

Ten Movies Every HR Professional Must Watch

Here are ten movies that every HR professional should watch to get inspired, solve HR problems of hiring the right candidate, motivating the employees, improving employee engagement, retaining a good employee, and handling equal opportunity issues.



There is no business like show business, and sure there are business lessons to be derived from movies. Unsurprisingly, global conglomerates and premier B-schools around the world have been using cinema to teach management theories, leadership and group dynamics and lessons on team handling. This is because movies are not a mere indulgence anymore, they are also a powerful learning tool. So, in a nod to holiday blockbuster season, here are ten movies that every HR professional should watch to get inspired, solve HR problems of hiring the right candidate, motivating the employees, improving employee engagement, retaining a good employee, and handling equal opportunity issues.

1. Invictus: It's all about making the right connection

When we talk about engagement, *Invictus* comes to the mind instantly. Based on the biography of Nelson Mandela, this movie is great in many aspects as it elucidates leadership and motivation in business. But, what strikes in the movie most is Mandela's ability to communicate and engage with the people of South Africa, whites and the blacks, torn apart by the racial times. In the movie (and in real life), Mandela uses Rugby- a sport as a medium to bridge the gap between the blacks and the whites. The message in the movie is clear for the HR managers; employees can easily get disengaged and even pessimistic in their approach towards their work. It is the duty of the HRs to bring out the positives in them through games, parties, movie hosting and other such conducive activities.

2. Up in the Air: People leave people, not organizations

Up in the Air is a movie that silently reminds us that people make the organizations and when it comes to downsizing, the loss is of an organization not of the person who has been fired. In *Up in the Air*, George Clooney, does the work of a "corporate downsizer" politely letting people go. Enter his fresher counterpart and suddenly firing becomes a more practical affair, ultimately cutting down company costs. The situation gets uglier with one of the fired employee committing suicide. Although, the movie teaches more about how to let people go, on the undercurrent it also elevates the importance of an employee for an organization. HR people have to understand that people leave people not organizations, they are either unhappy with their managers or the team they are working in.

3. Moneyball: Data can save you money!

In the 2002 season, the nation's lowest-salaried Major League Baseball team put together a 20-game winning streak, setting a new American League record. Though the team began the season with 11 losses in a row, what led to their success is the story of "Moneyball," a smart, intense and moving film that isn't so much about sports as about the war between intuition and statistics. While you may not be a baseball fan, you have to admit that this movie is really all about Human Resources. Billy Beane learned that by using data shrewdly he could build a high-performing team at a fraction the cost of his competitors. He bets against tradition and in favor of numerical analysis to demonstrate that a computer can assemble a team better than human instinct. Isn't this what strategic HR is all about?

4. The Internship and Outsourced: Unity in Diversity

We talk about Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies and what's a better example than Outsourced and The Internship. Both the movies aptly capture the cross-cultural amalgamation and answer various ethnic questions. While the Internship talks about two interns trying to win their jobs at Google along with other "Nooglers"- an Asian-American boy, an Indian-American girl and another guy who is constantly on phone, Outsourced follows the story of an American guy who has to outsource his call centre to India, gaining Indian cultural insights as he goes about doing his job. Both the movies teach how a mixed set of employees from different cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, gender, and color can teach each other valuable lessons in team management.

5. The pursuit of Happiness: Hard work wins in the end

The movie shows how a person can survive extremely harsh conditions in life and still won't give up. People who succeed have already made up their mind what they want to do and pay no heed to any negative thoughts coming their way and this movie portrays that delicately. This real-life story of Chris Gardner and his struggle against poverty will kindle inspiration like no other. The Pursuit of Happiness is a movie that everyone deserves to watch once to learn how to persevere even in the direst of situations.

6. Social Network: The best candidates can come from the most unlikely places

Most of us now know the story of Facebook and its creator Mark Zuckerberg-courtesy The Social Network. The film brilliantly shows the life and times of Mark as a college student who hacked into Harvard's student data file to ultimately develop the social media giant-Facebook. The key takeaways here is that hackers are not some meddling youngsters anymore, they are being hired by global giants like Apple, Facebook, and Microsoft for their "real-skills". The reason why hackathons and code-fests have become favorable is that they test real skills and real talent. A great idea for HR recruiters from this movie is to bring innovation into hiring.

7. Apollo 13: Failure is not an option

Because of the movie Apollo 13, “Failure is not an option,” has worked its way into many a group’s mission and vision. The characters in Ron Howard’s epic movie provide examples of how to display rational leadership during a crisis. In essence, the movie is also the perfect example of how virtual team leaders can solve a nearly impossible problem through teamwork, ingenuity, and rational process.

8. Kung Fu Panda series: Channelize your energies

The whole movie series is about leadership and it imparts lessons about continuously challenging oneself to be better and the importance of having good mentors. But the most important lesson this movie teaches us is that leaders must lead. When the protagonist of the movie, Po (Jack Black) is called upon to lead, he is in a dilemma about his own abilities. But once he acknowledges his own strengths and weakness, he resurrects as a leader and inspires his friends and family to fight on their own.

9. Remember the Titans: Power of good teams

The movie documents the trials and tribulations of the T.C. Williams High School football team as two different cultures come together and attempt to unite to reach a common goal—winning the state football championship. As the players begin to accept and trust one another, they are successful in their pursuit of wins on the gridiron – throughout the season, that trust is put to the test numerous times. Situations arise that raise questions and concerns for those involved, but each time the focus on the common goal of winning the state championship allows them to move past the issue. Ultimately, the movie is about hard work, dedication, sacrifice, leadership, and success.

10. The King’s Speech: Rise above your weaknesses

This movie narrates that the story of King George VI is one of the best leadership movies because of the unlikely leadership role cast on a king with a stammer. With the help of his speech therapist, the king succeeds in steering his country through the war with boldness and admirable leadership skills. This leadership movie brilliantly features King George’s journey, as well as his special relationship with the coach. You will learn true leadership lessons from this movie such as admitting that a problem exists, seeking help for it, and trusting others to succeed.

Source : Priyanka Madhusudan, <https://tinyurl.com/y9tdfp6m>