

HR Screening 2023



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БЪЛГАРСКА АСОЦИАЦИЯ
ЗА УПРАВЛЕНИЕ НА ХОРА



Introduction

Manpower's **Business Intelligence** department conducts targeted market research to address labour market dynamics and business needs for a sustainable strategy. These surveys aim to identify, track and analyse trends related to the workforce, business, and talent movement. In today's dynamic environment, where conditions constantly change, knowledge and understanding of these new trends and established practices are critical. This study aims to explore and analyze the challenges HR professionals face in their daily work and to offer practical solutions for greater effectiveness.

Through **strategic and logical questions**, we consulted professionals across the country representing different business segments in the market.

We asked questions related to the various functions within the HR segment with respondents categorizing answers by prioritizing activities.

"What function do you perform and what are the three activities defining it as such?", "What do you include in functions as an activity in your organization?", and "What is your commitment as a Human Resources department to employees?"

This is the third consecutive year that the survey has been conducted, and for this year's survey, the partners in the initiative are the **Bulgarian Association for People Management (BAPM)** and the **Employment Agency (EA)**.



The focus of the study is the analysis and comparison between the trends in businesses with one or more HR specialists and those businesses that do not have an HR department.

Methodology

In order to reach out to all the professionals performing the different functions in HR, we designed a survey with **19 specific questions** linked to each other with a logical dependency. **For some respondents**, those with one specialist and those without an established specialist department, the questions were no more than 10. Respondents were asked both about their relationship with employees and about attracting future talent to organizations. The survey was distributed and shared through **Manpower**, **Bulgarian Association for People Management (BAPM)**, and the **Employment Agency (EA)** communications networks, as well as through industry and business partner organizations.

The Zoho Survey and Zoho Analytics platforms were used in the qualitative and quantitative analysis process. **The results of the survey are presented in a systematized form through charts and statistics.**



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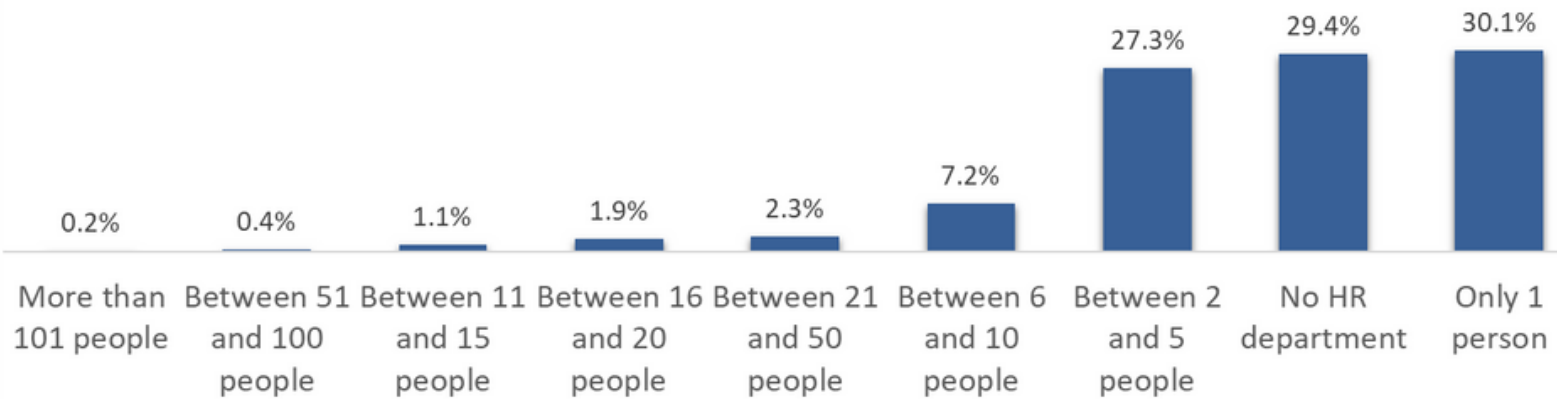


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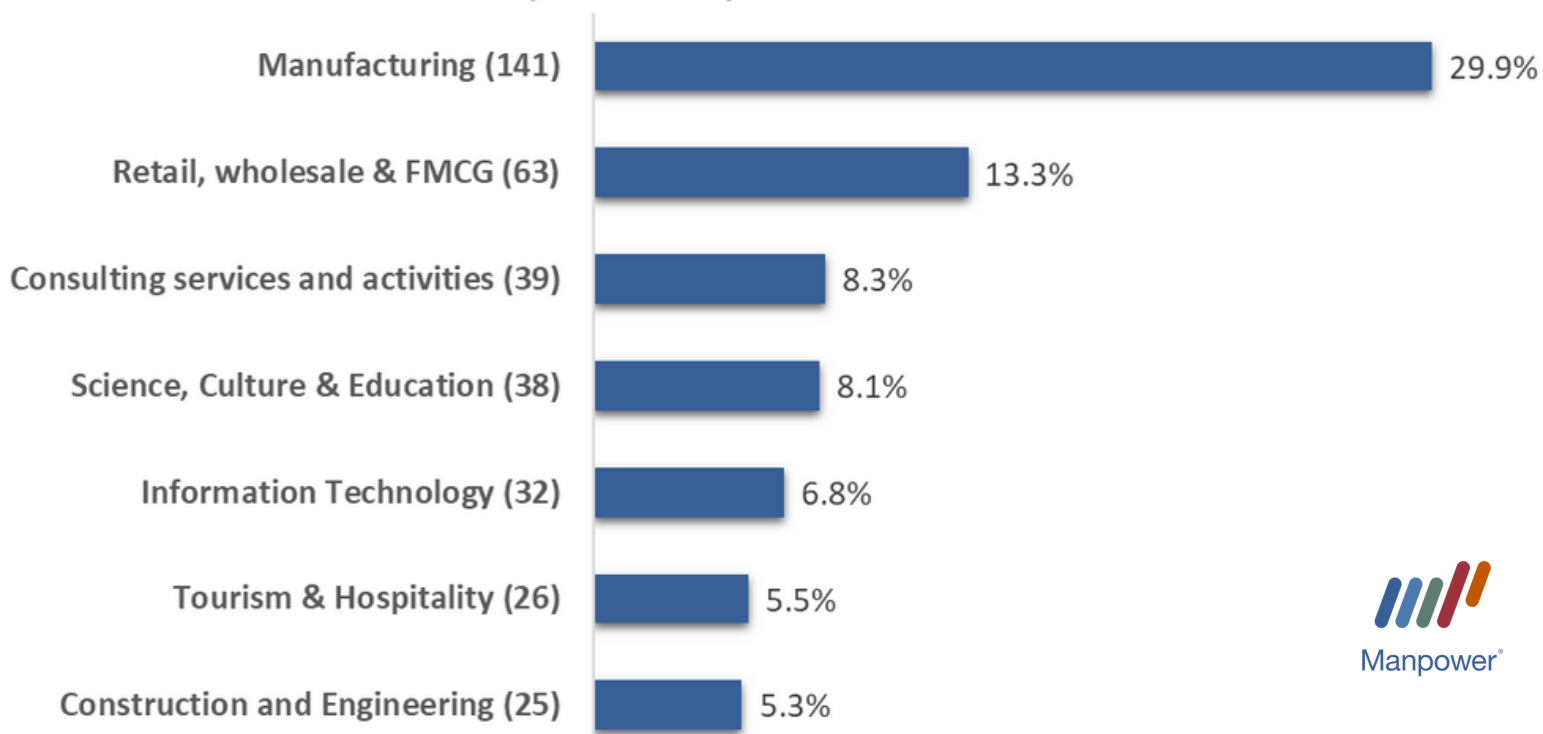
Respondents profiles

There were more than 20 business sectors participating in the survey, with 472 unique responses for the entire survey. Of these responses, 191 (40.5%) reported that their HR department consisted of two or more specialists, 142 (30.1%) were functioning with one representative in the organization, and another 139 (29.4%) noted that they did not have a dedicated HR department.



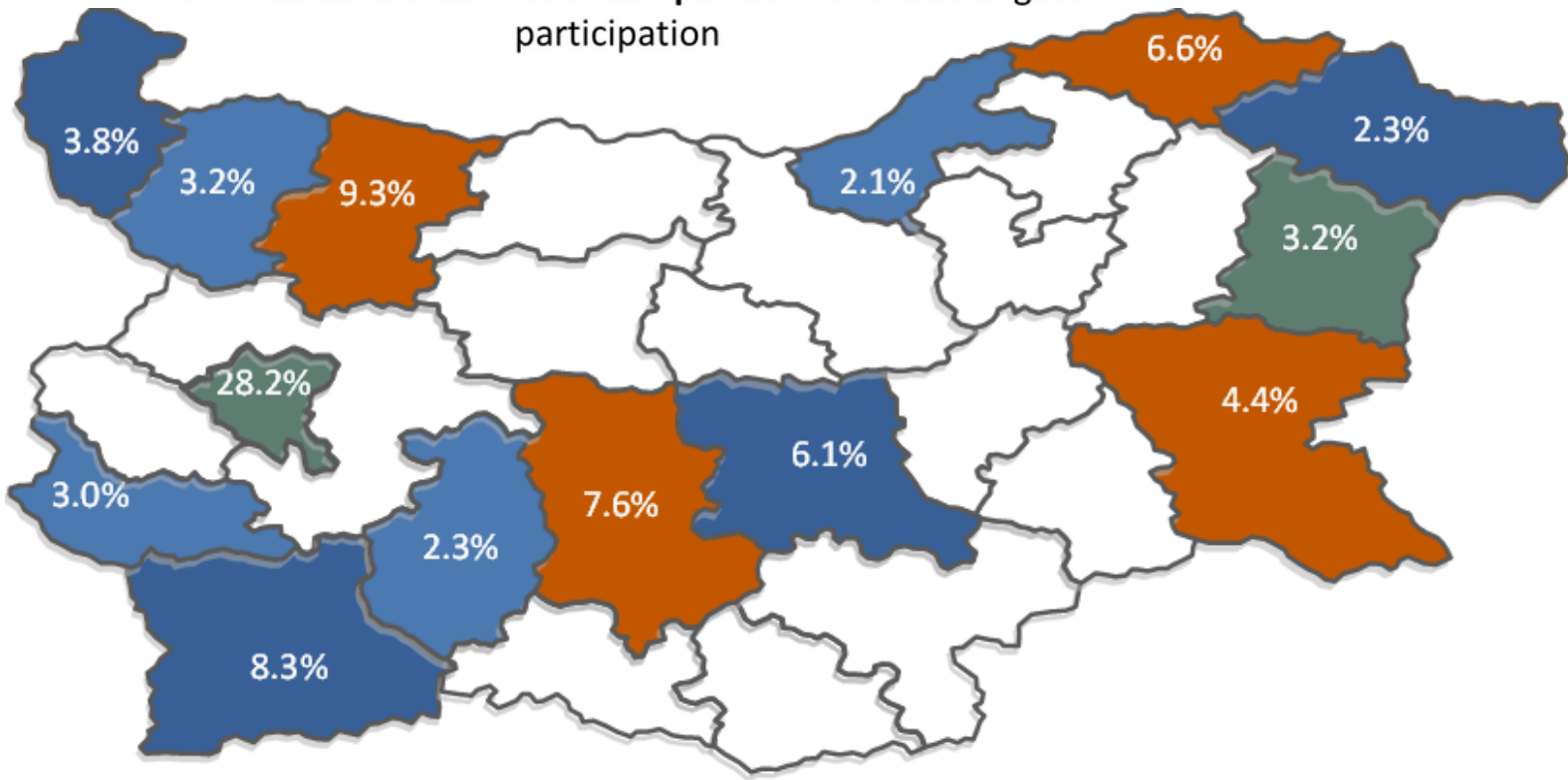
The largest number of representatives from all respondents belonged to several business areas, namely **Manufacturing & Production** (29.9% or 141 companies), followed by **Retail, Wholesale & FMCG** (13.3% or 63 organizations), and thirdly **Consulting services** with 8.3% or 39 companies responding. The subsequent business sectors with the most respondents were **Science, Culture, and Education** with 38 responses (8.1%), **Information Technology** with 32 responses (6.8%), **Tourism and Hospitality** with 26 respondents (5.5%), and **Construction & Engineering** with 25 representatives (5.3%).

Respondents per business sectors



Organizations with the highest activity in the survey are positioned in **Sofia and Sofia region** (28.2%), followed by those in **Vratsa** (9.3%) and **Blagoevgrad** (8.3%), then those with organizations in **Plovdiv** (7.6%) and **Silistra** (6.6%).

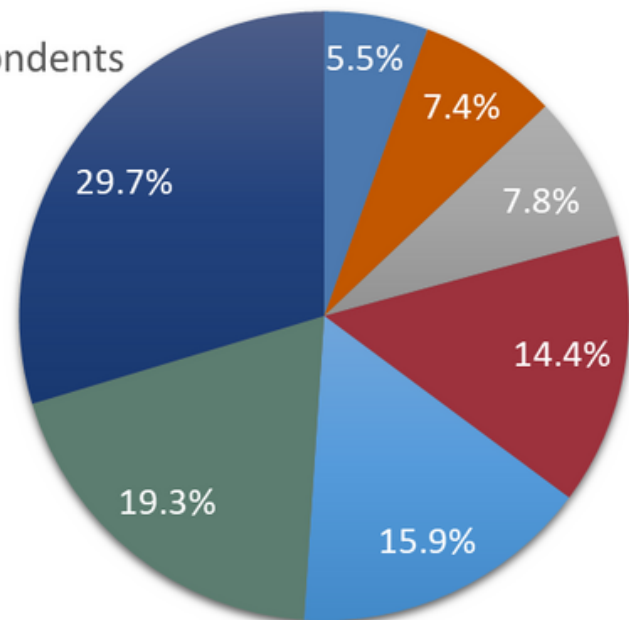
Administrative area in % of companies with the strongest participation



Companies with up to 20 employees provided **the most responses** (29.7% or 140 responses), followed by 91 unique responses from organizations with up to 300 employees. On average, there are **80,000 employees** behind all 472 business respondents to this survey.

Size of participating companies as a % of all respondents

- 501 - 1000 (26) ■ 1000+ (35) ■ 301 - 500 (37)
- 51 - 100 (68) ■ 21 - 50 (75) ■ 101 - 300 (91)
- 1 - 20 (140)

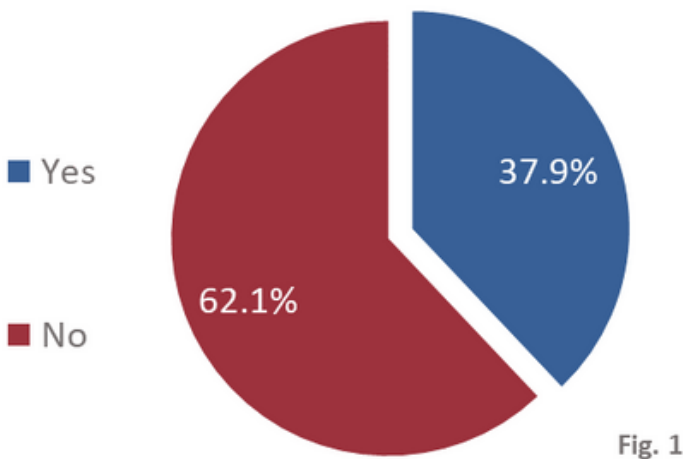


Overall analysis and comparison with 2022 results

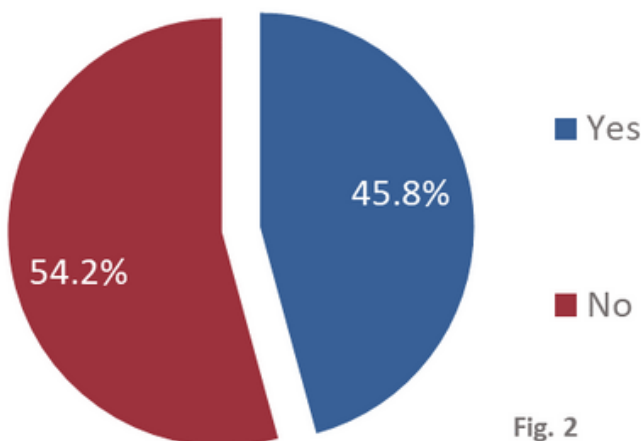
In the same survey for 2022, only 5% of all 130 professionals said they did not yet have an HR department established in their organizations. It should be taken into account that the 2022 survey focused entirely on private business in Bulgaria, where nearly 50% of the professionals represented Sofia and the region. In the current survey, nearly 8% of respondents were represented by Municipal and Public Administration sectors, along with Agriculture and Livestock and NGO representations.

The questions answered by **all 472 professionals** this year, as well as last, analyze the application of new employees in their organizations.

We asked the experts "Is it important for candidates to provide a reference with their resume?" (Figure 1) and "Do you check the credibility of these references?" (Figure 2) - both the 2022 and 2023 results tend to show that references do not matter a great deal to HR professionals.



For 2022 „No“ = 74%, „Yes“ = 26%



For 2022 „No“ = 53%, „Yes“ = 47%



"White lies" during the application for a new position

Experts shared their impressions of the recruitment process in terms of the "white" lies that candidates use to boost their applications. Most often, talents exaggerate duties and responsibilities in previous positions, along with personality traits of all types and foreign language proficiency.

