

HR Unleashed: Leading Business Transformation

Putting the focus on people, not processes to create a strategic, high value business service that streamlines interactions and elevates the employee experience.



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Introduction

HR is a people business, whether it's helping employees with simple tasks or more complicated challenges, hiring and nurturing the best talent, providing career guidance, or developing and implementing learning initiatives. HR practitioners care about establishing one-on-one relationships and are committed to helping employees and creating exceptional places for them to work.

So why do we find that so many HR professionals are not able to focus on the high value activities that attracted them to HR in the first place?

Ironically, trying to address all issues and questions on an individual basis makes it more difficult for HR professionals to do their jobs effectively. The problem is that too much time is being spent simply “keeping the lights on.”

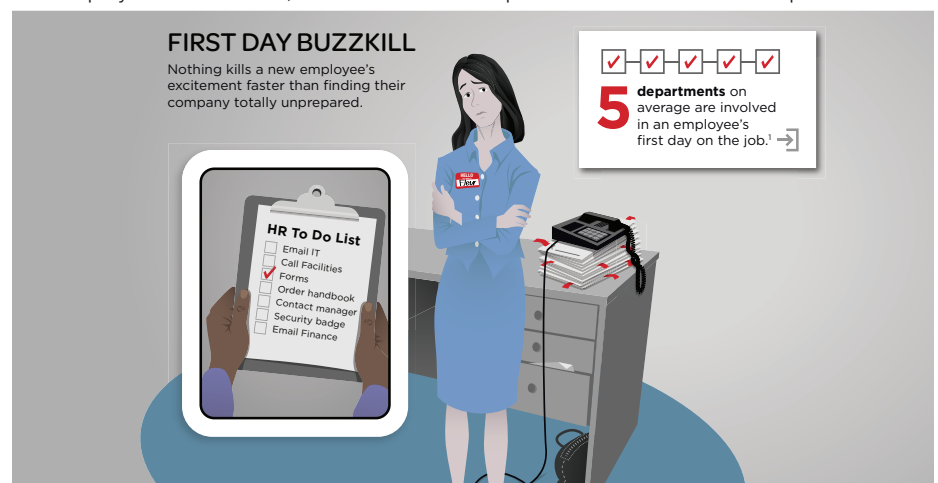
Research from ServiceNow’s State of Work study¹ reveals the extent of the productivity drain within HR:

- Managers spend 15 hours – or two days – a week on administrative work
- Five departments or more are involved in an employee’s first day on the job
- It typically takes 10 or more interactions to get ready for an employee’s first day at work
- 80% are using tools such as email or spreadsheets, or personal visits for routine work processes

Despite HR’s efforts, it’s a situation that doesn’t win any thanks or sympathy, as employees become increasingly frustrated with complex, time-consuming processes when they request what they perceive to be routine services from the HR department.

The high level of administrative work also leaves HR struggling to focus on substantive changes that will make the organisation a better place to work or on issues where one-to-one involvement really matters. For example, individual coaching on career paths or providing help during stressful situations, such as a divorce or a grievance with colleagues.

This report explores how HR can be unleashed from time-consuming, manual activities, such as answering benefit enquiries or coordinating employee onboarding tasks. It looks at how those two days a week spent on administrative tasks can be applied to innovative ideas and employee-led initiatives, with real-world examples of HR transformation in practice.



“Even in the most seemingly routine areas, when people are given difficult problems to tackle, with appropriate tools and support, they can do things faster, smarter, and better.”

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, The Three Things That Actually Motivate Employees, published by Harvard Business Review ⁱⁱⁱ

Employee expectations and high-touch services

Unlike other functions within an enterprise, the HR department has a unique customer base. Every single employee, from the CEO to an intern in their first job, is a ‘consumer’ of HR services. In a large organisation, this can mean tens of thousands of employees who all expect to be dealt with as individuals.

HR teams take pride in providing high-touch services, which typically rely on personal communications to respond to employee questions, handle cases, and manage other complex HR activities. However, the increasingly high expectations of today’s workforce in experiencing more ‘consumerised’ services at work present big challenges.

