



# CATS

# RECRUIT

Classified Jobs 1800-289-9988 [www.cats.com.sg/recruit](http://www.cats.com.sg/recruit)

Executive Appointments 1800-289-8822

## Ambassadors of change

Human resource leaders can rise to the top of the company if they transform the HR function into that of a strategic business partner.

FOR human resource (HR) leaders to be considered for the highest-level positions (often referred to as the C-Suite for offices like chief operating officer and chief financial officer), they need to transform their departments from serving a tactical, operational function to becoming a strategic business partner within the organisation.

For most companies, small or large, this begins with a critical paradigm shift originating from inside the HR unit itself. First and foremost, HR needs to view its purpose as one that goes beyond the simply administrative.

These days, organisations can outsource many administrative functions such as recruitment, compensation and benefits, payroll, training and development and even performance management (which are usually the tasks of the HR department) to HR consulting companies.

The top benefit of outsourcing is that it frees up time and manpower resources so that HR professionals can focus on higher-level HR initiatives.

These include talent management, organisational development and succession planning, which have a more powerful impact on the company's overall business strategies and operations and, consequently, its financial success.

HR professionals must view themselves as change agents and strategise ways to transform the widespread perception of the HR department as a cost centre to that of a strategic business partner instead.

They ought to think of themselves as business owners and start developing C-suite-level (highest-level executives) thinking. By doing so, the next step will come naturally: demonstrating that they have a thorough understanding of the company's business.

Whatever human capital strategies they design should then be presented as a business case, with an emphasis on how these initiatives will contribute to the company's bottomline.

Additionally, HR leaders should also be more customer- and service-oriented. They need to view employees as customers who need to be engaged in order to get "buy-in", instead of pushing HR initiatives and expecting all workers to simply toe the line.

### People strategies

It is truly unfortunate if HR leaders fail to realise that they actually hold the key to the most critical component of any organisation: the employees. People are the backbone of any business and they are the ones who drive an organisation's success — and HR leaders should certainly capitalise on this fact.

Thus, talent management strategies should always remain a core focus. If you can design people strategies that are able to attract top quality talent, actively and productively engage them, optimise their performance through targeted training and other initiatives, and measure their contributions in tangible dollar value while ensuring high retention rates, then you will be one step closer to the C-Suite.

Extra resources should be directed towards employee engagement. Increasingly, organisations are

recognising the financial advantages of keeping employees engaged and, conversely, the perils of a disenchanted workforce.

The onus lies on HR to implement effective programmes to shape the right corporate culture that will serve as a platform to engage employees and enhance their ownership of the broader business objectives.

Greater employee engagement and retention can also arise from the implementation of 360-degree feedback, which entails self-assessment by the employee as well feedback from all round including subordinates, peers, supervisors and even from external sources such as customers and suppliers.

Indeed, HR's transformation to that of a strategic business partner also calls for effective change management. With a clear vision in place, the HR leader should involve the rest of the department in this change process so that each HR worker takes ownership of this objective and adopts the role of a "change ambassador".

It is only when the necessary buy-in is attained, and the entire HR unit is onboard with the new strategic direction that the delicate process of transformation can truly begin.

With meticulous planning and management, it will subsequently radiate outwards, pervading the other departments and becoming a pivotal force for organisational change.

Article by Ronald Lee, managing director of PrimeStaff Management Services, a leading human resource consultancy specialising in recruitment, payroll processing, outplacement and training services. For more information, call 6222-3310, e-mail [enquiry@primestaff.com.sg](mailto:enquiry@primestaff.com.sg) or visit [www.primestaff.com.sg](http://www.primestaff.com.sg)

To send article contributions, comments, views and story ideas, e-mail [recruit3@sph.com.sg](mailto:recruit3@sph.com.sg)

When you contribute to CATS Recruit in The Straits Times, we take it that you agree, at no charge, to allow us to use, archive, resell or reproduce the letters and contributions in any way and in any medium.