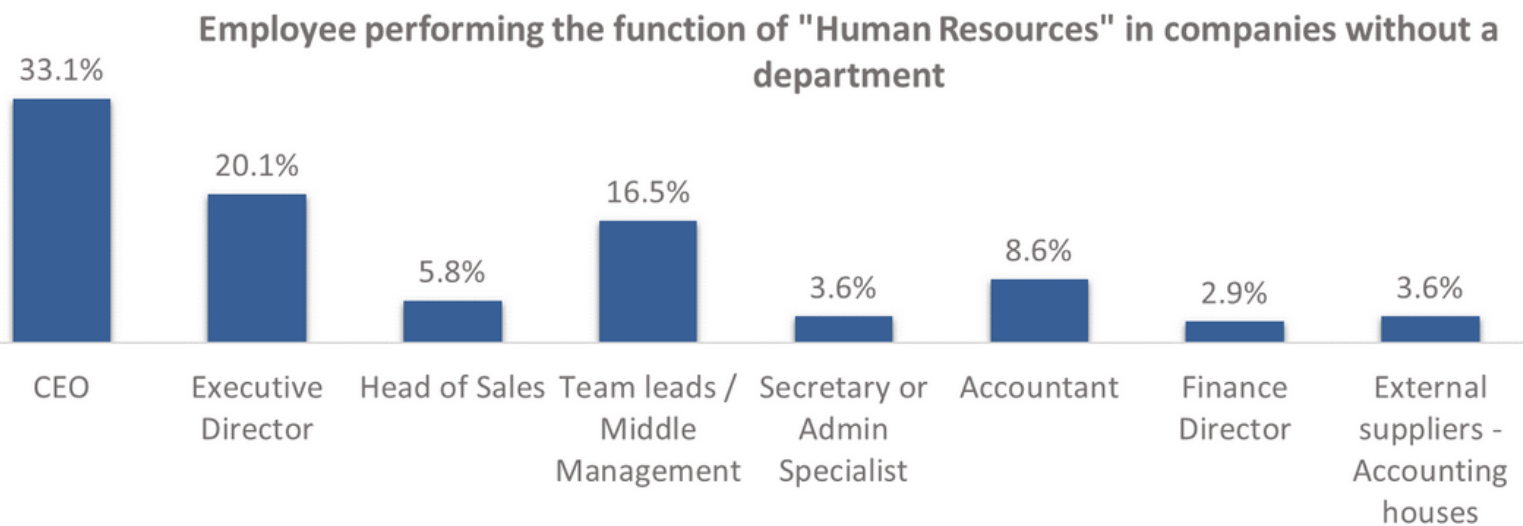
"White lie"	2023	2022
About the duties and responsibilities of a previous post	45%	57%
For personal qualities of all types	44%	51%
For foreign language proficiency level	40%	58%

Candidates were least likely, for both years of the study, to exaggerate about working conditions in previous organizations, alongside years of work experience and technical skills. For 2023, professionals share that job candidates are starting to be mostly candid when it comes to their perception of feedback in the process.



Data analysis on businesses that do not have an HR department

For the 139 business representatives in Bulgaria who noted that they do not have an HR department in their companies, the functions of this role are performed by other positions in the organization. The most common HR function is being taken over by the CEO (33.1%) and Executive Directors (20.1%). In a minority of companies (11.5%), Accountants (8.6%) and/or CFOs (2.9%) are responsible for the various processes and functions in HR implementation.



In the allocation of the various functions of human resource management, the responsibility for planning and recruitment (66.9%), tracking compensation and employee performance (63.3%) most often fell under the additional responsibilities of the incumbents (56.1%), along with the overall administration of the company's personnel.

For comparison, in some organizations with a team of several responsible employees, these functions are separately performed by different employees and the respective appointees to different roles.

Responsibilities of the person holding the Human Resources function



Data analysis on businesses that have an HR department

For organizations with a team of one or more than two people specializing in HRM, the most common function performed was overall personnel administration (70.9%), followed by planning and selection (70%). The difference for specialists involved as team representatives and those who perform the HR functions alone is the functional allocation of strategic management of the department and optimization of processes.

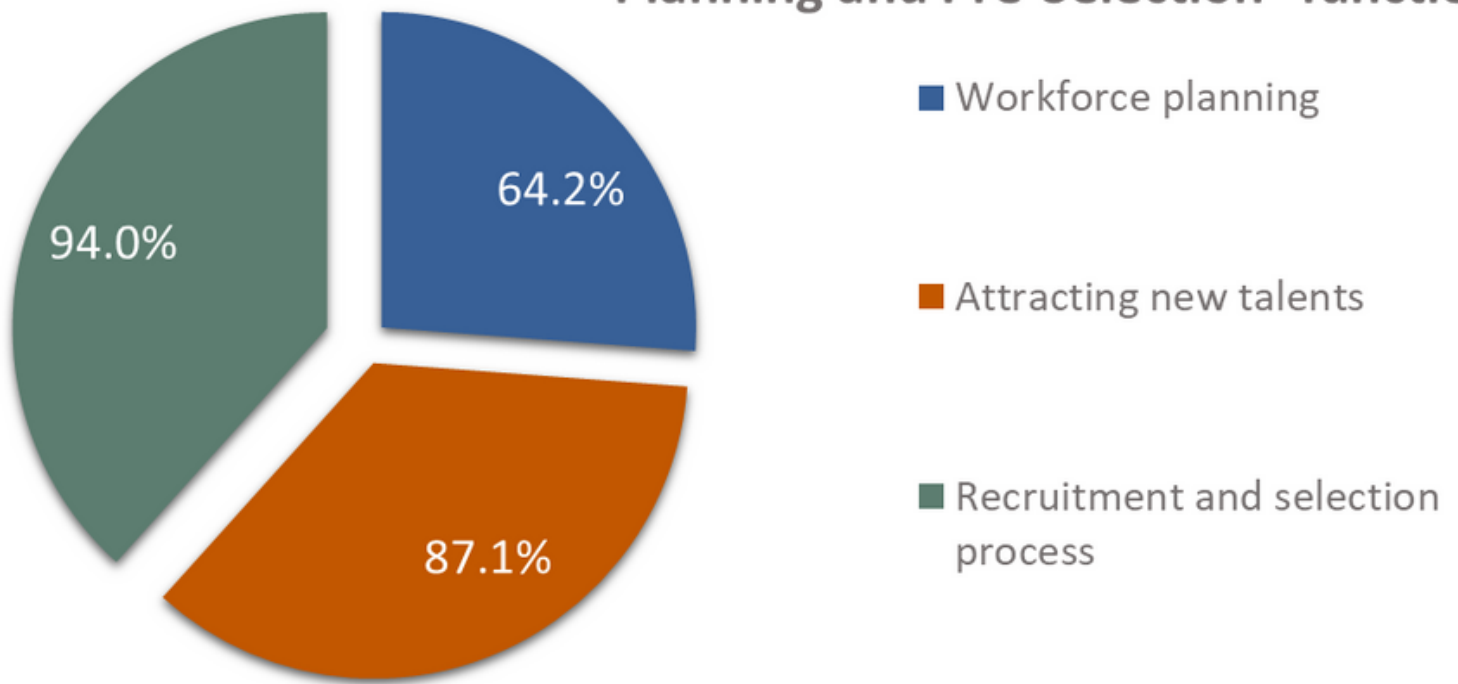
It is noticeable that for people specialized in the profession, these two units mean much more detailed and focused work than for organizations without a department and employees with allocated functions but performing another role.

Functions performed as HR

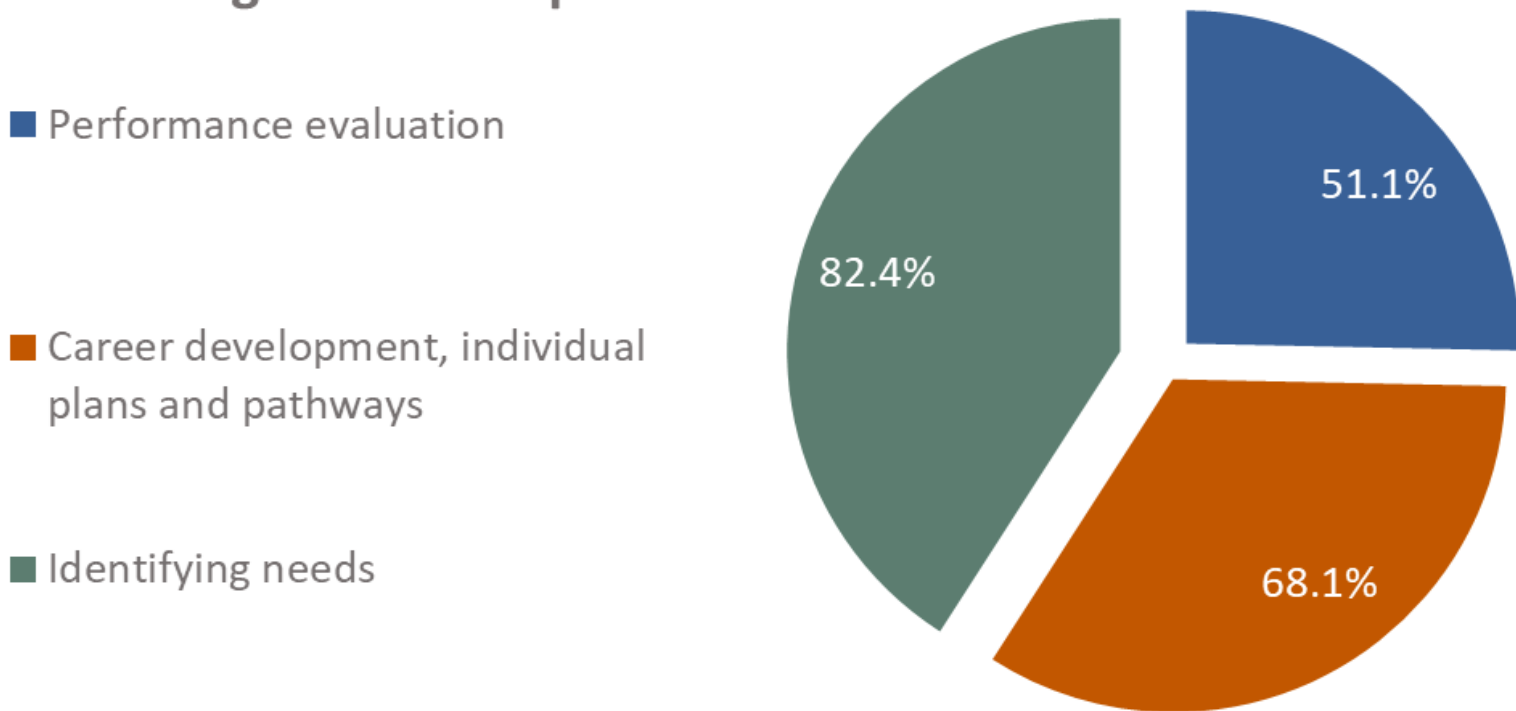


We asked the experts what are the different functions you perform and what are the top three definitions they can associate with them. Here are the results against the percentage distribution of top respondents by questions:

"Planning and Pre-Selection" function



"Learning and development" function



"Performance, Compensation and Benefits" function

51.8%



Benchmarking salary and benefits

60.9%



Performance evaluation

70.1%



Compensation strategy in the organisation

"Staff Administration" function

51.3%



Payroll

91.5%



Regular administration activities

95.8%



Recruitment, record keeping, dismissal

"Employee Engagement" function

67.1%



Develop/optimize the strategy to increase employee engagement

72.8%



Measure employee satisfaction

74.1%



Working with leaders and managers on their role in the engagement process

"Strategic HR Management" function

53.5%



Optimising HR processes

55.2%



Aligning the structure and strategy of the HR function to the organisation's business objectives

60.3%

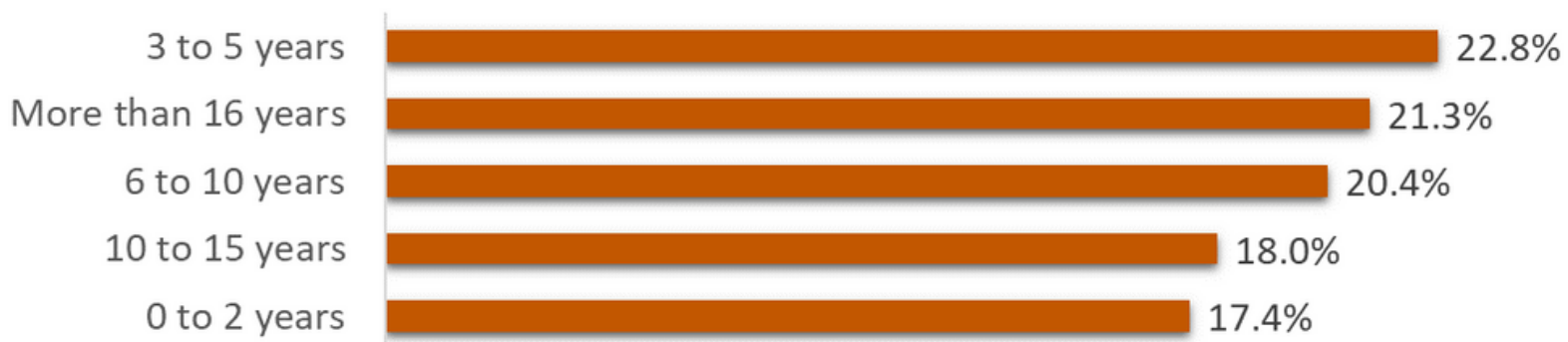


Build/optimize the organization's HR strategy

Shared experiences and current challenges

All of the 333 professionals, who perform different roles in the strand in teams of one or more than two people, shared their specific work experience in the organizations they represent. From the results below, we observe a trend of over 60% participating with more than 3-5 years of experience in their respective organizations. In many of the responses, there were comments indicating sustainable, established, long-standing HR teams and no turnover or need to attract new staff.

Years of experience in the current organisation



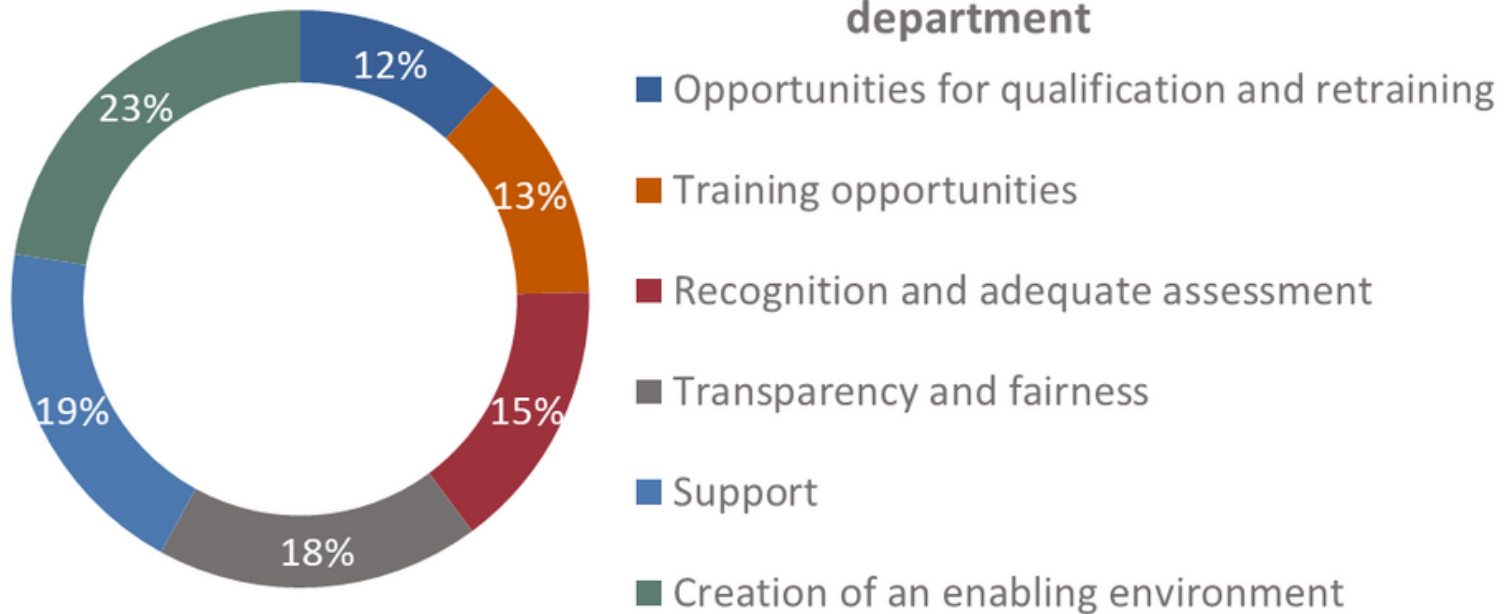
Despite the comments mentioned, most professionals said that for 2023 there are also expected to be difficulties in attracting staff for the relevant functions. The most frequent of these are the planning and recruitment, training and development, and strategic management staff in the HR function. The 2022 results tend to confirm that younger staff for the relevant areas are increasingly difficult to attract to traditional permanent organizations. Other Manpower research confirms that young professionals are gravitating towards organizations with secure employment but with more time and location management freedom to do the job.