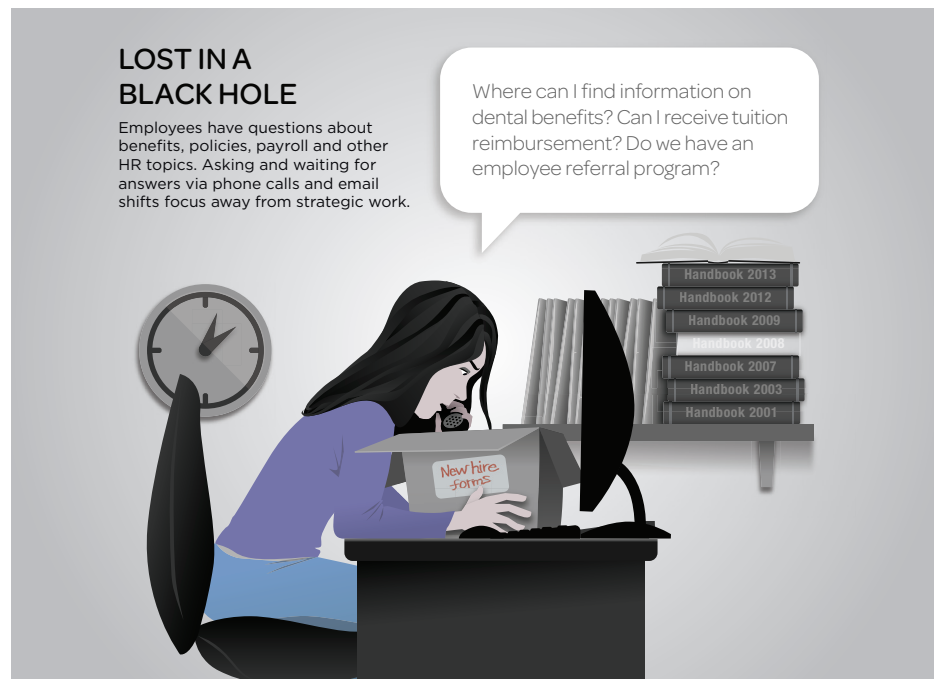
Think about how easy it is to buy products online or run a search for information on Google. Employees now expect the same consumer-style experience within the workplace. They want instant access to HR services and information on training, benefits, policies and payroll, at any time, at the touch of a button.

The demand is already overwhelming. As many as 75% of managers want to be able to order corporate services online at workⁱⁱ, just like they would make a restaurant reservation on their mobile device. This is only set to increase as an influx of millennials into the workplace brings digital natives with new values, ideas and expectations.

The key is in understanding the difference between employee engagement and helping employees find information or complete transactions. For routine administrative services, a manual approach isn’t effective or efficient for HR or the employee.

HR is faced with reconciling and managing an onslaught of employee requests via emails, calls and walk-ins. Many get lost or buried, generating even more work when employees start to follow up. Employees simply want a fast, successful outcome, but instead they become embroiled in a complex and time-consuming process.

The result is an HR department that is stuck in the “backroom.” This completely defeats the purpose of a high-touch approach. Rather than engaging personally in high-value activities such as mentoring, training or talent management – where high-touch delivers the most benefits – HR becomes all-consumed in a constant back-and-forth with employees on mundane tasks.



HR must unleash itself from the 15 hours a week (per HR person!) that is spent on administrative tasks and apply that time to more strategically-led initiatives.

Becoming a Transitional Business Function

Due to its position at the heart of an organisation, HR has the opportunity to become a true enabler of business transformation. As Peter Cheese, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), highlighted recently in a blog on the CIPD Community site^{iv}:

“HR has always sat in a unique place when compared to other functions. It touches everyone in an organisation, and needs to closely engage with, and be part of, management, as well as supporting and understanding the wider workforce.”

