Every organization wants to attract, motivate, and retain the most qualified employees and match them to jobs for which they are best suited. **Human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists** provide this connection. In the past, these workers performed the administrative function of an organization, such as handling employee benefits questions or recruiting, interviewing, and hiring new staff in accordance with policies established by top management. Today's human resources workers manage these tasks, but, increasingly, they consult with top executives regarding strategic planning. They have moved from behind-the-scenes staff work to leading the company in suggesting and changing policies.

In an effort to enhance morale and productivity, limit job turnover, and help organizations increase performance and improve results, these workers also help their companies effectively use employee skills, provide training and development opportunities to improve those skills, and increase employees' satisfaction with their jobs and working conditions. Although some jobs in the human resources field require only limited contact with people outside the human resources office, dealing with people is an important part of the job.

There are many types of human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists:

**Some examples of jobs are:**

- Human resources generalists, consultants, and managers
- Coordinators and development specialists
- Employment, recruitment, and placement specialists
- Compensation, benefits, and job analysis specialists
- Occupational analysts
- Employee benefits managers and specialists
- Employee assistance plan managers
- Training and development managers and specialists
- Employee relations
- Labor relations managers
- Mediators, Arbitrators
- EEO officers, representatives, or affirmative action coordinators

Although a bachelor's degree is a typical path of entry into these occupations, many colleges and universities do not offer degree programs in personnel administration, human resources, or labor relations until the graduate degree level. However, many offer individual courses in these subjects at the undergraduate level in addition to concentrations in human resources administration or human resources management, training and development, organizational development, and compensation and benefits. Because an interdisciplinary background is appropriate in this field, a combination of courses in the social sciences, business administration, and behavioral sciences is useful. Some jobs may require more technical or specialized backgrounds in engineering, science, finance, or law. Most prospective human resources specialists should take courses in principles of management, organizational structure, and industrial psychology; however, courses in accounting or finance
are becoming increasingly important. Courses in labor law, collective bargaining, labor economics, and labor history also provide a valuable background for the prospective labor relations specialist. As in many other fields, knowledge of computers and information systems is useful.

An advanced degree is increasingly important for some jobs. Many labor relations jobs require graduate study in industrial or labor relations. A strong background in industrial relations and law is highly desirable for contract negotiators, mediators, and arbitrators; in fact, many people in these specialties have law degrees. A master's degree in human resources, labor relations, or in business administration with a concentration in human resources management is highly recommended for those seeking general and top management positions. ¹

In addition to these titles, students also pursue jobs in consulting, research and practice in fields such as Industrial-Organizational Psychology and market and survey research.

**Industrial-organizational** (I-O) psychology is the scientific study of the workplace. Rigor and methods of psychology are applied to issues of critical relevance to business, including talent management, coaching, assessment, selection, training, organizational development, performance, and work-life balance. *Typically requires a Master’s or Ph.D. degree.

Division 14 - Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology espouses the scientist-practitioner model in the application of psychology to all types of organizations providing goods or services, such as manufacturing concerns, commercial enterprises, labor unions or trade associations, and public agencies. ²

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**Education and Training**

**Industrial-Organizational**

In order to become an Industrial/Organizational Psychologist, students need graduate training. The career options are different for master's level versus doctoral level graduates. Many master's graduates are more highly represented in jobs such as compensation, training, data analysis, and generalist human resource management positions and less likely to be found in academia as compared with doctoral graduates, who are more likely to be producers of new knowledge/research. ³

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**Market and survey researchers** gather information about what people think. Market research analysts help companies understand what types of products people want, determine who will buy them and at what price. Gathering statistical data on competitors and examining prices, sales, and methods of marketing and distribution, they analyze data on past sales to predict future sales.

**Education and Training**

**Marketing and Survey Researchers**

A bachelor's degree is the minimum educational requirement for many market and survey research jobs. However, a master's degree is usually required for more technical positions. In addition to completing courses in business, marketing, and consumer behavior, prospective market and survey researchers should take social science courses, including economics, psychology and sociology. Because of the importance of quantitative skills to market and survey researchers, courses in mathematics, statistics, sampling theory and survey design, and computer science are extremely helpful. Market and survey researchers often earn advanced degrees in business administration, marketing, statistics, communications, or other closely related disciplines. ⁴

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**Helpful Links:**

Society for Human Resource Management:  
[http://www.shrm.org/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/Pages/default.aspx)

American Society for Training and Development:  
[http://www.astd.org](http://www.astd.org)

International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans:  
[http://www.ifebp.org](http://www.ifebp.org)

American Psychological Association, Division 14, Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology:  

References:


