

Brogan Jade Ellis. Organisational Performance and Culture in Practice.

Q1. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of both a divisional structure and a matrix structure, within the evaluation, you should include the reasons for underpinning each structure. (AC 1.1)

Tingsager and Smith (2022, P. 53-63)

A divisional structure focuses on communication, the division of tasks, and personal responsibilities. They operate like smaller companies, whereby internal communications are distributed more quickly. The challenge with this however, is ensuring that all communication reaches isolated areas. If communication fails to land, it could have a negative impact on the company's culture. To minimise the risk, divisional structures should have a clear strategy in place as to how they share information. This could be via team meetings, or across digital platforms.

Divisional structures operate independently, they work both flexibly and autonomously. This enables them to react more quickly to market change. The downfall of this, however, is work can be duplicated, as each department has its own micro-functions. This means, processes and procedures are removed, leading to inconsistencies within the business. Considerations should therefore be made as to how organisations can operate effectively, without losing influence over its organisational performance. Failing to manage this could lead to conflict, as employees could feel they are being treated unfairly. Regular performance reviews will also be important, as companies can use continual feedback loops, to improve their strategies.

(Evonik, 2020) Decided to restructure in 2020. They outlined that moving to a divisional structure made workloads easier and employee roles clearer. Efficiencies within the company also improved. Resulting in an approx. reduction of 150 positions, saving the company 25 million Euros, by the end of 2021.

Although there are many benefits to divisional structures, organisations should be mindful of the potential risks.

Hall (2013) Suggests there are many pros and cons to matrix structures.

Communication and collaborations tend to better than what is seen within divisional structures, as traditional barriers are removed. Sharing best practice is also encouraged. Resource, staff and equipment can also be deployed quicker, with skills and expertise being better utilised. Role and responsibilities, however, are unclear, as individuals feel they are being pulled in all different directions. This is exasperated, by the fact, that many employees have multiple reporting lines. Finally, decision making can be harder, as many Managers fight for the final say.

Q2. Analyse the extent to which the organisational strategy in your organisation helps ensure products or services meet customer's needs. (AC 1.2)

Following reading, **Tingsager and Smith (2022, P. 42-53)** It's clear to me our organisation follows a 'planned' approach to strategy.

(CIPD, 2024) States that employees' knowledge, skills and abilities are assets, which all organisations should invest in, in order to drive value. In my opinion, National Grid's people strategy, aligns perfectly with this.

(National Grid, 2025) "We attract, retain, and develop our workforce, to support the transition to a cleaner energy future for all."

During the strategic analysis phase, our HR department conducted a SWOT analysis. This highlighted that the business was attracting good quality talent, but losing potential candidates due to our inability to offer flexible working. The opportunity for us here would be to work with local schools and/or colleges, to educate them as to our apprenticeship programmes, attracting the younger talent. The threat however, is that some females may not want to apply, as our current workforce is predominantly male.

Strategic development focused on setting SMART objectives.

S - We want to attract more females.

M - Our success can be measured via recruitment data pre and post initiative implementation

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A - We will try and achieve this by researching better benefit offerings, targeted at females, such as childcare vouchers.

R - This is a relevant as it aligns with our overall people strategy.

T - We will aim to achieve this by 2030.

During the implementation phase, the HR team focused on a roadmap to success. This involved; Understanding how we communicate these objectives, track our performance and consider what resource we have to support us.

When analysing the strategy, I think about the following; The HR team have looked at potential benefit offerings, which may attract more female talent, this is championing both diversity, and employee engagement. We have also identified ways of attracting younger talent, offering routes to entry, engaging a younger workforce. I therefore feel, our strategy meets the needs of our customers quite adequately.

This is backed up by our current employee retention rates; as 73% of employees suggest they would stay for more than 5 years.

Q3. Analyse the current impact of interest rates, inflation and one other external factor on your organisation. Identify organisational priorities arising from your analysis. (AC 1.3)

(Edu, 2025) Explains that fluxions in interest rates can have a significant impact on the energy sector. As companies such as National Grid, need a substantial amount of capital in order to ensure they are covering their costs to explore technological advancements. This could have a negative impact on our share price, as some investors may worry that we may not have enough funds to expand our network. This is a long-term worry for us, and poses a significant risk to our business. This may also have a detrimental impact on HR, as lower share prices mean we have less money to invest in employee compensation and benefits. Therefore, we need to be borrowing sensibly, ensure we are lending only on the lowest interest rates and only spending when necessary.

