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Designing a Strategic Human Capital Architecture for Helios Urban Mobility

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1. Introduction

Helios Urban Mobility (HUM) is a smart transport start-up, headquartered in London, Berlin and Singapore, with 450 employees (Perakovic *et al.*, 2025). In this case, there are three related issues: 54% engagement, high-potential graduate attrition and eight months ramp-up. These are not HR issues. They exhibit low human capital architecture, which is weak between people, skills, culture, work and strategy. Now, digital strategic HRM is not satisfied with administrative support, but demands human capital to be responsible for technology-based competitive advantage. Hence, in this report, the need for a comprehensive socialisation model to develop HUM's identity, ethical professionalism, job design, skills mobility and responsible HR judgement supported by AI comes into the picture.



<https://www.kneia.com/projects/helios>

2. Task A: Socialisation, Identity and Business Activism

2.1 Diagnosing HUM's Socialisation Problem

The fact that HUM took eight months to ramp up and the 54% score of engagement, plus the 54% rate of graduate attrition, indicates that the socialisation is not strategic (Liao, Zhou and Yin, 2022). New staff are informed but are not settling in and working well enough. This is not a laughing matter for a smart-mobility start-up as employees need to be knowledgeable on AI-powered transport, city clients, public safety matters, data ethics, and growth and commercial matters. Weak induction is not the only problem. It is a lack of clarity of role, belonging, ethical awareness and a believable future for the role. HUM might be a good first employer, but not an employer to develop identity, skills and commitment.

2.2 Traditional Onboarding versus Strategic Socialisation

Table 1: Comparison for HUM

Area	Traditional onboarding	Strategic socialisation	HUM requirement
Purpose	Rules and systems	Identity, skill and belonging	Faster contribution
Time	First days or weeks	Pre-entry to year one	Shorter ramp-up
Employee role	Passive learner	Active contributor	Graduate ownership
HR role	Compliance support	Strategic culture builder	Better engagement

Traditional onboarding has merit as HUM still has legal, technical and policy uncertainties. Staff need to be aware of contracts, platforms, security rules and reporting lines. This is a mistake, however, since it adopts an administrative perspective on entry. It can support a recruit to begin work, but it doesn't help them to understand what their job role has to do with responsible urban mobility. Van Maanen and Schein's socialisation tactics are more effective due to the sequential and structured nature of their entry and the mentoring component, which can diminish uncertainty (Griffin, Colella and Goparaju, 2000). This would have a positive impact on the HUM ramp-up time. A downside is that excessive structure can stifle creativity, and that's not ideal for an AI start-up. Psychological contract theory also has an advantage as it provides an explanation for why employees disengage when promises made in regard to development, purpose and support are unclear or broken (Hayes and Keyser, 2022). The downside is that there are variations in

expectations between different locations in London, Berlin and Singapore. HUM must be flexible, yet controlled: shared values and milestones, with local adaptation.

