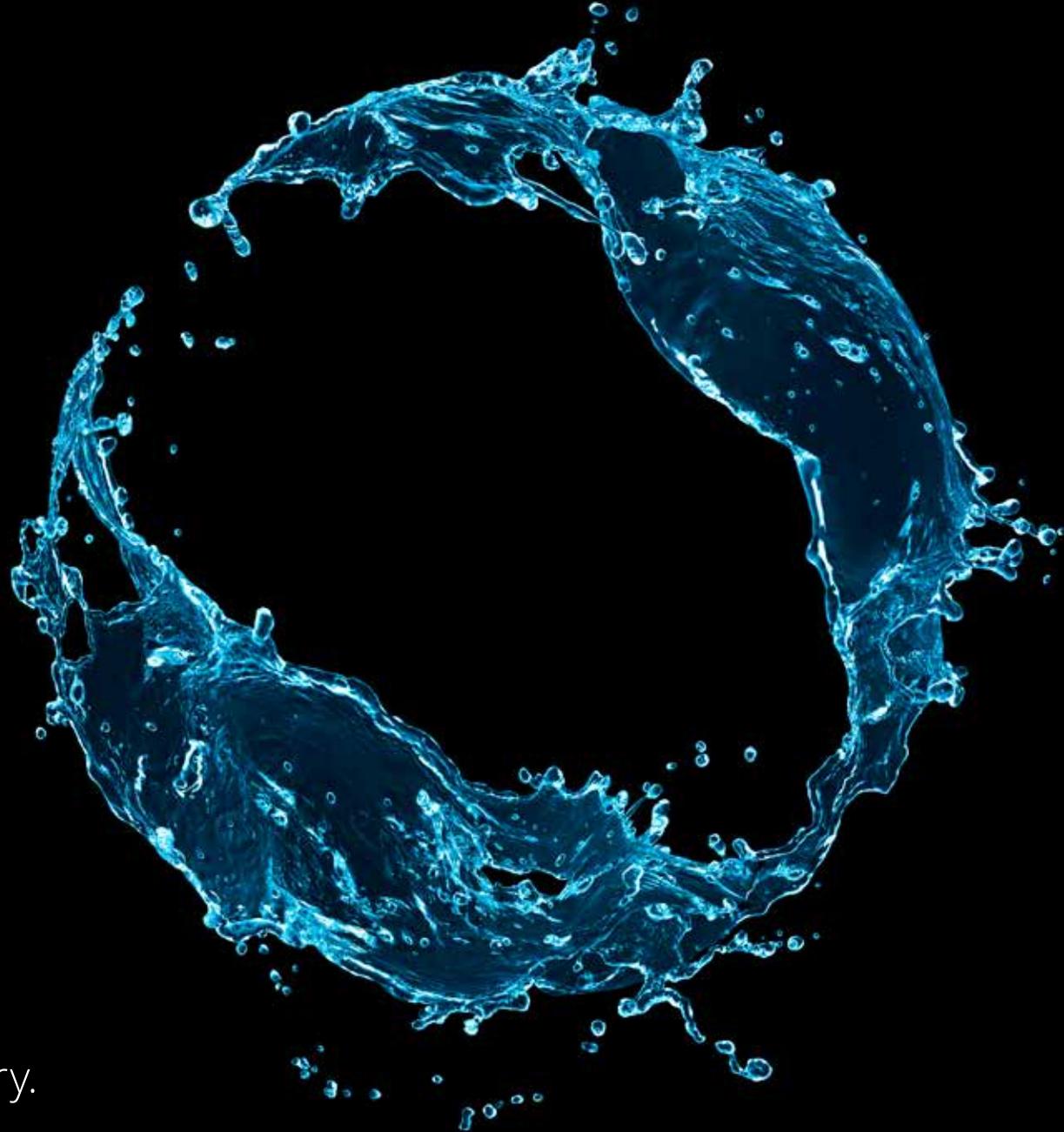


**Deloitte.**



**The High-Impact HR  
Operating Model**

Familiar. Sustainable. Revolutionary.

# The High-Impact HR Operating Model

Disruption is simultaneously impacting your business and your workforce. Organizations face increasing demands from customers, constant productivity pressure from competitors, and threats from unexpected entrants to their markets. The shifting geopolitical landscape, digitization of our daily lives, and changing workforce demographics and demands add further disruptive forces. Enterprises must quickly anticipate, adapt, maneuver, make decisions, and shift course in an agile way more than ever before to brave the never-ending disruption.

HR is the only function with the purview and ability to effectively turn those disruptions into opportunity for sustainable business performance. **Deloitte's Global Human Capital Trends** research shows that "HR's impact has been trending upward over the past few years with significant progress in the areas of employee engagement, culture, workplace analytics, and the adoption of cloud-based HR technology." While HR teams still face daunting challenges—particularly in experiences across design thinking, digital, behavioral economics, and real-time performance feedback—a new generation of inspired HR leaders is entering the profession, and the progress is real.

HR leaders today and into the future face a new set of potential challenges, including a mandate to: drive the workforce and talent agenda to attract the best in the market where the demographic upheavals have made the workforce younger, older, and diverse; foster an engaging culture and drive enterprise performance; meet the demand for world-class service while digital technology is disrupting business models and radically changing the workplace; build and support empowered teams; create a deep leadership pipeline; and, harness data for analytically based workforce decisions.

Organizations need HR to show up differently. Efficient and effective delivery of core services are givens. HR showing up differently is about setting and achieving the workforce and talent agenda, delivering the business strategy, driving workforce performance and engagement, stewarding the culture, and enhancing the experience for the enterprise's people. When HR shows up differently and takes the lead, they are able to navigate the disruptions happening in both the workforce and the business.

## Experience is key

A large, global financial services company recognized the power of interactions with its external customers and examined the interactions with the workforce. They discovered a defined set of "moments that matter" for the employee. With an acute focus on improving the value HR delivers, the organization targeted specific improvements to deliver true value at those "moments and experiences that matter."



Showing up differently relies on HR having the right operating model, capabilities, and digital enablement. Organizations are advancing from traditional ways of operating HR toward the High-Impact HR Operating Model Deloitte introduced a few years ago. Based on extensive research and practical experience gained through collaboration with enterprises around the world and across industries, the model is dynamic and must be fit for purpose to align with an enterprise's culture, organizational ways of working, and the business's unique strategy and priorities. While progress for many organizations is excellent, a distance remains to fully realize High-Impact HR.

Since launching the High-Impact HR Operating Model, experience and further research enable evolution of the Model and the approaches to realize a tailored version that fits an organization.

