Analytical Skills – The Wake up Call for Human Resource

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ABSTRACT
Analytical skills will set the new breed of Human Resources professional apart. Learning to speak the language of the business and dealing with a wide variety of topics and people, it is well placed to do this more than any other department as it works at multiple levels within the organization. This is where the opportunity lies for the new breed of professionals and this new breed not only provide data for analysis, but also people skills to influence others with that data in a meaningful way. Analytics skills may not necessarily be essential for the senior person as understood today, but senior professionals with an eye on the future would be well advised to build teams that strongly demonstrate analytic skills. If you are just starting and you want to progress, then developing and demonstrating matrices and analytic skills are the most essential way to make an impact and get ahead, now and for the foreseeable future.

The purpose of this paper is to bring out the impact of the new realities to Human Resources profession and create an awareness of the expanded role.

Keywords-- Analytical skills, business language, new breed of professionals, data analytics, awareness of expanded role

I. INTRODUCTION

To make smarter decisions about human capital and organizational investments, HR and business executives are turning to data analytics to reveal fresh insights about their workforce. While HR data has become increasingly accessible in the last few decades, the analytics movement is relatively new. With proper systems and structures, companies find that analytics can improve decisions in all areas of HR—for instance, staffing, training, compensation, retention and engagement—and also positively improve the bottom line.

You'll need a wide range of skills for most HR professional jobs. A broad base of business knowledge and background in the social sciences are helpful. The best HR professionals have excellent written and verbal skills, as well as proficiency with computers. Every specialty has its own specific requirements beyond the general background and skill set. Entrants in HR may not be expected to already have all the specific knowledge described below, but must be ready to learn it quickly on the job or in targeted training courses. While most people think that "people" skills are the key to being a successful human management, in reality what is required is a mix of people and technical skills. You collect data, deal with complex paperwork, analyze information, and present finding to top management.

As a generalist you need to review many different kinds of documents, understand their meaning, gather the necessary information and process that information. These documents include benefits applications, salary comparisons, resumes, applications and legal compliance forms. The HR generalist needs to quickly and accurately decipher essential information from these documents and act on it.

II. METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

A research paper on this topic has to rely on literature of which there are plenty. The challenge was to identify the correct and suitable literature and synthesize useful data for further analysis and conclusion. While searching for suitable literature the author was mildly
surprised with the quantum and quality of literature available on the subject. The efforts of the author throughout his paper s to focus attention specifically on the rising influence and importance of data analytics in the field of Human Resources. The specific objectives of this paper have been:

1. An overview of Human resources function as it stands today.
2. The identification of role of Data Analytics in the Human Resources function
3. How far data analytics are used today and the outcome there of
4. Future trends and scope of Analytics for Human Resources Management
5. Conclusions and Recommendations.
6. Emerging agenda of Human Resources with Talent Analytics and Big data

Obviously a vast amount of literature is available in the print as well as the electronic web media. Since more and more work of human resources is performed with the soft skills and web medium suitable weightage has been accorded to data through this medium. Data Analysis clearly brings out the critical importance of re-orienting Human Resources towards this new capability.

**III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Analytics in Human Resource refers to applying statistical and analytical techniques to employee data. Basically HR analytics helps companies understand their workforce better. With proper structuring and resources, HR department can leverage analytics to better manage Talent, improve Operations and create a Competitive advantage. “Today’s organizations expect HR professionals to make greater use of data and analytics to guide their recommendations and decisions,” says John Hausknecht, associate professor of Human Resource Studies at Cornell University’s ILR School and co-faculty director of its Human Capital Development program.

Recent research reports bring out some facts, difficult to digest.

- According to a Gallup Survey, only 13% of employees worldwide are engaged. They are outnumbered by the actively disengaged employees.
- 20% of workers in Europe report a poor mental well-being (5th European Working Conditions Survey). In Belgium half of the employees experience a too high mental workload (Secured Whitepaper)
- The ILO world of work 2013 survey reports a degradation of job quality between 2007-2011. The change of Job quality is determined by the change in the percentage of temporary employees, the change in social benefits expenditure as share of total public expenditure and the growth in the average hourly wages between 2007 and 2011 were used.
- Long-term absenteeism is on the rise according to a Secured Research and the increase of long-term absenteeism is accelerating.
- Research on Karaseks Job quality model, consistently report low figures.

And the list goes on, of course, and HR professionals should not take the blame. But still, these facts have to make us think about Human Resource profession. Thinking about the future of how employers will manage the employees should make us humble. Indeed we know the past and the present, but are ignorant about the future. There are two answers to the question about that future. We can think about the future content: what will be the tasks? And we can think about the process: what will be HR role?

