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Thomas Antony
Cornell University

Alysse Merila
Cornell University

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How Do Companies Integrate and Adapt to the HR Business Partner Organizational Model?

Abstract

[Excerpt] Current HR structural models focus on three elements: HR Business Partners (HRBP), Centers of Excellence (CoE), and HR Shared Services. Since David Ulrich's 1997 Human Resource Champions, HR leaders across various industries have begun realigning HR organizations to undertake "strategic business partner" work. To integrate the HRBP Model, they must work to find the most effective role of HR within the business unit to support the transformation process and create strategic alignment. With the rapid change of business, there is a need for HR leadership to also examine their existing HR organizational models in order to support business initiatives and people strategy.

Keywords

HR, human resources, HRBP, business partner, organizational model, shared services, HRSS

Comments

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Executive

Summary

Final Question

How do companies integrate and adapt to the HR Business Partner organizational model and what enhancements to the model are companies doing to meet new business and workforce challenges?

Introduction

Current HR structural models focus on three elements: HR Business Partners (HRBP), Centers of Excellence (CoE), and HR Shared Services ([Figure 1](#))¹. Since David Ulrich's 1997 *Human Resource Champions*, HR leaders across various industries have begun realigning HR organizations to undertake "strategic business partner" work. To integrate the HRBP Model ([Figure 2](#))², they must work to find the most effective role of HR within the business unit to support the transformation process and create strategic alignment. With the rapid change of business, there is a need for HR leadership to also examine their existing HR organizational models in order to support business initiatives and people strategy.

Integration Practices in the HRBP Organizational Model

Common challenges for HRBP models in reaching peak efficiency and integration actions:

- 1) Tension between front end, HRBP, and the back end, expert CoE³
Recommendation: Clarify employee roles and the relationship between the HRBP and CoE to facilitate collaboration. By defining responsibilities between the HRBP and service delivery model, this removes tensions between the front and back end⁴.
- 2) Gaps in organizational design that result in existing processes not being led or driven⁴
Recommendation: Define critical competencies for high performance and create appropriate development initiatives². This will ensure employees with appropriate competencies are matched for the proper roles, teams, and promotions. Further, developing mentorship programs, training courses, and outside recruitment strategies focused on specific skills will strengthen the HRBP role⁴.
- 3) Aligning resources to business need to facilitate HRBP model and its process⁵
Recommendation: Foster model's process efficiency by cutting down the transactional work HRBP complete and moving it to Shared Services Centers, allowing a greater focus on high-impact activities that sync with each business line⁶.
- 4) Implementing feedback loops to evaluate and improve model
Recommendation: Utilize social media to develop processes to measure employee feedback to incorporate end-user feedback to update the HR model. Social media's large toolkit, including blogs, online chats, and wiki-based FAQs, facilitate conversation and personalized service to create an employer-to-employee connection⁵.

Evolutions in HR Organization Model

Despite the widespread adoption of the HRBP model, organizations may still not receive the full return on the investment from the change given the rapid change of the business environment. Companies may consider the following HR organizational enhancements to meet those demands:

Model	Characteristics
Solutions Center	<p>The solutions model addresses the issues that have risen from the HRBP model in terms of who owns the client, the inability of HR to adapt to the continuous changes in business, and balancing business and enterprise agenda. It retains the basic shape of the HRBP but adds a new component—a matrixed group of functional specialists that are the delivery engine for back-end CoE and front-end business partners (Figure 3)². Recently, Deutsche Bank implemented this model and used the new middle groups as an integral part of the HR delivery capability, turning their HR into an internal professional services firm².</p>
Interaction	<p>The Interaction Model is guided by improving the relationship with the client - in this case managers and employees. As HRBP have evolved to become embedded in the business, working directly with departments, clients, and leaders to address business-specific HR challenges, the interaction model looks to transition the HRBP from an operation-focused lens to a relationship driven role⁷. Rather than aligning HRBP to senior executives, the interaction model believes HRBP may find better value by being realigned to scrum masters or project teams⁷. This way, HRBPs can meet the demands in time</p>
High Impact	<p>The High-Impact HR Operating Model, developed by Deloitte, is a blueprint for how the HR function builds on adaptability, innovation, and expertise, freeing HR to focus on business initiatives, develop relationships across silos, and enhance credibility (Figure 4)⁶. Incorporating components of the HRBP model, this customer-centric model brings levels of iterative-stage design thinking, digitalization, and external relationships to help redefine roles and responsibilities.</p>

