



HR Intelligence: Advancing People Research and Analytics

By Dr. Salvatore Falletta, Leadersphere

There is a dawning awareness that data and information, as a commodity in and of itself, has little value to an organization unless it is transformed into meaningful intelligence. In our age of information and speed, the sheer volume of data that organizations can and do amass is overwhelming. Amidst the volume, data is often fragmented, conflicting, incomplete and, in some cases, irrelevant. What is needed is the type of alchemy that transforms data and information into intelligence. Businesses in all industries require real-time intelligence more than ever to enable strategy creation, decision-making, execution and organizational learning. In the context of human capital management, HR intelligence, as derived from people research and analytics, is a fast emerging mandate for organizations seeking strategic competitive advantage. This article introduces the concept of HR intelligence, its inherent value and how practitioners can build HR intelligence capability within their firms.

Intelligence in the Context of Business and Human Resources

Competitive intelligence is the systematic and ongoing process of ethically and legally gathering data and information on targets such as customers, competitors, adversaries, personnel, technologies and the overall business environment (Shaker & Gembicki, 1999). The notion of competitive intelligence was originally developed by the U.S. government, e.g., CIA and NSA, and used extensively since the Cold War. Intelligence is often called the second oldest profession and has been in existence since the dawn of civilization. For example, Sun Tzu and many other ancient warriors realized that intelligence was fundamental and essential to the art of war.

In the context of HR, the war for talent coupled with the HR profession's battle for strategic legitimacy has given rise to a plethora of methods and techniques such as HR metrics, balanced scorecards, employee and organizational surveys, selection research, 360-degree and multi-rater feedback systems and benchmarking approaches. Although these methods have significantly advanced HR practice, they are treated as very specific and narrow methodological specialties generally managed as independent programs and projects and largely exist within functional HR silos. More disturbingly, they often lose sight of their original intent and become highly institutionalized and symbolic practices. Despite the fact that companies spend millions on people research and analytics-related practices each year, no systematic process is available to make sense of and transform these disparate data collection activities into meaningful intelligence results.

Dr. Jac Fitz-enz, founder and CEO of the Workforce Intelligence Institute and a highly respected authority on strategic HR measurement, asserts that "we desperately need to advance traditional people research and analytics practices and develop a more scientific and evidence-based approach to predict business and organizational outcomes (Falletta, 2008)." Boudreau and Ramstad (2005, 2007) further call for a HR decision science approach, whereby organizations strategically analyze their data and information and make better decisions with respect to their work force and key talent. Moreover, Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) have introduced the concept of evidence-based management. Specifically, they contend that hunches, trends and fads, and the popular press tend to influence our decisions around what strategies and practices are best. Instead, they advocate an evidence-based approach whereby science and empirical evidence drive business decisions and strategies. Lastly, Davenport and Harris (2007) argue that the landscape for using data and information has shifted dramatically, and that leading companies are building strategic capabilities and competitive advantage through data-driven intelligence and insight *vis-à-vis* advanced analytics.

HR Intelligence: What is it and why bother?

Human resources intelligence is a proactive and systematic process for gathering, analyzing, communicating, and using insightful people research and analytics results to help organizations achieve their strategic objectives. Human resources intelligence differs from traditional people research and analytics

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activities in that the latter tends to focus exclusively on data and information rather than intelligence *per se* (see Figure 1), which, more often than not, lacks any real insight or predictive utility.

