

HR-Xchange Summary – 9/15/09

“HR as a Strong Strategic Partner” – facilitated by Chandra Attiken

We began the session by learning how HR professionals can position themselves strategically in an organization to be at the table when decisions are made. Many times, HR can be described as the “road block” in a company; meanwhile, we want to learn how to be the “road bumps” – bringing our ideas, concerns, and suggestions to the table, while still allowing upper management to make the decisions that will best support the company’s mission and values.

The following 5 questions were discussed among small groups, and then recapped within the larger audience:

1. **How can you know whether or not your HR role is valued as a strategic partner within your organization?**
 - a. Depends on your role and the company culture
 - b. The overall respect that the department holds in the company
 - c. Having a seat at the leadership table
 - d. Leadership asks for your ideas/advice consistently
 - e. HR’s advice is considered before decisions are made
 - f. Hold yourself accountable to the company vision
 - g. Align people processes with the business needs
 - h. Use the HR mission as a roadmap of the company values

2. **What factors and conditions enhance or prevent HR from being a strategic partner in organizations?**
 - a. PREVENTS – Do not mesh with the philosophy of the CEO, the CEO may not be driving the change in the organization, lack of connection with the customer, not having the ability to influence, Philosophy vs. Policy = no match.
 - b. ENHANCES – CEO values the HR department, process-oriented leader to promote change, knowing your population, match of background and the industry.

3. **What steps can HR leadership take to position the HR role as a strategic partner?**
 - a. Know the overall strategies and link them to the HR strategies
 - b. Recruitment strategies = Focus on retention
 - c. Know the strengths/weaknesses of our talent and how to keep them engaged
 - d. Remain on the same page as your people
 - e. Get creative with workforce planning = anticipate change!

- f. Be aware of what is considered relevant data and model your strategy based off that data
- 4. What core capabilities are essential within HR to achieve the above?**
- a. Understanding the business processes
 - b. Voice of customer = LISTEN!
 - c. Right metrics dashboard
 - d. Integrate across the business
 - e. Organizational development
 - f. Workforce development
 - g. Communications
 - h. Culture drivers – Vision, Mission, Goals, Values
 - i. Core competencies
 - j. Sales/Persuasion – sell to all customers, employees, etc.
 - k. Change Agent
 - l. Culture Steward
 - m. Administer your expertise
 - n. Support the overall vision
 - o. Be an internal consultant
 - p. Employee Champion
- 5. What unique opportunities exist for HR in the current economic environment within organizations?**
- a. A lot of top talent is without work – Find them!
 - b. Look for inefficiencies in your company
 - c. “Prune, Replant, Transplant” – make sure that you have the right people in the right positions (i.e., transplant stagnant employees into new positions)

To wrap things up, Chandra enlightened us by sharing her “HR Delivery of Service.” She encouraged all of us to establish CREDIBILITY, to be COLLABORATIVE, and to focus on our CONTRIBUTION to our organizations.