

FYI for your information

Human Resources to Play a Bigger Role in Strategic Planning?

In a survey conducted among strategic planners and human resources executives by Columbia University's Strategy Research Center, most of the companies responding reported that substantial formal strategic planning is conducted, and most believe it is at least moderately effective in the company's success.

The respondents were asked whether human resource data were systematically available to strategic planners and to what extent these data influenced strategy formulation. Four types of information were found to be available to strategy planners: inventory of managerial talent, forecast inventories of future talent, inventories of technical talent and top management succession plans. External studies and audits of the human resource of potential acquisitions were the least available and least used.

The survey found that strategic planning has become widely established only in the past six years or so. While the importance of human resource data to strategic planning is increasingly recognized, it is not yet an integral part of the process in most companies.

What specific human resource activities are used—and to what extent—in the implementation of strategy? The survey found a moderate level of use for five activities: matching executives to strategic plans, identifying managerial characteristics to run the firm in the long term, modifying rewards to encourage long-term strategic objectives, changing staffing patterns to help implement strategies and appraising key personnel for their future role in carrying out strategic goals. These activities can be characterized collectively as "assessment," and they were used significantly more than formal training and development as aids to strategic implementation. Both planners and human resource specialists want these tools to be used more.

Senior line managers generally consider human resource data for day-to-day operational services and only occasionally for strategic uses. But this view of the human resource role need not be a block to future growth, since these executives claim they want human resources to take on a bigger role.

To do so—to operate more effectively in a strategic capacity—human resource activities must complete three steps, say the researchers:

- Improve data collection and retrieval systems;
- Encourage strategic thinking within human resources;
- Link human resource activities to strategic planning through interaction with line executives.

The study was reported in Columbia University's Career Development Bulletin, Volume 2, Number 4, 1981. The complete study, *Strategic Planning and Human Resource Management: At Rainbow's End*, can be obtained from the Strategy Research Center, Room 814 Uris Hall, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027—Reprinted from "Behavioral Sciences Newsletter," June 14, 1982.

Safety Training at Honeywell

Can someone with no experience in training and little expertise in a highly technical subject matter successfully lead a technical training program?

Honeywell's recent experience in the delivery of an occupational safety training program suggests that "lay" trainers can teach technical subjects.

The training program

Honeywell's Minneapolis-based residential division faced the challenge of delivering a package of occupational safety training modules to the salaried and hourly members of its factories' Safety Committees. The primary thrust was to develop the Safety Committees' ability to

recognize safety hazards in their work place and correct them. Each department's safety committee conducts monthly safety tours and spots specific safety hazards. As a result of an hourly employee opinion survey, Honeywell's management and union officers put safety and health at the top of their shared agenda. A cornerstone of this safety effort was to "beef up" the department safety committees and give them the "tools" to recognize and fix hazardous conditions.

A joint union-management effort

The Minneapolis-wide Labor-Management Steering Committee chartered a subcommittee to develop a Safety Committee training program. The committee selected a package of six occupational safety training modules, developed by Ohio State University and marketed by an industrial safety consultant. The modules covered hazard recognition, hazardous substances, inflammable liquids, protective equipment, material handling and machine safeguarding—a total of 24 training hours, covering highly technical subject matter.

Residential's training approach

The residential division took the approach to establish 12 two-member instructor teams to teach the training sessions—one for each subject area. The teams consisted of one hourly and one salaried person. The salaried member was generally someone with expertise in a related field. The hourly trainer was a member of a Department Safety Committee and had work experience in high exposure areas. But for nearly all the team members, safety training was a completely new experience. Few had more than a common-sense knowledge of their safety subject area; only one had previous experience in classroom teaching or training.

Faced with the task of delivering a total of 480 hours of training, the residential division couldn't put the full teaching burden on its three safety engineers. Moreover, the union clearly wanted to be

involved—this safety training program was as much “theirs” as management’s. Because of the design of the program, using non-safety experts to deliver the training seemed plausible. It was a mix of slide/tape show, questions and answers, workbooks and discussions.

The training program format

Each of the 12 training sessions generally followed this format (with about 20 people attending each session):

- The group views the subject matter slide show, driven by a pulsed sound tape;
- The group fills in the accompanying workbook, working together if they wish;
- The group participates in a discussion, using the completed workbook questions and the slide show as a guide;
- The group participates in a further discussion about personal experiences with safety both on the job and outside of work.

Prior to kicking off the training program, concerns and questions were raised about using these non-safety expert teams.

- Could non-safety experts lead these sessions and field the tough questions on technical points?
- Could non-professional trainers facilitate the group learning process?
- Could the trainers pull together as effective teaching teams—especially when they had no prior experience working together?