2.3 Strategic socialisation Framework for HUM

Table 2: HUM socialisation framework

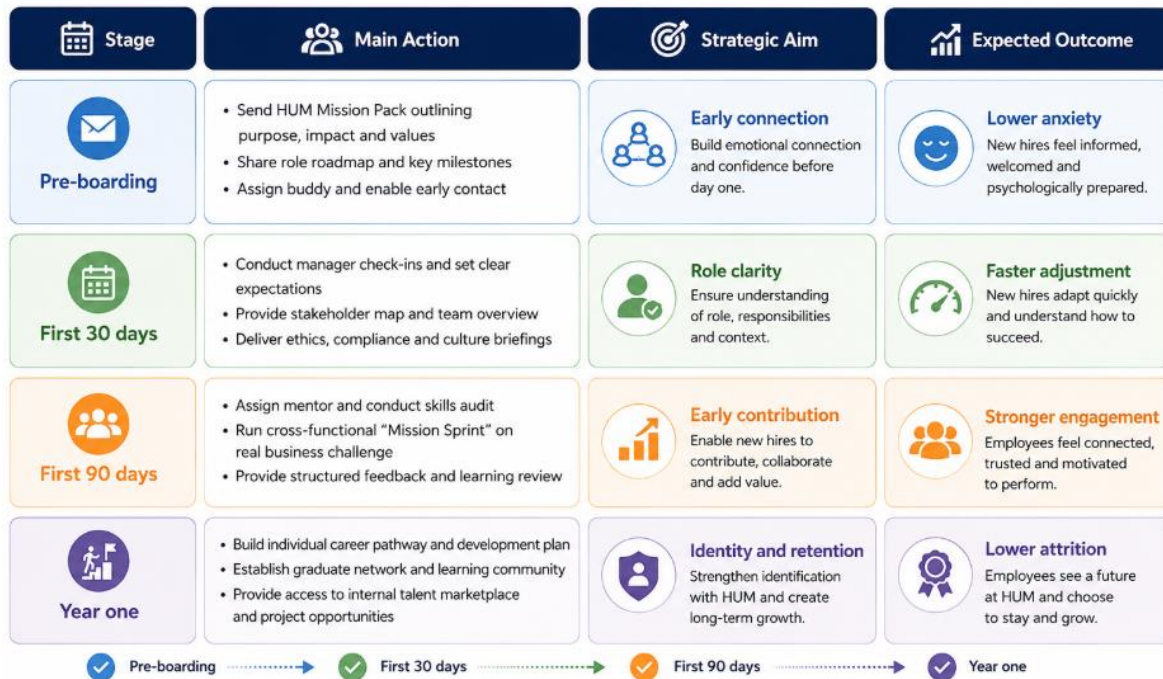
Stage	Main action	Outcome
Pre-boarding	Mission pack, role roadmap, buddy contact	Lower anxiety
First 30 days	Manager check-ins, stakeholder map, ethics briefing	Role clarity
First 90 days	Mentor, skills audit, mission sprint, feedback review	Early contribution
Year one	Career pathway, graduate network, talent marketplace	Retention

The pre-boarding phase should provide all recruits with a HUM Mobility Mission Pack, which provides a description of the ways in which the organization works to create cleaner cities, safer transport and better public services (UNDP, 2020). This would link employees to purpose prior to getting started. For the first 30 days, it should be about roles and psychological safety. Managers should describe anticipated outcomes, authority, key players, ethical responsibilities and support mechanisms. This means they will not be subject to uncertainty and will not have to guess at what is expected of them when they enter the job market.

Should be a Mission Sprint within the first 90 days, during which graduates and specialists work as a team to resolve a cross-functional mobility issue (Siddhey Mahadik *et al.*, 2024). This is crucial as engineers, analysts, product teams and city-facing employees need to share knowledge to enable HUM's work. The sprint is a chance for new players to contribute to the game, rather than just watching. This assists them in developing connections beyond their own group. Now, the year one stage should reinforce organisational identification. HUM should do more to build identity than just being a technology employer. The name should be responsible smart mobility, as employees should be convinced that data, AI and electric transport are for citizens and public value. HUM should also create a manager socialisation Scorecard to include 30-day clarity, mentor contact, sprint participation, feedback quality and graduate retention. This way, managers will be held responsible rather than HR will be held responsible.

Figure 2: HUM Strategic Socialisation Framework

A phased approach to integrate new hires into HUM's mission, culture and performance ecosystem



2.4 Ethical Professionalism and Business Activism

The HR business partner approach is helpful as it takes HR out of administration and into business contribution, as is the case with Ulrich. HR, needs to educate its staff on the business of the company, winning the contracts in the city, data protection, maintaining public trust and the risks of AI. However, if the model is meant for just performance, it may be overly commercial. This is addressed by HRM with stakeholders since HUM's efforts impact on employees, citizens, city authorities, investors and the environment. Hence the module of Ethical Business Activist should be incorporated in the 1st 90 days of HUM. It must cover the following topics: AI ethics, equality, data protection, public safety, value of the environment and commercial awareness. This makes the onboarding process more than just cultural orientation; it's responsible business education. There are also the reputational risk benefits which encourage employees to think about their short-term decisions that may not be safe.

2.5 Task A Justification

Task A is appropriate as it directly addresses the HUM's three problems. Slow ramp-up is minimized with pre-boarding, role roadmaps and 30-day clarity. Mission sprints, mentoring and

manager score cards provide employees with support, voice and early contribution to boost engagement. Year-one identity building, career pathways and graduate networks contribute to a lower attrition rate by providing high-potential employees with a future within HUM (Marlita *et al.*, 2025). The design is robust and distinct from the typical design of onboarding: it includes structure, innovation, psychological contract fulfillment, organisational identification, ethical professionalism and business activism. It provides HUM with a system that is practical and enables strategic renewal.

