

HRD Interventions

HR and management often want to do too much too quick, full with HR-plans that have never been totally implemented. A big challenge for HR is to choose and advice the HR-interventions that will have the biggest impact on the current organizational en cultural issues (preferably at the lowest cost).

Do nothing

Often this is the best solution. Do nothing. Action is over rated. The typical manager in an organization is action prone. When she or he smells an issue, the typical reaction is: action! On the leadership competency list you will not find “wait and see”, but “decisiveness” and “problem solving”. “Listening” will be on the list, but this is the most difficult competency to master.

Doing nothing is often a good choice. Not by default, making the right choice between doing nothing and doing something is not so easy. If you rightfully choose to do nothing, many things can happen. The issue turns out to be a minor or non-issue. The organization shows its power, and the issue is tackled without any intervention from senior management. Or: the organization redirects itself, and moves into another direction to avoid the issue.

Recruit

The HR intervention with the biggest impact is recruitment. A new leader, from inside or outside the organization, can make a big difference. Recruitment is an area where HR has a lot to add. Find the right candidates. Promote high potentials. Design and execute a fair and rigorous selection process. Help with the onboarding of the new leader.

Have a critical conversation

An important skill for HR professionals is the ability to have critical conversations. Do not duck important issues, but address them in a constructive way in a critical conversation. Starting the necessary critical conversations is not easy, and therefore it is often easier to revert to 1 (do nothing) or 2 (recruit).

Competency Mapping Exercise

Map the competencies for the entire organization. Use participative process. Use facilitators to initiate the exercise. This intervention needs specialists in behavioral science. Ascertain the qualifications of the facilitator. The facilitator should have skills in identifying knowledge attitudes, skills, and knowledge of competency mapping techniques. The competency mapping by itself is a participative process. When mapped and the competencies are used for organization wide interventions it becomes an OD intervention. Competency mapping and designing competency based HR systems is one of the most ROI giving interventions if taken to logical end. By virtue of its linkages with other HR systems it is a whole system involving exercise.

Start from the top.

Top management should know the purpose and importance of CM. They should be involved in setting the vision and strategic plan.

Use Behavioral science specialists and knowledge. Unless educationists trained in CM are used it may be hijacked into other directions.

Use sequential approach. CM should start with diagnosis. What is lacking because of lack of role directory, role clarity, team work, capability shortage, succession planning? What a right diagnosis can help? Use participative approach. Develop internal resource. Explain the importance of CM to all levels. Disengage after competency based HR systems one in place.

Use multiple interventions, workshops, seminars; interviews, task forces etc. conduct it for all levels.

Demonstrate how it leads to organizational effectiveness and change. Link it with all other

Leadership Development Programs (Using 360 Degree Feedback and climate Surveys)

A number of organization use leadership development in-house based on the 360 Degree feedback. The usual design is to start with a competency framework and develop a leadership and managerial effectiveness tool. This tool is then used to get individual assessments made for the top level, senior level and middle level executives. 360 Degree feedback profiles are prepared based on the assessments of juniors, seniors, internal and external customers of the candidate along with self assessment. The assessments are summarized and graphically presented to help the candidate get an insight into his/her own behavior and leadership competencies. The profiles are then given to the candidates individually and perhaps in a workshop form. The candidates are then assisted to prepare action plans and make commitments to change. The level-wise (HOD, General Manager, Vice-presidents etc.) or the group-wise trends of the feedback are shared and development activities undertaken by the HR department. For example if most participants need to be vision driven or systems driven then a series of programs to develop their vision or systems orientation are made and a training intervention undertaken. Individual coaching also becomes part of the intervention.

Assessment and Development Centers

ADCs have begun as potential assessment tools. Over a period of time they have acquired the potential as competency building tools. They are being used for identifying high fliers, succession planning and promotion tools. Though they are tools with limited purpose they can be used for larger purposes including culture change. However, when they are used for larger purposes they should be used as culture building tools. Creating a competency culture, high performance culture, leadership culture are some of the higher goals. However they should be supplemented with other interventions like climate surveys, succession planning etc. The limitations of ADCs as predictive tools should be explained. Organizations like Aditya Birla Group in private sector in NTPC, HPCL etc. in public sector have used these interventions to bring systematic changes. Most organizations however make the mistake of frequently changing consultants. Mostly they bring Consultants for specific interventions and as a result synergistic effect is lost. Some consultants are also shy of getting into long term contracts to bring change. Short term interventions have better remuneration possibilities for consultants but may have a limited impact.

Performance Appraisal Interventions

PMS is a great change tool. However most organization treat it merely as a system to manage people or as a human resource management system than as a change management system. The potential of this tool has been grossly underestimated and attention paid to this and investments made on this are extremely small. The most important investment it requires is a managerial time. The even this time is a mere 1% to 5% of each manager's time in a year to plan, review, and develop the performance, competencies and culture of individuals, dyads, teams and the organization as a whole.

Understand the potential of PMS.

Examine the multiple objectives of PMS and choose the objectives that are manageable in a short span and in the long run.

Use a participative approach. Get top management commitment. Help them to experience how it helps them focus their work, plan time and maximize their impact.