

The Transformation and Turn-around of a Human Resource function in a medium-sized University – progress to date

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Some Background

Vision, facts and marketing!

Vision

- We aim to be a world- class African university
- By world class we understand being recognised as an institute of higher learning according to internationally recognised criteria of academic excellence
- By African we understand being a truly African University with a specific and directed interest in the features, problems and affairs of Africa, South Africa and the Western Cape

Fast Facts

- Oldest University in South Africa, founded in 1829 as a tertiary school for boys and established as a University in 1918
- Six faculties supported by a Centre for Higher Education Development and 65 Research centres
- Chancellor: Ms Graca Machel; Vice Chancellor: Prof Njabulo Ndebele
- Turnover: approx. R1.5 billion

Fast Facts (continued)

- 21 000 students, 14 100 UG, 6 000 PG,
- 4 750 students in residences
- 49% female, 48% African, Coloured and Indian, 3 600 international students from 90 countries
- 4 300 staff, 44% academic and 56% professional and support

The Journey

- The need
- The consultants view of the process (or the dream!)
- Being practical
- The ideal structure
- The reality
- Where are we now and what have we learned?

The Need

“Re-definition of the role of Human
Resources”

Effective HR value-add is directed at a number of stakeholders

<i>Dimension</i>	Strategic HR	HR Strategy
Essence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To translate “business” strategies firstly into institutional capabilities and then into HR practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build a strategy (i.e. goals and objectives), and institutional action plans focussed on making the HR function more effective
Owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line (academics and service function heads), supported by the HR Executive Director and his/her team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Executive Director
Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic results through use of HR practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness and efficiency of the HR processes and practices
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deans/SFHs who use HR practices for academic/service function results Employees who are affected by HR practices Stakeholders who reap the rewards of institutional capabilities (e.g. students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR professionals who design and deliver effective HR practices Line managers (academic and SFs) who use effective HR practices
Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager (academics and SFHs) as owners of their people and their performance HR professionals as facilitators and coaches to line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line (academics and SFs) as investors, or service users HR professionals as creators and innovators

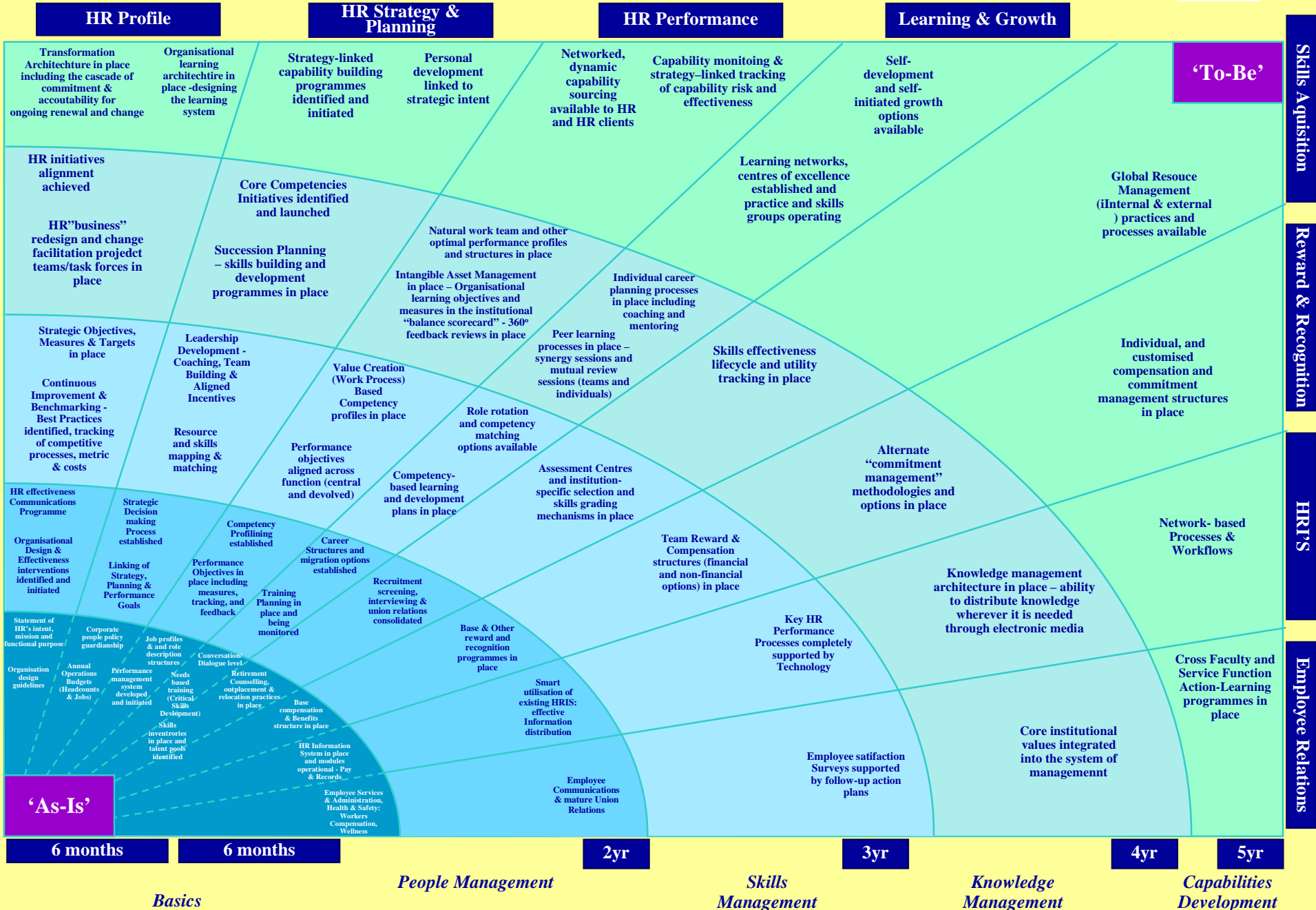
Contrary to popular belief the owner of strategic HR is line management