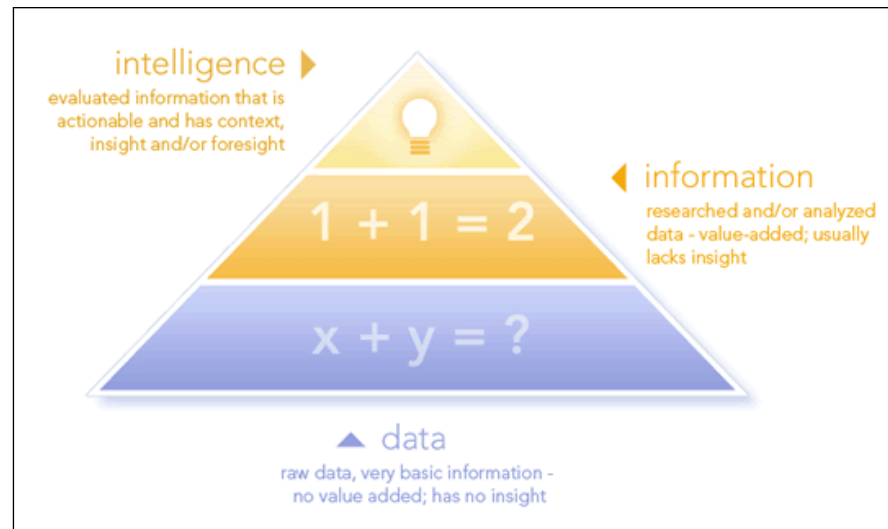


Figure 1. HR Intelligence Hierarchy.

HR Intelligence Hierarchy – Employee Retention Example.

Data

Data is very basic and raw. Usually it includes lagging indicators and metrics that provide little to no value and insight, e.g., after-the-fact turnover metrics.

‡ Company XYZ's overall turnover for 2007 was 7.5 percent.

‡ Regional/area turnover was 13.5 percent.

Information

Descriptive information, i.e., a snap shot, is value added and useful but generally lacks any actionable insight or predictive power, e.g., employee survey reports, verbatim or written comments and case studies results.

‡ On company XYZ's employee survey, 25 percent of employees reported that they "intend to leave XYZ within five years."

Intelligence

Data and information are analyzed and interpreted in the context of the business and in relation to other factors and variables. It is predictive in nature and provides a leading indicator as derived by advanced people research and analytical practices, e.g., correlation and regression analysis, structural equations modeling, meta-analysis involving multiple data sources analyzed in relation to other factors and variables, driver analysis and/or linkage studies.

‡ $R^2 = .60$ (Sixty percent of the variance in Y can be explained by X), and

‡ X = managerial quality and Y = actual turnover.

Current People Research and Analytics Practices

A preliminary study was conducted to learn more about the people research and analytics practices currently being performed. Several highly respected global companies in the high-tech industry were interviewed such as Dell, Microsoft, IBM, Intel and SAP, to name a few. The majority of the participating companies reported having a dedicated people research and analytics function or group. All of the groups were strategically positioned, with nearly half reporting to the chief HR officer, i.e., top HR executive. The types of people research and analytics practices were fairly common with employee and organizational surveys being the most prevalent. Table 1 lists the most common people research and analytics practices being performed in organizational settings.

All company participants described their role in HR strategy as an enabler and/or data feed to the strategy creation process.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent pool and site/location identification research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR metrics and indicators (including scorecards)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee and organizational surveys
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 360 degree or multi-rater feedback systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR benchmarking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection research (including personality assessments)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and HR program evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return-on-investment (ROI) studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative research methods (including case studies, focus groups)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review (e.g., review and synthesis of existing or secondary data sources such as articles and research reports)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsourced research activities including membership-based research consortia (e.g., Corporate Leadership Council, The Conference Board, University of Southern California's Center for Effective Organizations, and the Institute for Corporate Productivity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced organizational behavior research and modeling (i.e., linkage studies, driver analysis, correlation/regression analysis, factor analysis, causal modeling, and structural equation modeling procedures)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations research and management science (e.g., optimization methods such as linear programming; stochastic processes such as Markov analysis; Bayesian statistics, computational modeling, and simulations)

Table 1. People Research & Analytics Practices.

All company participants described their role in HR strategy as an enabler and/or data feed to the strategy creation process. Not surprisingly, some participants described the overall effort as an exhaustive data and information gathering exercise, i.e., data dump, whereby pre-conceived notions or after-the-fact HR strategies and decisions drove the actual data and information requirements. When asked to describe the future focus of people research and analytics practices and explain what the notion of "HR intelligence" meant to them, the following themes emerged:

- Performing value-added research that enables executive strategy creation, decision-making, execution and organizational learning;
- Gathering external or competitive data and information on other best-in-class companies;
- Gathering internal data and information to better understand our people, talent and work force in the context of the business;
- Linking multiple data and information sources to predict, model and forecast individual, group and organizational behavior and performance outcomes;
- Transforming data and information into knowledge, insight and foresight; and,
- Communicating and reporting insightful and useful research findings and intelligence results.