Achieving High-Impact HR requires a shift to a new level of maturity. Organizations must move further—from “rationalization” to “optimization” of the entire HR function and the experience of the workforce. HR, just as the business, cannot sit still or aspire to old models. So, we've stepped back to reflect on the delivery of HR—again. This time, rather than reflecting upon traditional HR models, we have evaluated the High-Impact HR Operating Model and refined it with knowledge and experience gained since its introduction. While the Model was developed following five years of research and hundreds of client engagements, the last few years have provided further insights about how to bring this new way of operating HR to life in a “fit for purpose” way.

# What does “high-impact” mean in HR?

Consider the challenges a modern-day HR operation typically faces, before or after transforming:

- A mandate to **drive** the workforce and talent agenda, creating a compelling experience that attracts the right people in a competitive market and drives enterprise productivity
- The need to drive **alignment**, an engaging **culture**, and global **performance**
- The opportunity to provide world-class customer **service** through better use of **digital technology and analytical capabilities**
- The need to support and build deep, global **leadership** pipelines—and **networks of teams** whose idea of being led is not merely to follow

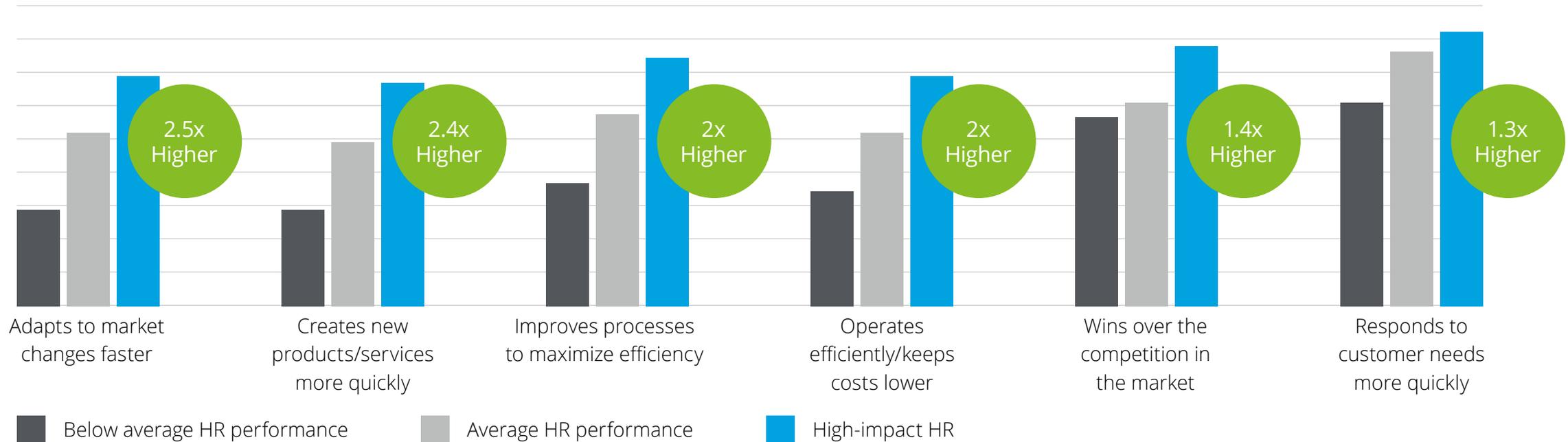


## What does “high-impact” mean in HR?

Research by Bersin by Deloitte, Deloitte Consulting LLP, shows that when HR operates with High-Impact, the business excels.\* As seen in Figure 1, companies that implement a High-Impact HR model are far more able to market changes, accelerate introduction of new products or services, operate efficiently, and win over their competition.

The High-Impact HR Operating Model is a blueprint for an HR function built on adaptability, innovation, and expertise. It “walks the walk” by helping HR move from a function of “service delivery” to a driver of strategic workforce, talent, and business outcomes. Just as important, the blueprint is adaptable. Instead of a “one size fits all” mandate, it offers foundational core philosophies, key shifts, and customized elements that HR organizations can make their own.

Figure 1.\*



\*High-Impact HR: Building Organizational Performance from the Ground Up, Bersin by Deloitte, Deloitte Consulting LLP

# Core Philosophies of the High-Impact HR Operating Model

- 1 HR Customers** remain at the **center of the model** with a bigger voice than ever, driving a critical focus on workforce experience
- 2 The Digital Workplace empowers and connects the workforce**, with modern digital experience
- 3 Workforce Insights**, derived through digital solutions and strengthened analytical capabilities of HR, **inform the business strategy**
- 4 Fluid interaction among the HR components**, continues to be key to the Model's strength, **breaking silos** created by traditional HR operating models and ways of working



# High-Impact HR Operating Model Core Elements

What does HR's new way of working look like? The High-Impact HR Operating Model empowers business leaders, prospective and current employees, and HR professionals in a number of ways:

- Aligns the work an organization needs with the capabilities to deliver it most effectively
- Incorporates digital as an integral part of the operating model to empower and connect with workforce
- Emphasizes coordination within and beyond HR
- Reshapes the roles and responsibilities within HR and the ways HR interacts inside and beyond the enterprise's walls
- Establishes HR's critical new role in fostering connections outside the organization—with business customers and external networks—to nurture the employer brand and translate the outside world through a talent lens that influences the enterprise's people strategy

Those familiar with the High-Impact HR Operating Model will recognize this refreshed view still incorporates the open architecture that promotes movement, adaptability, responsiveness, flexibility, collaboration, and openness for the variety of additional functions and roles that can play important parts in an organization's way of operating HR.

Also familiar are the main components, with HR Customers at the center; Business HR, HR Operational Services, Communities of Expertise, and External Networks & Partners as the primary HR roles; and joint HR and Business Leaders forming the Executive Leadership providing governance to the model.

The updated Model reflects important enhancements:

