

HRM Toolkit

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

What tools do you think that human resources, as an organization, has at their disposal to do their job? You may recall the previous discussion about how compensation and benefits may be more than simply money. Therefore, what is it that human resources can use in order to motivate their employees and do their job better? This tutorial will cover human resource management, or HRM, toolkit. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Human Resource Management (HRM) Toolkit

Human Resource Management, or HRM, has a lot of different tools that they can use within the workplace. Much of the time, these tools depend on the company and the package of benefits that the company is able to offer its employees.

- *Job Enrichment:* Increases employee job satisfaction by providing an opportunity for the employee to have greater oversight or choice over the manner in which they do their job.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Consider Federal Express and the employees who do the actual delivering in the trucks. A source of job enrichment might be letting those employees determine what route they're going to take, or which particular business or household they want to deliver to first. Typically, there may be a lot of packages that go to one particular place.

- *Job Redesign:* Increases employee satisfaction by reviewing and possibly changing the requirements for a particular job.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Suppose you work at the Ford Motor Company on the assembly line, and you notice that there are a lot of people who are dissatisfied. They're going home with aching backs--it's the same, repetitive action over and over again. Well, in this case, Ford may want to redesign a particular job on that assembly line so that it includes job enrichment and also causes less stress for the employee. It may even be redesigned so that the job is easier to get done and results in a better quality product.

- *Flex-time:* Involves working hours being chosen by the employee--within reason, of course.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Consider a company like Apple Corporation, which has a workforce of highly creative people. Now, you can't force creativity. In this case, then, you may want to have the employees simply

do the job when they're feeling the most motivated or the most creative. Now, you can't let them have free rein and just take weeks or months off. However, if you can allow them to have that flex-time so that they're doing their jobs, but at a time that's more beneficial for them or when they feel more creative or focused, then this can be a win-win for both the employee and the company.

- *Telecommuting:* Refers to working offsite or from home.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Again, as with Apple Corp., you may want people to work in a more comfortable spot--and the more comfortable spot may be working from home. This also allows a company to pull their workers from a wider geographic area because it doesn't have to only employ workers within the local commuting distance. Therefore, it can increase the workforce. In addition, because workers don't really need to be at the office, they can be placed where they may feel more comfortable.

- *Job Sharing:* Sharing a job with another person.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Again, circle back to the Ford Motor Company. Suppose you have two people who work in the accounting department, who are each going through periods where they can't be at work all the time, or they're unable to complete all the work they've been given. In this case, they may share that one job.

IN CONTEXT

The U.S. Navy and the Coast Guard will have Blue Team and Gold Team crews on vessels like destroyers and submarines. The captain of the ship is still the captain of the ship, but the two teams have alternating schedules, where the Blue Team is out to sea one period of time, and the Gold Team is out to sea another period of time.

This alternating schedule allows the ship to be in service more; it increases the availability of the ship. It also gives the captain and the other employees--the other sailors on that ship--downtime for training, personal development, etc., because they're not always constantly out at sea.

2. Reinforcement Theory

Reinforcement theory is a concept that has been around for quite a long time and proposes that you can change someone's behavior by using reinforcement, punishment, and extinction. Rewards are used to reinforce behavior that you want and punishments are used to prevent behavior that you don't want.

➞ **EXAMPLE** A business manager using reinforcement theory might employ rewards for desirable behavior and punishments for undesirable behavior.

There are several different facets of reinforcement theory that we will discuss today.

Type of Reinforcement Theory	Description	Pros vs. Cons
	Consists of encouraging a behavior by	

Positive Reinforcement	<p>adding something good. A classic example of this is Pavlov's dog, if you recall. The dog salivated whenever food was offered; the food, in this case, was that positive reinforcement. It resulted in motivating an animal to do a particular thing by giving it treats.</p> <p>This method works with people, too. If people do this one particular thing, then you can give them a positive result or a positive reinforcement.</p>	<p><i>Pros:</i> It is considered the most effective method. You're not discouraging employees along the way, but actually encouraging and reinforcing good behavior.</p> <p><i>Cons:</i> The negative side is that if you can't afford to do that particular reinforcement, or you forget to do the reinforcements, people can get demotivated fairly quickly. Also, you may be giving extra attention for bad behavior.</p>
Negative Reinforcement	<p>Consists of encouraging a behavior by taking something away--typically, taking away something bad. This involves placing an individual in a bad situation, then when they do something you want them to do, you remove that particular item that is causing stress.</p>	<p><i>Pros:</i> The benefit is that it tends to work as it strengthens a desired behavior.</p> <p><i>Cons:</i> The problem is that you have to put people in a bad situation, then expect them to perform a certain way so that they get something good in return. This can decrease self-esteem and confidence.</p>
Positive Punishment	<p>Consists of discouraging a behavior by adding something bad, as in putting an employee on report or taking away certain pay if they don't do the things you need them to do. That is a form of positive punishment.</p>	<p><i>Pros:</i> This can be a good way of conditioning a person that certain behaviors are bad because you are actively punishing bad behavior, which can work.</p> <p><i>Cons:</i> This can cause feelings of resentment by the person who's being punished towards the manager or the company. It also doesn't convey any information about an alternative.</p>
Negative Punishment	<p>Consists of discouraging a behavior by taking away something good. Suppose you promote an employee, or give them a bonus or pay raise; then, when they make a misstep, you take that good thing away.</p>	<p><i>Pros:</i> This method works and can be very effective when it is applied consistently.</p> <p><i>Cons:</i> Once punishment is withdrawn, the behavior is likely to reoccur. Another problem is that because you are taking away something good, again, you may be building those feelings of resentment. Think of it as someone who buys their child a bicycle just so they can use that bicycle as a tool to take away when the child misbehaves.</p>
Extinction	<p>Consists of discouraging a behavior by ignoring it. No matter how much an employee acts up or acts out, or does</p>	<p><i>Pros:</i> It's a nonconfrontational way to address that particular behavior, which could lead to the elimination of a learned behavior.</p> <p><i>Cons:</i> You have to put up with that behavior</p>

something bad, you simply ignore it.
You're not reinforcing that behavior.

until the employee gets the message that you're not going to acknowledge that outburst or particular behavior. Employees may also feel unappreciated because you are ignoring their behavior.



SUMMARY

Today we learned about the **HRM toolkit**. We also learned about **reinforcement theory** and those methods that human resource management can use to encourage good behavior and motivation throughout an organization.

Good luck!

Source: adapted from sophia instructor james howard