The first question is in my opinion not the most important one. To answer it you can review many surveys that have asked the question. A research by Boston Consulting Group revealed 6 tasks for the future:

- **Managing Talent**: assessing quantitative and qualitative needs for talent, managing the talent pipeline.
- **Managing Demographics**: managing the loss of capacity and knowledge, managing the ageing workforce
- **Becoming a learning organisation**: choosing a learning strategy, boosting the number of on-the-job development programs, measuring the return on investment.
- **Managing work-life balance**: determining what people need, building programs that afford flexible working hours, enhancing corporate social responsibility.
- **Managing Change and cultural transformation**: determining and shaping desired behaviors, ensuring top-management support.
- **Getting the fundamentals right**: mastering people processes, delivering on recruiting and staffing, transforming HR into a strategic partner.

The second question is much more interesting and challenges us more. What role can HR play in organizations? There can be some determining roles for HR in the future.

![Figure 2: Futuristic and determining roles for HR](https://www.ijemr.net/issue/15/15.png)
Role 1: The Architect

Beyond the people processes, it becomes a facilitator or even an architect through creation of the right context in which people can be successful; HR will deliver its greatest contribution. This will be achieved by working on culture, organization, processes and environment. The processes belong to the company. We cannot ignore the CEO’s increasing interest in people, leadership and culture. The CEO (or the board) is the owner of people processes. HR takes on the role of architect and designer. HR will create organizations in which leadership, cooperation, innovation, entrepreneurship...can develop.

Role 2: The Artisanal and Digital Expert

To be able to take on the role of architect, HR needs know-how. In the recent past this function used to be a generalist (Ref; Figure 1), but in future it will become a function of experts, or craftsmen. Instead of being a generalist, it will offer top-notch expertise about the people side of the company. Apart from the more traditional, artisanal know-how, HR will have to master the digital know-how: Social Media, HRIS, Employee Self Service...etc. HR will need to incorporate knowledge and practices from other disciplines into its own discipline: marketing, finance, service management...etc. Learning from others is a great opportunity in future for Human Resources.

Role 3: The Coach

In the quest for a spot at the board table HR might have a tendency to lose the contact with people. HR needs to be (come) more empathic. Empathy means to listen, try to understand and act upon that understanding. And why it should not introduce kindness, compassion and humanity into the corporate DNA? It’s like rediscovering the human being behind the employee ID. This is not meaningless softness; Business needs to be humane in order to help people to be successful. HR becomes a coach of the organization, its management and its employees. In the future it will be the employee that will determine and evaluate a company’s people strategy. Coaching is a way of individualization of the people strategy.

Role 4: The Data-Strategist

HR will be more and more oriented towards results and will work on evolving evidence-based. That entails not only looking for data to assess interventions, but also planning interventions based on available scientific insights through Data Analytics. There is not much big data in HR today. However, by analyzing the data available and further orienting towards a data analytic culture, we might be able to shape the future of this profession.

Role 5: The advocate

Leaving the backbench and becoming an advocate of the importance of people processes and results is the future role of Human Resources. The people strategy is a part of the company strategy. Human Resource people will gain influence through their know-how, their fact-based approach and their proactive contribution to the business results. Any business decision has an impact on people and any business strategy depends on the quality of the people who execute it.

Integration

Human Resource is able to design organizations, based on its profound knowledge of human behavior, with the necessary coaching, it has a bright future. We need to look at the various roles, all at once. This is a good starting point for any profession. But HR can expand its influence by trying to look for evidence through Data. And this evidence can be used to build an HR strategy through which it can become the advocate and the architect of the people side of business.

An incredible number of pressures are evident from business environment on today's organizations. To name a few: pressures such as increasing globalization, rapid technological change, and tougher competition; organizational changes such as new organizational alliances, new structures and hierarchies, new ways of assigning work, and a very high rate of change; changes in the workforce, including employees' priorities, capabilities, and demographic characteristics. Within these pressures in organizations, there is a need for (and opportunity for) the human resource function to play a critical role in helping organizations navigate through these transitions. To play this role, however, HR will have to increase its real and perceived value.

Dave Ulrich has indicated a clear path to the next generation with Human Resource Champions: The Next agenda for Adding Value and Delivering Results (1997). He describes a multi-faceted approach to delivering HR services that meets the needs of both employees and employers, and positions Human Resources as a significant contributor to organizational success. Ulrich presents his approach in terms of deliverables or outcomes for which HR should be responsible: strategy execution, administrative efficiency, employee contribution, and capacity for change. While delivering in these four areas, he describes four corresponding roles for HR to play within a business: a) as a strategic partner working to align HR and business strategy, b) as an administrative expert working to improve organizational processes and deliver basic HR services, c) as an employee champion, listening and responding to employees' needs, and d) as a change agent managing change processes to increase the effectiveness of the organization. One of unique things about Ulrich's approach is that is it includes all of the ways that HR can deliver value to an organization, rather than shifting focus from one area to another.