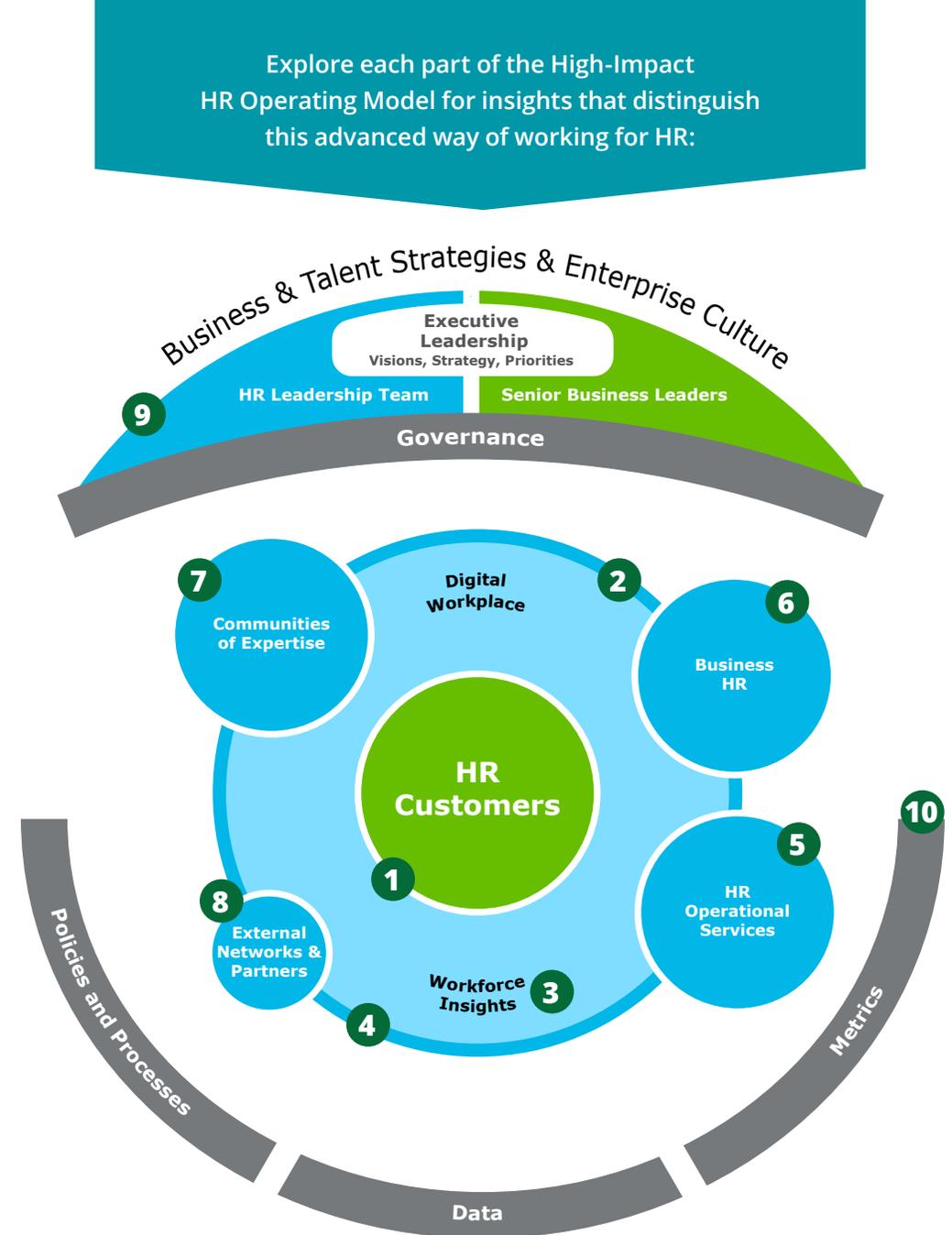
- The exponentially rising importance and ease of technology to create a consumer-like Digital Workplace and drive Workforce Insights based upon the massive amount of data increasingly available
- The need to optimize HR's connection to External Networks & Partners, given the critical roles of service provider partners, cloud platform solution partners, crowd-sourcing, and social networks

## Looking outside in

The CHRO of a global automotive organization recently commented, "We really need to move to Communities of Expertise. For too long, we have worked in isolation, building solutions not relevant to our customers. I need to push my HR team to go outside of HR and pull back leading research."

## High-Impact HR Operating Model Core Elements

- 1 **HR Customers** remain at the center and with a bigger voice than ever, driving a critical focus on workforce experience
- 2 **Digital Workplace** empowers and connects the workforce
- 3 **Workforce Insights** are used to **inform the business strategy**
- 4 **The model's strength** is fluid interactions
- 5 **HR Operational Services** delivers inquiry, data, and specialized services, **generating capacity** for other HR components
- 6 **Business HR** uses data and insights to **deploy workforce solutions** that ensure the business is capable of achieving its strategy
- 7 **Communities of Expertise** connect experts to **develop relevant, data-driven, and experience-designed workforce solutions**
- 8 **External Networks & Partners** extend the HR community **beyond its walls** and add more credibility to workforce solutions
- 9 **HR Leadership** partners with the business to **set the HR vision, culture and priorities** that deliver the business strategy
- 10 **HR Enablers** are **fundamental** to fueling the credibility and impact on the business and HR customers



# Shifts to High-Impact HR

The ability to effectively achieve the desired business outcomes, including faster adaptability to market changes, quicker product and services creation, and winning over the competition, requires HR to accomplish the “4C’s” of High-Impact HR:



## **CAPACITY**

Free up time for HR to focus on the moments that truly matter to the business and the organization as a whole



## **CAPABILITY**

Enable HR to deliver upon those moments that matter with the right solutions in the right context at the right time



## **COMMUNITY**

Build connections across silos, geographies, providers, and customers to form one HR organization



## **CREDIBILITY**

Give HR the license—the support—of the business to influence and engage on the most important issues and initiatives

## Shifts to High-Impact HR

Major shifts are needed to move from current ways of working to High-Impact HR, arranged as “From → To” within the 4C’s frame:work



**IMPACT**  
Creating a high-impact on the organization

# Making High-Impact Fit for Purpose

Of course, clear alignment of an enterprise's business strategy with its people and HR strategies is imperative to the success of any HR function.

The High-Impact HR Operating Model is a plan, not a prescription. The model provides a starting point that, when combined with HR Operating Model Strategic Design Choices, enables an enterprise to arrive at a "fit for purpose" way of operating HR. These choices are organized in three categories: Business Strategy, Business Environment, and People & HR Strategy.

Making HR Operating Model Strategic Design Choices that allow creating a fit for purpose High-Impact HR Operating Model relies on the following: Business Strategy, Business Environment, and People & HR Strategy.

