# Contents

# Introduction

In an ideal world every organisation will have a clearly defined strategy or business plan. However, this is not always the case and often HR must make strategic decisions in what seems like a vacuum. This toolkit helps the HR professional to explore and leverage organisational strategy so that you can design, develop and implement a successful HR strategy. We start by providing tools to help you assess your own capability. We then define what strategy is and include some examples. There are a number of diagnostic tools to help you understand the organisational strategy better or, where it is not clearly stated, to enable you to unearth it. From there, we move into how to prepare an HR strategy, and provide a number of practical tools and interventions to help you turn it into a reality.

Whilst this toolkit is focused on the needs of HR directors, or others in the HR profession who are moving into more strategic and influential roles (such as OD or change facilitators), it can be used by senior executives moving into or operating in any key strategic role. It is also designed to support consultants who are operating in this arena.

We suggest ways that the various tools and techniques can be used by individuals. Many of them are also suitable for using in group settings – either within HR, or across a multidisciplinary group within your organisation.

As a result of using this toolkit, you should be able to make the following statements about your capability or practice:

- I have the strategic skills which enable me to operate as an effective HR strategist.
- I can lead the organisation in times of turbulence.
- I understand the strategic process and can use a range of tools and techniques to identify key priorities.
- I am successful in helping managers to understand the importance of key HR objectives and activities.
- I know how HR adds value.

- I engage line managers and employees in exploring options and creating my strategy.
- I am able to communicate the intended strategy to line managers and employees.
- I know how to make a business case for a strategic HR intervention.
- I can structure my HR function for success.

## What is HR strategy?

A strategy is a set of informed choices which provides direction, inspires commitment and allows the organisation to respond quickly to customers and competitors, enabling it to fulfil its goals and achieve a sustainable position in its market.

### What does a strategy do for you?

A good strategy:

- forces choice
- focuses effort
- balances continuity and change
- helps to integrate all the different parts of the HR remit
- translates ideas into practical action.

### What are the ingredients in an HR strategy?

The business strategy sets the agenda for:

- resourcing
- skills acquisition and development
- culture, values and attitude
- commitment
- productivity
- performance management
- rewards
- employee relations.

Adapted from *HRM: strategic action,* CIPD fact sheet, by M Armstrong (1992).

We hear the phrases 'strategic human resources management' and 'human resource strategy' quite a bit these days in the workforce. But line managers and even some HR professionals sometimes find it difficult to describe what these concepts are and what they actually look like in practice. Experience shows, however, that when true strategic HRM does 'occur', it is recognised for what it is.

Consider, for example, the following comments:

- You seem to have an extremely good grasp of the business!
- You really added value in that board meeting the other day.
- I didn't even know you were in HR (a backhanded compliment!).
- That intervention really made a difference to our … (bottom line, marketing drive, organisational morale, positive press coverage, customer satisfaction, etc).

When you hear any of these, you are receiving signals that a human resources strategy is underlying *some or many of your actions and ways of working.*

## Why does HR strategy matter?

Most employees want to feel that they are relevant to an organisation, and human resources professionals are no exception. We have seen, over the years, many human resources departments being decimated or having their roles transferred to line managers, often in an attempt to save costs or eliminate duplication of work – and even, sometimes, to eliminate what are seen as unnecessary efforts. Not that there is anything inherently wrong with saving costs – just as long as it does not prevent those HR practices or processes which add value to the business.

Even if, as an HR professional, you have not been part of a 'downsizing' of an HR function, or the transfer of it to other parts of an organisation, you may very well have experienced a flow of complaints and criticisms about HR. How often have you heard the following phrases?

- HR stopped me doing …
- It's all HR's fault that …
- I can't do that because the HR policy manual/rules don't allow me to.
- I get inconsistent responses from HR staff.
- The HR policies and procedures are unclear.
- I have to do something in a particular way because HR told me I had to.

The 'traditional' role of HR, when it first became a profession, was to administer payroll and benefits, and act as a 'policeman' to ensure fairness and equity. HR also assisted in resourcing organisations (particularly larger ones) and letting people go. The measure of success lay in the inputs rather than the outputs. For example, in such traditional, 'transactional' HR functions, some measures of success might be:

- Are employees paid on time?
- Are they recruited in sufficient numbers, and quickly?
- Are people let go when they are no longer relevant or not performing?
- Do employees receive consistent and prompt answers to their benefit questions?

These aspects comprise the 'tactical' side of HR. This is still important when we talk about the components of strategic HRM, but if it happens in a vacuum without an agreed strategy, it isn't on its own going to be very useful or helpful to an organisation in the longer run.

## Why does HR strategy sometimes fail?

In a busy world, being strategic is not always easy. Many so called 'HR strategies' are far from strategic. Why? There are lots of reasons and we have listed the common pitfalls that you might run into below.

### Common pitfalls

- You overcomplicate the strategy and have too many competing objectives.

- You fail to take into consideration different scenarios which the organisation may face.
- Your words or actions don't inspire or convince.
- Your words or documents are vague or superficial.
- The strategy consists of a document listing all possible options without prioritisation (the 'menu' approach).
- Accompanying documents and presentations are boring to read or listen to.
- You don't communicate the desired future state.
- You are overly dependent on jargon.
- You overpromise.
- You talk in generalisations and don't speak to the individual ('what's in it for me' is missing).
- There are errors, gaps or omissions.
- You don't have the talented employees or resources to implement.

