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Human Resource Management and the Challenges of Diversity

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About transformation in HE



- The buzzword for Universities everywhere:
Transformation
- Why now? After hundreds of years?
- Because knowledge, the traditional business of universities, has become a commodity
- In the new global society, knowledge is seen as a key driver of economic prosperity

And so:

- The academics are like a native tribe on whose land oil has been discovered



About diversity



- It is common cause that an important part of transformation is:
 - To increase diversity**
- (And particularly so in South Africa ...)
- But we owe it to our own academic conscience to be clear on the important questions:
 - What kind of diversity?
 - Why should we do it?
 - How should we do it?
- All of these posit an important role for HRM



Kinds of diversity in Academia



- Different ages
 - The academic age bulge – leftover of the 1970s
- Different genders
 - Where are the women professors?
- Different cultures
 - Language, religion, dress, diet, habits,...
- Different colours
 - Black, white, and other hues
- Different universities
 - How much inbreeding is too much?



A metaphor for change



“We are like sailors, who have to rebuild their ship while afloat on the open sea”

Otto Neurath

(“Wie Schiffer sind wir, die ihr Schiff auf offener See umbauen müssen”)

- In this process, the HR managers are the carpenters.
- Sometimes they are also some of the planks.



Main Thesis



Everybody would like to be a top-quality university.

But:

Quality needs diversity

(Three reasons to follow)



Diversity has educational benefit

- Argument:
 - A university is for learning
 - We will learn more from those people, those circumstances and those phenomena that we do not know than from those we know only too well.
 - A diversity of people enhances the learning environment



Reason 2



Diversity makes good business sense

- Argument:
 - ❑ We should be an *engaged* university – roleplayers, not spectators, in societal changes
 - ❑ Our quality as a university is also judged on the quality of our engagement with society
 - ❑ We won't have the legitimacy in society to be an engaged participant if we do not in some measure reflect the diversity of our society.



Quality is not one-dimensional

- Argument:
 - Quality is not just about what you can count or measure on a linear scale
 - Quality also has an *integrative* aspect – the result of putting world-views together. (One of the “four scholarships”)
 - This presupposes the presence of such different world-views.



Quality needs diversity

because:

- What is important for a top-quality University is a *diversity of ideas*
- A diversity of ideas is enhanced by a diversity of people

(This requires a particular approach to Human Resource Management)



- **Stellenbosch University Vision**
- Academic institution of excellence- and respected knowledge partner
- Contributes towards building the scientific, technological and intellectual capacity of Africa
- Active role-player – SA Society
- Promote diversity – ideas and people
- Afrikaans – language of teaching and science – multilingual context