Conclusion

In order to most effectively integrate the HRBP model to achieve organizational results, HR leaders must work to identify, improve, and measure integration challenges. Developing a customized framework to enhance HR model integration furthers business growth through developing processes, standards, and staffing models that unlock department and employee potential in a fast-growing, global market. As organizations mature, they may consider adapting their models to fit changing environments in order to respond rapidly to their internal and external clients.

Appendix

Figure 1. The Prevailing HR Operating Model



Figure 2. HR Business Partner Model

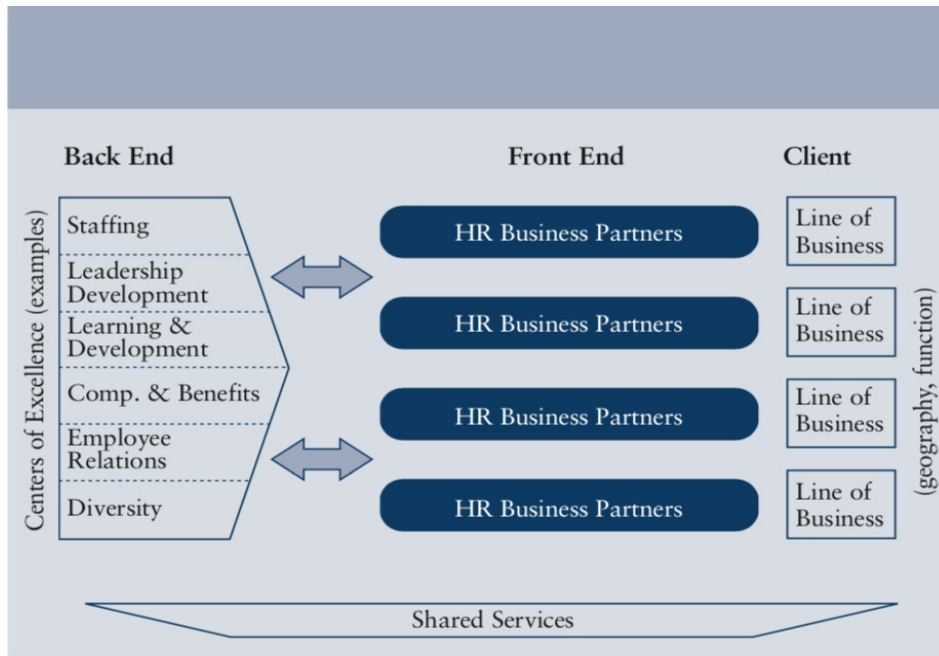


Figure 3. Solutions Center HR Model

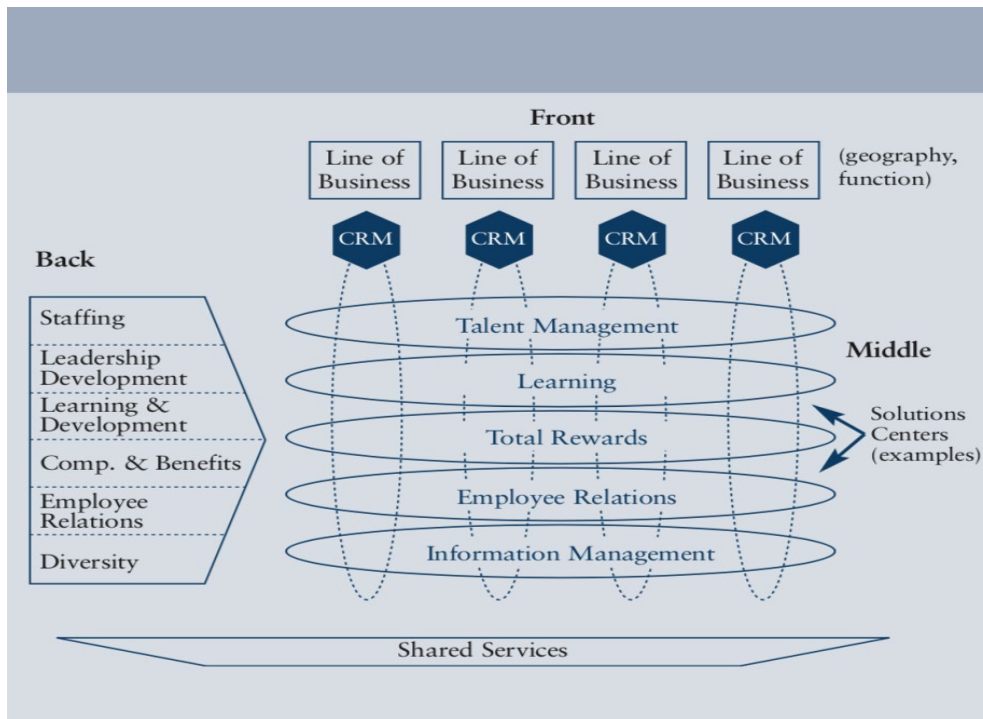
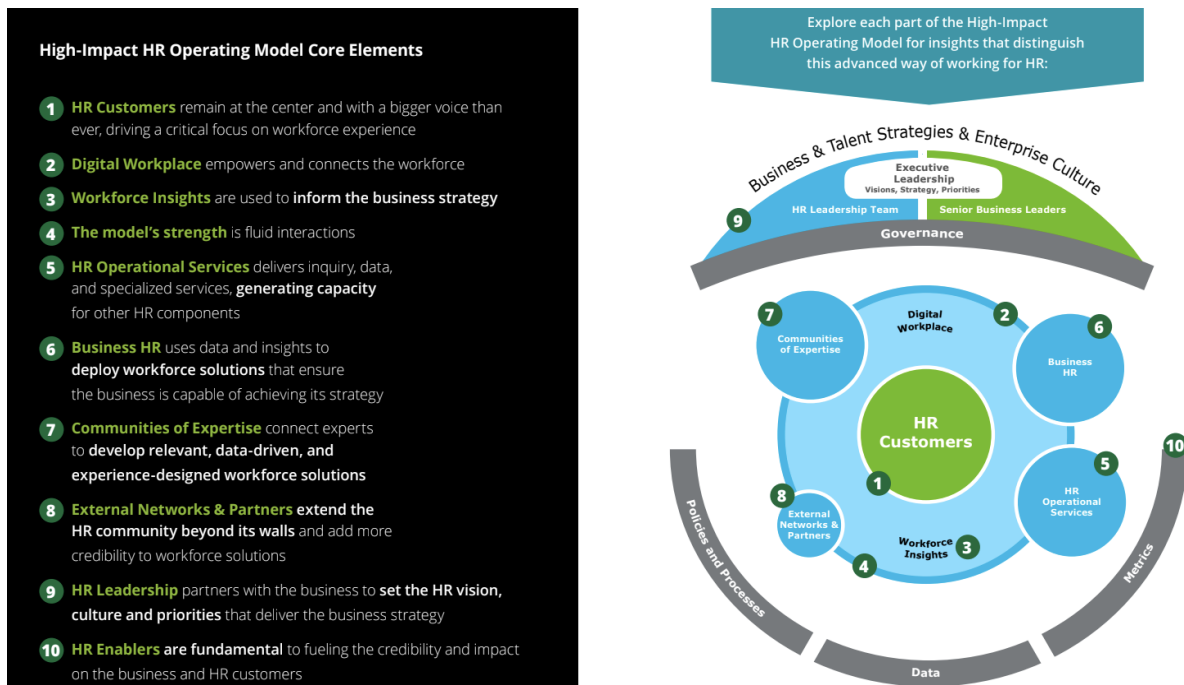


Figure 4. High Impact HR Model



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