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CHRO Strategist and Steward Series

# Strategist and Steward

The Evolving Role of the  
Chief Human Resources Officer

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# Strategist and Steward

The Evolving Role of the  
Chief Human Resources Officer



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In this book, we take a look at a range of challenges facing today's CHROs and offer some thoughts on what it takes to be effective.

## Headline News

In the 1980s, companies were focused on maximising growth and scale — particularly through mergers and acquisitions. In the 1990s, the big focus areas were ERP deployment, process standardisation, and moving work to the Web. But today, it's Human Capital-related issues that are grabbing the headlines:

- Workforce demographics and global talent trends are forcing companies to be more strategic and analytical about recruiting, engaging, deploying, and retaining talent.
- Corporate scandals and intensifying regulatory challenges have led to an increased focus on governance, ethics, culture, and compliance.
- Technology innovations are enabling new ways of working, including virtual teams, flexible hours, and a geographically distributed workforce — helping people to be productive whenever and wherever they happen to be working.
- Increasing globalisation is prompting companies to focus on offshore labour markets to stay competitive and is requiring the current workforce to adopt a global mind-set.
- Proliferation of outsourcing and offshoring options for all aspects of business — including HR — has presented decision-makers with a dizzying array of strategic alternatives and raised the importance of vendor management.
- Endless pressure to boost profitability and performance is producing a continuous stream of improvements and changes that threaten to overwhelm the workforce.

What role does the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) play in tackling these headline issues? How can a CHRO work with the CEO, board of directors, and other business leaders to confront these difficult challenges — and to help the company achieve its overall objectives?

The role of the CHRO as an enterprise business leader is still evolving — but it's never been more timely or relevant. In this book, we'll take an expansive look at a range of challenges facing today's CHROs and offer some thoughts on what it takes to be effective.

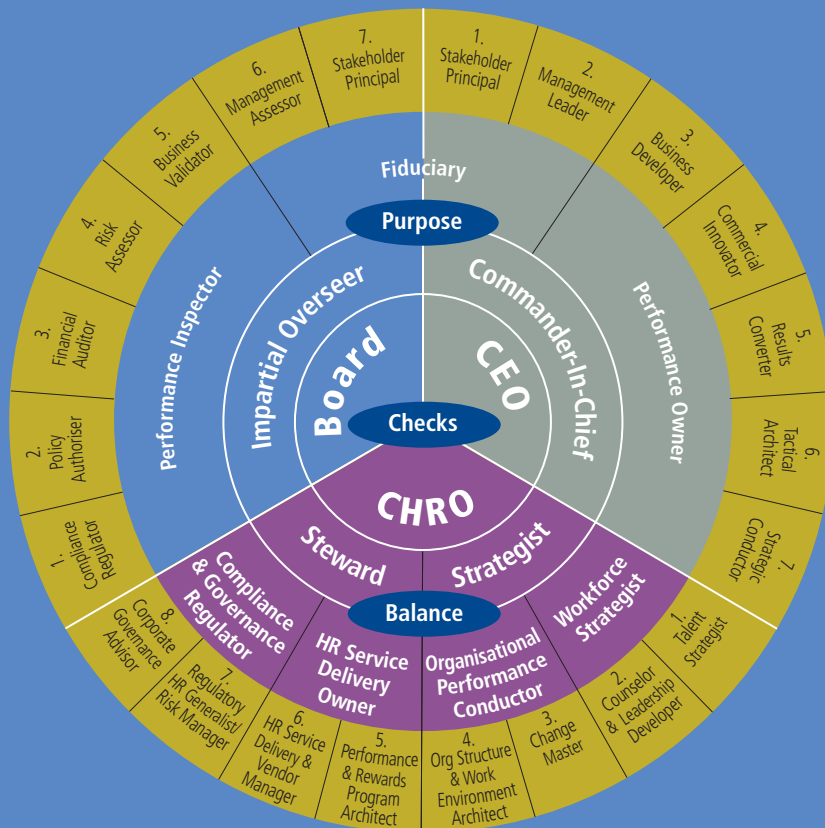
# Strategist and Steward: The CHRO Framework

Human Resources once was viewed primarily as an administrative function. But today, the head of HR is increasingly required to act as both strategist and steward: a leader who not only orchestrates day-to-day HR operations, but also helps shape and implement overall strategy.

