

# The People *Ultimatum*

A Resource for HR Professionals in the Public Sector

THE TOP 1% OF THE BEST  
HR PROFESSIONALS WEAR  
THESE 4 HATS.

**YOU SHOULD TOO.**

Page 9

**Do Business  
with the Past,**

So You Can Profit in the Future.

Page 2



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### Page 12

How to Become a  
High-Performing Chief  
HR Officer

### Page 14

The most important “superpower”  
that a professional can possess...  
**how you can build it**

### Page 19

Top 7 Reasons Why  
Strategy Fails

## Welcome

Dear HR Professionals,

Happy New Year!

We wanted to kick off 2024 with a bang and do whatever we can to make sure this is the best year ever for your public service/professional career.

We spent a lot of time asking ourselves what we could give the people in charge of the most important assets of our country in the New Year that will help them achieve spectacular success.

It was an easy decision.

We are going to create, publish, and deliver a personal and professional growth-focused print newsletter every month in 2024 targeted at helping you succeed in your role as a Public Sector HR professional.

## About Workforce Consulting

Workforce Consulting is the subsidiary of Workforce Group dedicated to the Public Sector.

For over two decades, we've partnered with organizational leaders and HR professionals across sectors, empowering them to maximize the potential and performance of their greatest asset: their workforce.

We are passionate and deeply committed to equipping and supporting the growth of Nigeria's public sector HR professionals – the architects of a competent, motivated, and engaged public workforce, the very engine of government performance.

## WHY A FOCUS ON THE PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF THE PUBLIC WORKFORCE?

### The Crux – The Public Workforce must become a National Priority.

The newly elected government of Nigeria has articulated a comprehensive and well-thought-out 8-point agenda designed to propel the nation's advancement and prosperity. At the center and pivotal to the achievement of the planned outcomes of these agendas is the Public Workforce.

The capacity to do what needs to be done and execute the new Government Agenda must reside in the Public Workforce, period. Without a competent, committed, and contributing Public Workforce, the Nigerian dream will most likely end up a nightmare.

This is because no nation can thrive and survive for long without a strong and well-equipped Public Workforce.

Yet, the political agenda continues to overlook the dire need for civil service reform. As if the increasing complexities and associated difficulties of running the Government are not enough, it is further complicated by putting the Public Workforce at the mercy of a revolving door of political appointees, some with

limited contextual experience and little interest in the long-term effectiveness and performance of the Government.

The Nigerian Government must commit enormous investment in human capital strategically to deliver the highest possible quality of government for everyone. We imagine a world in which civil service reform is of the highest priority to the president who places the weight of his office behind change.

At Workforce Consulting, we believe that running an effective and high-performing government is the key to the future success and sustainability of the Nigerian dream, and we are positioned to help make this dream a reality.

### Why a print newsletter and not a digital one?

If this newsletter was delivered by PDF, there's a good chance it would get lost among the other fifty thousand files on your computer and would collect virtual dust. We intend to put a lot of work into creating The People Ultimatum newsletter for you, and we want to be sure you get maximum value out of it. This is more likely to happen if you have the hard copy handy.

With that background, let's dive into the first edition of the newsletter.

# DO BUSINESS WITH THE PAST, SO YOU CAN PROFIT IN THE FUTURE



At the start of each New Year, it's customary for us to welcome it with a load of good wishes, big plans, and new resolutions. Yet, too often, a few months in, those grand dreams and ambitious plans get tucked away on the back burner. We find ourselves on the same path as the previous year.

The reason for this is simple: it is far easier to dream than to birth the dream. Typically, the problem lies in the fact that at the beginning of the year, as we drew those plans, we neglected to ask a crucial question: How do we transform these wishes, plans, and resolutions into tangible realities? What concrete and non-negotiable steps must we take to ensure that when December 2024 arrives, we will look back on it with feelings of fulfillment and joy because the year was indeed happy, successful, and profitable?

Here's a fact you can take to the bank: No big dream, plan, or goal ever becomes a reality by chance; everything must be pushed from behind. To increase the odds of 2024 being a stellar year, ask yourself: What can I actively do to significantly boost my chances of success in the future? In both my personal and professional life, how do I proactively and by design ensure that my achievements in 2024 outshine those of 2023?

*The keys to an exceptionally successful future lie in the archives of the past.*

In this article, I would like to share with you the tool that I have to thank for some of my most fulfilling achievements. If I were the swearing type, I would have sworn by this tool because it has greatly profited me. When I first began using it eight years ago, I employed it at the end of the year and the beginning of the New Year. However, as each year passed and the power of the tool in helping me stay focused and driven towards my goals and objectives became more obvious, I tweaked it and perfected its use on a monthly basis.

The name of the tool is **Doing Business with the Past Canvas**.

As the name suggests, the purpose of the tool is to assist any individual who is determined to succeed, to do business with the past, and to set the stage for success in the future. But why is this a thing? Why is it crucial to do serious business with the past? Shouldn't the past be left in the past? Absolutely not! This is because, more often than not, the keys to an exceptionally successful future lie in the archives of the past.

## Why is it Non-negotiable to do Business with the Past?

1. Doing business with the past will help you identify bottlenecks – those things that have caused you to stumble in the past and may pose a threat in the future, allowing you to eliminate them. If something prevented you from achieving your goals last year or two years ago, and those issues persist, there’s a chance they could become obstacles in the New Year. Therefore, it’s essential to uncover and address them.
2. Additionally, doing business with the past helps reveal opportunities. Are there things you could have done differently? Are there areas that, with a bit more effort, a bit more push, or a change of mindset, could have transformed into bigger and better options, opportunities, or success?
3. Doing business with the past also helps you identify what currently works for you – those hidden talents that you may have underutilized or underestimated. This is crucial because there’s no need to fix what isn’t broken.

Personally, at the beginning of every year, it has become my tradition to reflect deeply on the previous

year, to identify what exactly worked for me. I then determine how to make the most of it, repeat it, and do more of it. This exercise is game-changing because it helps to clear the mind and make room for the new. The principle of high performance mandates that you clear your mind to be ready to engage with the future, ready to grow, thrive, and do much better than you did last year.

If you’re ready to do what it takes to end 2024 on a strong note, get some writing material, get into a quiet room, and let me show you how to do business with the past and create the tomorrow you desire.

## HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE PAST

As depicted in the canvas below, there are four steps involved in doing business with the past. But before I guide you through these steps, it would be remiss of me not to emphasize that the true power and transformative potential of this tool will remain untapped if individuals merely read the steps without actively engaging in the attached exercises. The canvas is just the beginning; the real magic happens when you take each step, delve into the exercises, and fully commit.

**Let’s begin.**

### DOING BUSINESS WITH THE PAST CANVAS

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

LAST YEAR	PRESENT	FUTURE
<p><i>I'm proud of...</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><i>I regret...</i></p> <p>.....</p>	<p><i>I'm confident in...</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><i>I lack...</i></p> <p>.....</p>	<p><i>I'm excited about...</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><i>I worry about...</i></p> <p>.....</p>

**Make or Break:** What must happen in the new year for you to feel more pride, confidence and excitement?

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## STEP 1: THE PAST 365 DAYS—PRIDE AND REGRET.

This step is designed to help you mine crucial information from the past. The objective is to help you identify your biggest and most proud achievements in the last 365 days.

Now take a deep breath, get out your journal, and think back to 2023. *What were your biggest accomplishments in 2023? What game-changing moves did you make? What goals did you set for yourself? Did you meet and exceed them?* Write these down, now.

*What commitments did you make and honor? What difficult healing steps did you take? What habits did you break? In a nutshell, what did you do so well in the past 365 days that makes you feel very proud of yourself?* Write them down in detail. Please take your time with this; delve deep and provide as detailed answers as possible.

Once you've completed this phase, transition to the Regret section. Still in the spirit of brutal honesty, think deeply and write your answers to these questions now: *What do I regret doing last year? What do I regret not doing? What actions should I have taken but didn't, and now deeply regret?*

Your regrets may revolve around missed opportunities—chances, openings, and breaks you didn't perceive clearly at the time or perhaps saw but didn't maximize. Personally, some of my most profound regrets consistently involve missed opportunities and lost time. Yours may be different. Take the time to identify and write them clearly, capturing the details in the Regret column. This section is particularly powerful. You don't want to rush through it or gloss over it.

A word of caution: Objectivity is crucial when filling this section. Frequently, people, especially those inclined to be hypercritical, focus solely on the negatives. Excessive focus on regrets is unhealthy. Contrary to popular belief, failure is not a sin. It's the failure to learn from mistakes and the repetition of those mistakes that constitute a sin. Therefore, regrets are acceptable, as long as they are seen as opportunities to start anew, more intelligently, as Henry Ford advised.

On the flip side, while some individuals fixate on the negatives, others overly concentrate on the positives, disregarding areas that require correction. Once again, the objective is objectivity. Only when you honestly assess situations can you course-correct and improve in the future.

## STEP 2: CONFIDENCE AND LACK

While the first step focuses on the past, this step requires you to analyze your current circumstances.

Similar to the first step, there are two components in this one. Once again, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and search deep within your soul for these answers. Don't be tempted to rush through. Consider what things are currently working for you. Write your answers to the following: Amidst all the negatives, what gives me strong confidence? What in my present position makes me feel absolutely confident that the future can be better? Where does my confidence come from?

Now, let's move on to the second phase of this step. This part involves identifying areas where you currently experience a real lack. Think carefully and write your answers down in black and white: What things do I need to do better in the future but lack at present? What support, resources, knowledge, or relationships do I lack right now that make me feel unsure and undermine my sense of assurance of winning?

It is crucial that you complete this particular exercise. This is information that you must have—an insight you must possess to succeed in 2024. So, please don't postpone this. Write it down now. In areas where you are confident, you can do more and add effort to improve. For areas where you have identified some lack, zoom in to establish what you need to do differently to achieve better results.

## STEP 3: EXCITEMENT AND WORRY

We're now halfway through the process of doing business with the past. Are you still with me? Have you completed the first two steps? How did it feel? We would love to hear from you. Send us a message via

*In your hand is a tool with the potential to unlock significant growth in any area of your life you choose. I urge you to commit to completing the exercises and witness firsthand the surprising results it can bring.*

WhatsApp (We'll send you a surprise gift if you go the extra mile to attach a picture of your filled canvas).

Now, back to business. Step 3 focuses on the future and asks the question: When you close your eyes and think about the future, what about it makes you very excited? What is it that makes you so enthusiastic about the future that you can't sit still? This is the fun part, but also a vital step. Once again, don't rush your answers. Half-baked responses won't do you much good. This part should give you a dopamine boost if you do it well. It should fill you with energy.

Word of caution: Please, refrain from attempting the second part of this step if you haven't done the first part well enough. It could be counterproductive. If you've done a fabulous job of writing down what makes you excited about the future, it's now time to focus on what causes you to worry about the future. Answer this carefully: What makes me worried about the future? When I think about the months ahead, a year, or years ahead, what triggers worry and considerable concern for me? Articulate these concerns in as much detail as you can.

## STEP 4: MAKE OR BREAK

This is the final step of the tool. In my estimation, completing the exercises here is probably the most powerful and game-changing move you can make to ensure that 2024 is indeed a profitable year. This step requires you to answer these powerful questions: What must happen this year for me to feel more proud, confident, and excited? What actions do I need to take to have fewer regrets, less lack, and less worry? What must happen?

This is the planning stage.

My advice is that you revisit step one—what you are most proud of and confident in—then ask yourself: How can I do more of that? How can I create more of what makes me excited? Also, ask yourself: How can I reduce what causes regret, lack, and worry? Ultimately, it boils down to an 'Improve and Reduce' grid. How can I reduce the number of things that I regret? How can I reduce the areas where I lack (whether it's knowledge, support, time, or something else)? And how can I reduce the factors that cause worry?

### In conclusion

You can download a personal copy of your Business with the Past Canvas template from [consulting.workforce.com](https://consulting.workforce.com).

The template is adjustable to allow you to evaluate



and re-strategize for the rest of the year. If you use the tool properly, you should be able to accurately answer the following questions:

- » What were my wins last year?
- » What are the obvious bottlenecks?
- » What are the big opportunities?
- » What are the lessons learned?
- » What are my make-or-break moves for 2024?