(Ofgem, No Date) Standard charges are the fixed portion of a customer's energy bill, that is used to help National Grid cover the costs to maintain, operate and upgrade the energy network. The current standard charge is set to 32.67p. This is however, impacted by inflation. For example, if the costs of labour to repair the network increase, Ofgem will have to consider this when setting their standard charges.

(Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023) Suggests that the transition to net zero will cost 'NGED' between £270 and £350 billion. It's therefore important that 'NGED' prioritise, reporting correctly to the energy regulator, ensuring they can realistically determine whether or not the energy price cap is fit for purpose.

(National Energy System Operator (NESO), No Date)

The Energy Act 2023, enforced a new law recently, whereby a new independent system planner and operator had to be introduced. This has meant our previous operator was made redundant. Creating a need for a restructure.

HR have since been managing this, attempting to focus on the upskilling of our existing staff, as opposed to looking for talent elsewhere. The challenge with this however, is to ensure that the process is being done consistently and fairly. As a result, our priorities have been to: ensure we manage our employee's expectations, offering continuous support throughout. Ensuring engagement levels don't dip, by offering employees a platform to voice their concerns and ensuring our actions are carried out both ethically and in accordance with employment law.

Q4. Assess the extent that AI is, or could be used in your organisation and assess how AI impacts work. (AC 1.4)
(Mackenzie, 2023) Highlight that artificial intelligence is a broad term that encompasses several types of technology. It is also being widely used to help HR improve business decisions.

As an organisation we use AI in the following areas;

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Recruitment – AI supports us in finding the right talent, analysing CV's and matching them to job descriptions. 'Workable', an AI extension, currently uses our existing data to pull together a list of potential candidates, scraped from those 'open to work' on LinkedIn. This saves us copious amounts of time, in re-advertising job adverts if engagement levels are low. This also ensures we are not missing any potential candidates, due to fatigue.

We also use AI – to assess employee engagement levels. For example, the 'GRID' survey, is released once a quarter, and helps us to understand how employees feel about the workplace. Within this, we aim to assess culture and how employees feel about their managers. The AI then automates this data and identifies patterns and trends for us. This allows the HR team to then focus on these specified areas. This ensures objectives are streamlined, decisions are backed by data, and grey areas are minimised.

(Breibach, 2024) Assesses the challenges than can arise with algorithmic decision making, and suggests that although organisations are using technology to automate completion of tasks, they should be aware of the risks that come with AI, when they start to create algorithms of their own. When AI is self-driving, organisations have highlighted, that data returned is unreliable. Questions have also been raised as to whether data gathering has been done in the most ethical way. I therefore, feel considerations should be made as to what levels of human intervention need to be taken in order to ensure AI is behaving appropriately.

(CIPD, 2024) Furthermore, I know the business is looking to explore other options. The CIPD suggest adopting a HRIS system. Our HR department is going through massive structural change at the moment, so I wouldn't be surprised if they looked to explore this route of automation.

Q5. Explain Charles Handy's model of organisational culture, and explain David Rock's theory. (AC 2.1)

(Bizconesh, 2020, 0:29).

Power culture. This is seen when a select few make the majority of the decisions within the company. Closely related to centralised structures. The benefit of this is quick decision making. The challenge however, is that these individuals tend to crumble under pressure. An example of this can be seen within Tesla. Elon Musk makes all the key decisions there, including influencing all the company's strategy and goals.

(MindTools Content Team, 2025)

Role culture is when you have rules and regulations in place. This can be seen within traditional hierarchical structures. The disadvantages of this however are silo mentality, often seen within most cooperate banks.

Task culture focuses on specific projects or tasks. The benefit of this is effective communication. Seen within matrix structures. The downfall however, is confusion. As most employees have multiple managers to report to. This is commonly seen in advertising agencies.

People or person culture is when employees have the freedom to work autonomously. This is often seen when individuals are specialists within their roles. Similar to what is seen within most law firms. The disadvantage of however, is that people act with self-interest, only focusing on tasks that benefit themselves.

(Rock, 2009, 1:06)

David Rock's SCARF model is based on neuroscience research which implies that five social domains activate a threat or reward response. Understanding this model, suggests you can obtain the ability to influence others by trying to engage them into a reward state.

S - Our relative importance to others. This is when we evaluate ourselves against others. For example, when people receive negative feedback, they perceive this to be a threat to their status. Therefore, a manager's way round this would be to ensure individuals have an opportunity to evaluate themselves during one to ones, and appraisals.

