3445 The HR Verdict

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I have worked in this industry for more than four decades. I have worked in small, independent operations where the owner was the HR department. I have worked with large corporate brands that had full HR divisions, dedicated people-management infrastructure, regional HR business partners, and compliance teams three layers deep.

Here is my verdict: HR stands for Hardly Relevant.

That is not a joke. It is a conclusion drawn from watching what HR departments actually produce — and more importantly, what they prevent. They produce paperwork. They produce policy manuals that protect the company from the employee and the employee from the company. They produce hiring processes that filter out candidates on technicalities and slow-walk the ones worth having until those candidates accept another offer. They produce training programs that no one opens after day one.

What they prevent is accountability. When people management is owned by a department instead of by managers, managers stop managing people. They escalate to HR. They wait for HR. They blame HR when the wrong hire doesn't work out and HR approved the paperwork. The moment a manager can say "I checked with HR," accountability has been distributed into thin air.

The first CEO who eliminates the HR department entirely — who returns people management to the managers responsible for the people — will save money, move faster, and lead the market. Not because people don't matter. Because people matter too much to be managed by a department.

This is not an argument against compliance, payroll, or benefits administration. Those functions are real. But Coaching, development, accountability, and culture are not HR functions. They are leadership functions. And the operator who lets HR own them has already decided, without meaning to, that those things are bureaucratic obligations rather than competitive advantages.

Every Employee. Every Experience. Every Day.