Asking and answering these questions complete the process. Your next step is to assess and act. This way, you can end up creating a dependable game plan that is sure to make 2024 the year where you achieve your biggest and most important goals.

In your hand is a tool with the potential to unlock significant growth in any area of your life you choose. I urge you to commit to completing the exercises and witness firsthand the surprising results it can bring.

At Workforce Consulting, we are committed and extremely biased toward HR professionals in the public sector because they hold a strong key to the nation's renaissance.

We are all out to support you in your professional growth. If you have found this tool useful, we'd love to hear about it. Please send us a message on WhatsApp (09044898444). We will respond right back.

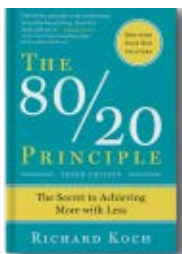
I wish you a most remarkable 2024.

Yours truly,

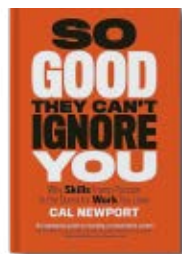
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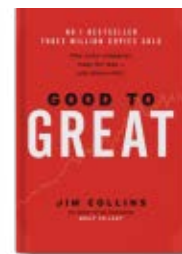
## 10 MUST-READ BOOKS FOR HR PROFESSIONALS WHO WISH TO REINVENT THEMSELVES IN 2024



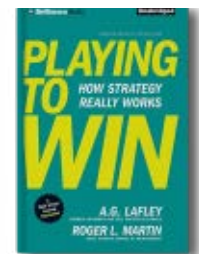
**The 80/20 Principles**  
by Richard Koch



**So Good They Can't Ignore You**  
by Cal Newport



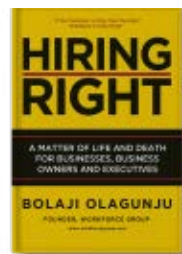
**Good to Great**  
by Jim Collins



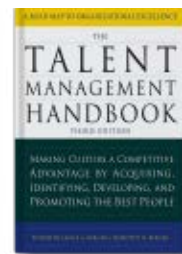
**Playing to Win**  
by Lafley & Martin



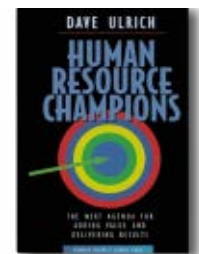
**The One Thing**  
by Gary Keller



**Hiring Right**  
by Bolaji Olagunju



**The Talent Management Handbook**  
by Berger



**Human Resources Champion**  
by Dave Ulrich



**Redefining HR**  
by Lars Schmidt



**Leading Organizational Design**  
by Kesler & Kates



## Are you a Senior HR Professional in the Public Sector?

- Are you passionate about repositioning the HR function in your MDA to heighten its impact on organizational effectiveness?
- Would you like to unleash your potential as a leader and build teams that are forward-thinking and bound to succeed?

## Join fellow visionary Public Sector HR leaders at SHREC 2024.

**What is SHREC?** SHREC is short for Senior HR Executives Conference.

SHREC 2024 is more than just a conference, it is a catalyst for transformation, strategic advancement, personal development and networking in Public Sector HR.

**An invitation only** event exclusively designed for Nigeria's top public sector HR professionals, SHREC provides a forum for visionary leaders to delve deeply, reimagine HR's impact, and address the critical human capital challenges hindering peak performance in the Nigerian Public Sector.

### **What can you expect at SHREC?**

You can expect to dive deep into advanced strategies to reposition HR as a central driver of national progress.

## **Be at the forefront of HR innovation and influence.**

Join us on the 20th & 21st of March 2024 for a groundbreaking event that promises to reshape the landscape of Public Sector HR

To secure your exclusive invitation: Contact us on WhatsApp:  **09044898444**

**Your journey to redefining HR excellence begins at SHREC 2024**



## STRATEGY FIRST

*At Workforce Consulting, our approach to solving problems for our clients is simple yet powerful: we tackle challenges with a strategy-first mindset. It's not just a good practice; it's a vital tool for effective leadership and governance. Strategy serves as the blueprint for success, outlining direction, objectives, and key priorities.*

*In the complex government environment, where public welfare and national development are at stake, a strategy-first approach becomes even more crucial. A strategy-first approach aligns your institution with national priorities, overcomes obstacles, boosts efficiency, fosters adaptability, opens new revenue streams, and supports sustainable development.*

*For individuals, adopting a strategy-first mindset ensures that you remain relevant and positions you as the go-to person.*

*The higher the stakes, the more pivotal strategy is in setting the stage for success, and the stakes couldn't be much higher than it is right now for your career and the success of your agency.*

*Professionals and institutions that ignore the strategy-first approach are doomed to average returns, while those who embrace it must bear the burden of exceptional achievement.*



## Ring in 2024 with a **SPECIAL SURPRISE!**

Take a clear picture of yourself with this edition of The People's Ultimatum and send us a WhatsApp message, along with your favorite part of this issue. You might just win something exciting!



SEND US A MESSAGE ON WHATSAPP

**09044898444**





## THE TOP 1% OF THE BEST HR PROFESSIONALS WEAR THESE 4 HATS. YOU SHOULD TOO.

All around the globe, HR has come a long way over the last 30 years, making a gradual shift from struggling to be a value-adding part of the organization to being a valued strategic business partner to the organization.

In Nigeria, the HR evolution has already begun. Although these changes are happening much slower within the public sector, given that the public environment is unique and in many ways more complex and challenging than the private sector, they are happening nonetheless.

As the present administration emphasizes MDA performance and stronger results, public sector leaders will increasingly look to their HR professionals for more strategic support than at any other time in the history of the public service.

Exciting times are therefore ahead for the Nigerian public sector and its HR professionals. The key question is, will you be equipped, ready, and able to lead and contribute to creating a productive, sustainable, and ready workforce that delivers for the Nigerian people?

HR professionals who will make the most impact and stand out are those who will build the right set of muscles to serve the needs of their organizations.