HR is no longer about ticking boxes on a list of employee benefits or providing environments with ping pong tables or running fun recreational activities. HR must unleash itself from the 15 hours a week (per HR person!) that is spent on administrative tasks and apply that time to more strategically-led initiatives. The five areas below are key to making this transformational change:

- **The little projects count** – Transformation doesn't have to start with a huge, enterprise-wide project; a series of small initiatives or ideas can make a big impact. For example, one organisation created overwhelmingly positive feedback when it introduced a new re-entry into the workplace scheme, which completely changed the 'brand' of the company in the eyes of the employees.
- **Know your value** – No organisation would be in business without its employees. Business leaders know that the best people drive success and with competition at an all-time high, this puts HR right at the heart of an organisation's growth strategy.
- **Align with the CIO** – HR and the CIO are natural allies. Unlike IT, HR touches every single employee across an organisation. If they have an exceptional HR experience, it opens the door for the CIO to gain entry into enterprise-wide transformation of services and processes. Make this relationship work, and it's a winning combination.
- **Understand what 'admin' means** – Think about the work that you do and ask 'do I actually need to be doing this?' In some cases, that human touch from HR is critical, for example, when it's an employee relations issue. Yet, it typically becomes clear when HR skills are not needed to do the vast majority of the admin and repetitive tasks, such as filling out forms or checking on holiday entitlement.
- **Embrace change** – One of the biggest challenges to HR transformation can be the HR team itself. Traditional roles are well-established, so HR teams need to know they will remain valued and relevant to the organisation. Employees will embrace the change, but start the transformation within HR, so the team knows how they will grow into a new role and an exciting career.

Cars.com, an online destination for car shoppers, has an employee onboarding app that was developed by ServiceNow. It sets off a process to provide for the IT needs of every new employee once a requisition is marked as 'hired.'

How to Unlock the Potential of HR

In order to truly unleash the potential of HR, teams must get back the two days a week that are lost unnecessarily to endless, mundane tasks. Service management can play a key role in enabling the shift from administration to strategy, giving HR professionals the freedom to focus on people, not processes.

It's the perfect combination of administrative assistant and project manager, responding instantly to employee requests, progressing cases, automating repeatable manual processes, and managing complex cross-departmental activities such as employee onboarding. Service management never forgets or makes mistakes, it always follows up so things get done, and lets you know if there's a problem it can't solve.

Employee onboarding:

New employee onboarding is a complex operation that involves at least five departments, with HR typically taking the lead. It can take more than 10 interactions to get a new hire ready for their first day, arranging for computers, email, phone lines, and credit cards, and setting up orientation sessions and training.

It's a massive co-ordination exercise and reliance on email, phone calls and in-person visits makes the process lengthy, inefficient and time-consuming. But a company spends too much time and money finding, vetting, and hiring the perfect candidate to let the onboarding process fail on day one. Rather than causing frustration, the onboarding experience must focus on supporting the newly hired candidate and preparing them for success.

Large organisations including Christus Health, Envision, TeleTech and Cars.com are using service management to eliminate complexity and automate the onboarding process.

Cars.com – an online destination for car shoppers - the customer Employee Onboarding app, developed by ServiceNow, sets off a process to provide for the IT needs of every new employee once a requisition is marked as 'hired'. Computers can be procured and provisioned appropriately, the new person added to Active Directory and email enabled with proper access to distribution lists and share drives. HR has saved 300 hours per year due to this service automation and time savings for IT are in excess of 1,000 hours per year.

Envision Healthcare, a leading provider of physician led, outsourced medical services, is bringing on board new hires faster and easier than ever by streamlining its employee onboarding process. Through service management, new job offers can be accepted at the click of a button, administrative and financial documents can be submitted easily, and IDs and clearances are processed quickly, so new hires are ready on their first first day – and not waiting. If questions come up, answers are right at the new hire's fingertips through the HR self-service portal, available to all of Envision's 17,000 employees from any location.

HOW TO WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER



YAZAKI NORTH AMERICA

Reducing onboarding efforts by 80% saves IT service desk staff over **800 hours per year.**



CARS.COM

90% of all new employees at Cars.com receive all hardware and access their first day.



