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How can we capitalize on inevitable—and potentially exciting—change?

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I’ve always been interested in the way other people speak and write. I’m a big fan of books, articles, and podcasts that dissect a topic and present new insights. Like a song that repeats itself in your head, I find myself holding onto the new idea until I can connect it to another concept. Such is my orientation to HRMAC that in my conversations with the Board of Directors, our volunteers, and members, I am quickly learning about our history and the important role HRMAC plays in your professional life. I am thrilled to join HRMAC at this exciting time and to collaborate with the Board on designing a new strategy to expand our impact in the Chicago human resources community. I attribute a lot of this energy to your leadership. As you are hopefully aware, the Board has made some critical decisions this year that position HRMAC to realize our mission of “Lead, Connect, Grow.”

Since joining HRMAC in mid-October, I have immersed myself in all types of conversations to gain insights and perspectives necessary to build our future. There are many important inputs to a process as big and important as strategic planning. This fall, the HRMAC team engaged in a series of focus groups with a cross-section of our members whose insights will inform Board-level discussions over the winter as to the opportunities and challenges facing HRMAC. This work is made possible by the vision set by the Board in 2016 and will continue to be built upon well into 2018.

I am thrilled to join HRMAC at this exciting time and to collaborate with the Board on designing a new strategy to expand our impact in the Chicago human resources community.

As a reminder, this work is anchored in five initiatives:
1. Clarify who HRMAC serves and what our members need from HRMAC to be successful
2. Evaluate, modify, and, as necessary, design programs and services to meet members’ needs
3. Consider the role of technology in communicating member value and engagement
4. Develop a multi-year financial plan that aligns our resources to our strategy
5. Empower our Board, committee leaders, and volunteers to think creatively about our programming and challenge the status quo

Granted, I have a lot more to learn as I get to know you and other members of the HRMAC community. You can count on me to ask questions and connect your insights to our important work. In the coming months, I look forward to meeting you at one or more of our upcoming events. We have an impressive roster of programs and speakers who will challenge your strategic thinking about the role of human resources now and in the future. Join us for the conversations that are making a difference for Chicago employees and companies! •
Why HR Needs to Change

By Dan Rubin, Central Market Career Business Leader, Mercer and Kate Bravery, Partner and Global Solutions Leader for Talent, Mercer

For decades, employers and employees had an informal contract with implied expectations—employees expected a job for life with certain benefits, and employers responded with a rewards system matching those expectations. Today, even the assumption of working for one employer for more than five years is uncommon. Many employees view jobs as short-term affairs; they seek to gather skills and experiences and then move on. What they want out of jobs has also changed; they’re seeking greater flexibility, increased autonomy, and more learning on the job. In this context, there is a growing acknowledgment that we are entering a talent-demand economy. However, many organizations’ policies, practices, and HR systems are not keeping pace. HR faces pressure to change on many fronts, from technological innovation to globalization and many more. What follows are a few specific areas that HR can address as a strategic partner within organizations.

HR Technology
A third of companies surveyed in Mercer’s global Workforce HR Technology Study plan to implement new technology within the next three years. Cloud-based applications are most prevalent, especially in large or expanding organizations. To adapt, HR is shifting its operating model based on the following technology trends:

- Increased user adoption: Systems like Workday and SAP SuccessFactors have a simple and friendly user interface designed to make manager and employee self-service personalized and easy to learn. Self-service tools and dashboard/reporting options offer flexibility in data access and data analyses, bringing information directly to leaders without going through HR.
- Mobile and real time: Talent apps, especially on mobile devices, allow for convenient and immediate HR processing and data access by leaders, managers, and employees. This real-time data retrieval/reporting can help support data-driven business decisions.

HR Business Partners
The HRBP position was designed to add business acumen and consultative skills in HR. Too often, organizations implement the role with little more than a title change and without discussing how generalists can acquire skills needed to take on new responsibilities. In Mercer’s Global Talent Trends Study, only 13% of organizations reported having a systemic curriculum for developing HR professionals. Fortunately, over one-third plan to invest in HR development in the next year.

Companies have taken the following approaches to improve HRBP effectiveness:

- Directed training: Companies are providing intensive training to develop leaders with particular skills for this pivotal role. Strategic partnering, analytics, and change management are key skill sets required for success, and are the focus of experiential workshops and other hands-on learning interventions.
- Rotating line talent into the HRBP role: Some organizations create rotation

Exhibit 1

Technology Implementation Plans

Where is your organization in the process of implementing an HRIS?

- Implemented in the last five years
- Plan to implemented new HRIS in the next 1–3 years
- No plans

Source: Mercer Workforce HR Technology Survey, 2015
programs to bring internal talent to the role with the right mix of skills and capabilities, often loaned from the business into temporary assignments. Non-HR leaders not only help improve the business comprehension of the HRBP role, but can also become champions for the value of HR. Successful execution of these programs requires a shift in expectations; unless the role is viewed as a growth opportunity, it will not attract the best talent and will fail to have impact.

**Centers of Expertise**

The prevailing HR operating model relies on Centers of Expertise (COEs)—centralized teams staffed with HR experts—to provide program design and consulting services to the business. Traditionally, COEs designed global programs at the corporate level, which were then adapted or redesigned to meet local requirements. In practice, we have seen a shift in how COEs operate in organizations:

- **Increased global focus**: Organizations are increasingly focused on ensuring that their workforce adapts and executes with a global mindset, and this applies to HR teams as well. This approach promotes movement of employees across the organization. Even without physical movement, collaboration technologies are enabling COE employees to connect virtually to each other, to their local HR counterparts, and to their clients.
- **Changing local COE structures**: With more robust service center capabilities and automation, in-country COEs are becoming obsolete. In the future, the in-country HRBP and COE roles may merge into one, providing both business partnering and local program execution (but not HR administration work).