In the coming months, on this platform, we will be sharing valuable articles designed to equip Public Sector HR professionals for high performance in all the areas they need to excel. We have painstakingly researched the information that will be presented in these articles. As a forward-thinking HR professional working in a challenging terrain, the content will provide you with tools and strategic know-how on how to foster a more engaged, skilled, and committed public workforce. This, in turn, can translate your MDA's mandate into better service delivery, improved public trust, and ultimately, a stronger nation.

As you read the articles, you'll encounter new and not-so-new ideas. When you come across familiar information, don't just conclude that you know these concepts. Ask yourself if you apply them consistently. Also, don't read the articles just to learn; read with the intention to apply what you've learned. As the saying goes, knowledge is not power. Applied Knowledge is Power. Remember, even small shifts, when embraced and implemented with determination, can lead to

extraordinary transformations. The revolution in public sector HR has begun, and it's an exciting journey to be a part of!

If you're willing and ready to commit yourself to becoming the kind of HR professional capable of driving tangible transformation in any organization, then the starting place is to learn to wear the 'four hats' we are about to describe. In the context of HR Professionals, wearing these 'four hats' implies approaching the job from four different perspectives to ensure maximum effectiveness.

If you master how to function from these four perspectives, you will not only end up adding greater value to your organization than you thought possible, but you will also be able to enter any organization—regardless of the sector and become literally unstoppable!

Are you ready?

Next are the four hats that transform HR professionals into valuable strategic partners:

## 1. Hat of a Customer of the Organization:

In the public sector, the "customers" are the citizens you serve. Their satisfaction is the ultimate hallmark and indicator of your success. Therefore, as HR professionals, a guiding principle should be to shape all HR initiatives with citizens' interests in mind. To achieve this, it is crucial to be acutely aware of citizens' needs and motivations.

## 2. Hat of a Public Sector Leader:

Wearing the hat of a public sector leader implies understanding the intricacies of the organization as deeply as the top leadership does. This understanding allows you to comprehend the concerns that occupy the minds of your leaders. Adopting this perspective is a potent way to enhance your effectiveness as an HR practitioner, providing you with a comprehensive view of everything impacting your organization and enabling you to offer sound advice.

## 3. Hat of a Problem-Solving Consultant:

Every public sector entity faces challenges, and this is where the role of a consultant becomes significant. As an HR practitioner, recognize that even the most experienced leaders may not always possess all the answers. To lead with maximum effectiveness, they need someone who can help diagnose complex

organizational issues and develop effective solutions. Your competency as a consultant becomes invaluable in this context.

## 4. Hat of a Strategic Public Sector HR Professional:

In the evolving landscape of Public Sector HRM, being an HR practitioner is distinct from being a strategic HR practitioner. The term 'strategic' makes all the difference. To be recognized as a strategic HR professional in the public sector means intentionally designing all HR initiatives, processes, and practices to deliver three core values to the organization:

*i. Employee competence*

*ii. Organizational Effectiveness*

*iii. Citizen Satisfaction*

There you have it—the four hats pivotal to success in any public sector HR domain.

In all the years that we have advised and consulted for both public and private entities, the four areas just described above are the foundation from which we have launched our interventions. The implication, therefore, for modern HR professionals is that those who cannot function effectively at these four levels will likely remain relegated to an HR administrative role. On the other hand, HR professionals who can utilize and take advantage of the frameworks and systems that enable them to function from the four hats described above transform the role of HR to a strategic partner or leader.

Make no mistake, wearing these hats will demand considerable effort from you, requiring you to stretch yourself in many ways. Although leaving your comfort zone may seem unappealing, as an HR practitioner aspiring to excel, reinventing yourself is essential to remaining relevant, valued, and strategic in the public sector of the future.

To support you and enhance your understanding of how to effectively wear these four hats, we'll dedicate the next four editions to dissecting each hat individually.

The concepts we'll be sharing have been tested and proven trustworthy. We encourage you to strive to comprehend, experiment, and adapt them where applicable.

Master the art of wearing these "four hats," and you will become literally unstoppable in transforming the public sector for the better!

# WORKFORCE CONSULTING

— Advisory • Training • M&E • Technology • Audit • Staffing —



## INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

### DELIVERY LOCATIONS



United Kingdom



Dubai



Turkey



Kenya



Rwanda



Mauritius



Ghana

Our International Training Programmes provide an exclusive collection of high-impact executive courses, each designed to enhance the competencies of leaders navigating the ever-evolving terrain of the public sector. These bespoke offerings are tailored to empower and elevate executives, ensuring they are well-equipped to thrive in the complex and dynamic world of public leadership.

### Our International Training Programmes

- Public Sector HR Excellence Certificate Programme
- Managing Training Effectiveness and Return of Investment (ROI)
- HR for Non-HR Managers
- Finance for Non-Finance Managers
- Business and Financial Acumen For Managers
- Leadership Development Workshop For Executives
- Strategic Planning and Execution Management For Executives
- Leading And Managing Change Masterclass For Execution
- Building Digital Skills Workshop for Executives
- Building, Managing and Leading High-Performance Organisations
- Driving Public Service Excellence For Senior Public Sector Executives
- Design Thinking And Innovation For Businesses Workshop For Executives
- Effective Budgeting and Financial Planning Workshop for Executives
- Procurement, Contract Management & Effective Negotiation
- Beyond Half Time: Pre-Retirement And Personal Planning Workshop
- And Many More.

To express your interest, please send us a message on WhatsApp  **09044898444**

# Cracking the Code on How to Become a High-Performing Chief HR Officer.

## Practical Insights from a Veteran CHRO

*The world of HR is forever changed. There has never been a time in history when the HR function was so critical to helping organizations, and nations for that matter, realize their full potential. In this new world, HR professionals are no longer merely compliance officers or even strategic advisors. Instead, they coordinate and align talent, data, and strategy profitably while balancing the interests of relevant stakeholders.*

*How can HR professionals achieve their potential in this new world? It will start with a fundamental shift in the way they view themselves, how they redefine their role within their organizations, and how they go about building the competencies they must master to add value.*

*The veteran HR professional whose insights we share with you in this section started from the bottom and rose to the peak of her HR career as the CHRO of a global organization. In this interview, she gives practical and sure-fire advice on how HR professionals can make the transition to become highly respected and valuable strategic partners to the leaders and organizations they serve.*

**Question one:** Most HR professionals desire a seat at the table; they aspire to be considered trusted advisors to chief executives. But, as we already know, only a few will successfully make this shift. You are one of the few who did. How did you begin developing your competence as a trusted advisor? Please provide practical advice on the essential steps HR professionals must begin to take intentionally and systematically to build this capability.