C - Our ability to predict the future. If we are uncertain of something, our brains start to work overtime. Managers who provide clear expectations, can ease this uncertainty, making people feel more comfortable.

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A - Our sense of control. Micromanagement is the biggest threat to autonomy. Managers can demonstrate they their trust within their employee group by allowing them to be a part of the decision-making processes.

R - Our lack of relatedness can make us feel lonely. Managers can encourage relatedness by facilitating team bonding exercises.

F- Our perception of what is fair or not. If we deem something as being unfair, this will activate a threat response. Managers should aim to be as transparent as possible in order to ensure fairness is demonstrated.

Q6. Assess how employee selection or employee development impacts organisational culture and behaviour in your organisation (AC 2.2)

Kassu (2023) Suggests that according to McKinsey research, a lack of development or growth opportunities led around 60% of employees leaving their jobs. Whilst opportunities for growth, keep talent engaged and committed by improving workers' sense of well-being.

Bestford (2023) Outlines employee engagement is a crucial factor for success. When Employees are engaged, they are more productive, motivated and committed to their work.

In our organisation, we have a large focus on employee development. One of our main focuses are the upskill of our existing staff. Every six months we hold 'personal development reviews.' These are when we discuss the individual's performance to date, and areas where they would like to develop. Once everything is outlined, I then facilitate this. This can be done either via traditional one to ones/ peer coaching, or through our professional training school. Following achieving individual goals, regular check-ins are conducted to individuals are consistently striving for more.

Since focusing on this area, I have seen a massive improvement in employee engagement. Employees now recognise, we are investing time and money into their professional futures. Fostering a continuous improvement culture. Employees also feel more comfortable to ask for support, when they would previously shy away from this. This has led to better collaboration within the workplace, as employees now feel more open to share their skills. Finally, retention rates have increased. Employees now feel more valued and therefore this has increased their loyalty. In terms of behaviours, individuals are now behaving more ethically also. More accountable for their own performance. It's also created a better sense of community, as individuals now are in the habit of reaching out to each other when they need support.

(National Grid, 2025) Highlight, that we are investing in our people so that we provide a workplace where all employees can thrive.

Q7. An organisation is planning a change relating to hybrid working. Many employees moved to home working during the covid-19 pandemic. Whilst this approach worked well at the time, the organisation now wants all employees to work at least two days a week on site. Explain how Kotter's approach to manage change could be used to successfully implement this change. (AC 2.3)

(CIPD, 2024)

Kotter's model outlines that successful change requires strong leadership and robust decision-making processes.

(NHSElect, 2002)

Stage 1,2, & 3 include; Creating a sense of urgency, building a strong team, and ensuring the vision is clear.

Creating a sense of urgency, helps to motivate. This can be facilitated by having open and honest conversations with individuals, as to why changes are being happening. In this instance, why the business is moving from a home working environment to a hybrid working environment. Urgency also needs to be established, ensuring everyone is aware the change is affecting all, and not just the minority.

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Building influential teams is important. This helps to influence. In this scenario, we could ask the CEO, to communicate the first stages of the process, and other departments such as HR and IT to communicate the later. Asking influential people like this, to be involved, will ensure the process gains better buy-in.

Finally, it's important that the vision is clear. This can be done, for example, by providing short, detailed summaries, as to what the future may look like. Emails and posters can help with this.

The next three stages discuss; communication, obstacles and creating short terms wins.

It's important to re-enforce messages frequently and powerfully. Team meetings and one to ones are a good opportunity to do this.

We need to check for potential barriers. A lot of lives have changed since covid-19, and therefore, childcare, and lifestyle changes, could be some of the reasons as to why individual are reluctant to change. The HR department should support with this, understanding individual needs.

Celebrating quick wins is also important, as helps to build momentum. In this scenario, the office return could be implemented in phases, providing us with the opportunity to celebrate at each stage. For example, 80 people returned to office, 100 people returned, etc.

The final two stages cover implementation and sustaining phases.

Achievements and improvements need to be analysed at each stage; this ensures we consistently re-aligning our performance to meet our objectives. Using outcome-based evaluation methods will support here, as it will provide a holistic view of what we have done well and what we need to improve on.

To make the changes stick, organisations should imbed changed into their core values. In this scenario, creating a hybrid working policy, to support managers, in attempting to continually drive change.

Ifah and Rach (2025) Outline following Kotter's model will achieve the best results for change, as it will improves employee engagement, provides a structured approach to change, and ensure all communication is transparent.

