

[Classification : Internal Use] The HR career trajectory

Selecting transcript lines in this section will navigate to timestamp in the video – Human resources has changed so much over the years. It means being future oriented and, according to the Society for Human Resources Management, or SHRM, "Developing and implementing programs that solve business problems and directly contribute to major long-term business objectives." Becoming a strategic HR professional is part of the growth journey for people in our field, so welcome to this stage of growth. Let's compare two HR professionals, one more focused on tactics and solutions, the other more strategic, to see what's in store for you. Acme has a five year goal to become the industry leader in cog manufacturing. Their strategic plan includes reducing production costs by 10% and increasing sales by 30%. Our first professional is more transactional. When asked how she might help achieve these goals, she says she'll help hire new people as sales increase, and see if she can reduce costs by pulling back on office snacks and workplace socials sponsored by Acme. Our second is a strategic HR professional. So she suggests conducting a learning needs analysis for the sales team, as it's possible better selling could lead to more sales. From there, she can forecast if more salespeople are needed. She also suggests a workforce survey, because things like employee engagement, job satisfaction, and trust in leadership, increase productivity. Increased productivity could mean reduced costs in production. Lastly, she suggests a job analysis on manufacturing jobs to determine if production costs could be reduced by combining roles, eliminating some roles, or making other roles more productive. So our second HR professional is thinking more strategically and suggesting ways in which she can help the organization meet its goals, and even measure her success in doing so. Reducing production costs with her HR initiative is a fantastic, tangible HR strategy. Now she's a resource to the leadership team, and they'll come to rely on her to help build the business. If this sounds exciting to you, then you're in the right place. For now, take some time to think about your own HR duties. Are you thinking more like our first or second professional here? If it's the former, consider how you can move past functional and tactical duties to become a more strategic business partner to your leadership.

Competencies of strategic HR professionals

Selecting transcript lines in this section will navigate to timestamp in the video – A good place to start in your journeys being more strategic is to understand the competencies required for being successful. SHRM, the leading and global professional association for HR professionals has defined nine competencies you need. As they describe it, "The SHRM Competency Model identifies what it takes to be a successful HR professional across the performance continuum, around the globe and across all career levels, job roles and job functions. You'll be able to quickly self-assess where you are in these four stages and where you'd like to go. Defining strategic HR

Selecting transcript lines in this section will navigate to timestamp in the video – Strategic HR is about aligning with the organization's overall strategy. An HR audit could be really useful for you if you're new in an organization or new to your role, if you're building an HR program from the ground up, or if it's been a while since anyone did it. There are four types of HR audits, including compliance, which focuses on whether your policies and practices are compliant with the law, or functional, which focuses on a specific area, such as payroll, recruiting, onboarding, or training. Tying HR to organizational mission and values

Selecting transcript lines in this section will navigate to timestamp in the video – Strategic HR increases an organization's ability to achieve its vision, mission and strategic objectives. Developing an

HR strategic plan

Selecting transcript lines in this section will navigate to timestamp in the video – Most businesses have a strategic plan focused on growth, marketing, customers, and operations. As you start to grow into answering these types of questions and gain credibility with leadership, you'll start moving into strategic HR, where you're building HR strategies alongside business strategies to help the business achieve its goals. Conduct some research by reviewing job descriptions, interviewing employees and their managers, observing work, and conducting a SWOT analysis.

Audits and assessments

Selecting transcript lines in this section will navigate to timestamp in the video – Maya Angelou's got a famous quote. The point is that instead of doing HR administratively and instead of focusing on putting out HR fires, a strategic plan allows you to grow HR along the side the business, and help the business achieve its goals.

