

## What Is Your Strategy Missing? The Three Elements of Corporate Execution

In the face of globalization and fast change, a highly productive workforce is critical to your company's success. How can you ensure high productivity from your team? You can do so by aligning your people strategies with your business strategies. No function is better positioned to drive this relationship than human resources.

Some organizations view HR's role as only managing activities such as hiring, benefits, and payroll. Without more broad-based, strategic involvement from HR, however, organizational goals will often languish. *Strategic HR* is about identifying the key drivers of business success, implementing people strategies to support the company's objectives, and measuring performance.

HR must be involved in all three synchronized elements of corporate execution: strategy, operations, and people. Your strategy defines where your business is heading, your operations plan provides a focused path, and your people make it happen. HR's unique perspective on corporate culture can help your organization clearly define and articulate its vision, mission, and values—all of which must be in place before the organization develops or refines its strategy.

Once you have clearly defined your vision, mission, and values, HR can assist you in analyzing the following questions:

- What is my assessment of the external environment?
- How well do we understand our existing customers and markets?
- What is the best way to grow the organization, and what are the obstacles to growth?
- Who is the competition?
- Are we able to execute the strategy?
- Are our short- and long-term goals balanced?
- What are the important milestones for executing the plan?
- What are the critical issues facing our organization?
- How will our organization bring in revenue on a sustainable basis?

Focusing on the people process in particular is a strength of HR. It is also a critical component of the strategic-planning process because a strong people process can:

- Evaluate individuals accurately and in depth;
- Provide a framework for identifying and developing the leadership talent; and
- Fill the leadership pipeline and form the basis of a strong succession plan.

As you look to execute these people strategies, be sure to:

- Assess your pipeline of promising and promotable leaders;
- Prepare a continuous improvement summary for each leader;
- Conduct succession depth and retention risk analyses;
- Deal individually and quickly with nonperformers;
- Review the HR function and ensure it is integrated into business processes; and
- Understand and assess the state of your relationship with your people.

A strategic HR approach includes an analysis of the company's desired culture, values, and strategic direction, and then it builds business processes and performance expectations to support them. Beyond strengthening your internal core, it is crucial that you plan for key trends in your external business climate, such as:

- Environmental factors: these factors include government regulations, technology, communication, and transportation.

- Business trends: these factors include globalization and competition.
- Stakeholder expectations: these factors include employees, communities, customers, and shareholders.
- Capabilities: these factors include productivity, low cost, speed, service, mergers, alliances, innovation, collaboration, synergy, branding, and quality.

If you feel your strategy is missing something, consider how aligned your people are to your business goals. Even if you have gone through strategic planning, the three elements of corporate execution still might not be aligned. Research shows that employees who feel connected to the strategy are better positioned to help you achieve your performance and profitability goals.