Q8. Using the Kubler-Ross change curve, discuss how change is experienced. (AC 2.3)

(Elisabeth Kubler-Ross foundation, 2024)

The change curve, is a model describing the emotional changes people go through when faced with change.
Jackson (2023)

Laura Whittle – A people change manager, outlines: everyone within HR should have an understanding of the change curve, as this helps individuals to be more self-aware, have an understanding of how others react to change, including behaviours and tone

The five stages to change are;

1. Denial stage, this involves disbelief or resistance to change.
2. Anger. This happens when the reality sets in. Individuals become frustrated and fuelled with resentment.
3. Bargaining. This is when individuals feel they have lost control. At this stage, they will try and bargain and negotiate terms.
4. Depression. This happens when individuals finally come to terms with the change. In some scenarios, employees will experience feelings of sadness or hopelessness.
5. Acceptance. This is when individuals finally accept the change and adapt to the new situation.

Understanding the change curve can help organisations support individuals with their reactions to change.

Jabri (2021) Outlines how the change curve can be applied to some organisational changes. During the first stages, managers need to be more sensitive to employee needs, giving them and opportunity to process what is being asked of them. When individuals move on to bargaining stage, managers need to listen, but firmly remind

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employees that the change is happening regardless. During the depression stage, managers need to be empathetic, until acceptance is reached, whereby they can then work together to find new ways of working.

Q9. Assess the importance of wellbeing at work and assess how good work could impact wellbeing (AC 2.5)

There are many supporting arguments that suggest that supporting wellbeing practices can provide both companies and employees with benefits.

(Great Place to work, 2024) Suggest, that high levels of employee wellbeing can produce higher levels of productivity, lower attrition rates and reductions in absenteeism's.

(Institute of government and public authority, 2024) Say that good wellbeing initiatives help retain and attract talent. According to a 2023 Gallup poll, 61% of employees suggested due to their company's ability to offer an attractive wellbeing package, they remained loyal.

(Mindwell, 2025) Stipulates that poor mental health costs employers between £33 billion and £42 billion a year, therefore investing time and resources into staff wellbeing makes both moral and organisational sense.

Having an organisation that's support wellbeing in the workplace, improves employees;

- Overall physical and mental health,
- Increases engagement and motivation,
- Increases job satisfaction,
- Reduces stress and burnout.

The organisation also benefits from;

- Increased productivity
- Reduced absenteeism
- Lower healthcare costs
- An improved workplace cultures

(CIPD, 2024) The CIPD believes that 'good work' plays a fundamental role in supporting individuals' wellbeing at work. It outlines that companies should consider the following, to achieve 'good work'.

- Fairly rewarding people for what they do, giving them the opportunity to securely make a living.
- Providing opportunities for upskill, demonstrating commitment to the cause
- Promoting healthy work life balances, by giving employees a voice to shape their working lives
- Creating supportive wellbeing practices, that are accessible to all

(Healthy working lives, 2025) State that companies using 'good work' initiatives can benefit from the same positive outcomes mentioned above. In addition, employees can benefit from job security, a good income, and a sense of purpose.

Q10. Provide a brief overview of the employee lifecycle and discuss people practice roles at the recruitment, development and separation stages of the lifecycle. (AC 3.1)

Smith and Mitchell (2022, P. 90-106)

Attraction. This is when employees first become first aware of the organisation. At this stage its important companies understand the five variants of generation that may apply, as this may influence what is included within the advert or which company benefits you choose to highlight.

Recruitment. At this stage the company decides exactly what type of role and the number of vacancies they want to fulfil. This includes conducting a job analysis, creating a job description, a person specification and advertising the role.

Selection. This phase is broad and starts with candidates to consider and ends with one contract being offered. Recruitment tends to take care of the steps in-between. These are; creating an application procedure, setting a

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deadline and scheduling the interviews. The interviews themselves are then handed over to the Hiring Manager to conduct.

Onboarding. This is a period of transition between the new starter joining and becoming fully competent within their roles.

Employee development. This involves people management professionals becoming heavily invested in the development of their staff.

Employee retention. It's important for companies not only to understand how to bring people into the business, but how to keep them too. This is achieved by improving employee engagement levels. Companies can also become aware of pitfalls via; conducting exit interviews and attitude surveys. This will tell them where employees feel the company is falling short, giving them an opportunity to improve.

Separation. There are four ways an employee can leave a business, voluntary, through retirement, redundancy or dismissal.

