

Human Resource StrategyShape, square

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# Introduction to this Guide

This is a template that organisations may utilise as a framework for the development of their Human Resources (HR) strategy. Under each heading of this guide, explanatory notes have been provided to support users in understanding what generally would appear in a HR strategy. There is not one “right” way to format or structure a HR plan, and each organisation should adopt the style and approach that fits their organisational maturity, capability and culture best.

After completing your HR Strategy, you may want to develop the HR Plan on a Page (POP), and the HR Action Plan. These two documents will help communicate the plan to internal stakeholders, and will ensure the strategy is actioned.

# General principles for writing a HR strategy

To write a great HR strategy, there are several principles that will need to be followed.

The HR strategy will need to align with the organisation's overall strategic plan and objectives.

The strategy needs to be based on a thorough analysis of the HR related metrics, employee feedback and other associated data. Strategies that address evidenced issues are far more likely to have impact.

Proposed activities and strategies must be grounded in best practice and current trends in HR management. If your organisation does not have internal expertise, you may consider consulting with comparable organisations or industry leaders to ensure the strategies you are proposing are likely to be successful.

The plan should be realistic and achievable, with clear action steps and timelines for implementation.

The plan needs to be kept current and reviewed/updated regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in achieving your organisation’s HR objectives.

If your strategies are evidence based and realistic, do not hesitate to be bold and challenge the status quo.

Use appendices if particular data or strategies need to be unpacked to be better understood.

# Executive Summary

The executive summary provides a high-level overview of the key elements of the plan. This includes the overall objectives of the HR plan, and a summary of the strategies and tactics that will be used to achieve those objectives.

The executive summary may include information on the current state of the organisation's workforce, including any strengths or weaknesses identified. This could include an overview of the organisation's current staffing levels, as well as any key metrics related to employee satisfaction, retention and productivity.

Additionally, the executive summary may highlight major initiatives or programs that will be implemented as part of the HR plan, such as training and development opportunities, performance management systems or changes to the organisation's employee benefits.

The executive summary of an HR plan should provide a clear and concise overview of the plan's key components, with a focus on how these components will help the organisation achieve its strategic objectives.

# Introduction & Methodology

The introduction typically provides background information on the organisation and the context for the HR plan. This includes the timeframe of the plan and a brief overview of the organisation's history, purpose, and values, as well as any external factors that are likely to impact the organisation's workforce.

The methodology component describes the process used to develop the plan. This might include a summary of any consultation, research or analysis that was conducted to inform the plan, as well as an overview of the stakeholders who were involved in the planning process. The methodology might also involve describing the tools or frameworks that were used to guide the planning process, such as a SWOT analysis.

# Analysis and Results

The analysis and results section provides a summary of the feedback input and data that was received from stakeholders during the consultation (listening) process. This contains feedback from employees, managers, executives and external stakeholders, collected through surveys, focus groups, interviews, or other means of consultation. The analysis should identify common themes, issues and concerns that emerged during the consultation process, and should also identify any areas of agreement or disagreement among stakeholders.

Rather than simply presenting a list of feedback and data, the analysis should highlight the key takeaways from the consultation process and explain how they informed the development of the HR plan. This might include insights into employee engagement, workforce diversity, talent management or other key issues that are relevant to the organisation. To keep the reader engaged, it's also helpful to present the analysis in a clear and concise manner, using visual aids like graphs or charts to illustrate key points and make the data more accessible.

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# HR Objectives/Pillars

This section provides the rationale behind the HR objectives and subsequent strategies. The discussion will generally take place under your HR objectives or pillar headings (objectives can also be referred to as pillars). It is important that, as you introduce the objectives, there is a clear link provided to the broader organisational strategic intents. Be sure to integrate your discussion with employee and stakeholder feedback, market research and any other intelligence you have gathered.

The objective headings sections selected in this guide are common focus areas in the field of human resource management. You may create your own intent or language for these headings, and/or increase or decrease their number. The key focus is ensuring they cascade with relevance from the broader organisational strategy.

## Workforce Planning

This section provides an analysis of the current and future workforce needs of the organisation to ensure that it has the right people in the right positions to achieve its strategic objectives. This might include a review of the organisation's current workforce, including its demographics, skills and capabilities, as well as an analysis of future workforce needs based on growth projections and changing agency requirements. For example, an analysis of workforce planning might identify a need to hire more employees with certain technical skills, diversity profiles or to develop a plan for succession planning in key leadership positions. Keeping discussion as factual and data focused as possible is a great way to keep your audience engaged with this section.

