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Innovating New Working Practices and Breeding an Environment Where Talent May Grow

A strategic human capital report for NexSpace Health Systems (NHSX)

Assessment Component 1: Individual Report

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1. Introduction:

NexSpace Health Systems (NHSX) is a healthcare technology company that has approximately 600 employees in the United Kingdom, India, and the United Arab Emirates. The NHSX Board believes that long-term success is more dependent on people than technology. In NHSX now, the hierarchical structure influences decision-making and experiments, hybrid work discourages collaboration between the three nations, high performers quit due to no development opportunities, and managers struggle with balancing well-being and performance. As an external Strategic Human Capital Consultant, I address these problems in three parts: Task A re-designs people management, Task B provides a talent management approach, and Task C is about my personal development and AI in HR.

2. Task A: Designing Innovative Working Practices:

2.1 Critical Evaluation of Traditional and Contemporary Work Design:

1. Traditional Work Design involves the process of fragmenting the work into specialized tasks under a chain of command. It operates using control as the basis whereby managers do all the planning and decision-making while employees strictly follow certain procedures. Consistency and accountability can be achieved through this design, and that is why Appelbaum et al., (2000), apply it as a standard for comparing newer designs. At NHSX, this concept makes decision-making occur up the organizational hierarchy and limits experimentation by individuals.

2. High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) is a set of HR practices that are expected to function cohesively. According to Appelbaum et al. (2000), it is a process of developing ability, motivation, and opportunity that involves recruitment and training for developing ability, contingent reward for motivating employees and participation as an opportunity for contributing. NHSX can use the package for the development and retention of high performing workers. The risk will be in the

pressure, as noted by Jensen, Patel & Messersmith (2013) in their research where low job control creates anxiety, role overload and turnover intention through HPWS.

3. High-Involvement Work Systems (HIWS) consists of a set of HPWS but places greater importance on the empowerment of workers through decision-making powers, information, and performance-based rewards. HIWS works by delegating decision-making power to people who are nearer to the problem. Product teams within NHSX have the decision-making power to meet their objectives without seeking anyone else's approval. This would help in quicker decision-making and provision of job control, which is seen as a protective factor, according to Jensen, Patel and Messersmith (2013).

4. Sociotechnical System Theory starts from the hypothesis that every workplace has two intertwined systems, namely the technology system and the user system of this technology, and they need to be developed together. It was shown by Trist & Bamforth (1951) that an improvement of the mining technology made this process less effective because it reduced the ability of miners to stay together in small groups and manage themselves. NHSX creates and applies AI solutions, thus, each new solution implies an evaluation of which people interact with which people.

5. Agile Working involves organizing work into small autonomous groups that work fast in cycles, usually two weeks long, and make adjustments at the end of every cycle based on the feedback received. According to Rigby, Sutherland, and Takeuchi (2016), the technique performs effectively where there is complexity and dynamic nature of requirements and hence suits the AI-based health products but does not suit the situation where the leaders use the command and control method. The process facilitates quick decision-making and experimentation at NHSX; however, clinical regulations form its limitation.

6. Hybrid Working involves working from both home and the office during the week. This works through allowing individuals to have control over where they work, reducing stress due to commuting and increasing job satisfaction. In a randomized experiment involving 1,612 employees, working two days a week from home reduced voluntary turnover by a third without affecting performance appraisals (Bloom, Han and Liang, 2024), which highlights the talent drain problem experienced by NHSX. The trade-off is isolation, with Yang et al. (2022) finding that organization-

wide remote work at Microsoft increased siloing and decreased interaction with colleagues from other groups by a quarter.

7 Flexible working weeks provide individuals with the opportunity to select their own working schedules, thus balancing work and life. In three different time zones, it is possible to decrease the amount of overlap hours for teams and switch communication to the slower written form (Yang et al., 2022); thus, NHSX needs overlap hours agreement.

2.2 Recommended working practices for NHSX:

1. Cross-Functional Collaboration: As for the cross functional collaboration, it is required to stop using hand-offs between functions and introduce standing cross-country product teams that will consist of engineers, data scientists, clinicians, and implementation specialists and people will rotate between countries. All decision-makers have to be at one table, and rotation is required in order to restore the relationships that have been destroyed due to remote working, according to Yang et al. (2022).

2. Hybrid and Flexible Working: The number of days when people work from home (two days per week, according to Bloom, Han and Liang, 2024) as well as collaboration days and overlapping time periods are defined by each team.

3. Employee Autonomy: Within the framework of the highly-informed, wide-span organization approach, teams can choose how to reach the desired results every quarter and receive an experiment budget. Work in progress is limited in order to avoid employee autonomy-related overload (Jensen, Patel and Messersmith, 2013).

