Strategic Workforce Management Made Easy

Daniela Rohan





DANIELA ROHAN

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1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniela Rohan, MCIPD, MSc CBT, PCC is an Executive Coach and Personnel and Development Consultant.

Working and coaching throughout Europe, Daniela understands the complexities of global business, individual, organizational and cross-cultural interactions. A prominent senior HR executive herself, Daniela has experienced and successfully navigated the challenges of the organizational life. She has coordinated, implemented and worked with strategic workforce planning during her human resources career and has seen first-hand the great organizational benefits when business and HR strategies are connected through strategic workforce management.

Daniela's experience, as well as her passion for simplicity and authenticity, is foundational in her work – both as coach and as author, leading to simple solutions, improved communication, positive working relationships and empowered decision-making in the organizations where she consults.

Prior to her coaching and career in Human Resources, Daniela was a high school Science teacher and an award-winning television broadcast journalist. She brings a unique mix of professional knowledge and life experience to her valuable consultancy and coaching practice.

Daniela lives in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

2 INTRODUCTION

This e-book presents the concept of strategic workforce management (planning), looking at the array of definitions associated with it, its history, relevance and current developments, in an endeavour to "make it easy" as the titles claims.

As HR practitioner, I know that most benefits derive from explaining a complex instrument in a simple manner, so that it is easily understood and applicable in real life in the organizations interested in the outcome – and undeniable benefits, of the strategic workforce management process.

Strategic workforce management bears many definitions in the organizational world and it is referred to in relation to quite a number of HR activities, from succession planning, to demand-supply forecasting, talent management, role design or outsourcing. Some of the common denominators are its link to the business strategy – being, in fact one of the few HR tools seen as a part of the strategic business planning process, and its capacity to use, analyze and generate HR actions based on workforce data and information.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to a strategic workforce management case study and is presented in a project management form, again, for clarity and simplicity.

Some of the lessons learned from my experience in working with strategic workforce planning, that I would be glad to offer to readers interested in implementing SWM in their organization, could be summarized as follows:

- Respect the program steps almost mathematically, in their right order and good time
- Organize the Human Resources team, as best possible, as a "project team" around the SWM HR action plan for as long as necessary, in order to have time to implement and to consolidate the results of the program
- Be flexible and ready to adjust the strategic workforce plan to the business reality, if and as it changes
- Explain the SWM program well at the kick-off, and then inform all stakeholders regularly about progress made, positive results and impact the program has in ensuring the desired human capital and business outcomes.

I hope you will find this e-book useful. Thank you for choosing Strategic Workforce Management Made Easy.

3 ABOUT STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

3.1 WHAT IS STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT?

3.1.1 DEFINITION

A simple and widely accepted definition of Strategic Workforce Management, as included in a 2004 study of the Institute for Employment Studies, is "Getting the right number of people with the right competencies in the right jobs at the right time" (Sinclair & IES, 2004)

For Hay Group, "integrating workforce supply and demand analysis into the strategic planning cycle ensures organizations have the 'five rights' – the right number of people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right level and at the right cost. This is what Hay means by Strategic Workforce Planning." (Hay Group, 2017)

The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) acknowledges that "there is no commonly understood definition of workforce planning and the term tends to embrace a range of activities". A poll launched by the institute on its website reveals that the following activities are carried out under the workforce planning umbrella – in percentage of respondents (CIPD, 2010):

- Succession planning (62%)
- Flexible working (53%)
- Demand-supply forecasting (53%)
- Skills audit and gap analysis (49%)
- Talent management (42%)
- Multi-skilling (36%)
- Role design (35%)
- Risk management (34%)
- Outsourcing (29%)
- Career Planning (28%)
- Scenario planning (20%).

In my opinion, Strategic Workforce Management is a business methodology implemented by HR ensuring that skills and competencies are made available immediately and in the future.

Strategic Workforce Management guarantees informed leadership decisions for all relevant people management areas, both short- and long-term, on the basis of a mixture of strategic, quantitative and qualitative workforce data, and market analysis. It works best when it gradually grows from being a project to becoming an organizational mindset.

3.1.2 ROOTS AND HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

Traditionally, Strategic Workforce Management is the product of the changing demography in developed markets. It has been triggered by the increased awareness about the ageing population and the impact this had on workforce development at the beginning of the '70s, when markets were stable and unemployment low, and companies faced supply shortages. (Sinclair & IES, 2004)

According to the same source, citing Dr. John Sullivan (Sullivan & IES, 2002), workforce planning lost its prevalence in the work of personnel departments during the economic downturn of the '80s, because it was concerned more with the head count than with the level and availability of competencies for business.

Towards the end of the '90s, further into the first decade of the new century, and even more during and after the 2008 financial crisis, strategic workforce management leapfrogged to the highest level of interest on the organizational agenda.

3.1.3 THE "WHO, WHAT, WHEN AND WHY" OF SWM

At a first glance, it may seem useless to plan for the movements in human capital over a long period of time given that the business world is constantly changing and adapting. There are more and more articles raising concerns for the future of the workforce due to automation and there are often references to the fact that we need to teach the young generation to get ready for jobs that have not yet been created.

So, why is Strategic Workforce Management both fashionable and very relevant today? Perhaps we have learnt to live with change, or we have more access to data than in the past, or we are more able to create flexible and adaptable workforce plans that flow with the flow of business.

As long as we can generate business plans that work, we must be able to understand and project the need for people and for competencies, and to offer human resources strategies that support business long term. It is precisely the volatility of business that makes long-term assumptions worthwhile, and plans to diversify and to make ends meet, necessary.

Strategic Workforce Management may be the appropriate step to take if your organization needs to:

- Expand rapidly in a market with little unemployment or whenever you need access
 to competencies that are not easily accessible in the market
- Retain high-value specialists or leaders with specific competencies, or you need to hire at a higher cost in a market with scarce resources
- Improve the level of competency by matching HR actions with the defined demand for future roles and competencies
- Project the evolution of the workforce over long-periods of time, i.e. 5–10 years or more, to keep pace with the business strategy
- Determine the necessary number of employees per job family and/or subsidiary now and in the future
- Manage a down sizing programme.

So far, Strategic Workforce Management has been mostly applied in large private companies in developed markets, across industries, with far less impact in the public sector in countries other than the USA.

However, there is also a difference in terms of workforce evolution and there are different needs for workforce management between industries, as well. The following are highlights of these various challenges per industry according to Hay Group. (**Table 1**)(Hay Group, 2017)

Sector	Strategic Workforce Challenge
Oil and gas	There is a growing shortage of geotechnical and petrochemical engineering skills. This is exacerbated by an ageing workforce and a highly competitive recruitment market
Finance	A wave of regulatory reform and reorganization is driving demand for skills in areas such as risk management and financial analysis
Energy	New forms of energy production and new regulatory frameworks (such as RIIO in UK) are driving the need for joint ventures and new skills in areas associated with smart grids, carbon capture and renewables
Telecommunications	The rapid shift from 3G to 4G technologies is driving demand for expertise in areas such as network and radio frequency engineering
Engineering- based industries	Industries such as rail and aerospace have seen a shift higher up the value chain, demanding greater systems engineering and design capability as lower value work is out sourced and off-shored
Healthcare and life sciences	An ageing population and the pace of research and technological change are driving a shift in the required clinical and scientific skills
Consumer goods	There is a shift from mature to emerging markets to generate growth and margin. A critical success factor is whether companies can mobilize or recruit the right skills in these parts of the world

Table 1

Various tools, models and methodologies fall under the name of workforce planning, strategic workforce planning, strategic workforce management or manpower planning (although this is probably the name most distant to what Strategic Workforce Management is today, as it appears to be more about numbers crunching than about a qualitative analysis).

Equally, there are a number of software packages available in the market to support complex data analysis.