While further research is needed into the extent to which high performing companies engage in people research and analytics related practices, there is sufficient evidence (based on the perspectives of several thought leaders described earlier and the themes outlined above) to assert that HR needs to move away from providing reactive "data fetching" support and move toward developing and delivering proactive HR intelligence results.

Determining stakeholder requirements is vital to the overall success of any HR intelligence effort.

HR Intelligence Cycle

To effectively build robust HR intelligence capabilities that are both proactive and systematic, HR intelligence must be positioned as an ongoing cycle involving the following critical steps:

1. Determining stakeholder requirements,
2. Defining the HR research agenda,
3. Identifying data and information sources,
4. Gathering data and information,
5. Transforming data and information,
6. Communicating and using intelligence results, and
7. Enabling strategy creation, decision-making, execution and learning.

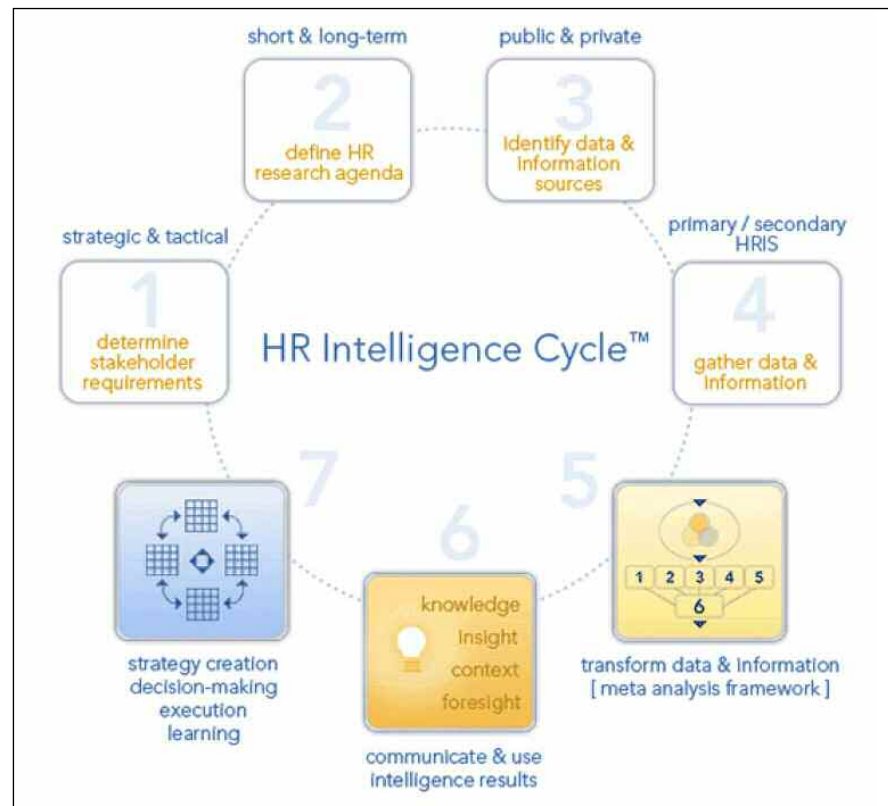


Figure 2. HR Intelligence Cycle.

Many of these steps might seem intuitive and commonsensical for anyone dedicated to people research and analytics work. Notwithstanding, it is instructive to provide at least a high-level description of each step to clarify the essence of the overall HR intelligence cycle.

Step 1: Determining Stakeholder Requirements

Determining stakeholder requirements is vital to the overall success of any HR intelligence effort. It is much more than meeting with a few influential or vocal stakeholders each year to formulate the annual HR research agenda. It's about establishing and cultivating a partnership and becoming a legitimate player by adding value to the business. With respect to the HR intelligence cycle, an ongoing and proactive partnership with key stakeholders is an essential role to ensure up-front legitimacy and credibility and obtain an accurate picture of the most pressing organizational problems and expected outcomes.