**What’s Next for HR?**

It’s time for HR to redefine its value. The new HR operating model needs to:

- **Embrace the new work equation**, including the new digital workforce, a flexible workplace, and employees as consumers
- **Understand and champion the role of the manager and new ways of** driving business results through performance management
- **Articulate a compelling employee value proposition that is globally consistent but locally relevant**
- **Infuse technology, data, and analytics into all that HR does**

The role of HR is already evolving. The HR profession of tomorrow will have defined competencies, new skills, and clear expectations for all its roles, from data scientist to virtual collaborator and innovator to technology strategist and talent partner.

To our learned HR colleagues who are eager for change—gather up, skill up, and look to the future! HR is a discipline evolving at break-neck speed, and you have a unique opportunity to shape the next chapter.

*Dan Rubin is the Central Market Career Business Leader at Mercer. He can be reached at dan.rubin@mercer.com. Kate Bravery is the Partner and Global Solutions Leader for Talent at Mercer. She can be reached at kate.bravery@mercer.com.*

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**Exhibit 2**

**Plans to Upskill HR**

- **16%**: We have gaps in our HR skills, but haven’t started our HR development journey
- **26%**: We have identified the HR skills we need for the future, but have not established any development plans
- **36%**: We plan to invest in training/HR development
- **13%**: We have a systematic curriculum for developing HR professionals
- **4%**: HR is viewed as a strategic business partner with high impact, therefore no additional training is needed
- **4%**: Don't know
Aligning Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives with Company Culture and Business Goals

By Julie Félix, Manager, Diversity & Inclusion, Human Resources, Mesirow Financial

Whether it is changing policy, relocating an office, restructuring an organization or introducing new products and services, successfully navigating change is a challenge for any business. Like many companies, we have evolved over our 80 years to better meet the needs of our clients and adapt to the marketplace, and as a committed employer, we have reevaluated and reassessed to continue to meet the needs of our employees and embrace diversity and inclusivity.

In 2015, Mesirow formally established the Inclusion & Workforce Strategy team to improve diversity and inclusion. In only two years, we have seen results by taking an agile yet focused approach to achieving change while also recognizing that there is always opportunity to improve and expand.

Establishing a Framework
The business case for diversity is clear. You may be familiar with the 2015 McKinsey report1 that revealed that companies in the top quartile with racial/ethnic diversity are 35% more likely and gender-diverse companies are 15% more likely to outperform above the national industry mean. However, there is no “one size fits all” for how diversity and inclusion becomes imbedded within company culture, and the pathways for achieving change vary depending on the nature and size of each business.

First, it is important to develop a framework for how you plan to create internal change. At Mesirow Financial, we identified three core pillars to provide the framework for our diversity and inclusion strategy:

- Diversifying the workforce
- Optimizing the workplace
- Penetrating the marketplace

To help guide the strategic direction of the internal initiative, we established an Executive Inclusion Council to empower leaders through diversity awareness and an Employee Inclusion Council to help implement our diversity and inclusion goals. We also added education pieces, tools, and resources to our intranet to raise awareness and increase employee engagement. Recognizing our employees have the best insight into what works for them, we established an online platform for employees to share their own ideas on how to improve diversity and inclusion internally.

Narrowing the Scope
As we began this endeavor, our primary focus targeted the improvement of Mesirow’s programming and operations. However, we recognized that to achieve real change, effective diversity and inclusion initiatives must be aligned with the firm’s business priorities as well. Over the last two years, we have partnered with several organizations, including the National Black MBA Association, Prospanica, Robert Toigo Foundation, and Out & Equal Chicagoland, to host various programs and events designed to improve recruitment, client and employee engagement, as well as marketplace visibility. We are proud that these events have led to exceptional staff hires, exciting new business opportunities, and increased employee and client engagement.

Recognizing that diversity goes beyond physical traits, we kicked off 2017 by hosting a “diversity of thought” event in conjunction with 1871, a center for technology and entrepreneurship. The event aimed to remind leaders and employees the importance of creating diverse teams to develop innovative products and services in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Building in Increments
It is impossible to do it all at once. Achieving broad diversity happens step-by-step with intention and focus. Recently, we enhanced our efforts to achieve better LGBTQ inclusiveness. We implemented “Transitioning in the Workplace Guidelines” for transgender employees and their supervisors. In 2017, we have actively been working to lay the foundation and develop an employee resources group for our LGBTQ employees and allies. In January 2018, we plan to formally launch PRIDEConnect, designed to provide education to all employees and resources for LGBTQ employees and allies.

Achieving Results
Ultimately, the success of diversity and inclusion initiatives depends on hard core results. For the first time, Mesirow participated in the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index survey in 2016. We were honored to receive a very favorable rating but recognized that there was more work to be done. In 2017, we submitted the CEI survey for the second year in a row and achieved a notable increase in our score, nearly reaching our goal of 100. In conjunction with increased efforts to expand our recruitment channels and attract diverse talent, we recently added a new section to our website, to celebrate our diverse workforce and bring our employee stories to the forefront.

Creating feedback loops for employees is also crucial to ensure a company remains aligned with business goals and company culture when implementing a diversity and inclusion strategy. Our recent employee engagement survey included several diversity-related questions to gauge employee attitudes on how we can best advance our commitment to D&I and refine our approach as we move forward.

While we have made great strides within diversity and inclusion in the last two years, we are dedicated to building upon our successes and improving year over year.

Julie Félix is the manager of Diversity & Inclusion, Human Resources at Mesirow Financial. She can be reached at jfelix@mesirowfinancial.com.

The changing landscape of talent within a company leads to inevitable, and many times drastic, change. Since 2011, there have been 10,000 Baby Boomers retiring daily, according to studies from the Pew Research Center. Only 40% of this generation are left in the workforce, while Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) are on target to become the largest generation the U.S. has ever seen. Generation X professionals (born between 1961 and 1981) have been widely overlooked due to Baby Boomers staying in the workforce longer and Millennials being tapped for succession at earlier ages. How can companies embrace the unavoidable change and capitalize on the transition in leadership?

Human resources executives should be playing an integral role in responding to the growing number of retiring Baby Boomer executives and the influx of Millennials on track to fill their shoes.

