

Summer Zehra

Talent Training & Development Specialist

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Accomplished, dynamic HR professional with a wealth of experience in talent acquisition, talent development, administrative management, education and learning management systems. Versatile performer possessing the keen business acumen and diverse skill set to add organizational value across a broad spectrum of industries and professional roles. Resourceful problem solver with demonstrated capacity to adapt and thrive in challenging, fast-paced environments. Exceptional communicator continually focused on cultivating productive professional relationships with associates and clients to drive positive change and spur process improvement. Skilled educator, extremely adept in personnel training and development. Proficiency and expertise with educational technology, and HR technologies and systems (HRIS, ATS, payroll systems). Multilingual, fluent in English, Sindhi, Urdu, Arabic and sign language.

Areas of Expertise

☐ HR Functions & Policies	☐ Project Management	☐ Process Improvement
☐ HRIS	☐ LMS	☐ Cost Control
☐ Talent Acquisition	☐ Curriculum Development	☐ Conflict Resolution
☐ Talent Development	☐ Team Leadership & Mentorship	☐ Strategic Planning
☐ Education & Training	☐ Relationship Building	☐ Community Outreach
☐ Employee Engagement/Retention	☐ Communication & Collaboration	☐ Public Speaking
☐ Compliance Management	☐ Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	☐ Educational Consulting

Professional Experience

Fawakih Institute, Fairfax, VA

10/2020 – Present

Director of People & Partnerships (remote position, 10/2022 – Present)

Perform in a multifunctional administrative capacity, serving HR functions for diverse organization dedicated to the education and instruction of adult students in Arabic studies. Myriad responsibilities include: HR program management; HRIS management; employee engagement, training and mentorship; benefits administration; and federal, state and local regulation compliance oversight.

- Developed best practices for hiring and talent development to ensure department success.
- Efforts have been instrumental in streamlining company payroll processes and HRIS, yielding significant savings by reducing errors, maximizing company time and boosting operational efficiencies.
- Designed and implemented comprehensive training programs for managers on various issues including conflict resolution, performance management and effective communication.
- Directed cross-functional team in development and launch of new performance management system, providing timely and actionable feedback to employees and spurring improvements in performance and productivity.
- Created employee feedback and engagement program to enhance communication and morale.

Talent Acquisition & Training Manager (remote position, 10/2020 – 10/2022)

Developed and managed organization's talent recruitment and training operations and processes. Cultivated and maintained productive relationships with prospective candidate communities, as well as local colleges and universities, to create and expand a steady pipeline of diverse, talented candidates.

- Hired, onboarded and developed exceptionally effective instruction team, receiving record high in positive feedback from students.
- Built and directed outstanding Talent Acquisition and Training Department team, yielding a spike in retention rate and overall productivity.
- Brainstormed and collaborated with HR team to create new recruitment policies and procedures with a focus on strict compliance with all relevant regulations and laws.
- Launched a social media strategy to increase company's online presence and enhance brand recognition.

ICNA Relief, Chicago, IL

9/2017 – 6/2019

Case Manager/Project Manager

Served as client case manager for national nonprofit organization providing essential social services and advocacy for underprivileged and marginalized clients and communities. Engaged in interviews, information gathering and clinical assessments. Designed and provided customized educational and instructional materials tailored for specific needs and learning styles of clients.

- Guided clients in pursuit of personal and professional growth by facilitating access to career counseling, healthcare and legal consultation.
- Planned and coordinated numerous successful events and functions to raise awareness for organization and promote community involvement.

Recruited, interviewed, hired and directed diverse team of teachers for institute with an emphasis on creating a culture of employee satisfaction and productivity.

- Increased online engagement and sales through development and management of user-friendly website for classes and organizational events.
- Introduced new processes for managing student inquiries, class placement, educational materials, work-study programs and scholarships; process improvements yielded significant gains in overall operational efficiency.
- Coordinated and executed series of extremely effective promotional events, boosting revenues and student enrollment.

Additional Experience

Computer Science Teacher, Islamic Foundation School, Villa Park, IL (2017)
English Language Arts Teacher, Arqam Virtual Academy, Lombard, IL (2014 – 2015)
School Principal, Arqam Virtual Academy, Lombard, IL (2014)
High School Teacher, College Preparatory School of America, Lombard, IL (2010 – 2013)
Kaplan Instructor & Student Advisor, ACT/TOEFL Test Prep, Downers Grove, IL (2009 – 2012)

Education

Master of Education in Educational Leadership, Global Studies in Education (Honors)
UIUC, Urbana-Champaign, IL

Bachelor of Arts in Secondary English Education (*cum laude*)
University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS

Associate of Applied Science in Computer Programming
Itawamba Community College, Tupelo, MS

Certificate in Culturally Responsive Literature Instruction
Harvard University – Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA

Certificate in Classical Arabic
Fajr Center, Cairo, Egypt

Licensure & Certifications

State of Illinois Standard Type 09 (6-12) Secondary Teaching Certification in:
English Language Arts; Computer Programming; Application; Sciences; Business

Publications

Interculturism, Education & Dialogue, Peter Lang et al., 2012