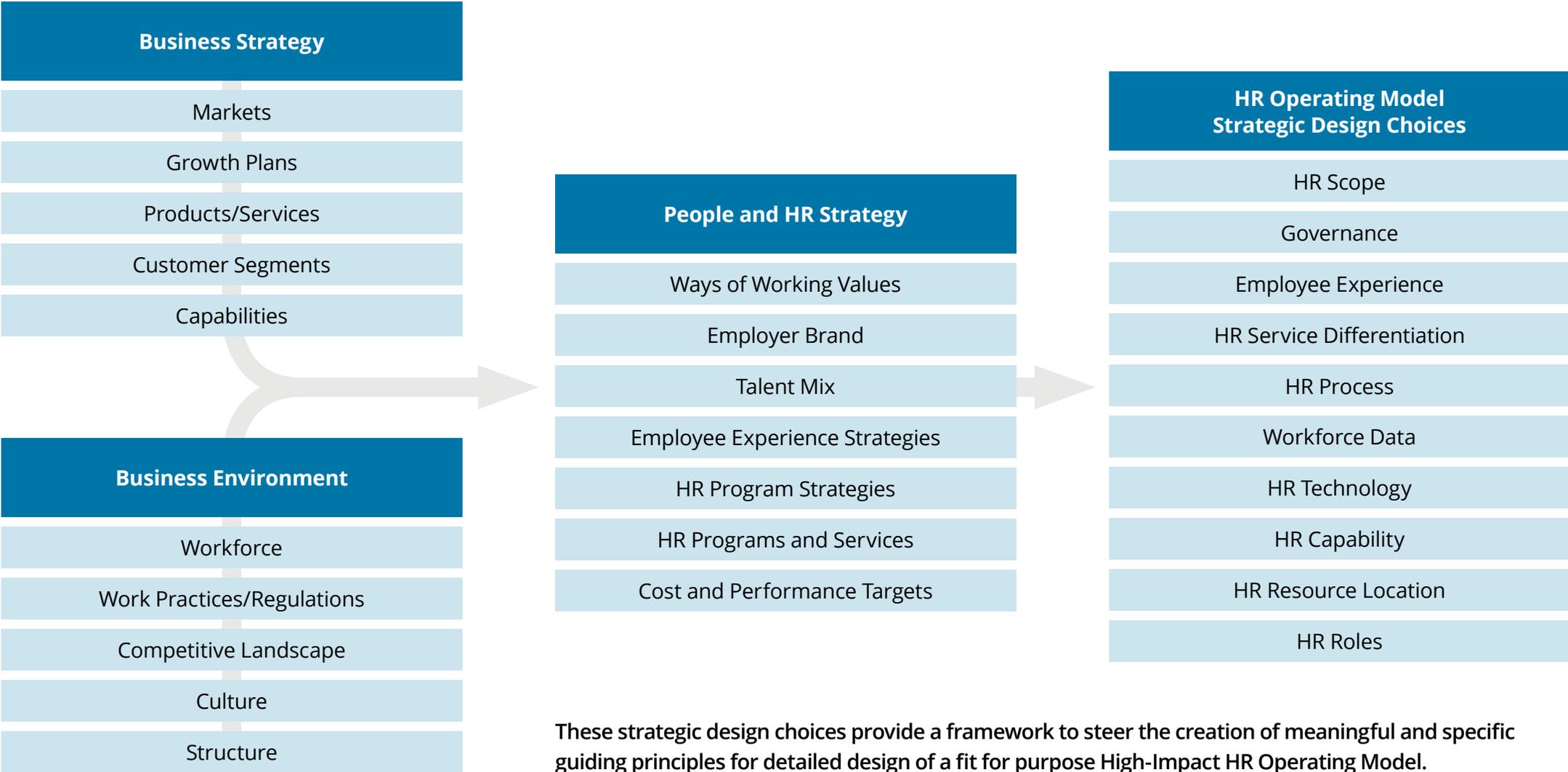
A combination of these three areas provide the guides for making choices, as shown in Figure 2.



## **Fit for purpose**

The Senior Vice President of HR strategy and operations for a large technology company noted, "The one size fits all has never worked for us. We are a unique company with diverse products, services, and customer groups. We needed an HR operating model that could wrap around our different lines of business, yet drive synergy and remain essentially one HR function."

# Making High-Impact Fit for Purpose



These strategic design choices provide a framework to steer the creation of meaningful and specific guiding principles for detailed design of a fit for purpose High-Impact HR Operating Model.

Figure 2.

## Making High-Impact Fit for Purpose

Each category of Strategic Design Choices has a pointed impact on the HR operating model design to arrive at one that truly fits an enterprise's purpose, as shown in Figure 3. As well, the framework helps with continued evolution and growth of an organization's HR operating model as business and talent needs change.

## HR Operating Model Strategic Design Choices

<b>1 HR Scope</b>	<b>HR Owned Experience</b> HR takes on accountability primarily for HR process steps within the employee experience	○○○○○	<b>Full End-to-End Experience</b> HR has accountability for a HR and non-HR process steps within the employee experience
<b>2 Governance</b>	<b>Controlled</b> Robust governance, decisions driven from a central governing group	○○○○○	<b>Entrepreneurial</b> Policies are guidance with local groups making decisions and adapting programs
<b>3 Employee Experience</b>	<b>Standardized</b> Employee experience similar regardless of customer segment	○○○○○	<b>Personalized</b> Employee experience differs and is tailored by customer segment
<b>4 Service Differentiation</b>	<b>Enterprise</b> Set of standardized HR services provided across all regions and businesses	○○○○○	<b>Differentiated</b> HR services differentiated and aligned to specific regional and/or business contexts
<b>5 HR Processes</b>	<b>Enterprise</b> Primarily integrated and standardized process steps to deliver HR services across regions and businesses	○○○○○	<b>Differentiated</b> Primarily localized process steps aligned to regional and/or business differences to deliver HR services
<b>6 Workforce Data</b>	<b>Data Supported</b> Data primarily used to support and be a part of the workforce decision-making process	○○○○○	<b>Data Driven</b> Data used as the primary driver and key part of the workforce decision-making process
<b>7 HR Technology</b>	<b>Enabling</b> Provide the tools to enable employee and manager access to information and transactions with HR involvement in approvals	○○○○○	<b>Extended</b> Provide the tools to drive employee and manager ownership for HR data, transactions with limited HR involvement in approvals
<b>8 HR Capability</b>	<b>Competitive Advantage</b> Focus on HR capabilities that build the competitive advantage for the business to win	○○○○○	<b>Full Services</b> Focus on HR capabilities that build competitive advantage and deliver a broader set of services
<b>9 HR Resource Location</b>	<b>Centralized</b> Delivery of HR services occurs primarily from a centralized team of resources	○○○○○	<b>Distributed</b> Delivery of HR services occurs primarily from regional and/or local teams of resources
<b>10 HR Roles</b>	<b>Broad</b> Fewer differentiated roles that focus on a broad range of services	○○○○○	<b>Specialty</b> More differentiated roles with deep concentrated expertise on defined services

Figure 3.

# How to get there

Designing and implementing the Model requires effective application of a customer-centric, design thinking approach in iterative stages. By using a set of well-established tools and frameworks developed and applied across many complex enterprises around the globe, an HR organization can guide and accelerate its journey to achieving the High-Impact HR Operating Model.

Organizations aiming for High-Impact HR should consider these lessons:

- **Start with the HR Customer.** Applying a design thinking approach positions HR to develop an operating model and the enabling processes and technologies to meet the real needs of the business and the customers of HR—the workforce. Understanding the workforce personas specific to an enterprise enables well-grounded choices about HR’s ways of working to fit the enterprise’s needs.
- **Evolve HR Capabilities.** Customer centricity, digital readiness, adaptability, agility, strategic consulting, and analytical acumen are at the top

of the list. High-Impact HR means the HR organization is embedded within the business, advising and innovating along with business leaders.