**Answer:** *First, they must embrace the fact that ascending to the height where their contributions influence executive decisions and effectively shape the growth of their organization, will require a lot of commitment and strategic learning on their part. There are no half-hearted measures for this kind of growth. For those ready and willing to commit to this journey, here is my advice:*

*The journey is in stages, and it starts with building deep functional expertise in one or more HR areas and developing some breadth across specialist/business partner roles. Furthermore, they must intentionally seek to understand the pain points of the middle managers they serve and win their respect to the point where these managers seek them out as skillful advisors. The HR professional who will one day advise CEOs must first learn to effectively advise managers, and to do this, it is necessary to be successful at winning the trust and respect of lower and middle managers. They can only win this trust when they demonstrate that they understand the business and the challenges that managers have to solve. Again to achieve this, they must build the capability needed to understand business problems and solve them from a people perspective.*

## ASK WORKFORCE



Got burning HR questions or stuck on a work challenge? We've got your back! Our team of experts is here to answer all your toughest HR questions.

Don't wait! Ask your question now on WhatsApp and get expert insights in 48 hours.



Send us a message on  
**09044898444**

**Question two:** Now, let's discuss strategy at the beginner level. Apart from enrolling in a course or program on Business Strategy, how else can HR professionals, who have no experience with organizational strategy, begin their journey toward being truly strategic and contributory?

**Answer:** *Considering how overused the word 'strategy' is, and how little it is understood, I would like to answer this question by first defining at a fundamental level what strategy is. At its core, strategy means a solution—an approach an organization employs to solve its challenges. The implication for HR professionals who aspire to be truly strategic is that they must develop the ability to think in a solution-based manner. To do this successfully, they must sit in on strategy formulation meetings and begin to cut their teeth gradually. They should start by making small contributions to strategy formation for business units. They must also be consistent in having formal and informal conversations with managers in which they intentionally seek to understand how they can contribute to helping managers meet their goals. In a nutshell, they must strive to perfect the art of executing objectives. Everything they do, every plan they make, and every request they put forth must contribute to the strategy/solution that the business is pursuing.*

**Question three:** We've explored to some extent how HR professionals at the beginning of their journey toward being more strategic can gain traction. Let's expand the conversation to cater to an audience of HR professionals with more experience in being strategic and who are actively pursuing the CHRO role. My first question is: What are the core attributes of a highly effective and well-respected CHRO?"

**Answer:** *From my experience and observations of highly effective CHROs, without a doubt, I'd say that there are at least four critical attributes that garner maximum respect for CHROs from the leaders they serve and the rest of the management team. The first attribute is what I would call personal attributes. A good CHRO must be politically astute, but not political. He or she must be a truth-teller, an individual who can facilitate tough conversations and coach senior leaders with confidence.*

The second attribute is from a business perspective. The individual must possess a deep understanding of business and must have insight into how to align the organization to accomplish its goals.

The third attribute is technical HR proficiency. Effective CHROs must adapt functional agendas to evolving priorities. They should bring broad, deep, and well-rounded HR expertise to solve business problems through functional execution.

Lastly, a good CHRO must be a strong leader, capable of taking a stance on tough issues and exerting influence at the highest levels.

**Question 4:** One of the best pieces of advice I've ever received as a professional is the importance of verifying context and cultural fit when deciding whether or not to accept a job offer. In your experience, how can a CHRO ascertain whether an organization will be a good fit?

**Answer:** *Great question. I have always taken the time to painstakingly do enough research to enable me to answer four critical questions to verify whether or not an offer was one I wanted to take, or if the odds would be stacked in my favor as CHRO of the organization. The four questions are:*

1. Are my strengths a fit for the business challenge?
2. Can I work well with the CEO and the Senior Management Team? Is there good chemistry?
3. What shape is the HR function in?
4. How will I develop in my role over time?

*The answer to these four questions will provide you with enough insight to make a quality decision.*

**Question 5:** My final question is closely linked to the first and third questions: How long and what would it typically take for a new CHRO to build trust and become a Trusted Advisor to the Chief Executive?

**Answer:** *The truth is, there is neither a magic formula nor a specific timeframe for building trust. No CHRO walks into a new role and automatically earns the trust and deep confidence of the CEO. There are no guarantees that it may even happen. But when it does happen, it occurs over time, depending on the attributes of the CHRO and the quality of interactions between him/her and the CEO.*

*However, certain consistent actions can help the trust-building process. Some of them include: as a CHRO, you must have the courage to speak the truth respectfully. You must be seen actively participating in those executive activities that 'run the business.' You must have a point of view, not just a physical presence. You need to be consistently assessing leaders and sharing your views with your CEO. These are discussions that grow richer over time. Finally, technical expertise helps you gain credibility with key stakeholders. Stay on top of your game—particularly on topics highly valued by your CEO.*



# The Most Important “Superpower” That A Professional Can Possess...

## AND HOW YOU CAN BUILD IT.

A landmark study of the top weight loss programs in the world reveals 3 very interesting facts:

1. All the programs work.
2. They work only when people use them as intended/prescribed.
3. People rarely use them as intended/prescribed.

Most individuals I know do not have a knowledge problem. Likewise, most organizations I know do not have a knowledge problem either. What individuals and organizations have is an execution problem... the discipline of acting on what they know.

The most important superpower you can possess as a professional

is Execution Intelligence.

The discipline of execution is crucial to success in life and business.

*Most individuals do not have a knowledge problem. What individuals have is an execution problem... the discipline of acting on what they know.*

This is because implementation, not ideas, is the secret to success.

One of my favorite quotes is this: the greatest gap in life is the gap between knowing and doing. Your

responsibility is to do everything possible to bridge this gap, whatever it takes.

Everyone talks about getting better, and yet, few people are willing to do what it takes to actually get better. After all is said and done, more is said than done.

Your ability to execute is truly the difference that will make the difference. You can be talented, smart, and knowledgeable, and it wouldn't matter. What the marketplace rewards is doing, not just knowing. It is what you do with what you know that counts.

