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Section 1

1.)

Long-term planning is an organisation's process of defining its strategy/direction (CIPD, 2021a).

Long-term strategy is a road map for organisational growth and guides employees in their decision-making (Harris, 2020). It outlines measurable goals which optimises collaboration, employee skills, and experience to reach those goals. For it to be successful, the organisation must be committed to the strategy. The organisation can create this culture by involving employees in the strategic plan and communicating with employees to get buy-in which will transfer to an increase in productivity as they will be happy that they were involved in the long-term plans (Wehrley, 2019). At Severn Trent, the business plan allowed employees to know what there were doing, and how they will deliver to their customers (Powell, 2022).

The long-term planning of the organisation is important for HR strategy as HR can put mechanisms in place to reach the long-term goals of an organisation (CIPD, 2021a).

One of the long-term strategic priorities at Coleg Sir Gar (CSG) is to deliver outstanding teaching and learning by improving the Welsh language skills of learners and staff (Coleg Sir Gar, 2022). The HR strategy, therefore, is aligned with this, with a focus on developing the Welsh language through training and development.

There are disadvantages to long-term planning as it can be hard to predict events such as COVID-19 which can impact achieving the long-term plan. For instance, the recession can impact training as it can result in a decrease in budget (Farnham, 2015).

It is important to long-term plan as it provides direction for the organisation however, organisations should set achievable goals as demonstrated by Severn Trent where they were still able to deliver their plans to increase engagement during unpredicted times (Powell, 2022).

2.)

PESTLE and SWOT are helpful with the formulation of organisational and HR strategies.

PESTLE is a useful tool to understand the environment in which organisations operate (CIPD, 2021b). It is a simple framework that can be used to understand and identify risks within the market and put mechanisms in place in response. It can enable organisations to spot business opportunities. For instance, AI is the future of work, which will replace jobs such as administration. Identifying this allows for organisations and HR to strategically plan for the staff that are currently in administrative jobs (Deloitte, 2015), (CIPD, 2021c). Organisations and HR can prepare for this by developing and training these employees to undertake duties that are harder to perform by AI and to address the skills gap. This will drive motivation, productivity, and engagement among these employees (CIPD, 2021c).

SWOT allows organisations to understand key factors such as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the internal organisation by putting mechanisms in place in response to those identified (CIPD, 2021d). It is also a simple framework to use. Severn Trent identified internally that everyone was going through a different kind of experience in the workplace and launched “lunch and learn” sessions and Black History Month celebration virtually. This resulted in people coming together to share

things which leads to an increase in employee engagement, motivation, and productivity (Powell, 2022).

The disadvantage to these frameworks is that the rate of change can make it difficult to anticipate developments that may affect the organisation such as the financial crisis of 2008 and COVID-19 which may impact the strategy.

Both frameworks are beneficial for strategic planning as identified above but will need to be repeated regularly to identify rapid changes (CIPD, 2021b).

3.)

The CIPD professional map sets out the skills required by an HR professional (CIPD, 2022a). Effective leadership, communication, and listening skills are required in HR to support the organisation through change such as the pandemic (CIPD, 2021e). HR should create a change plan which details the vision, objectives, benefits, and communication strategies (Perkins & Woodhams, 2016).

During periods of change, it is important to have good communication from the beginning by communicating through either top-down/bottom-up channels or two-way discussions (CIPD, 2021e). This was demonstrated through Severn Trent where during the pandemic they ran a regular CEO video blog and a cross-company news bulletin on restrictions. They did this to help people process information in a way that made sense to them. They also thought of different communication methods to communicate with different employee groups such as those that do not sit in front of a computer by putting information on walls (Powell, 2022). CSG implemented similar communication methods such as regular Principal videos and weekly bulletins on the internal gateway on any Government changes.

Good leadership skills such as honesty and integrity during periods of change are important so that the employee feels valued. Individuals resist change when communication is broken and when they do not understand the purpose of the change.

