



THE CONTEMPORARY HR FUNCTION

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Aims of presentation

- ▶ Understand the purpose of the HR function
- ▶ Understand how HR has evolved
- ▶ Understand the different ways in which HR can be delivered
- ▶ Understand how HR can work with line managers to provide HR services
- ▶ Understand ethical and non ethical behaviour
- ▶ Understand the ways in which HR's contribution to an organisation can be evaluated

Purpose of the HR Function

- Champion better working lives
- Create roles, opportunities, organisations and working environments that help get the best out of people
- Deliver great organisation outcomes, in turn driving our economies and making good, fair and inclusive work a societal outcome.

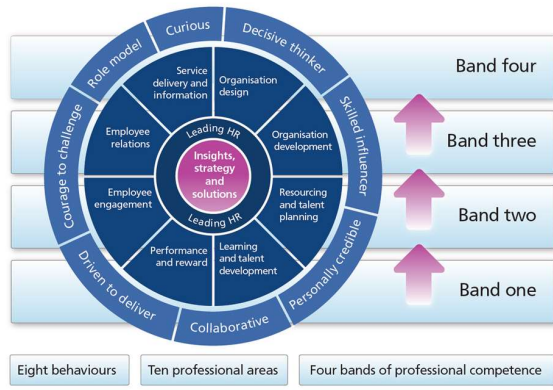
(CIPD, 2018a)

Work collaboratively with managers to empower them to support employees fairly and consistently

(Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016)

Principles led - evidence based - outcomes driven – applying principles will assist professionals, teams and organisations through an uncertain future, aiding in decision making and ensuring they have a positive, future fit impact, not only on the HR professional, but on the organisation they support and the wider community and society (CIPD, 2018a).

CIPD Profession Map (2013)