- **Digitize the Workplace.** The workforce demands ease of experience at work in the same way they’ve come to expect as consumers. The mind-set of HR technology as “self-service” now feels ancient. Rather, in High-Impact HR, “digital access” to information and actions should be embedded as part of the integrated service experience.
- **Own the Data.** HR can be better equipped than ever with meaningful workforce data and must shift from reporting to owning the data by delivering tangible workforce insights and guidance to the business.
- **Get Beyond Structure.** High-Impact HR is about new ways of working. Organizational design for HR is an output of a well-designed operating model. By defining a fit for purpose High-Impact HR Operating Model, the organization structure should become clear.

## Seeing the whole picture

A senior HR executive recently observed that her company’s HR team focused heavily on implementing technology and centralizing administration. But it missed the complexity and importance of enabling (1) the HR resources that are close to and working on the business and (2) communities of expertise—both essential to making the shift toward delivering significantly greater business impact.

# How do we know we made it?

The pace of business and workforce disruption continues to accelerate even in the few years since we first introduced the High-Impact HR Operating Model. HR executives and their teams face unparalleled challenges that involve a significant shift in the way HR operates and demand a model that fits an enterprise.

Plans, models, initiatives, and formal transformations add up to nothing if the business outcomes don't change and if the business performance is not sustained. The High-Impact HR Operating Model is meant as a cure for that disconnect—a new kind of transformation that reaches all the way to the bottom line.

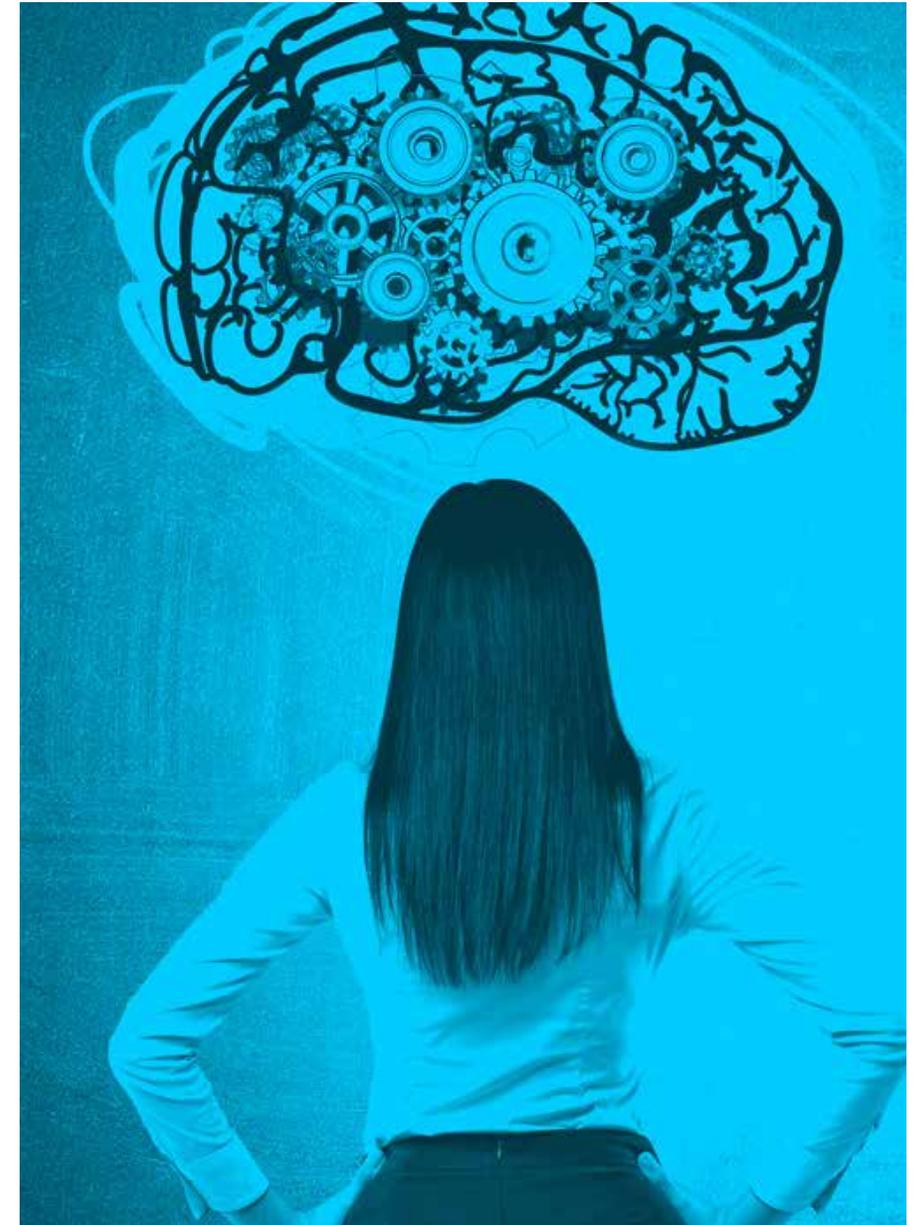
What are some signs it's working? We will know we have made it to High-Impact HR when...

- HR leaders engage with business customers and shape strategies with the knowledge gained
- Cross-functional and connected HR teams of resources deploy to address focused business imperatives and challenges