Replacing Baby Boomer Executives
Effective succession planning depends upon a strategic partnership between HR, the CEO, and Board. HR should provide objective support in profiling current executive roles and evaluating what skills, experiences, strengths, and competencies make a successful leader. The next step is for HR to identify and evaluate potential candidates within a structured framework and process.

Whether the successor is an internal promotion or an external hire, HR must play a role in establishing an effective onboarding process. Throwing a new executive in at the deep end isn’t an option. Many of the skills and abilities that were instrumental while climbing the corporate ladder can become significant “de-railers” once promoted to the C-Suite. Onboarding and coaching ensure that a cultural alignment is established, resulting in a successful transition.

Coordinating Knowledge Transfer
It’s a well-known stereotype—one based in truth—that Baby Boomers have been loyal to the organizations that employ them.

It’s a well-known stereotype—one based in truth—that Baby Boomers have been loyal to the organizations that employ them.

or two companies over the course of many years, which is not the case for Generation X professionals. This tenure is what has made many Baby Boomers so good at what they do. It only becomes a problem when they set their sights on retirement.

Generation X and Millennials are more than capable of building the same skill sets as Baby Boomers. However, the challenge is in the institutional and tacit knowledge that an individual gains throughout the years working at an organization. Much of that knowledge is so inherent that the gap is not revealed until a key departure. HR leaders must prepare for the process of knowledge transfer between retiring Baby Boomer executives and future leaders.

Formalizing Leadership Development
A study from Deloitte revealed that 64% of Millennials don’t believe their employers are providing an opportunity for leadership development. That’s a big deal for a generation that values life-long learning.

Equipping Millennials for executive leadership is a vital strategy in preparing for the continued exodus of Baby Boomers. Mentorship and coaching programs enable them to learn and experience the lessons of their elder colleagues, protecting against a future knowledge gap while also strengthening employee loyalty.

Historically, a key component of leadership development was “on-the-job training.” Unfortunately, many mid-management roles have been permanently eliminated, with organizational structures now resembling an hourglass as opposed to the traditional pyramid. As a result, organizations must foster non-traditional developmental outlets for high-potential Millennials.

As one corporate HR executive recently stated, “the war for talent is over…and talent has won.” Companies that get ahead of this multi-generational succession dilemma can still win this war by retaining their home grown high-potentials and recruiting externally when appropriate. •

John Doyle is Executive Vice President and Head of the Human Resources Practice at Slayton Search Partners. He can be reached at jdoyle@slaytonsearch.com.
Time to Overhaul Your Company Culture

3 Tips to Get It Done

By Gary Magenta, SVP, Root Inc.

Company culture has been one of the most defining characteristics of organizations over the past 30 years—shaping the actions, values and behaviors you want to see within your walls, and equally as important, supporting the execution of your business strategy in the marketplace.

Initially, a company’s culture was intended to last the lifespan of the organization. Not today!

Change is Today’s Constant

Today, change is one of the only guarantees you can count on—and this applies to your culture too. Company cultures must change to reflect societal trends, shifts in the marketplace including customers, competition and innovation, and more.

But, what do you do when you have an amazing culture and have to adjust your strategy to better anticipate (then meet and exceed) market trends and customer needs? You need to ask yourself if the current and amazing culture—the one you know and love—is the right one to support the new strategy. Odds are you’ll need to change the existing culture to support the strategy you’ve set in place. You may need to let go of yesterday’s success to create tomorrow’s victory.

The Only 3 Tips You’ll Ever Need for Real Culture Change

#1  Let purpose be your guide. While strategy and company culture should be fluid, your purpose should stand the test of time. Make your purpose broad enough to weather technological advances, clear enough to set you apart from the competition and strong enough to rally your troops to support the organization through change. Answering the question of why you exist isn’t always easy, but it is always worth it.

While we must be ready to shift gears faster and more frequently than ever, there is a critical focal point for your culture change. Your purpose. Your organization’s purpose—the reason why your business exists—should serve as your guiding light. In spite of the changes that every business must adjust to on a daily basis, to be successful, you must never abandon the reason why your company exists.

Let’s take Nintendo for example. Nintendo’s purpose has always stood for entertainment. The company was founded in 1889—yes, that’s 1889—and first produced playing cards. But as the world shifted from in-person to digital gaming, Nintendo shifted too. Throughout it all, Nintendo continued its purpose as an entertainment organization, segueing the products and services offered to meet the changing interests, needs and demands of its tech-savvy customers.

So be like Nintendo! Ask yourself, “What are we willing to give up or change to remain true to our purpose?” The most successful organizations are making adjustments to their strategy and their culture on an ongoing basis. It’s the only way to remain competitive.

#2  Your strategy should change with the times. You need to do more than simply respond to the marketplace. You need to build a strategy that keeps you ahead of the curve. You must anticipate your customer’s needs and be one step ahead of the competition. Are customers using a new technology or app? Revise your strategy, putting an emphasis on R&D so you can quickly integrate that technology into your products and/or services before anyone else. Facing new demands from shoppers? Adjust your strategy to arm your frontline with the tools, skills and knowledge they need to make your CX better than the best out there.

With each and every shift, let people know why the change is necessary for big picture success and what it means to them.

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

- **Prep your managers.** It’s equally important to ensure managers are prepared to lead people through the upcoming transition and are ready to provide the right level of clarity for individuals on their teams.

- **Celebrate the wins!** Be sure to convert the early wins, no matter how small, into success stories people can understand.

- **Never stop talking, sharing and doing.** Sustainment is everything, so be sure to enable ongoing dialogue at all levels of the business to demonstrate a commitment to the change that is authentic and healthy.

**#3 When strategy shifts, so should your company culture.** When your strategy changes, which it inevitably will, to reflect changing desires and needs from your customers, you must adjust your culture too. This ensures the actions and behaviors you want to see within your organization support the new roadmap. But, don’t just announce a strategic change and expect people to automatically adjust their behaviors to create a culture that supports the new direction. Start at the top! Once leaders set the tone, demonstrating the actions and behaviors you want to see, your people will follow their example.

Want to stay in business? Then say “yes” to change. Your strategy—and the culture that enables your people to execute it successfully—must change if you want a shot at staying ahead of customer needs and marketplace trends. Let your purpose—your why—guide your organization through the inevitable shifts, turns, and challenges. Your purpose, not your culture or your strategy, is your new constant.