From my experience, many individuals and organizations routinely fail to achieve their planned goals and objectives. They spend a considerable amount of time and other resources formulating their plans; nevertheless, months after months, quarter-on-quarter, year-over-year, their predictions fail to come true with alarming regularity.

Whether it is a New Year resolution, career growth initiative, revenue drive, business expansion, or customer acquisition and retention plans, many individuals and organizations exhibit a history of

unmet expectations that reveal a chronic inability to reliably deliver on intended outcomes.

A good question to ask then is: considering the fact that hitting set targets is an essential imperative for individual success and business survival,

why do the intentions of so many individuals and companies remain just that – intentions that hardly ever become their reality?

There are two major reasons that I have discovered over time.

The first one is a lack of effective and consistent review. Review is the hallmark of the discipline of getting things done. Consistency of results is practically impossible without review.

Successful companies attribute their success to effective and consistent monthly/quarterly/annual reviews (MPR/QPR/APR).

My own version is BPR – Bolaji’s Performance Review, and I carry out mine weekly.

The process is simple:

- » **A review of what I planned to do in the preceding week.**
- » **A score of what I was able to achieve.**
- » **A written account of what I learned and why I missed an unachieved goal.**
- » **A plan for course correction.**
- » **A detailed plan for the new month.**

Do this and do it consistently, and you will see a remarkable difference in your Execution Intelligence.

The second key is the lack of an Accountability Partner. Do you want to go far? Do you want to accelerate your career growth or business results? Do you want spectacular success? Do you want to achieve the extraordinary? Here is how to do it – Be accountable to someone for your plans, commitments, and results.

The higher you want to go or the better you want to get, the greater the requirement to have someone in your life who will hold you accountable and tell you the truth.

Our brains are simply too powerful at making excuses and creating elaborate justifications for why we did not get something important done or did not follow through on a task. We make promises to ourselves, but we break them with alarming regularity.

For some reason, the promises we make to ourselves are less sacred than the promises we make to others. Having an accountability partner who will hold you to your commitments is a key ingredient to making sustainable progress and for success.

Someone who will tell you the truth; someone who will not buy into your cheap excuses for why you fell off the wagon or didn’t get the job done; someone to tell you “no.”

“The man or woman who really wants to do something finds a way; the others find excuses”.

I have a coach I pay for holding me accountable. Yep... you read that right. Her responsibility is to make sure I do what I am supposed to do whether I feel like it or not. To raise the stakes, part of our contract is that I will pay her double her fees at the end of every quarter if I do not achieve 75% of my big goals.

You see, my dreams are too big to leave to my clever excuses and the ingenious ways I come up with to avoid doing what I am supposed to do when I am supposed to do it.

Before hiring an Accountability Coach, I kept saying I would write a book every year for over 10 years, but year after year, I consistently failed to achieve this feat.

Within three years after I had hired an Accountability Coach, I wrote three books.

I am absolutely convinced I couldn’t have done this without paying someone to follow up on me and hold me accountable.

So, there you have it, two things you can start doing today to accelerate your results. The question is, are you going to become accountable for delivering results, or will you continue delivering excuses? To

*The higher you want to go or the better you want to get, the greater the requirement to have someone in your life who will hold you accountable and tell you the truth.*

what extent are you willing to go to turn your dreams into reality?

In my opinion, one of the most important competencies to develop is the discipline of getting things done – Execution. It is practically impossible to overstate the importance of this ability.

So with all thy getting, get great at getting things done. The benefits to you will be unquantifiable.

All the very best with getting things done!



# WHEN ORGANISATIONS USE PROMOTION ASSESSMENTS, EVERYONE WINS (ESPECIALLY PERFORMANCE).

A 2018 study of a large organisation found that using a competency-based assessment for promotions led to a 31% increase in employee performance within one year!

**FACTS:** Promoting people based on who they know, not what they can do, will hurt your MDA's results. Focus on what matters: skills, experience, and results. That's how to build a great agency.

At Workforce Consulting, our Promotion Assessment tool uses a data-driven and process-oriented approach to ensure that promotions go to the most deserving candidates. This not only removes bias from your promotion process but, more importantly, it radically boosts employee morale, ultimately impacting your organisation's performance.

## Why Choose Our Promotion Assessment?

- Tailored assessments for specific job roles
- Expert analysis and detailed reporting for informed promotion decisions
- Data-driven process to eliminate bias and subjectivity
- Proven track record in public service promotion assessments

## FOR FAIRNESS AND PERFORMANCE

Use Workforce Promotion Assessment in your next promotion exercise.



Chat with us on WhatsApp to discuss custom assessments for your organisation.

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# HOW A RESPECTED GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION SIGNIFICANTLY BOOSTED PERFORMANCE BY IMPLEMENTING A COMPETENCY-BASED L&D MODEL

## A Case Study

### Client Problem

Our client, a respected public sector institution, faced the challenge of an outdated, unstructured and inefficient learning and development model. The absence of a structured approach led to misaligned learning strategies, a lack of measurable outcomes, and an inability to harness technology for informed analytics. This inefficiency hampered employee skill development and overall organizational performance.

### Our Proposed Solution

The primary objectives we proposed to the client were ambitious yet necessary:

- **Align Learning Strategies with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** To ensure that learning interventions were directly contributing to the institution's strategic goals.
- **Calculate and Analyse ROI of Learning Interventions:** To quantify the impact of learning programmes on overall organizational performance.
- **Implement Result-Driven Learning Models:** To shift from traditional learning methods to outcome-based models.
- **Use Data-Driven Insights to Enhance Decision Making:** To leverage data analytics for informed decision-making in learning and development.
- **Develop Measurement Frameworks:** To establish robust mechanisms for assessing the efficacy of learning programmes.
- **Utilize Technology for Learning Analytics:** To harness the power of technology in tracking and analyzing learning outcomes.

## Our Intervention

To achieve the objectives listed above, we embarked on a comprehensive and structured approach:

### Learning Strategy Alignment with KPIs:

- » We conducted workshops with key stakeholders to map out organizational goals and KPIs.
- » Developed a bespoke learning strategy that aligned with these KPIs, ensuring that every learning intervention had a direct impact on organizational objectives.