3. Task B: Job Design

3.1 Job Design Problem at HUM

Weak socialisation is not the only factor that can lead to HUM engagement and graduate retention. They also indicate poor work design. Technically competent employees can be very disengaged because of unclear job descriptions, limited jobs, and isolation. This is dangerous because it is important that engineers, analysts, product teams, policy experts, and managers work together to find solutions to problems in the field of smart mobility (Larson and DeChurch, 2020). Jobs that are still oriented to tasks and not around outcomes and skills will lead to less-than-optimal talent utilization by HUM. Students will leave the classroom if they don't receive autonomy, movement to learn, and feedback.

3.2 Critical Comparison of Job Design Theories

Table 3: Theory comparison

Theory	Strength	Limitation	HUM use
Job Characteristics Model	Explains autonomy, meaning and feedback	Too static for start-ups	Enrich core roles
Job crafting	Gives employee agency	Can create role confusion	Guided flexibility
Skills-based architecture	Uses capability, not job titles	Needs data governance	Cross-project deployment
Internal marketplace	Makes opportunities visible	Can be biased or manager-blocked	Graduate retention

Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model is useful because of its association with intrinsic motivation, autonomy, skill variety, task identity, task significance and feedback. This is why, for HUM, employees need more than just technology, start-up branding and pay. A data analyst will be more involved if they know how their work enhances reliability and if they get feedback on their work from the user. There are limitations to the model, however, as it was created for the case of stable employment. HUM's work evolves rapidly amongst cities, technologies and client needs. Thus, the model should enhance, not standardize, roles (Almulhim and Aina, 2025).

Job crafting is more likely to be strong when the company is growing rapidly, permitting employees to mould tasks, relationships, and meaning. This is a good fit for the graduates of HUM, as early-career workers tend to want ownership and tangible growth. But excessive job crafting can also lead to confusion, duplication and inequitable access to interesting work. HUM should implement guided job crafting, which involves employees suggesting changes, managers confirming that they align with employees' team goals, and that they are fair to other team members (Kardas, 2023).

Skills-based architecture is more than both of these since it is based on skills instead of job positions. This fits HUM, where AI skills, transport analytics, sustainability and cyber security skills are progressing more quickly than formal job descriptions. It has a limitation in that skills data can become inaccurate or biased without the cross-checking of self-reported skills. Creating a skills map that translates into opportunity is a concept of an internal talent marketplace, but it can be stifled when managers become “keepers” of talent (Mehrad, Korican Lajtman and Aman-Ullah, 2025). There should be transparency in HUM rules and governance.

3.3 Innovative Job Design Strategy for HUM

Diagram 1: HUM job design architecture



First, all roles within HUM must be redesigned with a mission statement, three outcomes, decision rights, links to stakeholders and learning goals. This provides clarity without creating checklists of jobs. Second, HUM needs to add to work with the Job Characteristics Model. There must be an element of choice for teams about how they're going to address the mobility data issues, but they're also evaluated on safety, accuracy, the value to the client and ethical considerations (Chiruvella and Guddati, 2021). Task significance should be made evident by demonstrating how roles impact charging infrastructure, bus reliability, traffic flow and citizen experience. Managers, peers and users are to provide feedback monthly.

Third, HUM needs to incorporate guided job crafting. One task change, one relationship change and one learning goal per quarter per employee. These proposals must be approved by managers only when they are for the team's delivery, fairness and capability development (Hassan, 2020). This allows employees to have a choice, but it also helps to avoid role drift.

Fourth, HUM need to develop a Skills Passport for each employee. Should document technical skills, AI literacy, transport knowledge, stakeholder experience, languages, project history and career interests (Krassadaki and Matsatsinis, 2023). This would provide HUM with a view of potential underutilized capacity and minimize reliance on informal networks. Fifth, HUM should provide a short assignment, graduate rotation, city project and innovation sprint, integrate into an internal talent marketplace, and connect to the passport. Judging should be on published criteria and not personal visibility (Mentorcliq, 2025). To minimize the gender bias, participation data by grade, function, location and gender should be reviewed by a small internal mobility governance board.