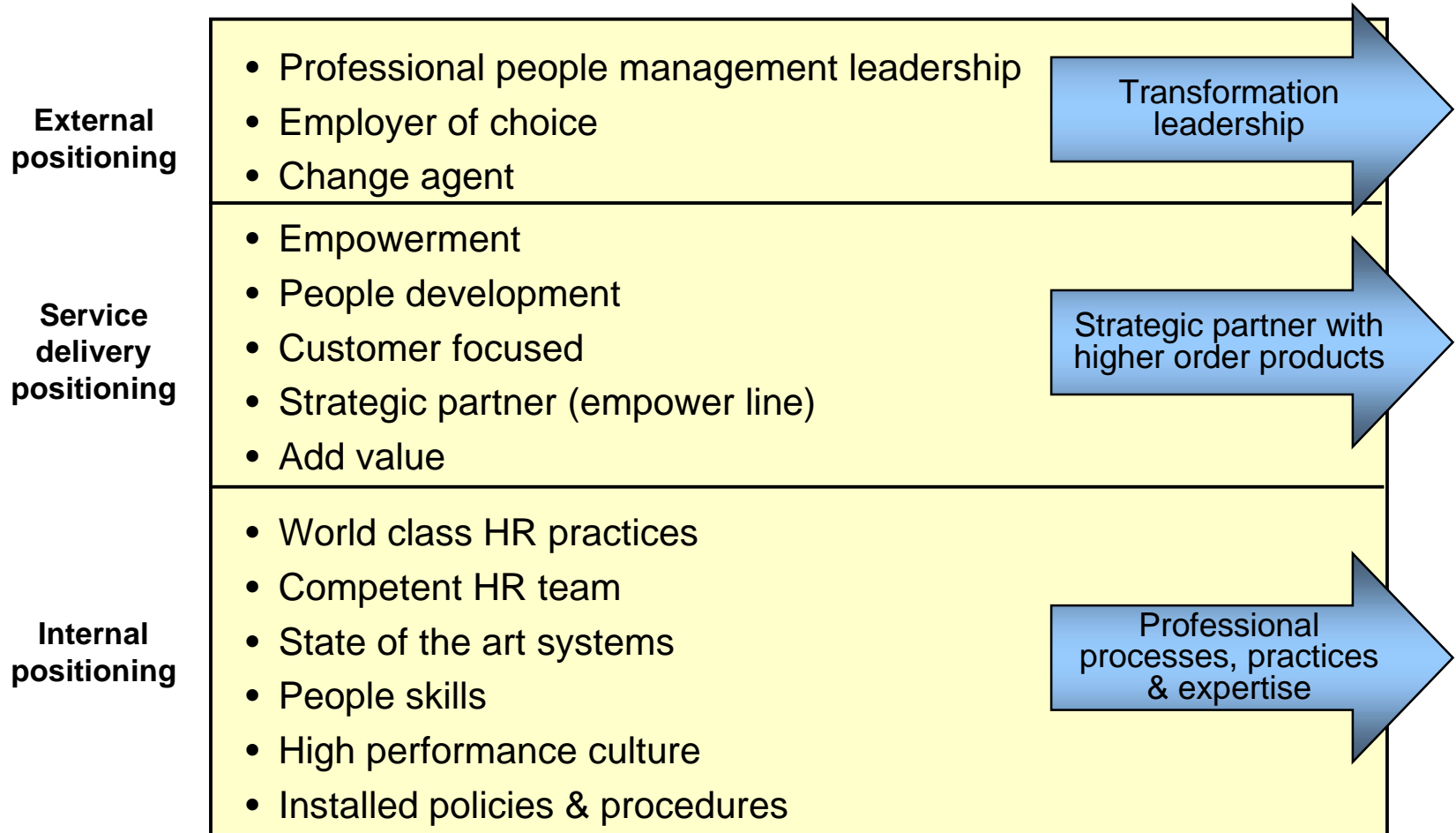
- **Building HR for the future**
- Excellence and diversity
- Alignment – Business Plan, Diversity Plan, HRM Plan
- Leadership of change process
- Value creation and capabilities



- **US – HR Strategy Approach**
- Ulrich's Model of HR as a Business Partner (1999)
 - Strategic Partner
 - Change Agent
 - Employee Champion
 - Administrative Expert
- Redefine – role and relevance of HR – focus be on HR management not just the function

