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Assignment: A comparative Case Study of the leadership of people
within two organisations (Astro & Netflix)

Module: Leading and Developing People (IUBA6005) LEVEL 6

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1.0 Design - How Astro's and Netflix's People Strategies Were Planned - Larissa Bruno

1.1 Company Background

Netflix is an American entertainment company founded in 1997 as a DVD rental service before transitioning to online streaming of film and TV, and is one of the largest producers and distributors of film and TV in most countries around the world (Hosch & Ashburn, 2025). Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad is the country's largest media and entertainment company, offering services for satellite pay-television, radio, streaming and digital advertising, and is the nation's largest content creator (Astro et al, 2026). The comparison developed in this section focuses on both firms being in the same very general sector of the economy, media and entertainment, but at vastly different scales and in vastly different national settings.



*Figure 1.0 & 1.1 Netflix Logo & Astro Logo
(Sourced From: PngEgg)*

1.2 Introduction

Design of a people strategy is thinking that occurs prior to doing something in practice. It's a company's attitude towards the connection of their employees and their company objectives, and the way that attitude is translated into a planned HR framework.

It is not an outcome, it's design. The best strategy, even though it is well designed, can be poorly executed. It may be a poorly designed one and may be saved through strong management on the ground. This section isn't inquiring whether the people's strategies of Astro and Netflix were successful or not. This question is part of the Effectiveness section of the report. In this case, the question is a bit easier: What were these companies trying to build, and why do the two designs differ so greatly?

The simple answer is Netflix made its strategy from a position of strength, where there are very few restrictions on how a company manages leave, pay or termination in a country. Astro's strategy came out of a much more regulated setting, where disclosure provisions in Malaysian law and labour laws dictate the legal limitations and expectations regarding what a company can and should do. When this difference is exposed it will be more difficult to compare the two companies as they are trying to solve the same problem.

1.3 Theoretical Foundations of People Strategy Design

Research on strategic HRM provides two fundamental approaches for articulating what companies ought to do with their people strategy.

There are two approaches according to Boxall and Purcell, one of which is called the "best practice" approach. It claims that some human resource practices, including the selective recruitment, good training, performance-related remuneration and employee voice, tend to enhance performance in most organisations (Opara & Waheduzzaman, 2024). The second is known as "best fit". The opposite view, promoted by Arora et al. (2024), is that HR design is effective only when it is closely aligned with a company's business strategy, industry and national environment. Pradhan et al. (2025) draws the conclusion that neither method is entirely successful in winning the argument. While it might seem that you're following universal best practice as an HR professional, in practice, most companies' HR strategies are influenced by context. It's helpful here because Netflix and Astro find themselves seemingly on the opposite ends of the spectrum, but that's not their fault, it's their location.

A second helpful model is the ability-motivation-opportunity model (AMO), which is commonly referred to as the "AMO model." It states that the three factors contribute to employee performance: ability to do the job, motivation to do the job, and having the opportunity to do the job (Hassan et al., 2026). AMO is useful for a Design section, in that it questions the intent of each company's activity as opposed to the actual outcomes.

AMO MODEL



Figure 1.2 AMO Model
(Sourced From: VectorStock)

Another lens that is inherited from the Equality and Diversity angle is Meyer and Rowan institutional theory, particularly the concept of decoupling. Decoupling is the term used when an organisation chooses to structure itself formally for the purpose of legitimacy rather than to achieve the most efficient organizational form for conducting the business. This is a helpful test to use here, as a people strategy can be quite comprehensive on paper but not necessarily well integrated with the company's day-to-day operations (Sidorkin, 2026).

1.4 Netflix - Built Around Talent Density

The people's side of Netflix is rather well documented, and the reason for this is because Netflix decided to make it public. In 2009, co-founder and current CEO Reed Hastings and then Chief Talent Officer Patty McCord published the "Netflix Culture Deck"

The design is based on only a few related ideas. Use only "fully formed adults. Add more "talent" to the mix rather than just more people (Jeffers et al., 2025). Give managers and employees more trust and eliminate formal policies (e.g. vacation limits, expense approval). Use a "keeper test" which asks managers if they would do everything to retain an employee if they indicated that they were considering leaving (Eastwood, 2022). This is what makes sense, as a company expands it becomes more complex, and without an increase in talent density, companies counter that complexity by introducing more processes, which makes things more complicated. More process, however, will tend to send out the very people that the company needs to retain.

Within the framework of Boxall and Purcell (Opara and Waheduzzaman, 2024) it is a best practice design. Netflix's principles are presented as ones that "can be applied everywhere, not just at Netflix. The traditional HR practices are all obsolete, not just at Netflix (Hidayati, 2022) The design in the AMO model is highly motivated and provides opportunity (autonomy, high pay and high trust), with little emphasis on formal development of ability. Netflix was not very enthusiastic about structured training programmes and opted to recruit individuals who could already perform the necessary skills for the role.

The culture deck is regularly thought of as a well-thought-out initiative which was planned well ahead and then implemented across the organization, including by Netflix itself. The unlimited vacation policy, for instance, began informally when employees noticed that there was no monitoring of their hours, and was only formalized in policy later on. In other words, much of what is today conceived of as conscious design was perhaps good, and was subsequently rationalized post hoc as planned from the start. This is important for a people strategy design, because it forces you to consider whether "design" is the word to use for Netflix, or simply a story about decisions that worked out.