In short, determining stakeholders' requirements is important to:

- Identify strategic and tactical research, data and informational needs, expectations and priorities;
- Secure involvement, commitment and support of the HR intelligence function or effort to increase ownership of the intelligence results, both positive and negative;

Once stakeholder requirements are obtained, it's time to define the HR or people research and analytics agenda.

- Provide communication on the ongoing progress of the overall HR intelligence cycle; and,
- Ensure utilization of the intelligence results and recommendations.

Step 2: Defining the HR Research Agenda

Once stakeholder requirements are obtained, it's time to define the HR or people research and analytics agenda. A research agenda in organizational settings is quite different from academic settings. People research and analytics practices in organizations tend to be much broader and more pragmatic, i.e., addressing topics related to business problems. In contrast, academic research is applied or basic in nature and tends to focus on a very specific line of inquiry over a considerable period of time.

An HR research agenda may be long-term or short-term. The constantly changing and evolving nature of business and the external environment is redefining the notion of time in terms of what is considered long-term versus short-term. In our age of speed and technology, long-term is no longer five to seven years out. One to two years is considered long-term now at least within the high technology industry. Conversely, short-term needs tend to coincide with a company's quarterly results, sometimes monthly. It important to note that short-term doesn't necessarily mean tactical or reactive, nor is long-term equated with strategic. Short-term and long-term research requirements can be both strategic and tactical in nature. For example, a short-term project can yield results, e.g., market adjustments to employee salaries that could potentially have strategic and long-term implications.

Consider the following when establishing the HR research agenda:

- Organize the general stakeholder requirements by theme or major topic.
- Pose broad research questions for each theme or major topic and use stakeholders' language and terminology to the extent possible.
- Under each of the broad research questions, begin generating targeted research questions, which lend themselves to measurement.
- Identify both the long-term and short-term requirements of the overall research agenda.
- Share the research agenda with your key stakeholders and go through an iterative process of refinement.

Importantly, the HR intelligence team, i.e., people research and analytics function, should bring their own "HR intelligence" and expertise to the table. For example, the HR intelligence team should devote some resources to covert research projects that are strategic in nature, aside and apart from what was generated during the stakeholder requirements step. Further, the HR intelligence team should think and act in terms of "change insurgents" and avoid thinking about the status quo, i.e., what has traditionally been done, in the HR organization. This will invariably influence the content and focus of the research agenda. Some difficult and unpopular changes may need to be made to existing people research and analytics activities, e.g., discontinuing pointless customer or point-of-service surveys, eliminating meaningless metrics and indicators, and rethinking "sacred cow" policies, programs and practices.

Step 3: Identifying Data and Information Sources

Once the HR research agenda has been established, identify the sources of data and information that will help to answer the research questions. Data and information sources may be either public or private. Public data and information resides in university libraries, knowledge repositories and governmental databases, e.g., U.S. Department of Labor Statistics. Examples of private data and information include a company's internal employee data *vis-à-vis* human resource information system (HRIS) as well as external benchmarking data from "best-in-class" companies. Reports and results gathered by credible membership-based consortia, e.g., Workforce Intelligence Institute, Corporate Leadership Council, The Conference Board, and the Institute for Corporate Productivity and academic

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think tanks, e.g., Cornell's Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies, University of Southern California's Center for Effective Organizations, are excellent sources of private data and information, which are available as part of an annual membership.

Sources of data may or may not exist depending on your organization's current people research and analytics practices. While reviewing data and information sources, questions may arise as to whether your organization's people research and analytics practices are still valid and useful to the business, e.g., some practices may have become institutionalized or ritualized over the years. Tough decisions may need to be made with respect to modifying existing practices, starting new ones, and in some cases, discontinuing outmoded or symbolic practices. For example, since Google's founding they've relied heavily on incredibly high GPAs from elite universities and near perfect standardized test scores (such as the SAT, GMAT, or GRE), as well as a lengthy interview process to screen and select prospective job candidates. However, Google's People Analytic's group found that grades and interviews alone were not a reliable predictor of performance and success within their chaotic and competitive environment. Instead, Google subsequently developed an elaborate 300 item online survey which explores a job applicant's attitudes, behavior, personality, and unorthodox and seemingly irrelevant aspects of their personal life, e.g., "what magazines do you subscribe to?" and "what pets do you have?" Suffice it to say, and without getting into the inherent ethical and validity concerns, Google is able to analyze the resultant data to model and, more importantly, predict how well a person will fit into their unique, albeit quirky, culture (Hansell, 2007).