What differentiates a good human resources director (HRD) from a mediocre one is this: a good HRD will have a focus on the future whilst keeping a firm grip on the current situation. So when creating strategy, HRDs who are fully informed about the future will have considered the implications of possible changes or scenarios for the business strategy and be weighing up options and priorities. They really know their business. They may have used similar tools to those in this toolkit to analyse its strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for change. They have a good grip on the organisation. They understand its current capability and the current business needs, and they take all of these into account when balancing the priorities. Finally, they know how to convince and influence – even the best strategists can face defeat if they can't convince and persuade others of the strategic direction they have so carefully crafted.

## Are there risks in *writing* an HR strategy?

A well-considered strategy communicates (to others in the organisation) what your intention is. It therefore also tells them what you have deprioritised or what you will not be doing. If you have worked through the tools here you can be confident that the strategy will be a well-considered, relevant and dynamic proposition, and most important of all, aligned with the organisation's strategy. Working through these tools will show you that you don't need to make grandiose statements or use complexity and jargon to write a good strategy.

Strategy can be transmitted both orally and in writing. We recognise that writing it down does make you vulnerable, but we advocate doing this as it helps both to shape your own thinking, and also to explain to others what you mean. You are stating what you will do (and, by omission, what you will not) and other people will have views about what you should be doing. Your strategy allows them freedom to challenge you. Whilst you may feel threatened or exposed, it does give you more likelihood of gaining management's buy-in. You may need to revise your strategy as people make information available to you that wasn't previously, but this is fine and to be expected. Share your draft strategy with your peers early in the process so as to gain feedback. They may reveal strategies or perspectives of their own which will add value and which you will need to take into consideration. Writing the strategy can't be achieved by committee; you will need to make the final decisions, but this period of creating and drafting will allow you to analyse your thinking and deliver something that is ultimately more robust.

# How to use this toolkit

## The structure of the toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help identify what HR strategy is. It describes how to recognise when circumstances and situations enable an HR professional to grasp opportunities to 'add value' and gain greater recognition for the HR function. There are 10 sections covering three key areas. We start in the first part by exploring the personal qualities and attributes of the strategic HR professional. In the second part we provide an array of tools around strategy, how to develop it and how to define and document your own HR strategy. Finally we focus on implementation. The tools in this part address a range of topics that you will need to understand if you are to deliver the organisation's HR strategy.

You are encouraged to read the toolkit in a sequential way, as each section builds upon the previous ones. However, it can be used for 'dipping into' according to your own needs and requirements.

### Part 1: How strategic are you?

### Section 1: Personal qualities of the strategic HR practitioner

Are you 'naturally' strategic, or can you grow and learn to be so? In Section 1, this and other questions are considered. There are tools which individuals can use for self-assessment, including a 360° tool. This will help individuals identify their strengths and areas that will require development. Once completed the tool will direct the individual to relevant learning activities in the toolkit.

### Section 2: The HR professional as a change leader

Section 2 lays out a strategic approach to major business changes such as restructuring, downsizing, growth, mergers or global expansion. It considers change as both an output of strategy and a driver for it. It touches on organisational development and provides essential pointers for the HR strategist to consider.

## Part 2: An overview of strategy

### Section 3: Strategy: where to start?

This section provides ways of becoming knowledgeable, and a range of techniques for HR professionals. It will demonstrate that just being a good HR professional does not provide the basis for being 'strategic'; rather, it is knowledge of the business and even the industry that can differentiate people.

### Section 4: From 'here' to 'there': defining the strategic HR plan

This section addresses how an HR professional can develop a clear vision of where and how the HR organisation needs to reorientate itself to meet the vision and objectives of the wider organisation. It will deal with how to link the organisational vision with an HR vision. We explain how to make the HR strategy a 'living' document, not something that is just put on a shelf.

### Section 5: Evidence-based HR

Evidence-based practice has had a major impact on medicine, education and now HR. When adopting evidence-based approaches, practitioners make decisions based on their own assessment but also on the best available external and internal evidence from research about a problem and its proposed solutions.

### Section 6: Strategic HR: identifying, managing and mitigating risk

In a fast-moving and increasingly unstable business world, the role of HR is becoming ever broader. This section explores things that more strategic HR functions can do to identify risks. It will include a set of tools that will help HR departments plan for business continuity during a recession or business disruption, and for dangers such as terrorist attacks, as well as other threats such as high absenteeism levels and competitor threats.

## Part 3: Making it happen

### Section 7: Getting to know the key players

Being strategic is about getting others to buy into your ideas and take the relevant action. Knowing who the key influencers are in an organisation is important. Being able to gain their support in turn helps the HR professionals to become influential themselves. This section focuses on some techniques for HR professionals to use to identify key players and gain their support. These are not necessarily the managers at senior levels, but might include trade union representatives, communications specialists, lawyers or administrative employees, to name but a few.