Subject matter preparation

At first, the trainers were anxious about subject matter expertise. Because of the self-contained slide shows with accompanying workbooks, there was no need for trainers to be subject matter experts.

What was the function of the training teams, then, if they were not to be subject matter experts? And why was a team needed to operate an automatic slide show?

The hourly salaried teams facilitated group acceptance of the safety concepts. The teams were representative of the company/union joint venture. An important part of the acceptance was group discussion of the materials. Teams were responsible for stimulating and leading productive discussions; people involved in a discussion are more likely to accept the material. It was therefore critical to the success of the program that the instructors were prepared for effective group facilitation and

were ready to work as a team.

A one and one-half day off-site training session was held for the instructor teams. Here are some highlights:

- Team members worked together. People always worked with their team partners simulating safety training delivery.
- Team members had effective role models to follow. The train-the-trainer leaders were also a paired team.
- Team members gained hands-on experience by working before their peers.

This hands-on experience began slowly. First, each team videotaped a “safety commercial”—a humorous ad targeted to their own particular safety subject. Each team then practiced leading a discussion about their particular specialty. In the beginning, the group was instructed to be helpful. As teams gained experience, the group was instructed to be less and less cooperative. This way, each team experienced “the worst possible.” Not only did this develop facilitation skills, but it also alleviated anxiety. Members thought, “If we can survive (and even enjoy) this group, we can handle anything!”

The training sessions

The train-the-trainer sessions clearly paid off. Trainers found themselves unexpectedly comfortable in front of the group. They believed they had acquired some real skills and were pleased to see them work.

The Safety Committee members were quite receptive to the training teams. The trainers clearly had been prepared—they were recognized now as “The Safety Trainers.” Also, trainers were careful not to bill themselves as subject matter experts. This avoided any ego confrontation.

There are several benefits in using non-specialist training teams rather than trained professionals:

- Having a representative of both the union and the company on each training team shows that safety training is jointly owned;
- Using non-specialists to deliver the training shows that safety belongs to everyone—not just the experts;
- Having the workers’ peers deliver the training suggests it’s not “coming down from the top”;
- With a cadre of safety trainers, the company has the internal capability to deliver these sessions again in the future, when new Safety Committee Members must be trained.

A benefit exists beyond the element of safety—the communication and feeling of cooperation that develops between the union and the company at all levels in the factory. Union and salaried people quickly learn to work together as teams. This lays the groundwork for future cooperative ventures between management and unions.—Submitted by Deborah E. Barber, manager, employee relations factory support, and Carol L. Fey, industrial training specialist, Honeywell Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.

Aetna Helps Fund Job Training Program

An innovative job training program designed to prepare Hispanic heads of households for the business world has been implemented successfully in the Hartford area.

The Bilingual Clerical Skills Training Program, a combined effort of the National Puerto Rican Forum (NPRF), local government agencies and private industry, is the first program of its kind to receive assistance from a major corporation. The Forum received equipment, funding and technical assistance for its pilot program from Aetna Life & Casualty.

Aetna, in turn, has benefited from this unique program, which trains clerical workers to meet specific business needs within an industry or company. More than 95 percent of the program’s first class of graduates have been hired for permanent positions at Aetna.

Participants of this intensive, six-month training program learn typing, business English, business math and other business related skills, Monday through Friday, 9:00 - 5:00, in an office setting. Program participants are treated as employees and receive a weekly stipend for their work. They are expected to follow rules of business decorum in dress and attitude and to meet established performance standards.

“We believe that businesses should not have to compromise their high standards when hiring minorities,” said Rosaida M. de Rosario, state director of NPRF. “We also believe that minorities should have the opportunity to compete on an equal level in today’s work environment, to

reach goals of self-development and economic independence."

"Training students in office procedures, as well as in business skills, gives them a better understanding of what will be expected of them in a regular job situation," Rosario continued. "We've found that our graduates are able to fit comfortably into a work environment and assume a normal workload, right from the start."

The program's unique design allows the sponsor corporation to augment basic instruction with courses or workshops run by company staff members and tours of local company offices. All training, job counseling and placement is handled by the National Puerto Rican Forum.

Aetna decided to sponsor the program to address both the high rate of minority unemployment in Hartford and the company's own need for skilled clerical workers.

"We are very pleased with the program's success, our new employees and the opportunity to participate in a unique partnership," said Alison G. Coolbrith, vice president of Aetna's corporate public involvement department. "The program demonstrates how business, community organizations and government can work together to achieve a common goal."

Are You Executive Management Material?

Review these 10 questions prepared by Richard D. Sbarbaro, president of the Chicago-based executive search firm of Lauer, Sbarbaro Associates, Inc., to determine your Executive Quotient (EQ). While this test is a bit subjective, it will give you a good indication of whether or not you're executive management material. To get an accurate EQ, don't assume the correct answer, but respond with your honest reaction.

