

# BSP FHRI Convention 2015



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## Corporate Advice



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### NOTE FROM THE Managing Editor

Caryn Walsh is one of our regular columnists. Her column appears in the Business Liftout every first Saturday of the month. She was one of the speakers at the BSP Fiji Human Resources Institute Convention 2015 held at the Sofitel Fiji Resort and Spa and which ends today. This is a special column from Ms Walsh based on her presentations at the convention.

## LEADERSHIP

# Lobster or Left-Overs?

HR LEADERS - CLAIMING YOUR HR SEAT AT THE TABLE OF ORGANISATIONAL GREATNESS

### 3 PRINCIPLES REQUIRED OF MODERN DAY HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGERS

Moving around and consulting to countless Organisations from various sectors, it is apparent to me that HR needs to adopt three key approaches in their everyday operations.

- **Be Strategic** - HR plays a significantly strategic role in any Organisation. HR does not exist to merely hire, fire and learn about tax laws. HR is critical as custodians of the Organisation's greatest asset – its people – to help grow and position people strategically and provide other value adding services to be a key player in driving the business forward
- **Be Focussed** – Modern day HR Managers have much with which to contend and can appear to lack focus. 'They are all over the place' I am told. Stay focussed on your strategy. For eg: Divide HR into sizeable and manageable chunks, with a key focus on growing and developing people, and then, in consultation with the CEO and the CFO, place them in key roles to outmanoeuvre the competitor time and time again. Focus on achieving outcomes that count and spend less time on tasks that don't add strategic value.
- **Be Relevant** – HR is more than merely Administration! Much, much more. HR has to stay relevant. Relevant to the Organisation, relevant in changing times, relevant in global, regional and local business trends and relevant in day to day strategy and operations.

Comments like 'what do they do around here anyway?' and 'they are the largest cost component to the business with the least return on investment' make me realise that many truly don't understand the importance, or value, of HR in their Organisations.

The issues that create these perceptions fuel my concern, and focus, on helping HR practitioners change this misconceived view so that their value and organisational worth are seen as both strategic and critical. And they are valuable members at the 'Table of Organisational Greatness.'

#### CEO Perceptions of HR

In order for HR Managers to understand how their roles are perceived and to position themselves more strategically in the future, it is important to consider research findings about how they are perceived by their leaders.

- 58% of CEO's believe that HR is not on the same level as other Executives (Global Intelligence Survey)
- 67% of CEO's state that HR Managers don't know the business well enough
- 27% of CEO's wonder whether HR is necessary to have in their Organisation at all

Bearing this international research in mind, it becomes critical that moving forward, HR Managers are able to consider all sides of the equation and design an impactful yet pragmatic path to follow to reaffirm the ways in which they can add value.

This is critical if HR is going to be seen as an intrinsic part of organisational success and sustainability.

#### HR short-changed

A recent description of HR that I read defined it as 'a critical component of employee wellbeing in any organisation, no matter the size.

HR responsibilities include payroll, hiring, firing and keeping up to date with tax laws.' (HR Resource: Small Business Encyclopaedia).

Really? Is HR only that? Surely there are more intrinsic and strategic aspects of a business for which HR is responsible that add greater value to the Organisation's success than these four areas only?

As stated above, with 58% of CEO's believing that HR Managers are not on the same level as other Executives, I believe that there

are two reasons that HR is 'short-changed' as a function and the impact they can make on the Organisation's business outcomes overall.

● Firstly HR Managers need to become increasingly strategic about what they bring to the Organisation with a relentless focus on adding value in achieving goals, at all levels, to drive the business forward

● Secondly, it is time that CEO's and other Organisational executives see HR beyond the role of merely administration, recruitment and remuneration and start to truly value the impact HR makes on business outcomes. And allow them to do what they do best!

#### The Golden Triangle – Creating a Formidable G3

Charan (2015) refers to the CEO, CFO and the CHRO as the Golden Three, or G3.

Each are critically as important as the other in playing a vital role in bringing to the table their area of expertise, and bring relevant strategies and approaches to join forces collaboratively to sustain organisational success.

The collaborative relationship between the G3 needs to be a powerful partnership with which to be reckoned.

In charge of the most important asset within any Organisation – the human capital – and by working with the CFO and CEO, HR is able to propel people forward, wherever necessary (using relevant rewards and recognition strategies, development plans and strategic initiatives) throughout the Organisation to equip managers and staff, at any level, to outwit the competition time and time again.

#### HR – Becoming Business Savvy

Becoming business savvy is a key focus required of modern HR practitioners.

Many argue that this is not the role of the HR Manager as their focus is on the people and how they can be adequately recruited, on-boarded and grown to thrive in their roles.

This is indeed true, but if HR is to become strategically relevant in their roles by adding value to the business, they need to become increasingly au fait with how the business operates, its profit and loss demands, brand cycles, marketing and strategic plans, areas of struggle and achievements – and

ultimately learn how to create, and sustain, high performance.

Only then, when they are at the table with other two members of the G3, can they truly help create and sustain Organisational greatness.

#### Lobster, not Left-overs!

By realising their intrinsic worth and the key value they add to the Organisation, the role of HR becomes strategically elevated to where it should be: with a key permanent seat at the table of Organisational Greatness.

But this seat is only obtained by HR consistently assessing and reviewing how they can add ongoing impact in helping the Organisation achieve key business goals, relentlessly looking for ways in which to ensure the areas for which they are responsible are of high quality and ongoing scrutiny. Strategic and impactful HR should never be invited to the table of Organisational strategy and greatness as an 'after-thought' or merely to implement strategies and approaches decided at the table without them having a seat.

HR needs to be a critical player in designing strategy with other key players in the Organisation so they position themselves as part of the business success team. Lobster, not left-overs!

#### Conclusion

As custodians of the greatest asset in any Organisation – people – HR practitioners are encouraged to rethink the role they play within the overall strategy and success of modern day companies.

Organisations don't grow without people. Businesses don't thrive without people.

The administrative function of HR, whilst important, needs to be considered as a necessary daily operation.

But alone it will never add the strategic value adding advantage that more critical aspects of HR provide – strategy, design, predict challenges, constant curiosity.

This is to assess where to develop and move people, rewarding them fairly, creating a culture of achievement and support and help create an exemplary organisation.

Only when this is done, and well, can HR practitioners truly claim their seat at the Table of Organisational Greatness.

### CHANGING NEGATIVE Perspective of HR

Charan (2015) considers there are three ways in which HR practitioners need to become more impactful in their roles. For the purposes of the presentation given to HR Managers at the Conference, I added two of my own:

- HR Managers need to get truly serious about their role and the value they add in creating Organisational Greatness
- Ensure your peers (other Executives) regard your contribution as significant
- Design strategy and predict outcomes
- Anticipate and diagnose problems
- Always add value

### HR 'GREATNESS' Strategies

Stop thinking of yourself as HR only. Rethink your role and your value to the Organisation

Keep thinking of HR as an aspect of Greatness – not an administrative 'after-thought.'

Get serious about understanding the whole business – financial resilience, marketing, sales, the product cycle, loss and profit and distribution channels, for example

Constantly grow your people to match them with strategies and positions that give your business the competitive advantage

Reclaim your position and strength with your peers. They need to perceive HR as value adding and powerful in strategy design and implementation

Be on top of global, regional and local HR trends

Be determined in driving your troops, with commitment, to shine in everything they do, constantly asking themselves 'how can we add value?'

Understand competitive strategies and how you can help your Organisational reshape itself

Get clear about where you add value, all the time and drive relentlessly towards that in everything you do

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