

HR Insights

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Getting Buy-in on HR Initiatives

While today's HR professionals are tasked with many organizational goals ranging from improving employee engagement to attracting and retaining talent, such initiatives take time, resources and continuous effort. As such, building and maintaining successful HR initiatives can be challenging without support from the overall organization and leadership. HR professionals need stakeholders to listen, understand, and support their views before any initiative can get off the ground.

This article explores strategies for HR professionals to obtain organizational buy-in on their initiatives.

Winning Over Stakeholders

To start, buy-in is the encouragement or support of one's ideas. Getting buy-in does not mean 100% agreement with a plan or initiative, but it's receiving the support of key team members or stakeholders—even if they don't wholly agree. HR professionals will spearhead a myriad of initiatives for an organization. Common initiatives are related to talent and learning and development efforts, or it could be more specific, such as integrating new technology or artificial intelligence. Before an initiative kicks off, others in the organization must approve it or give their blessing. Support may also require a financial investment (e.g., expenses and labor costs) depending on the initiative.

Regardless of the nature of the initiative, there are general strategies HR professionals should consider when trying to pursue a new idea but may be facing roadblocks within the organization. Take into account the following tips:

- **Lead with a clear vision.** A well-defined vision demonstrates confidence in the proposed idea. Developing a clear vision involves:

- Identifying the problem
 - Providing examples of the proposed solution
 - Leaning on data and metrics to substantiate the solution
 - Considering potential risks associated with the plan
- **Align with business goals.** An initiative is more likely to gain support if aligned with business goals, core values and other companywide efforts.
 - **Establish credibility.** With a proven track record, leaders and key stakeholders are more likely to support HR professionals and their new initiatives.
 - **Know the audience.** Everyone has different perspectives and opinions, so knowing the stakeholders is essential. A successful pitch will address an important issue to that person or deliver on success for the organization. Strong interpersonal skills help HR professionals build relationships before the next big idea. Still, they can also help them navigate these conversations better by knowing what piques the interest of certain individuals.



- **Leverage metrics and data.** Harness the power of HR data to help prove the need for an initiative and perhaps ways that others have experienced success. Facts and figures don't lie, so HR professionals can use data to prove their points.
- **Calculate the return on investment (ROI).** ROI is often the ultimate measurement tool and the key piece of information stakeholders are interested in. Many organizational leaders understand and relate to ROI, and including this information can help validate the proposed initiative.
- **Practice the pitch.** Before meeting with stakeholders, practicing the pitch to become more comfortable presenting the idea and supporting information is essential.
- **Expect common questions.** While it's important to be prepared for the actual pitch, it's just as critical to be ready for stakeholder questions. Make a list of expected questions and answers to be properly practiced beforehand. It'll help show confidence in the plan by not faltering on a question.

Being open to feedback or inviting others to expand on the idea is critical. This collaboration could strengthen the idea, demonstrate a willingness to compromise and build stronger interpersonal skills.

Summary

HR professionals are critical in driving significant impact and transformation within organizations. There are countless options for implementing HR initiatives, but securing stakeholder support is vital for them to either go anywhere or, hopefully, be successful. By selecting the appropriate workplace initiatives and striving to get buy-in from leadership, HR professionals can help bolster their influence and achieve notable results for the organization.

Contact Foundation Benefits for more HR resources.