Most of the big consultancy firms – if not all, have a solid, modern and sophisticated offer for Strategic Workforce Management products, well suited to supporting organizations in their endeavour to navigate successfully through uncertain times.

Websites of all Big 4 accounting firms, i.e. PWC, KPMG, E&Y and Deloitte present their approaches to strategic workforce management. Traditional "human resources" firms, such as Hay and Mercer, have interesting proposals, as well.

The Boston Consulting Group is probably the most renowned provider of the Strategic Workforce Management methodology, which BCG created and introduced in large organizations over the past two decades. The bcg. perspectives website presents many relevant viewpoints and case studies for those who wish to deepen their understanding of the topic. (BCG, Strack, Baier, & Zimmermann, 2011; Bombas & ManpowerGroup Solutions, 2017)

Some organizations have developed own SWM models, useful in their particular organizational context. This is possible due to the fact that some elements of Strategic Workforce Management are common to various methodologies, in spite of the variety of terms used to define them. In brief, workforce planning includes:

- An analysis of the current level of competency across the organization
- Clarity regarding the competencies needed in the future
- Awareness of the gaps between what is available (supply) and what will be needed (demand)
- Bespoke plans to balance the competency deficits and surpluses over time.

3.1.4 APPLICABILITY OF STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Manpower Group presents a very modern and convincing view point regarding workforce management in its article "Planning for uncertainty". According to Manpower Group, "by anticipating potential change and planning for uncertainty, employers can develop a flexible, yet resilient, workforce strategy to future-proof their businesses". (Bombas & ManpowerGroup Solutions, 2017)

The article makes reference to the fact that skills disruption is faster than ever, also due to the job automation, digitization, virtual reality and the over-shadowing presumed dangers of artificial intelligence. "People are living longer and working longer" it is stated, while the "movement of people is also impacting talent pools". Other factors to be considered are political in nature, or economic, as "prosperity or decline can have significant impact on availability of talent".

Is it then possible to plan for uncertainty? Is a strategic view of the workforce evolution possible and useful? The parameters of Strategic Workforce Management may change, but its paradigm is still the same and will be valid in the future. Manpower Group makes the following recommendations for the implementation of SWM in support to business development in forward-thinking organizations:

- Hire people who have the desire and ability to learn and to adapt
- · Identify a set of realistic Strategic Workforce Management variables to work with

- Make sure your workforce is agile enough to continue to be competitive in the ever-evolving market
- Stay true to your organizational values and instil an authentic leadership style in the organization.

Last, but not least, "HR must shift from art to science and will require a more coordinated, precise talent strategy that aligns to real-time business needs." (Bombas & ManpowerGroup Solutions, 2017)

3.2 STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT CONCEPT AND METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 BUSINESS STRATEGY AND HR STRATEGY

Strategic Workforce Management is a powerful methodology as it is linked to the external environment and the internal organizational context, the business strategy, resources supply and demand, and to a number of relevant actions closing the loop.

The main drivers of workforce planning are represented in Fig. 1 below (CIPD, 2010):



Fig. 1

Human Resources place central role in the SWM process and are responsible for connecting the people strategy to the business strategy. The modern HR function is more capable to understand how business drives the demand for staff and for competencies, and is able to grasp the impact that staff fluctuations have on the business evolution. In this sense, Strategic Workforce Management is truly embedded in the complex organizational system and not solely an HR instrument.

According to the CIPD guide to workforce planning "currently, while HR practitioners appear to recognize the importance of workforce planning in principle, for many there is a 'knowing-doing' gap". (CIPD, 2010)

This e-book aims to offer practical information to cover that gap in the form of a case study for a fictitious company named "Speed World" presented in the chapters 3 and 4.

3.2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

According to the results of the research performed by CIPD and presented in the Workforce Planning 2010 Guide, the main SWM development phases are (CIPD, 2010):

- 1. Business Strategy
- 2. Analysis and understanding of relevant data
- 3. Clarification and agreement regarding the objectives of SWM
- 4. Agreement on necessary actions and implementation (Fig. 2)

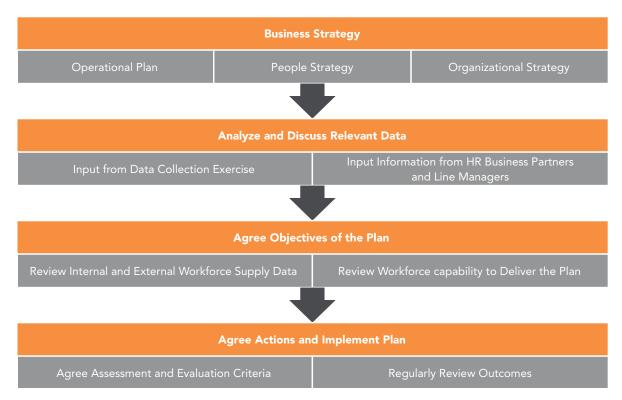


Fig. 2

3.2.3 RISK ANALYSIS FOR STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

"Although few government agencies in the UK and the US have begun their workforce planning efforts, a few have identified the lessons learned so far from their experience." (Sinclair & IES, 2004)

The following **risk factors** have been identified and need to be managed carefully in relation to Strategic Workforce Management:

- Quality and quantity of data available (a risk that has been considerably overcome in the past decade)
- Prior work done in relation to competency standards in the organization
- The absence of a job families and/or grading model to support analysis
- · Lack of policies alignment between headquarters and subsidiaries
- Not having a qualified project management team and HR staff allocated to the strategic workforce management analysis
- Lack of consistency between the organizational policies and HR practices in the organization



- · Lack of integration of the business strategy and people strategy
- Planning processes segregated across the organization
- Lack of top management ownership
- Lack of prioritization and/or proposing solutions that are too complex
- Creating workforce plans that are not flexible, nor adaptable to changing circumstances.

3.3 OUTCOME AND BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

The most important benefit of the Strategic Workforce Management methodology is that its results are logical, realistic, and measurable, effectively responding to specific organizational needs.

Strategic Workforce Management helps the organization by:

- Planning the need for people and professional competencies in absolute alignment with business strategy
- Allowing management to "preview" the impact of business decisions on the organization's human capital
- Offering clarity on the number of people needed, immediately and on mediumterm, per department, subsidiary and/or job family
- Helping the organization design long-term career paths and managing succession planning wisely
- Supporting Human Resources budgets, as well as recruitment and training plans, based on thorough evaluations and quantitative data
- Creating transparency across the organization.

Other major benefits of the SWM process, as described by Reilly (Reilly & IES, 1996) include thinking about the future, aligning behaviour with the organizational goals, and optimizing the contribution of various functions to the overall business strategy, by defining and agreeing on workforce distribution in advance.

According to the same source, the following are important **success factors in** designing and implementing Strategic Workforce Management:

- Research, identify and apply existing best practices as much as possible
- Make sure that top leadership is involved in all SWM phases
- Put in place an advisory task force (workforce planning team)
- Understand data requirements specific to your organization

- Set realistic time lines
- Keep it simple and communicate continuously
- · Focus both on headquarters and on subsidiaries
- Follow up and keep the momentum
- Address the difference between "head count" and "head content".

3.4 A RECAP OF MAIN POINTS ABOUT STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

A summary of everything that's been said so far and helps when deciding if Strategic Workforce Management is what your organization needs, includes the following main points:

- Strategic workforce management is a complex organizational process that responds to a large number of people related challenges, in various business circumstances, e.g. growth, restructuring, mergers& acquisitions, etc.
- Strategic workforce management is a red thread linking business strategy to the HR strategy and HR operational plans
- The workforce plans should be simple, easy to implement and flexible to changes in circumstances
- Workforce plans should propose immediate solutions to current challenges, while also considering long-term workforce scenarios and associated costs and benefits
- In what regards their content, workforce plans and actions should be continuously
 monitored, reviewed and prioritized, and should include a mixture of quantitative
 and qualitative data for best results and maximum impact
- In order to succeed, strategic workforce management should be seen as a business strategic tool delivered by HR and not only as an HR instrument.

