

Following the Yellow Brick Road, Part II

Knowing where you're going does provide clues on how to get there.

By Naomi Bloom

Last month, we began our travels down the Yellow Brick Road of strategic HRM and HRM delivery systems planning after explaining why such an exercise was essential. In this column, we'll try to complete the journey, at least enough to whet your appetite for more.

Business outcomes are the very specific measures and target values that demonstrate to what extent the organizational strategies are achieving the business vision. How will the organization recognize, via objective measures within a defined time frame, to what extent its organizational business strategies are being achieved? By what measures and target values within a defined time frame will the organization's progress be validated and/or problem areas revealed?

Drawing further on our unnamed company, by year-end 2008, it plans to have 5,000 independent VARs operating under its brand, with 75 percent coverage throughout North America and Western Europe, and 40 percent coverage throughout the rest of world. In the same period, it plans to have competitive product/service offerings for all seven market-sizing segments and 15 industry groups within the SME market.

It also wants to achieve an average of an 80 percent win ratio by VARs in 50 of the 105 key market segmentation cells, with the remainder having a 50 percent or greater win ratio. Converged products/services will begin rollout according to the budget and MMD-DYY workplan (which stipulates by application, by market, and by release of foundation the exact dates for each of the five stages of rollout). By year-end, all program offices will have signed off on release 1 of the SME business applications product/service life cycle and accompanying certification process and so on.

Having collected this information about the business, we can now follow the Yellow Brick Road right through HR management, establishing our own strategies and business outcomes. What must the HRM business (not the HR department, although it should provide leadership and substantive execution) do well to enable the organization to achieve its vision? By what strategies will the HRM business enable the achievement of the organizational goals? What HRM business strategies are needed to overcome specific ob-

stacles to achieving the organizational vision? What HRM business strategies are needed to address specific issues that the organization faces?

Our example company will need to standardize all HRM plans, practices, and programs on a global basis, with appropriate variations where necessary to achieve its desired outcomes; expand, standardize, and coordinate campus recruiting on a global basis with an emphasis on finding talent where the talent lives; partner with local experts to ensure that it is locating each type of business where it makes the most sense in terms of customer/VAR intimacy, sourcing and deploying talent, and managing costs; and minimize in absolute and relative terms the cost of HRM without sacrificing organizational strategies and outcomes. The process of establishing those outcomes should be quite clear.

Now, here's where we need the wizard—that great member of your team or a very seasoned consultant who has been traveling the Yellow Brick Road with you and seeing the HRM delivery systems' implications of what you're trying to accomplish. Wizards ask: Are your firm's results really driven by a small leadership group or brain trust? If so, perhaps you should focus more on the full range of talent management issues for this small group rather than rolling out a global talent management platform for the entire workforce.

Does your firm have large and growing legal and regulatory exposures because the managers of local operations can't be expected to remember and execute against all of the relevant laws and contractual terms? If so, perhaps you should be more focused on delivering point-of-sale regulatory and contractual guidance to include preventive guidance to these managers rather than trying to squeeze pennies out of your payroll service bureau's rates.

There are no generalized answers here but rather a process by which your HRM delivery system wizard can learn enough about your business and required outcomes to begin to formulate an overall HRM delivery systems strategy. This is a vast simplification of the actual methodology, but what's important is that all decisions about your HRM delivery system are grounded in the business purpose that it must serve. **HRO**



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