### Section 8: Making a compelling argument

This section provides tools to help the HR professional make a well-considered business case for any HR activity. It also provides help for HR people who find themselves bearing the brunt of complaints about HR delivery or lack of it.

### Section 9: The role of branding in HR

The employer brand is a critical tool in the 'war for talent', in motivation and in engagement. We have provided tools to help the HR practitioner create and develop a 'brand'. We provide checklists and templates to help embed this in relevant HR policies, practice and communications. We also look at branding the HR function itself to help communicate the values and qualities associated with it.

### Section 10: Structuring the HR function for success

In this section the focus is on how to organise an HR department to best fit an organisation's purpose. The delivery mechanism for HR will differ from one company to another, depending on each one's needs and requirements. The tools demonstrated here are designed to help readers select the structures best suited to their situation.

## The structure of a tool

Each tool begins with an overview explaining its purpose, listing any materials you will need, and outlining ways to use it. These introductory pages are marked with this symbol: *

This introduction is followed by the tool itself, which may include for example checklists, tables and questionnaires. These materials are available online (see address below) and are marked with this symbol:

These documents may be downloaded from the toolkit's website [www.cipd.co.uk/tsm] and are customisable at the discretion of the purchaser of the toolkit or the purchaser's consultant/facilitator.

## Navigating the toolkit

For those of you who want to 'dip into' the toolkit, we have included a matrix here which shows you the tools to use in different situations.

| Sections | Building my own strategic skills | Helping line managers understand the importance of HR | Identifying how HR adds value | Engaging with line managers and employees | Making a business case | Leadership development |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Section 1 | ✘ | | | | | ✘ |
| Section 2 | ✘ | ✘ | ✘ | | | ✘ |
| Section 3 | ✘ | | | | ✘ | |
| Section 4 | ✘ | | | | ✘ | ✘ |
| Section 5 | | ✘ | ✘ | | ✘ | |
| Section 6 | | ✘ | ✘ | | | |
| Section 7 | | | | ✘ | | ✘ |
| Section 8 | | | ✘ | | ✘ | |
| Section 9 | | | ✘ | | | |
| Section 10 | | | ✘ | ✘ | ✘ | |

# PART 3

# Making it happen



There are four sections in this part of the book. The first three cover important aspects that you must address if you want to implement your HR strategy.

In Section 7, we start with an exploration of how you get to know the key players. There are tools to help you think about stakeholder engagement and how to get buy-in for your suggested course of action. We then look at how you can influence others and build your own credibility with key stakeholders.

Section 8, which is closely linked to Section 7 and Section 5, is where we consider how to make a compelling argument.

Section 9 tackles the tricky subject of communicating your brand values. It may seem odd to think about the HR function needing to have its own brand, but many successful HR teams have used this approach to help explain, to an often cynical community, the HR values. Rather than just focusing on the HR brand we have looked at how branding helps to support the implementation of your strategy and can deliver real value to the business. We therefore look at branding from two perspectives: the employer brand and the HR team brand.

Section 10 is the last section in the toolkit but arguably one of the most important. It looks at structuring your HR department for success. We provide an array of tools to help you move to action, and create the HR function best suited to implementing your strategy.

# Section 7

# Getting to know the key players

## Introduction

Being strategic is about getting others to buy into your ideas and take the relevant action. Knowing who the key influencers are in an organisation is important. Being able to gain the support of the influencers in an organisation in turn helps HR professionals to become influential themselves. This section focuses on some techniques for HR professionals to use to identify and gain the support of key players.

This section starts by exploring different situations in which we need to be able to engage stakeholders. It is different from other sections because it focuses heavily on case studies. This device is used to help you understand some of the situations the authors have navigated in their careers. It gives you the opportunity to consider how you would have approached the situation, by working through the questions which follow. We then provide you with a 'what happened' synopsis. Some of what happened was good but we also share some examples of where things went wrong. By using a few examples we seek to demonstrate the importance of developing key skills in this area. We do not suggest that what we did is the only answer, or indeed would be the right answer in your organisation. It is impossible for you to be fully prepared, with all the answers for the many complex situations you will face in getting buy-in to your ideas. By building your skills you will have a better chance of navigating most situations.

We start with a large tool which contains three case studies (7.1.1 to 7.1.3). These are intended to generate debate about the strategy that could be used in each and the skills that are essential to develop. Use them on your own, in pairs or in small groups.

Tool 7.2 is a stakeholder analysis which invites you to think about a change you need to make and to identify the position of each of the stakeholders with regard to the suggestions.

Tool 7.3 provides you with a network analysis. Highly effective HR strategists are often exceptional networkers. If they don't know how to do something, they probably know a man or woman who does. They are often seen as people who get things done, where others struggle. Network analysis allows you to identify how robust your network really is.

Tool 7.4 is a process for mapping relationships. This is a critical tool for implementing your strategy. It has two parts. We start with Tool 7.4 to help you identify the key influencers in your organisation, then we move onto Tool 7.4.1 which will help you to spot areas of strength or weakness in your own or your team's relationships.

Tool 7.5 is a method for identifying issues you may encounter when devolving HR responsibilities to line managers.

Tool 7.6 is an exercise to help you think about your ability to build credibility with key stakeholders.

