



## The Global HR Capability Project: A New Approach to Accelerating HR Capabilities

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The human resources profession has risen to a heroic role in business. Not only are HR professionals helping their companies deal with the pandemic, but they are also working to mitigate workforce stress and taking leading roles in workplace transformation, fostering greater diversity and inclusion, and redefining the role and nature of leadership. Throughout the last few years, HR has become more digital, more agile, and ever-more focused on the role of data, analytics, and automation at work.

In the midst of all of these changes, HR leaders are also grappling with the continuous professional development of their HR teams. Most HR leaders spend a lot of time and energy thinking about the skills and capabilities of the broader workforce but very little thinking about the capabilities of their teams. Now, more than ever, is the time for this to change.

Over the last two years, we have built the Josh Bersin Academy, which has become [The World's Home for HR](#). The academy is devoted to helping HR teams learn, share, and collaborate with each other. And as the academy has grown (more than 300 companies and more than 20,000 HR professionals are now members), we've found that companies want more. HR leaders want a way to benchmark their teams' capabilities, inventory their strengths and weaknesses, and understand how to build ever-more powerful ways to develop and grow.

This has led us to the creation of the Global HR Capability Project, a multi-component initiative designed to address the heroic role HR now holds, the demand for continual professional development to meet the evolving needs of modern business, and the need to provide relevant analysis for both the individual and the organization. Currently, the project includes the Global HR Capability Model, the Global HR Capability Assessment, Individual Capability Profiles, and Organizational Capability Audits. And this is just the beginning!

### What Are the Capabilities Needed in HR?

There are many competency models and frameworks which try to define the skills of HR. But as we talk with hundreds of leaders and study what really makes high-performing companies work, we found that at its core, what HR professionals need are a set of strategic capabilities to do their jobs.

We define a "capability" as a business-oriented set of skills, which can be described in an easy-to-understand phrase. These capabilities, which are broader and deeper than skills, can be tested, observed, and proven in the workplace.

An example of a capability is building an employment brand. This is a complex area of expertise, one which requires an understanding of marketing, data analysis, storytelling, and the role of culture, leadership, and communications to succeed. We know that there are many skills that make someone an expert at employment brand; additionally, extensive experience and business perspective are required. In our Global HR Capability Model, a capability of building an employment brand is made up of many skills and is ultimately measured by experience in driving employment brand in real-world situations.

As we studied HR over the years, we have identified 94 capabilities relevant to HR professionals. Not every HR professional needs to be highly experienced in each, but we all need to be competent in many of them to succeed. See Appendix 1.

## The Role of Skills, Experience, Relationships, and Context

As we consider capabilities in a profession as complex as human resources, it's important to consider all the dimensions that truly drive success. Our research and model assume that

professional success is based on four things:

- **Skills:** What technical, professional, or managerial skills do you have? We define skills as granular areas of expertise on specific tasks, systems, or practices.
- **Experiences:** What level of experience do you have designing, implementing, measuring, and improving various HR and talent-related solutions? Have you implemented these solutions in small companies? Large companies? Globally? In what industries? Under what business conditions?
- **Relationships:** Over the years of your career, whom have you met who can advise, help, or coach you? How quickly can you identify vendors or technology partners to assist? Do you know solution providers, consultants, or others who can quickly lend expertise when needed?
- **Context:** Are you aware of the social, political, economic, or country-specific issues at play? All HR solutions exist in a world of local, ever-changing social context, so context is also key to professional success.

The Global HR Capability Project aims to address all four areas. And we do this with the awareness that a job or job title is only

