**The SBP Seat at the Table**

***“Earning that place at the table is a function of many factors including knowing the strategy, culture, vocabulary, and operating issues of the business, having passion for issues which add greatest value to external customers and shareholders, and focusing on financial results.”***

***-Brockbank, Wayne, HR’s Future on the Way to a Presence, Human Resource Management, Spring 1997. Volume 36, Number 1, pp. 65-69.***

**1. SBPs AT THE TABLE WORK STRATEGICALLY IN THREE WAYS**

* **Contribute to the formation of business strategies and plans**
* **Integrate the HR strategic plan and initiatives into the business plan**
* **Implement people initiatives in support of the business plan**

**2. CONTRIBUTE TO FORMATION OF BUSINESS STRATEGIES AND PLANS**

* **Acquire knowledge and use of an organizational architecture model**

**-Organize information using the GAPS! MAP. (See Figures 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 6.8, 6.9, 7.3, and 8.1, and Tables 8.1 and 8.2)**

* **Acquire knowledge of the organization’s strategic and business planning processes**

**-Examples are:**

* **situational and environmental analysis**
* **formation of assumptions**
* **creation of vision, mission, goals, and strategies**
* **risks associated with decisions made**
* **Be a Dot connector, thinking outside of your area of responsibility**

**-Link together what appear to be disparate pieces of information**

**-Link patterns and themes in discussions and identify connections that may not be obvious**

**-View problems from new angles**

**-Think and work as a businessperson, not only as an HR professional**

**-Develop the skill of perspective from an entire landscape view rather than seeing any single element**

**-Be courageous and speak with candor**

**-Disagree privately and agree publicly**

**3. INTEGRATE HR STRATEGIC PLAN AND INITIATIVES INTO BUSINESS PLAN**

* **Communicate Business Plan to HR Colleagues. Ensure that HR employees understand the link between an HR initiative and the requirements of the business**
* **Initiate organizational audits to identify readiness. Identify both strengths and potential flat sides of the organization, proposing initiatives to close any identified gaps**
* **Propose initiatives and solutions that ensure alignment of people with business requirements. Ask the right questions and propose solutions**
* **Provide the Business Case for HR solutions that are proposed. Provide analysis of the business and financial case for all options proposed and recommendations offered**
* **Possess knowledge of the HR staff’s capability. Credibility requires that you do not over-commit or under-deliver**

**4. IMPLEMENT PEOPLE INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF THE BUSINESS PLAN**

* **In the implementation phase, there are many roles for the SBP to fill:**

**-*Project Manager* – work in the role of a macro-project manager, ensuring initiatives are operating as intended; provide resources when roadblocks or problems are encountered**

**-*Broker of Resources –* perform as type of orchestra conductor, identifying and engaging those who will be a part of the resources needed to inplement initiatives**

**-*Link between Clients and Those Who Are Implementing Initiatives* – Communication is key: formal update meetings, e-mail messages, phone contacts. Design a communication process that keeps all participants updated and engaged, regularly and consistently**

**-*Keep the Focus on Execution of the Plan* – Without focus on a sustained basis, initiatives can die of benign neglect. When priorities shift, be proactive in termination of obsolete initiatives, time delays, or rescheduling. Avoid the “fizzle-out” scenario**

* **Provide accountability and measurement of results**

**-Determine the result categories of the initiatives in the planning phase. Examples: operational metrics, efficiency of processes used to design and implement solutions, customer satisfaction with quality of product or service, success in how employees performed in cross-functional teams**

**-Design metrics and ways of measuring for each result category. The combination of the results from all areas of the initiative is critical for accountability**

**--Clarify fences between what is the accountability of the SBP versus what is the accountability of the client being supported. All initiatives need to be viewed as emanating from the clients and not viewed as an “HR initiative.”**

**5. FINAL SBP TIPS**

* **Having *a seat at the table* is a day-to-day opportunity to influence decisions that guide long-term business strategies and goals, because you have gained the organization’s access, credibility, and trust as an SBP.**
* **At this level, your primary work focus is to align the structure and strategic plans of the HR function with the requirements of the business. This includes orchestrating the implementation of people initiatives in support of business plans.**
* **SBPs who work at this level operate as an integrator, facilitator, and as a business person who happens to specialize in the human side of business. Rarely do SBPs become the expert who designs and delivers a specific solution.**
* **Through the SBP HR architecture, a “NEW” HR will be created, moving from the perception of Value sapping to Value adding, influencing business strategies and direction**

**1** Robinson, D. G., & Robinson, J. C. (2005). *Strategic Business Partner: A Critical Role for Human Resource Professionals – Aligning People Strategies with Business Goals.* San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Kohler Publishers Inc.