


Navigating HR Roadblocks

That Impede Business Growth





Few of us could have anticipated the HR challenges we'd face growing a business. Often, these challenges prevent good organizations from reaching their full potential. Working on the premise that you can't correct what you haven't identified, we've compiled a list of HR challenges that may impede your growth along with possible solutions that can help you see your way to achieving your business goals without sacrificing customer service.

FIRST, HOW DID THESE ROADBLOCKS PRESENT THEMSELVES?

There's a big difference between running a business and being a great employer, as you've undoubtedly discovered. Usually, with company evolution, comes more hiring, and that introduces the necessity to be a good employer and HR decision-maker. The vast majority of business owners are not HR experts, but by the nature of being at the helm of a business, they are nonetheless thrust into this position. What's worse is that the HR landscape is getting more complicated all the time, and the processes and tools are more sophisticated. So while you may be sufficiently treading water now, it's getting tougher and tougher to keep up with HR while still advancing the overall goals of your business for the long term.

TAKE HEART, THOUGH, BECAUSE HELP IS OUT THERE.

OUR ADVICE is to evaluate your business objectives and prioritize your HR needs to support the vision you have for your business. Consider your HR risks as well as opportunities. The number of HR regulations has grown exponentially over the last decade and new ones are continuously imposed on small businesses. How do you keep up with them? Ask yourself, “How do you handle things when something goes wrong?” Perhaps even more importantly, ponder what an ideal future-state for HR would look like, and how your future is reliant on the quality of your workforce. Then, you can identify the best resources to bridge any gaps. You didn’t learn about your profession overnight, so allow yourself time to explore the HR scenarios and the bench strength you will need to achieve your company growth goals.

Throughout this Guide, we’ll list and discuss some of the major HR barriers to business growth. We look forward to hearing your comments and feedback.

Roadblock #1

“IT’S HARD TO DEDICATE STAFF TO HR, AND THOSE WHO DO THE WORK AREN’T ALL EXPERTS.”

In many small businesses, the job of managing HR is often not the sole responsibility of the person performing the work. Sometimes, it’s an office manager, a family member or friend, or an operations person, all of whom wear multiple hats. Other times, it’s the owners themselves, fitting things in when possible and putting out fires along the way. Seldom do small companies have the deep specialization necessary to understand all the aspects of HR from payroll, taxes, insurance, best practices, documentation, hiring/retention, benefits, and legal compliance with HR laws.

Hiring well qualified HR professionals is a challenge for many businesses. The obvious challenge is the overhead expense. Furthermore, in certain parts of the country, there’s a real shortage of trained professionals to meet your needs, particularly at the entry level. Once you’ve hired and trained them, they may be looking for their next opportunity fairly quickly.

OUR ADVICE? OUTSOURCE.

Get what you need affordably:

The expense challenge is a real one, and sometimes it simply cannot be overcome by hiring more staff. This is where outsourcing may be the most viable and affordable option. Whether you outsource the entire HR function, or limit your staff to one or several people responsible for HR with help from outside professionals, a range of affordable outsourcing options exists. Many businesses start by outsourcing payroll. While this is great in reducing workload, it doesn’t begin to address the risks to your business in terms of HR liabilities such as: accurately classifying your employees, properly paying them (including overtime and wage garnishments), paying state and federal taxes, and more. Furthermore, with just a payroll service, you will still lack the resources for other areas of HR such as policy, employee handbooks, regulatory compliance with employment laws, benefits administration, workers’ compensation and more. This is where a PEO (Professional Employer Organization) can assist in a broader sense. PEOs become co-employers and assume many of the responsibilities of being an employer, often at a price point that is less than doing things yourself. This can give you the deep expertise and specialization you need for a fraction of the price of hiring dedicated staff.

Roadblock #2

**“RECRUITING THE RIGHT PEOPLE, AND KEEPING THEM,
CAN BE DIFFICULT.”**

Recruiting and hiring the best people for your business has the potential to be a very challenging part of running a company. You advertise a job opening, screen applications and resumes to determine if the applicants have the experience and skills required for the position, interview qualified candidates, and make a decision to hire, all hoping you're making the right one. But if you don't also hire people with a customer service disposition and a desire to make the business stronger, your business may suffer. Even in roles that are not customer-facing, it's important for your staff to be attuned to the impact that business operations can have on customer satisfaction. So what can you do?

OUR ADVICE? HAVE A PLANNED PROCESS FOR INTERVIEWING AND CAREFULLY SCREEN FOR THE TRAITS YOU NEED FOR CREATING AND MAINTAINING AN EXCELLENT CLIENT SERVICE STANDARD.

Train your hiring managers:

Even if you're already great at interviewing candidates, don't assume that hiring skills come naturally for your entire management staff. Many people have been in the seat of the interviewee many times, but few have had a wealth of experience in the role of interviewer. Surprisingly, it is equally or even more difficult to be a good interviewer, than it is to perform as a candidate in an interview. It takes special skills and preparation to guide the conversation in a way that draws out the information that will help screen for important qualities. So consider training, or at the least, identify people who have mastered the skill of interviewing, and have them mentor other hiring managers before placing them in the role of interviewer.