In the 2013 "Creating People Advantage" report, BCG experts offer a script to help organizations improve their people-management capabilities across ten core HR activities. Please see the bcg.perspectives article 'Seven Case Studies of HR Excellence" for relevant best practices in people management from large corporations across a range of industries. (BCG, Strack, Caye, von der Linden, Haen, & Abramo, 2013)

For an ampler list of best practices and success stories in Strategic Workforce Management please see all References.

4 PRINCIPLES, PROCESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT EXEMPLIFIED

"Employers have historically struggled to plan for recruitment and retention during periods of uncertainty. Businesses want to understand the landscape of talent availability and plan for variations in production cycles, demand and seasonal needs. Developing a framework that accounts for large-scale change and the impact of unexpected circumstances is nontraditional—which may require significant effort to get the necessary buy-in and resources—but the returns are likely to justify the effort." (Bombas & ManpowerGroup Solutions, 2017)

As Victoria Bombas, Operations Director at ManpowerGroup, indicates in her article, "workforce data is typically retrospective – it tells us what happened, not what will happen". Plus, the business environment is more uncertain today than it was 10–15 years ago. Even so, by looking at internal and external trends, and by comparing existing past data with the future demand – derived from the business plan on the basis of the best possible assumptions, Strategic Workforce Management can inform short- and longer-term smart people management solutions.

4.1 PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Key principles of Strategic Workforce Management include:

- Involving all stakeholders management and employees, in creating, implementing and communicating the workforce plan
- Determining skills and competencies essential to achieving business objectives
- Offering dependable solutions to address the gaps in number and skills of human resources necessary in the future
- Instilling and building long-term organizational capability to support strategic workforce strategies
- Assessing and monitoring contribution of the strategic workforce strategies and solutions in achieving expected business results.

4.2 STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

For simplicity, and maybe also for a better understanding of the benefits of SWM, let us compare and contrast:

- The usual business and HR planning and
- The strategic workforce planning process.

4.2.1 PROCESS MODEL FOR BUSINESS AND HR PLANNING

The most important steps in linking HR strategy to business needs are:

- Define business objectives and business priorities
- Gather, understand and discuss both internal and market key challenges in achieving business objectives with all relevant stakeholders, HR included
- Define and agree on the human capital objectives and resources needed to respond to business needs
- Create the human resources plan, implement actions and monitor results regularly.

4.2.2 PROCESS MODEL FOR STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING

The main steps in the Strategic Workforce Planning process, as part of the overall Human Resources strategy setting and planning, are:

- Strategic analysis and understanding of external factors affecting business, e.g. PESTLE
- Define business objectives and formulate business strategy
- Initiate strategic workforce planning as a cross-divisional process
- Forecast workforce demand and supply
- Analyse gaps between demand and supply, and design scenarios that help filling the gaps, addressing the most urgent and significant risks first, per job family/ department/area, etc.
- Propose and prioritize concrete HR solutions for leadership, recruitment, retention, strengthening the talent pipeline, reward and engagement
- Implement a "mini-project" for each HR solution selected; measure and monitor effectiveness
- Create a flexible feedback loop to the business strategy.

4.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

"I sometimes think the HR profession believes workforce planning is more elaborate and sophisticated than it needs to be. Essentially it is about forecasting both the demand and supply of labor, understanding what you have got now and what you might need in the future"

- Stephen Moir, Cambridge County Council (CIPD, 2010)

This is a Strategic Workforce Management "made easy" guide and, in this spirit, I'll try to avoid over-complicating things. For this reason and for the purpose of this material only, I have designed a **strategic workforce management case study for a fictitious company called "Speed World".**

The case study is a device to describe, and to make accessible to readers, a methodology based on my past professional experiences. It is not intended as a complete or definitive set of instructions for strategic workforce management. You may research and discover other methods and materials to accomplish the same end result.

Here below is a "demo" of the concept, approach, process and steps in designing a strategic workforce management program applied at "Speed World".

A PowerPoint summary of the principles, process and implementation of strategic workforce management is also accessible in chapter 4, Strategic Workforce Management in Practice: "Speed World" Case Study.

4.3.1 LINKING HR STRATEGY TO BUSINESS NEEDS

The fictitious "Speed World" is an insurance company offering general insurance products. "Speed World" employs over 3,000 people in its headquarter and more than 100 subsidiaries across the country. Its **mission statement** is: "We commit ourselves to consistently offering our clients innovative insurance solutions".

The company has a good reputation in the market, built upon a set of values that are respected by the company staff and shared with all stakeholders. These **values** – client first, simplicity, growth and efficiency, support the creation of positive economic and social value, and make the "Speed World" business sustainable.

Speed World's management is oriented towards organic growth and network expansion and is currently considering its medium-term (3 to 5 years) strategic directions. The strategic analysis initiates with an understanding of the market from the political, economic, social, technology, legal and environmental viewpoints (PESTLE analysis).

The results of the macroeconomic analysis show that:

- Economic conditions are good and businesses grow fast, with notable external imbalances and higher inflation
- Given the growth potential, the insurance market is highly competitive
- Most insurance companies expand significantly in the territory, putting high-pressure on an already tight labor market.

In order to succeed in a market growing strongly, Speed World management proposed to the board a new business concept, the "One Stop Shop" for all general insurance products. The **business strategy** is designed around this concept and focuses on:

- · Acceleration of business growth and higher revenues
- Network expansion
- A sales "crash" programme to gain momentum
- Strengthen support areas human resources, risk and digital technology, to ensure sustainable growth under the current market circumstances.

The company's subsequent **business priorities** are: growth strategy, competition on market share and on staffing and profitable growth, and represent the main drivers of the human resources strategy.

To succeed, Speed World needs engaged and well-trained employees. Its **human resources strategic directions** can be synthesized as follows:

- Staffing and training for new subsidiaries, as well as recruitment, retention and communication programs for the current workforce
- Effective retention solutions, given its higher-than-market average staff turnover
- Ensuring a high level of professional skills and competencies to minimize staff related operational risk.

Relevant **KPIs** to assess the success of the HR strategy are: **reduce attrition, improve time to hire, reduce time to achieve competency and increase employer brand value**.

The HR division recommends the initiation of a strategic workforce-planning project to enable best people solutions for the current business strategy. The strategic workforce plan starts from the natural evolution of the workforce if no intervention would take place, combined with an understanding the overall need for talent versus the current status, pinpointing the areas of higher importance and prioritizing the human resource solutions that respond best and immediately to business needs.

The main objectives of the strategic workforce plan at Speed World are:

- 1. Identifying expected gaps between supply and demand in the company's personnel structure, now and in the future
- 2. Assessing the labour market for the professions most relevant to the company's growth
- 3. Offering HR solutions and making recommendations to close the gaps identified.

4.3.2 HOW TO SHAPE THE STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

According to CIPD's "Guide to Workforce Planning", the Strategic Workforce Management process consists of **four stages** (CIPD, 2010):

- I. Determine business strategy organisational strategy, operations plan, people strategy
- II. Analyse and discuss available data input information from data collection exercise, input resourcing information from HR business partners and business managers
- III. Agree objectives of the plan review labour supply data, both internal and external, review workforce capability to deliver the plan
- IV. Determine actions and implement plan agree assessment and evaluation criteria, regularly review outcomes.