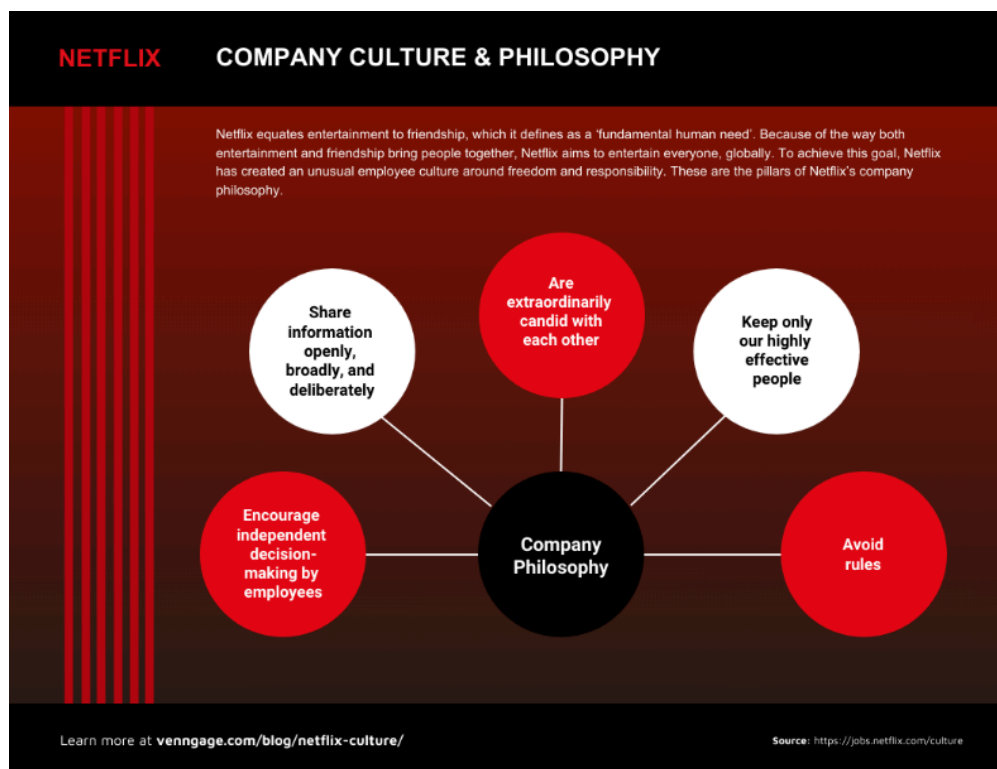


*Figure 1.3 Slide from Netflix's Culture Deck on Company Culture & Philosophy
(Sourced from: Mohan, 2021)*

There is also a more traditional criticism which should be raised, of what is actually mobile about this design. The willingness to hire and fire rapidly, and the keeper test, only work because Netflix can pay "top of market" wages instead of job security. That's the case for high-tech and content firms with deep financial budgets and plenty of other employers that might be interested in hiring, which Silicon Valley technology and content firms have, more than most firms do. This design places many psychological pressures on employees, as a high-stakes evaluation of "adults" is a constant. Notably, McCord herself departed Netflix in 2013 after by her own admission failing to meet that bar established by the system she helped pioneer (JEON, 2023).

1.5 Astro: Design Shaped by Regulation and Disclosure

Astro Malaysia's people strategy design takes a different shape, and it's not about ambition, it's about context.

In the recent Integrated Annual Reports, Astro listed three Strategic Drivers: Content, Products and Sustainability which guide all Astro's business strategies, including HR (Astro, 2025a). The Group CEO and Senior Leadership Team create these strategies which are approved by the Board and then cascaded to individual business units (Astro, 2024). "Talent acquisition, development and engagement" falls under this, and is one of five high priority "material matters", ranked third in a total of 13 material matters. Astro's rationale is that the dynamics of the labour supply and demand equation have changed dramatically in recent years and that the company requires a talent pool that is "fit for purpose" to support its long term growth (Astro, 2025b).

Material matters integral to our business are managed through Astro's three Strategic Drivers, comprising Content, Products and Sustainability, and are proactively addressed by our five ESG Pillars as shown on pages 68 to 69.

Our GCEO and SLT develop business strategies focused on these Strategic Drivers, taking into account climate and sustainability-related risks and opportunities alongside strategic, financial and operational risks. Team Astro is empowered to implement these Board-approved strategies collaboratively across all business units.

*Figure 1.4 Screenshot from Astro Integrated Annual Report 2025 on 3 Strategic Drivers
(Sourced From: Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad Integrated Annual Report 2025)*

Three characteristics of the design are highlighted. First, Bursa Malaysia has introduced a Sustainability Reporting Guide which mandates an ESG governance framework in which the

whole talent strategy is embedded. An ESG management committee led by the Group CEO and senior management's pay is linked to a Corporate Scorecard with ESG targets (Astro, 2025a). Second, the design is quite compliant. Astro explicitly states that their approach is "in full compliance with local labour and employment regulations", including the Employment Act 1955, and benchmarking pay against the market, and publishing an Employee Handbook (Astro, 2025a). Third, the design is work-centered, not culture based. For instance, Astro has targeted to increase the average employee training hours by 10% per year from FY22 to FY26 (Astro, 2025b). This is a vastly different design philosophy than Netflix' informal, trust-based design that encourages a relaxed and casual way of using the platform.

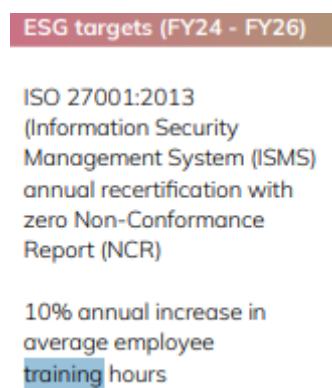


Figure 1.5 Astro ESG Targets on Employee Training Hours
(Sourced From: Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad Integrated Annual Report 2025)

This would seem to be design influenced primarily by context, as Boxall and Purcell's "best fit" theory suggests. It appears that it is not based on an internal theory of the motives behind high performance behaviour, but rather by pressure to comply with Bursa Malaysia disclosure rules and Malaysian labour law. It is here, where it is not simply a theoretical add-on, that the idea of decoupling proposed by Meyer and Rowan (1977) is really useful. There is a logical business case that part of Astro's talent approach is to meet external expectations, including those required for ESG disclosures and for continuing to be listed in the FTSE4Good Bursa Malaysia Index, as well as to address an internal performance issue (Astro, 2024). However, the argument for pure decoupling isn't as strong as it is for pure coupling. Some targets in the design are measurable and will be reviewed year on year, including a reported 35% uplift in average learning hours in FY24 compared to the target in FY26, which is more difficult to put in place than a values statement alone (Astro, 2025b). It's more likely a combination of the two: the actual strategic intent, and its form, meaning what metrics are reported, how, and

who's in charge, all of which were shaped by a compliance and disclosure system that Netflix, which never needed to design around, did have.

The omission of certain elements in the design documents of Astro is also noteworthy. There is no published philosophy of focusing talent, no matching “keeper test” and no effort to pay a handful of high-performing workers a significantly higher rate than the rest. Instead, language is used as "merit-based job progression" applied equally, as well as equal opportunity, "irrespective of race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, social class or nationality" (Astro, 2025a). Stand alone, this is a pretty standard diversity statement. A strictly 'merit-based' approach is arguably doing some 'stealth marketing' by, as Ramli and Williams (2024) showed, providing uneven advantages and disadvantages to ethnic groups in business more generally in Malaysia. It allows Astro to not be in the public limelight of a realistically sensitive segment of the Malaysian work force, whether it is a business decision or not.