Deloitte Consulting LLP's CHRO framework describes the CHRO's roles and responsibilities in terms of four major categories:

**Workforce strategist.** In the past, many CHROs had little or no involvement in strategy. Business leaders often devised their own strategies, then directed HR to “find the people.” But today, business strategy is increasingly a function of the workforce itself. Although CHROs continue to support and implement the overall direction, they now play a key role in steering and informing that direction — helping the CEO and other leaders craft strategies that make sense in light of global labour trends and available talent.

**Organisational performance conductor.** Every company wants to maximise the performance of its workforce. But what's the best way to move the needle? Companies today face an overwhelming number of choices, from boundary-less organisations, virtual teams, contingent workforces, telecommuting, and job sharing to flexible hours, workforce diversity, and more. CHROs help navigate all of those options — creating value in the “white space” that other companies take for granted. Things like performance measures and reward programmes that foster the right behaviour. Leadership programmes to take the company to the next level. Organisational structures that promote collaboration and innovation. Flexible work practices that create an engaging work environment. And, change management experience that helps the company get faster returns on its improvement initiatives.



Today's CHROs spend a lot less time overseeing their own systems, processes, and transactions and a lot more time juggling a complex mix of in-house resources, employee and manager self-service, and external vendors.

**HR service delivery owner.** Although CHROs are becoming increasingly strategic, they still need to deliver the goods of day-to-day HR administration and operations. They are also under constant pressure to cut costs by outsourcing HR transactions and other core HR functions — or to achieve an equivalent level of efficiency in-house. Today's CHROs spend a lot less time overseeing their own systems, processes, and transactions and a lot more time juggling a complex mix of in-house resources, employee self-service, and external vendors — doing their best to serve as the company's HR market maker — seamlessly integrating internal and external services into a cohesive whole.

**Compliance and governance regulator.** A rash of recent accounting and management scandals has put companies — and their employees — under unprecedented scrutiny. Meanwhile, increased globalisation and offshoring have made it far more challenging to comply with local, national, and international laws and regulations. CHROs have begun working directly with the board on workforce issues that are particularly critical or high-risk; they also assist with a wide range of board-related issues, from member selection and orientation to executive compensation and succession planning. Yet a big question remains: How can CHROs and their teams play more of a leadership role on issues of workforce compliance, risk management, and broader governance?

The four categories listed above comprise eight key disciplines (shown at the bottom of the CHRO framework). The sections that follow introduce each of the eight disciplines — highlighting the issues, processes, and performance measures that hold the key to effective CHRO performance.



## CHRO as . . . Talent Strategist

What can CHROs actively do to inform and shape company strategy?

How can global talent trends be approached as an opportunity, rather than a threat?

How does an increased understanding of talent markets help you create new products, services, and profits?

Are you ready for Generation Y?

## Is Talent Your Strategy?

Talent — or a shortage of talent — can make or break a company's business strategy. CEOs and business strategists used to take talent for granted, generally assuming the company could find whatever people it needed to make the strategy succeed. Hiring plans and workforce strategy were “tactical” issues to be addressed once the business strategy was finalised.

That approach worked reasonably well in the past, but it can't stand up to the demands of today's business environment. What was once tactical has now become strategic.

Most developed economies already suffer from a critical shortage of qualified workers in key areas such as nursing, engineering, education, and many of the sciences. And as more baby boomers retire, the problem is sure to become worse — and spread to other areas. Yet in many other parts of the world, millions of skilled workers are entering the global labour pool. At the same time, new Internet-enabled communication and workflow technologies, such as Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) and collaboration software, are enabling new business models and new ways of working — e.g., flexible hours, global virtual teams, and telecommuting — allowing companies to effectively build and manage a truly global workforce.