Once the HR strategy was designed in alignment with the business strategy, the Human Resources team at Speed World has put in place a SWM process model along the same lines for stages II, III and IV:

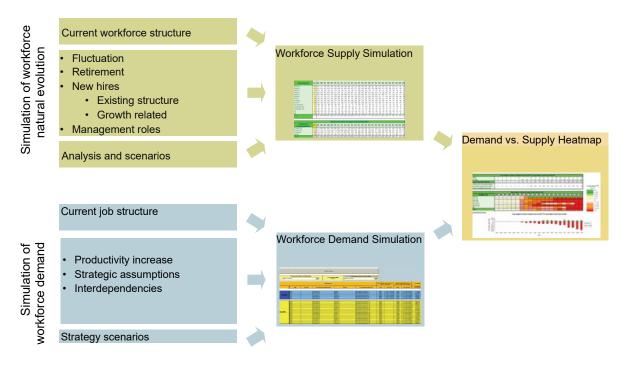
• **Stage II**: Collect data regarding the natural evolution of the workforce overtime in terms of retirements, fluctuation – in general, as well as areas of major concern, long-term absences, etc. (**Supply**) and gather information regarding the need for staff for various areas of the company, per job family, in the short- and mediumterm, from business leaders through the HR Business Partners, on the basis of shared strategic assumptions and interdependencies (**Demand**)

- **Stage III:** Perform a gap analysis of the needs versus supply results, concluded in a "heat map" that shows what are the critical areas for the implementation of the business strategy
- **Stage IV:** Brainstorm, propose and prioritize human resources solutions, and propose an implementation plan.

Fig. 3 below summarizes the process at Speed World:

Simulation of Workforce Supply and Demand

Workforce demand derived from business growth plans



Source: See References

Fig. 3

The "Speed World" HR team used a number of questions as a guide through the four stages of the Strategic Workforce Management process:

- How would the workforce evolve without any intervention?
- Which job families are most relevant to the business strategy?
- What skills and competencies will be needed for future growth?
- What does the market offer, and what is the situation in the market in terms of critical jobs and competencies?
- What measures should be taken?

For Speed World, the SWM analysis led to the identification of 25 HR solutions, grouped in 12 objectives and 6 work streams belonging to 2 major areas, retention and recruitment. Ten initiatives have been prioritized for implementation in phase one, following a bespoke scoring system, as shown in the model below (**Fig. 4**):

Strategic Workforce Management: Process Model

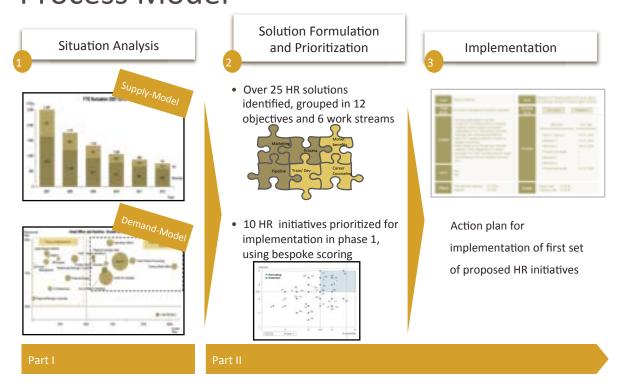


Fig. 4

4.3.3 EXPECTED EVOLUTION OF THE WORKFORCE

The next step in the SWM process at Speed World was to identify the areas and job families that drive the business, through a detailed analysis of the workforce. As a result, the HR team can easily grasp the variance between focus on replacement, on growth, and on replacement and growth simultaneously, for (a sample of) job families.

An example of the work performed by the project team to understand the impact of the growth strategy versus the high level of turnover for a sample of job families is shown below (**Fig. 5**):

Supply vs. Demand: High growth and high need for replacement

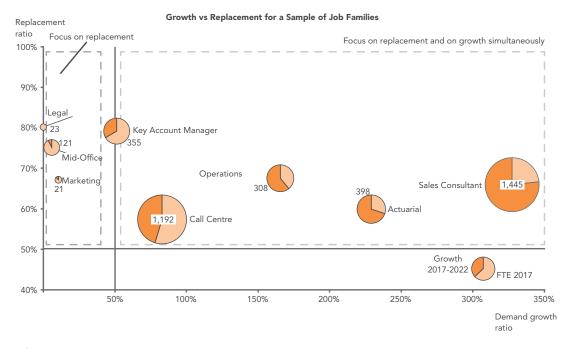
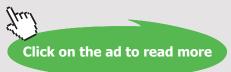


Fig. 5



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The chart above represents a sample of the total job families in the organization. The chart gives us access to concise, yet relevant information regarding the replacement ratios and ratios of FTEs growth per job family and, as such, also guides our thinking towards the most suitable HR solutions to ensure positions are filled timely.

Once all the parameter, assumptions and scenarios-related information is available, and data has been entered for all job families, both shortfall and surplus of FTEs per job family – as well as risk groups, can be shaped and visualized in the model below (**Fig. 6**):

Demand vs. Supply Fluctuation Risks Identified

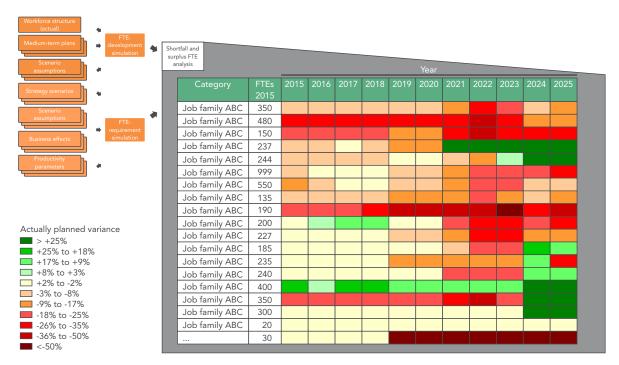
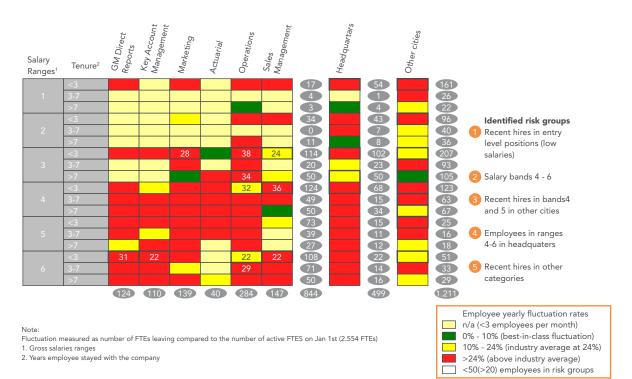


Fig. 6

Depending on the number of employees and job families, and considering its versatility, Excel has proven an ideal and sufficient tool to capture workforce and to analyze supply versus demand, per job family, for companies up to 10,000 employees.

The heat map for Speed World is shown here below (Fig. 7):



Supply vs. Demand Heatmap for Speed World

Fig. 7

As shown in **Fig. 6**, the heat map is an overlap of the availability or natural evolution of FTEs (supply) and the requirement for FTEs over time as derived from the business plan (demand).

The supply vs. demand heat map includes the consequential information for each job family, detailed by:

- Number of employees per job family, in the headquarters and subsidiaries
- Salary ranges (corresponding salary band)
- Number of years the employees stayed with the company.

This detailed approach allows us to identify the job families and positions with high fluctuation risk, and it guides organizational interventions in the most vulnerable areas.

The heat map is the lead document in a strategic workforce management exercise. It contains a summary of all the internal information needed to draw useful conclusions and to design HR solutions that are to be further corroborated with external (market) data.

4.3.4 AVAILABILITY OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RESOURCES TO DELIVER THE STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLAN (MARKET ANALYSIS)

As no company has the luxury of operating in a market of its own, understanding of the general market conditions and the direction competition goes is essential to delivering the business strategy.

In the case of Strategic Workforce Management this knowledge includes all information pertaining to workforce evolution and developments in the market in general and per industry, regional, age and skills demographic data, turnover, retirement and engagement studies, trends for the new generation, and many other similar references.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are various analysis instruments, all extremely useful in designing a solid strategy, e.g. PESTLE, SWOT, Critical Success factors, etc. (Mind Tools).

In addition, companies may perform qualitative market analysis through the participation of professional bodies – such as CIPD (Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development) for HR or in agreement with main competitors for the benefit of all participants involved. Another way is to research for and aggregate existing studies and sources available in the market.