Step 4: Gathering Data and Information

This step of the HR intelligence cycle involves the actual collection of data and information through primary research, secondary research, or through mining your HRIS. Primary research is new or original research that addresses a specific research question or set of questions, e.g., a study to identify which factors enable or inhibit employee engagement and performance. Secondary research is data and information available through existing research sources; it may involve examining existing literature or research reports or performing a meta-analysis, i.e., an analysis of results from multiple sources. Mining data from your HRIS is another way to gather, query, and analyze data and information about your work force, if the system is well managed and maintained. Given that data and information are gathered from multiple sources at different points in time, it is recommended that the HR intelligence team coordinate and monitor all aspects of people research and analytics activities at their respective company. For example, if your company uses multiple customized employee surveys within business units rather than a single corporate-wide or global employee survey effort, the HR intelligence team should assess and consider the implications and potential impact of such an approach. Companies that are serious about HR intelligence and a cohesive HR strategy and execution should conduct a global employee survey to ensure consistency, ease of analysis across the entire company and minimize the impact of over surveying the employee base (Falletta and Combs, 2001). Leading companies such as Intel have done an excellent job at coordinating their survey efforts within their companies. For example, when Intel conducts their Organizational Health Survey worldwide, they enable their major business units and core functions to include five to ten customized survey items to meet their specific needs, while ensuring consistency at the corporate level.

Step 5: Transforming Data and Information

Transforming data and information into useful and insightful intelligence is arguably the most important and critical step. Numerous advancements and innovations have been made by leading edge software firms, e.g., Oracle, SAP and Workday, incorporating work force analytical capabilities within their HRIS products and services. While such decision support solutions are promising,

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they should be seen as neither panacea nor silver bullet. The fact is, some forms of people research and analytics work cannot be boiled down to a simple algorithm or metric, and subsequently analyzed through a universal software application, e.g., advanced organizational behavior research and modeling. Until such a time, the use of an organizational model or some type of conceptual framework is highly recommended.

An organizational model is an abstract representation of an organization that depicts key factors within the organizational system, their relationship to one another, and their impact or effect on organizational outcomes. An organizational model can serve as a meta-analytic framework and facilitate a common data architecture to make sense of, i.e., transform, data and information derived from multiple and disparate data sources. Figure 3, the Organizational Intelligence Model, provides an ideal conceptual framework for such purposes. This model can also be used as a conceptual framework for employee survey efforts or as a guide for large-scale organizational change (Falletta, 2008).