### ROI Analysis of Learning Interventions:

- » Implemented an advanced analytics system to track and measure the effectiveness of each learning programme.
- » Developed a formula to calculate the ROI of learning interventions, correlating them with performance improvements and cost savings.

### Result-Driven Learning Models:

- » Transitioned from traditional learning methods to modern, competency-based learning modules.
- » Focused on practical, real-world applications that enhanced job performance.

### Data-Driven Decision Making:

- » Integrated a Learning Management System (LMS) equipped with advanced data analytics capabilities.
- » Empowered decision-makers with real-time data to tailor learning programmes effectively.

### Measurement Framework Development:

- » Established key metrics and benchmarks to evaluate the success of learning interventions.
- » Regularly reviewed and refined these metrics in line with evolving organizational needs.

### Technology Utilization for Learning Analytics:

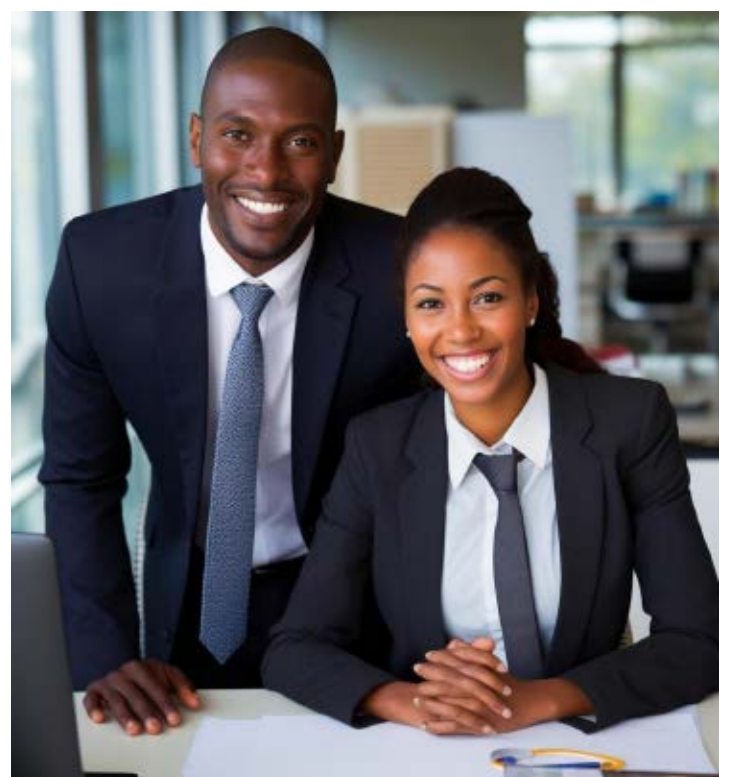
- » Leveraged cutting-edge technology to track, analyze, and report on learning outcomes.
- » Implemented AI-driven tools to personalize learning experiences and predict future learning needs.

## Results of our Intervention and Impact on Organization

The intervention we delivered led to transformative results:

- » Learning strategies were now tightly aligned with the organization's KPIs, leading to a more focused and impactful learning experience.
- » The ROI of learning interventions showed a substantial increase, with a marked improvement in employee performance and a reduction in training costs.
- » The shift to result-driven learning models saw a surge in employee engagement and skill acquisition.
- » Data-driven decision-making enabled the institution to dynamically adapt its learning strategies, resulting in higher efficiency and effectiveness.
- » The new measurement frameworks provided clear insights into the efficacy of learning programmes, facilitating continuous improvement.
- » The adoption of technology in learning analytics revolutionized the way training outcomes were measured and analyzed.

This intervention exemplifies Workforce Consulting's ability to transform outdated learning systems into modern, efficient, and result-oriented frameworks. The public sector institution not only witnessed a significant enhancement in its learning and development approaches but also experienced a notable improvement in overall organizational performance.



# TOP 7 REASONS

## WHY STRATEGY

# FAILS

If you're like most strategic HR professionals, we understand that strategic success is your primary concern, and you have a burning desire for your organisation to perform much better this year. Failure is clearly not an option, so how do you ensure you succeed spectacularly with your organisational strategy?

From our experience, many organisations routinely fail to achieve their planned organisational objectives. They spend a considerable amount of time and resources formulating their strategic plans and assigning individual goals to support these objectives; nevertheless, quarter-on-quarter, year-over-year, their predictions fail to come true with alarming regularity.

Considering that hitting set targets is an essential imperative for organisational survival and success, why do the strategic intents of so many organisations remain just that – intents that hardly ever become their reality? Based on 20 years of experience, partnering with different organisations to co-create solutions to their most challenging organisational and people problems, we have identified the top 7 reasons why strategy fails. In this guide, we will be sharing the gaps and high-level recommendations to close them, should they exist in your organisation.

### **GAP IN THE STRATEGY FORMULATION PROCESS**

Sometimes, the problem originates right from the very beginning of the strategic formulation process. The common gaps often have to do with the strategy development model of choice, quality of analysis, and the depth of critical thinking that goes into the process.

The essence of strategy itself is problem-solving, and the choice of a strategy development approach should be informed by the nature of the problems/challenges facing the organisation. This is so important. A one-size-fits-all approach to strategy formulation is simply a disaster waiting to happen. Likewise, another word for strategy is a solution. In order to have the right solution, there is a need for proper analysis and diagnosis of the biggest obstacles to forward progress. Prescription without diagnosis is malpractice; any strategy (solution)

whose foundation is not deeply rooted in the accurate diagnosis of the organisational challenges is DOA (Dead On Arrival).

A huge portion of the time spent on strategy formulation must be allocated to the analysis phase of the process. Organisations that hope to be successful with respect to their strategy must engage in a brutal confrontation of their internal and external realities. Finally, the quality of the strategy formulated is determined by the rigor and depth of strategic thinking applied. The quality of thinking is directly proportional to the quality of the strategy. Period.

### **GAPS IN THE ACTION PLANNING PROCESS**

Implementation, not just an idea, is the secret to success. Sometimes, organisations get the strategy formulation process right, but their strategy still fails

because of gaps in the action planning process. We have observed several situations where organisations allocate very little or no time at all to the proper planning of the actions that must be carried out with exceptional efforts to achieve strategic success.