We are living in a world where change is inevitable and ever-present. Strategy, culture, products, and services will change over time. Purpose and change are the only constants. Are you ready?

Gary Magenta is a SVP at Root Inc., a strategy execution company that helps organizations engage their people as the catalyst and driver for change. He can be reached at gmagenta@rootinc.com.
The New Way of Work

How can we capitalize on inevitable—and potentially exciting—change?

By Andrea Walsh, Talent Line of Business Leader, Chicago and Jill Havely, Talent Line of Business Leader, Midwest Region

We are living in a new reality. Change is imminent on a daily basis and the pace of that change is unprecedented. When Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone back in 1876, it took 75 years to reach 50 million users. Televisions took 13 years to reach a similar level and Pokémon GO did it in only 17 days. Digital and technological transformation is no longer something we expect in the future: It has already happened and will continue to move us forward at warp speed, whether we are ready or not.
As HR professionals, we are witnessing our workplaces changing at the same rapid pace. The trend toward a “gig economy” is here, where organizations hire workers on a temporary or freelance basis. Jobs are being pulled apart into specific “tasks,” and those tasks are now completed by a combination of full-time and freelance labor, robotics, machine learning, and automation. Organizations are increasingly deconstructing jobs and distributing the component tasks to the most optimal means for work, instead of delegating an entire job to a specific individual.

With all of this change, it is no surprise that our current and future employees are concerned about the implications of this shift away from traditional job and organizational structures. They will want to understand the implications of this new world of work on their jobs, income, future growth opportunities, and career paths.

It is up to us as HR leaders to inspire a positive reaction to change and help others see the unique opportunity we have ahead of us. HR professionals are asking the question, “How do we lead our employees, leaders, and organization amid fear of the unknown and through what seems to be never-ending change?” With thoughtful planning, HR can help leaders and employees see the silver lining of technological change and cultivate an engaging employee experience in the future.

Fear of an unknown future is not new or uncommon in the workplace. A job change, loss of responsibility, or a decline in expertise resulting from technological advancement can be a personal and often emotional topic for anyone. Aside from the personal learning and growth implications this change presents to employees, there is also likely to be varying complexity of change, depending on business segment, job, region, or country. For example, manual or repetitive jobs may be most quickly automated in any industry. Robotic bricklayers can now lay more brick on construction sites than two to three humans. Many of the tasks performed by accountants and underwriters can increasingly be automated. And software programming tasks may be more readily handled and less costly to source on a work platform such as Topcoder versus hiring a full-time software engineer in the external labor market.

Willis Towers Watson’s change management methodology provides an elegant framework for leading organizations through the complexities of impending workforce and business change. When we have witnessed change initiatives fail to meet an organization’s desired goals, the most common reason is that investment in employee and leader engagement tactics—such as training, communication, and leadership activities—was diminished or not considered to be of vital importance. Our view is, and our experience shows, that critical levers for driving readiness and behavior change (i.e., leading, measuring, involving, and sustaining) go well beyond basic communication and training. Each of these levers need to be considered, with tactics implemented, to ensure a positive response to change in today’s changing, fast-paced world of work (see Figure 1).

Let’s walk through the Big Six together. We will provide examples of how organizations have effectively inserted positivity and clarified opportunities to employees and leaders, and ensured change success.

Leading
Our research has shown that the modernization of work and an increasingly digital environment is reinforcing a significant need for certain leader behaviors. Willis Towers Watson’s 2016 Global Workforce, and

FIGURE 1
Change Management Levers

Activities identified that influence change success. The “Big Six” form the basis of Willis Towers Watson’s change methodology.

Leading
Inspire confidence, create clarity, and a sense of community

Measuring
Define success and support continuous improvement

Communicating
Foster understanding and guide action

Involving
Shape direct, unearth challenges and model the way

Learning
Ensure knowledge and skill to adapt

Sustaining
Reinforce behavior change overtime
Global Talent Management and Rewards Studies told us that now, more than ever, employees are demanding transparency and clear, concise messaging. They want to know what is happening, when, and how it affects them individually. And above all, they expect consistent messaging from both senior leadership and immediate supervisors. One logistics organization that is currently going through automation on its production floor provides regular and consistent updates to managers and training on the best way to cascade the information to its employees. Leaders at all levels of the organization discuss what jobs are changing, jobs that will be affected by the change, new opportunities that will arise, and the associated timeline. When they do not know the timeline of a change, leaders are comfortable sharing with the broader workforce that the timing is unknown, and that they will share additional information as it becomes available. Because the leaders send consistent messages, communicate new opportunities, and repeatedly live up to their word, employees trust that they will learn more when possible and have less angst in the process.

**Measuring**
Setting goals, revisiting them often, and looking for continuous improvement are key considerations in the new world of work. One organization in the energy industry had extremely high turnover on its production platform and set a goal to reduce turnover by 5% over the next six months. After analyzing their turnover and employee survey statistics, they deduced that the organization’s high turnover was due to its talent not having the emerging skills and competencies required on its production platform and less-than-optimal people management. To address the lack of skills and competencies, HR analyzed the job and its responsibilities and prepared an optimal profile for the future candidate. They learned that some of the specific skills, characteristics, or competencies they had searched for in past candidates were no longer relevant due to the latest technology improvements and automation. For example, less manual labor is now required on the production platform due to many automated features. As a result, a certain muscular physique for employees is much less critical for success in certain roles. Instead, they determined that collaboration with coworkers and familiarity with mechanical automation is more critical for success now and in the future. They implemented an assessment process to screen candidates for these newer behaviors and skills as part of their recruiting process. To address the people management concerns, HR performed site visits and led training for select managers to enhance soft and technological skills and clarify expectations of managers and newly screened employees. In many cases, managers were unaware of the impact they may have been having on the turnover equation. In the six months following the implementation of these tactics, the organization exceeded its goal and experienced 7% less turnover compared with the prior period. A year later, they had reduced their turnover for the selected population by 20%.

