

Mastering Your First 90 Days as Head of HR: A Comprehensive Success Guide

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

**GLOBAL
EXPANSION**





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INTRODUCTION

Stepping into the role of Head of HR is exciting and challenging.

As the strategic leader of the human resources department, you have the unique opportunity to influence the company's culture, drive its talent strategy, and contribute to its overall business success.

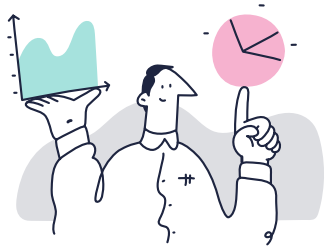
Your first 90 days are critical; they set the tone for your leadership and establish your credibility within the organization. This guide will help you confidently manage this period, providing actionable steps to align HR with business goals, build essential relationships, and lead by example.

Using proven strategies and real-world examples, you'll learn how to make HR a key contributor to company success.



Aligning HR with the Business Engine

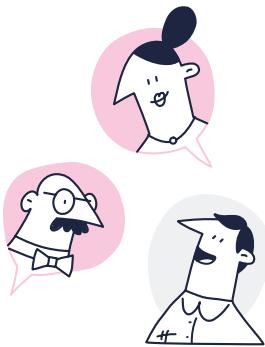
To be an effective HR leader, you must understand your company's business model and operations.



Determine the Revenue Stream:

Identify your customer base, their needs, and how your products or services meet them. Trace the journey of these offerings from creation to customer satisfaction.

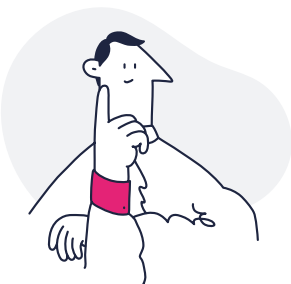
Engage with finance and marketing teams to gather valuable insights. Read [Harvard Business Review's guide](#) to understanding your company's business model.



Examine Every Angle:

Schedule meetings with various stakeholders, including managers, customers, and investors. This 360-degree view will help you understand their priorities and expectations of HR.

A practical case study from the [McKinsey Quarterly](#) illustrates the benefits of this approach.



Walk a Mile in Your Customer's Shoes:

Experience your company's products or services firsthand. This will provide a direct understanding of customer experience and product effectiveness.

This case study from [McKinsey](#) highlights the importance of customer journey mapping.

Building Relationships – Inside and Out

Strong relationships are crucial for effective HR leadership.



Connect with Key Business Leaders: Discuss their goals and challenges. Understand how HR can support them, building collaboration and earning their buy-in. For strategies for growing executive relationships, read this article from [SHRM](#).



Get to Know Your HR Team: Meet with everyone, from direct reports to high-potential employees, to understand their perspectives on HR's strengths, weaknesses, and past performance.



Shift the Conversation: Integrate business updates into HR meetings using financial data and customer insights. This reinforces HR's role as a strategic business partner. For more on making HR a strategic partner, see this case study from [Deloitte](#).

Charting Your HR Course

Understanding current HR activities is essential for identifying areas of improvement.

- ✓ **Map Your HR Activities:** Collaborate to comprehensively overview ongoing HR functions. Categorize them by area (e.g. people, performance, communication). This will help identify opportunities for innovation, alignment, and integration.
- ✓ **Innovation, Alignment, Integration:** Assess whether HR activities are innovative, aligned with business strategies, and consistent across various functions. Learn more about aligning HR with business strategies from [Deloitte's insights](#).

Prioritizing for Impact

Focus on initiatives that are both achievable and impactful.



Quick Wins, Big Impact

Identify areas for swift improvement. Early wins build credibility and demonstrate effectiveness. For examples of quick wins in HR, check out this article from [Forbes](#).



Strategic Focus

Define two to four key HR priorities that directly support organizational strategic goals, such as talent development, strong leadership, a culture of learning, or building collaboration. Secure management approval and establish measurable goals. For more on HR strategic focus, see this case study from [Mercer](#).

Building Your Dream HR Team

Your team is your backbone. Ensure they are aligned and empowered.

Evaluate Your Direct Reports: Assess their skills and credibility. Address any performance issues or misalignments early on. Building a trusted team is crucial for establishing strong leadership.

Invest in HR Talent Development: Identify strengths and weaknesses within your HR team. Provide training and resources to equip them with the skills needed for success. Read about building effective HR teams on [HBR](#).

Leading by Example

Your actions and behaviors set the tone for your leadership.