## Talent and Retention

This section will analyse your current talent management practices, including recruitment, selection, performance (as it relates to talent) and career development, as well as identifying strategies for retaining top talent. This might include an analysis of employee engagement levels, turnover rates and other metrics related to talent management. You may identify a need to improve the onboarding process for new employees or to develop a plan for promoting from within to retain top performers. The language and complexity used under this heading and in other sections will depend largely on the maturity level of the organisation and the intended readership.

## Learning and Development

This section looks at the organisation’s current learning and development programs and identifies strategies for improving the skills and capabilities of employees to meet future needs. This includes an analysis of training needs, skills gaps and other factors that impact employee performance and compliance. An example of this may include the need to implement a new training program for employees in a particular team or department, or to develop a plan for providing more opportunities for professional development.

Learning and development needs relating to workforce inclusion may be targeted at different levels of the organisation. For example, cultural safety and learning about truth-telling in the context of First Nations inclusion and safety may be an organisation-wide commitment, while a professional supervision course that covers reasonable adjustment in performance could be a program offered to those who are in management positions. Accessibility related to communications and technology may be something personnel in communications and IT roles may participate in.

It is important that you mention budgets in this and any other sections, particularly if the suggested strategies require lump sum investments or ongoing financial commitment. Often, learning and development strategies will include some financial investment.

## Diversity and Inclusion

This section involves the organisation's current diversity and inclusion practices, as well as identifying strategies for supporting diversity and inclusion within the workplace. This includes an analysis of the diversity of the workforce in comparison to a comparable organisation, and an assessment of the organisation's policies and practices related to diversity and inclusion.

Some organisations may develop a standalone diversity and inclusion strategy; however, this is not necessary if your HR plan is detailed enough to fully support this aspect of your strategy. Your plan should reference other organisational diversity related commitments such as Reconciliation Action Plans, to ensure they are fully integrated into the overall HR strategy.

While inclusion strategies are largely tailored to specific needs, it is important that employees feel that their needs in the workplace is a focus area the organisation is genuinely committed to. Ensuring there are opportunities to consider new needs and adapt current policies is critical.

Some strategies to support inclusion may look like:

* Working from home policy
* Cultural leave policy
* Workplace practices that cater to a variety of values, eg: having some staff meetings in an outside space, or with time dedicated to more relational conversation rather than only business updates
* Private space able to be booked for prayer, medication administration, exercises, breastmilk pumping
* Budget for adapting work spaces for different physical requirements
* Visible acknowledgment of traditional owners
* A Reconciliation Action Plan that is regularly referred to and progressed
* Planned staff celebrations (for example shared morning teas) around cultural traditions or holidays, where appropriate
* Dedicated board roles to ensure diverse representation in governance
* Amenities that cater for diverse needs
* Recruitment policy that includes diversity in the interviewing panel
* Parental leave provisions that allow for the needs of diverse families.

This list is not exhaustive and is only a small sample of the kinds of strategies or activities your organisation may consider. Your employee group will have many more ideas.

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## Performance

Performance can be a somewhat contentious term as it can be a subjective measure. What performance means in your organisation should be detailed in your HR plan, this is generally easily achieved by relating it back to the organisation’s definitions of performance and success as provided by the strategic plan.

Performance discussion in a HR plan generally involves reviewing the organisation's current performance management practices and identifying opportunities for improvement. This might include analysing performance metrics such as employee productivity, client satisfaction and other conduct related data, as well as conducting employee surveys or focus groups to gather feedback on the effectiveness of current performance management processes. In many cases, organisations do not have policies addressing performance outside of appraisals and misconduct management, this often provides an opportunity for your HR plan to create a more focused, positive and robust policy approach.

## Engagement

Employee engagement typically involves reviewing the organisation's current employee engagement levels and identifying strategies for improving them. This might include analysing employee survey results, turnover rates and unplanned/planned absenteeism rates to identify areas of concern, as well as conducting focus groups or other forms of employee feedback to better understand the underlying drivers for both high and low engagement levels.

Your strategy should detail what methods you will use for measuring engagement, how often these measurements will be conducted and what will be done with the information.

Some of the tools used may include:

* Periodic satisfaction/happiness measures
* Annual staff survey
* Feedback via professional supervision.

# Further Recommendations

This is generally the final section of your HR plan; it should tie together the HR objectives previously discussed with the analysis of the different sections of the plan. It is an opportunity to emphasise specific recommendations required to achieve the HR objectives, and to identify the resources required to implement those actions. This section should also summarise the key findings and present a conclusion on the overall state of HR within the organisation, including the strengths and areas of opportunity for improvement. The conclusion should be concise and refer to the Plan on a Page (POP) and HR Action Plan for further details.