

Shaping Your HR Role

By William M. Kahnweiler and Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005
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William M. Kahnweiler, an HR degree director for Georgia State University, and Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, a career consultant, say that most HR books are aimed at human resource executives or focus on hot topics such as measuring HR's impact. And they add that most books on career success just don't apply to HR.

This book spotlights HR careers only, and it emphasizes actions that readers can take to advance their own careers while serving their organizations well. The target audiences are entry-level and mid-career HR professionals, career changers entering HR, and students preparing

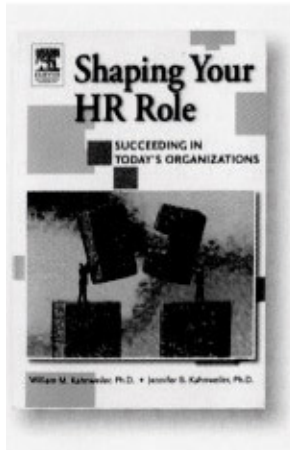
for an HR career. Seasoned HR executives also can use the book as they coach their staffs.

A look at HR careers covers specialist and generalist roles as well as functional areas such as compensation, employee relations, benefits coordination and training design.

The authors examine both the appeals of a career in HR—helping people, a flexible career path, rising influence as HR's professional status grows—and the challenges HR faces, such as

vulnerability to outsourcing and a business impact that can be tough to quantify.

The book looks at nine principal HR roles, and it guides readers on choosing the roles that best suit them. >



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A separate focus on internal and external HR consulting asks readers to consider whether they have the skills and personality to be a consultant. Consulting offers a wide variety of HR work but also requires "high tolerance for ambiguity" and willingness to delay gratification because client feedback can be elusive.

The authors' "HR career success model" is designed to help HR practitioners assess where they are now, set goals for development and navigate the profession. The model's three elements are gaining knowledge about yourself, your field and your organization; applying that knowledge; and achieving results.

Actions to take for HR career success include assessing your experience, skills, values, preferences and emotional intelligence. *Shaping Your HR Role* provides web sites for various self-

assessment tests; includes a simple tool for examining personal values; and offers other self-assessment ideas, from keeping journals to finding coaches.

Learning about the field means becoming familiar with HR functional areas, issues and trends through structured efforts, such as degree programs, training and certification programs, and unstructured efforts, such as mentoring and taking developmental assignments.

HR professionals also must learn about their organizations and find out what worries managers and employees, what competitors' and stakeholders' issues are, and what the organization does well—and why. The book gives tips for figuring out organizational culture, identifying who really has power and examining the relationship with customers.