

Creating high performance culture in HR teams

By [Leon Ayo](#)

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Working at all levels of the business, the HR department needs to remain high performing and focused on building a culture of excellence. This will ensure that an organisation can enjoy sustained growth through its most important resource - its people.



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In high-performance cultures, good is never good enough. Managers are always pushing to go further, better, faster. It is not just about short-term financial performance – it is about building something special and lasting.

Oggers Berndtson's Australia office recently conducted primary research of that country's top organisations to understand which key characteristics determine high-performing HR teams. The study found that:

- A business agenda must be at the heart of what the HR team does. The organisations surveyed agreed that high performing HR teams have strong commercial acumen and a deep knowledge about the business. Most said they want their team to comprise all HR backgrounds – from strategy and project management, to technology – and to have a profound understanding of what it means to be doing various roles.

- HR teams need to have a 'think like the owners' attitude. A hallmark of a high-performance culture is that all employees, including the HR team, take personal responsibility for overall business performance. They need to understand that their actions impact the bottom line.

- The team needs to remain customer-focused and actively contribute to the big goals of the organisation. Great HR teams have moved away from the transactional and operational to the strategic. The key hallmarks of a good HR team are responsiveness, agility, collaboration, a tendency towards self-management and individual accountability.
- The best HR teams focus their energies externally on delighting customers. They are not caught up in internal politics and navel-gazing.
- Full accountability and measuring success by business outcomes is crucial. High-performing HR teams are closely aligned with where the business is heading, they put measures in place to achieve the wider business goals, and then track performance in a measurable and timely way. It is all about action and showing HR can deliver – and using commercial data to drive change.
- HR teams need to deliver a great employee lifecycle of experience that is aligned with the company vision and strategic plan. Great HR teams support the over-the-horizon employee needs, not just today's. A competitive and attractive employer must pre-empt, not respond to, changes in employee aspirations, and employee needs must be integrated with business aspirations.
- The HR team should act as the voice and conscience of the organisation. The team needs to take ownership around people practices and be vocal enough to challenge the leadership. The best HR departments have the trust of the CEO to such an extent they can fearlessly share the challenging feedback the CEO most needs to hear.

The most important role of a high performing HR team is to manage the organisation's most valuable asset – its employees – and building a high-performance culture throughout the entire organisation.

It is also about appointing executives to form a top team consisting of all the complementary skills required to ensure the development of a distinctive high-performance culture to ensure the organisation's competitive advantage and sustained growth going forward.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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