The HR area with the most difficulty attracting staff



For the purposes of critical and qualitative analysis, we asked what employees' expectations were of the HR division, and for the most part, employees do not expect employee administration to enter the HR function. For 23% of respondents, expectations for HR practitioners relate to creating a supportive environment and relationship within the organization's culture, along with expressing support and transparency in communication.

Expectations of employees towards the work of the HR department



On the other hand, the commitment of professionals to employee expectations at nearly 56% is either by necessity or non-existent as a performance and function. We observe quite large differences in employee expectations and respective role performance across teams. In larger organizations this is less apparent as with a larger team of people split by role/function, employees see much greater coverage of expectations.

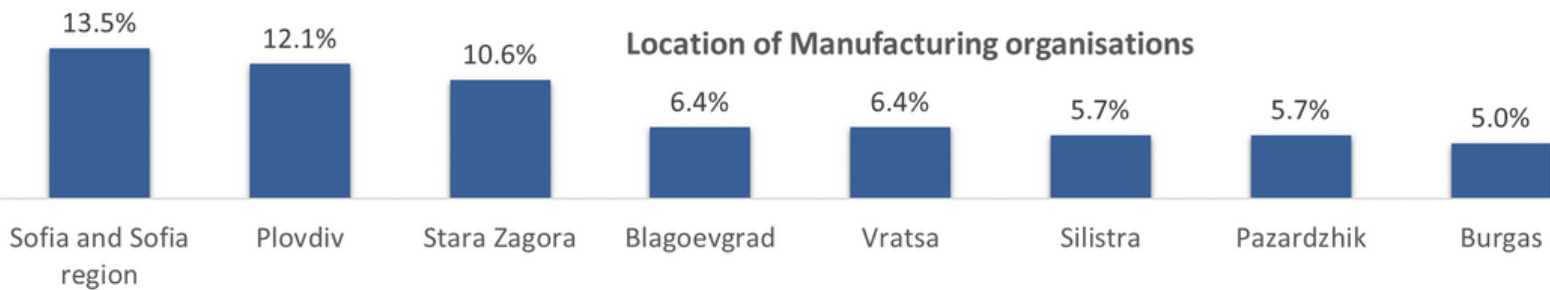
HR commitment to employee expectations



Data analysis on business sectors with the highest survey activity

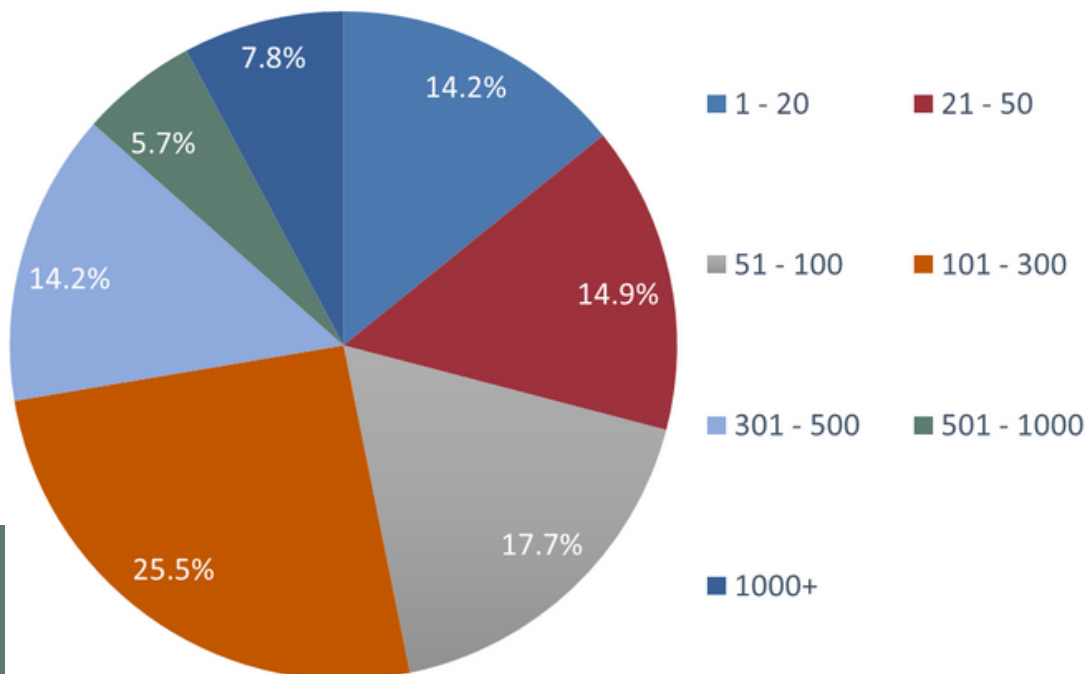
Manufacturing & Production

Respondents profile



The profile of respondents from the "Manufacturing" sector, 141 responses out of a total of 472 respondents, represents a larger percentage of companies from Sofia and the district (25.6%), followed by Plovdiv (12.1%) and Stara Zagora (10.6%), with a quarter of all employers having up to 300 employees (25.5%).

Size of the companies



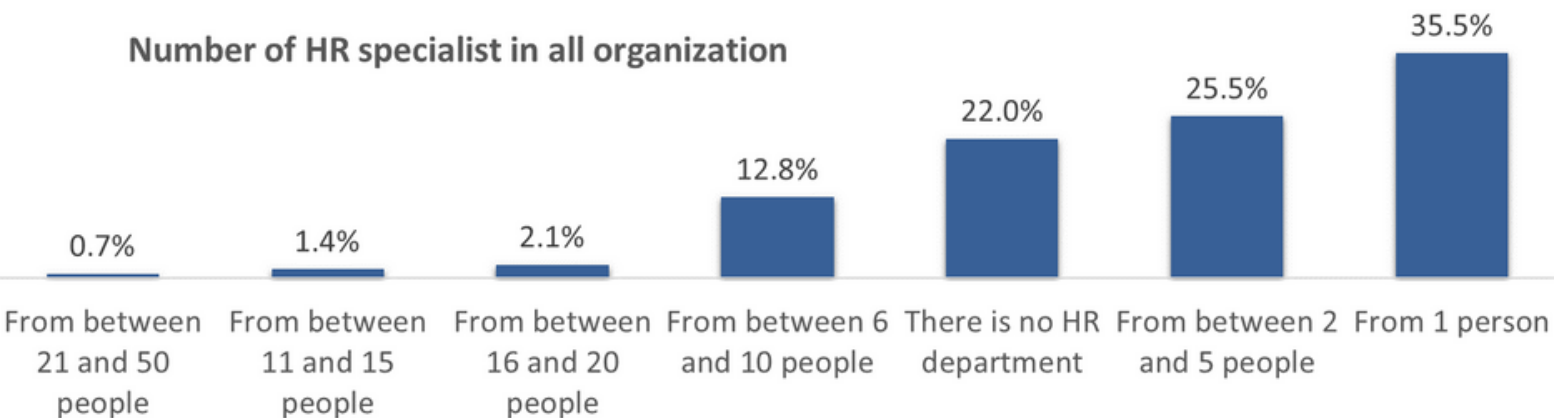
Most of the HR professionals who participated in the current survey have up to 5 years of experience in their organization, followed by 20% of representatives with up to 15 years of experience in an organization. The data should show that, for the most part, professionals in this field stay in their jobs for an average of 5-7 years.

Years of experience in the current organisation



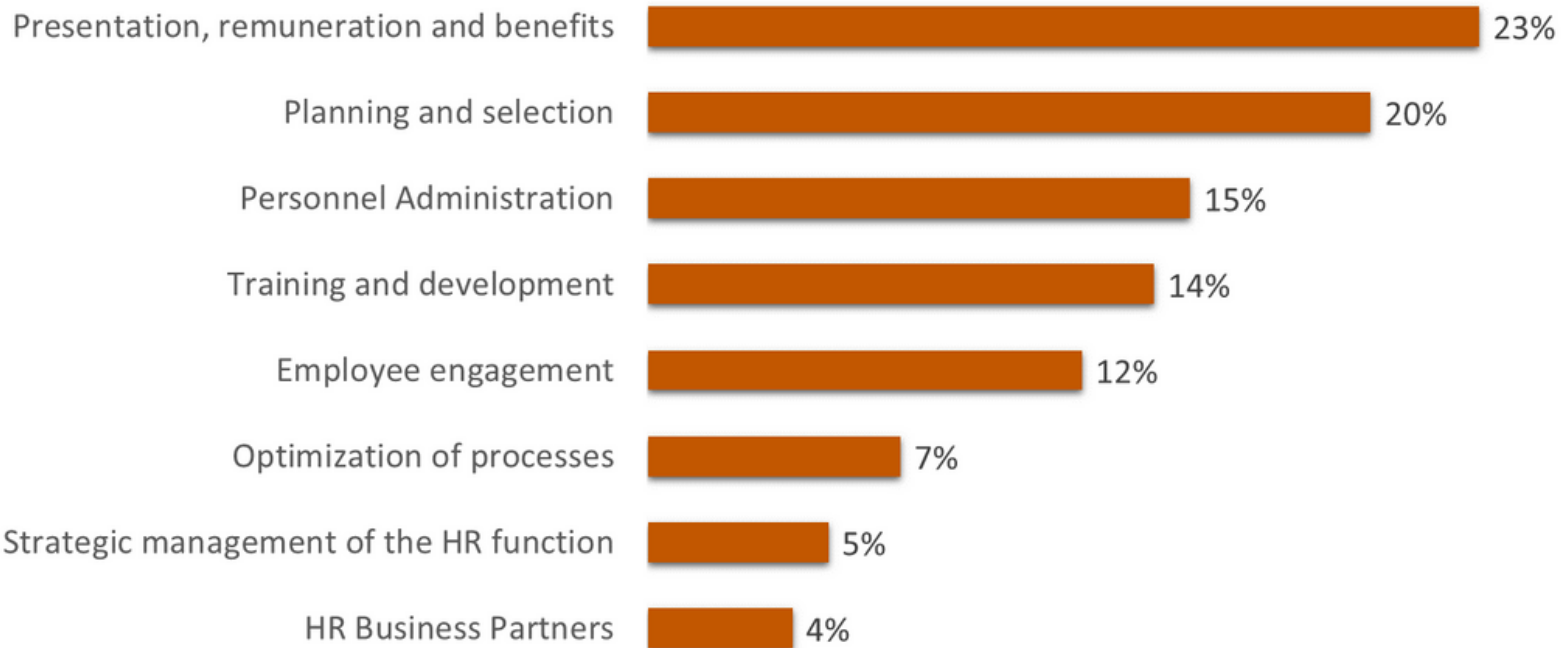
Of all 141 representatives of the manufacturing sector, 22% indicated that they did not have a team in place to perform the HR function. The results show that in this line of business, where there is no one dedicated to the role, it is most often performed by the CEO, the various team leaders, or the Accounting Departments. These are mostly manufacturing companies with up to 30 employees, mostly spread across smaller locations in the country.

Number of HR specialist in all organization



In companies that lack a dedicated department for employee management, the various functions are assigned different levels of importance. Typically, the primary focus is on personnel administration, as well as performance management and organizing compensation and benefits packages.

Employee HR functions in companies without a department



For employers with one or more representatives in the HR department, the planning and recruitment function takes first place, with training and employee development ranking second alongside the performance and tracking of the overall remuneration package for the role.

Responsibilities of the HR in companies with department



Definition of the division's functions in the sector

We asked Manufacturing professionals who hold a defined role in an established department (nearly 72% of 141 respondents) how they define the various functions in detail. Here is what they shared about the concept and actual processes behind the various functions:

"Learning and development" function

■ Identification of needs

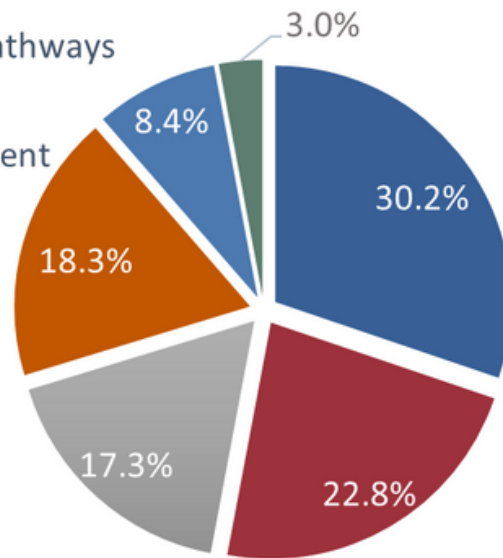
■ Career development, individual plans and pathways

■ Establishing talent and leadership development programs

■ Performance evaluation

■ Creating a learning organization

■ Building e-learning formats



The interesting thing about the people development function is that the first place is occupied by "identifying needs" - these results should be read as identifying both the business need and the one that is related to employees and their professional development in the context of the company.

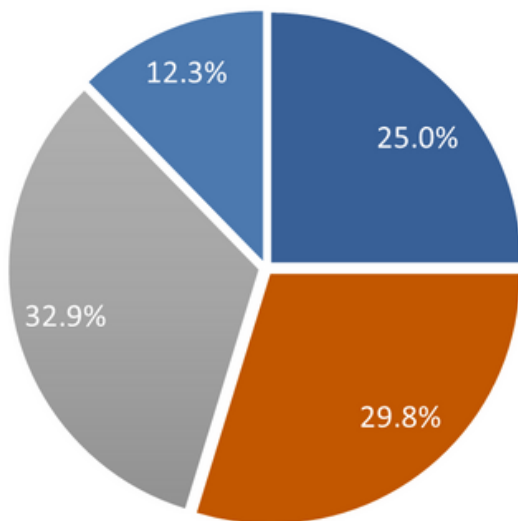
"Planning and pre-selection" function

■ Workforce planning

■ Attracting candidates

■ Selection and pre-selection process

■ Building an employer brand



"Performance, remunerations & benefits" function

■ Performance optimization

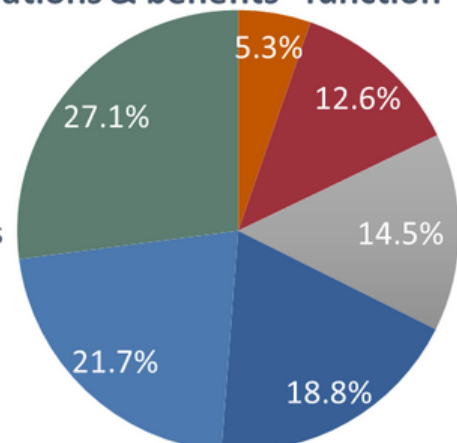
■ Acquisition strategy development/optimization

■ Introduction/optimization of flexible benefits

■ Benchmark with competitors for salaries and benefits

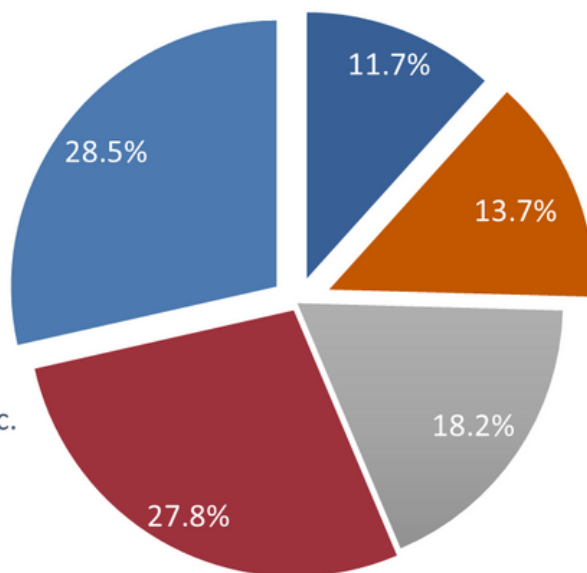
■ Performance evaluation

■ Building/optimizing a reward strategy in the organization



"Staff administration" function

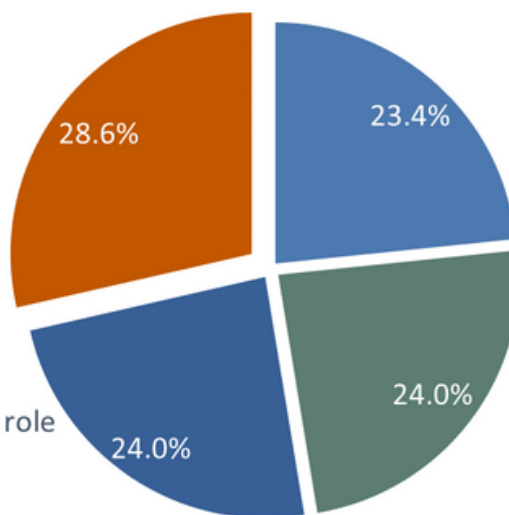
- Healthy and safe working conditions
- Protection of personal data
- Payroll
- Regular administration activities - sick leave, vacations, etc.
- Appointment, maintenance of documentation, release



Near parity in percentage between the four optional responses when defining the **Employee Engagement function**.