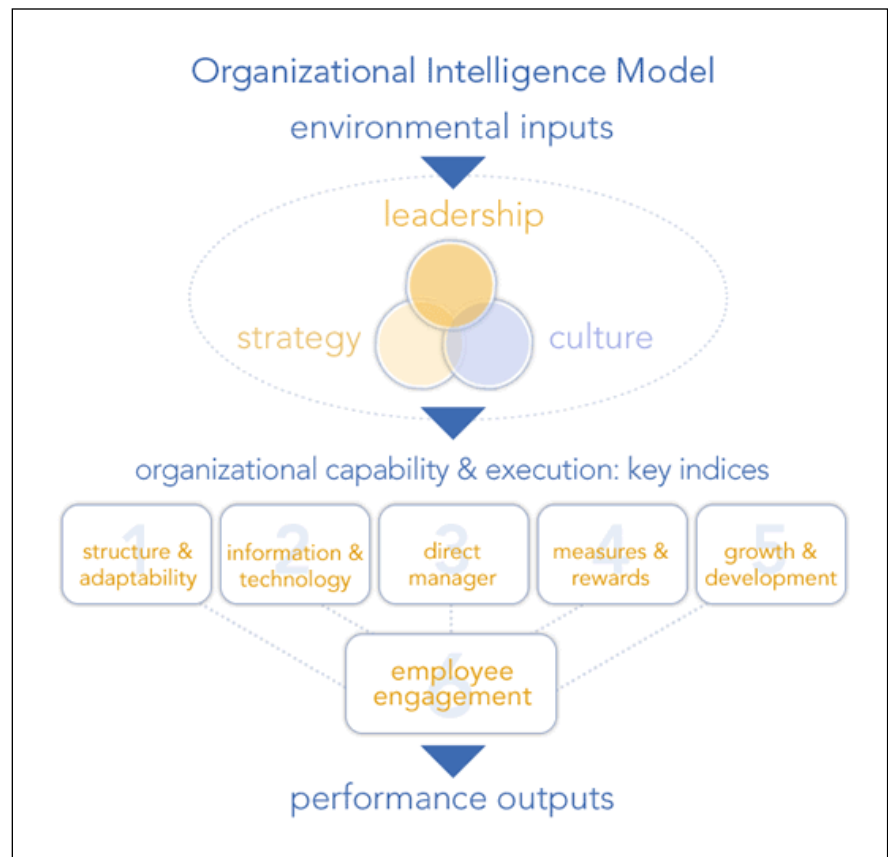


Figure 3. Organizational Intelligence Model.

Organizational models vary with respect to their level of specificity and applicability to different organizations and settings. Therefore, the HR intelligence team must be careful to select the right framework for use given their company culture and stakeholder communication needs. This may mean using a model or framework that is relatively simple, especially if the company has never used a model before or has concerns about being able to work with a complex meta-analytic or diagnostic framework. Thus, use a model that is recognizable to your stakeholders, but ensure it is comprehensive enough to represent the factors and variables of interest with respect to the HR research agenda.

The Organizational Intelligence Model serves as a meta-analytic framework to filter and make sense of the data. Performing the meta-analysis, i.e., an analysis of analysis across multiple data and information sources enables you to organize and codify information into knowledge and gain critical insight into your organization's most pressing problems. Performing the meta-analysis can be

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simple or complex. This largely depends on the nature of the data gathered, sophistication and competency of the researcher or data analyst and the amount of time one has to actually conduct the analysis.

Environmental Inputs	The outside conditions or situations that affect the company/organization (e.g., Sarbanes-Oxley, government policy, competitive intelligence, customer feedback, the economy).
Strategy	The means by which the company/organization intends on achieving its overall mission and goals and creating value for its stakeholders.
Leadership	The most senior level of executives and managers in the company/organization.
Culture	The underlying values, beliefs and norms that drive team and organizational behavior.
Structure & Adaptability	The structure is how the company/organization is designed (i.e., levels, roles, decision rights, responsibilities and accountabilities) to execute on the strategy. Whereas, adaptability refers to the extent to which the company/organization is ready and able to change.
Information & Technology	The business systems, practices, and capabilities that facilitate and reinforce people's work (e.g., IT infrastructure, communication, knowledge sharing).
Direct Manager	The relative quality and effectiveness of your immediate manager or supervisor.
Measures & Rewards	Measures refer to the ways in which individual and team performance and accomplishments are measured and managed. Rewards are the monetary and non-monetary incentives that reinforce people's behavior and actions, including advancement and promotion.
Growth & Development	The practices, resources, and opportunities available for employee skill development and enhancement, including development planning, training and learning, and stretch assignments.
Employee Engagement	Employee engagement involves the cognitive, emotional and behavioral relationship employees have with their jobs and organizations, and effort and enthusiasm they put into their daily work (i.e., the extent to which employees exert their discretionary energy and effort on behalf of the organizations they serve).
Performance Outputs	The outcomes and indicators of individual and organizational achievement and results.

Table 2. Factor Descriptions of the Organizational Intelligence Model.

Step 6: Communicating and Using Intelligence Results

The sixth step of the HR intelligence cycle involves communicating and using intelligence results. The *gestalt* of HR intelligence places more effort and emphasis on the development of an executive summary, which in turn tells a story about the data and information in relation to the organization's most pressing problems and successes. This goes beyond traditional people research and analytics reporting processes and presentations, which can be characterized as the "proverbial data dump," as it involves strategic insight and interpretation on part of the HR intelligence team.