HR needs to have good listening skills to listen to any concerns that employees may have and to provide answers and advice (Huberman, 2022). HR may need to provide training for employees to feel comfortable with the proposed change (CIPD, 2021e). For instance, before lockdown employees at CSG had never worked from home. This meant that CSG had to provide quick IT training on how to deliver teaching online to help with the transition.

It is also best practice to implement change champions in the organisation to facilitate change such as implementing a new IT system (CIPD, 2021e).

Kurk Lewin (1950) model of change is a useful model for HR to use during periods of change where it is made up of three stages (Cummings et al, 2016):

- Unfreezing – Ensure that the employees are ready for the change by communicating the benefits and the reason. Important for HR to let employees participate in the change from the beginning.
- Change – Execute the intended change.
- Freezing – This is about finding stability after the change. This is where change is accepted.

Viscose Closures LTD is an example of an organisation that has not implemented change effectively after a newly appointed CEO forced all employees to return to the

workplace full-time. This has resulted in employees resisting the change causing employees to resign as they were not consulted, involved, or communicated.

HR needs to implement change effectively by referring to models such as Kurk Lewin (Cummings et al, 2016). It is important to communicate with employees and include them in the change (Huberman, 2022). It can be difficult to include employees in unpredictable changes but HR should include them as soon as possible as demonstrated in the case study and at CSG.

Section 2

2.1b)

The pandemic and Brexit have impacted recruitment and retention in many organisations. Currently, organisations are competing in a tight labour market where there is an increased level of employment (Reid, 2022). Unemployment rates have fallen further in the UK and are currently at 3.9% (CIPD, 2022b). This has an impact on recruitment as it makes it harder to find recruits with those desired skills and the demand for these people outstrips the supply. Recruits that have those skills have an increased bargaining power where they have greater autonomy over the rate of pay, flexibility and, working conditions (Farnham, 2015).

This has been demonstrated within CSG where the organisation has struggled to recruit a Lecturer in Accountancy because industry pays more in comparison to public sector salaries. This resulted in the recruit negotiating his salary to match the industry.

Potter's five forces (1998) can be used to identify the main sources of competition in the industry by looking at the 5 areas (Figure 1).

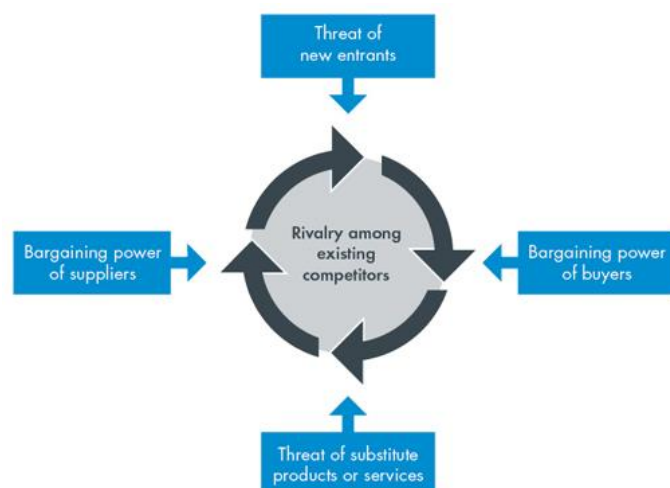


Figure 1 - Porters five forces (Mind Tools, n.d)

HR can use this to adjust its strategy to stay ahead of the competition. This model does have its disadvantages as it only concentrates on the five forces and does not consider technological advances which is one of the biggest threats (Mind Tools, n.d).

A major disadvantage to CSG is that it does not offer hybrid working in comparison to its local competitor, Gower College. Since the pandemic, there has been an increase in home-working and people have enjoyed the benefits that it brings such as a better work-life balance. 85% of employees according to ONS (2021) want a hybrid approach to working and employees are seeking jobs where employers offer them this. Organisations that do not offer this will lose out to competitors (Brown, 2021). This has resulted in recruitment difficulties at CSG.

