

“Tremendous impact and influence...”

Bio-economy Career Profile

Position: Associate Vice-President, Human Resources (Canada) and Global HR Partner, Research and Development

Name: Julia O’Rawe

Company: Sanofi Pasteur Limited

Salary Range: \$120,000 and up per year

What I do:

My job is about helping the business meet its goals by getting the best out of the people who we employ.

I’m responsible for human resources for our Canada site. I’m also the global HR partner for our research and development business. We have scientists in research and development in France, the U.S., South America, and the Far East, and I’m their HR partner.

So what I do is strategic HR work – thinking about how we’re going to optimize resources on the human side, how we’re going to recruit, what our recruitment strategies are, what our pension strategies are, and what we’re going to do in terms of training and skills development.

On average I travel four to five days a month to France and the U.S.

What education and skills do candidates need for this position?

Most people in Canada who work in human resources have certification from the HR professional association in Canada; most employers look for people in the field who have some sort of accreditation, but it’s not an essential – it’s more a “highly desirable.”

At minimum, you need a bachelor’s degree, preferably in the human sciences – sociology, psychology, etc. And most people now coming into the field have a master’s degree.



Essentials include communication, problem solving, planning, and managerial skills. If you’re involved in a unionized environment, you also need negotiation skills and an understanding of labour law. I wouldn’t like to see anyone in HR who is not interested in people.

What are the best parts of your job?

The best thing about my job is that I know pretty much everything that’s going on in the company. Other parts of the business tend to have a much narrower focus. The other thing that’s really terrific about being in human resources is that if you’re good, you have tremendous influence and impact on how the business is run.

It’s an incredibly rewarding career because of the opportunity to see people and businesses evolve and develop.