

BUILDING ALIGNED AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN RESOURCES (“HR”) PRACTICES....

...may seem like a daunting task - it does not have to be. Take a few moments to answer the 5 “W”s”:

1. **Why** bother?
2. **Where** to start
3. **What** needs to be done?
4. **Who** should undertake this?
5. **When** should we do this?
6. and finally, **How** should we proceed?

1. Why bother? Aligning your organisation’s people practices with the rest of your business is critical for proper focus and effectiveness of employees to meet business goals. Without alignment you have silos, conflicting priorities, chaos.

2. Where to start? The easiest place is with your organisation’s business plan, its Vision, Mission, Values. The next best place is to review the employee issues that regularly surface, or, seek your employees input about your current people practices and suggestions for improvement / where to start. Ultimately, the collective perception is reality.

3. What needs to be done? Sound basic HR practices are key to effective employment relationships and so powerful when applied well that most organisations don’t need anything else. Neither complicated nor expensive, they include:

- ◆ **Written employment policies:** “Game Rules” that address both employee and employer expectations
- ◆ **Clear compensation and benefits practices:** promote fairness, meet basic employee needs.
- ◆ **Proper recruitment processes:** get the right person for your organisation correctly.
- ◆ **Performance management:** clarity of role, expectations, measurements to support your organisation’s goals.
- ◆ **Trained people managers:** “People quit their bosses not their jobs”.
- ◆ **Communication:** ensures the success of HR practices.

4. Who should undertake this? A senior leader must champion the establishment of a proper HR infrastructure and ensure its proper implementation. Somebody with HR expertise should develop the people practices, working closely with the champion, so that the structure is built correctly the 1st time. You wouldn’t ask an accountant to do plumbing so why have unqualified people design the people practices that affect the engine of your business: your employees.

5. When should this be done? If you have been operational for several years and have not started to shape the HR infrastructure for your organisation then NOW is the right time to start, even with a small step. Once you begin, however, employees will expect results. Your credibility and employee morale suffer greatly when commitments are unfulfilled, reinforcing the already unspoken message that the employees are not important.

6. How should we proceed?

As with the principle that one must learn to walk before running, starting with the basics is the smartest way to proceed. Identify “what is” versus “what should be” and develop a plan and timeline on how to bridge the gaps starting with a basic foundation. It is easier to build upon a basic foundation as your organisation evolves than to “tear down” people practices that are too cumbersome. Rome was not built in a day so the ability to plan, prioritise, implement and evaluate is key

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