A number of constituencies benefit from effective strategic HR, including students

The consultants view of the
process - the dream!

“Transformation of the Human
Resource function”

Milestone MAP for the transformation of HR



Being practical

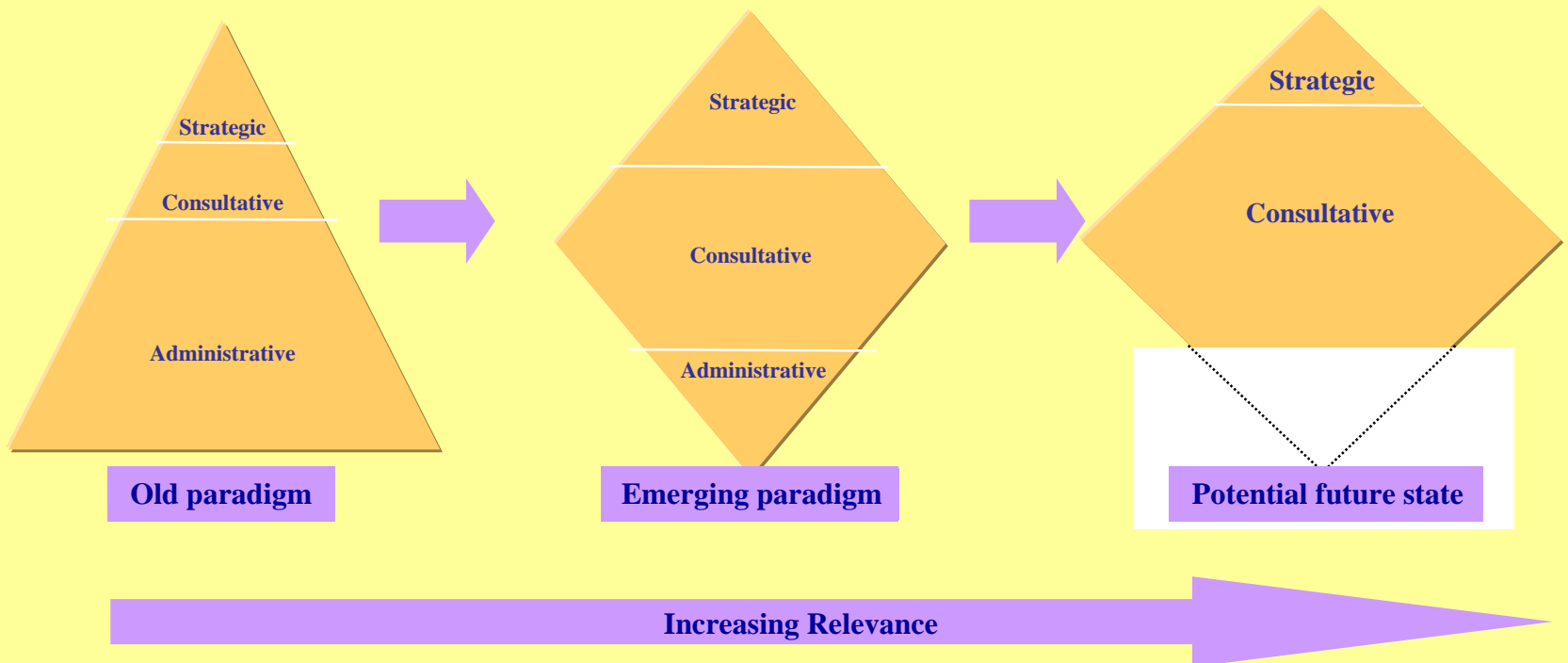
“From transactional to strategic”