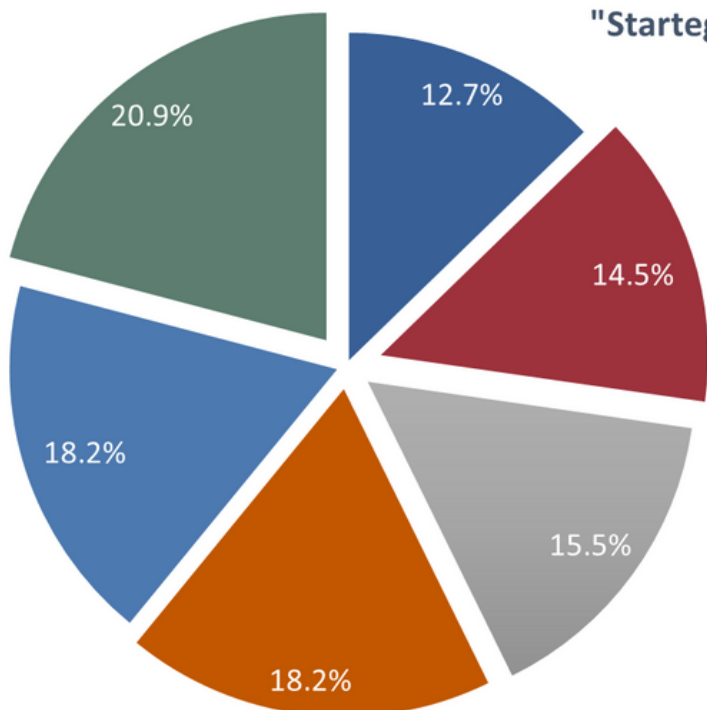
"Employee engagement" function

- Develop/optimize the strategy to increase employee engagement
- Measuring employee satisfaction
- Develop engagement programs
- Working with leaders and managers on their role in the engagement process



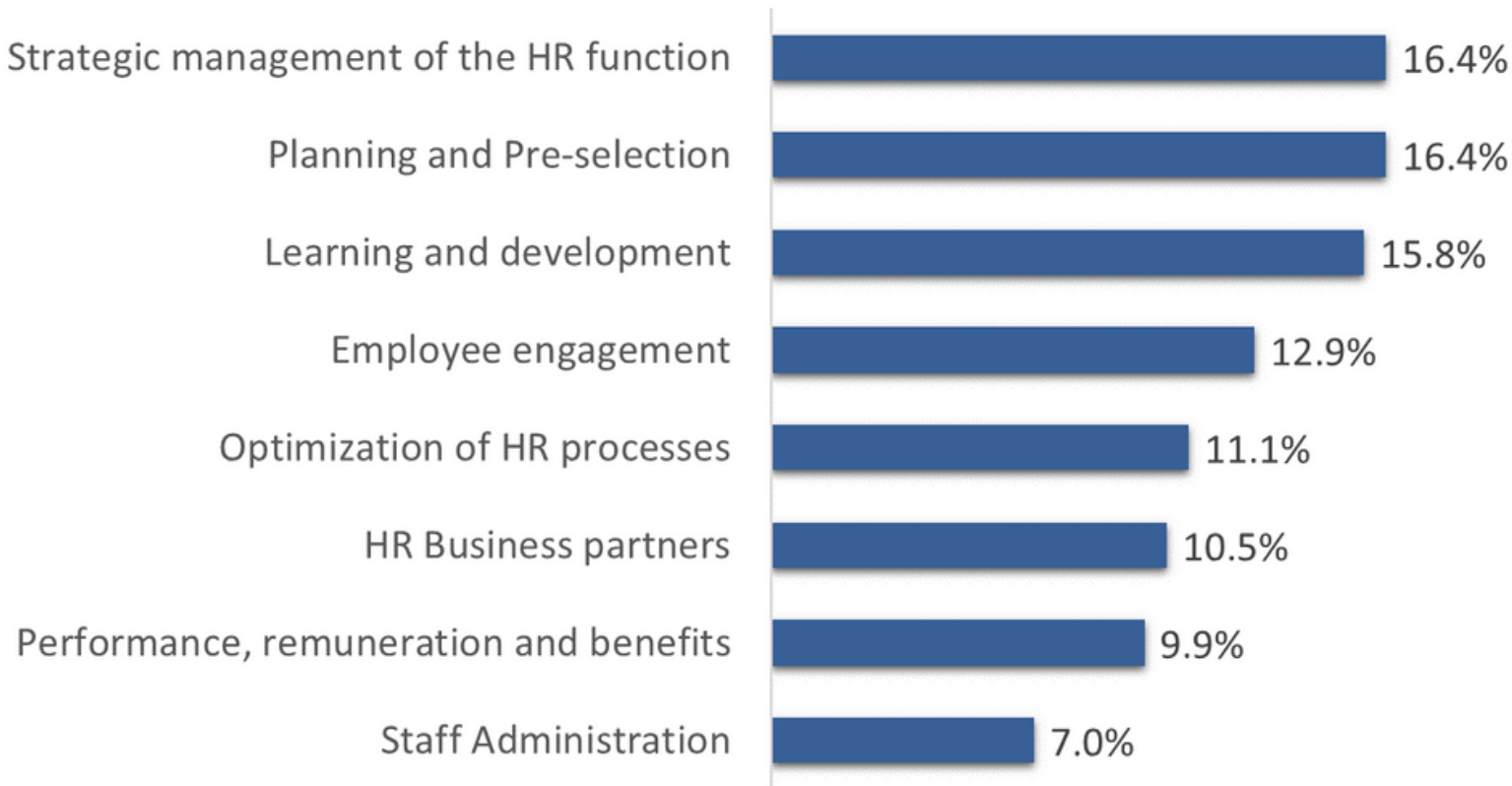
"Strategic management of HR" function

- Monitoring and control in every direction in the HR function
- Budgeting
- Coordination of HR initiatives with company stakeholders outside the HR department
- Adapting the structure and strategy of the HR function to the business goals of the organization
- Optimization of HR processes
- Building/optimizing the organization's HR strategy



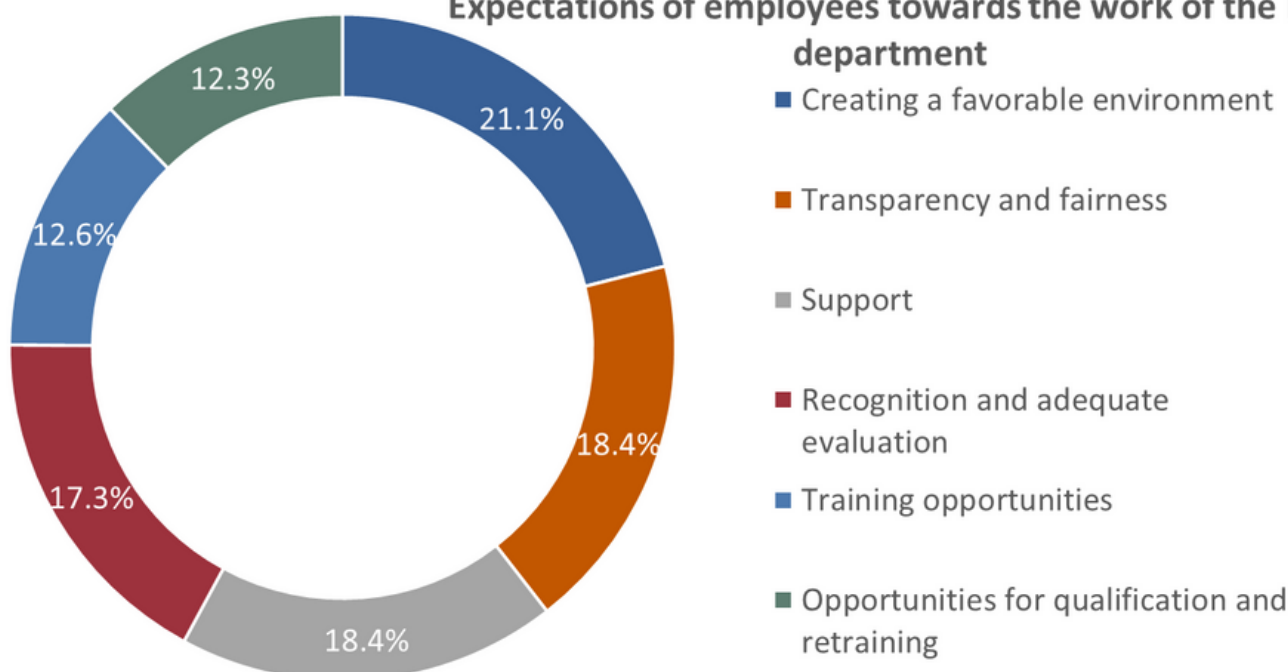
In the "Manufacturing" sector, the lack of specialists for HR functions is also not unknown. In the 2022 survey, the data showed that the most difficult staff to attract was for the planning and recruitment process, and this year should see a change in the trend for attracting staff also in the strategic management of the overall HR function. There are also challenges in attracting specialists for training and team development.

The HR area with the most difficult recruitment



We asked respondents about the different expectations in the context of employee relations with HR departments and as the overall analysis of all 472 responses confirms that also in the context of 141 respondents in the manufacturing sector, employees expect mainly the creation of a favorable environment and transparency in communication.

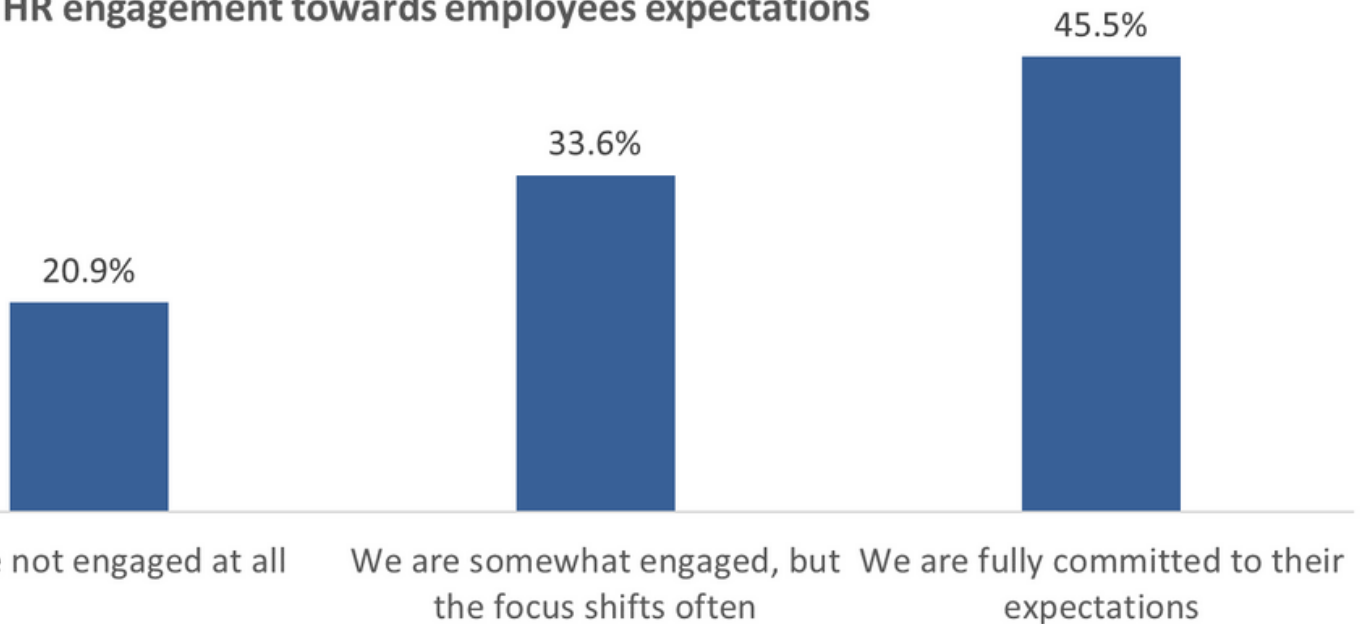
Expectations of employees towards the work of the HR department



On the other hand, we also asked professionals to rate their engagement with employees and, as the overall analysis shows, nearly 55% of all respondents confirmed that they had little or no engagement with employees in their respective companies.

A notable gap exists between the perspectives of employees and HR professionals and their respective roles and responsibilities.

Level of HR engagement towards employees expectations



"White lies" during the application for a new position

As in both 2022 and 2023, we are seeing a trend that resume references are not needed by professionals when a candidate enters an appointment and/or selection process with an organization. Here's what they shared about the white lies that are seen as most commonly used for 2023:

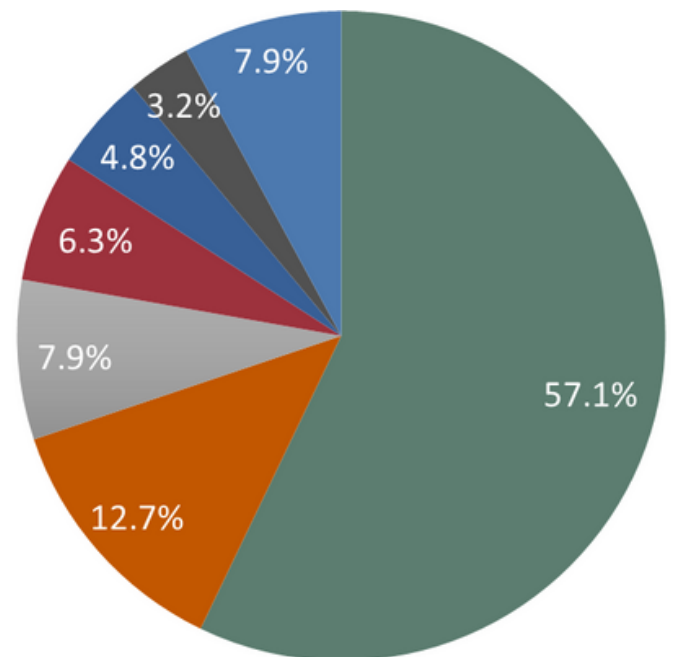
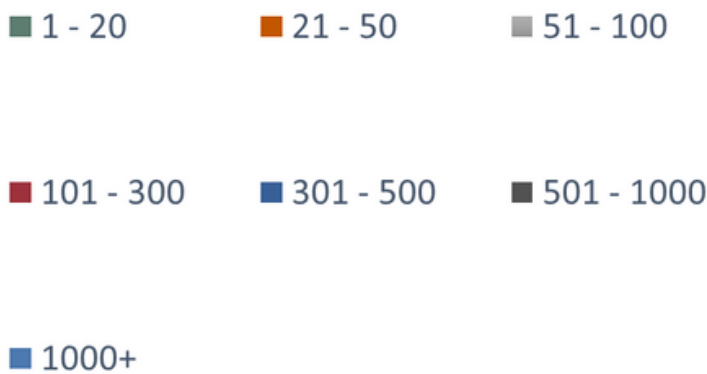
For duties/responsibilities of the previous role	15.6%
For remuneration at a previous company	14.4%
For teamwork skills	13.3%
For personal qualities of all types	12.8%

Wholesale, Retail & FMCG

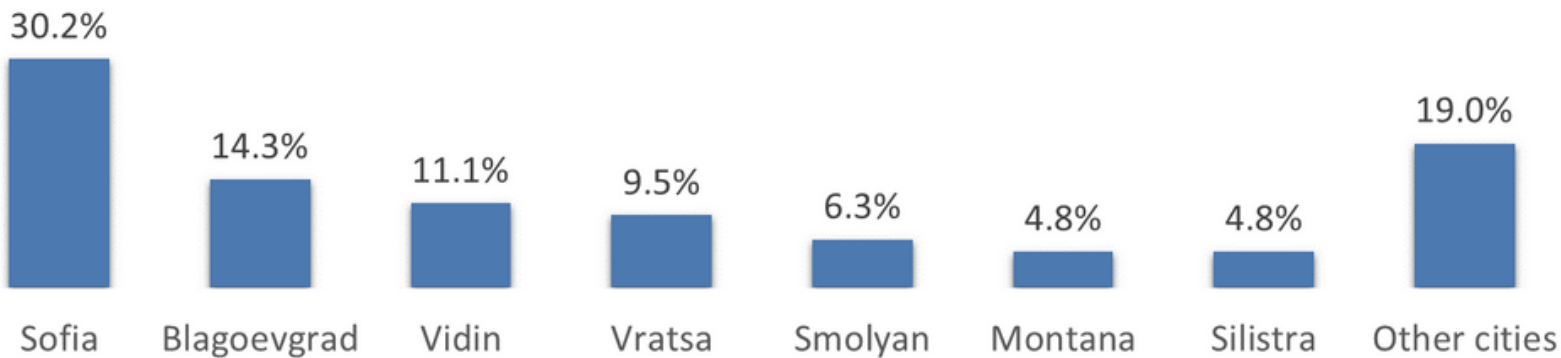
Respondents profile

Wholesale, Retail & FMCG sector represents 63 respondents out of a total sample of 472 respondents. For these 63 employers, the specialists mentioned the size of their organizations and their location, with the majority of their offices in the larger cities of the country.

