**Building an HR Department Checklist**

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| **Task** | **Done** | **Not applicable** | **Note** |
| **1. Assess the current state of HR** |
| List and assess current HR tools in use | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Evaluate which HR tasks line managers are handling | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Check for missing or outdated policies | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| Consider enrolling in an HR Generalist Certificate Program to help you build your HR department from scratch and avoid common pitfalls | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| **2. Organize employee records & create a record-keeping process** |
| Build digital personnel files for each employee | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Collect recruitment documents, eligibility forms, payroll records, and performance documentation | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Work with IT to set up a secure electronic filing system | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| **3. Write HR policies** |
| Draft essential policies covering topics like leave, working hours, anti-harassment, confidentiality, and AI use | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Combine related policies and make them accessible | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| **4. Build recruitment and onboarding foundations** |
| Define recruitment steps and assign responsibilities | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| Prepare job descriptions, interview guides, and onboarding documentation | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| Structure onboarding into five phases: preboarding, day one, week one, first 90 days, and the end of year one | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| **5. Document compensation and benefits** |
| List what’s currently offered in terms of compensation and benefits, including required and optional items | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| Make sure policies are legally compliant and clearly communicated to employees | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| Consider developing a total rewards framework that includes non-monetary incentives | ☐ | ☐ |  |

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| Task | Done | Not applicable | Note |
| **6. Review tools and identify needs** |
| Identify and prioritize tools for compliance, hiring, employee data, performance, and learning | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| Choose platforms that fit your organization now but can grow with it | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| **7. Check compliance guidelines** |
| Review labor laws, health and safety, and remote work regulations | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Make sure policies address minimum wage, working hours, leave, non-discrimination, and health and safety | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Consult with an employment layer if needed | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| **8. Create an employee handbook** |
| Develop a handbook that includes your company’s mission, values, policies, benefits and conduct expectations | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Use online tools or AI platforms to speed up the drafting process | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| **9. Set up a learning and development plan** |
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| Define your L&D goals and align them with company strategy |

 | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Identify the skills and competencies needed to reach those goals through a skills gap analysis. | ☐ | ☐ |       |
| Speak with employees to understand their career goals and build personal development plans | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| Create a training library and include any mandatory compliance training | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| **10 Create a long-term HR plan** |
| Forecast your organization’s future HR needs and prioritize what to build first | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| Align your HR planning with timelines, budgets, and organizational growth | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| **11. Decide when to expand the HR team** |
| Determine when additional RH support is needed based on your workload | ☐ | ☐ |  |
| Consider internal candidates or hybrid roles before recruiting externally | ☐ | ☐ |  |





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