The HR team responsible for Strategic Workforce management at Speed World has completed the picture offered by an analysis of the government and professional bodies (National Office for Statistics, CIPD) with a qualitative analysis based on one-to-one interviews with four of their most relevant competitors. All companies agreed that the analysis is mutually beneficial, so results were openly shared among the participants. However, none of the companies was asked for, nor disclosed, the particular scope of the analysis for any of them at that specific moment in time.

The **qualitative industry market analysis** at "Speed World" provided relevant information, used further in the brainstorming, selection and prioritization of good SWM people solutions:

- 1) Most competitors have not considered in-depth the reasons for the current staff fluctuation, which has been seen until recently as "a given":
 - There is limited knowledge about the patterns of fluctuation and about risk groups, and quite limited interest so far in customized interventions for different risk groups
 - Training is the most common retention tool used in the industry

- All employers focus on professional development overall, hence its impact to retention is somehow limited
- New generation is perceived as more short-term focused than past generations, and more cash and personal development oriented
- 2) The industry is open to long-term retention plans, which seem to work best in the current market conditions:
 - "Good retention starts with good recruitment", includes taking into account the cultural fit with the company culture for new hires
 - Involving, and even making line managers responsible for retention seems to produce more positive results than overall umbrella engagement programmes
- 3) All companies put a lot of effort in recruitment, mostly focused on the traditional talent pools:
 - Sources of candidates include: career fairs, recruiting events, partnerships with universities and internships
 - Traditional pools refer to business and economy students other student categories not being targeted actively
 - KPIs used for marketing recruitment vary, but usually are not very sophisticated and companies do not use consistently recruitment dashboards to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the recruitment process
 - Induction programs vary a lot between the companies participating in the minisurvey, and are an interesting point for further consideration for Speed World
 - All companies in the study pay at or slightly above market median, so that there
 is very little room for competitive advantage in what regards pay and reward –
 without creating an unproductive and unfair competition spiral for the industry.

4.3.5 STRATEGIC HR PLANNING: SOLUTIONS AND MEASUREMENT

We have discussed so far how the strategic workforce process unfolds in its analysis stages, starting with business needs and continuing with the human resources strategy – and placing both in the market context.

The purpose of the supply, demand and gap analysis is to find the best possible – and, I dare say accessible and affordable people solutions, in response to the business strategy. In brief, SWM is about "right size, right shape, right skills, right place, and right cost". (Hay Group, 2017)

Strategic Workforce Management is better understood through the **SWM Process Chart**, a **framework that translates business strategy into people solutions**, as seen below. (**Fig. 8**)

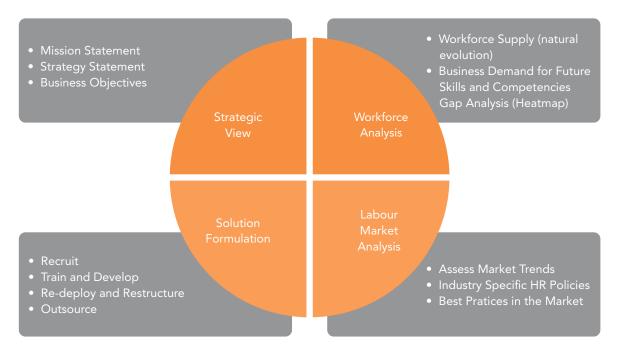


Fig. 8

Although a process chart is usually placed at the beginning or in conclusion to a process description, I feel that it might be most useful to the HR practitioner at this point, both as a recap of the steps and meaning of the SWM process and as an introduction to offering practical solutions to real business and organizational problems.

For the HR team at Speed World, the **SWM heat map** appeared as a treasure of relevant information, easily reflecting the areas of high-importance for business, as well as areas of significant short- and medium-term risks that represented obstacles for progress and needed to be addressed immediately. In addition, the market "feedback" analysis was a reality-check for the organization's own current situation and forecasted evolution.

The **second step** in the Strategic Workforce Management process was **brainstorming** for all possible solutions useful to solving the red and, later on, yellow areas of the heat map.

Next, the HR project team invited the opinion of almost the entire HR department and further on organized a number of **focus groups** in which they invited colleagues from all organizational areas, from headquarters and subsidiaries across the country. Discussions were centered on recruitment and retention, both areas of high interest in the heat map.

At "Speed World", the brainstorming exercise led to **more than 50 potential people solutions**, grouped in 12 objectives belonging to 6 work streams related to traditional talent pools, newly identified talent pools and the recruiting process – for recruitment (**Fig. 9**), and to training and development, career coaching and reward policies – for retention (**Fig. 10**), as seen below:

Recruitment: Solution Formulation

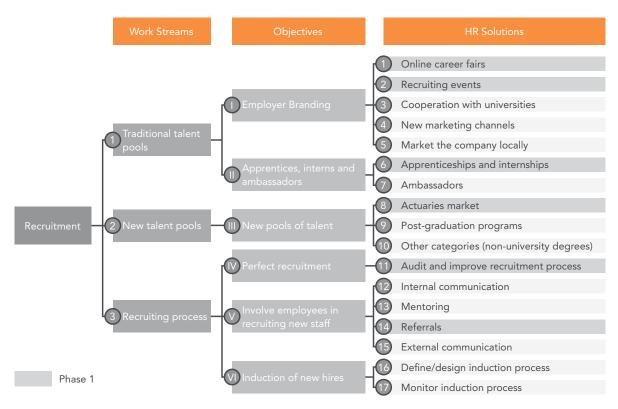


Fig. 9

18 Define training Curriculum (19) Customize training for risk groups 20 Leadership Training 21) Define eligibility criteria for bespoke training 22 Monitor training process 23 High-potentials program 24 Job-rotation program 25) 360° feedback coaching 26 Succession planning 5 Career Coaching 27) Career paths program 28) Involve line managers in career development 129 Internal growth (30) Career path for high-value specialists (31) Re-assess part of remuneration system 32 Fringe benefits 33 Specific to industry employee packages Long-term incentives 35 Exceptional bonus definition and criteria 36 Retention bonus 37 Flexible benefit scheme Phase 1 38 Flexibility of working hours

Retention: Solution Formulation

Fig. 10

The first selection brushed away 12 ideas, so that 38 proposed people solutions made it to the long-list. In order to choose the highest-impact initiatives to focus on in the first phase, the project team suggested a **solution prioritization grid** based on the following criteria:

- Impact = 50% × FTE Potential (between 2% and 10% in retention or new hires) + 50% × Time to Impact (less than 3 months to over 1 year)
- **Easy to Implement** = 50% × Change in "tools" (acquire new systems, change existing or fine-tune current instruments) + 50% × Cost of Implementation (minimal costs to over £20.000).

The HR actions bearing most fruit in the short-term were easily recognizable in the **Impact/ Feasibility grid** (**Fig. 11**).

Strategic Workforce Management: Solution Prioritization

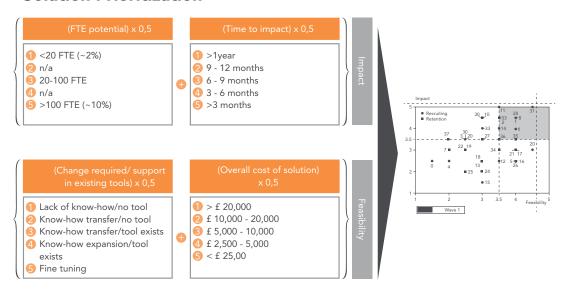


Fig. 11

From this point on, the Strategic Workforce Management project was ready for implementation. In order to achieve best results, the **HR team shifted towards a project-management approach** and operated according to a project plan in which it also integrated elements of its customary activities.