Size of the companies

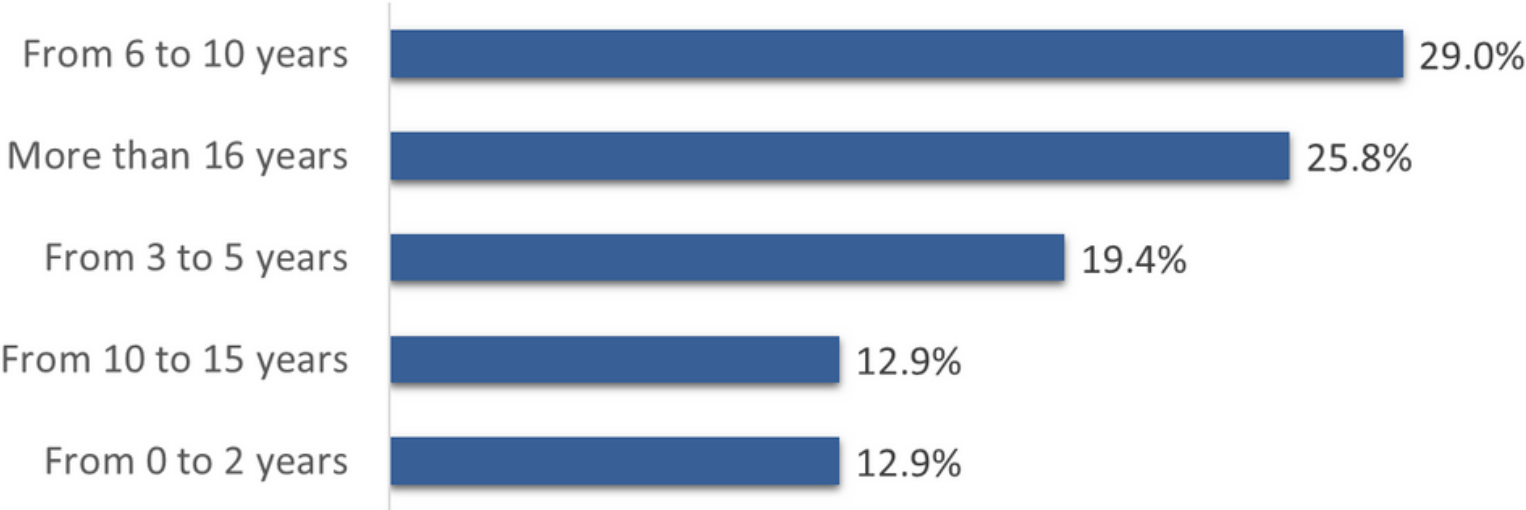


Location of the organisations



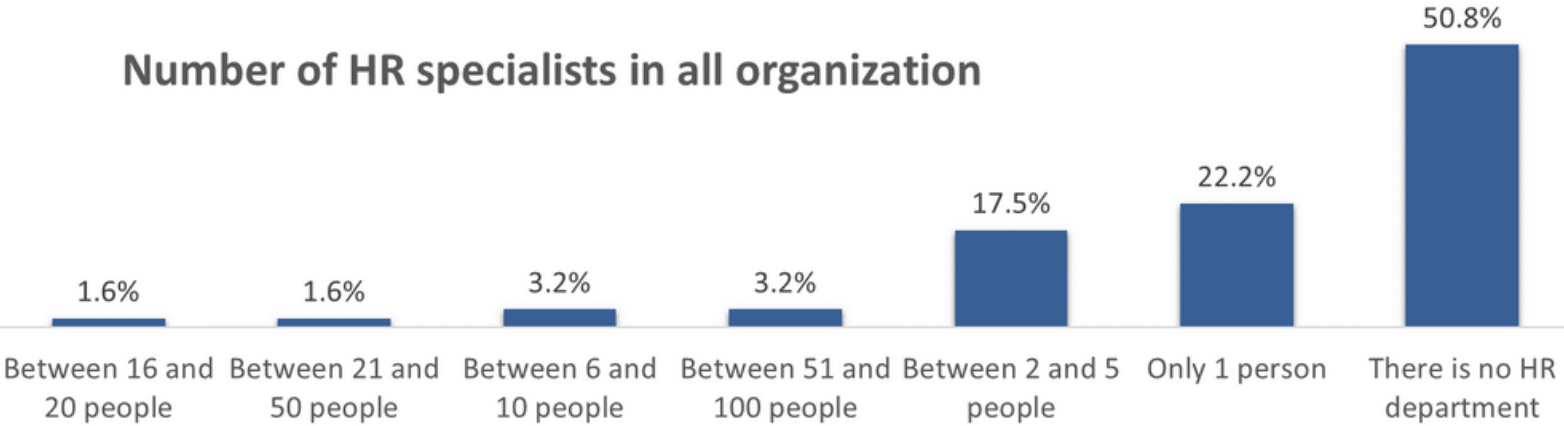
In contrast to the Manufacturing sector, here we observe that nearly 30% of professionals have spent up to 10 years in their current organizations, followed by 25% responding that they have accumulated more than 16 years of experience.

Years of experience in the current organisation



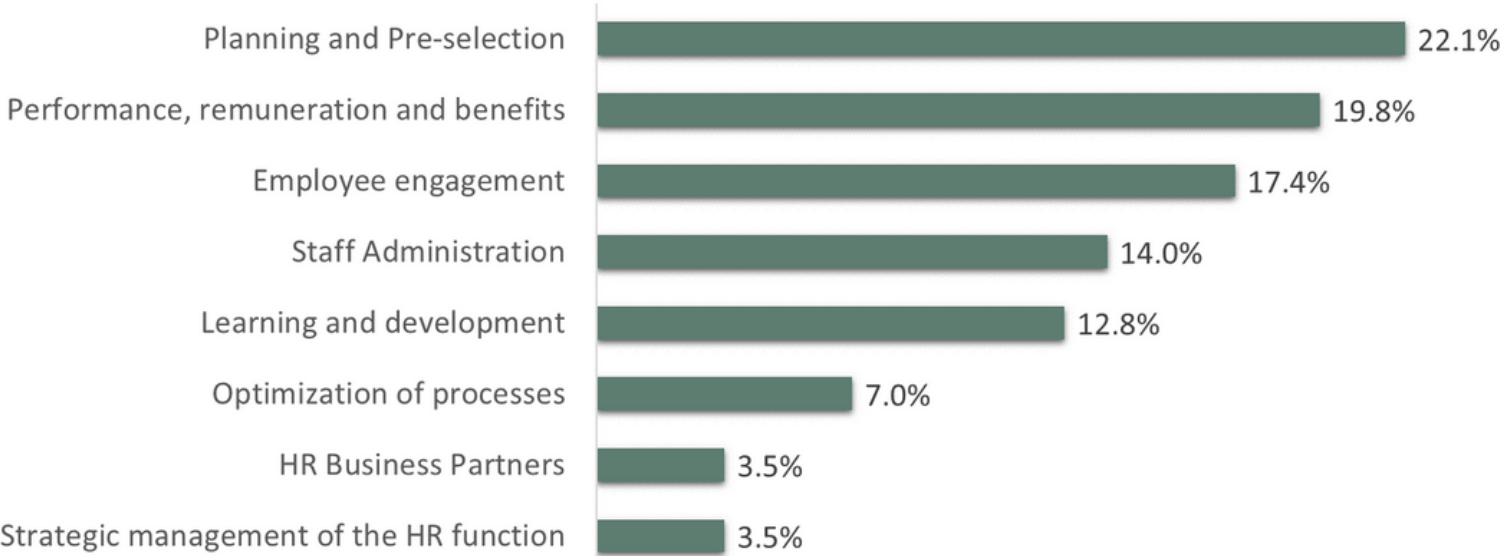
The most interesting trend in these respondents is that in as many as 33 organisations the HR function is exercised by people with other key responsibilities - most often managers or people in the finance department.

Number of HR specialists in all organization



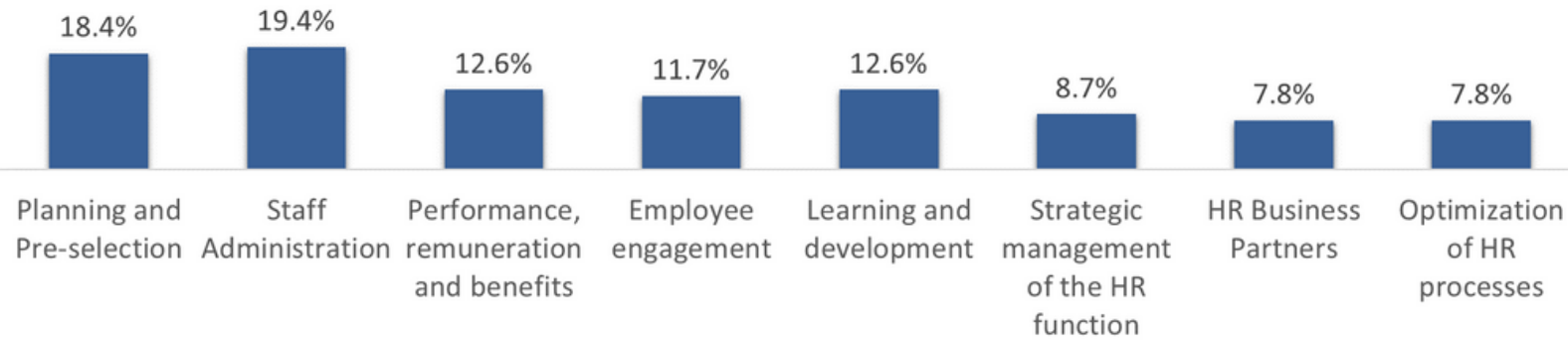
The main focus of people performing HR functions is planning and recruiting new people, in parallel with tracking compensation and benefits.

Employee HR functions in companies without a department



There was no difference in function performance for the remaining 50% of respondents who had one or more HR employees

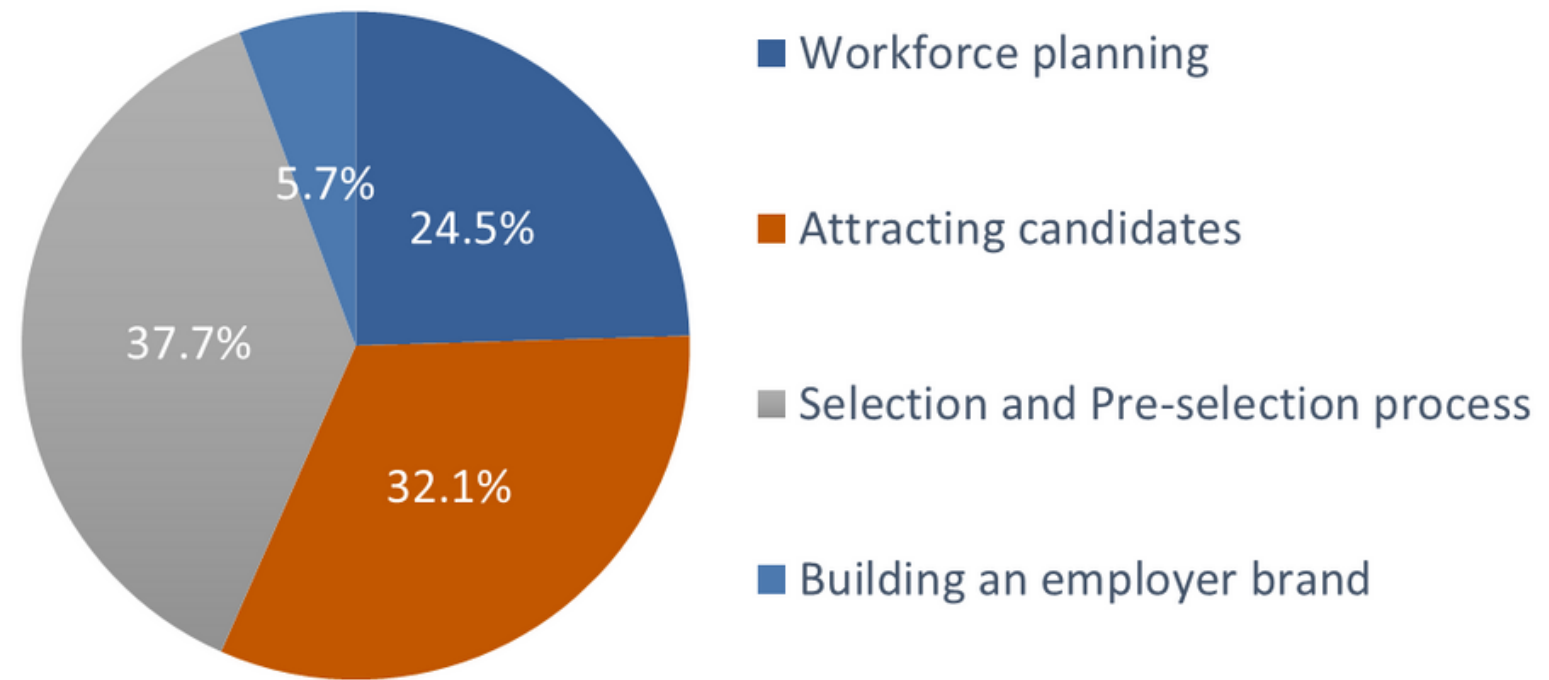
Responsibilities of the HR in companies with department



Definition of the division's functions in the sector

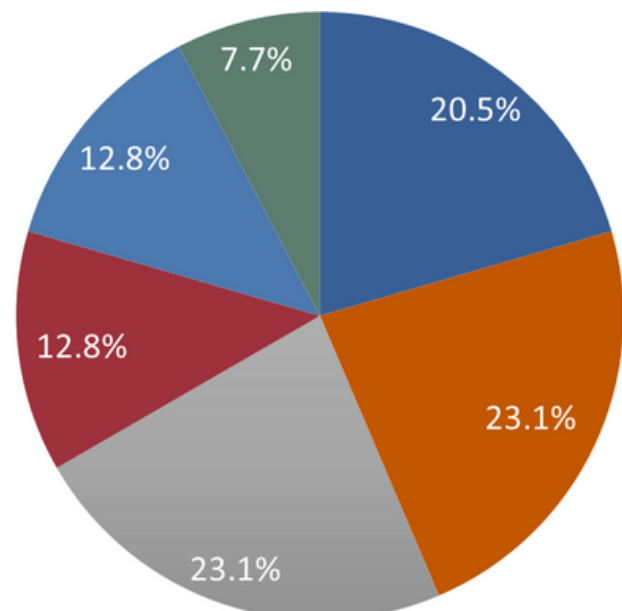
See how different specialists in various HR areas define the unique functions in the results below:

"Planning and Pre-selection" function



"Learning and development" function

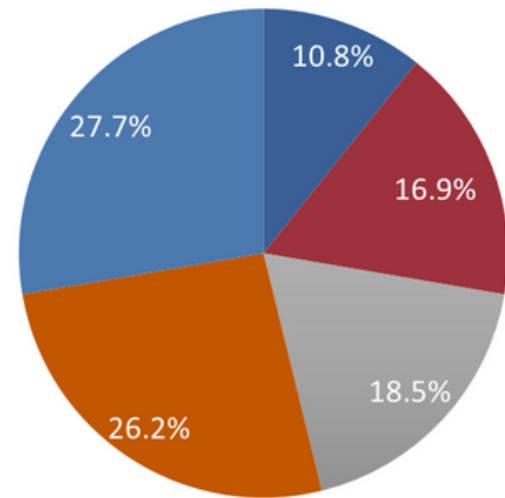
- Identification of needs
- Career development, individual plans and pathways
- Establishing talent and leadership development programs
- Performance evaluation
- Creating a learning organization
- Building e-learning formats



In contrast to the Manufacturing sector, in the Wholesale, Retail & FMCG sector, career development and the creation of talent development programs are most important to the Training and Development function.

