



From Human Resources to Human Energy

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Currently most Human Resources Departments in Organisations spend the bulk of their time on things like:

- Leave administration
- Loan applications
- Performance administration
- Training administration
- Recruitment, relocation and retention administration
- Contractual administration
- Remuneration administration and conflict handling
- Disciplinary processes
- Managing disputes and grievances

Most of these issues, although potentially explosive and critical to the smooth running of the business, do not significantly contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives. They are more like hygiene factors, their absence could create problems.

The following issues do contribute positively to the achievement of organisational objectives:

- Understanding the requirements of the business into the future and ensuring that the right people are recruited and or retained to take the organisation there.
- Creating an environment where the energy and creativity of the people can be maximised and unleashed.
- Understanding the needs of the organisations people and designing the business so that as many of their individual needs are met as possible so that their contribution can be positive and creative.

Changes in society have also had the effect that highly skilled and talented people particularly and humans in general expect transparency, fun, freedom speed and instant gratification in all activities and interactions in their lives, including the workplace. People are also demanding that they should be treated as individuals.

In order to accommodate these changes in society and to contribute positively to the achievement of Organisational objectives, Human Resources Departments need to move from Human Resources (HR) to Human Energy (HE).

How do they do this, I hear you ask, well here are some pointers

Understand the future and design a talent map

The biggest shift from HR to HE is to get under the skin of the business and to really know where the organisation is going. Once this is understood a talent map is drawn up against which people are brought into the Organisation or current employees are developed. This enables the Organisation to achieve its objectives. What is critical to understand is that there is a scarcity of highly talented and intellectual people in the world. These people are in huge demand and Enterprises with better talent and intellectual capacity, are most likely going to be the winners. Young bright talented intellectuals can radically transform Organisations as they are fearless, can come up with fresh new ideas and expose the Organisation to new

technology, often with enormous benefits. A leading financial service firm for example recruited a large number of leading young super intellectuals without giving them any specific functions, and let them work their way through the Business. They simply want to feed off their capabilities and let them naturally change the business.

Another practical example is that Companies that plan to migrate onto a new information technology platform recruit people with skills or knowledge of the specific IT system long before the system is actually implemented. The talent map can also be linked to the behaviours and attitudes that might be required by the organisation in the future. Recruitment then takes place against the specific future behaviours and attitudes required, this can for instance be mapped against the future client the business might have to deal with.

Another example is car manufacturers employing bio fuel or alternative energy experts long before they even start producing vehicles that run on alternative power.

One size does not fit all

The one size fits all approach and other traditional ways of treating people must be revamped. The custodians of the status quo must now challenge it. Old HR would have tried by all means to ensure that people are treated the same, sighting restrictive labour laws and regulations and the need to have consistency and equality. The HR department treats people as individuals within certain parameters and Governance requirements. Despite the challenges such as having a unionised workforce, it is possible to achieve unique and individually customised ways of dealing with employees while at the same time being transparent, fair and consistent. To achieve this Organisation's must know their people intimately. From this knowledge, the individual can be custom treated, motivated, rewarded and looked after.

Automate or Outsource traditional HR

Automate and outsource as many HR processes and functionalities that do not directly contribute to the achievement of Enterprise objectives as possible. Just like customers are getting self help functionalities from sophisticated Companies, so too can employees do things for themselves like leave, loan and even training administration. Let the system manage people as far as possible.

There are also numerous external experts that can deal with negative time consuming issues such as disciplinary, conflict and dispute matters. Outsource it if you can. Just keep in mind that outsourcing requires careful consideration as well as detailed planning and contracting. In most cases outsourcing fails due to vague contracts and poor planning and divergent expectations. Outsource properly.

Create a positive Workplace

Create an environment where people want to go to and feel positively energised. HR personnel need to therefore understand something about modern workplace design. Create spaces that are ergonomically designed so as ensure positive experiences and enables the behaviour and interactions that is needed by the Organisation. Having modern meeting rooms, chill areas and other recreational facilities amongst others contribute significantly to this positive energy. Also keep in mind that the workplace is a strong contributor towards the brand image of the enterprise. Old and shabby look and feel gives exactly that brand image.

The definition of the workplace also extends to the virtual workplace and the connectivity of the employee with the Company. Having an intranet with interactive capabilities with fun activities further enhances the workplace experience. Having the ability to connect with work

and do things remotely has the enormous value to an Enterprise. People can for example miss the traffic, Companies can reduce office rentals, people can work when they want to, geographical barriers are destroyed etc.

Brand your people

Employees are brand carriers and in some instance the strongest brand carriers of an Organisation. It is a very powerful strategy to actively brand the business through employees. This is done by systematically ensuring that the employees are given a positive experience of the business, its products and services. A leading car manufacturer for instance gets all its employees to experience its latest models by driving them and the Company highlights the fantastic technology and design of the vehicle. These people can not help but being brand agents. Others take this further by providing clothes and other ways to brand employees. If the brand is funky, it even attracts people to the business. Some people for example would take a drop in salary to work at Harley Davison and Camel.

Motivate

An on going, planned and well designed motivation programme for employees is also essential in the move from HR to HE. The numbers of ways leading Companies motivate their employees are endless but it includes planned actions of day to day recognition of employees in written, electronic, public and other formats, achievement awards, gifts, perks, special privileges, celebrations, career or individual development opportunities. The trick is to have a consistent, planned programme that takes into account individual preferences and needs.

Free your employees

Giving employees freedom to choose also goes a long way towards achieving positive people energy. Freedom can come in the form of employees being given the right to choose or design their own remuneration package, working hours, career path, space or office design, dress and many more. This obviously will only be effective within certain parameters and constrains as complete freedom could lead to complete anarchy, which in most instances are not conducive to positive energy or the achievement of Organisational objectives.

Lets play!

Fun at work has been frowned upon ever since the industrial revolution. Companies believed that they need their pound of flesh for the hours that the person is being paid for and they are not there to play. Things have changed! The best Company to work for in America as voted by Fortune Magazine is Google. Google states clearly on its website their approach is that work and fun is not mutually exclusive. In fact the whole working environment is designed in such a way that employees can have fun while at work. Fun comes in many ways but Google for instance has an on site state of the art gym, a swimming pool, a myriad of games, people can bring their dogs to work, you can have a haircut at work and many other ways you can have fun at work. The world has changed so much that the clear distinction between the various aspects of our lives can not be made anymore. Work, private life and fun can not be as clearly defined anymore. What leading Organisations are doing is to blur the distinctions between employment, fun and the private lives of employees and with that they create positive energy.

Performance Manage

The cornerstone of allowing freedom and fun at the workplace is having a very solid performance management capability in place. Without clear and concise goals, freedom, fun and the achievement of most of the other pointers will fail. Performance management is critical in the successful transition from HR to HE. Please read the article on performance management for more detail on this critical aspect of business.

HR to HE; a final word

It is probably unreasonable to expect Organisations to overnight delete their current HR Department and simply outsource and automate most of its functions, rename the Department and focus solely on HE. What is reasonable is to expect that HR Departments be transformed over time to focus their energy on creating positive human energy and move the focus away from the traditional approach. The end game is to ensure that the future objectives of the Organisation is achieved and to achieve this some hard decisions need to be made about how HR contributes to this.