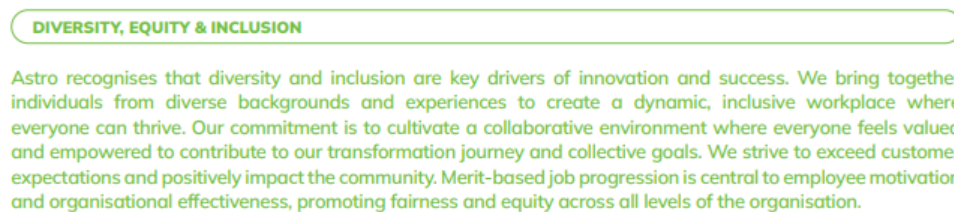


Figure 1.6 Astro on “Merit-Based Job Progression”
(Sourced From: Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad Integrated Annual Report 2025)

1.6 Critical Comparison

Area of Comparisons	Netflix	Astro
Origin of the Design	Designed to the company's vision of what great performance is.	Based on Malaysian laws and reporting requirements
Intended Scope of the Strategy	Made to look like something that would be applicable to nearly every company	Designed for use in Astro's controlled environment
Main Area of Focus	Freedom, trust and higher pay for a smaller team.	A comprehensive program of training and ongoing development for all employees

Level of Formality	Informal, no written rules are enforced, though there is a sense of fairness.	Formal and written down, approved by the Board.
Approach to Pay	Pay top salaries to fewer, high-performing staff	Wages paid in line with the market and consistent throughout staffing.
Approach to Training	Very little formal education; hire people who already possess skills.	Structured training programmes with yearly targets
Strictness of Policies	Intentionally not prescribed, such as no set vacation caps	Well defined, for example in a written employee handbook and in accordance with the Employment Act 1955
Likelihood of being for Appearances	Low, the practices are really incorporated into the work of the day,	There is some risk that it may be present only to meet external demands and not address an internal issue.

Side by side, Netflix's design was created from the inside out, with an internal theory about what makes for a successful performance in the creative industry, in a market where there is a limited number of rules on how to manage pay, leave, and termination. Astro's design was constructed, at least in part, around the outside inwards, in response to external disclosure and governance demands, within a strongly-regulated broadcasting and labour market.

Netflix's design is more internally consistent, and more obviously related to a certain conception of performance, on the basis of Boxall and Purcell's best practice principles. For its own context, Astro's design seems more appropriate by best-fit criteria. A large union regulated, nationally regulated pay-TV and media company has too much margins and labour market conditions to allow an invulnerable Netflix-like “pay top of market, let the rest go” approach, and attempting to emulate this would not be a good idea for them, as it would harm both employee relations and the regulatory position.

It's not a case of one being better than the other. They are responses to two types of institutional pressures. The only real criticism that can be done is the discussion of each company's own design. Netflix's list of decisions is somewhat improvised and reactive, even

if it feels like a carefully arrived at architecture from the beginning. The language Astro uses in developing its design is similarly suggestive of proactive strategic choice, such as “we have developed strategies to attract, develop and retain” talent (Astro, 2025a), and with this example, the language does not fully acknowledge the extent to which the structure of the design was imposed externally rather than chosen. Both companies, that is, have reason to claim that their design is more purposeful than the process that went into it was. That's something to bear in mind, as what a company says it does and how it actually works are not necessarily the same.

2.0 Implementation - Ariff

Implementation is the way in which an organisation puts its planned people strategy into practice by incorporating particular human resource practices, managerial actions and employee experiences. Section 1.0 showed that the strategies for people Netflix and Astro designed were at least rooted in different institutional and organisational conditions, but how they are implemented is what will make or break their functionality. While a clear people strategy can be articulated at the conceptual level, the value of that strategy will depend on the degree of consistency that managers, personnel and systems deliver with the principles. Thus, implementing the behavior is the link between the strategic goals that were described in the Design section and what is actually happening in the workplace.



Figure 2.0 Implementation strategies.

Netflix's approach to people strategy is based on autonomy, high expectations for talent, decision-making based on performance, limited formal controls; Astro is more structured with leadership driven by governance, formal policies, employee development, and compliance and measurable targets. These differences are explained by the theoretical conceptions of the ones outlined in Section 1.3. The best practice and best fit approaches offer a sound starting point to explore whether implementation is universal or influenced by each organisation's business and institutional circumstances. Netflix's approach is closely related to their notion that highly capable employees can work well when given freedom and responsibility, whereas Astro's approach is driven by the need to make employee management practices harmonise with Malaysian employment legislations, corporate governance and overall strategic objectives. (Jeffers, C. N., Romulo, M.-D., Duncan, S., & Mujtaba, B. G, (2025)).

The AMO model is also of critical importance for the analysis of implementation. The model, as stated above, suggests that the performance of employees is affected by the three variables mentioned above: ability, motivation and opportunity. Implementation is a more complex process than just making HR policies. Organisations need to be able to equip employees with the capacity to carry out their tasks, encourage them to be engaged in accomplishing organisational goals and provide them opportunities to use their skills. These are the elements that are handled uniquely by Netflix and Astro. A major focus of Netflix is hiring employees with the skills and tools needed to perform, and then giving them autonomy and responsibility to carry out their work. In Astro, the focus is more on structured development and training, where the employee develops his/her skills through formal training programmes within the organisations (Obaid, S., Ahmad, S. F., & Mumtaz, F. ,2022).