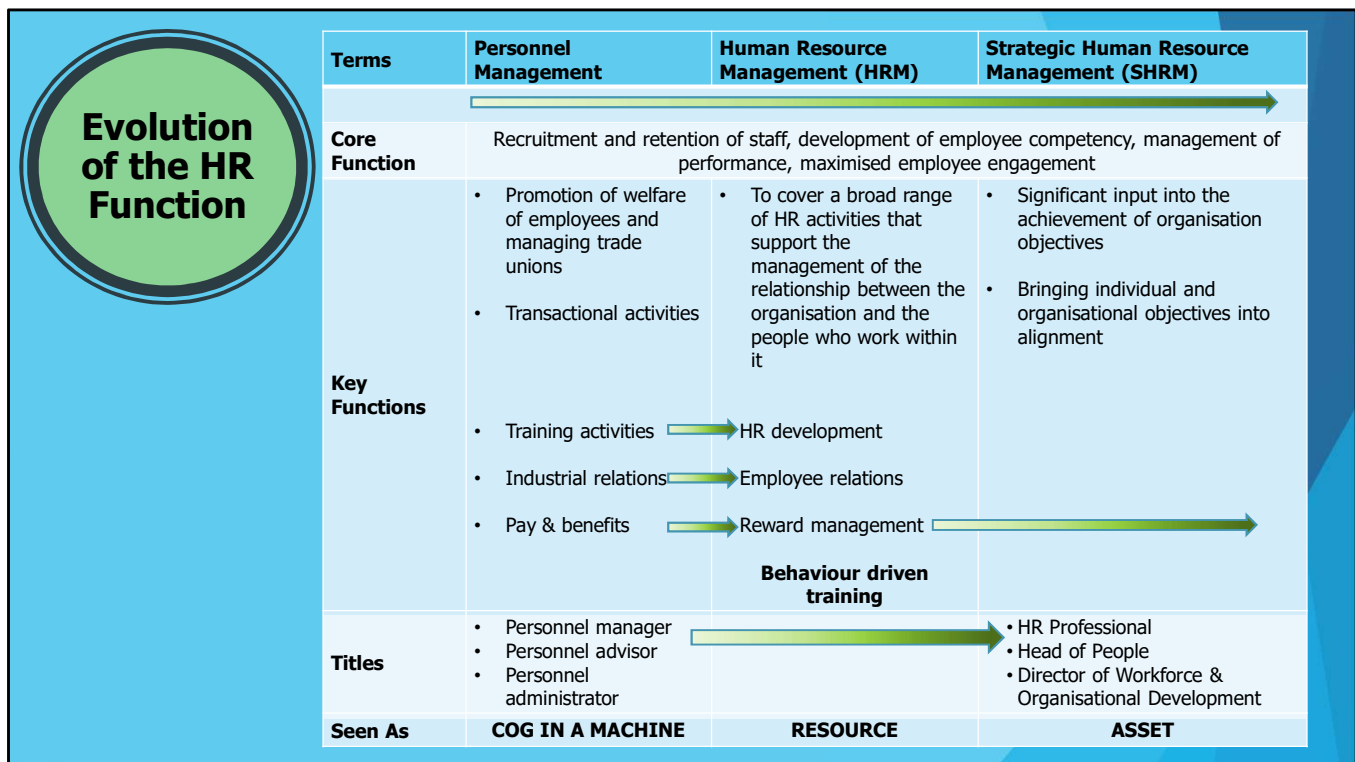


**New Profession Map
(Areas of Specialist Knowledge)**



The CIPD 2013 profession map highlights the 10 core areas that HR professionals lead within an organisation.

The new CIPD map - includes people analytics and diversity and inclusion - recognising significant impact these are having on HR at present and the importance of them in the future. Recognises how HR roles are developing with the introduction of new specialisms, priorities and ways of working. (CIPD, 2018b)



Personnel Management - Little opportunity for implementation of people strategies due to nationally negotiated T&Cs (Taylor & Woodhams, 2016). Relate more to transactional activity (Marchington *et al*, 2016). Workers were seen as a “cog in a machine” - value was not recognised (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016).

Core purpose/activities not significantly changed across decades . - CIPD 2007 research = core functions - recruitment/retention of staff, development of employee competency, performance management and maximised employee engagement/involvement. Remain high on repeated surveys. Recruiting/retaining right people, supporting development, recognising contribution and engaging will ultimately support the achievement of organisational objectives.

HRM - new way of managing people - significantly different to traditional methods
Policies more proactive than reactive - bespoke to fit business need. (Taylor & Woodhams, 2016).

Terminology changed, e.g. training activities became HR development etc

More to productivity than pay alone – value in developing/engaging with staff. Staff recognised as resources = increased loyalty and commitment. Training and development became behaviours driven. (Wilkinson & Taylor 2016).

SHRM – employees seen as assets (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016). Evolution of job titles. Significant impact recognised of the role HR professionals play in achieving organisation objectives and input into business strategy (Taylor and Woodhams 2016). Awareness of how HR activity impacts on organisation success and link between individual and organisation objectives.

HR contribution to change management

- ▶ **Change is a constant in many organisations**

- ▶ **Reasons include:**

- ▶ Customers
- ▶ Technological advancements
- ▶ Market changes

(CIPD, 2019d)

Research states that failing to manage change effectively can effect an organisations potential and its employees – effects can be long lasting. HR professionals need to be aware of potential issues and be ready to support the change process (CIPD, 2019d).

Controllable/uncontrollable elements of change

Controllable	Uncontrollable
Processes	People & their understanding of the process

Wilkinson & Taylor (2016) - contribution HR can provide to organisations during a period of change. 2 elements – controllable and uncontrollable

HR involvement

Processes

- Involvement and start of change project
- Provide advise on skills available, skill gaps, training requirements, new posts
- Awareness of short term goals & longer strategic aims of the organisation
- Balance interest of stakeholders and understand best communication method
- Evaluate effect of change on HR activities

People and understanding

- Awareness of possible reaction to change
- Knowledge of interpersonal activities that can be used to manage the change transition