Tool 7.7 is a short list of actions you can take to get a seat on the board.

# Tool 7.1: A suite of case studies: getting stakeholder buy-in

## Overview

A strategic move on the part of HR practitioners who want to be proactive is to find ways to influence and win over key stakeholders. Studies show that without the support of the top leadership of an organisation, any change or new development in the human resources arena can actually worsen organisational performance! (Adapted from Whittington and Molloy, 2005.)

As Peter Reilly and Tony Williams explain in their book *Strategic HR: building the capability to deliver* (2006), the assumption that strategy-making is a rational and deterministic process is wrong; rather, a strategic HR player needs to be able to understand the internal politics and be active within the informal networks of an organisation.

## Identifying the key players

Key players are not necessarily only those at senior levels. Stakeholders come in different forms, depending on the kind of organisation concerned. They might include any or all of the following – depending on whether, for example, it is a private-sector or public-sector organisation, operating in one country or globally, and on the type of industry it operates in, its size and so forth. See which ones apply to you? Are there any others you can think of?

- the board
- the president/chairman/CEO of the organisation
- key allies and players in your parent company/subsidiary organisations
- your immediate boss
- employees

- managers
- the union(s) or staff association
- clients
- press and media
- government and politicians
- lawyers
- IT staff
- pensioners and ex-employees
- suppliers/buyers
- local communities
- partners (eg with joint ventures, outsourced business etc)
- potential recruits
- communications specialists
- budget specialists.

## Aim of the tool

To provide the means for individuals, pairs or groups to explore the difficulties associated with implementing HR strategy , and the skills needed to get stakeholder buy-in to it.

## Procedure for using it

There are three case studies which cover different aspects of stakeholder involvement in a variety of types of organisation. Choose the one that is most appropriate for your own organisation. They can be used individually, in pairs or in groups. Each has two parts. The case study or scenario is shown along with a number of questions to help prompt discussion. There is then a second sheet called 'The reality' which gives you examples of the action taken by the HR director. This is also accompanied by a couple of questions aimed at getting the group to explore the real-life solution to see what learning they can take from it.

Facilitators should invite the individual or group to identify the skills needed and encourage the group to consider how good their own skills are in these areas. The tools that follow can then be used to explore their skills set further.

The facilitator may also want to get the group to identify stories from their own organisation and to analyse them in a similar way.

## Evaluating its use

Have you been able to identify alternative solutions to your own problems or issues for gaining stakeholder buy-in?

On reviewing the HR survey or employee engagement survey, can you see real improvements in how people rate senior managers' relationships with key stakeholders?

# Tool 7.1.1: The case study: obscuring the data!

## Part 1: the scenario

Here is a scenario, based on a true situation, where the lack of relationship-building with key constituents brought about some dire consequences.

**Obscuring the data**

A public-sector organisation had a board which met several times a year to approve the budget (including the salary budget, merit pay and promotion increases).

For a number of years, HR succeeded in getting the budget approved by the board only after contentious discussions. The budget submissions were presented in two parts: first the overall budget, then the more detailed salary budget. HR typically presented a fairly complex paper, with the intention of deliberately 'obscuring' the real details (for example, that the overall increase being sought was somewhat higher than it appeared). For a number of years, their strategy succeeded because none of the board members wanted to admit their ignorance of the subject.

The budget department and the HR department did not always see 'eye to eye' with each other and often presented the same data in different ways, and with a different 'spin' on the figures which further added to the confusion.

It was clear that the current situation was unsustainable. And indeed, eventually, some of the more astute board members, playing a strong governance role, started probing and questioning the data, with the inevitable consequences – the budget failed to be passed.

Consider and discuss the case study with another person. Then answer these three questions:

- What needed to be done to resolve the problem?
- Which of the list of key players (pages 280–281) needed to be involved and consulted?
- Which relationships would have been key to dealing with this issue?

Additional questions to consider:

- What advantage did HR hope to gain by obscuring the data?
- Is this ever an appropriate strategy to use?
- How do you keep the stakeholders engaged if you need to withhold data?

## Part 2: obscuring the data: the reality

What happened in real life was the following:

The HR director engaged with the *budget director* and set up a series of meetings between the *HR department staff* (especially those working on compensation matters), and the *key budget staff* preparing the annual budget submission, in order to:

- get to know the perspectives of the budget team
- explain to them the rationale and formulae behind the cost-of-living, merit-pay and promotions-increase proposals
- agree on common definitions and indicators
- agree on a common and more simplified paper to be presented all at one time, which both departments could support.

The HR director then decided to visit *every single one* of the (20 plus) board directors to listen to their concerns about salary budget issues. Often there was more than one meeting with those deemed to have greatest influence over the board decisions – or who were widely viewed as the worst 'trouble makers'. These meetings were also used to explain the rationale behind certain budget requests. In addition to the board members themselves, meetings were also held with the *directors' assistants* – the staff who usually prepared the directors' responses at the board meetings. These meetings were used as opportunities to gather feedback and provide education for those closely involved in the board decision process.