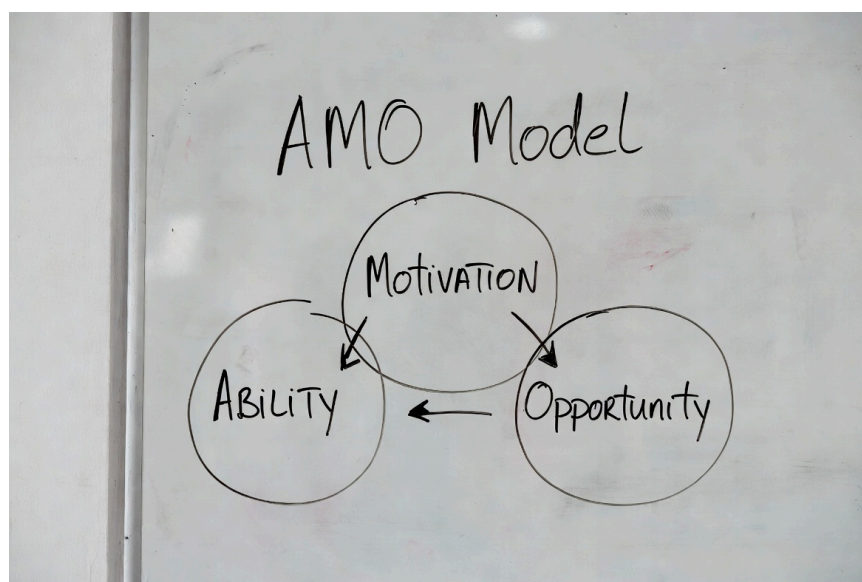


Figure 2.1 AMO Model

There is also a difference in the degree of formality of the two organisations. Relatively informal practices with fairly high managerial autonomy in making decisions and a considered reduction of formal rules, are features of the implementation of Netflix. This demonstrates the business's focus on judgement and individual responsibility of employees. But it is also very much a case of managers consistently and consistently adopting Netflix principles, and employees being able to function effectively in a high performing environment (Burcharth, A., Præst Knudsen, M., & Søndergaard, H. A. , 2025)

Astro has a more formal approach to implementation. As detailed in Section 1.5, the people strategy of Astro is linked to its Strategic Drivers of Content, Products & Sustainability, with the strategy of talent acquisition, development and engagement noted as an important material matter. Strategic priorities are the decisions taken by senior leadership, endorsed by the Board and then rolled out to the individual business units. This gives a formal process to translate the corporate strategy into specific activities of the organisation and its HR. Astro's solution also involves formal policies, employee development programmes, measurable training goals, that enable the organisation to track employee-related goals (Nair, S., 2026, September 13).

Another important factor of implementation is the regulatory environment. In Malaysia, workplace processes and regulations are governed by the Employment Act 1955 and requirements for disclosure. Astro is working in the Malaysian employment and corporate governance landscape, which will involve taking into account requirements including the Employment Act 1955 and disclosure requirements. Astro says it meets local labour and employment laws, and implements various employee policies and procedures including a market benchmarking strategy for pay and documentation in the form of an Employee Handbook. This illustrates how the identified institutional pressures continue to affect implementation as outlined in the Design section. Astro's people strategy needs to be bound by both the legal and governance framework, unlike Netflix (*Official Malaysia Government, 2026*).

Employee development is also an important part of Astro's implementation. The company has set itself a target to boost by 10% each year the amount of hours spent by its employees on training, from FY22 to FY26, which are measurable hours that become a company objective

(Astro, 2025b). This is a direct link to the ability aspect of the AMO model as training gives employees opportunities to develop their knowledge and abilities. This is further evidence that the implementation involves measurement and monitoring, not just stating strategic intentions, as Astro reported a 35% increase in learning hours in FY24 to its FY26 target.

The practices for implementation of Netflix and Astro shows how the strategies mentioned in the sections 1.0 to 1.6 are actually converted into practice in an organisation. In general, the implementation approaches of Netflix and Astro illustrate how the strategies discussed in Sections 1.0-1.6 are translated into practice in an organization. Netflix is more independent, prefers to hire talent, has a higher managerial discretion and expects the performance and both rely more on formal governance, employee development, compliance and measurable targets rather than Astro. While both organisations have in mind the same general mandate, the approaches used to achieve their goals are affected by their different institutionalised and organisational environments. These approaches for implementation will be explored in the coming sub-sections.

2.1 Netflix: Implementing a Talent-Density Strategy

Netflix' take is linked to its talent density strategy. It assumes that already highly capable employees can be provided more freedom and responsibility, thus minimizing the time they need to spend on rules and supervision. This is in line with the AMO framework described in section 1.3; namely the element of motivation and opportunity. Netflix is trying to encourage employees to put in more effort, give them the freedom and confidence to think for themselves, offer them pay which is relatively high and give them some autonomy. Explain that Netflix' system of talent management and monetary rewards to be one of its innovative systems of human resource management. Practically, selecting individuals who can work under the high autonomy model and then giving them a high level of autonomy to work will be key to implementation (Vugar Mehdiyev, 2024).

The "keeper test" is one of the most obvious ways Netflix is putting it into practice when it comes to performance management. Managers should ask themselves if they would actively pursue to keep an employee when that person tells them that they want to leave. This sets up the link between an employee's performance and retention. Instead, it is not a process of formal performance procedures and judgements are placed mainly on the manager's shoulders. The keeper test emerged as a unique part of Netflix's culture of performance, as

(Hastings, R. , 2025) puts it. This is a good example of Netflix's application of its design principle that it should preserve a high standard of talent to its day-to-day management decisions.

One part of the plan adopted by Netflix is also the reduction of formal rules in which employees are judged as being able to exercise responsible judgment. Netflix's culture puts an emphasis on "fully formed adults," or staff members who have learned to take accountability for their own increased freedom. This attitude is manifested in the elimination or limitation of rigid parameters, including vacations and expenses. In general, Netflix's approach to HR is defined by the high level of autonomy in relation to their users and a unique organizational culture (McCord, P. , 2024). So implementation does not just mean on the one hand introducing single HR policies, but on the other hand, strengthening a clear expectation by the manager for the employees to decide appropriately on their own.

But, it is also an important limitation that Netflix's people strategy shows in execution, as discussed in the design section. The approach is based on conditions that won't always be present in an organisation. An environment of high expectations, frequent assessment and lack of formal safeguards can produce a stressful workplace. Compensation that is at or near "top of market" is also an important supporting mechanism as financial rewards are a component of the "trade" for the amount of performance they are expected to give. This means that Netflix's implementation is inextricably linked to the financial resources at their disposal as well as the industry climate and ability to attract talent. This helps to substantiate the best fit argument from Section 1.3, as implementation in Netflix will not necessarily work in Astro or other organisations.

2.2 Astro: Implementing a Structured People Strategy

The implementation is not that same in Astro, as its people strategy is translated in a more formal and structured HR system. Talent acquisition, development and engagement is an important material matter in Astro's Strategic Direction which is driven by the company's Strategic Drivers of Content, Products and Sustainability as defined in Section 1.5. These priorities will be implemented through the engagement of the Group CEO, senior leadership and the Board, followed by cascading strategies down to individual business units (Astro, 2024; Astro, 2025a). This establishes a transparent pathway from companies' strategy to HR

actions. Astro's method does not rely primarily on individual managerial judgement but rather creates organisational structures to define, track and embody people-related objectives.