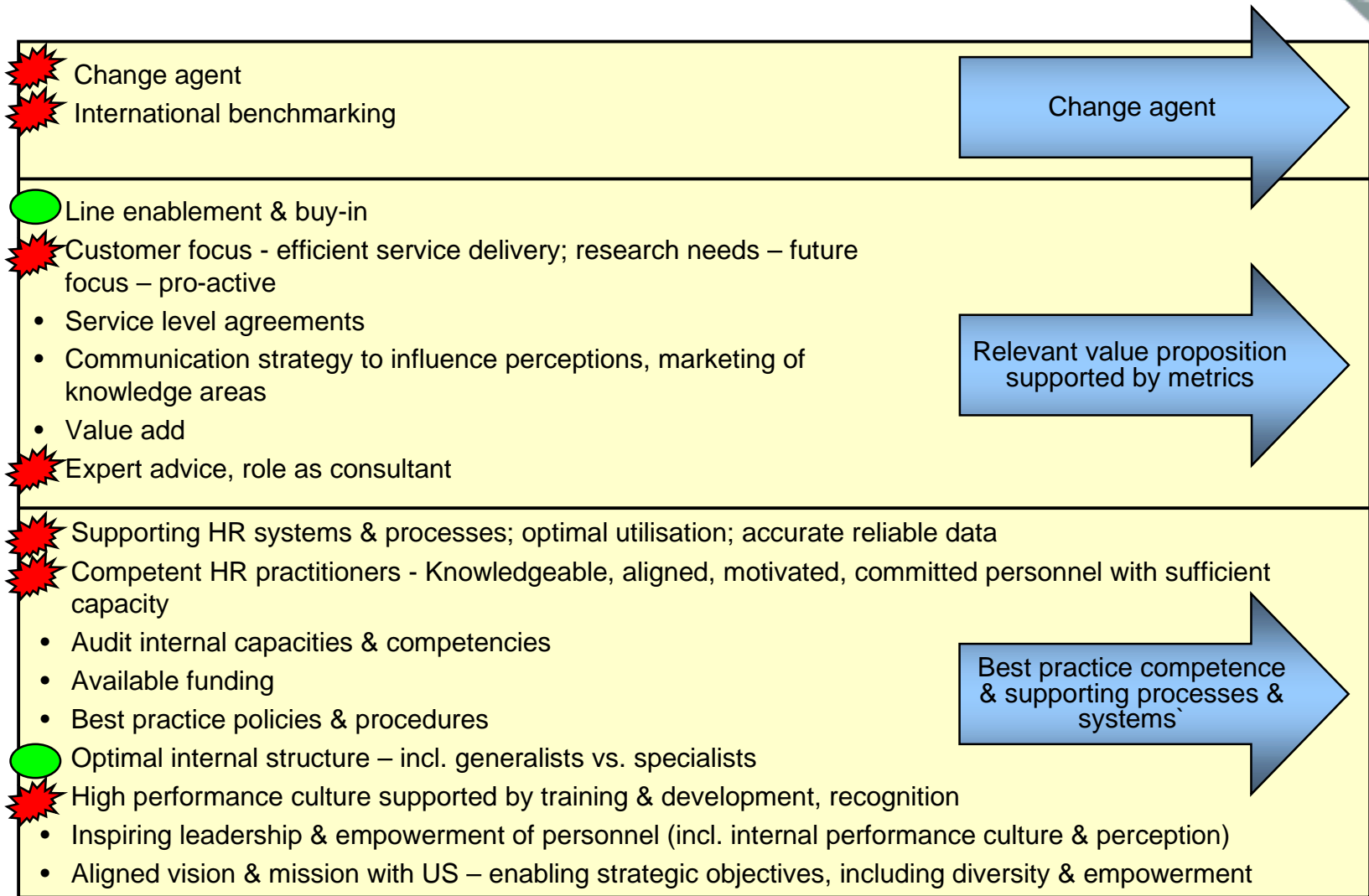


4. HRM management positioning at US





5. Key success factors in people management



Most important

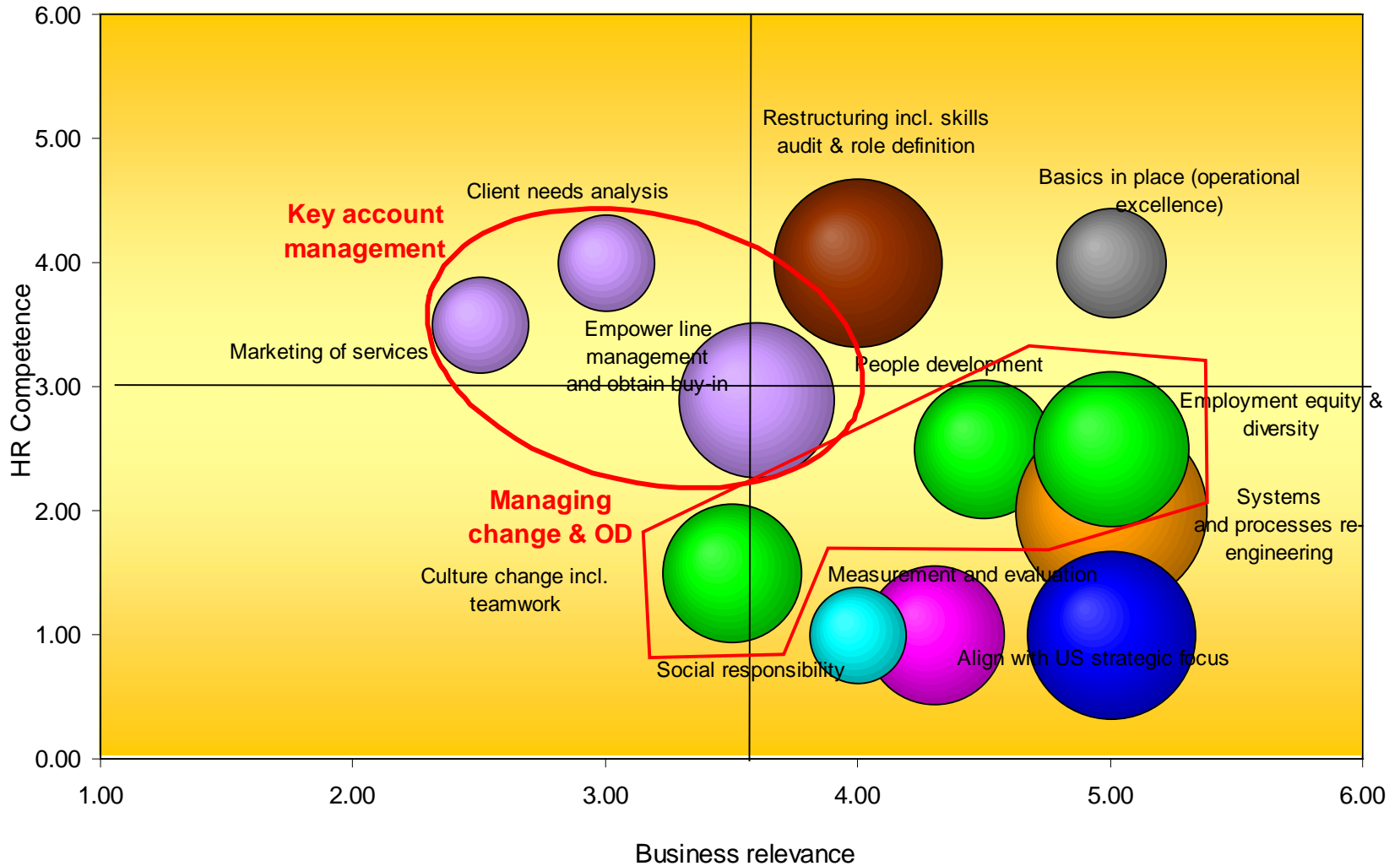
Key take-out



Prerequisite

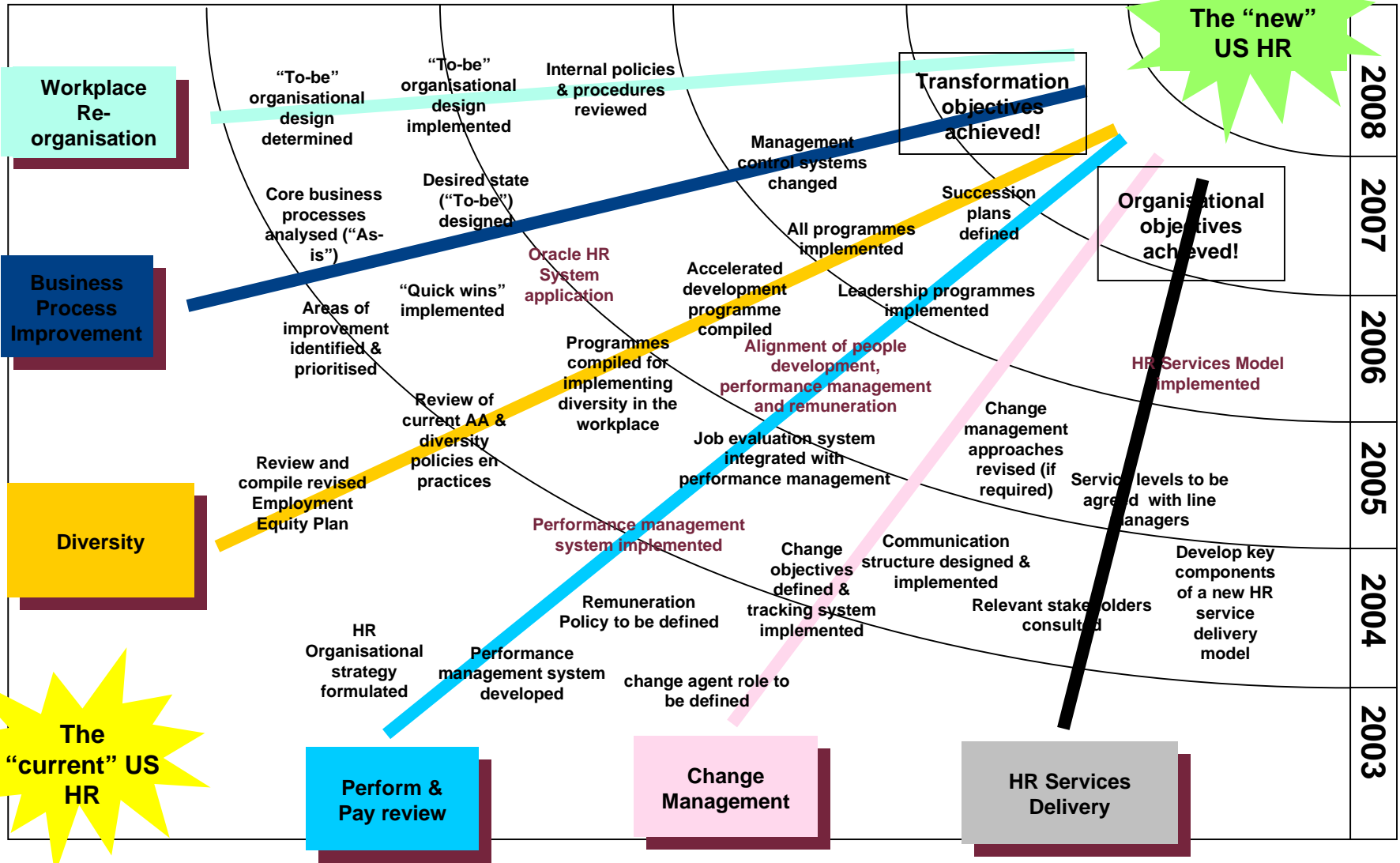


6. Ranking of HR's strategic focus areas





7. A road map for change – US: HR





HRM Challenges – The future



- Paradigm shift required – HR and academic managers
- Alignment of HRM strategy with institutional strategy
- Universities are complex adaptive systems
- Need for integration – people, strategy and performance
- Bridging academic and administration cultures



A sobering reminder



“... there is nothing more difficult to plan or more uncertain of success or more dangerous to carry out than an attempt to introduce new institutions, because the introducer has as his enemies all those who profit from the old institutions, and has as lukewarm defenders all those who will profit from the new institutions.”

Machiavelli: *The Prince* (1513)



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Baie dankie
Thank you
Enkosi kakhulu





Stellenbosch Diversity Plan



- Some particular features
 - Identify diversity as a strategic goal in Mission Statement
 - Use diversity as a parameter in funding allocation to Faculties/Departments/Divisions
 - Use diversity as a parameter in performance evaluation of senior managers
 - Accept the principle of differentiation
 - Give credit for progress attained
 - Fine-tune within the context of an HR Plan