

# Human Resource Management, Rhetoric or Reality

Wale Adediran,  
HR Director – FMN Group

Business Management Department,  
Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State.

*30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.*

*"HR is the driving force behind what makes a winning team. We make the argument that the team that fields the best players wins. HR is involved in making sure we field the best players."*

*Jack Welch, 25 Jan 2013.*

# Profile of a HR Practitioner

A HR leader that is a Pastor (or Imam) and a parent is on to success. A Pastor will be empathetic and keep your secret while a Parent will tell you straight as it is out of love.

This combination makes a personality that is committed to growing people and putting together a winning team.

# Resources for Wealth Creation

1. Materials

2. Machines

3. Money

4. Men



# Why Men?...

*“business houses are made or broken in the long run, not by markets or capital, patents or equipment, but by men”.*

*L.F. Urwick*

# Men.....

*The good news is that of these, men are the only resources of the four available to man, that can grow.*

*Peter F. Drucker.*

# Human Resource...

HR is the most crucial factor of success in organizations.

HR management is a professional practice that has evolved over the pre- and post-industrial age.

# A - Definitions & Scope

- Wide range of definitions and scope of HR practice I have heard of *and* experienced
- The perspective on what HR management is, vary widely from the public service to the private sector



## .... Definitions & Scope

- Private sector multi-national businesses tend to adopt definitions and practice structures from their parent companies
- Indigenous private organizations grow their own practices heavily influenced by same factors that shape our national lives.

# Operational vs. Strategic Scope

- Most definitions situate HR management around the operation of the processes for workforce planning, attracting, recruiting, inducting, directing, controlling, motivating, training, developing, rewarding, and retaining employees

## .... Operational vs. Strategic Scope

- Lately, the likes of Armstrong (2006), define HR as strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach, to the management and development of the organization's human resources in which every aspect of the process is wholly integrated within the overall management of the organization

## .... Operational vs. Strategic Scope

- Dave Ulrich attempted to bring the operational and strategic roles in HR management on one model by creating the 4-quadrant for HR management – strategic partnering, change agent, employee champion and admin expert. HR practice is fluid and plays the roles in the 4 quadrants.

# B - Shapes and Structures

- Varying shapes and structures of the management and the practice in different organizations I have worked for.
- The structure drives the culture. From the shape of the HR function, you could tell if HR management is a functional or organization-wide affair; strategic or operational.

# Talent Management vs. Personnel Management

- Personnel management has worked well over the decades and had served businesses well.
- It is mostly reactive, operational and process driven.

# Talent Management vs. Personnel Management

- Talent management on the other hand is proactive, strategic, data and insight driven.

# Talent Management vs. Personnel Management

- All new developments in HR management are focused on talent and organization management.
- New sets of skills emerging in this area, e.g. big data and HR Analytics, multi-year strategic talent and organization planning.



# Learning Point 1 of 8

HR management must be organization-wide, and not a function affair. Line managers are accountable for managing their human resources, with HR function partnership.

Most line managers don't do well in this role.

## Learning Point 2 of 8

The HR leader is first and foremost a business leader and must be at the table to actively participate in the shaping of the strategic direction of the organization.

## Learning Point 3 of 8

HR managers must be equipped with the insights that informed the business strategy, and be provided a platform to embed HR advantage into the business direction.

## Learning Point 4 of 8

Of all the resources a business has – materials, machines, money and men; the real source of sustainable competitive advantage is men.

Most organizations don't prioritize this resource in deed, while they pay lip service to it singing the mantra: *“our most valued asset”*.

# Learning Point 5 of 8

Organizations that pay attention to this resource will get a huge competitive advantage over those that do not.

## Learning Point 6 of 8

Strategic HR partnering with business leaders must target capacity building for managers to be sufficiently prepared for HR management.

The HR function must support the line managers with tools to be effective managers of their Human Resources, same way they manage materials, machines and money.

## Learning Point 7 of 8

HR function must continuously strengthen its front line that partners with line managers to become more strategic in focus. Operational processes are better consolidated into center of expertise to minimize operational distractions and make big impact on the achievement of organization objectives.

# Learning Point 8 of 8

There are 6 broad areas that the HR functions

I have led focus on – 1. Business Partnering,

2. Talent Resourcing, 3. Talent Development,

4. Employee Engagement, 5. Industrial &

Employee Relations, and 6. HR Service

Delivery. The last 5 support the Business

Partnering - the frontline, core HR unit.



# Conclusions

#1 of 4

HR management is still at its infancy in Nigeria. The HR practice as the functional profession that drives effective HR management in organizations is evolving and has been on the fast pace in the last two decades in Nigeria.

# Conclusions

#2 of 4

The core of the processes we have adopted are influenced significantly by multi-national companies home office practices and a lot of adaptations are required to truly make the practice suitable for our cultural environment.

# Conclusions

#3 of 4

The academic community would add great value if it could collaborate with the industry to study the impact of some of the HR practices and processes in Nigeria and, evolve indigenous hybrid that suit our cultural peculiarities.

# Conclusions

#4 of 4

The essence of the practice is to create sustainable competitive advantage for our businesses through exceptional talent and organizational effectiveness.

***Thanks for your attention!***