The HR director initially had strong resistance from the compensation staff in HR to preparing a clearer board submission – these particular individuals guarded closely their professional knowledge and expertise. However, they were won over after seeing the HR director's influencing style with the board members and strong ability to listen and take into account their concerns whilst being able to clearly explain the rationale behind the salary budget requests. Once they saw that the board directors were turned around from being negative to supportive, they changed their approach and attitude.

## Lessons learned

Engage your group in thinking about the lessons learned from this situation. Here are some suggested learning points:

- Know who the key influencers are and get to know them.
- Take time to listen; be prepared to explain and adapt the final outcome appropriately to reflect their concerns.
- For complex issues, try to present them in a more simplified way.

It's the way you present and how you adapt the message to the audience that's important – you are not going to be able to pull the wool over other people's eyes all the time, so adapt to fit the interests of key stakeholders – 'what's in it for them'.

# Tool 7.1.2: The case study: mapping the relationships

## Part 1: the scenario

Here is a scenario from a different organisation, again based on fact, where the lack of relationship-building with key constituents brought about some dire consequences.

**Mapping the relationships**

A high-profile organisation had a strong staff association. The HR team became aware that there appeared to be many 'leaks' of information to local politicians about the perceived 'abusive behaviour' of some managers towards their staff.

The HR director received a request from one such politician for a meeting to explain what was happening within the organisation and to ask what steps were being taken to deal with the issues reported.

Very soon, the media got wind of the situation and there was negative publicity about the organisation in the national press. Even prospective employees would ask about this when they came for job interviews.

The results of a recently introduced 360° exercise used for managerial assessment became widely known and were used as examples of poor managerial performance and further back-up for evidence of abuse in individual cases.

There was some truth in the rumour, but it was being exaggerated for political gain. The organisation was addressing the behavioural problems; this information, however, was sensitive and the HR director did not want to get into a debate about it on radio or in the media.

Action had to be taken.

Consider and discuss the case study with another person. Then answer these questions:

- What needed to be done to resolve the problem?
- Which of the list of key players (pages 280–281) needed to be involved and consulted?
- Which relationships were key to dealing with this issue?

## Part 2: mapping the relationships: the reality

So, what happened? The HR director assigned the deputy HR director to set up a weekly consultation meeting with the *Staff Association chair and her team.* Initially, meetings were rather 'sticky', but over time things improved and more information was shared within the group. The two key players started meeting on a one-on-one basis, to test whether they were able to share key confidences, and gradually trust was developed. The deputy HR director listened and was able to gather some pertinent information about staff complaints that had not surfaced through the 360° assessments, and was able to probe more deeply into areas of potential harassment and – in relevant cases, and with the assistance of the *HR business advisers* – advise managers on the relevant action to take. In turn, the Staff Association top team were able to understand better the significance of certain types of behaviour as revealed through the 360° exercise. (For example, it became clear that the feedback which said that a manager was 'abusive' was not always correct, but sometimes resulted from dealing with a difficult staff performance issue.)

All this information was eventually shared at a general level, without actually discussing individual names so as to be sensitive to the actual managers cited. Enough information was shared to educate both parties as well as the politicians who had been lobbied to check on what was going on! In their turn, the media stopped targeting the organisation. Finally, the internal communications team were able to assist with putting out useful follow-up messages about the situation and how it was being dealt with.

## Exercise

Working on your own or in pairs, consider the questions below:

- Consider the reality: what would you have done differently?
- What are the skills demonstrated here?
- How good are your skills in this area?
- What do you take away from this exercise?

# Tool 7.1.3: The case study: no accountability for HR issues

## Part 1: the scenario

In this case study you are given both the problem and the solution an organisation decided to adopt. Consider the scenario and then answer the questions below.

**No accountability for HR issues**

Managers in a private sector organisation were getting promoted even where they were not managing their staff properly – including keeping on poor performers. The HR director provided a business case which demonstrated that, with proper accountability and training, results and quality of output would improve, and quantified the savings made in time of products getting to market.

He built up a relationship with the Budget Manager, and together they were able to present a joint proposal for measuring productivity and setting measurable indicators to measure output and quality. A client survey was also carried out and the results published, which showed up the areas for improvement.

In pairs discuss the case and answer the first two questions:

- What are the key issues in this case study?
- What are the critical skills needed?

## Part 2: no accountability for HR issues: the reality

The CEO of the organisation was persuaded of the need for change, and so was resolute in supporting the proposals made, and communicated them over and over to her line-management team. Promotion criteria started to include some HR indicators – like productivity levels, doing more with less and tackling non-performers.

After two years, there was true accountability for managing people, and an acceptance by line managers that their role was to manage people, not just budget and other assets.

## Personal reflection

- What would you have done?
- How good are your skills in this area?
- What can you take away from this exercise?

Also, see Section 5 on 'Evidence-based HR'. The evidence provided in this case study was influential in gaining support and winning around key stakeholders and influencers.

# Tool 7.2: Stakeholder analysis

## Overview

As mentioned above, identifying the key stakeholders when you are trying to implement your strategy will help you to be more effective. It is equally important to explore their relationship to the issue or the activities you are aiming to introduce. This information will help you to decide on how to proceed and which tactics to use to get them onside.