How HR can support organisation change

- ▶ Identify organisations receptibility to change by holding focus groups and asking questions on change initiatives
- ▶ Involve staff in the structured planning & implementation, allowing discussion of concerns and worries
- ▶ Ensuring good communication
 - ▶ Top down
 - ▶ Bottom up
 - ▶ Two way discussions
- ▶ Understand employee thoughts and experiences of change and supporting them through it
- ▶ Provide advice on tools and techniques that can be used by organisations

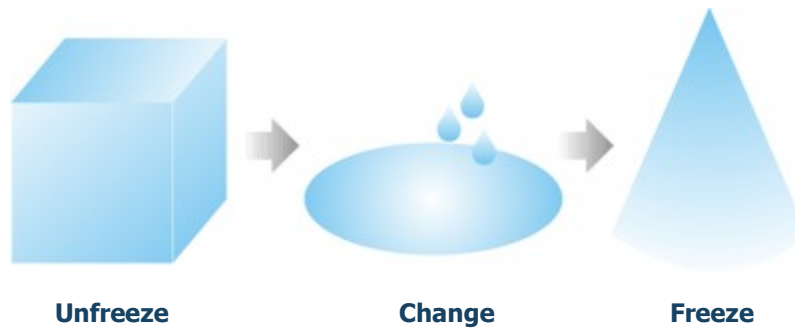
Encouraging staff to be receptive to change requires certain elements within the organisation, including having a culture that embraces change, encouraging employee engagement in the lead up and implementation of the change and ensuring good communication (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016). The HR professional can play a significant part in these elements:

Top down - factual, accurate information disseminated. Bottom up - allowing engagement in discussions/generate ideas. - change workshops/collective consultations. Two way - identify personal implications or concerns.

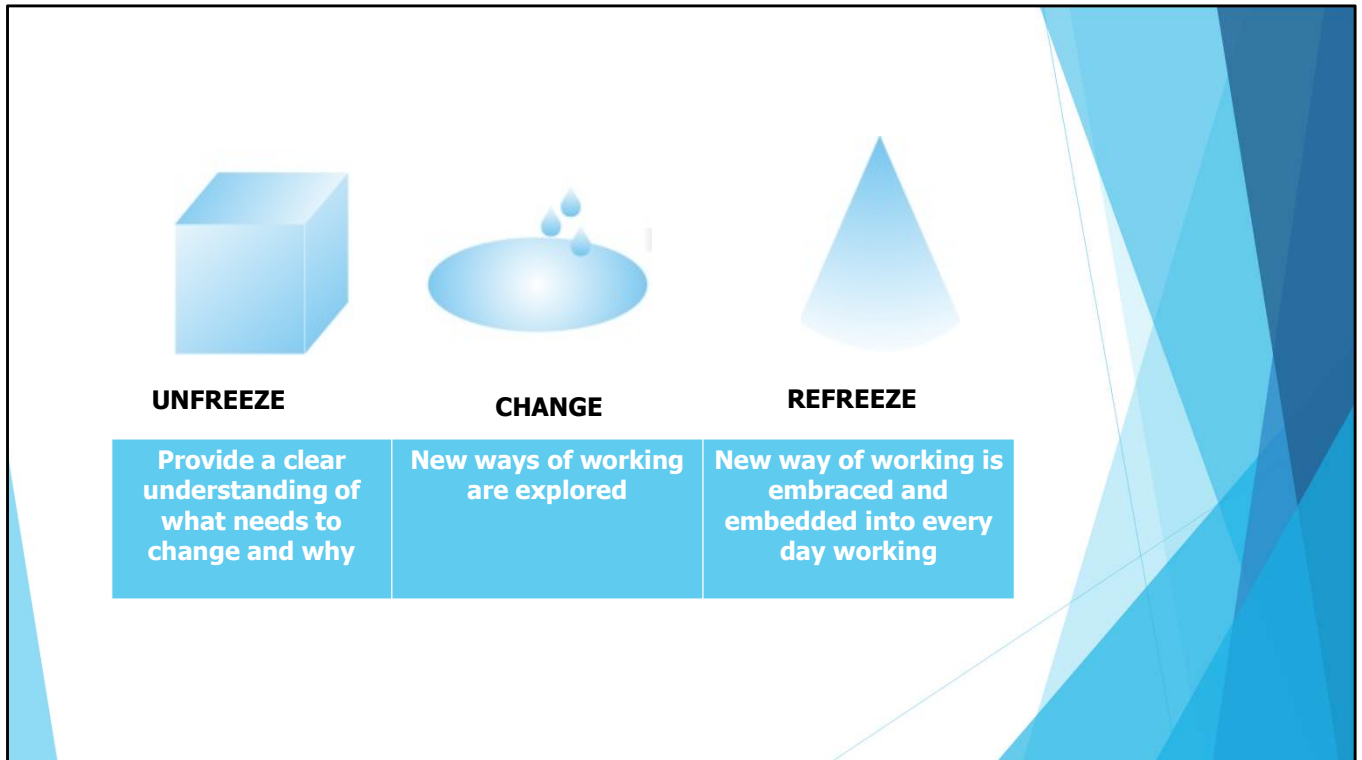
New profession map (CIPD 2018c)- change as a core knowledge - should be structured and planned. HR support by understanding thoughts/experiences of change and then helping them through it. Provide advice on tools/techniques that help navigate periods of change and be aware of their effectiveness and ability to mitigate risk.

