

What are the capabilities needed as an HR Strategic Partner?

Fiona Ellis

Becoming a strategic partner is about a shift in mindset, and capabilities...

Ulrich

“For HR to master a new role, centred on deliverables with new patterns of behaviours, both learning and unlearning needs to occur. Learning means appreciating new alternatives; unlearning means letting go of the past”

Becoming a business partner sounds easy but in practice demands a shift in mindset and capability.....

What is the mindset shift needed?

Becoming a true “player “ on strategic business issues
.....able to challenge business leaders on their own ground

Architects who can synthesise specialist best practice eg Reward, Talent , OD etc into integrated solutions and implement at speed

Shifting from advising and consulting to challenging, provoking, confronting business leaders

Letting go of the past – often coping with restructuring when colleagues have gone – and engaging with the future

What personal capabilities does a Strategic Business Partner really need to have?

Personal Impact:

Have the personal presence, integrity, authority and business strategic understanding to speak as an equal and be listened to

Provoke:

Get managers to think about strategic business implications; ask difficult questions, say the unthinkable, challenge assumptions. Provide an holistic, systems/complexity based insight on the business – being a true “player”

Catalyst:

Bring in concepts and data from the outside world and make it relevant to the business. Manage relationships with externals.

Coach:

Partner managers as a coach, supporting and facilitating as they tackle change in themselves, their teams and their organisation.

Architect:

Synthesise specialist best practice eg Reward, Talent , OD etc into integrated solutions and implement at speed

HR Strategic Partners have to lead and influence at a senior level

These are some of the challenges HR Strategic Partners tell us they face:

- How is this new role different from before?
- How can I really have impact and influence at a senior level?
- How strong is my strategic business credibility ?
- What is my role in leading complex change ?
- What are the strategic change strategies I can employ?

You are moving towards Strategic Partnering when...

- you are involved in discussions (by invitation!) on the “*people implications*” of a change or a new initiative in the organisation before things go wrong
- managers in your client system *confide in you* about their concerns and problems, even when you are not providing a solution then and there
- managers *encourage you to tackle issues* in their areas and express confidence in your ability to do things you may never have done before
- you engage in *genuine dialogue* with client managers: eg co-create solutions

You are moving towards Strategic Partnering when...

- you can *disagree* with a “client’s” point of view and the result is constructive
- the needs one is presented with are *genuine needs/problems*, not solutions to be implemented
- the *time frame* of one’s work moves from present/past to future - especially longer term future
- the “*why*” of what one is doing is very clear - in terms of *organisational need* (not “because we always do it/ have done it)

Developing capabilities and supporting a shift in role

- Experience in HR transformations show that making this mindset shift can be helped by working with a peer group of HR colleagues on real life issues in an action learning or coaching group process.
- Reviewing on the job experience, planning changes and getting feedback from peers over several months can really help changes and capabilities develop
- This is a core approach in the integrated development process we have facilitated in both public and private sectors, - to find out more please contact:
Fiona.Ellis@bathconsultancygroup.com