

# Where the Jobs Are in HRO

Despite the economy, some HRO segments remain healthy, thankfully, and offer the type of hunting grounds suited for the interested candidates.

By Lisa Maxwell

When a down economy hits, smart job-seekers begin to wonder which industries are strong enough to weather the storm and which ones are recession-proof. In theory, these industries will keep on growing and hiring people despite the hard times, making them a safe bet for candidates.

HRO, like every industry, has been affected by the contraction. Economic distress has led to much uncertainty for all domains of HRO. With daily news of layoffs and business closings topping the headlines, it's great to see that various HRO segments are still growing and hiring.

Payroll is leading the way. It often drives the reason companies consider outsourcing HR, and therefore continues to do well. Benefits such as cost savings, best practices, flexibility, and cost tracking continue to stimulate growth in outsourcing payroll. Equally as important, payroll continues to be a big focus because in many countries, it has, in essence, become the HR data system.

An accurate payroll system is foundational to any successful HR system. Organizations are trending toward using their payroll record to drive the HR database. "Companies have figured out that it is very hard to deploy many other HR solutions such as recruitment or learning if they don't have accurate names in the database and they can't attach it to something consistent," stated Cay Gliebe, vice president of sales and marketing for NorthgateArinso.

Not far behind payroll in significance with respect to HR is quality of performance organization systems. Documenting and managing employee performance is critical to the ongoing success of any company. Having a strong system in place to fill in gaps provides assurances that promotions and job transitions are handled appropriately.

Talent management along with employee data management is a growing segment of HRO. Recruitment may not be a top priority for many firms right now due to layoffs and decreased hiring, however, performance management and succession planning and development are more important than ever. Companies are

looking internally in terms of keeping their workforce engaged and ready for the challenges ahead. Now is the time to make sure they have the technology and HR solutions in place. Developing accurate head count and compensation plans along with streamlining hiring, onboarding, and termination processes are significant.

## GROWTH EQUALS HIRING?

What does this mean in terms of hiring? You would expect that firms would be hiring specifically for payroll and talent management capabilities, which they are. Multiprocess HRO firms are looking for people with deep subject matter expertise. Firms need the highest level of knowledge and proficiency in terms of HR experience.

Whether it is an HR generalist performing in a customer service capacity or a payroll specialist, intricate domain expertise is important. When interfacing with a customer, HRO firms need people who have first-hand experience dealing with the issues the customer is facing. If they come from an HR background, they need to have the ability to interface with the customer.

"We have a big emphasis on customer satisfaction," said Mary Sue Rogers, general manager, Americas, global HR and learning outsourcing for IBM. "Along with deep domain expertise, we look for people who have a focus on human interaction and can delight the customer."

Although payroll and talent management are growing more than other areas such as learning and recruitment, the hiring in HRO is probably more skill-focused than domain-focused. Firms look for a blend of skills, including subject matter expertise, customer service, technology, and problem-solving skills.

In an economy where there is more renegotiation of existing contracts and less new opportunities, it is more important than ever to please the customer. Flexibility and the willingness to go far above and beyond what is expected to gratify the customer are attributes HRO firms look for in candidates. **HRO**



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