Lewin's Change Management Model

Understanding the Three Stages of Change



Mindtools.com



HR's input in each stage:

Unfreeze:

Share results from staff surveys/evidence of falling sales = factual justification

Change

Facilitating change workshops/group brainstorming = encourage proactive participation.
1:1 meetings - line managers and staff = open/honest conversations about concerns/worries.

Liaise with trade unions = ensure support/agreement to change & in best interest of members.

Refreeze

Amending policies/procedures to reflect the changes - ensure appropriate training available - employee satisfaction surveys = measure impact of change - review data on staff absence, productivity etc.

FINALLY – Celebrate success – Communicate what went well, including staff stories, improved stats etc

Mindtools (nd a)

How HR services can be delivered

▶ **Generalists**

▶ **Specialists**

- ▶ Recruitment, resourcing & talent planning
- ▶ Employee engagement
- ▶ Diversity & inclusion

▶ **Business Partners**

Generalists

Accountable for whole employee life cycle (CIPD, 2020a)

Wilkinson & Taylor (2016) & CIPD (2020a)

- Knowledge of all aspects of HR - policy & process, recruitment & retention, collation of people data
- Teams are useful when there are peaks in demand (large recruitment drives)
- Support/advise/work with managers on people issues
- Tasks change day to day
- Cross organisation relationships are key

Specialists

Someone who applies their specialist knowledge/expertise and makes a positive impact on the workplace (CIPD, 2020b.)

R, R & TP - Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016 — specialist knowledge – business need, what attracts people to the business (uniqueness). How they will add value, understanding of candidate recruitment journey. CIPD (2020c) - identify the best people who are right fit for organisation, using appropriate approaches – recognises their contribution, knowledge & skills

EE – Support employee relations, internal comms, develop and promote company branding, develop tools to measure & improve EE, manage workplace conflict (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016)

D&I – Support people to be the themselves & their best – awareness of legislation - going above & beyond – create truly inclusive environment – D&I throughout policies and wider business context (CIPD 2020d)

Business Partners

- Support managers and specific teams to “build capability and design and implement effective people strategies and activities” (CIPD, 2020e)
- Understand key aspects to organisation objectives/strategies and the employees within it
- Support specialists to drive the departments objectives/strategies
- Focus on enabling business strategy rather than operational implementation
- Aware of skills mix/gaps and available technology
- Understand the value that HR can bring to an organisation