Similarly, Johnson (1997) describes his experiences in executive search in which CEOs describe the HR leaders they want to hire. They want people who will be successful business partners, strategic thinkers, and people who will understand the pressures of running an effective business in today's market. Making the shift to a...
new HR role will raise unique issues for every HR group that attempts it, but there are some common steps and activities that will increase the likelihood of success. Some of these steps and activities are:

- **Strong HR leadership.** As with any major change effort, a strong leader can develop a clear vision, motivate others to share that vision, and help them work towards achieving it. The HR leader will need to work both within the HR group and with the organizational leaders to reshape everyone's expectations of what HR can and will deliver. The success of the change will depend upon HR's ability to meet the real needs of the organization and the credibility it develops.

- **Acute future orientation.** One of the ways that HR can provide value is to understand how changing environmental, organizational, and workforce factors will likely influence the business, anticipate the associated HR needs, and be prepared to deliver appropriate solutions to meet those needs. By focusing on workplace trends, HR can prepare to evaluate the impact that particular changes are likely to have on an organization's people and processes, and be prepared to work with the business leaders to decide how to respond—being ahead of the curve, not behind it. For example, one movement that is likely to have significant impact on the way people are hired, managed, and valued is that of intellectual capital. A "new role" HR department is one that has learned about intellectual capital and its implications, evaluated the impact on current practice, and developed ideas and recommendations for changing HR practice and other business processes.

- **Flexibility and creativity.** An HR group that is successful in the future will likely be one that is responsive to the changing needs of its client organization. Responsiveness in the changing world of work will require being flexible-as the organizations change, so will their needs and priorities. In addition, traditional activities and processes may not be sufficient to meet the unique needs of the future HR leaders will likely rely on creativity of their groups to achieve effective results. Increasing globalization of the market will create a need for both flexibility and creativity as businesses try to succeed in new locations, with a new workforce, and with new customers.

- **Delivering value.** HR is still perceived by many within today's organizations as simply a non-revenue generating function. It is important to make apparent the value provided by working with the management team to hire the right people, manage them well, pay them appropriately, and build a working environment that encourages success. Beatty and Schneier (1997) extended the concept of delivering value within the organization by arguing that HR must deliver economic value to the customers, as well as to employees.

It is clearly time for a quantum leap in the HR field, and I/O psychologists working with and for HR professionals can support this transition by taking seriously the organizational pressures to change, helping to identify ways to measure the value delivered by HR, and conducting meaningful research related to all areas of human performance in tomorrow's organizations.

![The Coolest Thing – Human Resources?](image)

This is an actual picture from Morocco. Who would believe? Yes, actually goats were seen climbing trees. It was like a life-long dream had been fulfilled for whoever saw this. This has nothing to do with HR, but isn’t it the coolest thing ever? Future of Human Resource is just like that – unbelievable!

**The Role challenge & tomorrow's vision**

The sources of sustained competitive advantage lie not only in access to finance or capital, but within the organization, in people and processes capable of delivering business strategies such as customer satisfaction or rapid innovation (Bawany, 2004). To be effective, HR needs to align its improvement efforts with the company’s business strategy. This requires an HR transformation strategy that is realistic and executable – with accurate plans, schedules, resource requirements and estimated benefits that the company can rely on.

**IV. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION**

This research paper has been inspired by the amount of information available on internet and web pages in general and some imaginative ideas and thinking by working professionals in the field. Figures 1, 2 and 3 illustrates the changes happening in the environment and how the Human Resources profession has been evolving. The evolution will continue but what needs to be understood is where we stand today and how we are going to meet the challenges of tomorrow. This is the overview
Emerging Agenda for Human Resources Managers is clear. Transformation starts from them. They need to upgrade themselves and their function to new realities. The speed and dynamism with which global strategies and environmental changes are taking pace, they need to integrate their function with corporate strategy. For this to take place Managers and their teams have to be prepared to handle data, i.e. big data and keep their competitive advantage intact.

SUGGESTION

The following three critical themes emerge: Evolution of work and the worker- The globalization of business, changing demographics and changing patterns of mobility will continue to change the nature of work and the worker; Engaging and integrating a global workforce - Cultural integration and clashes/unrest will continue to grow globally, at both societal and corporate levels; Use of talent analytics for competitive advantage - Talent shortages will continue to grow globally, requiring HR to become the provider of human-capital analytics for input to strategic business decision making. The future is always daunting. Preparedness is the only solution!

REFERENCES