Sometimes, maybe due to the rigor of the planning process, they couldn't wait to get that part done, and once done, everyone wants to escape. The speed at which people want to get out of strategy retreat sessions is unbelievable. However, the strategy is never going to get executed without appropriate action plans. Action planning is way too critical to leave until the end of the strategy session. Yet, it is difficult to do if there is no clarity on the strategy of the organisation. The solution? Plan the action during the strategy formulation process. What we typically do is create several flip charts with action planning items written on them and paste these on the wall. Once key initiatives are identified, we update the action plans on the chart; by the end of the strategy formulation process, we would have a draft of the action plan ready for review and adoption. Another option is to schedule a particular day for action planning alone.

## **GAPS IN THE KNOW-HOW, CAPABILITIES & EXPERIENCE OF THE STRATEGY SESSION ATTENDEES**

In some other cases, the gap is talent-related. This occurs when the people who are tasked with the responsibility of formulating and executing the strategy do not have the know-how, capabilities, and requisite experience needed to effectively do so.

Strategy education is crucial for leaders and managers. The more knowledgeable they are about strategy - the what's, whys, and hows - the higher the probability of success. The capabilities of the strategy formulation team will have a critical effect on the formulation and execution of the strategy. The key question to ask is this, "Does your team have the know-how and cognitive capacity to engage in strategy formulation and implementation planning?"

Having team members with prior experience of strategy formulation is a huge advantage when present. We advise organisations to offer their senior team educational opportunities to learn in highly effective workshops, such as Strategic Thinking and Execution masterclass, Strategy Formulation Programme for managers, and Developing Organisation Growth Strategies for executives. In these workshops, we deploy our organisation simulation methodology to train managers and organisation leaders in a

practical way so they can effectively and efficiently apply what they have learnt. Crucial also is ensuring that you hire the right people who can operate at the right level in your organisation.

## **GAPS IN RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

A strategy without a budget is a strategy that is designed to fail. Strategic success requires adequate resources. No company can be successful when it divides its resources among too many initiatives. Focusing on the right critical issues - not more than 3 - 5, in most cases - is crucial to achieving success. One of the main reasons why strategy fails is the undisciplined pursuit of more. To pursue more, one must do so with discipline. This implies that one must have the necessary resources and resourcefulness to achieve the set goals.

Traditionally, organisational budgets are based on previous performance. One of the biggest challenges of this approach is the fact that the budget is too focused on benchmarking past performances, rather than adapting to the unique situation of your existing strategy. The success of most strategic plans is often hinged on an organisation's ability to allocate its resources appropriately, based on the merit of the current plan itself. This defines the concept of zero-based budgeting.

We work with executives to design and implement zero-based budgeting. We ensure that all projected expenses are justified by drilling down and extensively analyzing each project item before allocating the budget. This ensures that the budget is prepared on the basis of actual need for the expenses, which are directly linked to the execution of the strategy, within the forecasted period irrespective of whether it was lower or higher in the previous budget.

## **GAPS IN ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT**

You cannot manage what you cannot measure. As much as formulating and implementing a strategic action plan is needed for success, the lack of an efficient tracking system would inevitably lead to strategy failure and non-accomplishment of the desired organisational goals and objectives. To be successful, you must identify your non-negotiable metrics.

For example, your lag and lead indicators as well as a tightly defined window of execution must be clear and unambiguous. It is crucial that you begin with the end in mind by determining upfront what success would look like when you are done.

## GAPS IN ORGANISATIONAL RHYTHM

Your organisation needs a consistent, repeatable, and predictable way of tracking and managing its strategic activities. In order for an organisation to achieve its strategic intent, it must develop a rhythm - a consistent, repeatable, and predictable way of managing the operations of the organisation. No organisation can achieve coherence without a well-designed organisation rhythm. Your organisation rhythm should establish how you will manage execution and the various activities needed to ensure things get done.

Activities such as Organisational Review Sessions, Knowledge/Insight Sharing Sessions, Reports and status Update meetings are critical execution disciplines and the success of your strategy hinges on how well you design and execute your organisation rhythm.

## LEADERSHIP GAPS

The bottleneck is at the neck of the bottle. When it comes to strategic success, leadership matters a lot. It is indeed the difference that makes the difference. Successful strategy implementation requires leadership with the courage to call it as it is and lead the execution from the front.

Leaders that can get the right people in the right roles to get the right things done. Leaders who are agile and are able to adapt and adjust their action plans as required to better reflect their organisation's realities and contexts. The rapidly changing and competitive nature of the organisational environment needs leaders to act decisively in articulating and achieving their organisational goals. Without the right leadership in place, strategy is destined to fail.

We get it - as your organisation grows, your organisation starts to outgrow its initial systems, processes, and people capabilities. As strange as it sounds, this growth creates complexities that have the power to destroy everything from the inside out. Unless you take action. If you would like to learn more about how we are helping executives like you build and sustain high-performing organisations or you would like us to come and share insights with your senior leadership team on how to improve execution in your organisation, please send us a WhatsApp message on the number provided.



# WHEN YOUR TEAM IS ALIGNED, **ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.**

The importance of clear goals, strong teamwork, and high-level innovative thinking has never been more crucial, particularly in light of the Federal Government's strong focus on improving public service performance.

Is your team prepared for the tough year ahead?

**Our Expert-led Strategy Retreat builds strong, forward-thinking teams with a clear path to success.**

**Why is Workforce Consulting the go-to Expert in Facilitating Strategy Retreats?**

It's simple. We've spent the last 20 years working with leaders to transform their organizational dynamics and boost performance. We excel in creating strategic alignment through strategy and team-building retreats.

Our retreats provide a powerful platform for public leaders to assess their organization, identify strengths and weaknesses, and create a clear plan to achieve their goals. We work with you through the entire process - from an insightful pre-retreat diagnosis and meticulous planning to the impactful delivery of the strategy retreat and the critical phase of post-retreat implementation.

If your priority is to create a strong and aligned team that is fit to deliver, **contact us now.**



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# Public-Sector HR: Resources & Learning



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Remember when we promised our unwavering support in unlocking your HR potential?

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Visit <https://consulting.workforcegroup.com/> to unlock your HR toolkit today.

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