ENVISION HEALTHCARE

Employees can access over **1,000 articles** in a centralized knowledge base on desktops and mobile devices.

“Automation means employees have much of the information they need right at their fingertips, significantly increasing employee satisfaction, and dramatically reducing the number of steps taken for information to be accessed.”

*Marc Van den Berg, ING's Netherlands
HR Manager*

Spend Time on People, Not Processes: Self-Service Portals

Allow employees to take control of basic HR needs with a flexible and intuitive portal, which provides them with the freedom to find HR information and request HR services whenever and wherever they need to.

This self-service approach gives employees access to HR services around the clock, from a desktop or mobile device, offering the same simplicity they have come to expect from banking online, shopping online or ordering a cab. Employees can see the status of each of their requests, which is constantly updated as the service management system shepherds the request through the fulfillment process.

Instead of employee requests pouring into HR through multiple channels, a portal is that one-stop shop that answers, auto-routes, and tracks requests, so HR teams can focus their time and energy on high value activities.

HR departments in a number of large organisations are already seeing the benefits of HR self-service, including ING Group and Envision, which have seen major improvements in employee satisfaction and significant gains in efficiency.

The ING Group self-service HR portal holds more than 1,200 knowledge base articles so 25,000+ employees have instant access to information on topics such as health, compensation and learning, and are automatically connected to the right HR expert when they need further support.

Marc Van den Berg, ING's Netherlands HR Manager commented “Automation means employees have much of the information they need right at their fingertips, significantly increasing employee satisfaction, and dramatically reducing the number of steps taken for information to be accessed.”

Teletch Holdings, a global provider of customer engagement solutions for Global 1000 clients and their customers, has transformed its Human Capital (HC) operations, with an employee self-service portal. Accessible from anywhere, the HR storefront provides 24x7 access to HR information and services.

The HR team at Vitamix, which provides high-performance home and commercial blending equipment, worked closely with their IT team to integrate HR services into an enterprise-wide employee self-service portal. Automated HR services span the entire employee lifecycle – from onboarding to separation.

The HR team at the University of Bradford has reduced the level of resources required to deal with transactional work requests and demands, enabling staff to focus on transformational HR programmes. According to Gary McFarlane, Head of Operational HR, “It was clear from the outset that technology would be key to delivering the new model, through automation and self-service.”

SPEND TIME ON PEOPLE, NOT PROCESSES

When an intuitive portal answers, auto-routes, and tracks employee requests, HR teams can focus on high value activities—talent management, training, organizational design, and fostering a winning business culture.



HR needs to emerge from the 'backroom' and unleash itself from administrative functions to become the high value service that it should be for today's enterprise.

Conclusion

Organisations spend an enormous amount of time and money on manual administrative work and the burden is significant for HR professionals, who spend two days a week on process-driven tasks, rather than focusing on activities that move the business forward.

Yet HR plays a unique and critical role within the enterprise, as it touches every single employee. HR needs to emerge from the 'backroom' and unleash itself from administrative functions to become the high value service that it should be for today's enterprise.

HR is a service to the most important customers the business will ever have – its employees – and there is an enormous opportunity to put the focus on people, not processes, to really position HR as a strategic driver for businesses and organisations.

By consumerising support services and automating administrative tasks, HR has the potential to free up millions of hours of highly skilled management time that can be focused on creating positive workplace environments and cultures that attract and retain employees and create a workforce of brand ambassadors.

It's time for HR professionals to challenge existing processes and lead transformational change in the workplace with a strategic approach that moves business forward. The time for HR service management is now.

ⁱ <http://www.servicenow.com/lpwhp/state-of-work-survey.html>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.servicenow.com/lpwhp/state-of-work-survey.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://hbr.org/2013/10/three-things-that-actually-motivate-employees/>

^{iv} http://www.cipd.co.uk/community/blogs/b/peter_cheese/archive/2016/01/12/hr-s-image-challenge

^v <http://www.servicenow.com/lpwhp/state-of-work-survey.html>



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