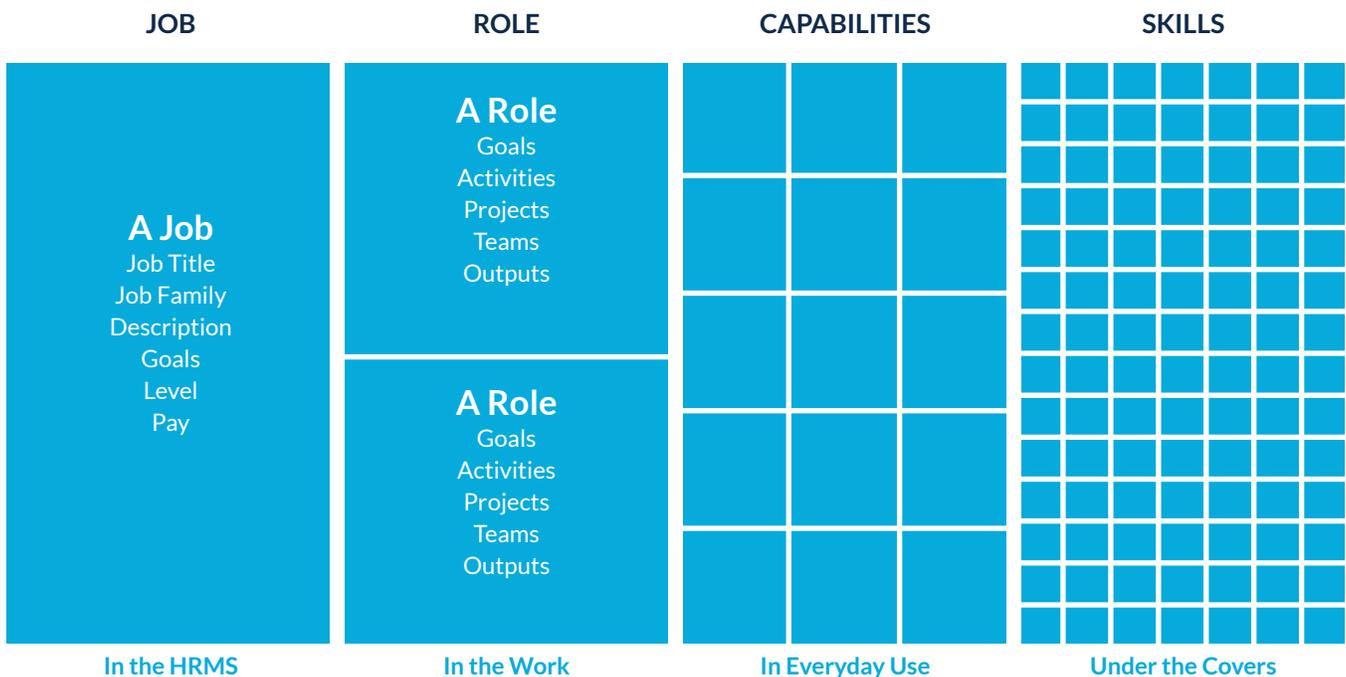


Figure 1: Understanding Jobs, Roles, Skills, and Capabilities

one small piece of the puzzle. After talking with hundreds of leaders, we believe the puzzle looks like Figure 1. Note that the boxes labeled “capabilities” are the most important of all.

In our work, we will not focus on teaching skills such as using Excel or understanding statistics. These are skills that we know you need, but there are many sources for such skills. Therefore, we will recommend, curate, and advise on education and development when skills training is needed.

What we will do, however, is regularly maintain a future-focused, research-driven set of strategic HR-domain capabilities you can focus on. We will also provide you the ability to assess yourself against these 20 broad capability areas.

### Example of Skills vs. Capabilities:

Imagine you are a marketing professional and are responsible for lead generation. In the 1980s, lead generation required skills in direct mail, telemarketing, billboards, and field roadshows. Now, you need skills in search engine optimization, email marketing, affiliate marketing, and CRM. The business capability of lead generation demands these granular skills, but the skills themselves become obsolete over time. By focusing on capabilities, we give you the guidance to continuously develop the current, relevant, and critical skills you need.

## The Global HR Capability Assessment

In order to help HR professionals and HR teams assess their capability strengths and weaknesses, we have developed the Global HR Capability Assessment, in partnership with Perceptyx, a specialist in people analytics. By taking the assessment, you will see your strengths, weaknesses, and overall profile of capabilities as measured against your peers. In the future, we will be able to segment peer groups by tenure, level, role, industry, geography, and company size, so you can then compare capabilities against peers or similar types of companies.

The assessment takes only 15 to 20 minutes to complete, and it can be completed in stages. Responses are kept absolutely private; data is not shared with anyone. Currently, the Capability Assessment is available only to members of the Josh Bersin Academy. We do expect to make it publicly available later in 2021.

