



Fearless HR: Driving Business Results

David C Forman



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Fearless HR is about HR's purpose of driving business results and improving the competitive position of the company. It is about being a business leader, not a department head or a passive participant at a table full of unequals. It is about creating an environment in which talent and innovation can flourish. And it is about being fearless, bold and willing to take risks for the business to be successful. Over the years, people have developed other perceptions of HR. We all know these perceptions exist, but have failed to address them because it might be disruptive or uncomfortable. The problem is that these beliefs become even more engrained in corporate memory when they are allowed to persist. HR, as a profession, must address its past before it can move forward to make greater contributions in the future. Five specific historical perceptions about HR are addressed and examined in terms of the latest evidence and research. • HR Doesn't Add Value to the Business • HR is Siloed and Too Inwardly Focused • HR is a Weak Discipline with Poor Tools • HR Measures are Too Soft and Subjective • HR is a Stodgy, Dead-end Career Once the past myths have been reconciled, there are many serious issues to be addressed. There are four key steps that must be taken before HR can drive the business forward. First, HR professionals must develop a greater diversity of skills and abilities. HR must "get better" and continually strive to improve in such a fast-changing world. Old skills and approaches will not suffice. Second, HR professionals need to expand and grow their professional networks as this becomes essential to developing capabilities and having access to the wisdom of others. Third, HR has very real levers to improve the business through better alignment, cost savings and productivity improvements. These levers need to be used in a balanced fashion, not simply through reductions in force or removing programs to save money. And fourth, the HR profession needs to speak with a strong point of view, a new confidence, with perhaps even with swagger. HR's purpose is to drive business results. It is that simple, and yet that difficult. Part of HR's struggles for years has been the ambiguity over its roles and responsibilities that has then led to different perceptions of its effectiveness. A clear articulated purpose, however, contributes to sharper focus, better alignment, stronger prioritization, improved professional confidence, and less distraction. The Fearless HR story-confronting past perceptions, seizing opportunities and driving business results-- is actually quite liberating.

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