## Aim of the tool

It provides a template for analysing the position of key stakeholders in relation to strategic intent.

## Procedure for using it

Start by identifying the strategic imperative for which you want to ensure stakeholder support.

Either individually or with your HR team, use the template on page 294 to help you explore the position of key stakeholders. There are a number of stakeholders listed here; change the list to suit your situation. Consider which tactic is best for each of the positions. Use the suggestions below:

- *'For':* Ensure that your proposal is positioned so that it meets the needs of this group and will be supported by them. Make sure that you do not lose their goodwill by failing to recognise their interests.
- *'Undecided':* This is where you can gain most leverage. Ensure that you identify their needs/interests/concerns. Then review your strategy and any activities you want to initiate to see where the blocks might come. Try to minimise their objections by making changes where you can to

meet their needs. This may require that you meet with each of them individually. You may need to spend more time with some and involve them in the process.

- *'Against':* This is the hardest group to influence. Identify their objections and ensure that your proposals address them directly. Try to involve the dissenters in your early discussions so that you have at least given them an opportunity to vent their anxieties. This may require a personal meeting or a team meeting prior to the implementation. By meeting with our opponents, we do at least demonstrate our respect for their position.

Finally note the actions that you have decided to take.

## Evaluating its use

How good are you and your team at getting stakeholder buy-in to the implementation of key aspects of your strategy?

What do your peers, or other stakeholders say about your skills and interests in working with them and understanding their position?

Have you been able to implement your strategy, particularly any critical activities or ones where you expected opposition?

## The tool: Stakeholder analysis

The element of the HR strategy which needs full stakeholder buy-in is:

________________________________________

________________________________________

The position of each of the key stakeholders is:

| Stakeholder | For | Undecided | Against | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The board | | | | |
| President/chair/CEO of your organisation | | | | |
| Key players in your parent company/subsidiary organisations | | | | |
| Your immediate boss | | | | |
| Employees | | | | |
| Managers | | | | |
| The union(s) or staff association | | | | |
| Clients | | | | |
| Press and media | | | | |
| Government and politicians | | | | |
| Lawyers | | | | |
| IT staff | | | | |
| Pensioners and ex-employees | | | | |
| Suppliers/buyers | | | | |
| Local communities | | | | |
| Partners (eg with joint ventures, outsourced business etc) | | | | |
| Potential recruits | | | | |
| Communications specialists | | | | |
| Budget specialists | | | | |

The action needed is:

________________________________________

________________________________________

# Tool 7.3: Who is in your network?

## Overview

Who is currently in your network? Using the list on page 294, can you identify others who currently are not? How important is this type of stakeholder to your modus operandi and ability to get things done? Are there any particular individuals or groups of individuals who are particular 'gatekeepers' or 'naysayers' that you need to build bridges with and win around?

It is difficult to maintain relationships with all stakeholders at all times, primarily because of the pressures of time. It is important, therefore, to decide who you need to meet with and when, how best to do this, and on what topics.

## Aim of the tool

To help identify the key people in your network that you need to make time for.

## Procedure for using it

This is a good tool to use with a coach, trusted manager or peers.

Using the template on page 297, map out the 'Before/Now' situation, and the ideal 'After'.

In thinking about your relationships, also consider whether:

- There are some relationships that are well established and don't need to be changed or given attention for now.
- There are some relationships that can be dropped (eg those contacts

who add little value and who take up time and energy – often there are a few of these in any organisation who want more of your time for themselves, and give little back or are not useful to you).

- There may be some relationships that are going to be short lived. For example, there is rapid turnover of CEOs these days. While a CEO can be a key ally, his or her early departure can be a problem for an HR director who is seen as being too 'close' to the CEO. You may want to consider how to build a relationship with CEOs without developing such a close tie that you become defined as 'their' person, and therefore vulnerable on their departure.

## Evaluating its use

Are you meeting with the people who will help you to implement your strategy? How robust is your network and are there people you need to do more with?

## The tool: Who is in your network?

| Stakeholder | Currently have relationship with | Currently don't have relationship with | Need to develop relationship | Action |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Example: The CEO | Quite good but meetings are always initiated by him/her. | Could be better. | There are times when I need to be able to approach the CEO to run an idea past him/her. | Start by sending occasional e-mails that may be helpful to him/her. Seek to have a meeting once every month or so, to explore a specific issue. Ensure that I am well prepared and have solutions ready. Take no more than 15–20 minutes. |
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# Tool 7.4: Relationship mapping: who are the key influencers in the organisation?

## Overview

Knowing who the key influencers are in an organisation is important, since these are the individuals who can support you in implementing your strategy, and hence assist in bringing about a more favourable outcome.

## Aim of the tool

To help you identify who is talking to whom, and in turn who are the key influencers in your organisation.

## Procedure for using it

Interview each individual in an organisation (or, if it is a large one, start with 'obvious' ones who hold significant roles) about who they communicate with and about what.

This is a dynamic tool – as you go along, you can add more names and more links as names come up in interviews.

It's best to obtain a lot of detail about who communicates with whom (and about what) before sorting it. It can then be sorted by type of communication – such as 'providing information to', 'directing someone to do something', 'consulting someone' and so on.