Once you’ve completed your assessment, you’ll receive an Individual Capability Profile which shows your capability level for each of the 94 capabilities assessed. The profile also provides customized recommendations for further learning based on your priorities.

Our pilot companies have already gotten amazing insights from assessment data. One large organization in Asia found that some of its business units are quite primitive in key HR capabilities while others are quite advanced. The assessment data is helping them put into place a job rotation and mobility program to help. Another large company found that HR business partners with certain capability strengths lead business units with much higher employee engagement and retention ratings. So HR leaders now know precisely which capabilities pay off the most and can actually quantify a return on investment for developing these capabilities.

We believe and understand that your efforts to stay current will be complex. To help, we offer specially designed Capability Accelerators incorporated into the Josh Bersin Academy. Aligned with various capability areas, accelerators are carefully curated learning journeys comprised of Academy programs, resources, case studies, and work challenges to help you build capability “muscle.”

In coming months, we will be adding solutions to help with finding mentors, new positions, or even redefining job roles. We will be happy to share our vision with anyone interested in learning more.

## Benchmarking Your Team’s Capabilities

There are many reasons to use the Global HR Capability Assessment. The most important is to get an inventory of your company’s HR capabilities so you can see where strengths and weaknesses lay. One of our pilot clients, for example, found that its major strength was in recruiting – important since the company was in a high-turnover industry segment.

