

## 01 / BUSINESS &amp; EVIDENCE

# Understand the business and establish your evidence base.

The first 90 days as CHRO: use these questions selectively, building on what is already known. Activities overlap; address urgent decisions while the wider picture develops. Mark questions as covered, explore or act.

## Connect the people agenda to business value.

- ☐ Where do growth, profit and cash come from? What do strategy papers, business plans and performance by product, market and customer reveal?
- ☐ How are the industry, competitors, customer needs and ownership expectations changing? What can you learn from customers, operations and frontline visits?
- ☐ Which strategic priorities depend on leadership, capability, workforce or organisational change? What changes under different growth, cost or portfolio scenarios?

## Agree the mandate and the decisions ahead.

- ☐ What do the CEO, board and executive colleagues need from you in three, six and twelve months? What will define success?
- ☐ What decisions, investments and promises have you inherited? Review executive succession, remuneration priorities, board reporting and the decision calendar.

## Find the evidence and understand its limits.

- ☐ Where are the authoritative sources for workforce, finance, operations and customer data? Who owns access, analysis and interpretation?
- ☐ What can you reuse from existing dashboards, employee surveys, audits, prior diagnostics, collective agreements and change programmes?
- ☐ Are definitions, coverage and dates consistent? What is missing or disputed, and which decisions require better evidence?

## Build a simple evidence index.

Question to answer | source and location | owner and access | coverage and freshness | confidence and gaps. Combine internal data, stakeholder views, relevant research and experience; record competing explanations.

### DECISIONS & OUTPUTS

A business-priority map, agreed mandate and evidence index. Identify the first decisions to make and the information needed to make them well.

02 / PEOPLE, HEALTH & REPRESENTATION

# Understand the people and the organisation they experience.

Look beyond executive interviews. Combine workforce evidence with listening across levels, locations and working patterns, including groups who are less visible in digital channels.

## Read organisational health through several lenses.

- ☐ What do engagement surveys, pulses and comments show about trust, workload, inclusion, wellbeing and confidence? Compare trends, populations and response coverage.
- ☐ What do attrition, absence, mobility, vacancies, cases and exit interviews add? Test connections with business performance; correlations are clues to investigate.
- ☐ What action followed previous feedback? Where do frontline, shift, site or contractor experiences differ from the corporate view?

## Assess leadership and readiness for change.

- ☐ Which roles, teams and capabilities are critical to the strategy? Review performance, succession, readiness, retention and dependence on particular individuals.
- ☐ Who supports each proposed change, who is undecided and who has concerns? Understand influence, interests and evidence that could shift their view.

## Build support through involvement and follow-through.

Invite credible supporters to help shape and demonstrate the change. Give undecided colleagues evidence and a role in it. Address valid objections and resolve persistent barriers. Positions can change and need not divide into equal thirds.

## Understand representation and build the relationships.

- ☐ Which unions, works councils, forums and employee board representatives cover each country or site? Include transnational bodies and key management counterparts.
- ☐ What agreements, bargaining rounds, consultations or disputes are active? Understand expiry dates, inherited commitments and the history of trust and cooperation.
- ☐ Where can representatives help improve proposals, skills transitions and implementation? Understand their mandate and members' interests when interpreting concerns.

### DECISIONS & OUTPUTS

An organisational-health view, critical talent risks and a stakeholder map. Include representative bodies, agreed next conversations and questions still to validate.

03 / PERFORM & TRANSFORM

# Agree what HR must deliver today and what it must change.

Use perform and transform to organise the agenda, resources and decisions. Protect essential delivery while creating the capacity to improve the function and support business change.

## Protect delivery and establish the baseline.

- ☐ What cannot wait: essential services, critical appointments, employee commitments, negotiations or business milestones? What service standard is required?
- ☐ Can the current function meet those commitments? Where do workload, vacancies or backlogs require reprioritisation, temporary support or an explicit service choice?
- ☐ Reconcile current, approved and proposed headcount and spend. Include local teams, contractors, suppliers, technology, transition costs and committed savings.

