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What does a career in Human Resources (HR) look like in the Y? What sort of things do you work on day-to-day?

Each day is different, which I love! There is so much variety in HR responsibilities, such as day-to-day tasks like answering employee questions, processing paperwork and payroll, recruiting and hiring employees, and mediating employee concerns. As a director, I enjoy the strategic side of HR, which involves compliance with laws, writing and enforcing policies, and most importantly, exploring how our staff and organizational structure can look to make our Y the most successful at meeting community needs and our mission.

What do you enjoy about working in HR?

It is the perfect combination of “task work” and strategic work, requiring me to use different skills and push my limits to continuously learn. It is also the perfect balance of planned and spontaneous work, so it keeps my skills sharp.

How did you become qualified to work in HR?

I have a bachelor’s degree in health care administration and management and am a certified Senior Certified Professional through SHRM. I started my HR career at a non-profit clinic and grew my skillset specific to HR that makes me marketable in other industries (outside of health care).

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How do I become an HR Professional?

There are entry-level positions available, such as HR Interns and HR Assistants, that often don't require experience or training. These jobs are a great way to get experience while you pursue your degree; this is a field that typically requires at least an associate's degree, depending upon the level of position you strive for.

What will make me more marketable to employers?

Most HR professionals have at least an associate's degree in human resources or some form of business management. If you want to work in a larger organization, especially a for-profit company, you may need at least a bachelor's degree and certification by an accredited HR organization.

What characteristics should someone possess to find success in HR?

Skills that will make you more marketable include:

- Strong communication skills
- Strong technological skills, using technology to its utmost potential for efficiency
- Problem-solving and critical thinking skills

Personality traits that work well in human resources:

- Emotional maturity
- Empathy
- Adaptability
- Unbiased and neutral demeanor in times of conflict

What can I do now to prepare myself for a career in HR?

- Take classes at your school in business functions, not just human resources. Being a strong HR professional means knowing how each area of a business works to understand how everything fits together.
- Hone your skills at conflict management.
- Work in an administrative setting to learn how paperwork, technology, and staffing "works."