BACKGROUND

In essence, we are proposing that the traditional administrative focus of HRM change to a more specialist consultative role

In leading companies locally and internationally, HR has shed the traditional role of:

- a little strategic work, a little consulting, and a lot of administrative duties



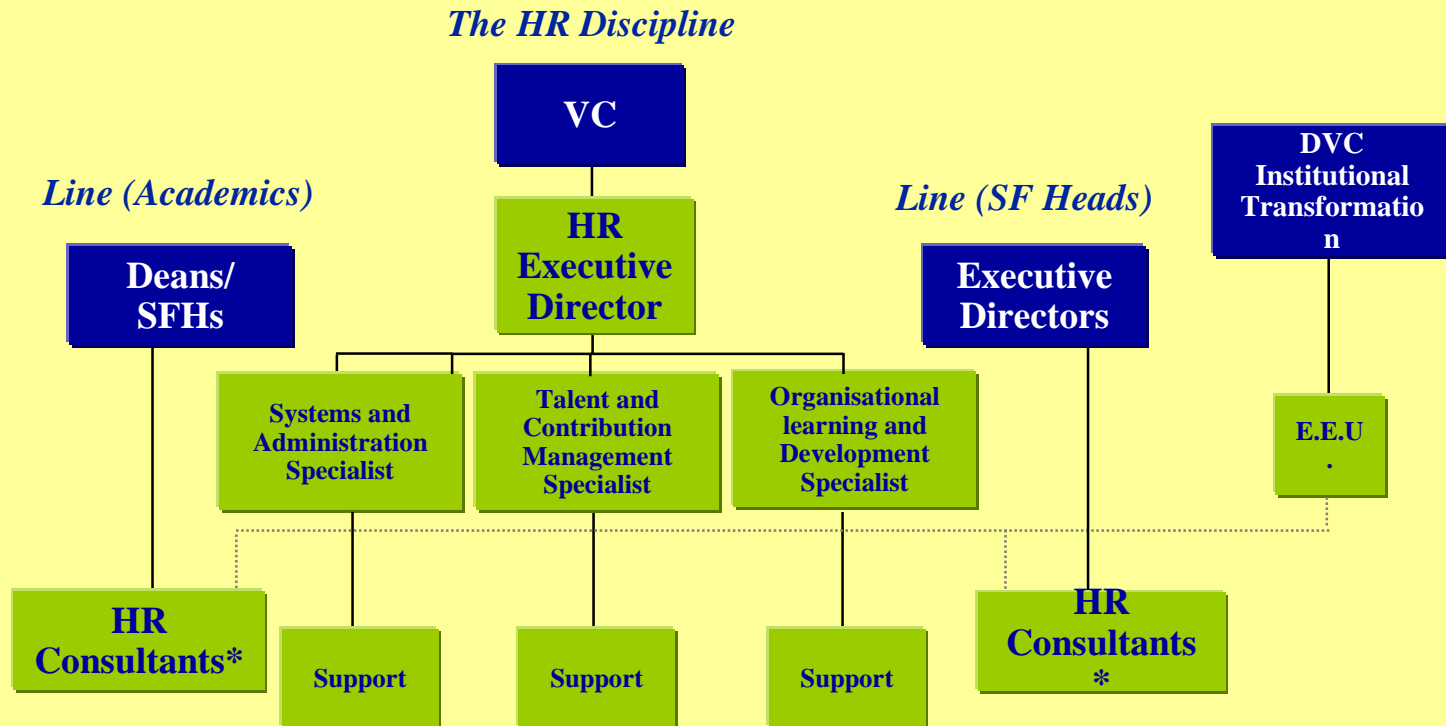
A new reputation and value proposition for HRM requires a fundamental re-look at existing structures, skills, services and systems.

The ideal structure

- HR Consultants reporting to line on a devolved basis
- Central specialists
- Agreed ratios of HR professionals to staff numbers
- Line ownership of people issues
- HR ownership of strategic people processes as partners to line
- Ulrich model of roles

A devolved HR structure is particularly appropriate to service Faculties and Support Functions

HR provides a specialised (central) and a generalist (devolved) consulting service to the university, its primary units (faculties) and service functions



In this way, line “buy-in” the services of HR professionals who support line (as partners) to achieve the academic and other objectives of each faculty or service function.