### FIGURE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you <strong>gain</strong> from using each lever...</th>
<th>...and the <strong>risk</strong> of ignoring a lever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspiration</strong>  Leaders are equipped to inspire confidence, create clarity, foster community</td>
<td><strong>Confusion</strong>  Lack of vision and motivation; fragmentation of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarity of impact</strong>  Balanced metrics define success, support continuous improvement</td>
<td><strong>Misunderstanding</strong>  Lack of knowledge of anticipated impact, progress against goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong>  Fosters understanding and guides actions</td>
<td><strong>Misinformation</strong>  Lack of direction and understanding of the rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment</strong>  Allows stakeholders to shape direction, identify challenges, move forward</td>
<td><strong>Apathy</strong>  Lack of ownership and support from the critical mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong>  People have knowledge and skills to adapt to change, be effective in their roles</td>
<td><strong>Apprehension</strong>  Lack of confidence and accountability for new skills and expected behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance</strong>  Reinforces behavior through aligned structure, technology, process, and people programs</td>
<td><strong>Status quo</strong>  Lack of sustainability for change and missed opportunities for additional improvement over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicating

In today’s world, it is not unheard of for electronic communication from leaders to fall into a black hole (a.k.a. our overstuffed email in-boxes). Even with the best intentions, it is becoming more difficult to reach our audiences with key messages about change; yet communication remains a top necessity for engaging employees through transformational change.

Our experience tells us that the most effective communication is tailored by audience, simple, clear and concise, and is delivered using a variety of different channels (print, face-to-face, electronic, video, podcasts and so on). It is also timely, repeated at consistent intervals and easily repeatable by others. One of the most important aspects of communication to support technology and work transformation is to be open, honest, and authentic not only about what is changing but why the changes are needed and how individuals are impacted—positively or negatively.

Involving

Involving people at all levels of the organization will be the key to energizing employees about the new way work is done. Many organizations utilize their subject matter experts and other high potentials/high performers to “deconstruct” jobs into activities, understand what can and will be automated, and “reconstruct” the nonautomated activities into new jobs. They are also clear to identify change agents in each business unit or location who can spread a positive word and provide clarity on any new direction the organization may choose to take. One global organization has named its learning and development advisor as a key change agent as it creates its “workforce of the future.” As the advisor travels among locations, she spreads the word about what the organization is doing and why, clarifies objectives and answers questions. She also gathers feedback from those working in the field on what might need to be considered that is not currently part of the plan. Not only is she involving and engaging employees across the world, but she is also communicating a consistent business reason for change and gathering additional data for the organization. This will ensure fewer surprises, a better understanding of pain points for communication during rollout, and a robust and realistic approach for the future plan.

Learning

Ensuring leaders and employees have the knowledge, skills, and competencies they need to adapt to and succeed in our changing work environment presents an exciting challenge and opportunity. Many organizations are implementing internal talent platforms that allow them to tag employee skills and knowledge and uncover gaps when skills and knowledge needed for future business success are not currently evident in the organization. This creates a culture of learning by upskilling as many employees as possible and recruiting externally when talent cannot be grown from within.

One global organization is deconstructing its manual jobs with the purpose of automating some tasks to allow time for the same employee to perform higher-value activities. For example, consider a senior sorting specialist at an order fulfillment plant. Through deconstruction of tasks, the organization may choose to move one-third of her job to a lesser-cost employee (junior sorter). Another one-third of her job might be automated with new technology (e.g., automated sorting device). With two-thirds of the senior sorting specialist’s time now unfilled, she has the capacity to fill up her day with new, higher-value work, which positions her for new career opportunities within the organization. For example, she might be asked to understand and provide enhancements to the algorithm for the automated sorting device, and provide leadership and coaching to entry-level sorts. The new skills have made her not only more valuable to the company but also more marketable as an individual for her future career security.

Sustaining

Sustaining is arguably the most critical lever an organization can pull when leading change. Reinforcing the right behaviors of leaders and employees is what will embed this change in your organization’s culture for the longer term. Three things will keep your organization on track and help you be prepared to take on future change:

1. Periodically pull the measurement lever. Without measurement on a regular basis, the positive impact of change cannot be captured and celebrated.

2. Maintain a commitment to leadership development and reinforce the right leadership behaviors. With authenticity and transparency as the key to earning employees’ trust, HR will want to keep all leaders informed and maintain their communication and other soft skills. Leaders should be encouraged to keep lines of communication open with employees and provide updates often (even if there is no new information).

3. Revisit skills, knowledge and success profiles for key roles on a consistent basis. This will ensure that your organization is staying ahead of the curve, developing employees on emerging skills and identifying gaps in time to take action.

Knowing when and how to pull each of these levers is based on both art and science. Additionally, there are gains and risks associated with each lever (see Figure 2) and all should be considered as you craft your change (transformation) strategy. With a well-designed strategy and an eye for the positive aspects of change, you will ensure an agile organization and a successful and sustainable transformation for your workforce.

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One of the most valued member benefits are the free interest group programs offered to all HRMAC members. Interest groups are in-person learning programs that represent the key functional areas of HR; two geographic groups; a group geared for young professionals; and a group for colleagues in transition or seeking career development. These programs deliver the latest thought leadership on all aspects of HR, and many programs offer accreditation. Below are recaps of a few of the most popular interest group meetings that took place this past quarter.

Employee Relations Interest Group Meeting, 10.04.17

Modern Framework for Building an Engaging Culture

Gary Beckstrand shared O.C. Tanner’s recent research regarding culture and how to improve it. Culture is a powerful force that forms whenever you get a group together, and it affects how we treat each other and how we feel. Gary discussed leveraging strengths to attract, retain, and engage talent by improving culture. O.C. Tanner has identified what they call culture magnets that help impact culture, listed below:

- **Purpose**: What is your higher cause beyond the products and services?
- **Opportunity**: Do employees have a voice and understand how their contributions affect bottom line?
- **Leadership**: How good are the leaders at being mentors and coaches? Most companies make people leaders because they are good doers but how do we help them transition?
- **Success**: Are you creating opportunities for great work and recognizing it when you see it?
- **Wellbeing**: How do you demonstrate you care about employee’s well-being beyond wellness programs that focus on reducing health care costs?
- **Appreciation**: Find ways of recognizing that are meaningful to the employee and purposeful to the organization. This also helps build confidence and helps employees know what to continue doing.