A strategic recruiting and onboarding approach

Selecting transcript lines in this section will navigate to timestamp in the video – The cost of turnover is expensive. This is a snapshot in time of your organization's culture, including employee engagement, job satisfaction, inclusivity, trust in leadership, internal communication effectiveness, and burnout. Your compliance audit probably doesn't include them, but if your best practices audit is going to include them in some way, be sure you've communicated what you're doing and why and also that they'll get information about the results. Your plan might also include important areas like gaining a more diverse workforce, increasing employee benefits, developing more work life balance, data protection, reward systems, performance management, and more. I also just want to say that leaders often create strategic plans without input from HR. If that's the case in your organization, clearly articulate the common people themes behind the plan your leaders created and address employee engagement and motivation issues the plan brings to light. They're forecasting future staffing needs as the executive team talks about market growth and also building equity and inclusion, training, and employer branding into that plan for market growth. Of course you also have to be ethical, and able to think critically, and you can implement your strategic plans without HR expertise, which means understanding what technology is available to you. Being strategic is also going to require strong business acumen so you can speak with confidence about the business as a whole, including operations, logistics, sales, marketing and metrics.

Approaching your role as a consultant whose role is to provide guidance through coaching and problem-solving will help you gain trust, and see the organizational problems from a different perspective. Perhaps you do that with your employee wellbeing initiatives, flexible work, competitive vacation time and stellar learning opportunities.

A strategic audit is focused on strengths and weaknesses of your HR practices. And you should have a plan ensuring there's adequate people with the right skills, the right behaviors, and the right attitudes to achieve the company's strategic plan. At this beginning level, professionals tend to be focused on compliance as it relates to recruiting, compensation, and training. The last step on the maturity model is integrated HR. This is what CHROs and executive VPs of HR are doing. No matter the size of your company, you absolutely have to be effective in thinking and communicating in our diverse world through cultural awareness, and open mind and adaptability. How to engage in workforce planning, and delivering customized solutions to solve the business' problems. In order for leaders to listen, and buy into your ideas, you have to meet them where they're at, and instill confidence in them, and the workforce that you can lead the initiatives you're proposing. And it definitely applies to strategic HR. Before you develop any sort of strategic plan, it's

important to assess what's happening so you can build from there. A best practices audit focuses on competitive advantage or how well you're living up to HR industry best practices. Piggybacking on that, if your workforce knows you're auditing and assessing, then they'll also want to see some change. In other words, a strategic HR plan lays out how the HR function will support the goals and strategies of the organization. Now you've moved into solutions focused HR, where you start to learn that HR can proactively solve problems. Feedback, facilitation, persuasion and diplomacy. You need this competency to talk your leadership team into the ideas you have related to helping them meet their strategic goals for the company. Along with speaking with confidence about the business, you'll need to demonstrate strong leadership such as influencing others. Last but not least, on the heads of all strategic HR professionals is a consulting hat. If our firm's mission is to promote a healthy lifestyle through a wide range of well designed apps, it must also be your mission to promote a healthy lifestyle internally. In addition to connecting to the vision and mission, you should also focus on demonstrating return on investment or ROI for your activities. If our industry is saying you should be using metrics to make decisions, you'll want to audit what metrics you have, whether they're correct, and what else you should be measuring. It's the process of identifying what skills are needed to achieve the future goals, who has them, and where the gaps are. These days, we've got Chief Human Resources Officers, or CHROs at the table, along with Chief People Officers and Chiefs of People and Culture. And let's not forget, HR led the world's employers through a pandemic. Bottom line, now is a great time to build your career in HR by mapping out your career trajectory. There are many HR maturity models out there, but take a look at the one I created and put in the exercise files for you. Most HR professionals start off in the world of compliance. Although these days you can obtain a bachelor's and a master's degree in human resources, so we've definitely upped our game. Here's where you start wondering about metrics, company culture and employee experience, employee performance, equity and inclusion, and more. Review the questions within each section of the HR Maturity Model I provided. I'm going to review them here in no particular order as they relate to strategic HR specifically. Relationship management is about networking, credibility, teamwork, and excellent service for your customers, the employees. There's plenty online from SHRM regarding these competencies, so you can learn more. Let's say you work for a small tech firm who creates apps focused on health and nutrition, and the organization's vision statement is to make lives better. Perhaps that includes a yoga and exercise room, healthy food in the cafeteria and making a nutritionist available as a benefit. If one involves excellent customer service, then your core value in HR is providing excellent customer service to employees. If another is innovation, you should be doing some innovative HR stuff. Where are you excelling and what are the opportunities for improvement? One option here is to send an HR customer service survey out to your workforce. Beyond your world of HR, another possible step is a climate assessment. Then an employee engagement survey may not be the right avenue if it's only measuring engagement. Lastly, workforce surveys are better done from outside the organization. And it outlines the gaps between the present and future goals. You've got four options to include in your HR strategic plan. Provide training to current employees, recruit new employees, outsource, or restructure. My team just analyzed the cost of 16 employee exits for one of our clients and found that at the bare minimum, these exits had cost 200,000 over a year in lost productivity. Just 10

