



# How to Assess Your HR & Make the Digital Leap

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**At the start of it, none of us could have predicted just how much the COVID-19 pandemic would end up changing the way business and professionals operate – essentially necessitating that companies respond swiftly to the needs and requirements of the new normal, or run the risk of getting outpaced and outperformed by more adaptable rivals.**

Crucially, the same urgency applies in the arena of HR. With social distancing needs brought on by the pandemic, businesses are now discovering just how challenging it is to execute HR processes and protocols online and through screens instead of in person.

What's more, new HR trends continue to pop up that create even more need for businesses to become more HR-savvy in their practices. This includes everything from hiring and talent retention, to healthcare policies, and even disciplinary tasks.

We understand the importance and value of talent, and as such place a keen emphasis on maintaining good HR practices while staying in touch with the latest trends, including remote working models (or WFH) and the shift towards skill-based hiring, for instance.

As such, the modules and features we've developed for Digi's super app, altHR, reflect our very own experience and insights on what today's employers and employees need to get the most of their time in the office (as well as outside of it). To help businesses at surviving — and thriving — in the digital era, we've compiled some of these insights.

Without further ado, here's a general guide to help employers and HR professionals assess their HR practices — and make them better.

## ALIGN TARGETS AND FORM OVERARCHING STRATEGIES.

Assessing your company's HR department begins with identifying the overall objectives and predictions for your business – both in the short and long term, and then seeing how they align with your HR practices.

Start by highlighting what your business targets are for a given time period – whether it be a year or several. Then, understand the opportunities and limitations brought on by said objectives.

For example, any plans to expand the business to a new location will undoubtedly necessitate a consideration to expand your HR team due to increased hiring needs. On the flip side, a meagre growth forecast will see hiring become limited, hence, a potential shift towards growing and promoting from within the organisation.

To make things simple, the task of syncing your business and HR targets should enable you to design strategies to achieve your objectives. Ideally, these approaches should end up satisfying three criteria:



### PROMOTES PRODUCTIVITY

- HR strategies should always be implemented with the goal of making things as efficient as possible for all involved.
- Any implementation should come with as little red tape and bureaucracy as possible. This also means reducing the amount of personnel dedicated to certain manual, recurring functions, such as onboarding or processing payrolls.



### REDUCES COST

- This goes hand-in-hand with the first point, and basically means that all strategies should be as cost-effective as possible.
- This includes reducing staff turnover rates, minimising external vendor costs, or even downsizing bloated teams.



### CREATES SYNERGY

- When implementing strategies, synergy and symbiotic relationships should be created as natural by-products. This includes mutually beneficial relationships between employees, staff, and customers, as well as between the company, community, and the environment.
- Examples of synergy include setting work protocols and policies where employees are incentivised to help each other succeed, or where an open-door policy can allow subordinates to hash things out with team leaders in a safe and holistic environment.
- Externally, these can come in the form of CSR opportunities where staff members are given avenues to serve the community or shifting away from paper towards electronic solutions to lower the company's carbon footprint.

## IDENTIFY NEW AND RELEVANT HR TRENDS.

In the digital era, business trends – including HR practices – have changed rapidly. Many of these changes emerged even before COVID-19, but accelerated with the arrival of the pandemic, while new and completely unexpected styles of work have also appeared as a result.

Assessing your company's HR department properly involves taking stock of what these trends are and adjusting to accommodate the ones most relevant to your staff and customers.

These are just a few of the latest global HR trends at a glance, many of which could be applicable to your own business:



### HYBRID WORK ARRANGEMENTS

- A survey by Accenture has revealed that 83% of employees prefer a work style that allows them to work from (just about) wherever they prefer.
- More companies are becoming more adaptable to flexible working arrangements.



### EMPLOYEE CARE AND WELLBEING

- Social media literacy has caused a global uptick in demand for companies to provide better conditions and benefits for employees.
- A survey conducted in 2021 showed Gen Z respondents strongly agreeing that well-being benefits greatly affected their decisions in applying for jobs.



### RELIANCE ON DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

- Remote working arrangements and the need for swift completion of tasks across long distances has made digital tools such as Slack, Zoom, and various other productivity suites essential for everyday work.



### SKILL-BASED HIRING

- More companies around the world are offering higher salaries to candidates who are able to display competencies in high-demand skills, whether or not they possess paper degrees that indicate their qualification level.

## CONDUCT A GAP ANALYSIS FOR HR.

To get an in-depth understanding of just how well your HR department is currently performing, you'll need to conduct a gap analysis, which is a breakdown and comparison of your existing workforce against the manpower you'll require to reach the business goals you've outlined for your company.

Whether you conduct it internally or via an external consultancy, a gap analysis should accomplish four things:

- Understand your workforce's current strengths and limitations
- Allow you to formulate strategies to get where you want your business to be
- Project potential future business needs
- Plan for future growth

Done correctly, the data you gain through a gap analysis should enable you to determine how to proceed with filling in the so-called "gaps" within your current workforce and end up with a well-oiled HR machine.