* It is proposed that the name Human Resource Manager (HRM) be replaced by Human Resource Consultant (HRC); Unit.

EEU = Employment Equity Unit.

Reality!

circa August 2000

Current Reality in Human Resources

- depleted in terms of competencies
- demotivated and sceptical with little common identity
- lack of clear Human Resource strategy, supporting plans and objectives
- bureaucratic procedures and practices

Current Reality in Human Resources (continued)

- generalist-specialist conflict aggravated by:
 - poor relationships
 - lack of role clarity within Human Resources
 - lack of clarity of the Human Resource role institutionally
- being a convenient scapegoat at times
- lack of job security: of a staff of 76, 38 are on contracts, acting or temporary,
- lack of urgency, accountability, consequence and pride

Current Reality in Human Resources (continued)

- poor timekeeping
- depressing physical surroundings
- poor customer service ethic
- poor communication
- very poor perception of Human Resources generally

Current Reality in Human Resources (continued)

- shaky Human Resource Administration complicated by
 - a sophisticated enterprise platform
 - weak I.T. infrastructure
 - complex and multi variable people practices
- some very committed individuals asking to make a contribution

The Journey

Intervene at four levels..... while maintaining and improving service levels

- The physical environment
- Processes and procedures
- Relationships and teamwork
- Vision and identity

The Journey – some interventions

- Link HR strategy to UCT vision and mission
- Structure around strategy
- Consult on and implement structure
 - Employ the right people and give as many as possible a chance
 - Centralise and regain control and ownership of direction
 - Grow morale, create alignment and focus
 - Instill a service ethic
 - Remove bureaucracy
 - Have some fun
- Fix the physical environment
- Deal with current burning HR issues in the organisation - healthcare, transactional base, remuneration and others
- Commence clarifying the role of HR

Where are we now (circa
December 2003)?

Internally....

Internally?

- Much higher levels of energy and motivation
- Some progress with clean up of an enormous backlog of inefficiency and neglect
- Much higher levels of energy and motivation
- Still mostly maintaining not developing and initiating (reactive not proactive)
- Slow delivery in some cases
- Not sufficient focus on a common vision
- Still inter-functional gaps due to history
- Need for working KPI's and SLA's

Where are we now?

Externally....

Externally?

- Starting to link to the strategic framework and budget process as a strategic function
- Starting to make our HR Charter and code of conduct live
- Grappling with the lack of clarity of the HR role of academic 'line management', flirting with the development of a working model for HR and dealing with the lack of clarity of whether a strategic HR function is really required
- People not really seen as 'intellectual capital'
- Dealing with falling back on cumbersome procedures and bureaucracy resulting in a lack of accountability and performance management
- Relatively low levels of line management competence in terms of management and leadership within an educational landscape which, inter alia, is driving the need for change in people practices

What have we learned?

- Double the implementation time
- Do not assume leadership commitment to a significant organisation transformation purely based on sound consultant recommendations
- Make sure there is clarity on priorities up front and who is accountable for what
- The Ulrich model is not a simple answer in a HE institution – butterflies and cats!
- Remuneration and financial incentives are less important than intrinsic recognition
- Meet pressing HR needs first and notch up small wins
- Bureaucracy kills service delivery
- Governance is an issue – recognise it!
- Collegiality must live alongside hierarchy and accountability – leadership is consequently much more difficult!
- The devil is in the detail – the academic psyche seeks perfection and certainty – flow with it not against it

Thank you

Optional extra

Using Ulrich

A possible model for HR at UCT

- Role One: Administrator
 - Focus on transactional excellence via accurate information and efficient processes
 - Delivery of relevant management information

A possible model for HR at UCT

- Role Two: Employee Champion
 - Focus on strengthening unions
 - Streamlining of procedures and agreements
 - Creating capacity for better people practices in line management
 - Improve communication to all staff

A possible model for HR at UCT

- Role Three: Strategic Partner
 - Clarify HR role
 - Treat people as intellectual capital via a wide range of initiatives
 - Create a positive workplace via organisational health initiatives
 - Support UCT strategic initiatives by ensuring people capacity

A possible model for HR at UCT

- Role Four: Change agent
 - Pilot interventions within UCT which enhance responsiveness, collective leadership and organisational learning
 - Integrate developments in HR with overall transformation plans
 - Be a model of transformation

Intervention Options

- Radical confrontation
- Re-framing
- Gradualism
- Remain an Administrative function