An improvement in any one of these culture magnets will improve the others. While you can’t focus on all of them at the same time, certain culture magnets have the most impact on retention, engagement, and attraction. For retention, focus on leadership and then well-being and appreciation. To drive engagement, focus on opportunity and purpose. For attraction, focus on leadership and success.

The panel then shared where they saw their company’s strengths and areas they were

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School of Labor & Employment Relations
Young HR Leaders Interest Group Meeting, 10.10.17

Your Company Offers What? Internal Company Programs

The “war on talent” is no longer a new notion, and employers know that attracting and retaining top talent is crucial to the success of the organization in today’s economy. At our most recent Young HR Leaders meeting, our panelist and thought leaders, Manika Turnbull, VP & Chief Diversity Officer from Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC); Lisa Padden, Founder and Principal from Big Toe Consulting; and Kim Marzano, Senior HR Business Partner from Advanced Resources, shared their insights and experiences with rewards and programs that are both innovative and effective in winning the “war on talent.”

Our moderator Diamond Greer, Co-Founder of Let’s Vibe L3C, set the “vibe” for the morning through a word cloud that bore the question, “When you think of engagement, what words come to mind?” Not surprisingly, words like retention, inclusion, and productivity dominated the cloud. So if engagement drives retention, inclusion, etc., then what drives engagement?

We focused the bulk of our discussion around specific programs that our panelists have implemented or experienced, and more importantly, the impact these programs have on their workforce and the organization as a whole. Two such examples of those programs are the Business Resource Groups (BRG) utilized at HCSC/BCBS and the “leadership walk” program.

The group talked extensively about HCSC’s BRG. These groups are formed based on common bonds between the members, i.e., a Veterans Group, African American Group, or their largest group, EMERGE, which stands for Engaging Millennial Energy to Recognize Growth Enterprise Wide. These groups are each self-governed with chairs, vice-chairs, etc., and are structured like counsel or general assembly meetings focused on advancing their groups’ goals or objectives.

Another program that seems both innovative and easy to implement was simply named, “Leadership Walks.” This can be structured in a number of different ways, but in this example, the walk is held once per month during the lunch hour. The “leader,” who can be anyone from the executive team, communicates to the workforce that they will be in the lobby at 11:45 AM for a lunch hour walk, where anyone can join them for one-on-one time, open dialogue, etc. This simple program is innovative in that it provides a number of unique opportunities both for the employee and the employer. For the employee, the accessibility to leadership provides the opportunity for them to own their own engagement and have clear line of sight to their own role within the organizations overall objectives. It also provides a sense of worth and “meaning” to the work which is one of the most important aspects of engagement. From an employer’s perspective, this walk gives opportunity to hear feedback and ideas from employees in all levels throughout the company and promotes healthy lifestyle, etc.

A theme that continued to emerge throughout the morning’s conversation and a key takeaway from the event is the notion of employees taking ownership of their own engagement by voicing their opinions on how the company can best connect to the company, emphasizing that it is both the responsibility of the employee and their manager to have “critical path” conversations to understand the goals and drivers of the employee. Employees must express what they’re passionate about, what gets them excited about coming to work, etc. Taking these ideas and finding a way to create programs or “connect the dots” between the employee’s passion and the goals of the organization is key to continued engagement for the existing workforce and is also a significant driver for recruiting key talent.

Submitted by Liz Yarger, Assistant Vice President, HUB International

Employee Relations IG, from page 14

working on. For instance, Mary Lauer from Presence Health/Amita shared that as a not-for-profit, their strength is purpose because most people join for the higher purpose. Everyone knows the company values, but opportunity and leadership are the areas they are working on, and they are currently building out their leadership development program. Manuel Cuevas from Motorola shared that his company started with purpose in shifting their culture since it was lofty. By providing products for public safety, they help people be their best in difficult situations. Ann Weiser from the Cubs also shared that purpose was their strength since hope was a big part of the culture.

Submitted by Renee Fath, Director, Employee Relations Consultant Team, CNA Financial
The Talent & Organization Effectiveness Committee recently hosted a stimulating conversation about “Influence Effectiveness” and how to up their brand as a business partner. They turned the tables by bringing in C-Suite leaders to tell us what they love and hate about HR resulting in the advice you are about to read:

Suz O’Donnell, Thrivatize President, set the stage for the meeting with a glimpse into her workshop “Stop Speaking HR, Start Speaking Business Results.” She helps HR leaders get increased support and budget from company leaders. One example she gave is to stop using HR terms when speaking with C-level leaders, and instead use business terms and goals as your lead-in to earn the C-suite leaders’ respect, time, and budget. She says to use terms like “productivity” and “profitability” so they will give you time to talk to them about employee engagement, culture, leadership development, etc. for which you want/need their support and budget.

A distinguished panel of C-Level leaders consisting of Kevin Skibinski—General Manager, Amsted Rail; Nick Smith—Chief Operating Officer, National Safety Council; and Carolyn Dolezal—CEO, The Dolezal Group, LLC provided their advice on these critical HR dilemmas:

Learn how to gain influence… by building trust

To gain influence, you must first establish the trust of the business leaders. In order to do so, you must demonstrate deep understanding of business initiatives, what business leaders do, how they do it, and why they do it.

Ask questions, and continue to operate in a strategic manner; do not get stuck and bogged down by “the processes” component of HR. Nick Smith suggested one way to do this was to go beyond the execution of paperwork, and demonstrate your role as a “fair arbiter to help explain policies and processes and be the ‘policeman’ of those to bring consistency.”

You will continue to build your trustworthiness by being “in the foxhole” with leaders, Carolyn Dolezal says, showing “you have as much at risk as the rest of the leaders,” which gains you respect and credibility. If you want HR to be seen as a trustworthy business partner, this is the time to take risks, engage, and be courageous to push people. Your job isn’t only to process resumes and applications, but to truly help push the business forward. When you support the business as a whole you will get support for your initiatives in return.

