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**DO YOU HAVE
A STRATEGIC HR
FUNCTION?**

Taking care of your people.

WHERE IS HR IN YOUR COMPANY?

The term "having a seat at the table" is commonly used to gauge whether the human resources (HR) function actively contributes to shaping a company's strategy. Does your HR function truly have a strategic influence?

While the traditional roles of HR involve managing policies, discipline, employee administration, benefits, and payroll, they go beyond these responsibilities. HR professionals are crucial in resolving people issues, supporting managers in hiring, training, and overseeing labor practices. They often act as problem solvers and advocates for employees, performing critical functions that contribute to overall organizational well-being.

Many companies operate effectively with a tactical HR function, focusing on day-to-day tasks without necessarily being strategic. However, as performance expectations rise or if the organization is poised for change or growth, an evolved HR function becomes essential. This evolution may be driven partly by the necessity or desire for a focus on organizational development. Business partner consulting, succession planning and talent management and development initiatives, are examples of higher level organizational development activities.

The guidance of a professional in organizational development can be invaluable during times of significant change, ensuring organizational effectiveness and providing leadership in maintaining a strong organizational culture. As companies progress, they may require services such as executive compensation advice, employment contract work, or more sophisticated performance management and leadership development programs.

To determine the current state of your HR function and identify the characteristics of a strategic HR function, we will delve into defining questions in the following discussion. This exploration aims to help inform you on how HR functions evolve and align with the dynamic trends and needs of today's business environment.

LET'S START HERE

1. Where does HR report?

It is often the case HR reports to either Operations (largest number of employees) or Finance (budget or compliance reasons). Often in these situations, the HR leader is not included in strategic discussions and decisions. While there may be good reasons for the HR function reporting to these areas, ideally it reports to the top of the house for it to have the right strategic impact.

2. Is your HR leader trusted and respected by the senior leadership team?

This person needs to have iron clad relationships with the other senior executives. Ideally the HR leader is a peer with your key senior leaders.

3. Is HR primarily a compliance function?

Is HR playing the role of “corporate cop?” Are they obstructing needed change and growth? HR should be proactively leading talent strategies to help the company move forward.

4. Can your HR Leader perform GAP analysis?

Do you have a data driven HR function? Are they using KPIs and metrics to measure success? Is you HR leader a business person as well as an HR person?

5. Do you view your HR function as modern?

Do they look around the corner and at future trends? Do they embrace technology? What is the “employee brand” of your organization? What is their role in advancing the culture of the company? Are they actively engaging the senior leadership team with these topics?



5 STRATEGIC HR ROLES

Human Capital Expert – Maximizing the contribution of everyone within the organization. Talent acquisition and management strategies, training and leadership development, succession planning.

HR Strategist – Adapts both workforce and leadership structure to align with the future. Organizational development and effectiveness, measure results using hard data, survey, and correct course, as necessary.

Culture Keeper – How is the culture communicated? Are we “Walking the Talk?” Is the culture reflective of where the company wants to go and how it wants to be viewed? Does it represent what is “right” vs. what is expedient?

Change Manager – Change occurs via people. Is the HR Leader the change leader (or one of them) within the organization? How do they influence the rest of the leadership team in successfully bringing positive change.

Advisor/Consultant to CEO and C-Suite – Ensure HR goals and strategies are aligned with organizational goals and strategies. Key consultant and confidante within the senior leadership team.

WilliamCharles Search Group is a boutique executive search and professional recruiting firm providing services to companies across a variety of industries. Our focus is on leadership positions up to the C suite, including President/CEO. Our work is concentrated in finance, human resources, operations/supply chain, sales/marketing and administration. Our most common clients are private, family owned, private equity-owned and ESOP companies. We work extensively in West Michigan and Western Pennsylvania, and have demonstrated experience nationally and globally through a network of partners.

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