With critical talent becoming more difficult to find in some markets — and a dizzying array of options for tackling the problem — it's no wonder CHROs are playing a bigger role in business strategy. CHROs now work side-by-side with the CEO and other business leaders to identify ways that talent can be used to create new products and services and to inspire new strategies. Today's CHROs are informing and shaping business strategy — not just supporting it.



CHROs work side-by-side with business leaders to identify ways that talent can be used to create new products and services and to inspire new strategies.

#### Key Processes:

- **Contribute to business strategy.** Work with other business leaders to develop enterprise business strategies that make sense in light of global labour trends and the company's existing talent base.
- **Translate enterprise strategy into global workforce requirements.** Develop workforce plans and programmes that align with the company's overall strategic objectives.
- **Forecast talent needs.** Assess the workforce's current capabilities. Periodically examine future labour trends and expected vacancies.
- **Address talent gaps.** Develop a formal plan to attract, develop, and deploy global talent. Oversee external recruiting and succession management.
- **Orchestrate learning, skills, and career development.** Find the right mix of development programmes to satisfy the company's unique requirements.



#### Key Performance Measures:

- Bench depth/breadth ratios
- High-potential turnover rate
- Strength of employment brand



## CHRO as . . . Counselor and Leadership Developer

How do you develop leaders that fit your company's unique business needs?

How do you use leadership programmes to create greater value for customers, shareholders, and the community?

How might the CHRO build or access executive coaching capability across the company?

## Developing the Next Generation of Leaders

High-performance companies need high-performance leaders. But different companies often have dramatically different leadership requirements. Companies focused on globalisation need leaders with international experience and a global perspective. Companies pursuing a lowest-cost strategy need leaders that live and breathe efficiency. Companies focused on innovation need leaders who can think creatively and push organisational thinking.

CHROs can play a central role in cultivating the right kind of leaders, including designing and implementing leadership development programmes to identify and assess top talent. And they can help high-potential employees round out their capabilities — for example, by sending them abroad to develop a global perspective or by placing them in a key business function.

As CHROs gain respect as business leaders — not just administrators — they are also expanding their role as executive coach, helping other executives and managers strengthen their leadership skills by offering advice and insight on issues such as management style and team effectiveness.

Flat organisational structures have reduced the number of management positions — making it harder for companies to identify high-potential leaders and providing fewer development opportunities. Yet having the right kind of leaders has never been more important. Today's CHROs can — and should — be front and centre when it comes to developing their company's next generation of leaders.

### Key Processes:

- **Provide executive coaching for senior leaders.** Develop formal programmes to help new executives get up to speed. Offer advice on people-related issues, such as management style or team effectiveness. Identify situations in which external coaching might be useful.
- **Oversee leadership development programmes.** Create a leadership competency model linked to performance management, talent selection, and learning. Help high-potential leaders find assignments that will allow them to develop new skills and experience.

### Key Performance Measures:

- High-potential placement rate
- Lateral mobility ratio
- Development plan effectiveness ratio

## CHRO as . . . Change Master

How do you manage change when your workforce is already overwhelmed and exhausted?

How do you help employees and executives to be equally involved in driving change?

What are the leading models to use when building internal change management capacity?

## Overwhelming Change = Underwhelming Results

In today's hypercompetitive marketplace, the most successful companies tend to be those that are most adept at change. Capitalising on new and emerging markets. Introducing new, innovative products and services. And constantly improving their capabilities — taking advantage of speed and scale to stay two steps ahead of the competition.

In striving to become better, most companies tend to focus their attention on processes and systems. But, the truth is, employees are usually the biggest obstacle — and the biggest opportunity. It's not that people are opposed to new ways of working. They are just overwhelmed by the number of initiatives and conflicting messages — and often feel as if they are all alone in shouldering the burden.