Considerable advances have been made in linking HR to the business strategy and company performance, i.e., a value creation framework, through the notion and use of the *Balanced Scorecard* (Kaplan & Norton, 1992), *HR Scorecard* (Becker, Huselid, & Ulrich, 2001) and the recent introduction of the *Workforce Scorecard* (Huselid, Becker, & Beatty, 2005). However, as alluded to earlier, not all forms of internal and external data and information can be expressed in terms of a simple metric or indicator. For example, some people research and analytics activities, e.g., advanced organizational behavior research and linkage studies, require advanced statistical analysis, meta-analytic and causal modeling procedures, i.e., structural equations modeling (SEM), as well as expert interpretation and insight. Notwithstanding, these scorecards are a complementary approach and

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effective means by which to communicate most people research and analytics results and are best used as a communication and reporting tool for strategy execution once an agreed upon strategy is in place.

During the presentation of results, the majority of the time is spent on reinforcing the model used in transforming the data gathered and subsequently walking the stakeholders through the executive summary. The summary is almost always presented in narrative form and not as a series of bar and pie charts, although these should be included in a supplemental HR intelligence report. While the report contains various scorecard data, metrics and indicators, and other analyses, these elements should not be the focus of the summary presentation to the executive team. The narrative presentation, based on the model used, should largely consist of data-based diagnostic inferences and insight. Real intelligence and insight lends itself to use and subsequent action. That said, take some risks and provide interpretation and insight, as well as specific recommendations. Such bold moves lead to strategy creation, decision-making and, more importantly, action.

Step 7: Enabling Strategy Creation, Decision-Making, Execution and Learning

The final step of the HR intelligence cycle is strategy creation and decision-making. We all have heard the proverbial mantra that behind every successful company is a strategy that works. But what exactly is strategy? Strategy is a multidimensional concept that can be defined in a number of different ways. It involves asking intelligent questions, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), knowing the right things at the right time, game theory, scenario planning, optimal decision-making, establishing priorities and goals, and effectively managing execution. Despite these various methods and approaches, strategy can be viewed as the means by which an organization intends on achieving its overall mission and goals, and creating value for its stakeholders.

The term strategy creation is emphasized here and differs from traditional strategic planning. Strategy creation involves the formulation of something innovative or new. Conversely, strategic planning tends to focus on analyzing and evaluating all of the consequences associated with selecting and implementing proven solutions or best known methods. While there is nothing wrong with adopting best-in-class solutions from other companies, exclusively copycatting and leveraging what everyone else does rarely leads to real competitive advantage. Instead, HR should take an active role as in driving an appropriate level of innovation as part of their overall human capital strategy to differentiate their company for competitive advantage.

Proactive HR intelligence arms strategists and decision-makers with pertinent knowledge and insight to make critical decisions pertaining to human capital. Establishing effective HR intelligence practices can also ameliorate some of the repetitive ad hoc data fetching exercises described earlier by providing HR leaders with real intelligence and predictive insight. While this undoubtedly can be a slippery slope in terms of organizational politics and data ownership across a company's HR functional silos, data and information analyzed and interpreted in the context of the business and in relation to other factors and variables are hard to ignore, particularly when it's predictive in nature.

Once plans and priorities are in place, the Balanced Scorecard or HR Scorecard can be used as a means by which to manage and communicate the execution of the strategy. The strategic priorities and goals, and concomitant metrics and indicators, can be measured and tracked to promote a shared understanding of what's working and what's not and where change is needed. Lastly, it is important to carefully document your successes and failures as it pertains to strategy execution. Meaningful organizational learning can only occur through informed risk-taking, a propensity for action, and yes, occasional failure. Nevertheless, an HR organization can avoid or at least ameliorate the nature and extent of failure by establishing an overall research agenda and ongoing cycle of real-time HR intelligence and insight.

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HR Intelligence Implementation Tips

Some questions and answers about the HR intelligence cycle that are likely to arise as you apply the process in your organization are presented below:

Our organization has been performing people research and analytics activities for years. How should we introduce the notion of HR intelligence?