4. Agile Project Team: The project team of up to eight people conducts two-week sprints with retrospectives (Rigby, Sutherland and Takeuchi, 2016), and clinical regulated parts are released in accordance with controlled process.

5. Digital Collaboration Technologies. The application of a limited number of tools with a search option for decision-making logs will guarantee that the information is

available regardless of time zones, and the team will be able to help choose these tools, according to the principles of sociotechnical theory (Trist and Bamforth, 1951).

International adaptation. Ideal core hours are those that would see the mornings in the UK match afternoons in India and the UAE. The UK workers have the option of flexible working right from the very first day. Hybrid language in India and the UAE is defined by the local contract and hence country HR has to review each individual case. When the employees are less comfortable with challenging managers, the team leaders have to get their opinion about the issue.

Pilot and Targets. There are two product teams operating under the model, together with two comparison teams, during six months. The pilot is being run by the Chief People Officer. The only costs that will be incurred here are managers' time, tool and training costs. The HR will record the baselines in the first month. If the average decision-making time reduces by one-fourth and high performer turnover is decreased compared to the comparison teams, without a decrease in their well-being, then this pilot will be considered successful. Bloom, Han and Liang (2024) recorded an almost one-third reduction in employee turnover in hybrid models, therefore this target is quite realistic.

3. Task B: Breeding an Environment Where Talent May Grow:

3.1 Critical evaluation of how organisations help talent flourish:

1. The Learning organization can be described as an organization where all its members continue to learn continuously and apply what they learn to improve the performance of the organization. Senge (2006) describes it in terms of five disciplines that include systems thinking, shared vision, team learning, personal mastery, and mental models. The whole process involves ensuring that the learning takes place as part of team activities that involve analyzing any mistake that occurs during every release cycle. Learning Organization takes care of the problem of lack of learning that the leavers experienced.

2. Psychological safety could be defined as the common perception shared by all the team members that the team is a safe environment for taking interpersonal risks

like accountability for the mistakes made or talking to the manager. Psychological safety relies on the idea that people would report any mistakes and develop new ideas, provided that they do not have to face any punishment. In their study, Edmondson & Bransby (2023), provide an overview of literature on the concept since the 1990s and talk about the relationship of the concept with learning, performance and improved work experience. In the context of NHSX, the concept could be linked to lack of creativity while, in clinical software, it could be associated with patients' safety.

3. The growth mindset refers to the conviction that abilities can be developed through hard work and proper strategies. As Dweck (2006) claims, people with such a mindset seek challenges and handle failures, while managers promote it by giving feedback on strategies and efforts. However, since the majority of researches supporting it pertain to the educational environment, its effectiveness regarding working adults cannot be completely guaranteed, and therefore, it can be used in NHSX only as a way to give feedback.

4. The self-determination theory addresses the factors that sustain people's motivation. People require autonomy (right to make their own choices), competence (feeling of being skilled) and relatedness (connections with other people), and Deci, Olafsen and Ryan (2017) claim that managerial promotion of these needs results in higher employee engagement and well-being. Self-determination theory helps to address the problem of talent retention and well-being of employees in NHSX, but it depends on managers' desire to delegate responsibilities.

5. Job crafting is defined as altering one's job through changing the tasks, relationships, or the purpose of the job (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). It is built on the assumption that the job is compatible with the strengths and passions of the individual. For NHSX, this theory will facilitate personal growth for high-performers at work; however, since the approach is employee-driven, it can have no correlation with team objectives without any managerial input.

6. The talent management framework defines the investments into people. According to Collings, Mellahi and Cascio (2019), in the multinational setting, the framework would lead to greater performance of the investment into critical jobs according to the corporate strategy and consistency among the subsidiaries. For

NHSX, it means the jobs of AI engineering and clinical informatics across all countries. Differentiation of positions seems to be unfair until the criteria for the differentiation are known.

7. The theory of Employee Experience (EX) focuses on the design of the entire employee journey (from recruitment to firing), similarly to the design of customer journeys within the company (Plaskoff, 2017). In this context, the theory is focused on recognizing the main experience stages of an individual employee, such as, for example, onboarding and coming back from vacation. When considering the NHSX case, it helps in recognizing the sources of employee well-being. There are different approaches to defining this theory; hence, it can be regarded as the design philosophy.

3.2 Talent growth strategy for NHSX:

1. Career Pathways: Dual career track helps technical specialists to grow in their jobs without becoming managers and having internal market model for temporary assignments and mentoring elsewhere. This solves the core reason for attrition – the absence of professional growth opportunities. Investments are made in vital roles according to established standards (Collings, Mellahi and Cascio, 2019).