Strategic Workforce Management cannot exist in isolation; once the plan was ready it became obvious that many regular HR activities were intertwined with the SWM HR project actions. In effect, each HR speciality took over the projects under its area of coordination and made them a priority. HR BPs remained the point of contact with leaders and employees, so that focus on the SWM project was not impacting negatively on employee engagement. (CIPD, 2010)

Making things happen timely and within the approved cost scheme is the most important thing in implementation, and there are many ways in which progress and success can be monitored and measured. Consequently, there are many tools, formats and dashboards that allow project teams to capture relevant data and to respond to the agreed KPIs. (Mind Tools)

The following elements were captured in the **one-page initiative reporting formatter HR initiative** at Speed World (**Fig. 12**):

Implementation: Online Career Fairs (example)

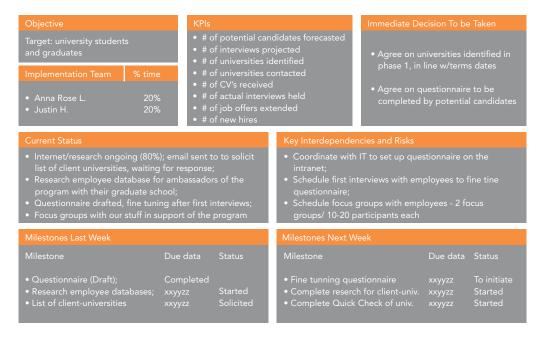


Fig. 12

A snapshot of the overall progress made in implementing the first wave of Strategic Workforce Management actions at Speed World is represented in the (self-explanatory) project dashboard below (Fig. 13):

Implementation Phase I Overall



Fig. 13

Both work streams – retention and recruitment, included HR actions that were essential, and promising, in bringing quick positive results in face of the challenges posed by the Speed World's growth strategy in a very restrictive market.

One of the recruitment initiatives, though, was more complex to deal with in the short run and on medium-term. This was the Recruitment Process Overview, which included a policy review, a process review and a new IT tool implementation. The success of the entire process review was linked to simple KPIs such as the number of new hires per month. However, it needed to be sustainable and affordable over time, so additional KPIs – such as time to offer, time to hire and recruiting costs, as well as regular reporting, were paramount to its success. The HR project team designed a **recruitment dashboard to monitor progress on a regular basis**. An example of the recruitment dashboard at Speed World is shown below (**Fig. 14**).



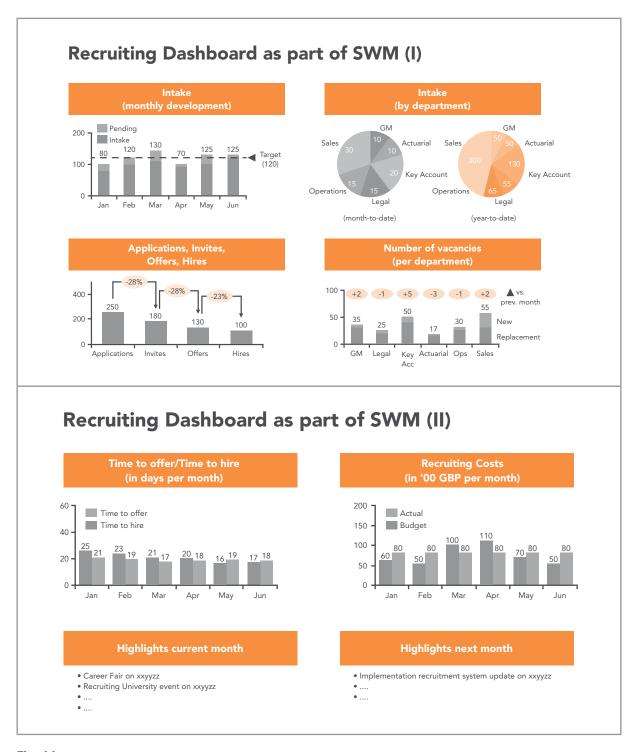


Fig. 14

4.3.6 STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

For the largest part of this chapter we have examined strictly the project elements of the Strategic Workforce Management process. Whereas the burden of the SWM analysis, solutions presentation and implementation sits on the shoulders of the HR team, Strategic Workforce Management is an all-organization encompassing activity.

According to the CIPD Workforce Planning fact sheet, "within most organizations a wide variety of people participate in workforce planning discussions, from senior managers to business strategists and operational line managers. However, our website poll indicated that senior management (88%), HR (84%), Finance (46%) and line managers (10%) were the groups more likely to be involved with workforce planning." (CIPD, 2010)

From the traditional HR perspective, Strategic Workforce Management appears quite challenging and doesn't seem to fit easily with the HR role, as we know it. However, the HR role has evolved in the last decade and HR professionals – especially HR Business Partner roles, are more accustomed to working with dashboards and sharing workforce reports with their internal clients.

At Speed World, the Management Board sponsored the overall SWM process, while the Steering Committee supervising the SWM HR project included the CEO, VP Finance and VP HR. The Head of Reward and Policy, a senior HR leader, coordinated the project team, with each initiative being further allocated to one HR responsible.

4.3.7 SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PROCESS AT "SPEED WORLD"

The Strategic Workforce Management analysis and solution formulation phases took approx. eight weeks to completion.

The implementation of the first wave of 10 HR initiatives showed immediate results in recruitment – once the recruiting process was reviewed, and led to a reduction of the turnover rate from 25% to 15% after 6 months.

Several quick wins have been achieved during the process, among which:

- Clarity regarding the total number of people needed for the coming year and their allocation per division in advance of the annual budgeting exercise and in agreement with responsible leaders for each division
- An employee pulse check was introduced with good results, to measure employee
 engagement on a quarterly basis, as well as the impact of SWM HR initiatives, thus
 allowing for flexibility and necessary adjustments in the overall strategic workforce
 management process
- The HR policies and procedures have been improved as a result of the SWM analysis.

Longer-term, the design of the strategic workforce management process, as well as its consistent implementation, with the involvement of senior leaders and participation of the entire HR team, led to a change of organizational mind set and to a better understanding, and acceptance, of the human resource function in the organization.

5 CASE STUDY PRESENTATION: STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT AT "SPEED WORLD"

"Speed World" is a fictitious company operating in the general insurance industry.

The company employs over 3,000 people in its headquarter and more than 100 subsidiaries across the country. Speed World's top leadership has chosen to focus on organic growth and network expansion in the following five-years.

Speed World has already been introduced in chapter III: Principles, Process and Implementation of Strategic Workforce Management, where theoretical approaches to SWM have been exemplified by practical cases from the Speed World program.

The Speed World case study – applying the "from strategy to action" approach previously described in this book, is presented below in a structured manner, for clarity and simplicity.

The **Speed World case study summary** incorporates in the figures below the following information:

Fig 15.	Speed World Mission Statement
Fig 16.	Information about the macroeconomic environment
Fig 17.	Speed World Strategy Statement
Fig 18.	Human Resources Strategic Directions
Fig 19.	Linking HR Strategy to the Business Strategy
Fig 20.	Business Expansion Estimated Data
Fig 21.	Market and Industry Unemployment Rate Evolution
Fig 22.	Strategic Workforce Management Project Objectives
Fig 23.	Strategic Workforce Management Process Model
Fig 24.	Strategic Workforce Management Key Steps
Fig 25.	Simulation of Workforce Supply and Demand
Fig 26.	Supply vs. Demand Situation for a Sample of Job Families
Fig 27.	Identification of Demand vs. Supply Fluctuation Risks (example)
Fig 28.	Supply vs. Demand Heat map for Speed World

Fig 29. Qualitative Workforce Market Analysis SWM Solution Formulation for the Recruitment Work stream Fig 30. SWM Solution Formulation for the Retention Work stream Fig 31. Fig 32. Strategic Workforce Management Solution Prioritization Model Fig 33. Effect and Impact in FTEs for the HR Solutions Proposed Fig 34. Dashboard for the Overall Implementation (example) Fig 35. HR Initiative Project Update (example) Fig 36. Monthly Recruitment Dashboard I, II (example) Fig 37. Strategic Workforce Management 1-Page Summary

Please refer to next chapter for references and information that supported the making of the "Speed World" case study.