An obvious example of the way Astro is implemented is through employee development. Astro set a goal of growing the average number of hours spent on employee training by 10% per year between FY22 and FY26, and they are committed to growth, but employee development is not just a vague goal, it is a measurable goal as part of their organisation's objective for the next few years (Astro, 2025b). The implementation of this target is an example of how Astro applies its design principles to deliver quantifiable HR activities. This does not say that employees have to build up their skills; instead, the company sets a numerical learning objective for them and tracks them. This is what is known as the 'Capability' aspect of the AMO model, i.e. the capacity building element, through learning and training.

The reported progress, too, shows that Astro's implementation is linked to monitoring, but not restricted to policy statements. Astro reported an average learning hours uplift of 35% for FY24 against the organisation's target for FY26, which he explained represents training activity being monitored against an organisation's target. (Astro, 2025b) This is relevant as regards the account of institutional theory in Section 1.3. While many of the challenges in Astro's people strategy are driven by external factors like ESG reporting and Malaysian labour laws, there are measurable learning outcomes, indicating that some elements are being practised in their organisation and not just for external acceptance (Finch, W., 2023)

Formalisation of employment practices is one of the other key implementation strategies at Astro. It is said that the company's approach is based on local labour and employment laws, such as the Employment Act 1955, and that it has followed the market's recommendations on pay rates plus it had an Employee Handbook (Astro, 2025a). The mechanisms give the employees and managers formal expectations about the employment practices. This is in contrast to Netflix's desire to simplify the rules. For Astro, it is a set of written policies and documented procedures that define how managers and employees go about their jobs. The formalisation is particularly relevant for the context of how Astro operates in Malaysia, where their jobs are governed by law and regulation.

The strong people part of the implementation is also integrated into Astro's sustainability and governance framework. With the Group CEO as the chairperson of its ESG management

committee, senior management remuneration is tied to a Corporate Scorecard with ESG targets (Astro, 2025a). This indicates that implementation is not a matter of the HR department's own and that HR isn't an island. Rather, the employee-related and sustainability goals are linked to the accountability of senior leaders. The latter structure can facilitate AMO in linking the goals of the organisation with the task of management, and from the institutional perspective, it illustrates the integration of external reporting and governance requirements into internal management (*ASTRO MALAYSIA HOLDINGS BERHAD.*, 2024).

2.3 Comparison of Implementation Approaches

When the best practice and best fit approach of implementation are explored, the differences between Netflix and Astro become more apparent. The Netflix practice is aligned with their company philosophy of talent density, autonomy and performance accountability. It draws on a range of non-formal documents and procedures to share the organisation's principles rather than relying heavily on formal procedures. However, Astro adopts an approach to its people strategy that can be formalised, measurable, with vision and regulatory compliance. This approach is appropriate as it reflects best fit, whilst the implementation of Astro is closely linked to its national, regulatory and organisational environment (Morgan, J. (2022, September 8)).

However, the application of both strategies shows a link between formal systems and real behaviours in management. Netflix uses a few formal rules, but that doesn't mean that Netflix does not have a system. Rather, it requires the application of principles of the keeper test, etc., consistently by managers. Likewise, there is no guarantee that Astro's formal policies are effectively implemented. However, managers need to ensure that they communicate the objectives, offer training, and have consistent policies across business units. Thus, implementation does not just rely on the presence of HR mechanisms, it also depends on their translation to employee experiences (Aster, H. (2022, January 21)).

It's interesting to note also how important it is that the design and implementation are consistent in this comparison. In many ways it's a replication of those elements of the Netflix culture: everyone is expected to be very capable, managers are given very few formal rules and restrictions, and everyone is expected to be very capable. Astro also takes its approach with an underlying governance structure, employee development and measurable targets and compliance. Both organisations are able to show a consistency in terms of goals set out in the

strategies and actions taken in implementing them in this regard (Allgaier, A. (2026, July 26)).

2.4 Critical Evaluation of Implementation

Netflix and Astro's use of people strategies are based on the different conditions found in Section 1.0-1.6. Though Netflix takes a more hands-off approach with autonomy, talent selection and high performance expectations combined with managerial discretion, Astro is more likely to focus on formal governance, training, policies, compliance and measurable organisational targets. In that sense, Netflix' implementation focuses on individual capacity and freedom, while Astro's implementation focuses more on well-coordinated organisation.

However, the approaches which have been adopted also help to explain why consideration of the organisational context can't be divorced from people's strategies. Netflix's strategy relies heavily on the high competency of staff being able to function with little formal supervision and managers making consistent performance assessments. Astro's strategy, on the other hand, depends on cooperation in a wider formal organisational framework and functionalities within the legal framework of employment and governance in Malaysia. The 2 approaches are thus different strategies of implementing strategic HR principles into practice within an organisation (Hsiao, Y.-H. (2024)).

It is also directly related to the critical discussion in Section 1.6. The people strategy looks consistent with Netflix, as it is in line with its focus on talent density and freedom & performance. The implementation of Astro is more formal as there are governance, sustainability reporting, and Malaysian employment requirements that will need to be considered in the people strategy. So the differences between the two organizations of the HR dimension in practice are not only favour and facility differences. They also reflect the institutional and corporate setting in which each organisation functions. It is then possible to evaluate the effectiveness of these implementation approaches separately in Section 3.0 in which the results and effects of the respective people strategies can be analyzed (Hidayati, N. (2022)).

3.0 Effectiveness - Lara Yasmeeen

In Sections 1.0 and 2.0, it was established that Netflix and Astro have very different people strategies: they are very different in terms of their design and implementation. It was

suggested that these differences could be attributed to their institutional and organisational conditions. This section addresses another question: What was the effect of the strategies? Effectiveness is about results and not means or means and methods. A strategy can be clearly formulated, followed consistently and adhere to all its elements, and yet fail to achieve (1.0 and 2.0), or fail because it is not actually the strategy itself that is being successfully executed.