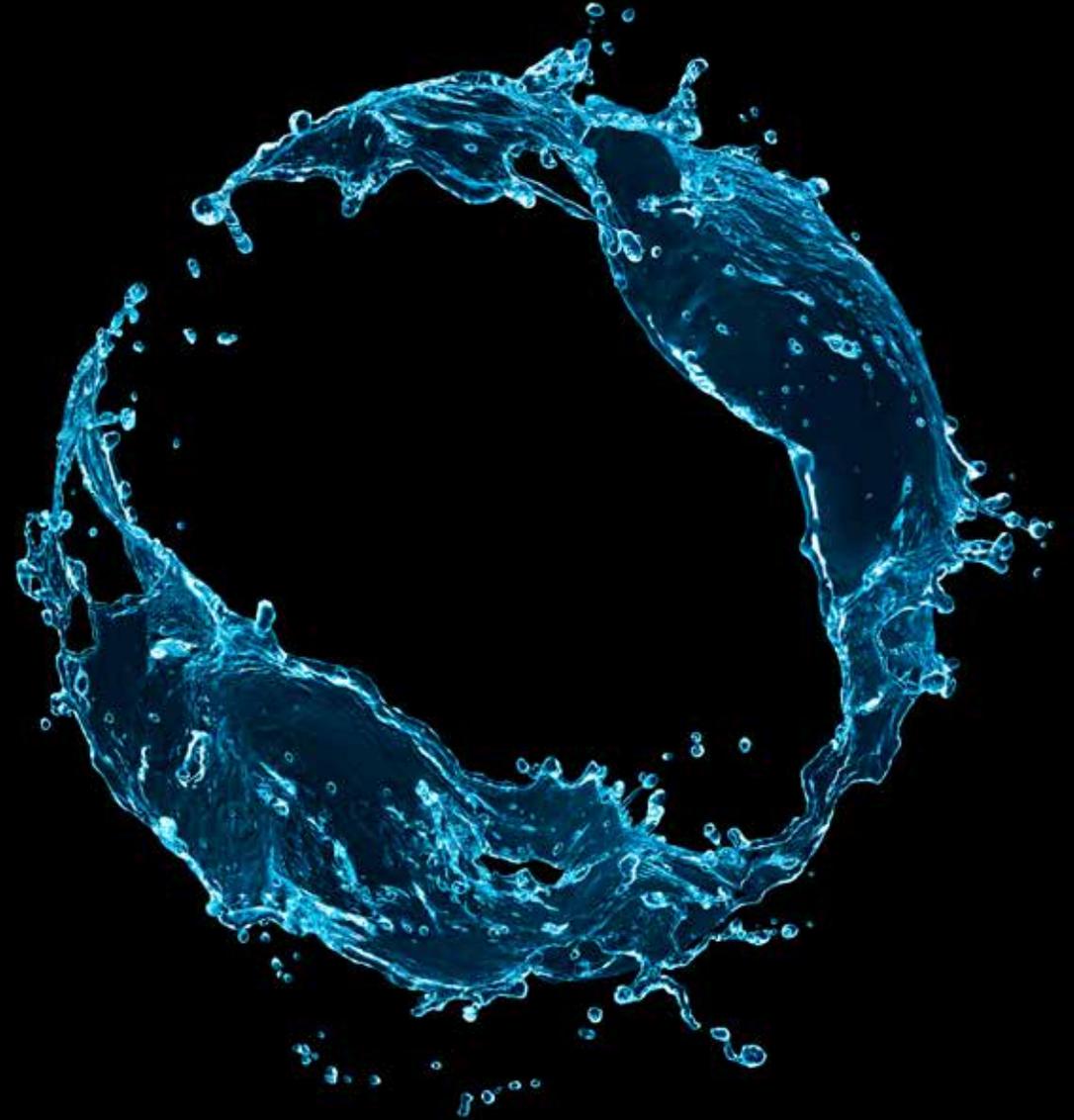
- CHROs are regulars on analyst calls, describing linkage of people programs to business results
- Business HR and HR Operational Services professionals also identify as members of an HR Community of Expertise
- HR is providing the business with workforce insights that predict workforce patterns and behaviors to drive business performance
- HR has created senior leadership emphasis on the employee experience that places the candidate, employee, contingent workers, and alumni at the center of focus when designing HR processes and solutions

When fit for purpose, the High-Impact HR Operating Model provides organizations the foundation to drive critically important business outcomes.

Are you ready to make the choices for your enterprise?



**High-Impact HR  
Operating Model insights**



# High-Impact HR Operating Model insights



**HR Customers** include a wide variety of roles—both internal and external to the organization—and are placed at the center of the model, where they should be as the focal point for delivery of HR capabilities. They are the primary recipient of HR's services.

Understanding the needs across each segment of HR customers enables consideration of ways to flex the employee experience to fit varied needs and deliver at the moments that matter within the employee life cycle.

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**Digital Workplace** surrounds HR Customers with advanced technologies to enable productivity, collaboration, and automation virtually anywhere. The digital workplace offers an intuitive, personalized experience for candidates, employees, contingent workers, and alumni. Workplace digitization is no longer “nice to have;” it’s a must-have as part of a High-Impact HR Operating Model. However, as with all aspects of the Model, the extent an enterprise digitizes the employee experience is guided by strategic design choices to align with the organization’s purpose and goals.

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## Leading the Digital Workplace

Digital transformation begins with a change of mind-set within the HR organization, prioritizing connectivity, real-time operations, automation, and mobile-first. For many organizations, both in HR and across the enterprise, this is a revolutionary opportunity. To enable digitization, an organization should ask, “How can HR play a role in developing the overall digital enterprise strategy, organization, and culture?”



**Workforce Insights** include data about the workforce and the business—both internal and external to the enterprise—along with metrics and measurement tools that provide people-related information linked to overall business performance. Workforce Insights generate meaningful information that enhance HR’s credibility and enables HR to lead the business in decision making. By linking HR and business data, from the past, present and future, organizations can predict and improve workforce performance by uncovering issues, influencing organizational decisions, and driving continuous improvement.

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### **Power of workforce insights**

“Through our workforce analytics team,” observed the VP of Talent of a global manufacturing company, “we were able to collect internal and external macroeconomic data based on predetermined attrition drivers, analyze the data, and develop insights to determine the attributes of attrition. We then developed action plans to address sales force individuals and groups at highest risk for leaving the organization.”