Brexit has also impacted organisations such as the NHS where recruiting overseas is difficult causing a low shortage of staff which was evident through the pandemic (Hacker, 2021).

Several strategies can be developed by HR to survive in a tight labour market: (Farham, 2015):

- Recruitment initiatives – allocating a greater budget for recruiting staff by designing better advertising.
- Retention initiatives – HR need to understand why people leave by issuing surveys and then acting accordingly. Feedback from recent surveys within CSG

has indicated that employees want hybrid working. This should be implemented to compete against competitors.

- Development initiatives – Developing employees by upskilling them. When employees feel valued and invested they will be happy which will result in them being motivated, productive, and engaged and they will be less likely to leave.
- Improving employer brand - Understanding how the employer brand is perceived by stakeholders by holding focus groups and communicating what the brand stands for.
- Company benefits - Focusing on improving and advertising company benefits to gain a competitive advantage, for instance, CSG has free parking, staff discounts, cycle to work schemes, and wellbeing days. As CSG is a public organisation, the salary tends to be lower than a private organisation but benefits such as the generous pension scheme are much greater making it a major competitive advantage (Reuben, 2021).

The pandemic and Brexit have both caused recruitment and retention issues in organisations. Implementing the strategies suggested by Farnham (2015) will keep CSG well placed in the labour market.

2.2a)

The pandemic has raised the profile of flexible working and demonstrated its feasibility and benefits. Flexible working requests such as home-working have increased because of the increase in productivity that it brings with 16.8 more days being worked a year compared to office workers. Flexible working reduces turnover with 80% of respondents stating they would be more loyal to their employer if they provide flexible working (Castrillon, 2022).

Flexible working has been proven to improve engagement, job satisfaction, and reduce absence rates (CIPD, 2021f). According to ONS (2020), sickness absences were 0.9% in 2020 compared to 2.2% with staff that did not work from home. This is because homeworking allows for employees who are feeling a little unwell, to work from home.

If public policy took this concept and suggested that organisations strongly considered implementing a standard four-day working week then this would maximise the benefits mentioned above further as it will allow for employees to have a three-day weekend (Jolly, 2022). A study conducted by a New-Zealand based company analysing a four-day working week concluded that employee job satisfaction, teamwork, work-life-balance, and company loyalty increased further and employee stress decreased from 45% to 38%. Norway has adopted a four-day working week and they are one of the

world's most productive country which demonstrates the benefits it brings (Change, n.d). A four-day week would also mean that employees would be able to spend more time with family. Employees would be better rested and take fewer sick days. Implementing this would be highly attractive to recruits and would be seen as a competitive advantage (Jolly, 2022). Carbon footprint would significantly improve as it would result in less commuting and research suggests that it would be reduced by 127 million tonnes and it would take 27 million cars off the road during rush hour. It will enable employees to save money on commuting if travelling for four days (Jolly, 2022). Morrisons (2022) has introduced this where there has been a reduction of weekly hours from 40 to 37.5 hours over four days where they have experienced the above benefits.

Introducing a four-day week does have its disadvantages as identified by Christian (2022). Some organisations may introduce a four-day week where employees are expected to reduce their full-time contract of 37 hours to 28 hours per week meaning that this will impact their finances. With the increase in energy bills, NI, tax, and cost of living, employees will not be able to afford to live. A four-day week could also mean that organisations ask for employees to condense their 37 hours into a 4-day week which can result in burnout of employees which could decrease productivity, engagement, motivation, and increase sickness because of stress. Work-life balance during those four days would also be affected. Whilst a four-day week could work in

some organisations it can be difficult for organisations such as CSG where it would be difficult to teach and timetable classes into a four-day week for them to cover the curriculum.

Flexible working has demonstrated its benefits and research does suggest that a four-day working week would have a strong case, however, there is still a lack of research on this, and companies are still being trialled in the UK to understand the full impact on employees and organisations.