Prepare for the interview:

Preparation begins with the job description. Know what you're looking for in an ideal candidate to perform the job. Go beyond education, skills and work experience, and factor in personality, culture fit, and soft skills. Be familiar with the applicant, plan interview questions, and consider whether any skills or personality testing should be scheduled for top candidates.

Ask questions that help you explore customer service traits:

Ask for examples from former work roles, attitudes about customer service, perspectives as a consumer/customer, and soft skills and training related to customer service. Here are a few sample questions to help you along:

- What do you think are the keys to a good customer experience?
- How did you meet or exceed customer expectations in your former jobs?
- Tell me about a time when you felt customer service suffered for any reason?
 - What did you do about it?
- What are some of the things you would look for as a customer/consumer of our services?
- How would you handle a phone call with a customer who wanted to complain about bad service?

Consider some hiring flexibility:

Once you've established position roles and responsibilities in a job description, imagine what good candidates are looking for in that position. Many other employers may be competing with you for top talent, so it can pay big dividends to find creative ways to attract them. Compensation packages should be competitive with an understanding of what motivates candidates. Most of the time, it's salary, benefits, paid time off and flexible work hours. The ability to work from home is also appealing to many when it meets your company's needs. Innovative approaches that are well suited to businesses will pay off.

Offer competitive pay and benefits:

Pay and annual increases should be factored into your retention strategy, but there are other factors that are equally as important. Having a good policy of paid time off and sick days is imperative. Offering high quality benefits like health insurance, dental, and vision care are practically expected in many fields. And it stands to reason that if you want employees to be happy and stay with the company for the long haul, you should offer a vehicle for retirement savings. With or without a matching program for 401(k) plans, employees will look for employer-sponsored ways to build a nest egg and long-term security for themselves and their families.



Roadblock #3

“ACCIDENTS. IT’S CHALLENGING TO KEEP MY EMPLOYEES SAFE. THE CLAIMS ARE ADDING UP.”

Keeping your employees safe is a challenge many business owners face, but having a safe workplace is smart business. Avoiding injuries, lost work time and workers’ compensation claims drives productivity and increases employee morale. Being proactive before an accident happens is the key to improving safety performance, and sustaining it over time. Although every company is different, safety standards can benefit companies of every kind.

OUR ADVICE IS TO CREATE A SAFETY PROGRAM.

Start by holding your supervisors and managers accountable for safety.

You’ll see that once they take responsibility, others will follow. Then, your employees will know safety is a company priority and expectation. Provide training as a part of your safety program. OSHA has a variety of programs available to businesses. If you choose to partner with a PEO, you have access to a team of safety management specialists who can deliver customized resources for your business. Remember, for safety training to stay relevant, you have to keep doing it. Ongoing drills, training and reminders are essential. The cost of ongoing safety workshops is much less expensive than the average cost of a workers’ compensation claim.

Prevent Injuries.

Be proactive. At the simplest level, have your employees wear their hard hats and whatever other equipment may be necessary to keep them safe. As for the equipment, have your employees review the tools they’re working with, even if they’ve used it on jobs before. Also, have them check it before they begin, to make sure its functioning properly. Sometimes, the condition of machinery can deteriorate overnight, even when it worked properly the day before. Have the site supervisor stop work anytime he or she feels there may be a safety issue. Allowing employees to continue working when a piece of equipment could malfunction puts the whole team in danger. The list of proactive activities can go on—daily toolbox talks, safety teams, competent-person training and other accountability systems that are not tied to discipline. It is important for supervisors and employees to report any hazardous conditions they see, no matter how small or insignificant the conditions may seem.


Return to Work Program.

A Return to Work program is designed to get injured, disabled or temporarily impaired workers back on the job as soon as medically possible. It can have many great benefits for both the employer and the employee. Those include reducing financial impact and improving the injured employee's recovery progress following an injury. Research has also shown that the longer the injured employee is absent from the workplace, the higher the costs will be to the employer and to the workers' compensation insurance carrier. Additional costs include lost productivity, overtime, decreased morale, increased premiums, and the costs of hiring and training a new employee if you must replace the injured employee.



We suggest outsourcing HR and other administrative tasks that are outside the scope of your business. The most comprehensive of the HR-related options is that of a PEO for tasks such as payroll, benefits, workers' compensation, hiring, training, firing and the myriad other tasks many business owners prefer to avoid.





The idea behind a PEO is that small and mid-sized businesses need help tackling not only the HR tasks listed above, but also keeping up with the changing HR regulatory and payroll tax landscapes. The regulatory climate has become increasingly onerous, and the number of new regulations imposed on businesses each year is staggering. The “do it yourself” model of HR and payroll tax compliance doesn’t work these days. It’s not practical to hire all the help you need, and when businesses try to stay on top of these issues, they may open themselves up to fines and sanctions.

HR outsourcing is often a strategy that allows you to sleep better at night knowing your organization is compliant – as well as lifting the administrative burden to free up your time to concentrate on customers and business growth.

READY TO START NAVIGATING YOUR HR ROADBLOCKS?

Contact us today to get started

Contact Us!



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