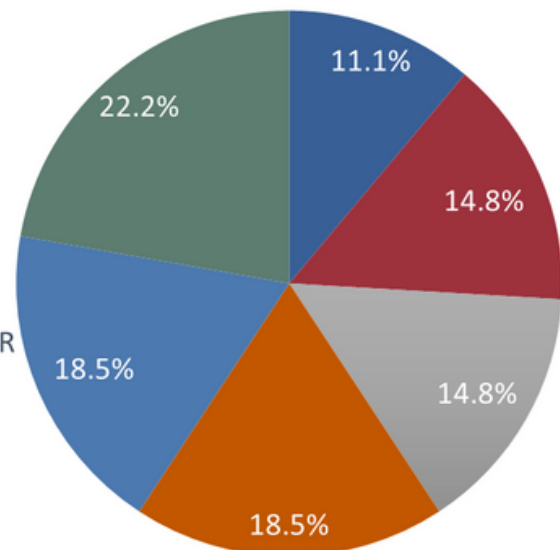
"Staff administration" function

- Protection of personal data
- Health and safety
- Payroll
- Regular administration activities - sick leave, vacations, etc.
- Appointment, maintenance of documentation, lay-offs



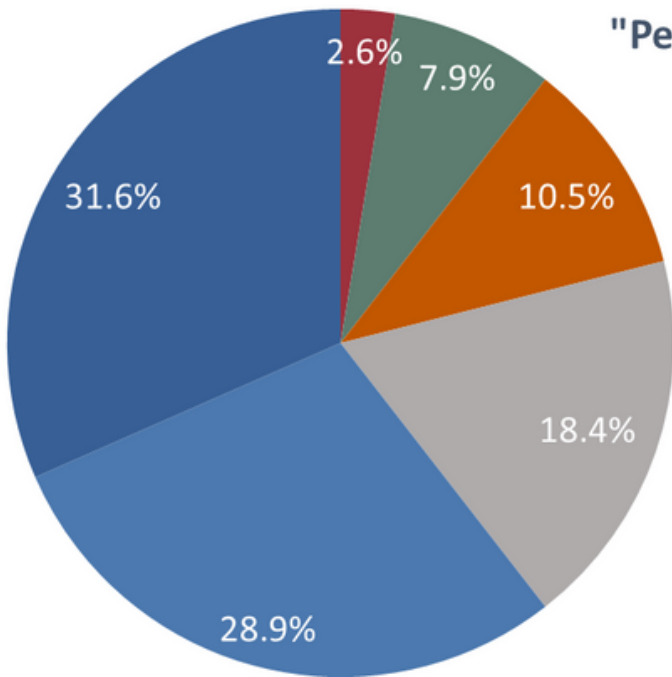
"Strategic management of HR" function

- Optimization of HR processes
- Monitoring and control in every direction in the HR function
- Adapting the structure and strategy of the HR function to the business goals of the organization
- Coordination of HR initiatives with company stakeholders outside the HR department
- Budgeting
- Building/optimizing the organization's HR strategy



The basic definition of the function related to compensation and benefits management is to build an optimized compensation plan that is on the one hand efficient, easy, and accessible to administer, on the other hand, budgetary but competitive for the labor market. It is in fulfillment of the second objective that nearly 30% of respondents said they define and benchmark compensation with industry peers or relevant roles/required talent with this feature.

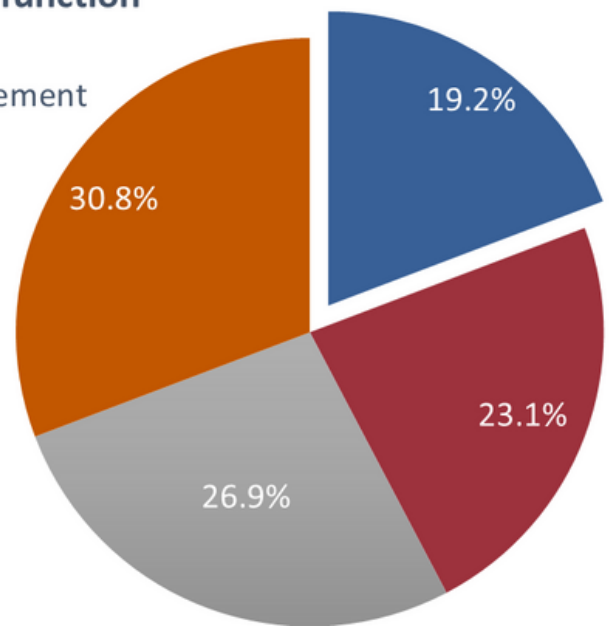
"Performance, remunerations & benefits" function



- Acquisition strategy development/optimization
- Performance evaluation
- Performance optimization
- Introduction/optimization of flexible benefits
- Benchmark with competitors for salaries and benefits
- Building/optimizing a reward strategy in the organization

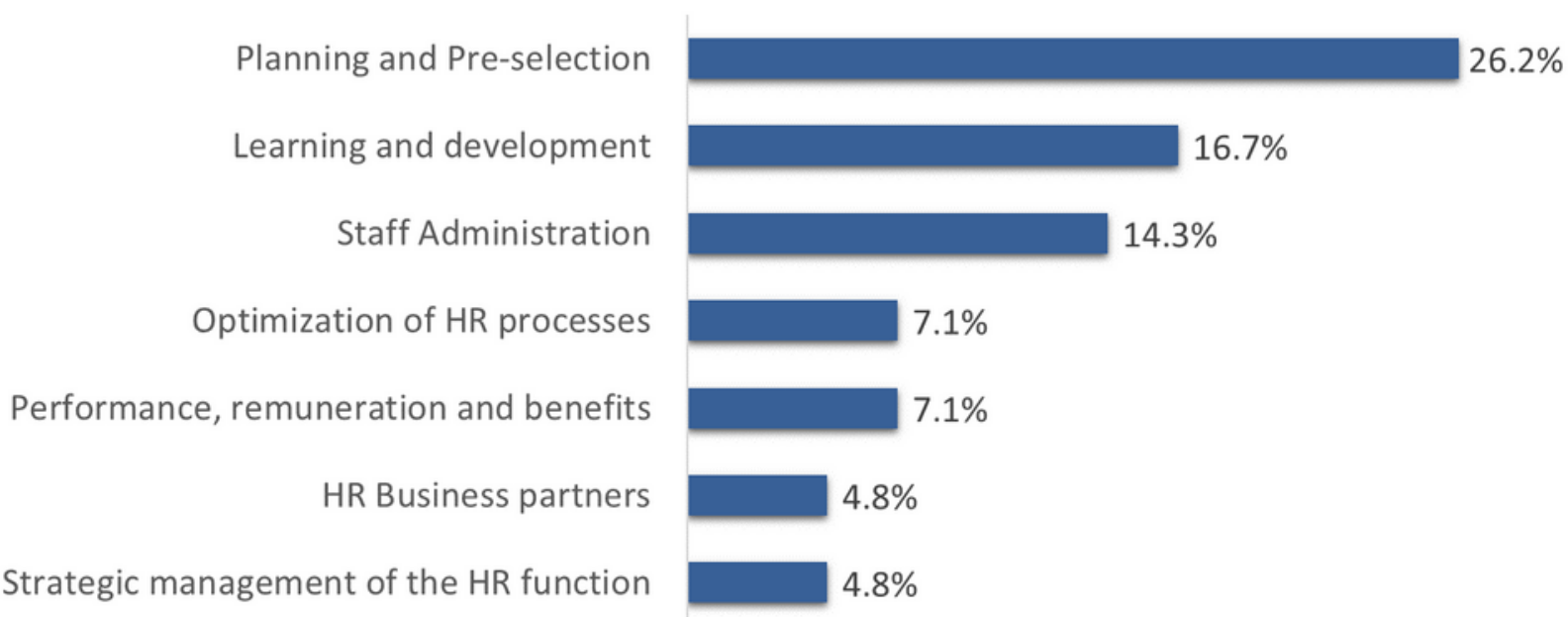
"Employee engagement" function

- Develop/optimize the strategy to increase employee engagement
- Develop engagement programs
- Working with leaders and managers on their role in the engagement process
- Measuring employee satisfaction



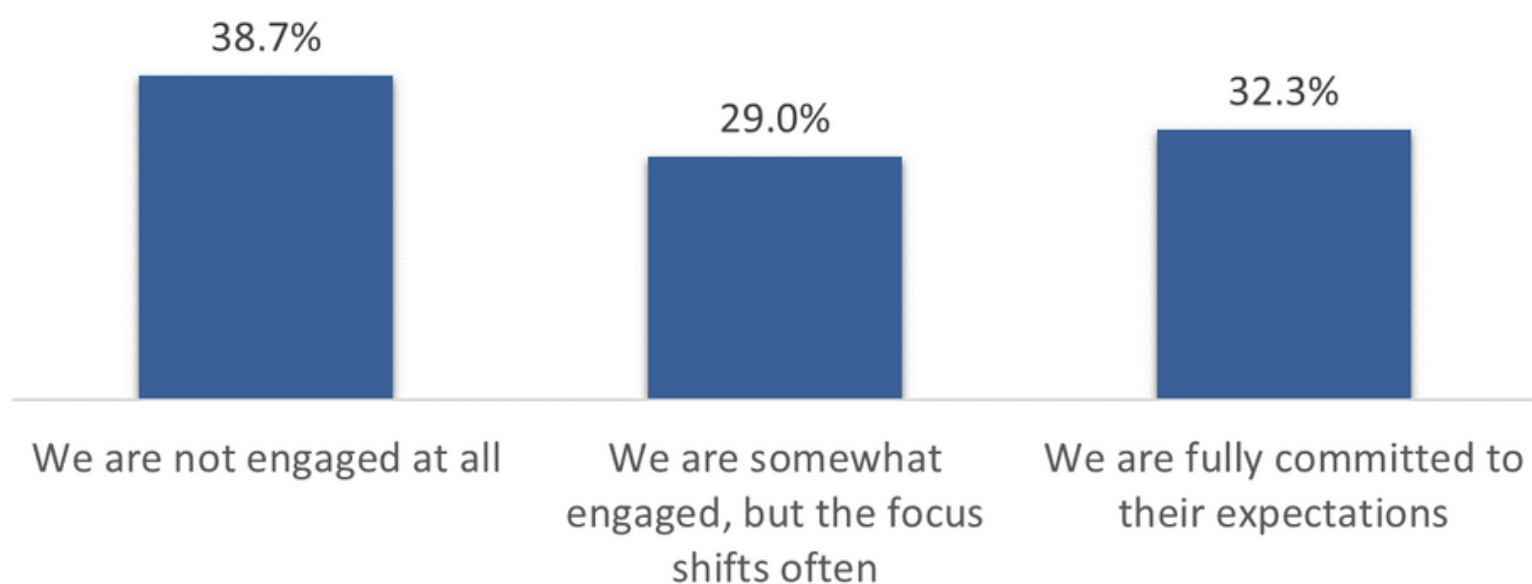
The first item of definition for professionals in the sector is **measuring employee satisfaction**, and this is most often done through targeted surveys and the application of computational metrics to build an improvement strategy. Quite often, however, practitioners report that they fail to put the recommendations into practice, especially when this process is in the context of a large international company and the process is not locally developed.

The HR area with the most difficult recruitment



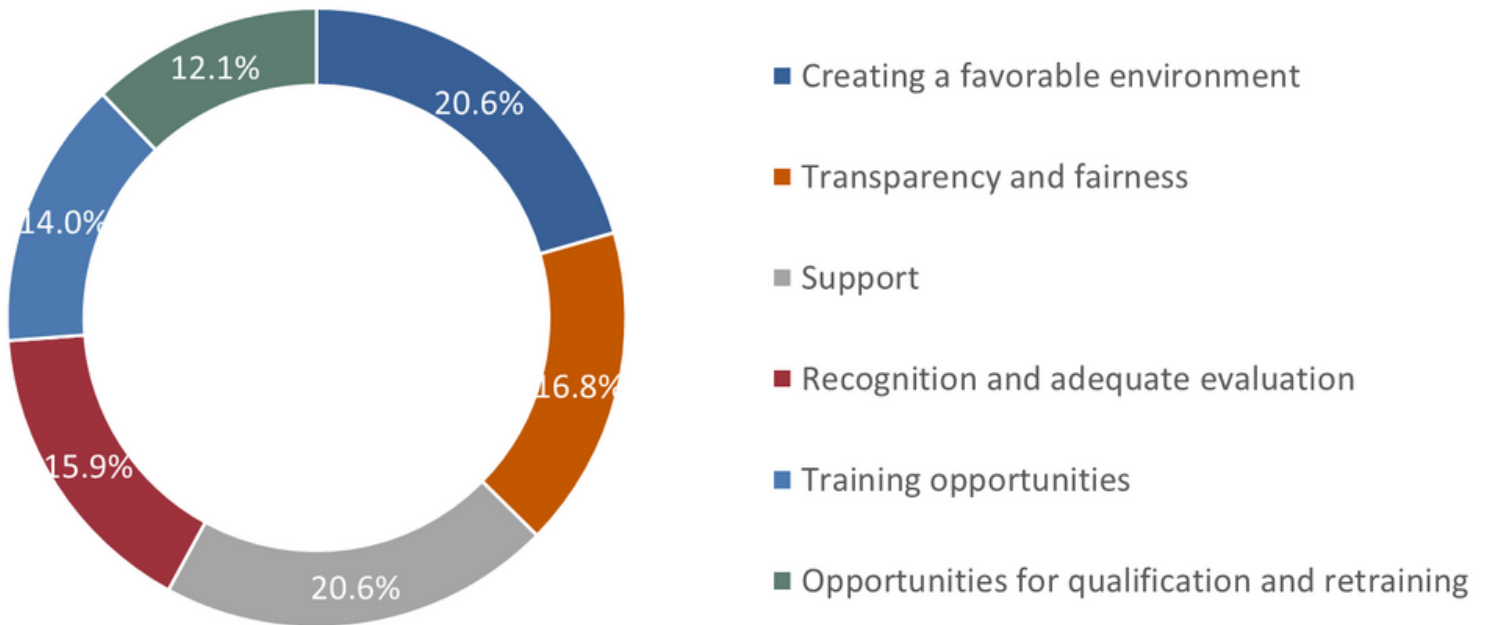
In contrast to the 2022 results, in the current year we observe that learning and development professionals are harder to attract than people involved in personnel administration.

Level of HR engagement towards employees expectations



An interesting trend was observed, touching on the topic of the HR team's commitment to the company's employees. The data is mixed, and the level of engagement depends on the organization. Here it is also appropriate to consider the topic of employees' own expectations of the HR division's responsibilities. In summary, employee expectations are that the HR team is their trusted partner and advocate for their interests in the company. It is interesting to note that the survey results place emphasis on their ability to create a supportive work environment and provide the necessary support. The topic of qualification and retraining is less touched upon, and here the responsibility may be directed toward the direct supervisors and managers.

Expectations of employees towards the work of the HR department



"White lies" during the application for a new position

The topic of 'White Lies' during interviews and applications for positions in commercial sector organizations also follows the trend of candidates exaggerating duties and responsibilities and remuneration. This trend has maintained its results since 2022. As for recommendations and their credibility, professionals in the field are evenly split between not needing one and a positive response to a recommendation. Most practitioners are unanimous in agreeing that if a recommendation is to be considered, then it must pass a credibility check.

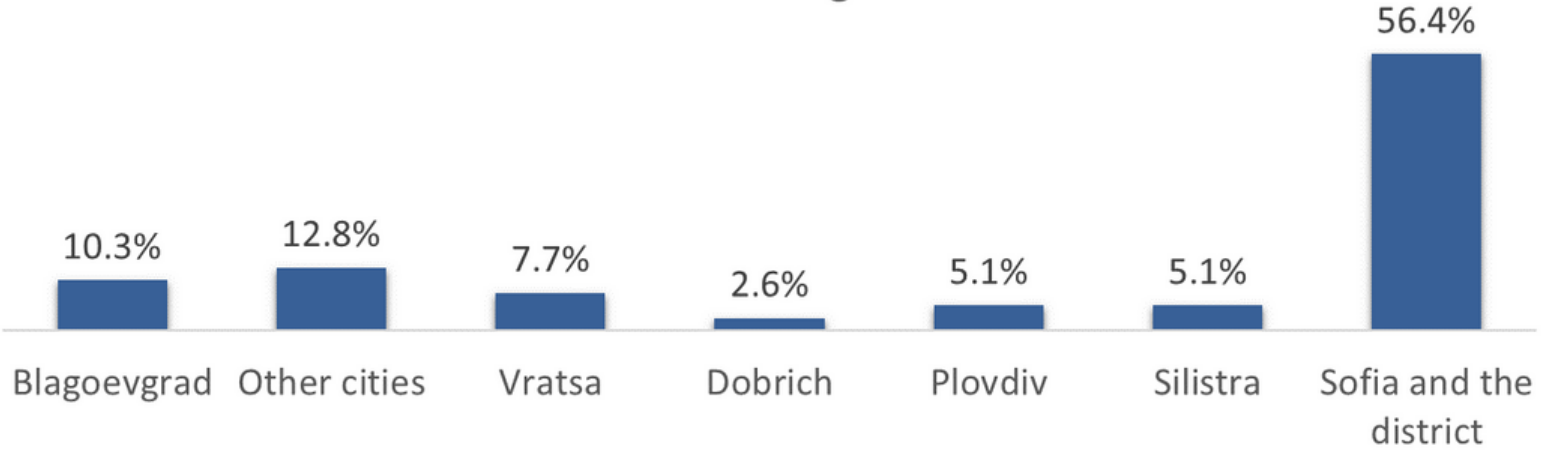
For duties/responsibilities of previous post	15.6%
For remuneration at a previous company	14.4%
For teamwork skills	13.3%
For personal qualities of all types	12.8%