It can be further fine-tuned by adding the kind of communication used – such as 'providing a board paper', 'providing data' or 'holding a staff meeting'. It is important, also, to be sure to get both sides of the communications – to identify areas where information is sent but not used or responded to – in other words to assess the impact, since individuals may send out much information, yet much of it may go unheeded or unread.

This model can be taken a step further to analyse from whom and to whom the bulk of e-mails are sent. This provides a way of seeing where the information flows go. It also helps distinguish what might be 'important' e-mails from those that are urgent or just for information – and hence provides a way of undertaking a kind of 'business process' of e-mail usage, as well.

From this kind of model, you can start to see who the 'influencers' are. See the example on page 300.

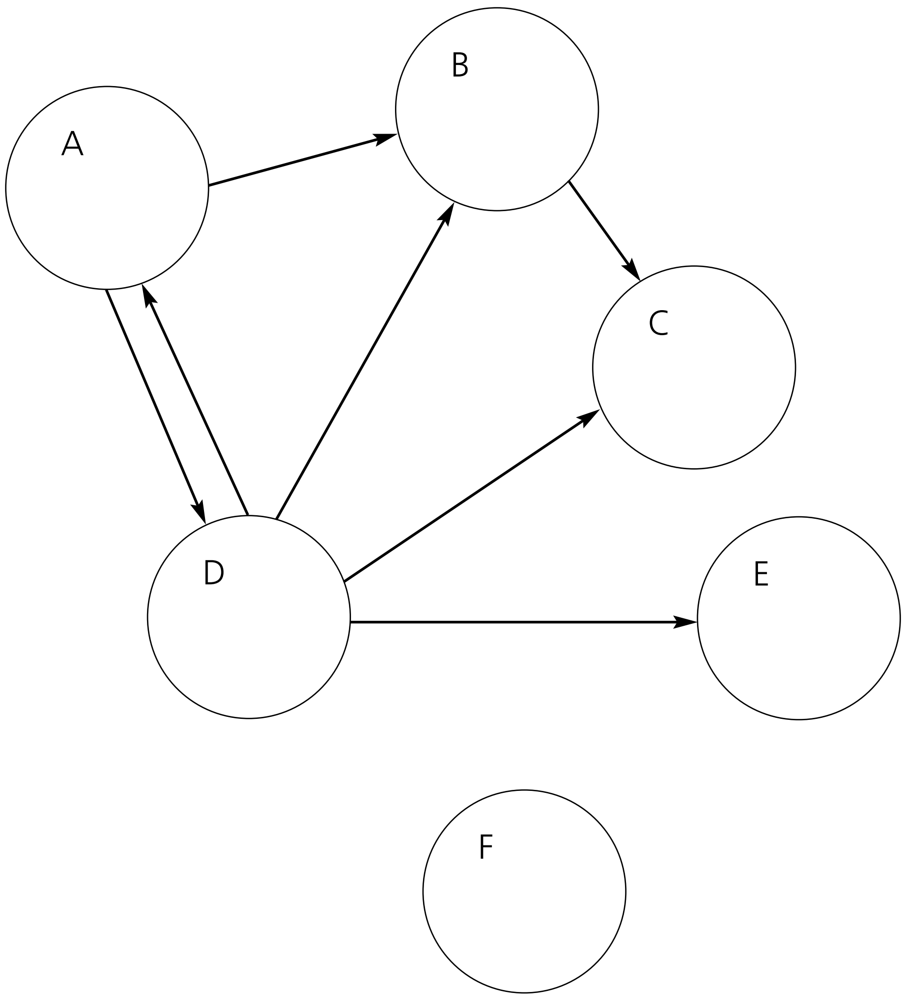
## Evaluating its use

How effective are you at spotting the key influencers in the organisation?

**Example**

The diagram below shows that one person (D) communicates with almost everyone, and has a two-way relationship with (A). (D) could be potentially quite powerful, depending on the content. It also shows someone (F) who is isolated and does not communicate with (or is not communicated with) anyone. Arrows going both ways signify that the person has greater impact. S/he is both a receiver and disseminator of communications; the relationships are not just one way.

***An example of a relationship map***



# Tool 7.4.1: Relationship mapping: your own map

## Overview

Sometimes it is not easy to anticipate who the key players might be when we start to implement our strategy. Superficially, it would seem that it is those who have the most visibility. But sometimes it is those who operate behind the scenes who have the most influencing power in the organisation.

It is sometimes useful to literally 'map out' the relationships you have with key stakeholders. That allows you to answer the question: 'Who is talking with whom?' From this, you can identify the key 'leverage points'. This is especially useful when planning out the establishment of a new policy, process or change programme, or when implementing your strategy.

## Aim of the tool

Provide a process to map the relationships that currently exist against the desired state, and to spot gaps or areas to improve.

## Procedure for using it

This is a slightly different process from the previous one. Start with yourself at the centre of the map. Have the desired change in mind and note down all of the key stakeholders. Now map the current relationships by using arrows to indicate the flow of information. Who are you talking with? Who are they talking with?

