

LABMAN

Head of People & Culture Role Description

Responsible to: Managing Director

Line Manages: Head of HR, Recruitment & In Education Manager, Learning & Development Lead

Main purpose of role

To set the direction for people and culture at Labman, and ensure the business has the capability, structure and culture to scale successfully.

This is a senior, strategic role at the heart of the business. As a member of the Strategic Leadership Team, it shapes how Labman thinks about its people - influencing decision-making, aligning people strategy to commercial priorities, and ensuring people risk, capability and culture are considered as core business issues.

The role is not purely strategic. While much of the direction is already in place and supported by an established team, there is still work to do to strengthen and evolve key elements of the function. This requires someone who is comfortable moving between strategy and delivery - personally shaping and refining critical frameworks where it matters most, while enabling the team to deliver and sustain them over time.

It requires judgement about where to focus effort: what needs to be designed or improved now, what can be led through others, and what is already working and should be left alone.

This person protects and evolves the culture that has made Labman successful, while ensuring the systems, leadership capability and organisational structure are in place for the next phase of growth.

Key responsibilities of the role

1. People & Culture strategy and roadmap

- Own the People & Culture strategy - setting direction, sequencing priorities, and ensuring the roadmap is realistic, funded, and understood by the SLT.
- Decide what gets done in what order: HRIS, salary banding, performance management, leadership capability, international expansion, policy rewrite - and be explicit about what is not being done yet and why.

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- Shape how the Strategic Leadership Team thinks about people risk, capability and culture - not by presenting HR updates, but by framing people decisions as business decisions.
- Build the evidence-based case for people investment in language that resonates with a commercially focused, data-driven leadership team.
- Translate business strategy and contract pipeline into a workforce plan.

2. Framework design and delivery

- Personally lead the design and delivery of the major people frameworks: salary banding, job architecture, and the performance management system. These are not things to sponsor and oversee - they are things to build.
- Own the compensation philosophy - securing SLT agreement on principles, then building the framework that follows. The Recruitment & In Education Manager feeds market intelligence into this process; the Head of P&C makes the decisions.
- Drive delivery of the People & Culture strategy through clear ownership, realistic planning, and visible reporting on progress and outcomes.
- Lead the HRIS implementation as the accountable senior owner, working closely with the HR Manager who will own the day-to-day project delivery.
- Ensure that what gets designed actually works in practice - in a technically led, non-corporate environment where people are sceptical of process for its own sake.

3. Culture stewardship

- Own Labman's culture - what it is, how it is measured, and how it is preserved as the business scales rapidly; applying thoughtful judgement to protect the principles behind the culture, not just the visible practices or processes.
- Act as the early warning system for culture drift: monitor headcount growth, onboarding quality, and leadership behaviour for signs that what makes Labman special is being diluted.
- Ensure culture preservation is a designed and active effort, not something left to chance or assumed to happen naturally.
- Work with the L&D Lead and Recruitment & In Education Manager to make culture transmission a shared, structured endeavour across the function.

4. Senior HR partnering and complex people matters

- Act as the senior HR partner to the MD and SLT members on complex, sensitive or high-stakes people matters - those that carry legal, reputational or cultural risk.
- Provide authoritative, pragmatic guidance grounded in employment law but delivered in plain language that leaders can act on.
- Intervene where culture, leadership behaviour or people decisions create business risk.

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- Provide strategic oversight of international expansion into Germany and the US, ensuring the right employment infrastructure is in place before each hire.

5. Organisational design and workforce planning

- Advise the MD and SLT on organisational structure, reporting lines, and role architecture as the business grows.
- Lead succession planning for senior roles in partnership with the MD.

6. Leadership and team management

- Line-manage the Head of HR, L&D Lead, and Recruitment & In Education Manager.
- Set clear expectations, hold the team to a high standard, and create development opportunities for each person.
- Ensure the L&D Lead and Head of HR have a clear and active working relationship on manager capability - so that leadership development and ER case management are joined up, not running in parallel without speaking to each other.
- Model what good leadership looks like for a business that is asking its managers to grow as people leaders.
- Be visible and accessible - not removed from the function but not drawn into running it day to day either.
- Actively contribute as a member of the Strategic Leadership Team, bringing business insight, experience and challenge to discussions beyond the people agenda.

Explicitly not the focus of this role

- Running day-to-day HR operations or managing routine ER cases - that is the Head of HR.
- Being the escalation point for routine people queries - the team should be equipped to handle these.
- Day-to-day project management of the HRIS - that sits with the HR Manager.
- L&D design or delivery - that is the L&D Lead.
- Day-to-day recruitment or in-education coordination - that sits with the Recruitment & In Education Manager.

Knowledge, skills, and experience

- Senior people leadership experience, gained across more than one organisation - ideally including a privately owned or founder-led business.

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- A genuine builder: track record of designing and delivering HR frameworks from scratch in a scaling business - salary banding, job architecture, performance management, or similar.
- Experience of operating at senior leadership level - influencing peers and being taken seriously as a business leader, not just as an HR function head.
- Strong and current knowledge of UK employment law, with the confidence to handle complex matters without reaching for external advice on every occasion.
- Comfortable with technically minded, commercially driven leaders who need to be won over through relevance and credibility.
- Experience of culture change in organisations going through rapid growth or significant transition.
- Exposure to international employment, particularly Germany or the United States, is desirable.
- CIPD Level 7 qualified or equivalent demonstrated experience.

Competencies

- Strategically credible - thinks beyond the people function; understands the commercial context and how people decisions affect business outcomes.
- Builder mindset - energised by creating structure where little exists; not looking for a mature function to manage and not satisfied with strategy that never becomes reality.
- Technically authoritative - knows their employment law and HR practice well enough to give confident, clear guidance without hedging everything.
- Clear and confident communicator - speaks and writes with conviction; holds their own in a room with technically minded, data-driven peers.
- Prioritisation discipline - knows what matters now, what can wait, and is honest about both.
- Calm under pressure - absorbs pressure rather than transmitting it downwards.
- Culture-protective - genuinely curious about what makes Labman tick; able to distinguish between change that strengthens culture and change that threatens it.
- Privately owned business instinct - understands the pace, ambiguity and informality of founder-led environments; comfortable making decisions and progressing work without highly defined processes.
- Leads through influence - builds credibility and trust through consistency, relevance and straightforward communication; effective without relying on hierarchy, governance or formal mandate.

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Labman values alignment

In it together

Build genuine relationships across the business and be invested in collective success, not just functional delivery.

Excellence

Hold a high bar for quality - in decisions, in output, and in how the People & Culture function is experienced by the rest of the business.

Humility

Arrive with expertise but without arrogance. Recognise that people across Labman know this business well, and that trust is earned through consistency.

Sustainability

Build things that last. Design processes, frameworks and team capability that scale with the business and do not depend on any one person to function.

Fun

Bring energy and enthusiasm to the work. A workplace that people enjoy is not a nice-to-have - it is part of what makes Labman, Labman.

This role description outlines the main duties of the role, but it's not an exhaustive list. You'll need to be flexible and ready to take on other reasonable tasks as the needs of the business evolve.