HRBP – significant contribution to HR strategy – more focus on business and better relationship with line managers (Reilly *et al*, 2007)

Ulrich, Human Resources (HR) Business Partner 2.0 – dimensions of a HRBP – understand value of HR, contextualise factors that have impact on development of HR business centrally, understand people, organisation strategy/objectives, skill mix/gaps and available technology

Outsourcing

Factors

- ▶ Organisation size
- ▶ Complexity
- ▶ Importance of HR strategy
- ▶ Key component to today's HR function
- ▶ Provides access to expertise not available in house

Can be:

- Fully outsourced
- Partial inhouse/outsourced
- Fully in house

Expertise not available in house – eg. director/high level recruitment. (Marchington *et al*, 2016)

In house – key functions for achieving business objectives (Marchington *et al*, 2016)

- **Fully outsourced** – pensions, payroll, legal advice, employee assistance programmes
- **Partial inhouse/outsourced** – recruitment, training, benefits
- **In house** – planning, appraisals, strategy & policy

Shared Services

- ▶ Centres that provide transactional activity required by organisation/s
- ▶ Provide specialist knowledge and insight that is not available in-house

Ulrich & Duleholm (2015)

- ▶ HR activities in a central location, which is commonly shared (CIPD, 2018d)
- ▶ NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP)

Ulrich & Duleholm (2015) – NHS – lower costs, better expertise, integrated & consistent approaches – transactional rather than strategic

NWSSP HR supported elements – NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (2020)

- Elements of recruitment
- Payroll
- Pensions
- Staff expenses
- Legal & risk advice
- Hire to retire services

CIPD (2018d) – SS allows in house function to focus on delivery of organisation strategy

Centre's of Excellence

- ▶ Specialised programme within an organisation with exceptional expertise and resources
- ▶ Ability to significantly enhance the services available

Elrod & Fortenberry (2017)

Ulrich *et al* (2008) – BPs – ability to diagnose/resolve problems, collaborative working with BPs/LMs, improve ways of working, “act as guardian of the learning community within an organisation”

Offer services to business partners and line managers (CIPD 2007)
Work collaboratively with BPs to ensure use of appropriate services
Diagnose problems and offer appropriate solutions
Research and develop improved ways of working

How HR can support line managers to provide HR services

- ▶ Line managers have a pivotal role in the day to day management of employees and implementation of people policies (CIPD)
- ▶ Best placed to deliver some HR activities
 - ▶ Recruitment
 - ▶ Appraisal
 - ▶ Performance
 - ▶ Employee record maintenance
 - ▶ Routine HR processes, eg. return to work interviews

Cynthia Nalevanko (2018) – LM's best placed as they know their staff – can ensure consistency, understand benefits of opportunities – deliver appraisals, booking onto development courses

HR can support line managers by:

- ▶ Providing a robust, supportive framework that empowers managers to have the knowledge, skills and confidence to manage aspects of HR activity
(CIPD, 2019e)
- ▶ Educating on policies and procedures & provide training on necessary elements
- ▶ Working collaboratively to better align people policy & process with overall business strategy
(Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016)



- Guidance on employee relations – ensuring managers know when to ask for advice – carry out surveys to monitor and evaluate LMs and advise on improvements (coaching)
- Elements of HR practice – managing attendance at work, capability

Ethical Practice

"Ethical values provide the moral compass by which we live our lives and make decisions: doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do. Not for financial and personal gain"

(CIPD, 2019b)



The application of ethical values in an organisation = ethical practice (CIPD, 2019b)

HR professionals are experts in the workforce and change. They have a key role to place in understanding policies and procedures and the behaviours required to ensure ethical practice in an organisation. They are also required to role model ethical behaviour in every day practice (CIPD, 2019c)

HR should be managed in an ethical manner to:

Maintain and improve an organisations reputation

Improve the working lives of the workforce

Role model ethical decisions and behaviours in the workplace

Ensure transparency and fairness and demonstrate high standards of integrity

(CIPD, 2019b & CIPD, 2019c)