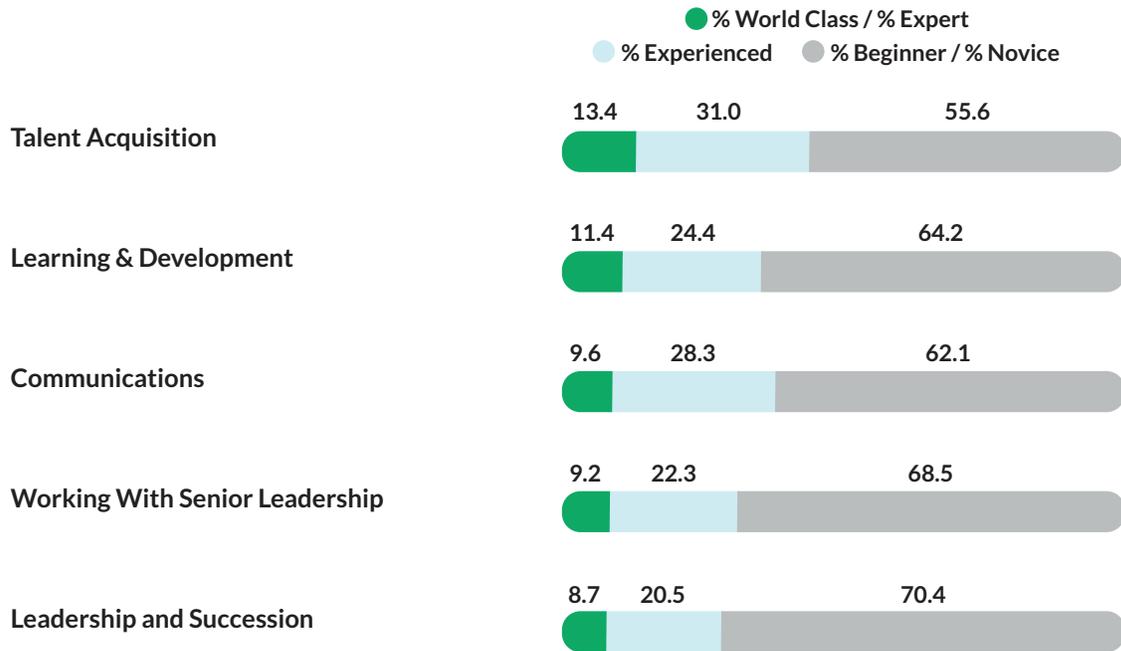


Figure 2: Sample Perceptyx dashboard showing top five areas of strength

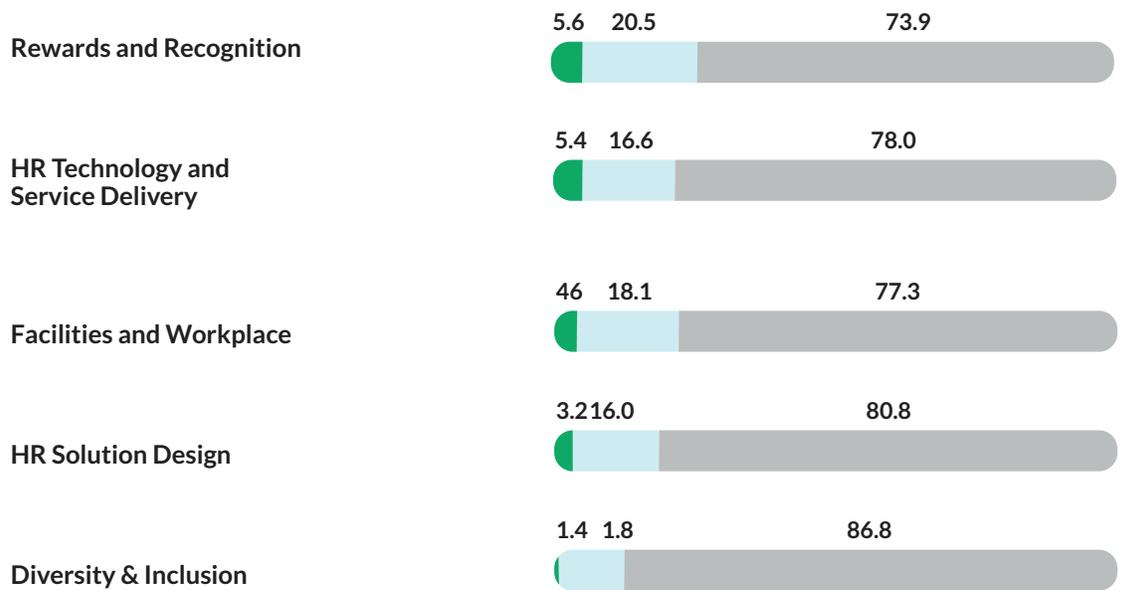


Figure 3: Sample Perceptyx dashboard showing five areas for most improvement

The weakest capability areas were in rewards, technology, design, and diversity. This finding led the CHRO to immediately realize that D&I had to get more focus, so the company is now embarking on an enterprise-wide D&I program designed to show every HR professional how their role must change as the company becomes more inclusive.

Another of our large clients is using the Capability Assessment to understand precisely what different HR business partners actually do. While job descriptions are clear, leaders have seen that some HR business partners are highly strategic advisors while others operate as HR administrators or assistants to hiring managers. The Capability Assessment is helping this company identify these differences so they can build a more integrated, consistent HR business partner community.

## HR Capabilities Directly Drive Business Results

One of our early pilot clients used the Capability Assessment to assess nearly 500 of its HR professionals and then correlated the data against business unit engagement, retention, and productivity. This company found that certain HR capabilities had a direct impact on these measures, so they can now focus on HR needs that directly drive results. For instance, those business units in which HR had highest

capability assessments in talent acquisition also had the lowest attrition of new hires.

This global company also found that skills and capabilities in global change management and organization design were sorely missing and tremendously high predictors of business performance. This is helping the company work with us to directly address these issues.

## Where the Global HR Capability Project Is Going

We are early in our journey, but we already have several thousand HR professionals in our capability database now and expect this number to grow quickly and exponentially. We expect to add more offerings in the coming months.

If you would like to join us in this journey, please let us know as we are looking for pilot clients. We already have experience with some of the world's largest companies and would love to work with you.

For more information, please contact Amy Farner ([amy.farner@bersinpartners.com](mailto:amy.farner@bersinpartners.com)) for details.

# Appendix 1: The Global HR Capability Model

The Global HR Capability Model is an index of the core functional capabilities that are needed for high-performing HR organizations. The model is rooted in more than 30 years of experience examining HR capabilities and based on conversations with hundreds of global HR leaders. The model outlines the 94 unique HR capabilities we've identified as necessary for organizational and individual success. We've classified the capabilities into 20 broad areas that reflect the most important capability areas for future-focused HR organizations.

