



DO YOU HAVE A STRATEGIC HR FUNCTION?

Managing your
most important
asset...

Your People

Where is HR in your company?

We often hear the euphemism “seat at the table” as a descriptive term to determine whether a human resource function truly participates in steering company strategy. Does your HR function have a “seat at the table”?

The human resources function plays a key role in the operating of a company. These traditional roles include; managing policies and discipline, employee administration, benefits and payroll. They resolve people issues and support managers in hiring, training and managing labor practices. They are often the fixer of other people's problems. They are often the advocate or voice for employees. Everyone will agree these are critical functions to do well.

Many companies operate just fine with a tactical but not strategic human resources function. Many of these companies get exactly what they want and expect from HR. In order to get to the next level it is likely that a more evolved HR function will be necessary. The need might be driven by increased competition and rising performance expectations or a need for more consistency throughout an organization. Organizational development facilitated by a professional is invaluable from the standpoint of succession planning and talent optimization. Organizational effectiveness and culture leadership can make the difference in sustaining the culture of an organization through these large changes. You may need executive compensation advice, improved HR technology or a more sophisticated performance management system. In reality, you probably need it all. We will further explore by asking questions to understand your current state and then offer five characteristics of a strategic HR function.

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Start by asking these questions

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 HR is not at the decision table. You may have good reasons for your structure but HR should ideally report to the top of the house for it to carry the right strategic weight.

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.

3. **Is HR primarily a compliance function?**

Are they obstructing needed change and growth? HR needs to proactively lead talent strategies to help the company move forward.

4. **Can your HR Leader perform GAP analysis?**

Are they using KPI's to measure success? Are they a business person as well as an HR person? Do the goals within human resources support the overall goals of the organization?

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?

5 Strategic HR Roles

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

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

3. **Culture Keeper** – How is the culture communicated? Are we "Walking the Talk?" Is the culture reflective of where the company wants to go? Does it represent what is "right" vs. what is expedient?

4. **Change Manager** – change occurs via people. Is the HR Leader the change leader (or one of them) within the organization?

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

Information from this article was a collaboration between WilliamCharles and Steve Crandall. Steve Crandall is an Executive HR professional, leadership coach and Master Trainer (L.E.T) Learn more about Steve at <https://www.crandallpartners.com/principals-bio/>

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