2. Learning Infrastructure: Teams have four hours a week devoted to learning, conduct release review and take part in communities of practices (Senge, 2006). Senior executives should make sure that they use this time otherwise it will be stolen by delivery pressure.

3. Psychological safety: Incidents are discussed in a non-blaming way, team managers are trained to welcome objections and psychological safety of each team is measured through quarterly survey (Edmondson and Bransby, 2023).

4. Motivation and job crafting: An annual discussion of job design provides an opportunity for an employee to redefine his/her tasks and relationships (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001) and managers are trained to promote autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017).

5. Employee experience: HR conducts short pulse surveys during important milestones like promotions (Plaskoff, 2017) and team well-being becomes one of manager's KPIs.

International Adaptation. The HR representatives of different countries adapt the process of implementation, without changing the principles that are used in subsidiaries (Collings, Mellahi and Cascio, 2019). In case challenging seniors is seen as a threat, safety surveys will be anonymous, and all proposals will be written. In the UAE, where most of the employees are expatriates, working on the employer's visa, having a clear career path can be particularly important.

Rollout and Targets. Safety surveys and dual ladders will be implemented in six months, after which marketplace and learning periods will be introduced. Having completed baselines in the first month, success will be measured by decrease of the turnover of high performers quarterly, increase of the number of senior positions held by internal candidates, as well as by improvements in safety and engagement rates in all countries.

4. Task C: Reflective Report:

4.1 AI as a Strategic Decision-Support Tool:

1. Where AI is useful for NHSX. AI may be used to spot an increasing risk of attrition for top-performing workers, assign workers to project tasks within the organization, and analyse feedback from the pulse survey at the team level. These applications will relate to the areas of career paths and employee experience in Task B.

2. Where AI does not work. According to Tambe, Cappelli and Yakubovich (2019), HR-related outcomes are difficult to measure, and there may be limited HR datasets to work with, which makes AI predictions accurate yet based on poor-quality data. Andrieux et al. (2024) state that each AI application for HR purposes needs to be evaluated in terms of potential risks as well as benefits due to issues of bias, transparency, and privacy.

3. Maintaining ethics, empathy, and accountability. Human intervention is required as part of measures to protect data under the UK data protection law when decisions are being made automatically by the computer. This means that AI can provide information for decision-making, but decisions must be made by a named manager who can explain their rationale to the worker. Career and health conversations require empathy and cannot be driven by AI.

4.2 Reflective Analysis: Three Examples:

Example 1: understanding motivations behind attrition of best performers (analytical skills). I used AI to review NHSX exit interview reports and found that a lack of development and learning opportunities was a common theme in the minutes, thus changing my analysis from mere observations to evidence. AI flagged certain individuals as high risks due to limited data samples as described by Tambe, Cappelli and Yakubovich (2019), so I used them to start a conversation but not to make any decisions.

Example 2: analyzing responses in a survey about hybrid working (cross-cultural understanding). AI grouped comments from all three countries under isolation and time zone topics, thus showing me the collaboration challenge in all three places. AI interpreted comments from certain offices as neutral even though they were short and polite, while not picking up on some issues that employees were hesitant to bring up.

Example 3: Criteria for career ladders (ethical judgment). Generative AI was used to develop criteria for the promotion process in the dual career ladder setting. The criteria generated were good and developed fast; however, some of the criteria were discriminative towards hybrid employees because visibility in the office was an important criterion. Testing for the biases, as suggested by Andrieux et al. (2024), was useful in developing my ethical judgment skills.

4.3 Personal Action Plan:

Each of the actions which I will implement will be targeted at solving one of these issues.

Action 1: AI Governance (before January 2027). Research information about guidelines for the use of AI and data protection issued by the UK Information Commissioner's Office and come up with a list of criteria for the assessment of HR algorithms for possible bias.

Action 2: People Analytics (before March 2027). Receive a certificate about successful completion of the people analytics course and perform an analysis of some publicly available data set connected with employees. In this way, I will be able to demonstrate something to my future employers.

Action 3: Cross-cultural Communication (from February 2027). Perform the project associated with my MBA in cooperation with other students from various countries and receive feedback from them regarding my interpretation of non-verbal language.

Action 4: Assessment (in October 2027). Assess the results of actions and make amendments to the personal development plan.

4. Conclusion:

What all five issues have in common is the fact that work and career are focused on control instead of learning. Task A can solve the problem of delayed decision-making, lack of creativity, poor team work, and work pressure; on the other hand, Task B is going to solve the issue of attrition of talented people. Taking into consideration conflicting evidence, both tasks can be tested for the first time against a baseline measure. Task C has similarities in terms of AI.

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