Claim your seat at the table…and maintain your position

Once you’ve built the trust to earn your place at the table, your work isn’t done there—you must continue to be engaged, courageous, and offer your opinion. You are not a placeholder; you have valuable opinions. Don’t be afraid to ask provoking questions of leadership and help remove blinders on how they see themselves.

Kevin Skibinski reminds HR leaders to possess a sense of urgency to “show you are motivated to get things done quickly.” Offer to help business leaders build teams composed of “the right people with the right training,” at the right time, and you will be seen as invaluable.

Realize what you can do to assist with current business initiatives. For instance, many companies experience major changes in business strategy and industry trends. If your organization goes through a period of change, such as a merger or acquisition, think ahead to the people and business implications. Don’t be shy to point out the factors that will slow down the process, such as the integration and blending of the two cultures. Ensuring workforce productivity during transition is the #1 way to ensure profitability, so will be appreciated at all levels, if you explain it in business terms. Think ahead to create strategy around employee engagement and productivity, which demonstrate initiative and forward-thinking.

Kevin points out that one thing HR does well is “to put yourselves in the new employee’s shoes.” Set a plan to meet with new division leadership as early as possible. Basically, don’t wait for someone else to do these things because no one else will. When the merger or acquisition goes through swimmingly and cultures are blended nicely, you will have greater retention and rate of productivity, all of which leads to more revenue. HR will be seen as a revenue-maker.

Ask business leaders for more budget … and get it

Many businesses are functioning with limited resources in a very fast-paced environment. HR leaders need to ensure their investments get the same consideration as other areas, and the best way to do this is by leading with data and sharing results. If you want budget for a program or initiative, you must tell them what the “end outcome is” that will help accomplish overall company goals. Carolyn uses the example of sharing that your program will “cut costs or increase revenue. If you can talk about examples of how it is going to make the business run better, then you are more likely to get it.”

Tie everything you can to data, and use those data points to indicate ROI from your ask. When asking for budget, Kevin says one successful avenue is to “point out potential compliance issues, which could cause issues with Legal, which in turn could cost the company money,” and Nick suggests “explaining how your program will keep employees happy and retained.” Whatever your program may be, the more detailed and factual you can be, the more likely you will be able to score the budget you need.

The next steps for you to execute…and be successful

HR has appeared needy over the years in their “ask” to be at the table. Suz O’Donnell says, “Shift that orientation at your organization, so you are leading with the goal of wanting the company to be as effective and efficient as possible, and help them achieve their business initiatives with your role in the organization.”

Be consistent and do your homework. Ask business leaders questions—it’s imperative you don’t have your entire meeting time planned out for you to talk the whole time. Get their feedback while you have face-to-face time. Really listen to what they want, and make sure that your actions line up with those goals. This will help you prioritize and pick your battles. Overall, remember why you are in the room and actively participate in the meetings.

In order to be seen as a true business partner, you must contribute to the conversation, think outside the box, and you must propose business solutions. Build a sense of trust, earn your seat at the table, and keep asking questions and creating strategy that challenges status quo. Focus on integrity, leadership, and courage. Lead with data, and show that HR can be seen as a revenue-driver. When you are able to do all of these things, you will truly be a valued strategic partner.

Submitted by Talent & Organization Effectiveness Committee
Build the bridge between HR and business and impact your organization’s strategy through the 2018 HRMAC Leadership Series! This annual signature series features three programs designed to give you the perspectives and real-life examples from C-suite executives and senior leaders representing various industries. Each session will feature engaging panel discussions moderated by a different subject matter expert for the first time ever. Learn the best practices and competencies needed to drive your team toward success from these experts and your peers at this year’s series, focused on enabling growth, driving inclusion, and blending AI with the workforce.

The series kicks off on February 22 with executives leading a discussion about the constant pressure to demonstrate exponential company growth and how to enable this rapid growth. This executive panel, featuring Bon French, Executive Chairman of Adams Street Partners; Dorie Blesoff, Chief People Officer of Relativity; and Allison Robinson, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of The Mom Project, will address how this can be challenging to the traditional HR model, how HR can operate with increased agility, and what strategy is needed for HR to support the business before, during, and after rapid growth.

Discover how to translate diversity and inclusion initiatives into real business impact during “Driving a Sustainable Culture of Inclusion” on April 19. This issue is not HR’s challenge alone; learn how to build a coalition and culture that will breed accountability throughout the organization from panelists Shawn Mobley, Chief Executive of the Americas at Cushman & Wakefield; Susan Schmitt, Senior Vice President of Human Resources at Rockwell Automation; and William Von Hoene, Jr., Senior Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer at Exelon. The series concludes on June 7 with “The Merging of Artificial Intelligence, Work and the Workforce.” As AI changes the way we think, problem solve, learn, and transact business, companies need to embrace AI into their business models and discover what that means for human capital. Learn more about the knowledge and skills that will be required for HR leaders to keep pace and uncover how to implement the appropriate systems and process with an overarching framework to manage these changes with panelist Shawn Broadfield, Vice President of Claim Strategy and Innovation and Allstate Insurance. Additional panelists will be announced; keep watching the Leadership Series webpage for more information.

Bring your HR teams and your other colleagues to implement a truly effective program across your organization. Group and individual discounts for the entire series end February 16—act now to take advantage of the ultimate savings!
Lead your organization into the future with the brand-new 2018 HRMAC Research Series! This new series highlights the dramatic shifts that organizations are facing and how to combat them with data-driven solutions through three separate programs all centered on a common theme: Evolving HR: Disruptive Trends and Opportunities to Lead into the Future. Uncover the data and research surrounding three of the hottest topics in HR: evolving models of human resources, artificial intelligence, and global talent trends.