## Choose the few priorities that create most value.

- ☐ Which three to five outcomes matter most? Label each perform, transform or both, explaining how it contributes to business results.
- ☐ What stops, simplifies or waits? What capacity will each new request consume, and who agrees the trade-off?
- ☐ What must change in service design, leadership, capability, technology or workforce planning? Link the people agenda to wider business transformation.

| Work portfolio | Decision to make                                                                              |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Perform        | Protect service and near-term commitments; assign enough capacity to deliver.                 |
| Transform      | Fund and staff changes to future capability, work and operating models.                       |
| Both           | Explain the immediate outcome and lasting improvement; avoid counting the same benefit twice. |

## Make the plan credible.

For each priority record outcome, owner, capacity, timing, measure and trade-off. With Finance, distinguish cash savings, capacity released and business value. Build applicable information, consultation, negotiation or agreement steps into the sequence; confirm requirements locally.

### DECISIONS & OUTPUTS

A prioritised people value-creation plan, cost-and-capacity baseline and protected delivery commitments. Make resource gaps and decisions visible before work accumulates.

#### 04 / OPERATING MODEL & FLEXIBLE CAPACITY

# Shape the function so capacity can follow priorities.

Test the whole operating model: services, processes, people, decision rights, information, technology and governance. Use reporting lines as one part of the design.

## Choose the model deliberately.

- ☐ Is the model based on HRBPs, COEs and services; leader-led delivery; employee journeys; flexible project teams; or a combination? Does it fit the business?
- ☐ What requires stable specialist ownership, local presence or continuity? What can be standardised, shared or flexibly deployed?
- ☐ Are global, regional and local accountabilities clear? Trace real manager and employee journeys to find duplication, gaps and avoidable hand-offs.

## Create usable flexibility.

- ☐ Is there an internal consulting pool or transferable capacity across HRBPs, COEs, analytics and services? Who can release it and resolve competing priorities?
- ☐ Can you assemble a focused team for a priority with a sponsor, decision authority, protected time, measures and a clear handover?
- ☐ Where would an independent challenge team help test assumptions? Keep that purpose distinct from responsibility for delivering the work.

## Equip people to work in the model.

- ☐ Do spans, layers, roles and leadership capabilities support the future mandate? Separate individual development needs from problems of role design.
- ☐ What must managers own, and do they have the time, skills, data and support? Who owns industrial relations and country-specific requirements?
- ☐ How will the team reprioritise, fund transition and protect service continuity? Which systems, contracts or agreements constrain the pace?

## Make flexible capacity real.

Record stable service capacity, capacity available for priorities and any temporary gap. Redeployment must release people from other commitments. Give each time-limited team a home for its work and knowledge after handover.

### DECISIONS & OUTPUTS

A service and accountability map, operating-model options and a deployment plan. Define the decisions, resources and manager support needed to make the model work.

05 / FUNCTION DIAGNOSTIC & BENCHMARKS

# Form an informed view of the function and where to invest.

For each area, examine the required outcome, current evidence, capacity and capability, external comparisons and the decision needed. Choose depth according to business importance and risk.

| Area                            | Core questions                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HR business partners            | Do they understand the business and influence important decisions? Is coverage realistic, and what work should sit elsewhere?              |
| Talent & succession             | Do critical roles and future needs drive reviews? What evidence supports readiness, appointments, development and deployment?              |
| Recruitment                     | Are selection, internal mobility, executive hiring and onboarding delivering the people and capabilities required?                         |
| Learning & capability           | Is investment tied to business outcomes? Are gaps in skills, experience, process or work design? Does learning change performance?         |
| Reward & performance            | Do goals, incentives, benefits and recognition support the strategy? Review fairness, affordability, pay positioning and executive reward. |
| OD & workforce planning         | Do structure and decision rights support delivery? Are demand, skills, workforce scenarios and implementation resources connected?         |
| Services & industrial relations | Are services reliable? Review cases, bargaining, consultation, agreements, negotiating authority and central/local expertise.              |
| People analytics                | Are trusted data and analytical skills available? Can the team move from reporting to insight, scenarios and evaluated decisions?          |
| Technology & partners           | Do systems, suppliers and AI improve work? Review integration, adoption, cost, service ownership, overlap and capability transfer.         |

## Use relevant external comparisons.

Benchmark structure and capacity; talent and compensation; organisational health; service cost, quality and cycle time; and technology/AI adoption. Match geography, workforce, service scope and outsourcing. Distinguish research evidence, peer metrics and examples of effective practice.