1. Are you more interested in planning new programs than maintaining current ones?

2. Would you rather maintain your cultural and social interest than devote your entire effort to the job?

3. Do you believe that good communications are more important than attention to detail?

4. Do you believe that a good sense of humor is just as important as a

working knowledge of the balance sheet?

5. Do you enjoy a variety of work experiences rather than concentrating on your specialty?

6. Are you somewhat impetuous and not always analytical?

7. Are you extremely interested in your compensation package, and not always that concerned with the long-term benefits?

8. Are you concerned with the political realities of your company as they relate to current assignments and your overall progress?

9. Do you believe in giving your subordinates enough rope to hang themselves rather than staying close to a project to protect them against failure?

10. Would you rather beat a customer in golf than let him or her win to protect the business relationship?

If you have seven or more "yes" answers, your EQ is high enough to qualify for advancement. But go back and review your "no" answers, as well as the ones you wavered on. These are the areas you need to address.

Here's how Sbarbaro views each question:

1. Companies are looking for "idea people," not just caretakers. The long haul is considered to be more important than the immediate benefits. In most executive searches, the perfect candidate is never found. The candidates that are hired are those that come closest to meeting the position's criteria. As long as executive searches exist, compromise will exist.

2. Consider that many times business can be conducted leisurely and, in fact, many of the most successful deals have been closed in a non-business atmosphere. Candidates who have an active social and cultural life are considered to be more aware of, and knowledgeable about the world around them. Employers don't look for people with tunnel vision.

3. Even the best plan must *first* be sold to management. The candidate that can communicate effectively is heads above those who can't put a plan down on paper. Also, in order for a plan to be effective, it must be communicated to those with the power to implement it.

4. Those who can't enjoy life are in trouble. Humor often relieves the tension in a stressful environment.

5. The specialists (engineers, scientists, computer experts, etc.) who have moved into senior management are those who have taken an interest

in the entire company and have become team players. The most successful managers are willing to get their fingers dirty on occasion. Also, they never forget that bottom-line results are the only results that count.

6. Sometimes a "gut" reaction is the best one. Don't, however, operate that way regularly!

7. Fast-track executives normally are more interested in salary and bonus than in pension and profit-sharing plans.

8. Know your allies within the company. Use your mentor when needed. Just because the plan is good, don't expect it to roll right through. Jealousy is a reality among peers.

9. It's easier to determine who is promotable if you follow a "hands-off" policy. Don't create drones! Remember, though, that you are responsible for those you supervise.

10. Have fun, but play to win. That's a good idea whether it's golf or business!

PepsiCo Grant to Support Chain Restaurant Management Program

A major five-year grant from the PepsiCo Foundation will support the nation's first chain restaurant management program at Michigan State University, according to Arthur G. Gunther, president and chief executive officer of Pizza Hut, Inc.

Pizza Hut officials have worked with MSU to develop the \$375,000 program, which will establish the PepsiCo Food Service Professorship. Michigan State's College of Business will offer the emphasis on multi-restaurant management through its School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management. Plans are to focus on both graduate and undergraduate levels.

"This grant represents an excellent example of corporate support of higher education in response to President Reagan's challenge to private enterprise," said Gunther. "Its graduates will be welcomed by the chain restaurant industry as the first managers academically prepared for multi-unit responsibility."

PepsiCo Foundation education grants target graduate business school programs in which PepsiCo employees are actively involved in an advisory capacity, as well as economic education, scholarships and minority programs.

"Shutdown for Safety"

For a 15-minute period one day each month, work on the waterfront at Newport News Shipbuilding, the world's largest private shipyard, comes to a halt and the normally bustling yard falls silent as more than 14,000 employees turn their attention to safety.

In what is believed to be the largest "Shutdown for Safety" program in a major manufacturing facility in the United States, each of the company's 1,300 front line supervisors conducts a prepared safety talk to an average of 11 employees. The presentations emphasize safety on and off the job, and the subject matter ranges from proper lifting techniques to lawn mower safety.

Under the company's previous approach, monthly safety talks were conducted on a more informal basis whenever they fit with a department's work schedule. Under the new program, the supervisors give a more effective, structured presentation in a controlled environment, free of noise, outside activity and other distractions.

Newport News Shipbuilding

adopted its own employee safety education program, known as "Safety Sense," in 1977 to promote safety on and off the job. Since that time, under the leadership of Charles Klein, director of safety, the shipyard's lost time accident rate has dropped more than 33%.

Looking for a job?

