

As a human resources executive, you are at the heart of any organization. After all, it is you and your position that are, in large part, responsible for the success or failure of that organization. And, the way your position interacts and works with many other positions inside and outside of the enterprise will mean the difference between long-term success or failure. Unfortunately for many HR executives, their success can largely be determined by the actions (or inactions) of others around them in their own business, and understanding how to navigate that and adroitly traverse the “internal mine field” is critical.

Human resources is at the center of attracting and retaining talent, communicating internally to all members of any successful organization regarding policies and programs, as well as training, planning events and a host of additional responsibilities. The challenge is that many of these core responsibilities also fall into other camps and internal disciplines, such as marketing, public relations, community relations, operations and legal. After all, if your brand has a bad reputation, attracting talent is going to be that much more challenging. If you don't have a strong, well-communicated corporate culture, it's difficult to retain talent who may lack understanding of the direction of the boat. If operational policies are unclear, and office politics tend to rule the day, confusion and consternation lead to that ever-revolving door of talent, and the need to constantly retrain. This costs time. This costs money.

Which is why working with these folks - either internally or outsourced through a professional firm - is increasingly more important. Human resources professionals are increasingly tasked with doing more for less, it seems. In some small businesses, HR IS the PR department as well. The need to stay current on communications, legal and operational issues. Plus, strategies and best practices is a never ending battle, compounded by the fact that most internally-staffed communications teams tend to be constantly changing and largely unaffected by corporate retention policies. And, I would argue that HR, when hiring for communications positions, are largely ignoring the expertise, experience and cost savings that would be gained by looking at a communications agency partner rather than simply the latest in-house hire.

Why? Not sure. But it seems that each time the “boss” needs a new hire, the immediate knee jerk reaction is to dust off the last job opening post and put it out there again (the average in house marketing person stays on the job less than 12 months). When instead, we would suggest that while looking

at in-house candidates, also consider the option of hiring a professional firm or freelancer with likely a much more expansive skill set, already in possession of the necessary tools and expertise, all the necessary staff to accomplish virtually anything, and the ability to provide the most senior counsel as well as tactical support – something simply not realistic in any single new hire. And yet, in many cases, this is significantly less costly than even entry level in-house hires. As a side note, if you are insistent on hiring in house, have an agency review the job posting to make sure the job description is up to date and accurate with what would be needed – I can't tell you how many times I've reviewed job descriptions for a marketing communications position that is clearly years out of date – which in marketing, is eons.

With the right agency, you have no overhead. The business can use what it needs, when it's needed. No downtime, and no need to retrain each time the last hire leaves. In fact, most agency partners that have had a long tenure with a business client know more about the business than the folks that actually work there – after all, they're the ones who have been consistently and systematically communicating about the company to both external and internal audiences for years. If I was the CEO of a business, I'd at the very least, want the stability and objectivity of a professional agency with specific industry knowledge, expertise and experience that offers that high-level strategy, as well as the ability to seamlessly execute with the most contemporary and proven techniques and tactics.

The ability to properly communicate a brand to both internal and external audiences makes attracting and retaining talent that much easier as well. Few folks want to work for a company they've never heard of, or worse, one with a bad reputation. If your business has very little in the way of external communications, a dated website, no community relations program, or a poor social media presence, attracting the best and brightest is just that much more difficult.



Easy to fix with a firm – you give them the assignment. However, more challenging when dealing with folks in house (how many meetings would that take?).

And, when communicating internally, do you have all the tools and the time to most effectively create and disseminate these messages. Are the messages correct and clear? Could you use a little help, even if it's just some basic logistics and project management assistance? Perhaps there are some needed connections that the agency has to help you plan that perfect event or develop a corporate sponsorship or cause marketing program – or just someone dedicated to sending your team information on possibilities and options. Perhaps you need someone to expertly write something for the myriad of items HR is now tasked with managing and executing. Let an agency lift some burdens and, in fact, suggest that the next time the boss wants to add overhead to the company and more work in training and recruiting for you.

The bottom line is that agency is not perfect, but the perfect agency for 'you' is indeed out there, with expertise in your industry and all the skills necessary to competently and consistently help to communicate your brand messages both internally and externally. You owe it your business, your boss and your bottom line to, at the very least, consider an agency partner for some, a little, all, of your communications rather than the constant revolving door, which is particularly an acute problem in the marketing field. And is so troublesome to the successful HR professional.

So, the next time the boss says "hey, will you put an ad out for a PR or marketing or design or website person?" just suggest that you may have a better option or at least an option that could save the business money, and offer more expertise and 100 percent objectively committed to the success of the business. You might just get a raise for being so smart.

About the Author

Roeser is the founder, owner and president of Greater Cleveland and Greater Cincinnati premier brand marketing communications agency, The Eisen Agency. Named Cincinnati PRSA Large Agency of the Year in 2013, his firm has twice been named a Cincinnati Business Courier Fast 55 (#3 in 2009, #9 in 2011) and twice named a Cincinnati Business Courier Best Places to Work. In 2010, his firm earned a TriState Success Award as one of Cincinnati's 35 Most Successful Businesses. His firm was twice named an Emerging 30 Business by the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. In 2010, Roeser was named PR Professional of the Year by the Greater Cincinnati PRSA Chapter where he served as president in 2005. His firm earned Inc. 5000 honors in 2012 as one of the 5000 fastest growing small businesses in the US. Roeser was also awarded a prestigious C-Suite Award by Lead Magazine in 2014, and in 2013 was honored as a top social media expert by Cleveland's SmartBusiness Magazine and their SoMe Impact Award and is currently a member of the Cleveland PRSA.

