

HOW HR CAN HELP THE C-SUITE

To earn a place on the board, as well as develop their own skills, human resources directors must add significant value to the roles of other C-suites

01 CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The chief executive (CEO) expects the human resources function to support the business in making decisions and managing people, according to a *What CEOs want from HR* report by Henley Business School. The CEO wants an HR function that will speak up about commercial issues, not only people issues, says Mark Swain, director of partnerships at Henley Business School. "It's about HR focusing on the performance of a business, which is the delivery of crucial capabilities," he says. "HR needs to get to know the fundamental force that drives the business. If you cannot identify the crucial capabilities, then you cannot understand the value chain. If you're in a professional services firm and trust is crucial to the relationship with clients, then that is a capability HR needs to understand; what it looks like in terms of hiring people and how you can assess for that capability." The HR function can give the CEO insight into the culture of an organisation, according to David D'Souza, head of engagement and London at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. "It's also about making sure the people agenda is sustainable and that the CEO is equipped with the best people," he says.



90% of business and HR leaders say building the organisation of the future was the most important challenge for 2017
Deloitte



02 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

The chief operating officer (COO) focuses on bringing the corporate vision to life in operations. The big challenge facing COOs is embracing technology and change, alongside improving efficiency and customer service, says Charlie Grubb, managing director of Robert Half Executive Search. "HR can help by identifying the skills to embrace that change and understanding the implementation of those skills," he says. A COO needs to know what skills they need to fill roles, which is where the HR function can add value, says Neil Pickering, customer and industry insight manager at Kronos UK. "The COO will say to the HR team, 'we need you to help us fill these skills gaps either through training or hiring the right people.'" Using data analytics is how the HR function can make an impact with the COO, adds Mr Pickering. "If you use people more effectively, then you can put a monetary figure on the value of people, and it's about the useful and effective deployment of people," he says. HR can be the moral conscience of the COO, says Michael Jenkins, chief executive of Roffey Park: "The COO says what the organisation needs to do in terms of cost-cutting and productivity, but HR can remind them of the human cost as well."



65% of HR professionals say that skills needed for jobs in their organisation are changing
CIPD

03 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

There is a lot of similarity between the HR and marketing function as they are both concerned with branding, says Dr Steve Foster, head of business consultancy at NGA UK. "Marketing is concerned with branding of product and organisation, and HR with the employer as brand, and there is a close link between the two," he says. "People talk about Google as a powerful brand in the market, but it's also a powerful brand as an employer. It doesn't have to fight to attract talent in the market as it's a powerful brand. I see HR and the chief marketing officer (CMO) more and more, trying to find ways of working together to enhance each other." Algorithms are tailored to work out our spending patterns and habits, and the employee journey could in the future be viewed in the same as behavioural economics to drive a new generation of HR strategy, according to Jeff Phipps, managing director of ADP UK. "People are the lifeblood of every organisation, but HR practices are often based on outdated psychology and tired organisational theory," he says. "HR teams are starting to use behavioural economics to better shape their hiring, engagement practices and the overall employee journey, and need to work with marketing teams to incorporate this into their practice."



53% of workers in the UK say that no amount of money could tempt them to work for a company with a poor employer brand
LinkedIn

04 CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

The chief technology officer (CTO) is one of the most important C-suite roles due to the rising tide of automation of knowledge work and work processes becoming more digitalised, says Paul Sparrow, emeritus professor of international human resources management at Lancaster University Management School. "The main contribution for HR is to help the CTO understand the implications of some of the changes to the IT-driven work processes on the behaviour of employees," he says. New technology implementations can be incredibly complex and often the hardest part is getting employees to adapt to new ways of working, says Cathy Temple, senior HR director at Oracle UK, Ireland and Israel. "HR leaders can help CTOs make the most of their IT investments by working with them to understand what new technologies mean for workplace skills, working with managers to create a change-ready culture and developing training programmes to help employees master new technology," she says. Michael Custers, chief marketing officer at NGA HR, argues that HR can provide the CTO with an insight into the needs of millennials and Generation Z employees. "These employees will want to see a level of digital technology in the workplace similar to what they're used to in their private lives. This includes access to corporate systems on mobile, and interaction through social media and chatbots," he says.



52% of HR leaders say they are helping their organisation respond to organisational change driven by automation, advanced technologies and artificial intelligence
CIPD

05 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The chief financial officer (CFO) needs more data on people from HR, given that people are critical to the business, says Doug Butler, chief executive of Reward Gateway. "It's about the HR function working with the CFO to choose systems and cut up data that comes out of the HR system, which makes a difference in terms of planning," he says. Some 80 per cent of finance and HR professionals reported that their relationship is becoming more collaborative, according to a recent *CFOs Drive Performance* report by EY. A study by SumTotal points out that more than two thirds of CFOs now take an active role in recruitment and talent management. "For example, some finance departments are now closely monitoring the acquisition of key hires, their performance after three months and the return on investment that hire has contributed to the business," says Liam Butler, SumTotal's vice president of corporate sales, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Michael Custers, CMO at NGA HR, believes HR can give the CFO guidance and reassurance around regulatory compliance, for example data privacy, equal pay and the impending general data protection regulations. He adds: "HR also helps to ensure there is no unintended or unexpected spending around labour which can lead to lost revenue."



80% of HR and finance leaders say their relationship has become more collaborative in recent years
EY