There are challenges in assessing effectiveness, especially when comparing the effectiveness of two organisations with significantly different sizes, sector reputations and reporting structures (Matthews, 2011). Unfortunately, Netflix reveals very little formal data on its HR effectiveness, and the best proof comes indirectly: through the retention of talent in key leadership roles, continued production of content and financial results as measures of the effectiveness of the “talent density” model. By contrast, Astro's effectiveness is easier to evidence by reporting of specific HR metrics as part of its obligations for ESG and governance, like targets for training hours and uplift, but harder to interpret because a metric is achieved without proof of impact on employee behaviour.

As with the rest of the report, effectiveness is measured here by three points that have already been set forth in Sections 1.0 and 2.0. The first is AMO: does the strategy have an impact on employees' ability, motivation or opportunity to perform, or does it simply claim to do so? Is the second the best practice/best fit argument: Is the strategy effective in that it achieves good results everywhere, or in that it is effective because it is appropriate to the context, in which case it would not be generalised? The third is decoupling: is there a real shift in operations because of the strategy or does it serve primarily as a signal to investors, regulators or the labour market for legitimacy? By applying each of these three lenses to Netflix and Astro in turn, the efficacy of each strategy can be evaluated independently, prior to the formation of a comparative judgement as to which conditions, if any, each strategy actually needs to be successful.

3.1 Netflix: Effectiveness of a Talent-Density Approach

Netflix's approach seems to be effective with regard to motivation and opportunity, and less so about ability, in comparison to the AMO model. It's reasonable to believe that the motives for this type of self-directed, 'senior' talent may include high compensation, freedom from

formal structures and/or the ability to make decisions. And the continued success of Netflix's output of commercially viable content indicates that, in practice, it is allowing employees to make choices and perform. What's more difficult to prove, however, is whether the plan is to develop skill Netflix takes a leaner approach to training, preferring to hire those with the necessary abilities. That's a key constraint if the pool of talent that the strategy relies on becomes more scarce or expensive, because the strategy's impact on the ability dimension is actually dependent on how Netflix recruits, not on the efforts of the people strategy (Jeffers et al., 2025).

For the best practice/best fit question, the strategy is seen as working well, but primarily in terms of 'best fit' rather than a truly universal strategy. Netflix is in a high-margin business that's low on talent, and has a very low constrained labour market, meaning that it can sustain its high-trust and low-process approach with high compensation and quick performance-based departures (Hsiao, 2024). In the face of these conditions, it seems to work well: it maintains a lean organisation, gets decisions to the people who can manage them and doesn't suffer the bureaucracy that Netflix's logic in Section 1.4 says accompanies fast growth. However, this is not intrinsic to the design, but rather depends on the actual results of the observation. The strategy hasn't been effective because "best practice" HR concepts were used correctly, but it's effective because the context was right for the practices that Netflix adopted.

The decoupling lens provides a better reading for Netflix than for Astro. The culture deck was an initiative that was published proactively, not as a disclosure requirement, and mechanisms such as the "keeper test" are listed as "routinely used" in daily business decisions, not just in annual documents, so there isn't a lot of cause to believe Netflix's people strategy is primarily for external legitimation (Amadi, 2026). Indeed, the danger is that it might be a more effective recruitment and employer branding tool than a statement about how consistently it is applied by every manager in the organisation, as the foregoing discussion in Section 1.4 indicated, that many of what might appear to be considered designs are in fact a retrospective story on why decisions were made that happened to work.

Netflix's people strategy, together, seems effective, but it's effective only under a few and demanding conditions: sustained financial strength to afford to pay at the top end of the market; an external talent pool so deep that they can keep replacing the people they fail to

keep; and people willing to do high-performance work under high-performance pressure for autonomy and reward. In areas where those conditions are in place, the strategy seems to hold true (Jeffers et al., 2025b). If any one of them fails, then design elements that create its effectiveness can also cause the effectiveness to be compromised.

3.2 Astro: Effectiveness of a Structured, Compliance-Driven Approach

If you apply the AMO model to Astro, you get the “almost” Netflix type picture. The emphasis on ability is strong with Astro, as they have clear, measurable training goals and provide clear, measurable data year-on-year comparing their progress to the goals in order to demonstrate that they are on track to achieve the "capability building" they designed for. In both case studies, the training hour uplift is the most obvious single measure of where a stated intention has led to a measured outcome. Evaluating motivation and opportunity is more difficult because the disclosures in Astro are on structures and inputs like governance committees, pay benchmarking and policy documents, not whether employees are motivated and whether they are given space to implement what they have learned (Mahalingam, 2011). A well-managed training programme does not necessarily reflect that staff are engaged, or that they have actual opportunities to put the new skills into practice, but rather that the organisation has created a process which can be used to deliver training and monitor its implementation.

Astro's effectiveness is yet another case of fit instead of universal on the best practice/best fit question, but for quite different reasons than Netflix. Astro's solution is right for the needs of a large, regulated, publicly listed media property that is subject to employment law in Malaysia and disclosure requirements under the Bursa Malaysia Listing Qualifications: consistency across business units, defensible compliance with the Employment Act and metrics that meet ESG reporting requirements (Chia, 2026). In that light, it's easy to see the strategy as being reasonably effective at its stated mission, one more oriented to risk management and regulatory assurance than the sort of performance separation Netflix experiences. Where it would probably not work is if it were applied in a more "free-range" and "fast-moving" organisation, where the same degree of formality that's useful in Astro would be seen as "bureaucracy".

It's the decoupling lens that gives rise to more serious doubts as to Astro's effectiveness. Senior pay is based on a scorecard with the same ESG targets that it reports to the outside world, creating a structural incentive to ensure that the numbers are favourable irrespective of what is really happening (Laeq et al., 2026). The training-hour target is useful here because it's specific and trackable independently, and thus more readily achievable without the coupling. Other aspects of the design are far less measurable, though, like the equal-opportunity and merit-based progression language discussed in Section 1.5, and as will be discussed in Section 1.6, much more difficult to determine if they represent true organisational practice or are primarily performed to meet diversity and governance goals rather than actually influencing day-to-day decisions.

In a narrower sense, Astro's strategy seems to be working well for it; it seems to reliably produce what it's measured on, and it shields Astro from regulatory and reputational risk, but there's less evidence that it is doing much more. The value of its effectiveness relies on the metrics being used for reporting being the right ones to measure real employee capacity and engagement, and on senior leadership not using the scorecard as a paper target but as a management tool.

