



What Is Your Company's Human Operating System?

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I bet if I asked you what your company is all about you'd give me that same ol' rehearsed elevator pitch. You'd be able to tell me what it does and why it's important. But, if I asked you how. You just might stall. The answers on "how" a business does what it does lies in its unique combination of systems that governs how it executes its mission.



I like to call this collection of systems the organization's "**Human Operating System.**"

Your firm's Human Operating System is, of course, informed by your vision, enabled by your strategic plans and is translated into company culture. Here are the key parts of every Human Operating System:

1. **Work Design Systems** – These systems define how your business is organized. It determines your reporting lines, you workflow and the nature of your production and service delivery processes. These systems must be optimized and aligned to achieve your vision.

2. **Communication Systems** – These systems include, both, the formal and informal ways in which your business communicates within and without. Time must be spent to design these systems in a deliberate fashion. You want to achieve transparency and to field the necessary tools that make open, honest and ease of communication as simple and straight-forward, as possible.

3. **Decision-making Systems** – Decision-making support systems take many forms and provide many functions. They can be underpinned by “*Big Data*” and sophisticated analytics engines which crunch data and present it in meaningful ways. These systems also include the style in which decision-making is done by a firm, including such “*soft*” subjects as collaboration tendencies, empowerment levels and problem escalation principles. Care must be taken in the design and implementation of these systems because you want to ensure synchronicity with other desired company culture objectives.

4. **Change Management Systems** – These systems include all of the processes and procedures used to set direction and manage change. How well your people handle the natural evolution of your business environment is dictated by the change management systems that you put into place. These systems should be carefully developed to enable the “*preparedness*” of your organization.

5. **Talent Management Systems** – These systems entail the acquisition, retention and development of your human capital. Also included in these systems are training, career path design, job classifications and skills prerequisites. These systems must be fully integrated into your strategic thinking to ensure that the organization is hiring and developing for the future and not just filling its current open positions.

6. **Measurement and Reward Systems** – These systems must be tied to the work design systems so that measurements are done as work is performed and not counted and tallied after the fact. Additionally, rewards systems must be based on the achievement of desired outcomes, at both, company and individual levels, and not on effort or tenure.

To close, what does your organization’s Human Operating System look like? Is it fully aligned with your vision story and does it enable the execution of your strategies? If so, count yourself lucky – few businesses can claim full alignment and integration of the critical systems that comprise its Human Operating System. If not, keep the faith, there’s plenty of help available to assist you in re-imagining how to make them work in unison and achieve your greatest business goals and objectives. Don’t be afraid to reach out for what you need.

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