Step two is to do something similar, but now note down the relationships needed to help move the change forward. So, taking the same stakeholders (add in any new ones that will help), map out the ideal situation. What are the relationships that you would like to have with others? Are there any relationships of your team members that are weak and need to be bolstered?

Now compare the two. This will show you where the weaknesses lie and you can make a plan to build the relationships that you need to have in place to ensure successful implementation.

An alternative approach is to allocate larger boxes to the people who are very important in the process. This allows you to keep track of these people and can help to focus your attention. You can also change the length of the lines to help you plan. Short lines could denote: 'keep them close'. Longer lines indicate that these people are more remote from the decision. However you choose to draw it, the act of drawing helps you to identify the gaps. It is also good for helping you to communicate with your HR team about the complexity of the stakeholder involvement and what action needs to be taken by you or them.

## Evaluating its use

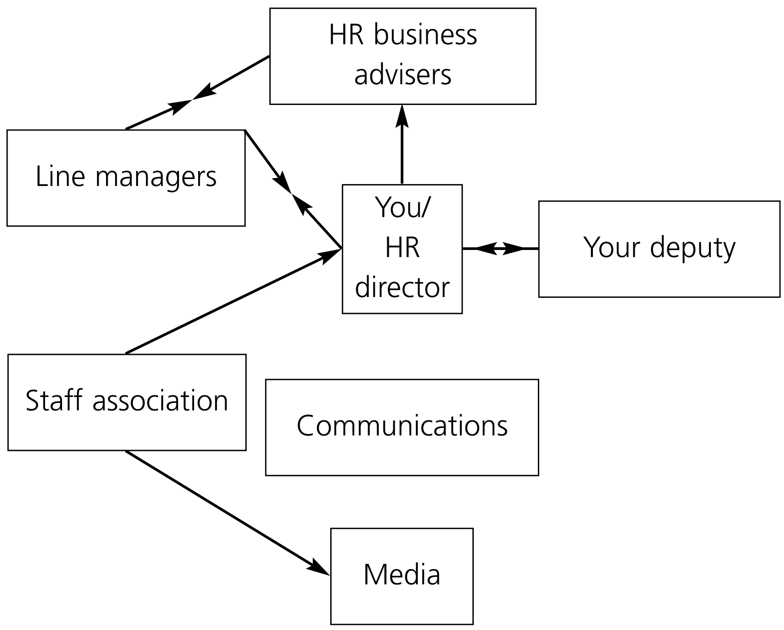
Are you gaining buy-in and building your own and your team's credibility with key stakeholders?

When you review your strategy, have you found that people have been more or less supportive? How much time are you spending coercing others or having to manage conflict or barriers to your work?

## Example

This example looks at the relationship between the HR team and the staff association. It is based on the earlier case study (on page 287) where it was found that the organisation's staff association had been leaking information to the media.

### The 'before'



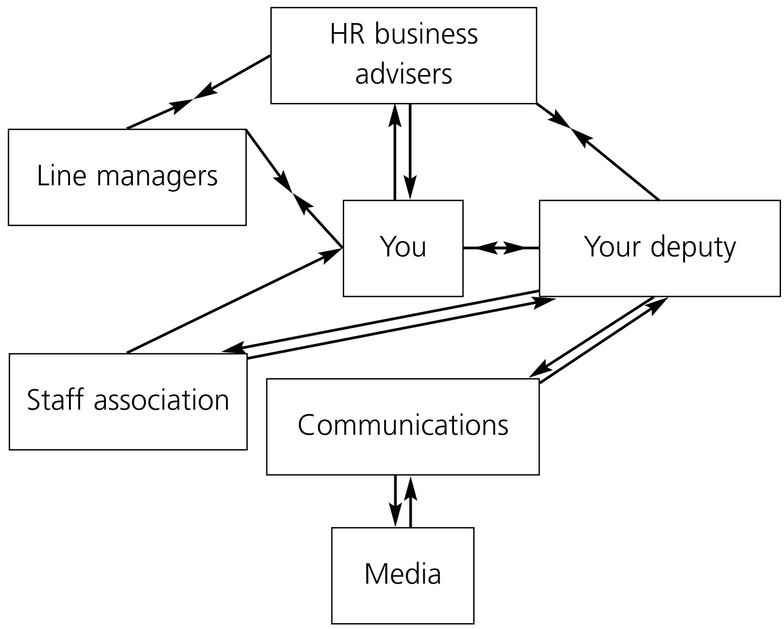

The arrows represent the flows of communication. What do you notice about them?

What is immediately apparent is that:

- Your deputy has little delegated authority.
- The staff association has the 'upper hand' – in that they communicate to you, yet you don't communicate to them.
- The staff association is communicating to the media – without you, or even your communications department being in the loop.

Clearly, there are large gaps in the influencing sphere. What happens when you decide to proactively fill these gaps and create the appropriate links? This is what the picture would look like afterwards:

**The 'after'**




Some points to note:

- Your deputy has more delegated responsibility, and now manages the staff association consultation process.
- Your deputy also has more direct authority to liaise with the organisation's communication department to put together relevant messages for the media.
- In turn, the communications department provides data and information that the HR function can use to proactively respond to media comment.
- The HR business advisers are able to get more actively involved in the feedback and follow-up loops with line managers.