There are many competency models and frameworks that try to define the skills of HR. But as we talk with hundreds of leaders and study what really makes high-performing companies work, we found that what HR professionals need are a set of strategic capabilities to do their jobs.

The Global HR Capability Model is designed to identify a future-focused, research-driven set of strategic HR-domain capabilities individuals and organizations can focus on. This set will be regularly maintained over time to keep pace with the rapidly evolving needs of leading HR organizations.

## Global HR Capability Model

<b>Benefits &amp; Wellbeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing benefits programs</li> <li>Employee wellbeing programs</li> <li>Emotional wellbeing</li> <li>CSR and volunteer programs</li> </ul>	<b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D&amp;I strategy</li> <li>D&amp;I measurement</li> <li>Recruitment diversity</li> <li>Workplace inclusion</li> <li>Senior D&amp;I support</li> <li>D&amp;I training</li> </ul>	<b>Labor Relations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labor/Union relationships</li> <li>Harassment and discrimination</li> <li>Senior level terminations</li> </ul>	<b>People Analytics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Types of people data</li> <li>Statistical analysis</li> <li>Using analysis tools</li> <li>Data visualization</li> <li>Data quality</li> <li>Data privacy and ethics</li> <li>Advanced analytics</li> <li>Data-driven storytelling</li> <li>Workforce data consulting</li> </ul>
<b>Business Acumen</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global economic trends</li> <li>Budgets</li> <li>Sales and marketing</li> <li>Customer support</li> <li>Manufacturing and operations</li> </ul>	<b>Employee Experience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measuring employee engagement</li> <li>Acting on survey results</li> <li>Survey vendors and tools</li> <li>Employee experience strategy</li> <li>Digital employee experience</li> </ul>	<b>Leadership &amp; Succession</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership models</li> <li>Identifying potential leaders</li> <li>Developing early leaders</li> <li>Developing senior leaders</li> <li>Succession management</li> <li>Board management</li> </ul>	<b>Performance Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PM design</li> <li>Engaging leaders in development</li> <li>Career progression models</li> <li>Global mobility programs</li> <li>PM. tools</li> <li>Performance coaching</li> <li>Coaching leaders</li> </ul>
<b>Change &amp; Transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change management</li> <li>Mergers and acquisitions</li> </ul>	<b>Facilities &amp; Workplace</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable workspaces</li> <li>Moving to new facilities</li> <li>Health and safety</li> <li>Flexible workplace policies</li> </ul>	<b>Leadership of HR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leading HR function</li> <li>Leading functional areas within HR</li> <li>Senior business partnership</li> <li>HR operating models</li> </ul>	<b>Rewards &amp; Recognition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition systems</li> <li>Selecting recognition tools and vendors</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee communications</li> <li>Crisis communications</li> </ul>	<b>HR Solution Design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design thinking</li> <li>Agile methods</li> <li>User experience</li> <li>Product management</li> </ul>	<b>Learning &amp; Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>L&amp;D needs assessment</li> <li>Creating learning experiences</li> <li>Competency models</li> <li>L&amp;D tools and technology</li> <li>Leading the L&amp;D function</li> </ul>	<b>Talent Acquisition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment brand</li> <li>Mobile and social media</li> <li>Sourcing candidates</li> <li>Recruiting AI</li> <li>Onboarding programs</li> <li>Interviewing protocols</li> <li>Recruitment tools</li> <li>Talent acquisition leadership</li> <li>Job descriptions</li> <li>Leading the L&amp;D function</li> </ul>
<b>Compensation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensation models</li> <li>Compensation benchmarking</li> <li>Internal pay equity</li> <li>Executive compensation</li> <li>Total rewards strategy</li> </ul>	<b>HR Tech/Service Delivery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core HR systems</li> <li>Employee portals</li> <li>RPA/Help bots</li> <li>Case management</li> <li>Customer-orientation</li> </ul>	<b>Org Design &amp; Culture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing organizational culture</li> <li>Global cultural issues</li> <li>Org design</li> <li>High performance organizations</li> <li>Contingent workforce management</li> </ul>	<b>Working With Sr. Leaders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consulting with C-level executives</li> <li>Selecting and assessing senior leaders</li> </ul>