Speed World Mission Statement

We commit ourselves to consistently offering our clients innovative insurance solutions

Our reputation is based on integrity as a condition for sustainability

- Client Firs
- Simplicity
- Growth
- Efficiency

transforming profit into value

For speed World profit as a positive value ensures productivity, continuity and success for our clients. Integrity commends sustainability, which makes it possible to create positive value.

...for all our stakeholders

- Clients
- Employees
- Investors
- Suppliers
- Authorities
- Local Communities

Fig. 15

Macroeconomic Environment

- Local economy is fast-growing along with widening external imbalances and higher inflation
- Because of the growth potential the competition in the insurance market is highly aggressive
- Outlets (subsidiaries) expansion is expected to continue, putting more pressure on the tight labour market

Risks Opportunities Tu

Fig. 16

Speed World Strategy Statement



- ✓ **Strategic Goal-** acceleration of business growth with a focus on revenues
 - New Business Initiatives launched to boost short-term growth while contributing to long term improvement of profitability and value creation
 - Network expansion, reinforcing financing and consumer lending
 - Sales "crash" programme critical to gaining momentum
 - Support Areas strengthened in order to support growth
 - A special focus on *Human Resources* in order to address challenging labour market conditions
 - Risk Strategy designed to ensure sustainable growth and to protect clients
 - Digital Technology upgrade to ensure efficiency and quality

Fig. 17

Human Resources Strategic Directions

- Reduce attrition
- Improve time to hire
- Reduce time to achieve technical skills
- Increase employer brand value



Fig. 18

Linking HR to Business Strategy

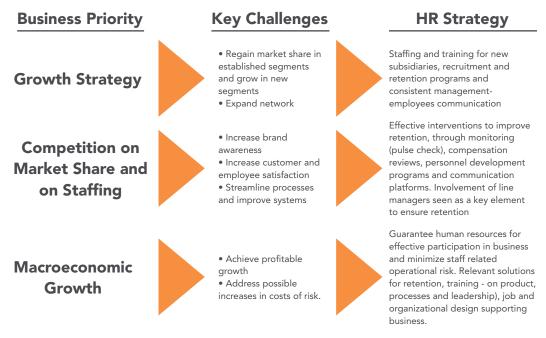
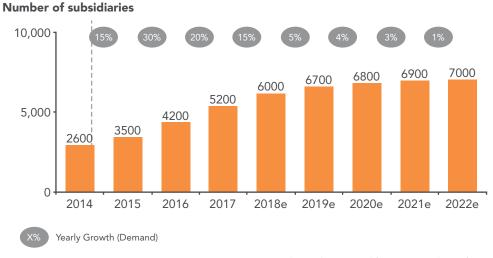


Fig. 19

Continued Expansion Estimated Data



Sources: supervision authority data, internal forecast, consultancy firm

Source: national statistics authority

Fig. 20

Market Unemployment Rate Evolution

Market & Industry unemployment Rate 15% 10% 8% 8% 8,4% 7,4% 5,9% 6,3% 5,4% 4,7% 5% 2,8% 2,5% 2,6% 2,5% 2,2% 1,8% 1,5% 1,3% Total - Industry 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017

Fig. 21

Strategic Workforce Management Project Objectives

- Identify expected gaps between supply & demand in the company's personnel structure:
 - Potential development of existing workforce
 - Personnel needs deriving from growth plans
 - Gaps between future expected and targeted workforce structure
- Perform a labour market analysis for the professions most relevant to the company's growth plans
- Propose measures to close the gaps identified

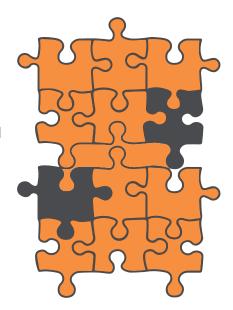


Fig. 22

Strategic Workforce Management: Process Model

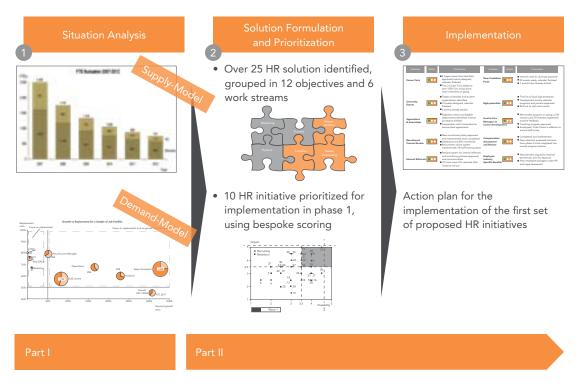
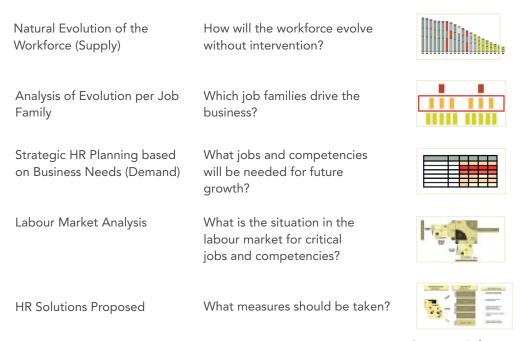


