

What You Need To Know About Interim HR Management

This practical guide will cover:

- When would you use an Interim Manager?
- What is an Interim Manager?
- What are the Advantages of Using an Interim?
- Return on Investment
- Objections to Using an Interim Manager
- Choosing the Right Provider

When Would You Use An Interim Manager?

Imagine facing these situations:

- your HR Manager has left just before a major reorganisation
- you want to restructure part of your business and no-one currently in post has the experience you need to deal with the HR issues involved
- you want to change the mindset of your management, supervision and their teams and you do not know how to go about it

These are all situations where taking on an Interim Manager could be the answer to your problems.

An Interim Manager (IM) can plug a temporary gap in your HR team or offer specialist knowledge and experience, which doesn't currently exist within your organisation.

He or she can take on a specific project for a set period, help to introduce or manage change within the business and supplement the skills of your existing managers.

A large number of businesses have rationalised their management teams in recent years and may not have the expertise to handle every situation, which arises.

Additionally, UK and EU HR legislation is undergoing massive changes, becoming increasingly complex and with greater penalties for transgressions. Many organisations lack Managers with the necessary knowledge to lead them through these changes or to manage projects in a way, which minimises their exposure to risk.

What Is An Interim Manager?

An IM is someone from outside your organisation who you bring in for a defined period to carry out a prescribed role. In other words, a temporary appointment.

An IM is someone with years of experience of HR management at high levels and a proven track record.

Choosing to use an IM gives you access to a senior Manager or Executive, available at short notice and for whatever period you need.

An IM differs from a consultant in that the IM's role is not just to offer advice or to help with strategy, but to implement projects in a practical sense.

The IM will usually have internal responsibilities in the organisation and will report directly to management. He or she will be integrated into the management team and will be expected to produce results in the same way that an internal Manager would be.

A typical assignment will last from 3 – 6 months, but some may be substantially longer or shorter than this.

What Are The Advantages Of Using An Interim?

- Availability – an IM can usually start very quickly, saving time in comparison to a permanent appointment.
- Selection – you can choose someone with precisely the knowledge and expertise you need for your specific situation.
- Experience – most IMs are actually overqualified for the roles they are assigned, meaning they need no training and can deliver from the first day. They can also pass on this expertise to existing management, coaching and mentoring others.
- Flexibility – you use the IM only for the necessary period.
- Performance – IMs are judged by their record in delivering results and are committed to achieving success for the organisations they work for. IMs are also used to “hitting the ground running” with little time needed to learn the ropes.
- Objectivity – an IM brings a detached view, free from office politics or vested interest.
- Stability - using an IM leaves other managers free to concentrate on their own roles, they are not distracted or asked to cover areas in which they are not qualified.

Return On Investment

One of the main reasons for using an IM is the return on investment as compared to a permanent appointment.

What is involved in taking on a permanent HR Manager?

Weeks, if not months, advertising for and interviewing candidates. Time diverted away from your main objectives. All the costs involved.

Then, the risk that the person you have appointed may not be the right one. The time for them to settle in and get up to speed.

Chartered Management Institute Surveys suggest that Senior Managers contribute at least 3 times their annual salary. With many Managers earning at least £60,000, this means that spending just a month finding a

suitable candidate for a post would cost an organisation £15,000 in lost productivity. Then there's the settling in period when they are not working at full capacity.

This does not include the other costs, or the time lost by others involved in the selection process.

Then, when you do employ someone, as well as their salary you have benefits, pensions, NIC payments, holiday pay, sick leave, termination payments...

Compared to all this, the daily rate of an IM is an excellent investment. After all, you are not responsible for any other employment costs and you only pay an IM for the actual days he or she works. When the assignment ends, your responsibility is over and there are no termination payments or complications to consider.

Objections to Using an Interim Manager

Despite the numerous advantages of using IMs, some organisations may still have objections:

- The cost – having to justify taking on an external Manager and adding to the costs of a project.
As explained above, there is a clear ROI when using IMs as compared to a permanent appointment.
- It seems like a criticism of the existing management team.

It is unlikely that any management team can deal with all situations, which could conceivably arise. An IM can be a stopgap until a permanent Manager is appointed or can undertake a specific project. Either way, the IM should be seen as supplementing the skills of the existing team and allowing them to concentrate on their current roles. A good IM will also pass on some of their expertise to the team and so add further value to the organisation.

- There may be hostility amongst the current management.

This is linked to the previous point. Open communication is needed to prepare the ground for the arrival of an IM so that their role is clear and they are not seen as a threat to the other Managers. The scope and purpose of the engagement must be explained so that everyone sees the rationale behind it. It should be seen as preventing other Managers from being taken away from their existing roles and, perhaps, being placed in stressful situations where they are asked to perform tasks outside their sphere of expertise.

Choosing the Right Provider

To guarantee the success of any Interim Appointment, you need to use a trusted and experienced provider. Mike Barnett Human Resources is a provider of calibre interim human resources directors, managers, consultants and human resources specialists to organisations. We recruit and provide such human resources specialists for HR projects, change management programmes and emergency cover and any other interim need.

For interim and project work with the usual emphasis on pace we would normally undertake to provide a short list within 3 working days. Database and focused quick response web advertising is our approach.

Visit the website at www.hrweb.co.uk for more details about the services we can provide or call us to discuss your requirements.