Denise LaForte, Partner and HR Transformation Practice Leader for North America at Mercer, and Dan Lezotte, PhD, Principal of Workforce Strategy and Analytics at Mercer, will launch the first session, “High Potential HR: Evolving HR Models to Meet the Rapidly Changing Needs of Business,” on January 25. Discover how to identify what corporate executives want from human resources, how to leverage the right mix of HCM technology and data analytics capabilities, and how to drive results from all of this and more.

Learn how to translate the evolving pivot points in your business model and understand the transformative role AI can play in redefining the performance curve for the work of the future at the March 14 session with Ravin Jesuthasan, Managing Director of Willis Towers Watson’s Talent Management Practice. “Artificial Intelligence and How Work Will Be Redefined” will showcase how companies are rethinking the value of a job and what skillsets companies should invest in to continue empowering the global workforce. Develop your work automation strategy and understand how to re-envision your organization to continue propelling it forward.

The series concludes on May 16 with “Global Talent Trends: Reimagine the Workforce.” Dan Lezotte will return, this time with Dan Rubin, Partner and Central Market Career Business Leader/North America Talent Management Practice Leader at Mercer, to address the challenges employers face in providing career support, new flexibility, and skill building for their employees, all based on a recent Mercer global research study. Gain insights on how you can influence change and address these cited challenges in your own organization, and understand what some organizations are already doing to combat these disruptors on the horizon.

With tangible take-home resources, practical in-session activities, and focused networking with your fellow industry leaders, this new series is one you can’t miss. Bundled registration ends January 19—visit the HRMAC website and register now to take advantage of the ultimate savings.

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Many organizations solicit data from employees through surveys, meetings, and informal discussions. How does your organization capitalize on the information it gathers?

How have you tied HR metrics to the organization’s strategic goals?

Have you transformed employee feedback into concrete actions from your C-Suite? **Tell us how!**

Describe a change episode in an organization where HR leadership made a pivotal contribution.

A great example is what’s going on right now in our organization. We have embarked on a growth initiative. With growth comes change. In addition to the organization design and talent management work, HR is playing a key role on the teams driving our strategic plan and growth initiative. HR plays a lead role in developing and disseminating the communications. We use SharePoint as our communication tool and have created pages which are updated monthly with financial data as well as employee and client focused stories that highlight our key strategies. We provide our managers with talking points so they can discuss our growth initiative in their team meetings.

Leadership style can be pretty deeply engrained in a leader’s professional identity. Have you seen a leader truly adapt his/her style to a particularly challenging situation? What enabled that change?

I’ve seen leaders not so much change their identity but rather rise to the occasion. I know of several situations where a manager had been responsible for one department and then inherited the responsibility for several departments. Managers who were successful in this type of situation were not afraid to ask for help. They built a network of individuals inside and outside the organization who could provide them with guidance and support. With hard work and humility, these individuals turned into true leaders. It is always inspiring to see a leader make this type of transformation.

Nowadays, change is less a one-time crisis and more a continual journey of transformation. What are the bedrock themes to leading effectively in this environment?

Communication and transparency are key. You can never over-communicate with employees and the management team. It is important to share not only the “what” but the “why” and “how.” Employees at every level should know the details. It is important to communicate using a variety of vehicles. Managers need to facilitate regular meetings with their teams to discuss how any changes will affect the team. The team needs to be involved in the solutions to the challenges. The senior management team needs to have honest discussions about challenges and ways to resolve them. Be honest when hiring new employees. You don’t want new employees to be surprised by change. You want them excited to be part of the transformation journey.
SUMMIT 2017

Summit is the premier annual event to lead, develop, and grow within the Chicagoland human resources community. Here is a recap of the 20th anniversary celebration!

91.6% of respondents voted “education” as the #1 reason to attend Summit

87.92% of respondents agreed that Summit educational sessions provided “Excellent” or “Very Good” thought leadership

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75% of respondents agreed that the Summit app was “Excellent” or “Very Good”

38% of companies at Summit sent multiple employees, including teams of 10

73% of respondents found the changes to Summit, including new on-demand badge printing and the Questions desk, “Excellent” or “Very Good”

SAVE THE DATE

SUMMIT 2018 will be held in the heart of Chicago. Mark your calendar to join HRMAC on Thursday, October 11, 2018 at Navy Pier.

www.hrmac.org
NOTICES

Skender Construction recently announced that Vice President of People and Culture Lisa Latronico has been promoted to Partner. Since joining the firm in 2001, Lisa has pioneered many award-winning employee enrichment and recruiting programs, leading the firm to consist recognition as a best place to work in Illinois and Chicago.

Kensington International has promoted two senior employees to equity partner: Nancy Ortega and Tim Bealert. Founding partner Brian Clark expressed enthusiasm about the changes saying, “We look forward to working alongside both to ensure Kensington’s business model will excel far into the future.

United Airlines named Kate Gebo as the new Executive Vice President of Human Resources and Labor Relations. She is replacing Mike Bonds, who announced his retirement earlier this year. Congratulations to Kate!

Forbes named City Staffing as one of America’s Best Recruiting Firms in 2017. Congratulations!

Submit your updates to buzz@hrmac.org!

HRMAC welcomed 11 NEW MEMBERS during the last quarter:

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6/7   The Merging of Artificial Intelligence, Work and the Workforce

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INTEREST GROUPS*
Career Development
2/28  Utilizing Technology in Your Career Search
3/21  The Truth about Working With Recruiters

North/Northwest
2/16  From the Corner Office to the Oval Office: Behaviors Matter

Talent Acquisition
3/9   “Wait—You can’t ask about salary history?”

Young HR Leaders
2/13  Influencing with Limited Authority

WEBINARS
As a HRMAC member benefit, registration for each webinar program is complimentary for the first 50 HRMAC members who register. The HRMAC member rate after the complimentary first 50 is $25. The non-member registration rate is $75.
2/28  A Buyer’s Guide to Talent Assessment
3/7   The Potential and Value of Onsite Clinics
4/25  Patterns of Highly Effective Leaders

HRCI ONLINE EXAM PREP COURSES
2/26–4/9  HRCI HR Fundamentals Online Course (aPHR)
2/28–4/11 HRCI Start Smart Online Course (PHR/SPHR)

*Free programs from February through April 2018