Unethical Behaviour

- Unethical pro-organisational behaviour (UPB)
- Egoistic behaviour

Ethical behaviour

- Fair
- Merit
- Wellbeing

UPB - An act that is perceived to be beneficial to the business, eg – price fixing, withholding key information. EB - An individual who acts for their own personal gain, eg - accepting gifts from stakeholders (CIPD, 2019c)

(CIPD, 2015) – 3 of the 8 lenses highlighting good ethical practice

Fair – policies designed so individual/group of staff is not treated less favourably

Merit – promoted/rewarded on skills/knowledge/talent/hard work – not because face fits. Protected characteristics should have no bearing on ability to do job.

Wellbeing – workplaces should be designed to have a positive impact on individuals – varied roles - staff have say in how tasks are done. Awareness of impact practices have on staff. The working environment should have a positive impact on individuals - Utilitarianism – practices and working environments should be designed to promote employee wellbeing

Ethical v non ethical practice

Ethical	Non Ethical
Policies & Procedures	
Fair and consistent and appropriate for whole workforce	Treat an individual or group less favourably
Employee wellbeing	
Practices should be varied and individuals should have a say in how tasks are performed	Monotonous tasks. Individuals do not have a say in how task is performed
Staff are provided with appropriate working conditions eg, lighting, temperature, resources	Staff are required to work in poor conditions (dark/cold) and are not provided with correct resources
Merit	
Staff are promoted justifiably by exhibiting hard work and the knowledge and skills required. Appointments are made regardless of age, gender etc	Staff are promoted as "their face fits". Jobs are advertised as being specifically for a male/female, young person etc.

Evaluation of HR's contribution to the organisation

- ▶ Formal performance management systems - performance appraisal
- ▶ Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- ▶ Staff surveys

Taylor (2016) – Appraisal – LMs formally meet with individuals periodically to review/discuss performance. Targets and objectives can be identified and agreed and reviewed on annual/bi-annual basis. Bloom *et al* (2012) – difficult/achievable/timebound targets, incentives (recognition, progression opportunities) and monitoring of outcomes to identify development opportunities = an average 23% increase on organisational activity.

When carried out well can increase morale, improve communication and identify development needs. To be effective, appropriate training to be given and process itself should be regularly reviewed (Taylor, 2016).