Consulting activities and services



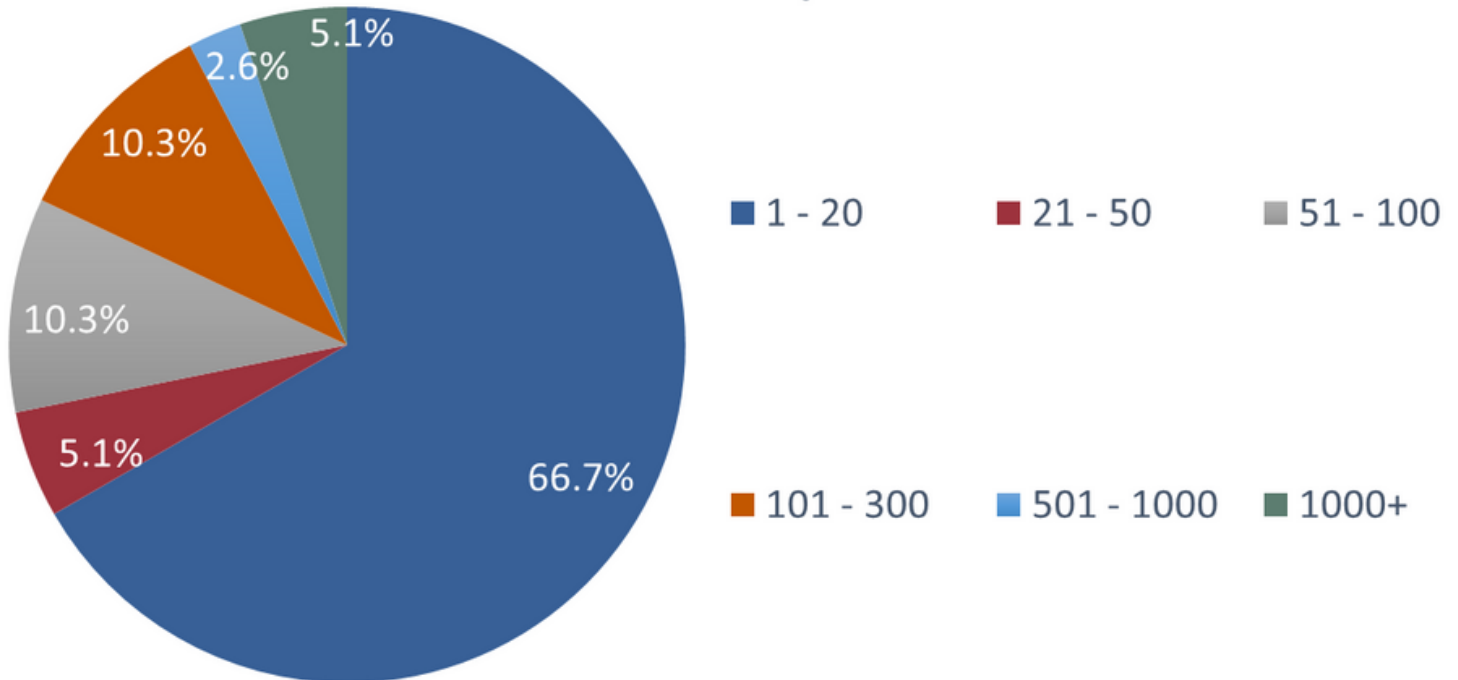
Respondents profile

Location of the organisations



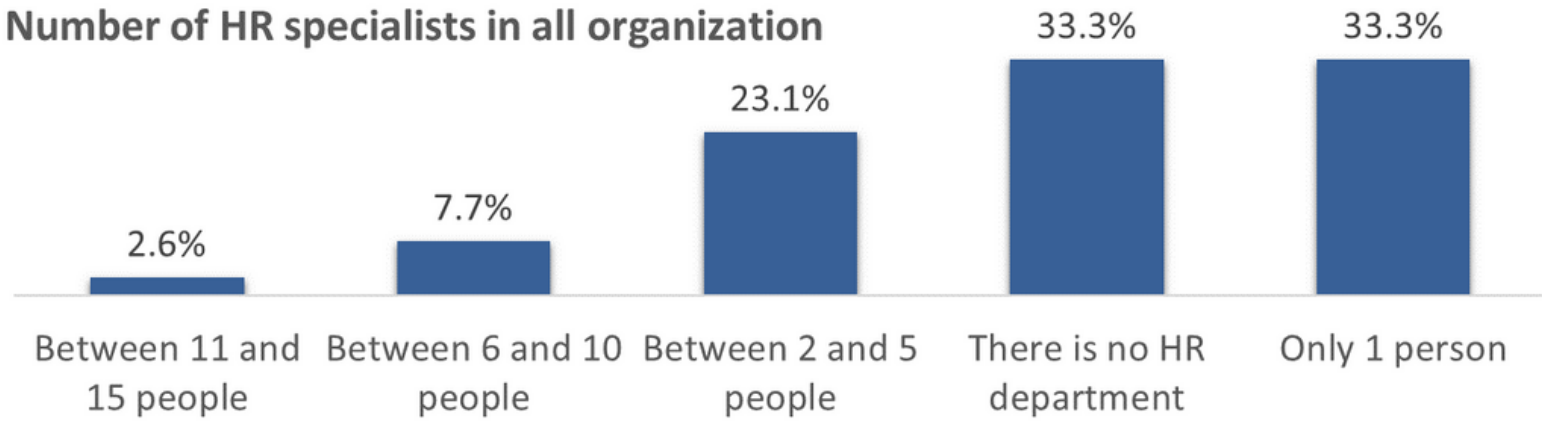
The data for the representatives of the Consulting activities and services sector who took part in the survey show that the businesses are mostly located in the capital city, with the size of the organizations varying between 1 and 20 employees.

Size of the companies



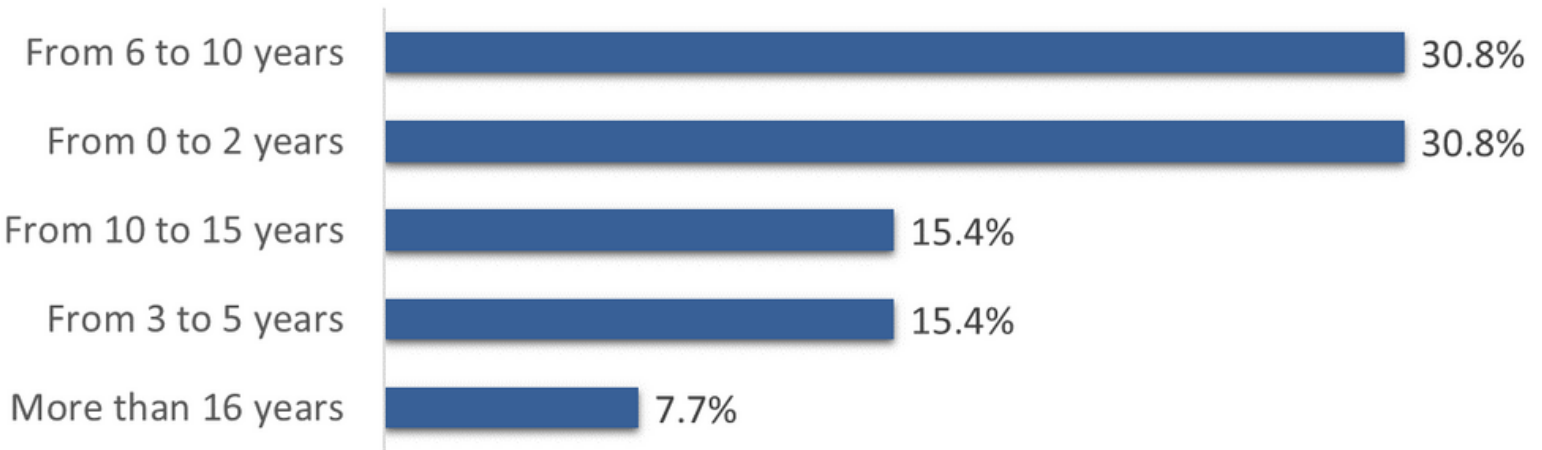
Not surprisingly, the HR teams operating in these companies consist of 1 to a maximum of 5 people or are entirely replaced by employees performing other functions.

Number of HR specialists in all organization

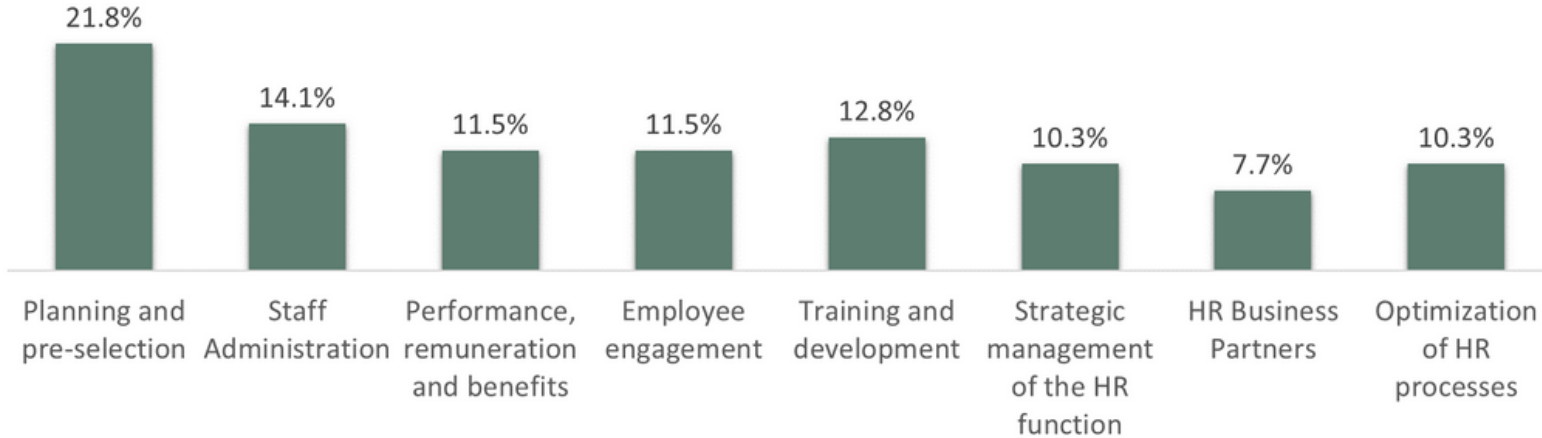


Regarding the years of experience accumulated in the company, the data varies, and in these organizations, positions are held by both employees with 10 years of experience and junior professionals with no more than 2 years of experience. Fewer respondents said they had more than 16 years of experience in their current organization.

Years of experience in the current organisation

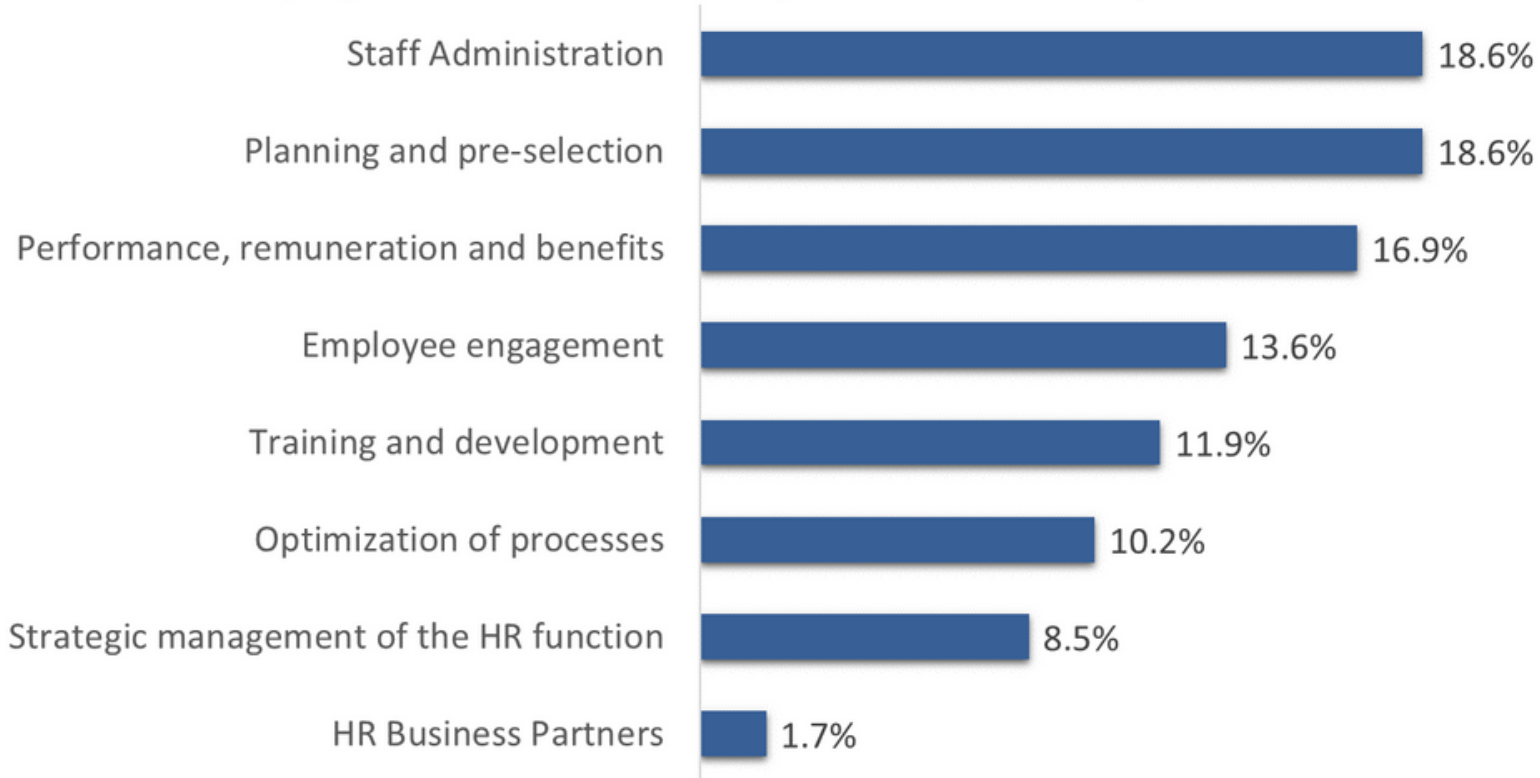


Responsibilities of the HR in companies with department



The main functions performed by Human Resources staff relate to planning and selection, followed by personnel administration. In addition to personnel administration and planning and selection, the responsibilities themselves include the subject of performance, remuneration, and benefits. The least affected are the HR Business Partners function and those professionals committed to process optimization in the context of the entire HR division.