2.3.a)

Legislation including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Minimum Wage Act 2022 both have an impact on organisations (GOV.UK, 2022a), (GOV.UK, 2022b).

The **Data Protection Act 2018** is the UK implementation of the GDPR Regulation which is an act where everyone who is using personal data has to follow strict rules known as “data protection principles” (Figure 1) (GOV.UK, 2022a).

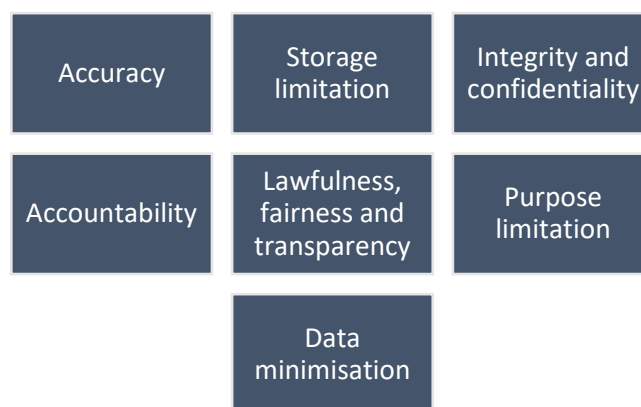


Figure1 - Data Protection Principles (GOV.UK, 2022a)

With this act, there is stronger legal protection for sensitive information such as those mentioned in figure 2 (GOV.UK, 2022a)

Race	Ethnic background	Political opinions
Religious beliefs	Trade union membership	Genetics
Biometrics	Health	Sex life or orientation

The advantage of this act for CSG is that

Figure 2 - Legal protection (GOV.UK, 2022a)

allows for employees/public to have confidence in the college when they know the organisation is following the data protection principles and that their data is safe and used correctly and destroyed within a justifiable timeframe. Cyber security is on the

increase in the UK with over 400,000 reports of fraud and cybercrime in 2021 (GOV.UK, 2022c). This increase has meant that CSG have upgraded their technology and invested in the cloud to keep data safe and to avoid heavy fines through cyber-attacks. Being compliant means that it is less likely that information falls into the wrong hands as only a few professionals should have access to critical data in the organisation. Complying leads to employee trust which creates a positive reputation and brand which can be a competitive advantage.

CSG have to continuously monitor data compliance on an ongoing basis, review policies and practices, check the security of information stored, consider how data is used, and audit information systems to find out who holds what data (CIPD, 2021g).

CSG have made it compulsory for all employees to undertake the data protection training to ensure that everyone is clear on the principles. This has had an overall positive impact on the organisation as no data protection has been breached and employees have confidence in the organisation.

The disadvantages of not complying with GDPR can lead to reputational damage as experienced by Twitter where they exposed private tweets in 2019 for over four years and failed to notify the regulator within 72 hours of breaching the act. As a result, this cost Twitter \$450,000 causing reputational damage. This can impact recruitment and retention if not done correctly (BBC, 2020).

The Minimum Wage Act 2022, sets out the minimum amount of pay a worker is entitled to per hour based on an employee's age. In April 2022, the National Minimum Wage was amended (GOV.UK, 2022b). Organisations, therefore, have to legally implement this by changing salaries.

The advantage of this is that for the organisation the minimum wage is a cheap way to employ staff (GOV.UK, 2022b).

The disadvantage to the organisation is that there is a risk that organisations will not be able to afford to pay the minimum wage if it increases which will create unemployment resulting in the hourglass occupational structure (Farnham, 2015). It can result in the unskilled and younger individuals not being able to find work.

Matalan failed to pay minimum wage to workers and came under fire in 2021. This results in poor employer brand and reputational damage (Webber, 2021).

Both legislations have impacted organisations and provide clear employee rights which can have a positive impact on organisations if they are implemented correctly. If not, they can experience negative and long-term consequences.

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