## High-Impact HR Operating Model insights

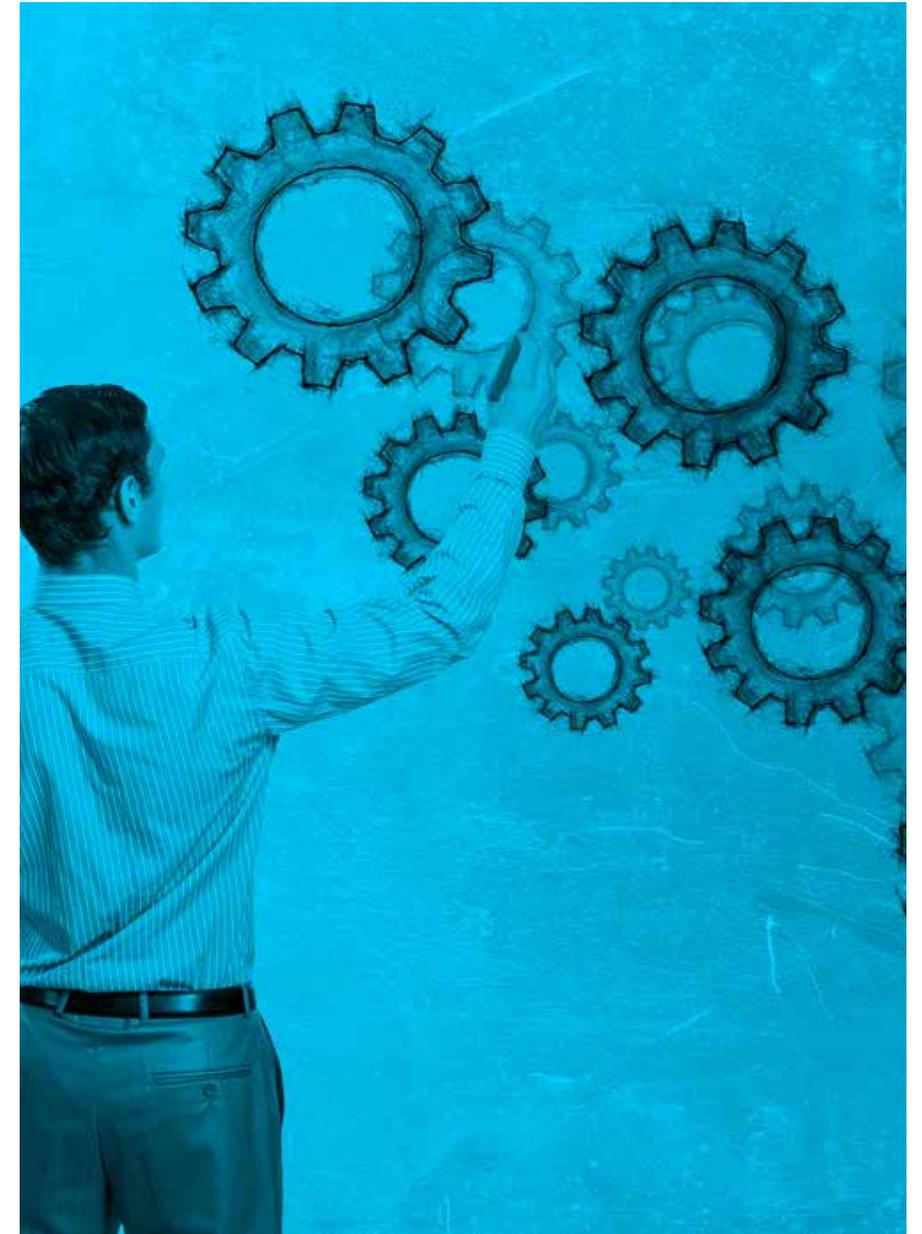


**Business HR** is closest to the business leaders and people managers. High-Impact HR relies on rethinking the role of HR within the business. Organizations that have transformed HR by centralizing capabilities within Centers of Excellence and shared services often expected that by removing many activities from the “HR generalists,” those field-based HR roles would naturally become strategic. In many cases, these roles have been branded as “HR Business Partners,” yet have not been able to truly progress to such a level of impact. High-Impact Business HR collaborates primarily with business leaders and people managers, and play an important role in HR delivery by driving engagement, workforce and talent management, and organizational change.

In many organizations, Business HR roles have yet to reach their full potential. Many “HR transformations” have focused on implementing technology and building operational capabilities via shared services or outsourced delivery, but they have not yet fully developed the Business HR role or individual capabilities necessary to deliver the impact the business needs.

In the High-Impact HR Operating Model, Business HR roles are embedded in the business, yet highly coordinated within the business and with other HR roles. They work closely with top business leaders and managers, providing coaching and driving strategic talent priorities, employee engagement, organizational effectiveness, and change management. And, they partner with the Communities of Expertise colleagues to design and deliver HR programs that leverage the scale of the enterprise, yet adapt to directly address business needs.

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## High-Impact HR Operating Model insights

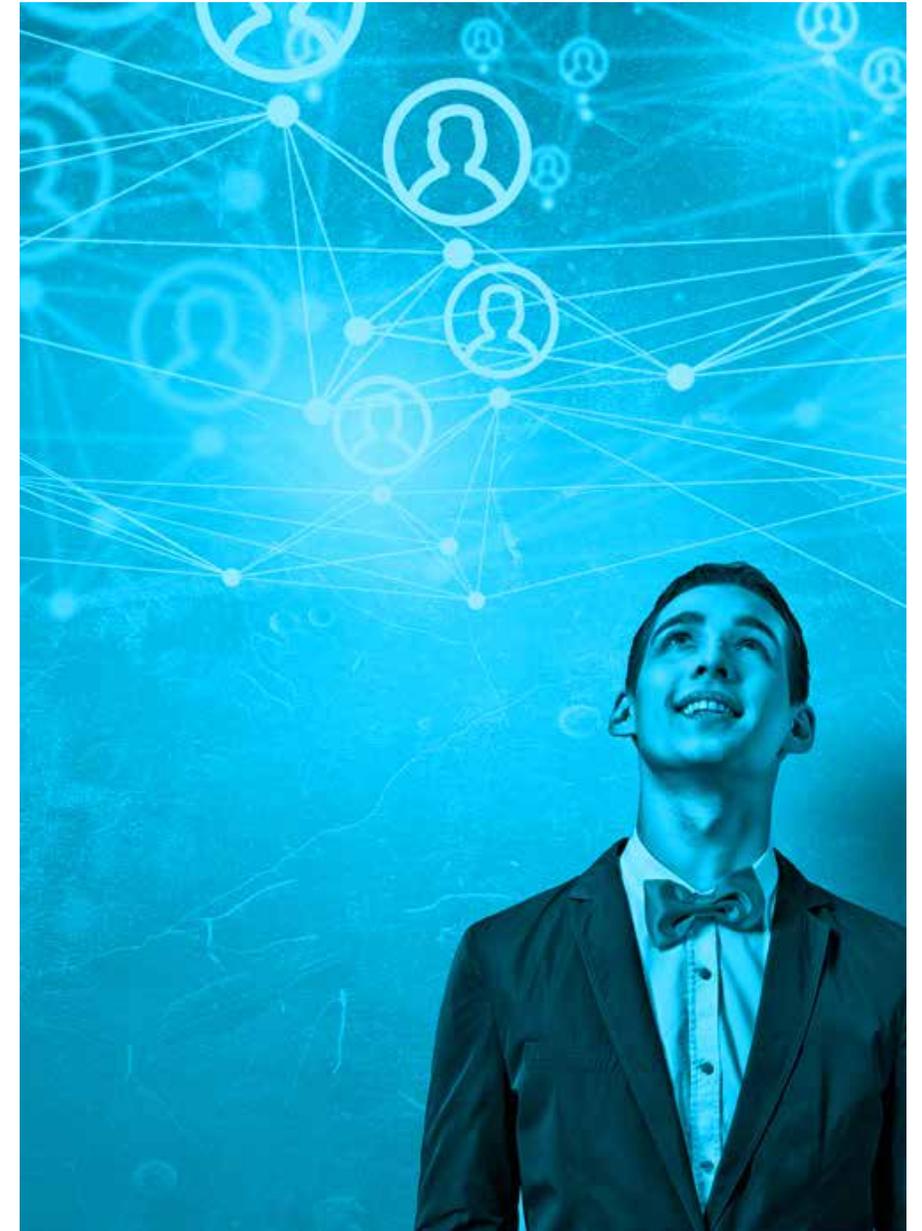


The move from Centers of Excellence to **Communities of Expertise** (CoEs) drive leading practices and processes by applying deep HR functional domain knowledge, a strong understanding of business imperatives, and market trends to deliver thought leadership. The move from Centers of Excellence to Communities of Expertise addresses a specific challenge: “centers” have tended to operate in “ivory towers,” pushing down policies and programs to the business. They have not necessarily focused on addressing or adapting to business needs and demands from external customers and local markets. As a result, in many cases, traditional “corporate HR” teams

were simply rebranded as Centers of Expertise without necessarily achieving a change in role, behaviors, or outcomes delivered to the business as a customer.