Employee HR functions in companies without a department

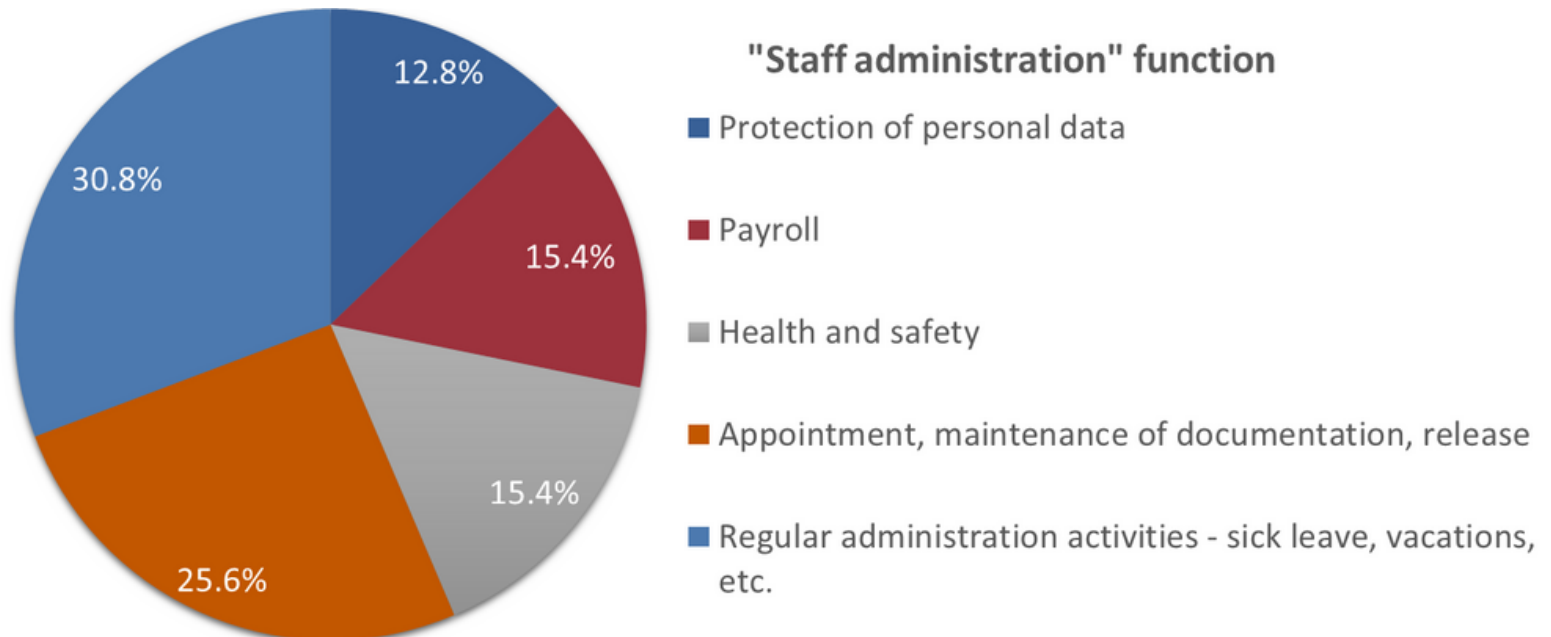
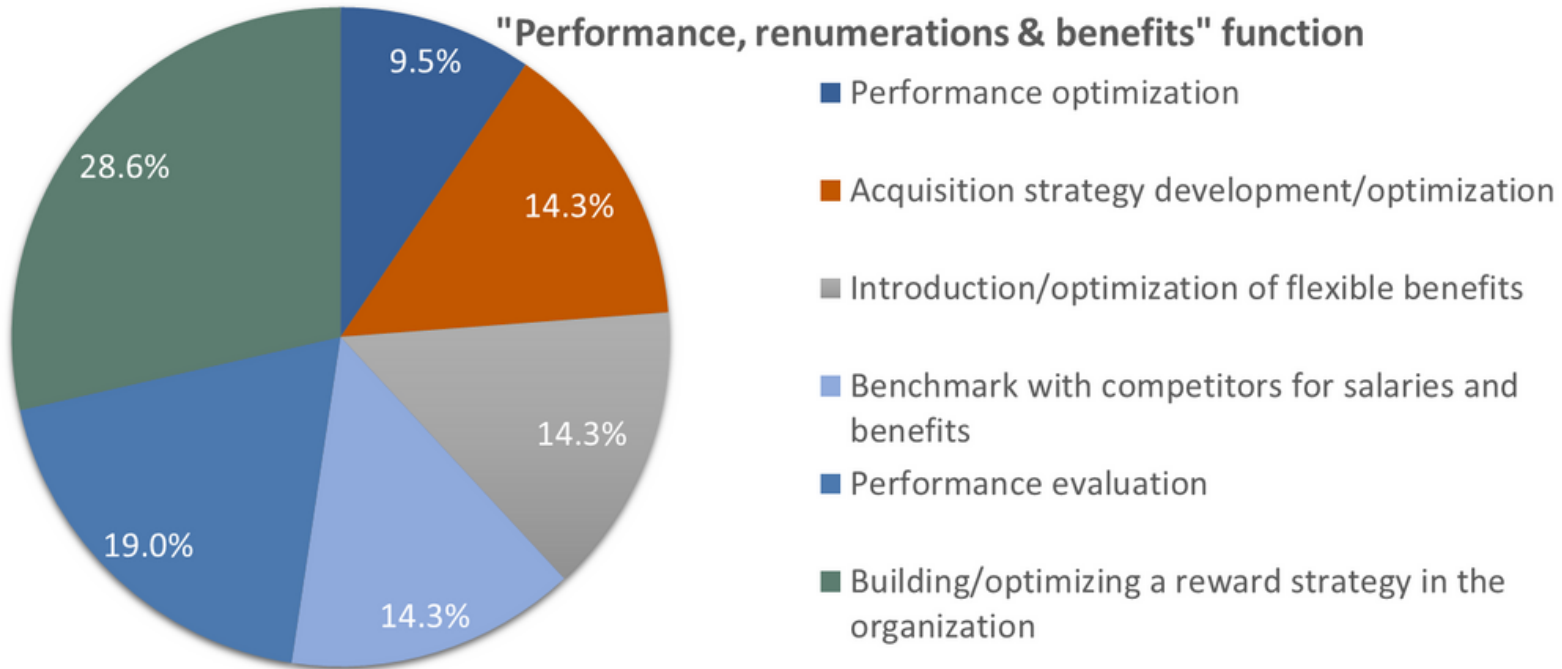


While in retail and manufacturing organizations, in companies without an HR department, the recruitment, performance tracking, and compensation and benefits tracking are the primary focus of the distributed HR function, in the consulting services industry, employees with other roles performing HR functions report that personnel administration is the process that takes primary focus. Mostly in the field, professionals said that accounting departments are concerned with performing the functions of non-existent departments. In large part, these are intermediary organizations.



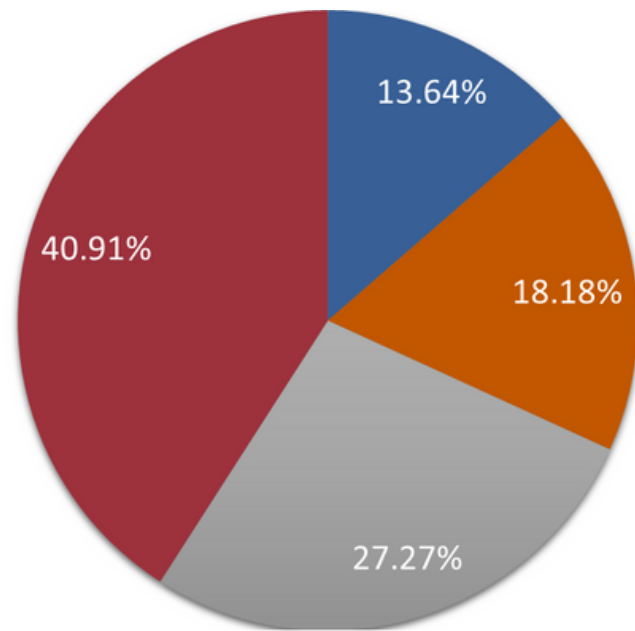
Definition of the division's functions in the sector

In the next few diagrams, HR professionals in the Consulting activities and services businesses share their core processes in the context of the details of the various functions:



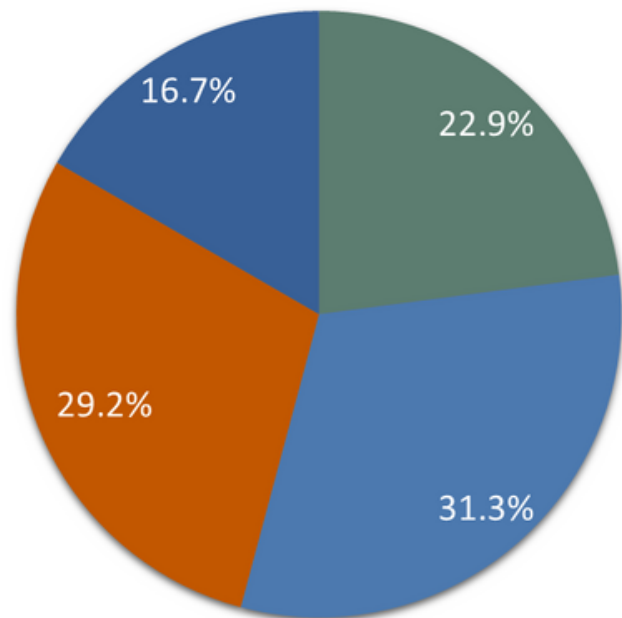
"Employee engagement" function

- Develop engagement programs
- Develop/optimize the strategy to increase employee engagement
- Working with leaders and managers on their role in the engagement process
- Measuring employee satisfaction



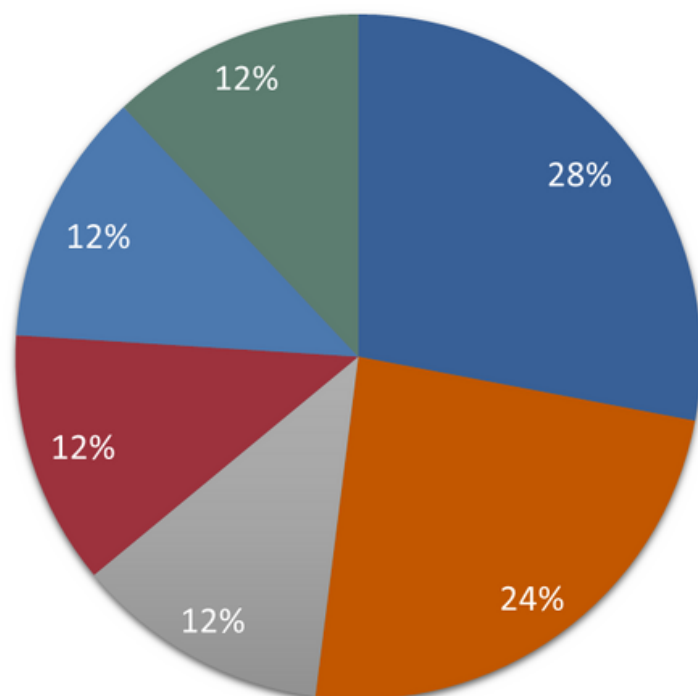
"Planning and Pre-selection" function

- Workforce planning
- Attracting candidates
- Selection and pre-selection process
- Building an employer brand



"Learning and development" function

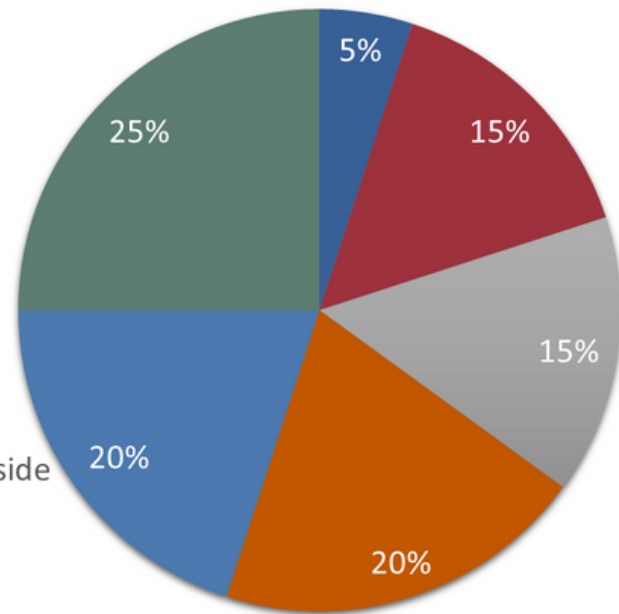
- Identification of needs
- Career development, individual plans and pathways
- Establishing talent and leadership development programs
- Performance evaluation
- Creating a learning organization
- Building e-learning formats



In the sector, performance in terms of identifying needs is directly linked to the second most mentioned response, namely career development and individual plan. Practitioners report that in fulfilling this function, almost equal attention is given to assessing effectiveness, creating development programmes and establishing good practice.

"Strategic management of HR" function

- Monitoring and control in every direction in the HR function
- Adapting the structure and strategy of the HR function to the business goals of the organization
- Budgeting
- Building/optimizing the organization's HR strategy
- Coordination of HR initiatives with company stakeholders outside the HR department
- Optimization of HR processes



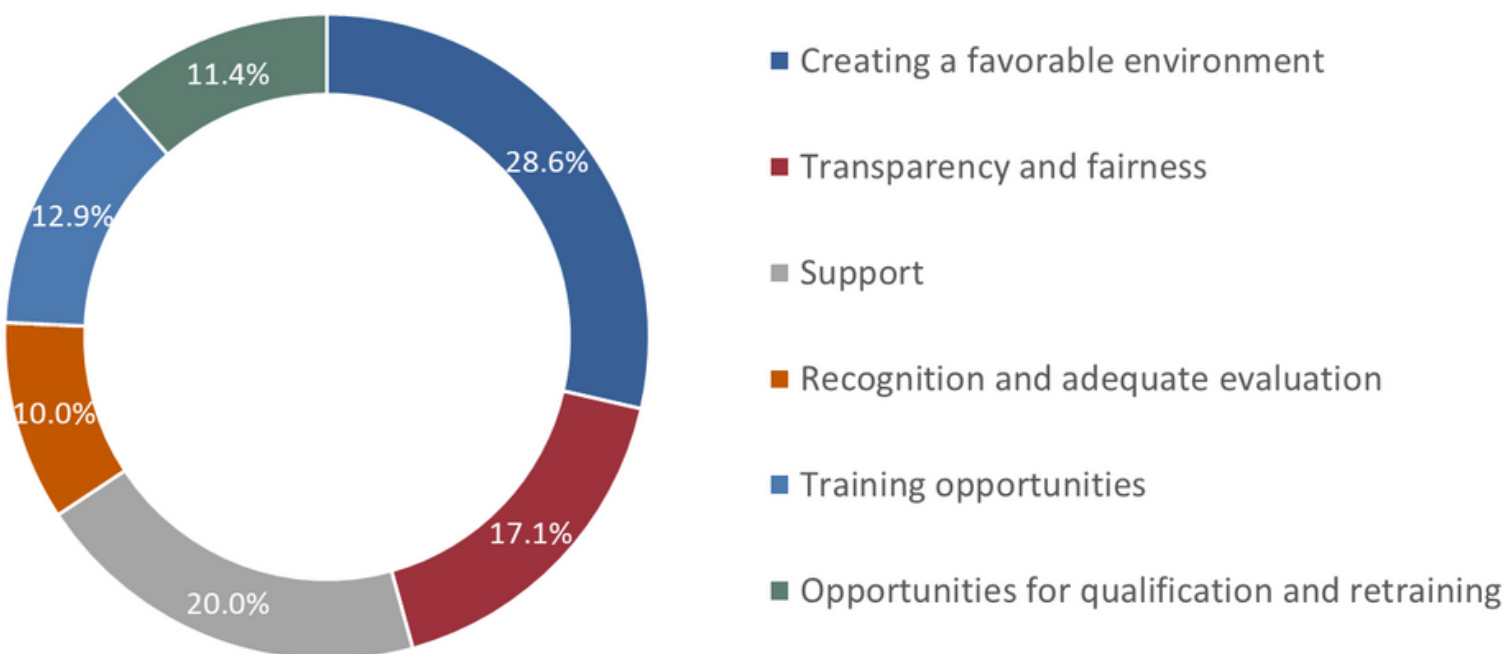
Nearly 50% of professionals in the sector say that planning and recruiting are the most difficult to attract. The next challenge in attracting HR professionals is having functioning HR professionals who are knowledgeable about performance tracking, benefits, and rewards for employees in the organization. Most respondents from the sector said that they are still experiencing difficulties in attracting retention for their HR teams, which is evident from the statistics for the professionals who participated in this study with no more than 2 years of experience.

The HR area with the most difficult recruitment

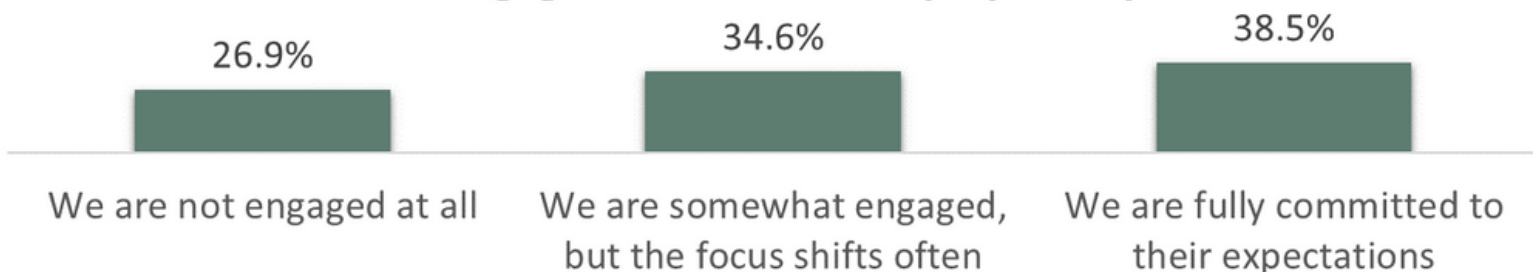


As in the manufacturing and retail sectors, the most important thing for employees in this sector is the creation of a supportive environment and support from HR departments. When questioning the professionals, it was observed that a large majority were adamant about being fully engaged with the expectations of the workforce, but again, the majority were nearly 65% of those whose focus was more on other processes and functions of the roles.

Expectations of employees towards the work of the HR department



Level of HR engagement towards employees expectations



"White lies" during the application for a new position

The "white lies" in the sector are also not unknown to HR as they are dominated by those qualities and functions related to the knowledge of foreign languages and personal qualities of any type. It is typical of the sector for employees in the various roles to possess a good deal of people skills that are not always identifiable from the simulated environment of an interview and/or conversation.

For foreign language proficiency level	14.9%
For personal qualities of all types	13.2%
For duties/responsibilities of previous post	12.4%

Key insights:

- For 2023, as for 2022, experts say that references to applicants' CVs are not key in selecting job candidates.
- The different HR functions with defined roles within the division are individually defined according to business sectors.
- SMEs in Bulgaria do not recognize the need or find a way to segment the HR department to look after the different functions of the role, and often the activities carried out occupy the senior management positions such as Managers, Heads, and Directors.
- There is still a shortage of talent in the HR department in Bulgaria, with the businesses that suffer the most being the ones that are based on soft skills.
- The trend of exaggerating skills and qualities and "white lies" during interviews by job applicants continues this year.

Contacts

Adding Assert International's services to Manpower Bulgaria's portfolio, we launched real-time research on key HR metrics such as salary levels, fringe benefits, employee satisfaction, and engagement in combination with automated market studies on the availability of talents in specific regions and industries.

Assert Business Intelligence - The goal is to provide every business with a successful benchmarking study, both in terms of working conditions and human potential, of the labor market.

Assert Assessment - Offers a wide range of qualitative solutions that provide information on abilities, skills, personality characteristics, motivation, preferences, emotional intelligence, and all other aspects that are needed in a work environment.

Assert People Development - The approach is based on the accurate identification of development needs, applying the most effective methods and techniques based on innovative and tailored development solutions.

For further analysis of results for other business sectors and additional information, you can contact the experts:

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