



The No Limits Workplace
Aligning Work with the Human Spirit
Yielding Enduring Prosperity and Individual Reward

The No Limits Workplace - Human Resource Advisory

Successful human resource initiatives and decisions begin, not with HR expertise, but with a clear understanding of business objectives. At the No Limits Workplace we combine exceptional business acumen and instincts, strong consultative skills, and in-depth human resource knowledge, with a proven systematic approach (see below) to ensure initial and ongoing success of human resource initiatives.

=====

OUR APPROACH

We're not in the business of selling particular solutions. We're in the business of helping you figure out what solution(s) is right fit for your organization and how best to implement and ensure ongoing effectiveness.

As mentioned above, our combination of broad capability and systematic approach allows you to move down the decision-making funnel from perceived need - to consideration - to solution without getting off path or wasting time. And yet with the right consideration and consensus to ensure success. In fact we can assure you that the process itself, let alone the result, will leave your organization stronger.

We can work with HR personnel or business leaders who operate without internal HR. Each has different challenges per the notes below but mostly the considerations are the same.

THE FACT ABOUT HR CONSULTANTS IS...

There are many companies that can help you implement a wide-variety of human resource applications. Many have the HR expertise. That's the easier part. The most challenging and important part of an HR implementation is to be sure that the chosen application is the "right total fit" for your enterprise. Often companies have a limited number of solutions and may not concern themselves with the important issues we discuss below. So while the products and services may be terrific, they may be fitting your need to their solution.

SO THE QUESTION IS...

How do you ensure that you're implementing the right applications for you and doing it in a way that will strengthen your enterprise?

AND THE ANSWER IS...

Like so many things, if you start at the foundation and move systematically towards the specific, answers become evident. As you'll read below, in knowing what to consider, who to involve, and what questions to ask, solutions take shape. Then you employ additional HR expertise to the degree necessary. We at the NLW are very good at helping you move through that process without wasting time on excessive analysis yet without missing key considerations.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Consideration of any important HR initiative begins by reminding one's self of the purpose of the human resource function and evaluating the initiative in light of that purpose. This is step one for ensuring that the initiative aligns with business objectives.



The No Limits Workplace Aligning Work with the Human Spirit

HR Purpose

Whether as a functional department in a large company or as a role performed by a business leader in a smaller company, HR's primary purpose is to optimize performance. As discuss in the six tenets of the NLW, that means;

- a) selecting people with high capacity,
- b) maximizing that capacity by providing the right knowledge and resource investments to ensure high capability, and then
- c) maximizing that capability by providing the right opportunity, direction, and clarity of objectives to ensure high performance.

Any HR program, practice, policy, etc. new or current should align as best it can, given other priorities, with that purpose. Does it bring out what's best in people? Does it promote high performance? Also, it's beneficial to be sure that HR's thinking is consistent with others on this alignment. That foundational perception has many implications that lend to HR being done right and enhancing organizational objectives.

Aside - Note to HR in larger organizations;

When it comes to significant decisions or implementations, often the challenge for HR is to avoid working in isolation and to ensure engagement of the necessary parties. Nothing spells trouble more than to have business leaders assume that HR's expertise is to produce effective solutions working in relative functional isolation. As we suggest below, the way HR ensures the success of efforts and in general increases the strategic role of HR, is by positioning themselves into a more consultative business role. That happens automatically by following this approach. We at the NLW can be very helpful in working with HR to achieve that positioning.

Aside - Note to business leaders;

Some of the following may at first appear to suggest a belabored process. But with an important HR initiative, an ounce of prevention is worth at least a pound of cure. Reeling in an off-target HR effort can leave behind a lot of carnage and/or waste of resources. Depending upon the breadth of the decisions or initiative, the following considerations can be done as speedily as fits the need. And when done right will lead to a good result and the effort itself will expand trust, camaraderie, capability, and confidence in the organization.

