

INDUSTRY NEWS

2016: TIME FOR HR TO FOCUS - WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT A YEAR FROM NOW?

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HR already has a mandate to support the business in achieving its objectives - whether stated explicitly by its leadership, or implicitly because leaders know people are their greatest asset and risk and they need HR to guide and support them.

The message that HR's role has changed to a value-adding business partner is not 'new' anymore. The next wave of changes that will impact business and HR is already upon us, and yet many HR functions have not demonstrated over the past few decades that they can make a difference.

Why?

HR SHOULD FOCUS INTERNALLY

By merely extracting the HR strategy from the people issues in the business strategy, and using this as the strategy for the HR function, HR and the business might not achieve its strategic objectives. HR still need to know what they need to focus on internally.

They need to ask the right questions about their own role, performance, and interaction with internal clients, and assess their own competencies. As important, is that HR asks the people who are in the best position to provide a meaningful and objective opinion - i.e. their clients.

It is essential to focus on what HR is delivering, that will have an impact on the business in the next three years. Questions need to move beyond merely asking what HR is doing, to what HR's performance is and what value HR is adding.

HR SHOULD PRIORITISE

Given the depth and scope of the many people challenges and opportunities, some HR professionals and leaders might feel overwhelmed and fail to demonstrate progress from one year to the next.



HR often has to juggle between making time for strategic initiatives, whilst dealing with (or reacting to) daily and ad-hoc requests from different clients.

This often means balancing the expectations and needs of leadership and the rest of the organisation, which requires HR to (re-) think their role and ensure everyone in the business understands what it is.

HR departments are all at different stages of transformation, and yet there is a key question HR could ask: "What are the key priorities we need to have in place first, that will have a significant impact on our performance and ability to add value as a HR team?".

Working in, with and alongside numerous HR functions in different countries, I believe there are three key priorities HR should focus on first, before the rest will fall into place:

1. RECRUIT AND DEVELOP A COMPETENT HR TEAM

A competent, skilled, experienced and passionate HR team will find the right solutions, make the right decisions, develop systems and processes that is fit for the organisation, and spread their knowledge and passion of people management to leaders.

2. UTILISE TECHNOLOGY

Many companies and HR functions still do many things manually (especially on traditional HR activities), whilst everyone should by now have an integrated HR management and information system in place – a system that makes life easier and is utilised by everyone, and automate great HR processes.

Digitising processes, accurate and up-to-date information and valuable analytics will give HR more time to focus on other things what will make a sustainable difference. It will also give HR credibility once they can demonstrate that they cannot only provide accurate reporting on what is likely to happen, but also monitoring what is happening, predictive modeling and ultimately simulation of what is likely to happen.

The next wave of technological changes (e.g. increased focus on mobile devices and social media) impacting business and how we attract, manage and engage people have already started.

HR functions who successfully manage and utilise technology, could make a real difference.

3. DEVELOP LEADERS

It is important that HR and leaders understand that it is leaders' role to select, engage and manage people. HR, however, is in the best position to use their training and experience and passion for people to support, develop and coach leaders and to provide the best solutions that will make it easy for leaders to do so.

Imagine how much more time HR will have available to does not have to deal with the implications of poor leadership (e.g. replacement recruiting, performance and disciplinary issues).

Imagine what the result will be if we were to develop our future leaders from a very young age, and if tertiary institutions could include HR management as a module in all their qualifications...

HR SHOULD THINK DIFFERENTLY AND ACT WITH AGILITY

On top of all the existing challenges facing business and HR functions, there are national and global changes and trends in technology, the workforce, and socio-economy. New challenges will continue to emerge which means we continuously need to think differently.

The speed of change which has become a reality, means we need to act with agility.



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HUMAN RESOURCES AND THE BUSINESS VALUE MODEL

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Both HRDirect and Megrolowveld are companies in the inavitiQ group.

BACKGROUND

More than ten years ago, the results of a doctoral research project was reported on in an article titled "Validation of key relationships in an extended service-profit chain model in the South Africa retail industry context" (Verwey, A.M. & Carstens, L.). In very simple terms, the research indicated that there was more than sufficient evidence that the relationships as shown in the diagram below, in fact exist.

THE IDEA IN BRIEF

Research conducted amongst HR professionals indicates a need for business organisations to specifically focus on:

- Leadership Excellence;
- People Performance;
- Internal Brand; and
- Customer Delight.

The Business Value Model may also present to HR Professionals a useful framework to rethink that what, how and why of their contribution to business and society.