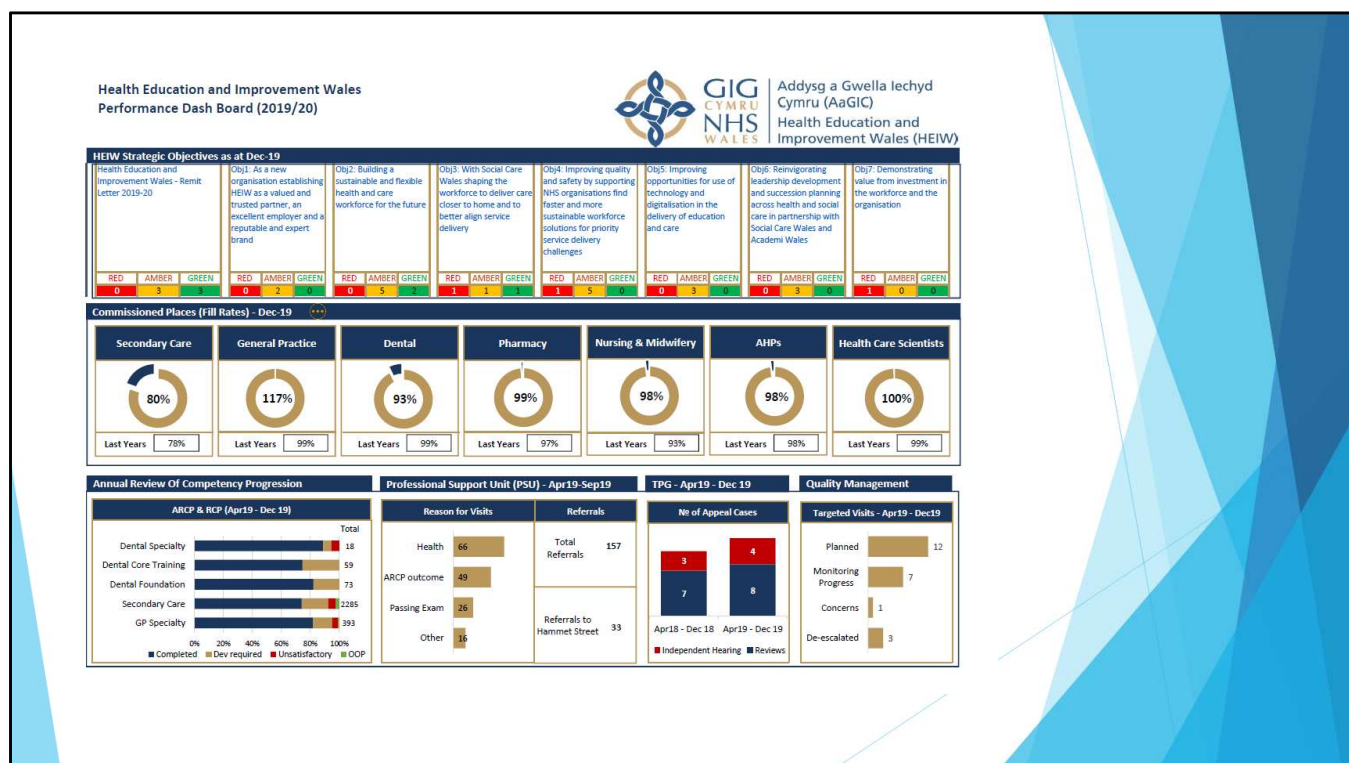
Can be ineffective - highlight hierarchical nature of business and impact negatively on employee-manager relationships (Taylor, 2016). Rowe (1986) LMs can lack confidence to be honest for fear of causing upset.

KPIs – A metric that when quantified demonstrates how an organisation is performing against its goals/objectives. Can be used to monitor performance of individuals/teams/organisation against any appropriate element of performance – finance, process, training & development. (Mindtools, nd b).

Gabacanova (2012) – effective KPIs should link employees & team objectives with organisational objectives/strategy. They should be SMART objectives.

Staff surveys – Personnel Today (2017) – can gain staff feedback on leadership, fairness, morale, relationships and development opportunities. Effective method to understand/measure employee engagement and identify root causes.

Successful = good prior communication to ensure understanding, trust that it is confidential, results are acted upon and plans are shared – highlights importance of employee voice. Unsuccessful = no trust that is confidential, results are not acted upon = disengagement.



Example of scorecard/dashboard using KPIs that link to organisation's objectives (HEIW, 2020a).

HR KPIs = sickness rates, turnover, PADR completion, stat/mand training compliance = mandatory as per WG.

Other KPIs that link to objectives = training places secured (fill rates), quality management visits undertaken, PSU visits

HEIW (2020b) – supporting report suggests current dashboard does not collect the appropriate data to represent our performance. Data collected is the same as from legacy organisations and is not all appropriate for reporting the new organisations performance. Appropriate metrics need to be identified to ensure they align with organisational objectives.

The link between HR practices and positive organisational outcomes

- ▶ The relationship between line manager behaviour, perceived HRM practices, and individual performance: Examining the mediating role of engagement.