Three Consideration Factors

The three factors to consider follow. Each is accompanied by a brief description. These factors are often not given consideration and as a result serious mistakes with significant negative implications occur. If these factors are given their due and accompanied by the necessary expertise, positive solutions are almost assured.

1. Integration - How well does the practice fit with other HR and people practices?

Thinking through this integration consideration is not difficult. The key is to do it. It's a matter of comparing related internal practices to ensure they fit together from a cost, administration, message consistency, cultural (other?) standpoint. For instance, does a new disability program align from all relevant standpoints with a health insurance plan? Does a performance management initiative fit with a compensation plan? Is a new policy consistent with other somewhat related policies?



The No Limits Workplace Aligning Work with the Human Spirit

It's best to develop some consensus with key people in and out of HR and up and down the organization on this integration. That will do much to ensure good decision making and organizational understanding and buy-in. Leading a group through this integration analysis is effective business-focused HR.

2. Alignment - How well does the practice support operational, business, and cultural objectives of the organization?

This is crucial. An HR program can look great on it's own but if not aligned with overall objectives, or even if not perceived to be aligned, will miss the mark. Companies that have clear and aligned values, mission, vision, strategies, and objectives that transfer throughout the workforce have an advantage in this regard. But HR practices that lack business alignment are common in all kinds of organizations. This occurs for many reasons. Sometimes too much emphasis is placed on one priority such as cost, compliance, or to achieve a specific objective without sufficient regard to others. For instance, pay programs that motivate behaviors that work against the best interests of the enterprise or that cost a lot but motivate little. Or a highly control-oriented policy is put in place that's inconsistent with the company's culture, perhaps due to an isolated event. There are many possibilities for misalignment if this isn't actively considered. HR's consultative expertise comes more in leading this alignment discussion with the right people than in making specific recommendations. Failure to lead that discussion and analysis greatly increases the chance of a weak result. Whereas these types of discussions done well lead to both the right answers and leave the enterprise more cohesive.

3. Process - When developing an HR solution, process is the methodology one applies to decide who's involved and in what capacity, how it's communicated, how the solution is developed, implemented, and managed ongoing?

Depending on the importance and scope of the particular initiative, this can be make-or-break. In many cases even a good solution can be poorly accepted when process is viewed as improper. In today's more complex, faster changing, and more decentralized knowledge economy where engagement is on the increase (as it should be), process can be more important than any other factor. We strongly recommend use of continuous improvement (CI) tools and methods such as brainstorming techniques, decision-matrices, use of key indicators, and other CI methods when making significant HR (or any other) decisions. A CI approach, by it's nature, ensures that the right stakeholders are involved in the right roles, exposes poor prioritization, and promotes good communications, understanding of decisions, and buy-in. And a CI approach should also put defined support in place for making post-implementation adjustments and refinements as is so often key to success. For HR personnel, use of a CI approach not only brings better solutions but also effectively generates consensus. Importantly, in today's fast changing business environment, establishing an expectation for ongoing improvements and a way to manage them can be more important to success than the initial solution itself.

Per our note above, an effective CI approach brings cohesion and shared purpose to the group, putting HR in a strong consultative role and helping move HR issues into a more strategic light.

SUMMARY

Below is a list of HR areas for which we're available to provide advisory services. We don't claim to know every solution to every situation. There are "deep-dive" experts available in all of these areas. But as we've emphasized, we bring significant HR, business, and consultative capability. And when combined with our "strategic consideration process" we're certain that we can lend much to helping your organization identify and implement solutions that meet objectives and effectively support and strengthen your business.



The No Limits Workplace
Aligning Work with the Human Spirit

Please see additional No Limits Workplace materials for more strategic HR and change initiatives that involve all of the following HR areas.

Areas of Human Resources Advisory Services

- Hiring and Internal Selection
- Training and Development
- Benefits
- Compensation / Variable Pay
- Employee Relations
- Policy & Practice
- Continuous Improvement
- Organizational Development
- Legal & Regulatory Compliance
- Union Avoidance
- Performance Management
- Communications