The term “Community” was thoughtfully chosen, as it means people inside and outside HR need to collaborate beyond the formal CoE structure. *Communities* of Expertise intentionally form and lead empowered teams composed of skills across functions. That way, they can design and develop solutions that balance global consistency with business and geographic relevance. Organizations are recognizing the power of integration across HR program and process areas.

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## High-Impact HR Operating Model insights



### HR Operational Services

enable operating excellence by delivering the end-to-end experience efficiently and effectively across HR processes, with an emphasis on inquiry management, transactions, and specialized functional services. The addition of knowledge-based and specialized functional services to the traditional scope of a shared services model expands the opportunity for Business HR and Communities of Expertise to focus on delivering valuable impact to help drive business growth and performance.

Traditional HR shared services scope, limited to transactions and very basic administration, can hold the entirety of HR capability back. Often this traditional scope approach leads to rigid, one-size-

fits-all approaches in the name of efficiency. Yet, effective High-Impact HR requires flexibility to meet the needs of the business. A broader scope under HR Operational Services—delivered through the combination of internal and external sources—allows delivery of end-to-end services in a function and provides greater ability to meet the business needs, while still achieving efficiency.

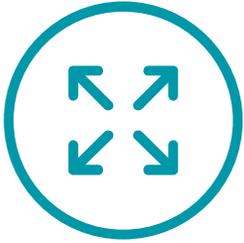
For example, traditional HR shared services might include administering an Applicant Tracking System and generating offer letters as the only activities within the wide arena of Talent Acquisition. In the High-Impact HR Operating Model, HR Operational Services delivers broader recruitment capabilities with specialist knowledge that might include sourcing, screening, interview scheduling, selection support, and pre-hire activities. In this way, recruiters as part of CoEs, can play up and focus on true workforce planning, managing the employer brand, growing the talent pipeline, and collaborating with hiring managers in talent selection.

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### Creating capacity and credibility with HR Operational Services

Recognizing a need to improve employee relations capabilities, a health care organization decided to shift day-to-day employee relations services and complex investigations into a specialized team. A combination of professionals who address basic inquiries by following written guides alongside employee relations specialists can drive consistency and enable an end-to-end employee relations capability to serve all groups across the organization.

## High-Impact HR Operating Model insights



### External Networks and Partners

are embedded in the Model, emphasizing the importance of HR accessing outside sources to get the work done right.

External networks are critical to High-Impact HR. Social networks play an important role in defining an enterprise's reputation, greatly helping—or hindering—talent acquisition and retention. HR should serve as the steward of the employer brand, taking active steps to promote the brand and manage its presence across the many networks that extend outside organizational boundaries.

**External Partners include** both customers of the enterprise and vendors that provide both tactical and strategic products, services, and technologies. Each plays a role of growing prominence in delivering end-to-end HR services.

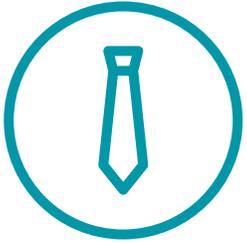
- **External Customers:** HR's understanding of the needs of their enterprise's end customers is critical and should directly influence the talent an organization hires and the top areas of focus for employee and leader development. The business achieves significant value when HR truly understands the priorities of external customers and translates these into talent strategies and solutions. Traditionally, HR has relied mostly upon business leaders to provide insights to external customer needs. However, HR executives are finding that participating in customer meetings, sales pursuits, and challenging customer situations brings positive value to both the business and its customers. As a result, unlike traditional HR delivery models, High-Impact HR recognizes the importance of external business customers within the model so as to properly consider the right HR interactions and engagement with external customers.
- **External Vendors:** Traditionally, vendors have been viewed as service or solution providers that are somehow off to the side of an organization's HR operating model. The rise of cloud-based human capital management platforms that

require adopting standard processes and tools, in addition to the increasing use of outsourcing providers to deliver specialty services to an HR organization, elevate the need to position external vendors as partners, embedded within the HR operating model.

Vendor management, an often underdeveloped skill within HR, has become a critical factor in successfully delivering HR services. To identify the appropriate sourcing mix and manage vendors to achieve the desired balance of quality and efficiency, Communities of Expertise collaborate with HR Operational Services, influenced by feedback from Business HR where vendor services touch HR customers.

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## High-Impact HR Operating Model insights

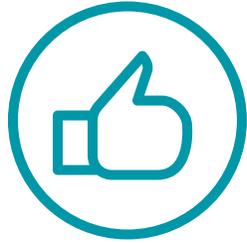


### Executive Leadership

HR Leadership and Business Leaders translate broad business strategy and imperatives into a compelling HR strategy, vision, and priorities, to balance meeting HR customers' needs and innovate for the future, serving the enterprise, and providing business unit/geography specific solutions. They:

- Act as a steward, role model, and catalyst for the enterprise-wide culture
- Drive HR workforce and program alignment to meet business outcomes
- Preserve and evolve HR's value contribution to all HR customers

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**HR enablers** surround the model, providing the integration involved in achieving High-Impact HR:

- **Governance** fosters accountabilities, sets priorities, and plays a prominent role in orchestrating the complexity and effectiveness of the operating model over the long term. Effective governance is critical, as the model demands a higher level of collaboration and flexibility. A governance approach that includes a formal HR Program Management Office helps achieve transparency and coordination through well-structured strategy and planning, HR calendars and roadmaps, initiative prioritization, meeting cadence, and reporting.

- **Policies and processes** provide the guidelines and ways of working, enabling effective alignment of accountabilities and responsibilities to deliver programs and services.
- **Data** is fundamental to High-Impact HR. Organizations at the highest level of talent analytics maturity generated 30% greater stock returns than average, are 2x more likely to improve their leadership pipelines, have 2x greater talent mobility, and are twice as effective at recruiting.\* Through robust data and mature analytical capabilities, HR can generate workforce insights to shape business decisions.
- **Metrics** provide tangible ways to assess the effectiveness and business impact of HR programs, processes, and the delivery model. Metrics include service levels and key performance indicators that contribute to overall continuous improvement of the HR function.

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