

Most HR Professionals Enter the Field By Chance, Says New XpertHR Survey

84.8% of respondents said their first job was not in HR

New Providence, NJ (May 22, 2014) – In a startling [new study](#) of the human resource profession, XpertHR found that most HR professionals (84.8%) did not begin their careers as human resource professionals. And more than half of the respondents felt that their reasons for entering the profession were heavily influenced by chance and external forces rather than an active desire to work in HR. XpertHR surveyed 231 HR managers, HR workers and HR assistants in organizations of all sizes, operating in every state and in almost all sectors of the economy. In all, the organizations they work for employ 1,715,187 people.

The [survey](#) also found that only one in 10 (11.3%) were attracted to HR because it was a well-respected profession, with fewer still (10%) seeing it as offering good opportunities for career advancement. Only 3.9% came in to HR because it pays well.

Nearly one in three (30.3%) said they had chosen HR because they wanted to work with people. Almost one in four (22.9%) said it had been an attractive career proposition. And nearly as many (22.1%) saw it as a natural progression from their previous role. A substantial number (13%) took up a career in HR after having been mentored by an HR professional.

“Although many entered the profession by chance, the majority of HR professionals surveyed are happy with the career choice they made, believe that HR is valued by senior managers in their organization, and have encouraging advice for anyone seeking to enter the profession today,” says Peggy Carter-Ward, Head of Content, XpertHR. “However, there is a significant minority who appear unhappy with their lot, feel undervalued by their employer and see more roadblocks than opportunities in their future HR careers.”

The factors most often cited as having held respondents back in their careers are their employer’s failure to view HR as important (40%), the lack of a clear HR strategy in their organization (31.6%) and the lack of a structured HR career progression framework in the profession (29.3%).

Not surprisingly, some HR professionals are more actively seeking a new role than others. Just one in ten (10%) of respondents said they never scan the job market for new career opportunities. LinkedIn is now the dominant player in the HR jobs market, with two in three HR job seekers (66.7%) using it to look for new career opportunities while the once-dominant professional and trade journals are used by just one in four (23.7%).

[XpertHR’s research](#) shows that six in 10 HR professionals (61%) would, if they could start their career over, still choose HR as a career. But this leaves a significant and

perhaps worryingly large proportion who either definitely would not do so (8.7%) or don't know (30.3%).

The majority of respondents hold at least a college degree or higher, with 51.5% having a bachelor's degree and 28.1% holding a doctoral or professional degree (a PhD, JD or DBA). Despite their relatively high level of academic achievement, nearly four in 10 (39.4%) do not have a professional HR qualification of any kind. Among those who do, the most commonly held qualifications are the industry standard certifications of Professional in Human Resources (42.1%) and Senior Professional in Human Resources (22.1%) with just two respondents (1.4%) having the less common Global Professional in Human Resources. Smaller numbers claimed certification through a variety of bodies in compensation and benefits (7.9%) or payroll (0.7%).

More than seven in 10 respondents (71.4%) are members of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), and 10% belong to the reward-oriented WorldatWork.

To receive a free copy of XpertHR's HR Careers 2014 survey report, visit <http://www.xperthr.com/pages/hr-careers-2014-key-findings-of-the-xperthr-survey/>.

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Editor's Note:

Survey infographics are available for publication.

Please include a link to the full report <http://www.xperthr.com/pages/hr-careers-2014-key-findings-of-the-xperthr-survey/>

Media Contact:

Beth Brody, fisher VISTA (For XpertHR)

beth@hrmarketer.com

609-397-3737