Human resources functions have been in reactive mode for so long, it's hard for them to fathom a systematic and holistic approach. An incremental approach to implementing HR intelligence is recommended. Introduce the HR intelligence cycle as a flexible and comprehensive approach to making sense of the disparate data sources that exist in your organization. Whatever you do, avoid harsh criticism of the existing people research and analytics practices, because you will alienate stakeholders and increase resistance to implementing the HR intelligence cycle in your organization.

Why use an organizational model or conceptual framework to transform data and information into HR intelligence results?

As mentioned, there is no technological solution that is going to magically transform all of the HR related data and information at your disposal. An organizational model serves as an organizing framework to make sense of data and information generated from multiple and disparate data sources. Performing the analysis within a conceptual framework enables you to organize and depict multiple variables in relation to each other, which in turn, leads to meaningful strategy discussions. While the Organizational Intelligence Model is presented and available to use, avoid using a model that is confusing to your stakeholders. Keep it simple, but ensure it is sufficiently comprehensive to represent the factors and variables of interest in your organization.

Is it necessary to centralize all people research and analytics work under a single HR intelligence umbrella or function?

There is no easy answer to this question. In general, it is recommended that you attempt to centralize people research and analytics related practices into a single HR intelligence function. If this is not possible, all HR-related data and information must be readily available to the HR intelligence team in its raw form.

Sometimes it is not feasible or politically desirable to pull all people research and analytics practices together. Therefore, do not insist that all such work reside within the HR intelligence function. Rather, a common data architecture and access to all data and information sources is more vital to the success of your HR intelligence effort. It also may not be possible to have full and unencumbered access to all data and information sources globally with respect to international labor laws and European Union data privacy restrictions. Hence, be sure to establish worldwide safe harbor agreements where appropriate to ensure data transfer between countries.

To what extent should the HR intelligence team be connected to the HR strategy function?

It is highly recommended that HR intelligence practices be merged with your HR strategy function. In addition, this group should report directly to the chief HR officer, i.e., top HR executive. In many companies, a dedicated HR strategy function doesn't even exist. Politically, some organizations prefer this arrangement in that all HR executives have an equal role and responsibility in driving strategy development and execution rather than a centralized function *per se*. However, there's been a recent call for companies to establish a dedicated "Office of Strategy Management (OSM)" in order to address the gap between strategy creation and execution (Kaplan & Norton, 2005). The notion of a dedicated OSM should be extended to the corporate HR structure, coupled with HR intelligence capability. Hence, the establishment of a "HR intelligence and strategy" function would be ideal and ensure a coordinated effort between HR intelligence practices, strategy creation and execution.

If human and intellectual capital is indeed a company's greatest source of competitive advantage, rather than lip service for the popular press and HR profession, then it is incumbent on HR to play a central role in measuring and understanding an organization's most valuable asset: its people.

Conclusion

If human and intellectual capital is indeed a company's greatest source of competitive advantage, rather than lip service for the popular press and HR profession, then it is incumbent on HR to play a central role in measuring and understanding an organization's most valuable asset: its people. This includes staying abreast of the latest trends, as well as keeping a pulse on competitors' people practices. The business case is clear to establish a systematic process of gathering, analyzing, and transforming people research and analytics data and information into intelligence results. Hence, HR intelligence is an emerging mandate for 21st century organizations.

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Dr. Salvatore Falletta has more than 20 years experience in management, human resources, training and performance improvement, and organization development. Falletta is president and CEO of Leadersphere, a HR intelligence consulting firm that specializes in employee and organizational surveys, change readiness assessments, 360-degree feedback systems, measurement and evaluation processes, and HR strategy consulting. Prior to Leadersphere, he was vice president and chief HR officer for a Fortune 1000 company based in the Silicon Valley, California and has held management and consulting positions in human resources at several best-in-class companies, including Nortel Networks, Alltel, Intel Corporation, SAP AG and Sun Microsystems. While at Intel, Falletta managed the global employee survey program, performed leadership development needs assessments and organizational behavior research studies, and participated in corporate HR strategy efforts. He also led the training measurement and evaluation function at Nortel Network's Technical Education Centers. Falletta holds a doctorate with a specialization in human resource development and organizational behavior from North Carolina State University and was one of the first HR professionals to receive the global HR certification (GPHR) through SHRM. He can be reached at sal@leadersphere.com.