(Alfes *et al*, 2013)

LINE MANAGERS, HRM PRACTICES, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH ENGAGEMENT AND INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

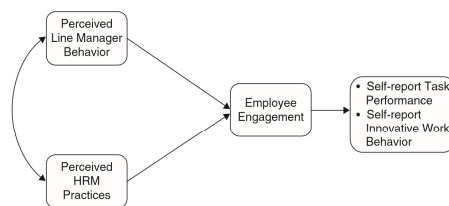


FIGURE 1. Model Linking Perceived Line Manager Behavior and Perceived HRM Practices to Individual Performance

Alfes *et al* (2013)

“Examines the link between HRM practices and line manager behaviour and self reported individual performance outcomes and engagement”. Focuses on results of a cross-sectional, online/paper based questionnaire provided to staff in 2 organisations of similar shape, sector and range of staff. Employees selected in discussion with HR managers to ensure a fair reflection of the workforce was captured.

2 studies within the research project –

- Analysis of the relationship between perceived line manager behaviour, perceived HRM practices, employee engagement and self-report task performance
- Examination of relationships with self report innovative work behaviour as a dependent variable.

Used previously successful data collection/analysis models to form conclusions from data collected.

Outcome supports theory that line managers have a significant influence on developing and maintaining a positive environment in which employees engage and perform willingly. Therefore, this research demonstrates that LMs and HRM practice can have a positive impact on the workforce response.

Limitations - Research carried out at a single point in time. Self reported measures by individuals could lead to bias. However, felt most appropriate as employees are best placed to comment on own performance and perceptions.

Further research recommended on whether different occupational groups have differing opinions and also whether leadership style has an impact on outcome.

This research highlights the importance of employee perception awareness when evaluating the effectiveness of HR policies and procedures.

“Employee perceptions of line managers behaviour and HRM practice are positively related to levels of employee engagement and that engagement, in turn, mediated the link with self-report individual performance.

The impact of HR practices, HR effectiveness and a 'strong HR system' on organisational outcomes: a stakeholder perspective

Guest & Conway (2011)

HR Practices should be:

- ✓ Effective
- ✓ Present
- ✓ Implemented effectively

Guest & Conway (2011)

“Previous research confirms the link between extensive use of HR practices and various indicators of organisational performance”. However, the link between HR practice and performance and the process of how they link is under researched.

Research looks at:

- Effectiveness of HR practices and of their implementation
- The presence of practices and the role employee attitude and behaviour, as potential mediators of the HR-performance relationship

Therefore, the research explores the impact of HR practices that are judged to be more or less effective from a HR manager and senior manager perspective. – There is a strong case for looking at these stakeholders as previous research has been done on employees and their perception of HR practices.

Research looks at proximal and distal outcomes.

Key questions:

“What is the impact of HR effectiveness on a range of proximal and distal outcomes and is this impact greater if there is high consensus on effectiveness between HR managers

and senior leaders”.

Sample – Random selection of 237 matched pairs of HR managers and senior managers from UK companies with > 50 staff. Research took the form of telephone interviews with HR directors (or most senior person responsible for HR) and CEOs (or most senior executive manager). Matched pairs allowed consensus measurement.

610 HR managers and 462 Senior managers. Median organisation size was 104 employees. 23% of organisations had ¼ or more employees registered with a union.

Research measured 48 items across 9 themes:

- Recruitment and selection
- Training and development
- Appraisal
- Compensation and financial flexibility
- Job design
- 2-way communication
- Job security and the internal labour market
- Single status and harmonisation
- Quality/Involvement

Respondents were asked about the effectiveness of each of the 9 practices in contributing to the achievement of organisational goals. 5 point scale – not at all - highly effective

Respondents were asked questions on their judgement of employee's quality and commitment, quality and competence of employees and level of output and results achieved. 5 point scale – very low - very high.

Limitations

This research does not examine the element of local HR implementation. It does identify how important this is with the presence of HR practices and some assessment of their effectiveness. Future research should use longitudinal studies and independent performance measures.

Conclusions

Assessments of HR effectiveness are linked with outcomes - effectiveness if more superior than the presence of HR practices.

Low levels of consensus on effectiveness of HR practices highlighted no significant impact on outcome association

Recommendation

HR practices must be present, effective and effectively implemented.

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