3.3 Comparing Effectiveness: Two Different Definitions of Success

Netflix and Astro are not being compared using the same conception of effectiveness when compared side by side, and that's the main point to take away from the comparison. The success of Netflix can best be measured as its performance effectiveness: is the strategy achieving exceptional output from a relatively small, high-quality, highly paid workforce, with very little formal constraint? As it is, the evidence is sparse and circumstantial, but it seems to, at least for the moment, at least for the particular financial and market context of Netflix. The effectiveness of Astro is more properly described as assurance effectiveness: does the strategy provide assurance, in a manner acceptable to regulators, investors, and ESG reporting requirements, that it is managed in a responsible and consistent manner? Again, the evidence in terms of the numbers reported by Astro is good to fair, though not as much insight into what is going on under the surface of the reported numbers.

This distinction is important because it makes it impossible to say that either company's people strategy to be said to be the more "effective" in any generalised way. The effectiveness

of this comparison was inevitably linked to what each organisation actually sought to achieve and determine the need for their strategy, while being influenced by the design and implementation conditions set up in Sections 1.0 and 2.0. For a thinly resourced company that had to act quickly and hire and keep top-tier talent in a virtually unregulated labour market, Netflix' strategy appears to be working. On that point, Astro's strategy looks to be effective, in that it affords a plan for a large, unionised, tightly controlled workforce that keeps them compliant, developed and reportable to external stakeholders (GBIM, 2026). Each would most logically fall apart if it tried to follow the other's path: a Netflix-style keeper test in Astro's regulatory and industrial relations system would leave it open to legal and reputational liability, and a Netflix-style small, autonomy-based workforce on top of Astro-style formal governance would likely sabotage the culture upon which the entire strategy relies.

The comparison also reveals a common fragility, one that lies on diametrically opposed axes. It is hard to tell if Netflix is effective or not, since they do not reveal much about it beyond their story, leaving unanswered questions about the extent to which principles, such as the keeper test, are uniformly applied across the organisation. The effectiveness of Astro is more easily proven in numbers, but more difficult in a substantive sense, as the same disclosure requirements that lead to measurable targets also lead to incentivising management of the numbers instead of the underlying employee experience (Nik Ibrahim, 2019). That is, Netflix is not sufficiently evidenced to be effective, whereas Astro's effectiveness could be over-evidenced so as to conceal genuine organisational practice.

The general findings are that both types of person strategies seem to be effective in the organisations that developed them, but that there is no template available that would be easily transferable to the other's organisation. They are not inherently superior designs, but rather they are effective designs, which are aligned with the design's implementation and institutional environment.

3.4 Conclusion on Effectiveness

Viewed as a whole, the findings of the effectiveness analysis support the argument made throughout Sections 1.0 to 3.3: that Netflix and Astro are not competing, but two coherent responses to very different demands on the organisation and institution, and that each should

be judged only by the goals its own context set for it. Netflix's strategy works well in a resource-rich, lightly regulated environment where individual performance is high, and Astro's strategy works well in a large, regulated team where consistency and verifiable capability building is paramount. The approach of either company would not necessarily work in the other company's environment, indicating that the more interesting question for people strategy in general is not which is “the better” approach, but which approach is more well suited to the environment in which it will operate.

4.0 Current and future needs - Aina

Whether or not a people strategy will ultimately prove effective will rely on its continued support of an organisation as it adjusts to a changing competitive environment and workforce needs. As demonstrated in Section 3, Netflix and Astro have devised different people strategies that are suitable to their respective organizational environments. While these strategies will be effective, their effectiveness cannot be guaranteed to change because both organisations are in industries that are undergoing rapid technological, competitive, and consumer changes. Strategic human resource practices must be aligned within the organisation in relation to the requirements of the organisation, especially as organisations become more reliant on knowledge and digital skills (Strategic HR Review, 2023). As such, both Netflix and Astro have to adjust their people strategies to meet their current needs and build their capabilities for the future.

4.1 Netflix – Current Organisational Needs

Netflix is now enjoying a very competitive global entertainment sector where being successful relies on the production of appealing products as well as a better customer experience and the ability to meet shifting consumer tastes. Netflix's business strategy is to expand globally through the delivery of engaging content, with various pricing options and an ongoing focus on enhancing the user interface and member experience (Netflix, 2026). At the end of 2025, the company employed around 16,000 people across the various regions, with its workforce becoming more international than ever before (Netflix, 2026). Netflix, therefore, needs to have a people strategy that enables it to manage a large, geographically dispersed workforce and continue to enjoy the autonomy and high-performing culture that it has.

Access to employees with solid digital, creative, and analytical skills is one of the key needs today. Netflix's business is becoming more of a combination of entertainment and technology, such as recommendation systems, user-interface development, advertising technology, and artificial intelligence (AI). Netflix announced its plans for further expanding the use of AI-powered tools in the field of advertising in 2026, including media plan generation and optimization tools, AI advertising copy generation, and AI advertising frequency tools (Netflix, 2026). This evolution drives up the need for people with technology, data, advertising, and creative skills. Netflix will therefore have to keep on hiring highly talented individuals and have to ensure that their current workforce can equip themselves with new technologies.

In addition, Netflix must also preserve its organizational culture as they go global. The company calls out employees and culture as key drivers to their success and claims to have a global workforce that is inclusive and diverse while representing the audiences they serve (Netflix, 2026). Shared values, communication, and collaboration are more difficult as the workforce becomes more geographically spread out. The people strategy must therefore ensure the autonomy and accountability of employees, and link employees across countries to common organisational goals.

4.2 Netflix – Future Organisational Needs

In the future, it will be more important for Netflix's people strategy to focus on ongoing capability building. As AI and other digital tools become more prevalent, certain skills might no longer be as crucial as others, and new technical and analytical abilities could be more significant. With the introduction of AI applications to its various services, Netflix is expanding the need for staff to grasp and engage with the technology beyond just their traditional expertise in the entertainment industry (Netflix, 2026). This indicates that Netflix needs to do more than just hire capable workers; it should invest more in reskilling and ongoing learning to future-proof its people management strategy.

It's a key factor for Netflix's traditional recruiting method. Staffing up with people who already have the skills can offer instant capabilities, but it may be less feasible to depend mainly on outside hires in the event of a shortage of, or swift changes in, emerging skills. When organisations rely on knowledge and expertise, Strategic HR research emphasises that there needs to be a link between strategic HR practices and knowledge-oriented HR practices (Strategic HR Review, 2023). Thus, Netflix could further enhance its future talent sourcing

by integrating its existing external talent sourcing efforts with purposeful internal career progression and knowledge sharing.