✓ Respect the Past, Shape the Future

Acknowledge the contributions of your predecessor while establishing your vision. This demonstrates respect for history while embracing progress.

✓ Focus Your Energy

Be strategic about how you spend your time.
Ensure your calendar reflects your priorities and commitment to change.

✓ Raising the HR Bar

Introduce new metrics and accountability measures.
Communicate expectations clearly and consistently follow through on them.

✓ Early Signals Matter

Your initial actions and decisions will be closely observed.
Set the right standards and manage company culture
to reinforce your values and priorities.

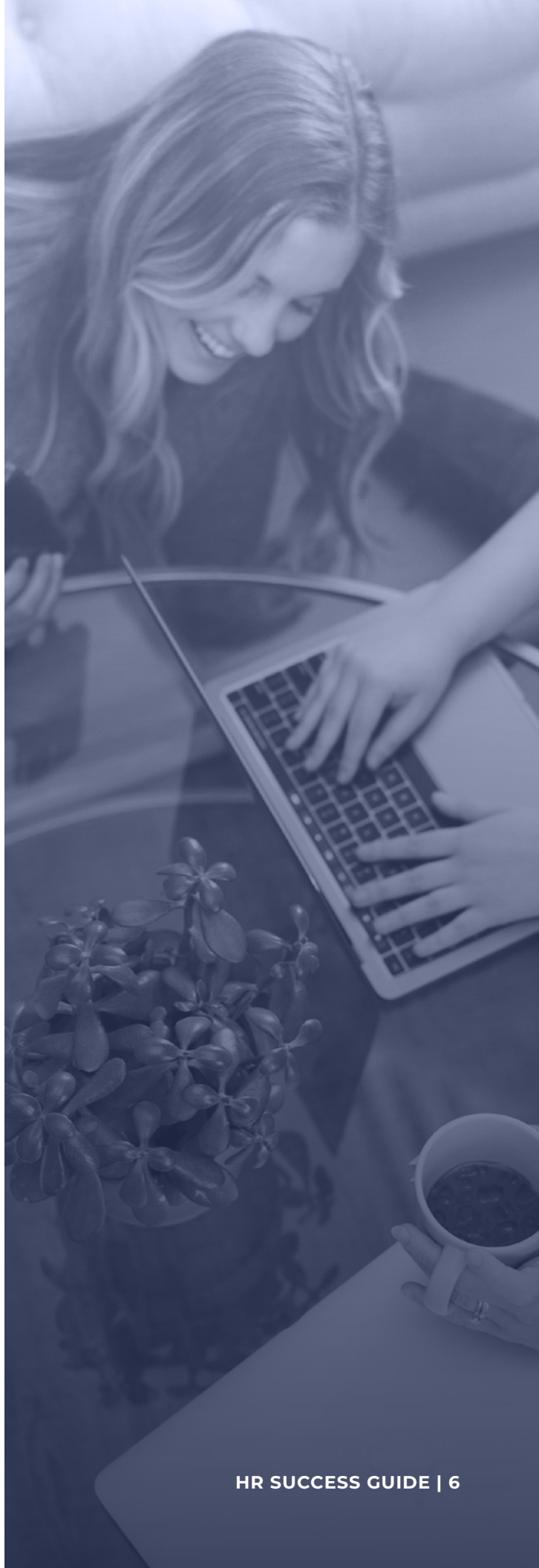


Kickstart Your HR Leadership Journey

Starting as the new Head of HR is a chance to make a big impact. This guide will help you align HR with the main business goals, build strong relationships, and set clear priorities for meaningful change.

The first 90 days are just the start. By building a strong foundation, you'll set up HR as a key strategic partner in your company. Take on the challenge, lead with purpose, and see your efforts turn HR into a crucial part of business success.

Your journey to becoming a standout HR leader begins now, and with the right steps, the possibilities are endless.



Additional Case Studies & Insights

- ▶ The First 90 Days by Michael D. Watkins
<https://www.amazon.com/First-90-Days-Strategies-Expanded/dp/1422188612>
- ▶ Transforming HR: How to Become a Strategic Partner from Mercer
<https://www.mercer.com/what-we-do/workforce-and-careers/transforming-hr.html>
- ▶ HR Leadership Case Studies from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
<https://www.shrm.org/learningandcareer/learning/case-studies/pages/default.aspx>
- ▶ Case Study: How Chief Human Resource Officers Can Drive Business Value from McKinsey
<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/how-chief-human-resource-officers-can-help-drive-business-value>



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