These actions can come in the form of adding or reducing the number of staff, upskilling via training, improving team relationships, promoting within, or by simply restructuring existing teams around for better efficiency.

While it may sound complicated, a gap analysis actually isn't all that difficult to carry out. In fact, you can conduct your very own gap analysis by sticking to the following guidelines:



### HAVE ESTABLISHED GOALS.

We previously discussed the importance of aligning your business targets with your HR goals, and the very same applies here. Everything from micro to macro, as well as immediate to long term objectives should be taken into consideration at the start of your HR gap analysis.



### PINPOINT THE SKILLS REQUIRED TO HIT THOSE GOALS.

With your objectives in sight and your work cut out for you, it's time to match the tasks to the various required skills and expertise in your workforce.

There are no hard or fast rules here, save that you should be as thorough and as comprehensive as possible when identifying the skills you want your employees to have (including both soft and hard skills).

Doing this will help you avoid oversight during fresh hiring rounds, allow you to find the talents most suitable to your future projects, and even enable you to plan upskilling programmes for current hires.

Tip: Use the job market to your advantage and derive strategies for talent acquisition from available job ads and descriptions – especially from competitors in the same niche, or for positions that you yourself would like to fill in your company.



## **EVALUATE YOUR STAFF'S CURRENT CAPABILITIES.**

Looking inwardly at your own workforce is no less vital in this process, and you can begin by taking stock of the skills and proficiency levels offered by your current staff.

You can do this in a variety of ways including comparing staff profiles against desired traits and expertise (if you're a smaller company), or by going all out and using analytics and data to gauge performance levels over previous years (if you're a larger business).

It also pays to add the human touch by directly garnering responses from individual employees via one-on-one conversations. Engage in dialogues — or even internalised focus groups — on employees' perspectives toward their own strengths, as well as areas for potential improvement.

It can also be beneficial to discuss potential roles or job functions that employees would like to move towards. These will more often than not yield precious insight into how your workers may grow in the coming months and years, and the best ways to harness their strengths or mitigate their shortcomings.



## **PLAN AND EXECUTE.**

From the information garnered through the processes above, you'll be able to formulate a bespoke strategy for filling in the gaps in your current workforce, and also how to make your HR department more efficient and well-oiled.

The most likely eventuality is that your strategy will be a combination of the following:

- a. Adjusting the headcount of your workforce by adding or reducing personnel.
- b. Introducing training and upskilling initiatives to add value to current staff.
- c. Setting succession plans and identifying potential new leaders for teams.
- d. Reshuffling teams and hierarchies for better corporate synergy.

# TAKE CARE OF THE NITTY-GRITTY

While overarching goals and strategies may seemingly take precedence over everything else, you also shouldn't neglect the smaller processes and concerns that play a part in making everything else tick.

Sure, these may seem like formalities to scratch off a list. But they'll all determine whether or not your company can find, hire, and retain the talent that you need. Too often we've heard of poorly planned HR policies and protocols leaving employees frustrated to the extent of causing an exodus of talent, which is why you need to be wary of neglecting to "sweat the small stuff".

The following are simply a few examples that you should pay attention to:

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS.**

- Does your company demonstrate fair recruitment practices free of biases and discrimination?
- Does your recruitment policy respect the personal privacy of potential hires?

## **WORKPLACE SAFETY MEASURES.**

- Does your business have rules and safeguards in place to protect employees across various working conditions?
- Do you maintain records of past workplace incidents and training as required by law?

## **RECOGNITION AND BENEFITS.**

- Do you have a system in place that rewards high-performing staff members while also providing aid for challenged workers that require assistance (further training, counselling, financial aid, etc).

## **EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE.**

- Does your company enforce a system that allows for misdemeanours to be handled swiftly and fairly?
- Do you have a track record that indicates your workplace is a hospitable enough environment for staff members to feel safe while working?

## **LEGAL COMPLIANCE.**

- Does your team keep track of the latest compliance and legal regulations in Malaysia (or any applicable locality)?



## **THE TOOLS YOU NEED TO SUCCEED.**

When it comes down to it, the task of auditing and fine-tuning your company's HR competency will require certain tools to help give you a clearer overview of the current issues at hand.

For example, auditing current competencies might require access to extensive data sets on your workforce depending on the size of your business, while trying to manage things such as timekeeping systems or employee support groups may require you to adopt a digital HR system that serves all your needs via a single app.

We pride ourselves in knowing exactly what employers and employees require to get the most out of work (and life), and our digital solutions provide all of the building blocks you'll need to properly assess your HR team and policies in the era of the new normal.

Digi's super app, altHR, is a powerful digital solution that is both simple to use and flexible for businesses of all sizes, from all industries in Malaysia, and beyond.

## **LOOKING TO TAKE THE DIGITAL LEAP TODAY?**

**CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT  
FUTURE-PROOFING YOUR WORKFORCE WITH  
DIGITALISATION.**