If you're looking for a job, you're well aware that one of the great frustrations of any employment campaign is never knowing exactly how long the search will take. Since so many variables are involved, it is, of course, impossible to be precise.

Robert Half, the expert who has found jobs for more than 100,000 people, has developed a system designed to give job seekers a reasonable estimate of their job-search time frame. Half is the author of a highly-acclaimed new book,

"The Robert Half Way to Get Hired in Today's Job Market."

Using the job search-time guide

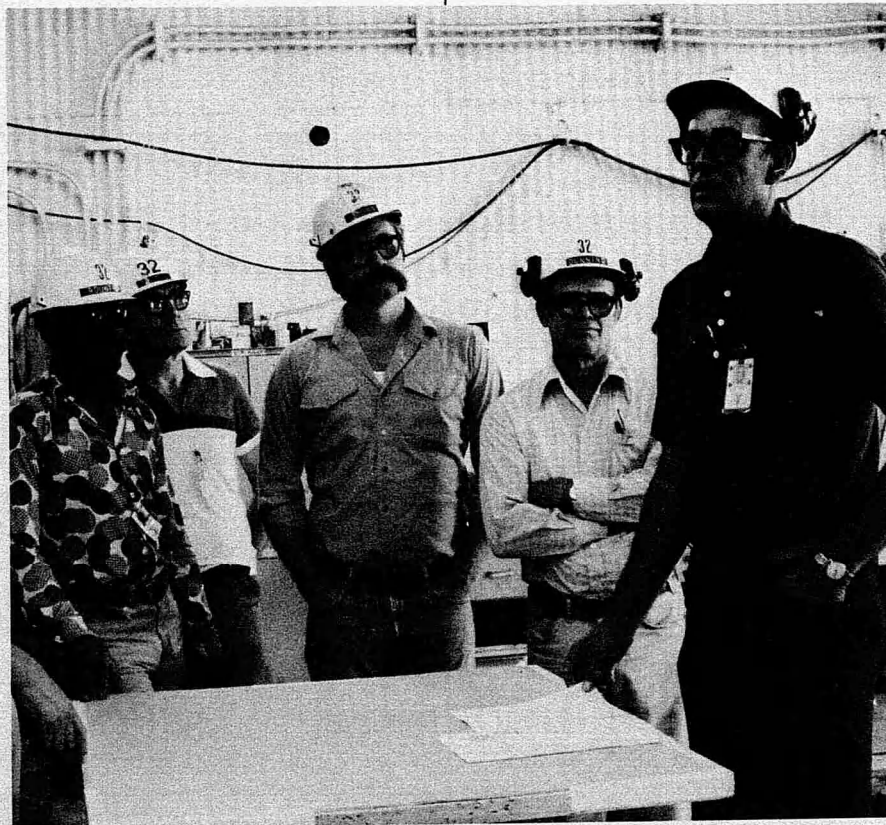
- Start by taking your current or last salary (include bonuses and fringe benefits). Delete the last three digits and divide by 2. The figure at which you arrive is your base number of weeks. Therefore, if you made \$20,000 at your last job, your base number would be 10, or 10 weeks. A figure of \$40,000 would result in a base number of 20, or 20 weeks.

Another method of computing a base number is to estimate one week for every \$2,000 in salary and benefits. Now that you have a base number, you will be able to factor the following important considerations into your calculations:

- If you think your *competitive qualifications* (experience, skills, education, etc.) for the position you seek are high, deduct 20 percent from the base figure. If they're low, add 50 percent. If they're average, make no adjustment.
- If you decide to keep your job search a secret (and tell almost no one that you're looking), multiply by 2. (This is the "exposure factor.")
- If your *personal characteristics* (appearance, personality, communications skills, etc.) are excellent, deduct 20 percent from the base figure. If they're poor, add 50 percent. If they're average, make no adjustment.
- If you have rigid *specific requirements* (location, size of company, travel, etc.), add 20 percent. If they're flexible, deduct 20 percent, and if they're average, make no adjustment.
- If you're *unemployed* and asking for a salary increase of 20 percent or more, add 50 percent to the base figure. If you're willing to take a 10 percent salary decrease, deduct 20 percent from the base figure. If you're *employed*, increase the base figure by 25 percent when you're looking for a 20 percent salary increase. Reduce the base week figure by five percent if you're willing to take a 20 percent salary decrease.

If your final result is lower than your base number of weeks, use the base number of weeks as your job search-time estimate.

Half, who heads Robert Half International Inc., points out that his guide does not apply to people who are changing careers as well as jobs. There is no way to estimate the time frame involved in a career change.



Sheet Metal Foreman James Parker (right) conducts a prepared safety talk in the shop area at Newport News Shipbuilding, Newport News, Va.