3.4 Intrinsic Motivation and Innovation Outcomes

Employees are offered meaningful, responsible, learning, and knowledge of results, which are intrinsic motivators for this design. A graduate data analyst would not just be able to clean data sets – they would understand how improved data can enhance the journey planning process, charging and urban sustainability. Job crafting encourages innovation because it is an opportunity to disrupt and change negative routines and establish cross-functional connections. Skills-based deployment is conducive to innovation because workers are recruited to projects according to their abilities, not their rank (Khan, Raya and Viswanathan, 2022). HUM should be a mixed team of AI, data analytics, cyber security, transport policy and communication with stakeholders. This is key since technical accuracy and public trust are essential to smart mobility innovation.

3.5 Task B Justification

Task B can be justified as a work system redesign. If jobs are still limited and there's still no career path, engagement will not be enhanced with surveys, slogans or rewards. The proposed model provides HUM with clearer roles, more meaningful motivations, some degree of flexibility and greater visibility of skills, and an internal movement that is fair. More strategic than conventional

job descriptions and used for innovation and retention. It provides a rationale for graduates to remain, as they can see development within HUM.

4. Task C: Reflective Report

4.1 AI as a Decision-Support Tool

As part of this assessment, I employed AI as a decision-making aid, rather than for making decisions. AI was useful for me when reviewing theories and comparing them, structuring arguments and making sure that each recommendation took into account HUM's 8-month ramp-up time, low engagement, and graduate attrition (Barger, 2025). It was also a chance to reflect on the possibilities of leveraging people analytics for HUM to detect onboarding delays, skills gaps, themes of engagement and opportunities to match up projects and people. But I found out that it is only when I question AI output that it is useful. It can also make things easier if the data and/or prompt are insufficient, and it can regenerate bias if the data is insufficient or the prompt is insufficient.

AI can be used for HUM to help match mentors, to alert on early attrition, and even to help with the internal talent marketplace. However, the manager should consider all recommendations as the decisions made about HR will have an impact on dignity, opportunity and trust (Jaškevičiūtė, 2021). There should also be a clear pathway for employees to appeal decisions made by AI. I'd therefore use an AI to help come up with ideas, rather than as a sign of a decision being fair or correct.

4.2 Personal Capability Development Plan

Capability	Development action	Evidence
Data literacy	Complete HR analytics training	Explain engagement and attrition patterns
AI augmentation	Practise prompt testing and source checking	Stronger recommendations
Strategic influencing	Study business cases and board papers	Clearer senior arguments
Ethical judgement	Read AI governance and employment ethics	Stronger risk analysis
Global awareness	Compare UK, German and Singapore HR norms	More balanced advice

This was a job that altered my way of thinking. At first, I thought I'd only find use for AI as a research tool, but now I see that it's an HR governance challenge. As an HR professional, I will have to call into question the quality of data, determine who will gain from it, think about who might be left out and communicate that I don't know. I also require enhanced strategic influencing skills as I need to be able to influence the HR recommendations to managers and senior leaders for them to take action, or recommendations are of little value (Kashif Lodhi and Sohail Ahmad, 2025). Global awareness and sensitivity are also significant as HUM works in various countries.

The employment culture may differ in various places, and thus a solution in HR might not be applicable in all places.

4.3 Task C Justification

Task C is justified because there is a need for evidence, technology, and human judgement; hence, the combination of all three. I will be able to use HR data to interpret data by using data literacy. I will be able to utilize AI to be effective and critical with my work. Ethical Judgement will ensure fairness. By applying HR ideas in a responsible way in complex international organizations like HUM, I will be able to strategically influence and be culturally aware. This enables a fair, transparent and evidence-based people management and ensures accountability via trained human decision-makers.

5. Conclusion

Slow ramp-up and low levels of engagement and graduate attrition should not trigger HUM in isolation with onboarding or motivation "quick fixes. These show a weak human capital architecture. The proposed report links strategic socialisation to the other dimensions of strategic socialisation: psychological contract clarity, organisational identification, ethical business activism, enriched job design, guided job crafting, internal mobility governance and responsible AI. This joined-up model is warranted as the success of HUM relies on the skilful, passionate and ethical staff who need to be able to innovate across London, Berlin and Singapore. It also applies to a smart transport environment that is UK-based, where technology, safety, sustainability and public trust need to be handled simultaneously.

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