Walker (2023, para. 2) Explains that HR can optimise the attraction stage, by helping the company market effectively. This could be via creating attractive careers pages, for example. They could also support the company's online presence, by writing regular blog posts about exciting updates happening within the company, boasting how great the company is to work for. HR can also ensure that all job listings outline the company's culture.

HR also play an important role in optimising the development stage. Responsible for continually assessing whether the training offered, is continuing to meet the business needs. For example, if the industry changes in any way, does this mean the learning and development offerings need to change also? HR can utilise 360 feedback to identify skill gaps, in addition to ensuring robust appraisal procedures are in place, to optimise employee progression.

Wizehire (2024) The HR team can also optimise the separation stage, by conducting robust exit interviews. This will ensure the business is continually gaining feedback as to what their improvement areas are. In addition, implementing various feedback loops, such as basic engagement surveys, and focus groups, will also ensure the company is catching employee dis-engagement before it becomes a problem.

Q11. Analyse how people practice supports organisational strategy through vertical integration and how people practice supports wider people strategies through horizontal integration. (AC 3.2)

(Tingsager and Smith, 2022) Explain that both vertical and horizontal integrations focus on aligning HR practices with business strategy and the people functions. Vertical integration ensures HR practices support the overall business objectives, whilst horizontal integration optimises relationships between the HR functions themselves. As an example, **Wall Street Prep Inc (2024)** State that Nike, uses vertical integration to ensure consistency in their quality control processes. This is supported by the HR department ensuring that the training programmes offered are robust. Whereas, **Magsino (2023)** explains that Marriott, used horizontal integration, to merge HR teams from both Marriott and Startword Hotels to work on a compensation and benefits strategy to ensure a more dynamic approach was considered for the organisation.

(Tingsager and Smith, 2022) Highlight that both horizontal and vertical integration strategies ensure alignment in HR practices. This allows people departments to work cohesively together. Organisations can then maximise their impact. It also creates a more collaborative approach, leading to a smoother and more effective HR process. It prevents contradictions and helps the organisations to develop more strategic and holistic strategies.

(Wester, 2023) Explains that people practitioners can use horizontal integration, to ensure recruitment practices align with training programmes. This ensures new employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform well within their roles. HR can also ensure performance management frameworks are aligned with compensation strategies for example, providing employees with clear high-performance incentives.

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(CIPD, 2025) Suggest however, that people practitioners can use vertical integration strategies to ensure recruitment hires individuals who are fit for the company's culture.

By aligning practices, employees feel more valued and engaged, which ultimately promotes better job satisfaction and higher company turnover.

Q12. An organisation is planning to introduce a four-day working week. Discuss the process the people function could use to consult and engage with managers and employees to understand their needs when moving from a five to a four-day working week. (AC 3.3)

(ACAS, 2025) ACAS suggest that there are two types of consultation processes, informal and formal.

The informal process aims to gather information, helping to understand employee/manager concerns. Whilst formal processes aim to address specific issues.

Informal consultation methods include: One to one meetings, informal surveys or questionnaires, brainstorming sessions, and internal feedback loops being created.

Formal consultation methods include; holding regular meetings with line managers and employee representatives. Engaging with trade unions and meeting with elected employee representatives.

(CIPD, 2025)

CIPD talk about potentially using the ICE model to consult and engage effectively. This is essentially setting up a workplace forum to allow senior leaders to discuss and consult with their workforce appropriately. This involves discussing key issues that may affect the change, suggestions as to how to carry out the change and allows employees the opportunity to discuss the change, and ask any questions they feel relevant.

There are many steps involved in setting up an effective ICE forum; Examples include: Having a written agreement in place, outlining exactly what the forum is set out to achieve, deciding who will be involved in the process and the frequency of the meetings, and what training will be provided to the work place representatives to ensure they are getting the most out of the meetings.

The benefits of effective consultation and engagement processes are; it achieves better buy in as communication is more transparent. Trust is built; therefore, Managers feel they can represent the change more effectively. Increased employee engagement and productivity is achieved, and greater collaboration tends to lead to quicker decision making and more effective problem solving.

British Business Bank (No Date) Outline there are many pros and cons to a four-day working week. Benefits could include; improved recruitment statistics and increased employee productivity, this is due to employees working reduced hours, meaning they can focus more within the hours they are in work. Con's however, could include, longer hours worked overall, leading to poor mental health and burn out. Companies could also see a reduction in quality, as employees are trying to achieve the same output with four days, compared to five. It's extremely important therefore, the people function choose their consult and engagement method wisely.

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