## Check obligations as well as opportunities.

Review material employment cases, audit findings, pension and benefit commitments, safety and wellbeing interfaces, and promises to employees or representatives. Confirm owners and any urgent action.

### DECISIONS & OUTPUTS

An evidence-based diagnostic: strengths to preserve, gaps to address and investment choices. Record the recommendation, confidence, owner and further evidence needed.

06 / AI VALUE, MATURITY & ADOPTION

# Find where AI can improve work and make the value real.

Map workflows across HR and assess where AI can help. The examples below are opportunities to test; their relative value depends on demand, data, reliability and the organisation's starting point.

| Workflow              | Application to test                                               | Value to measure                                       |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Employee services     | Trusted knowledge retrieval, guided support and case preparation. | Resolution time, accuracy, effort and capacity.        |
| Hiring & onboarding   | Scheduling, approved communications and onboarding coordination.  | Recruiter effort, experience and time to productivity. |
| Analytics & planning  | Data preparation, analysis assistance and workforce scenarios.    | Decision quality, speed and analytical capacity.       |
| Learning & capability | Content, practice, skills mapping and learning support.           | Time to competence, application and cost.              |
| Talent & performance  | Evidence preparation, development support and action follow-up.   | Decision preparation and completed talent actions.     |
| Organisation & change | Process mapping, scenario development and programme synthesis.    | Diagnosis speed, option quality and delivery capacity. |

## Assess potential and readiness separately.

For each workflow: task suitability and human judgement; volume and value; data and integration; owner and controls. Plot potential value against implementation readiness, with adoption and confidence marked. Choose a small number of measurable tests.

## Measure maturity through changed work.

Track exploration, pilot, embedded use and scale separately from adoption: who uses it, how often and for which tasks? Compare quality, time, cost and experience with the baseline. Include integration, training, review and running costs; agree how released capacity becomes useful value.

## Keep accountability clear and support the enterprise.

Define review, access, fairness, escalation and performance evaluation for each use. Check applicable consultation and people-data requirements. Alongside HR's own adoption, partner with the business, Finance and Technology on work redesign, roles, skills and career pathways.

### DECISIONS & OUTPUTS

An HR AI value map, maturity/adoption baseline and prioritised tests. Agree benefit owners, evaluation measures and what would justify scaling, revising or stopping.

07 / PERSONAL SUPPORT & DELIVERY

# Put the support around you and turn decisions into delivery.

The CHRO's effectiveness also depends on access, sponsorship, candid advice and enough capacity to lead. Make those conditions explicit as the agenda takes shape.

## Establish the conditions for your own success.

- ☐ Do you have a clear mandate, visible CEO sponsorship and a way to resolve competing executive expectations? Can you reach the people and decisions you need?
- ☐ Who are two or three trusted colleagues who can explain the organisation, champion progress and challenge your interpretation? Where can you hear a different view?
- ☐ Do you have a confidential sounding board? Are your deputy, analytical, coordination and administrative arrangements sufficient?
- ☐ What must you personally own, and what can others take forward? Protect time for relationships, thinking, learning and recovery.

| Period     | Emphasis                                | What should be in hand                                                          |
|------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Days 1-30  | Understand, align and protect delivery. | Mandate, evidence index, initial health and capacity view, immediate decisions. |
| Days 31-60 | Test the diagnosis and develop choices. | People priorities, team and service options, AI tests and early improvements.   |
| Days 61-90 | Agree direction and mobilise owners.    | Resourced delivery plan, decision rights, measures and handovers.               |

## Build a rhythm the team can sustain.

- ☐ Does each priority have an accountable owner, resources, milestones and outcome measures? What dependency or consultation step could affect timing?
- ☐ How will you review decisions, benefits, adoption and workload? What will trigger a change in plan, and how will employees hear what happens next?

## Use the guide as a working record.

For each area capture: what we know; our current view and confidence; the decision or next action; owner and date. The aim by day 90 is clear direction and credible mobilisation. Larger transformations continue beyond that point.

### DECISIONS & OUTPUTS

An agreed people agenda, personal support plan and delivery rhythm. Make clear what the function will deliver, what will change and who is accountable.