But Netflix will also have to find a balance between employee sustainability and the high-performance culture. Its present model puts a heavy burden on the employees by giving autonomy, accountability, and performance expectations. This can enable innovation, but it may also be necessary to emphasize long-term employability, collaboration, and continuous development for the future workforce. Netflix already states that they offer a number of employee benefits and have done annual pay-equity analyses on their staff (Netflix, 2026). These practices can help to retain and sustain employees and the organisation as it continues to attract and recruit specialist talent from all over the world.

Put simply, Netflix's future people strategy doesn't necessarily mean the end of Netflix's current culture. Rather, it must be associated with autonomy and high performance, with better capability building, especially in the areas of AI, data, technology, and new types of digital entertainment.

4.3 Astro – Current Organisational Needs

There are other needs that Astro is currently addressing in its organisation. Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad's (Astro) Integrated Annual Report highlights the critical challenges faced by the media and entertainment industry, including fragmentation of audiences, the growing trend of digital adoption, and the threat of video piracy and increased competition from international streaming service providers in FY26 (Astro, 2026). Household financial constraints also have an impact on Malaysians' selection of products and their priorities of value for money (Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, 2026). This is where Astro needs to be more digital, agile, efficient, and responsive to the changing needs of customers.

The company's current transformation thus brings the demand for more digitally and customer-oriented workers. Astro's FY2026 plan also featured key initiatives such as growing local intellectual property, creating digital-first content, leveraging AI-powered journalism, and enhancing audience data capabilities, as well as the adoption of automation and machine learning (Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, 2026). Such advances demand that television and radio broadcasters have more than just viewing and broadcasting abilities. The skills of digital content production, data analysis, technology, AI, and customer experience are gaining greater significance.

Astro is investing in staff development – that's a current answer to those needs. Astro has an average of 19.5 learning hours per employee in FY2026, representing an increase of 54.6% from FY2025. Technical skills, leadership development, digital learning, self-development, and on-the-job learning (Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, 2026) were part of the training. Furthermore, the company had an employee engagement score of 70% in its employee surveys conducted in 2025 and a response rate of 96% of its employees (Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, 2026). These indicators show that capability development and employee engagement are already significant elements of Astro's people strategy. But Astro's needs are not just for training size.

The organisation is in the process of transformation & cost management, and at the same time trying to improve digital capabilities. Thus, the people strategy must put investment in learning directly in service of the strategic needs of the organization, not just on a training hour-by-hour basis. The ability to help support digital transformation, customer experience, decision-making based on data, new content formats, etc. should be increasingly developed in training.

4.4 Astro – Future Organisational Needs

Astro's future manpower needs are tied closely with its digital transformation. The FY2026 report specifically mentions talent acquisition, development and engagement as critical areas, as these factors may hinder innovation due to the challenge in acquiring and developing digital and high-demand skills (Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, 2026). It is essential that Astro's recruitment and development initiatives are bolstered in order to sustain a Talent Pipeline.

Succession will also be a growing concern. Astro's corporate plan includes streamlining its organizational structure, making more use of digital technologies, and improving agility in the organisation (Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, 2026). The changes that are needed will demand managers and employees with the ability to work effectively in a more digital and dynamic world. Building internal leadership skills can minimize the need for external hiring and contribute to the organisation's know-how.

The next thing the future demands is the ability to be technologically innovative and to be responsible for human oversight as well. Astro's plan encompasses scaling up automation and machine learning, as well as implementing AI-driven journalism (Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, 2026). This will require workers to have technical knowledge and skills as well as judge the appropriateness of information generated by AI or automated systems within organisational processes. This means that digital literacy, AI-related skills, and responsible usage of technology should be incorporated in future training, along with leadership and technical development.

Another challenge for Astro is to keep employees engaged when the organisation is undergoing change. Despite the business transformation, cost management, and ongoing industry pressures, engagement was not as high as it was two years ago, as mentioned in its report for FY2026 (Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, 2026). This means that efficiency is not the only means of future people management. Communication, employee involvement, leadership development, and career opportunities will be crucial to keeping employees committed during the transition of the organisation's operating model.

4.5 Comparative Analysis of Current and Future Needs

While Netflix and Astro have different organisational contexts, both organizations have a need to build capacity for technological and industry change. The way consumer behaviour changes and the use of digital platforms, AI and data analytics are becoming a greater influence on both organisations. Their approaches to people, however, must be different as a result of their different organisational structures and competitive contexts.

Netflix's future need is chiefly to retain its capacity to hire highly talented people worldwide but put greater emphasis on ongoing development. A relatively flexible and autonomy-oriented culture can facilitate innovation, but with the increasing significance of AI and digital capabilities, employee development and reskilling should complement external recruitment. Netflix must, therefore, continue to be flexible in its existing people strategy and make sure that staff members are continually able to acquire the skills they need.

By contrast, Astro has a higher need for structured capability development as it is a transformation within a large established organisation. It currently has a strong focus on

formal learning, employee engagement and governance, which offers a platform for the development of digital and leadership skills. The success of future training, however, will be based on whether or not it is connected to strategic initiatives like AI, digital content, customer experience, data and automation.

It is then clear that there is no single people strategy for these two organisations. Netflix needs to have a people strategy that enables flexibility, innovation and specialist global talent, and Astro needs a strategy that needs to be structured, but also involves changing the organisation and enhancing digital skills. This mirrors the strategic HRM principle of alignment, which should be based on the organisation's knowledge needs rather than HR practices being applied universally. (Strategic HR Review, 2023).

4.6 Conclusion

Overall, both Netflix and Astro need to evolve their people strategies in response to technological development, changing consumer behaviour and increasing competition. Netflix's critical future needs include sustaining the magnetism and retention of talented global employees, building AI and digital capabilities, and keeping their high-performance culture alive and helping to develop their employees for the long haul. There is a stronger focus in Astro on the need to transform digital skills, develop leaders and succession planning, engage employees, and have the capacity to help with organisational transformation.

Neither organisation needs to replace its current people strategy entirely, but the comparison is suggestive of ways in which each might adapt and augment their current approaches. Rather, they must develop their own skills and capabilities in the areas of their strengths. The continuous learning and structured training and governance processes at Netflix can be enhanced with the autonomous talent-density approach, and the more deeply embedded capability development and digital transformation at Astro can be strengthened with their more robust autonomy and talent-density. In both, the effectiveness of the human strategy will be reliant on the alignment of human capabilities with evolving organisational needs.

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