years ago, there was a lot of hype about how HR can get a seat at the table. We developed and implemented new ways to work at the drop of a hat and now we're the keepers of the future of work. This type of HR is more tactical. Naturally, a person who's been recruiting and ensuring people get on-the-job training starts to wonder how to do it better. Could you fine-tune your recruitment efforts? You see these things as strategies for organizational success. They aren't finding ways to support the company's strategies, they're helping build the company's strategies. They also have an assessment you can take for free to understand where you are and what you need to work on. You can build your competencies from there. So you've got to connect your own activities to them as well. And as your workforce's lives are better, they'll put that positive energy into making customer lives better. So review your organization's vision, mission and core values, and ask yourself how you can apply them to yourself and your HR responsibilities. Also ask yourself what activities you're working on that help the organization itself meet its vision and mission, and where you are lacking. Where could you be stepping in to drive the organization towards its goals? Convince the CEO to spend \$10,000 on customer service training, save 1/2 of those customers, and keep \$100,000 in revenue. So I also want you to start looking at how you can prove the cost of your ideas and activities is either saving money or earning money. Are there functions that have been getting ignored? Also be transparent with your workforce. So don't run a climate assessment until you're sure you're going to have the resources and permission to do something about the results. Once you've got the company's plan in your inbox and can answer the question, where's the organization going? Estimates, vary. Losing an employee will cost your company between 50 and 150% of that position's annual salary. We were the ones making sure people were safe and our employers were following the rules. A small business realizes someone's got to be sure people are taking their lunch breaks and the office manager gets asked to do it. I got started that way, too. Could you manage your workforce's personnel files better? Could we better motivate employees to keep them from leaving? First is communication. You won't be able to get much done if they don't see you as credible, and focused on their needs. Being mission-driven and results-oriented. So your HR vision must be to make lives better for your employees. It either makes money or saves money. If your company loses 30% of customers within the first three months of signing on, your company is also losing money, let's say \$200,000 in revenue. The cost of training was 10,000 and the return on that investment was 90,000, or 100,000 minus the cost of the training. "You can't really know where you're going "until you know where you've been." So which type of audit should you run? Perhaps you want to dig into best practices. There really isn't a right answer. All of the audits are useful. No matter what you do, I've got some tips for you. People are more honest if they know their results truly can't be traced by you. A needs assessment can help. Once you know what you need and where the gaps are, then you can answer a fourth question, how do we address those gaps? All of these things can be tied to the organization's strategy and ROI can be shown. Then you can create a strategic plan around those issues. This will help you earn a coveted seat at the table. Your action step here is to get a hold of your company's strategic plan and get started on answering the questions that we discussed. If we'd use that 50% salary thing, the number is a whole lot more. Wow, that was a lot. Not to worry. All things that make employee lives better. Finally, review your organization's core values. This means that the investment in something has a return greater than the

investment itself. Take training, for example. Moving forward, make this a regular practice. Let them tell you what's working and not from their end. Well, there's a lot to consider. Perhaps you should start there. Have you been feeling like your organization's behind the curve? The main one is to be clear on your research question. If your research question is how do employees view the culture? So have a think on where you might get started and get started. You can start asking things like, what do we need to get there? And do we have those skills and people here already?