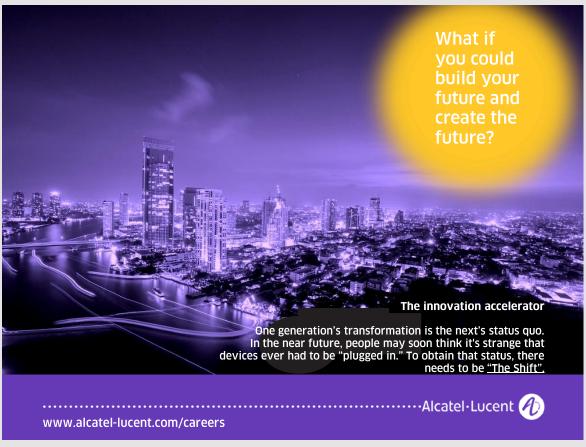
Fig. 23

Strategic Workforce Management: Key Steps



Source: see References

Fig. 24



Simulation of Workforce Supply and Demand

Workforce demand derived from business growth plans

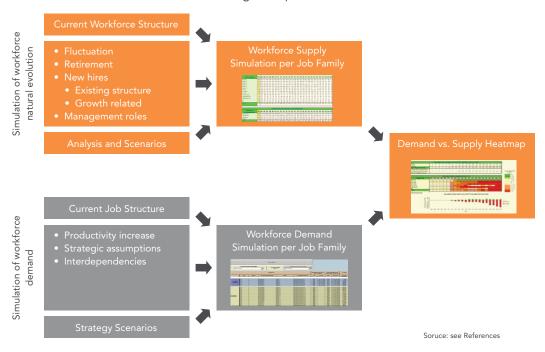


Fig. 25

Supply vs. Demand: High growth and high need for replacement

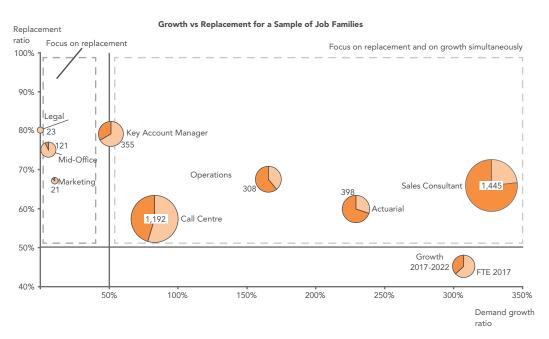


Fig. 26

Demand vs. Supply Fluctuation Risks Identified

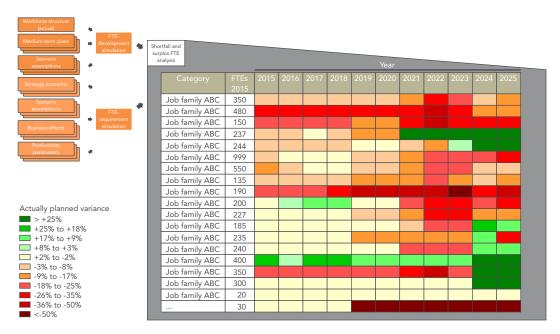


Fig. 27

Supply vs. Demand Heatmap for Speed World

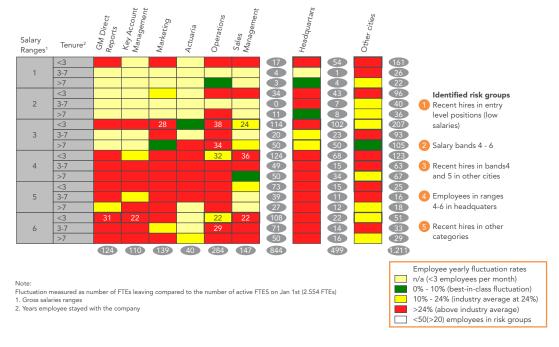


Fig. 28

Qualitative Workforce Market Analysis

Long-term approaches to retention seem to work best

Most competitors seem to take fluctuation as a given

- Minimum knowledge on fluctuation patterns, risk groups or customization of measures
- Training is used as a retention tool
- Development opportunities exist also with other employers, so they have a limited impact
- Young employees perceived as short-term and cash- and personal development oriented

Long-term approaches to fluctuation work

- Taking cultural fit into account increases retention: "Retention starts with recruiting"
- Making managers responsible for retention and development of own team works well

Recruiting in intensive, but focused only on traditional talent pools

Wide array of approaches used to target traditional talent pool

- Career fairs, recruiting events, partnerships with universities and internships are all used
- Students, other than business and economy, not targated actively
- KPIs used for recruiting marketing vary, but usually are not very sophisticated

Salary policy is market median, or above for the industry

• Likely to lead to internal discrepancies and potentially a further source of fluctuation

Induction programs vary in length and topics

• From ½ day orientation to several weeks of intensive sales training and coaching

Fig. 29

Recruitment: Solution Formulation

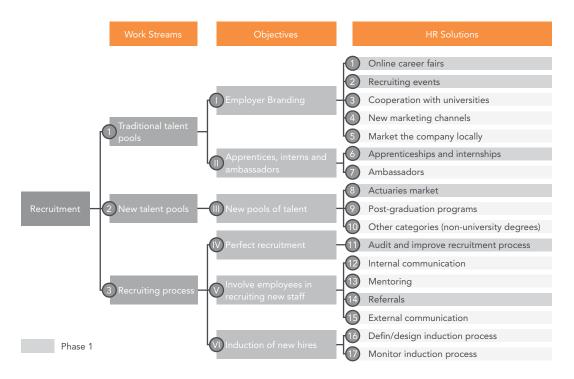


Fig. 30

Retention: Solution Formulation

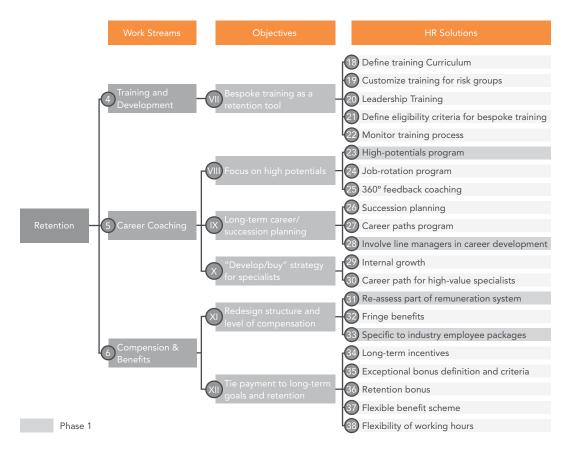


Fig. 31

Strategic Workforce Management: Solution Prioritization

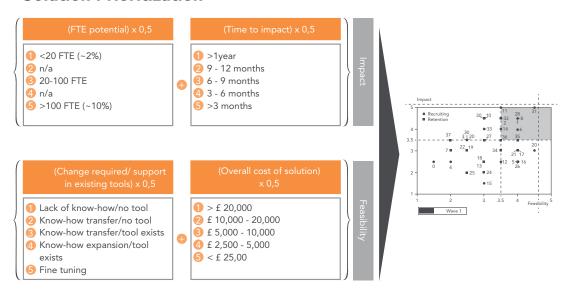


Fig. 32

HR Solutions Proposed Fulfill Projected Need for Resources

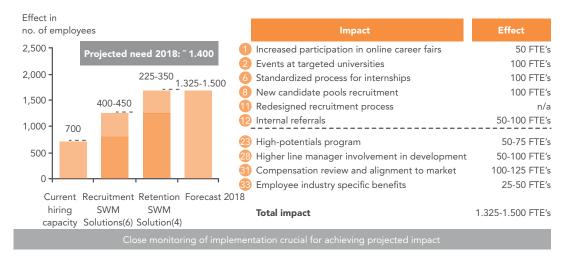


Fig. 33

Implementation: Online Career Fairs (example)

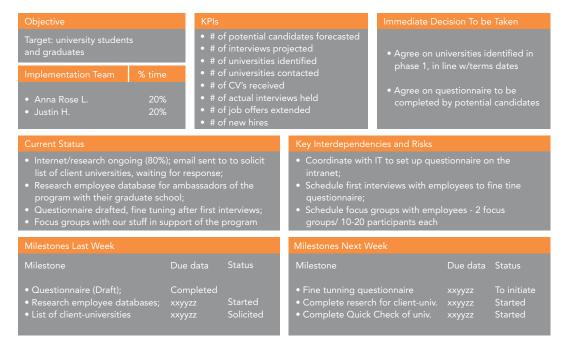


Fig. 34

Implementation Phase I Overall

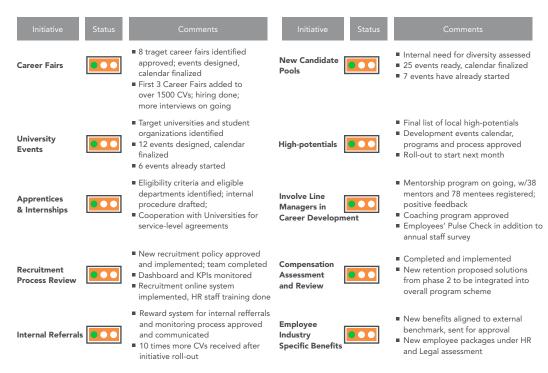


Fig. 35

Recruiting Dashboard as part of SWM (I)



Recruiting Dashboard as part of SWM (II)



Fig. 36

Speed World SWM 1-Page Summary

Considerable staff gap forecasted for Speed World by 2022, in a tight labour market

- Gap is due to both growth plans and expected yearly workforce fluctuation
- Recruiting need is forecast at 1,000-1,500 FTE per year, until 2022
- · Tight labour market especially for specialized roles suggests closing the gap will be a challenge

Based on the results of analytical findings, prioritized 10 out of the 40 HR initiatives defined

- 10 initiatives have been prioritized and detailed, based on expected impact and feasibility
- · Implementation of prioritized initiatives can start right away
- By implementing prioritized actions, Speed World can close the recruiting and retention gap to competitors - gaining a small hiring market advantage is possible

Several quick wins can be achieved in the process. Among them:

- The 2018 FTE budget has been detailed already in cooperation with all departments, as part of the demand analysis
- Competitor used as benchmark to identify best approach in the market
- A pulse check has been introduced with good results and can become a quarterly tool, in addition to the annual staff survey

Fig. 37

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