When faced with a flood of change initiatives, many people simply choose to do nothing — hunkering down, ignoring the proposed changes, and hoping the storm will just blow over. And very often, that's precisely what happens. Need proof? Just think about the history of failed change initiatives within your own company.

In a world where change is the only constant, companies must be really good at change. Of course, that's easier said than done. This is one area where CHROs have an opportunity to make a huge and immediate impact on the company. Whether the challenge is merger integration, divestiture, new IT systems, new operating processes, new regulations, or a new business model, CHROs must take a lead role in helping the executive team and workforce deal with change.



In a world where change is the only constant, companies must be really good at change.

#### Key Processes:

- **Build and oversee change management capacity.** Establish a cross-functional team that serves as an internal consultancy for change initiatives — or have a trusted relationship with an outside firm. Actively market those services to line management. Oversee project selection and serve as a liaison to project sponsors.
- **Provide change management guidance and services.** Help business units and project teams overcome resistance to change by providing change management experiences and resources. Oversee all of the company's major change initiatives.

#### Key Performance Measures:

- Employee satisfaction/engagement survey
- Employer-of-choice ratings
- Individual project delivery measures: on time, on budget, change realised

## CHRO as . . . Organisational Structure and Work Environment Architect

How do you create a work environment that supports flexibility and diversity?

How do you capitalise on talent across geographic and corporate boundaries?

How do you keep employees in an increasingly distributed workforce connected to each other — and to the company?

How can workforce values, behaviours, and culture help deliver a globally consistent customer experience that drives profits?

## Work Environments That Work

Creating a work environment that helps people perform their best is more challenging than ever. At many companies, traditional full-time workers now comprise only half of the workforce. The other half is a complex mix of part-timers, temps, independent contractors, third-party vendors, and offshore/outsourcing resources. There is no organisational chart any longer — just a large (often global) network of resources.

At the same time, technology advances based on the Internet are enabling entirely new ways of doing business, including virtual teams, flexible hours, job sharing, telecommuting, and a geographically distributed workforce. Workers are no longer chained to their desks from nine to five. They can now be connected and productive at all hours of the day, from anywhere in the world. And they know it.

More and more workers are looking for flexibility in their jobs. And with critical talent in short supply, savvy companies are looking for ways to accommodate them.

Keeping workers engaged and productive, managing across borders and boundaries, and sustaining a high level of performance using a non-traditional workforce — these are just a few of the challenges for the CHRO today.

### Key Processes:

- **Provide organisational design and performance optimisation consulting services.** Design or restructure functions and business units to respond effectively to internal and external markets. Build influence networks that span organisations. Deploy and monitor systems that hold people accountable.



Keeping workers engaged and productive is one of the key challenges for the CHRO today.

- **Define organisational culture and values.** Foster a culture that aligns with the company's overall mission. Link culture to behaviour through appropriate policies and procedures. Monitor organisational behaviour and cultural alignment, reporting the results to senior leadership on a regular basis.
- **Define a diversity strategy and programmes.** Drive the process for defining diversity. Establish clear goals and a business case. Confirm top-level support and ownership, reporting progress to senior leadership and the board.
- **Design the workforce environment.** Establish guiding principles and a framework for flexible staffing practices. Initiate programmes that help people operate effectively in a global business environment. Develop and test business continuity plans for working remotely.

#### Key Performance Measures:

- Percentage of participation in flexible staffing programmes
- Diversity representation for management vs. non-management positions
- Span of accountability statistics

## CHRO as . . . Performance and Rewards Programme Architect

How do you manage your rewards programme like a business?

How do you create innovative performance and rewards programmes that align employee development with business objectives?

How do you determine the optimal mix of reward components — a mix that encourages employees to “invest” in the company?

## Dollars and Sense

Successful talent management demands more finesse than simply throwing money at “A” players or juggling benefits programmes in lean times.

As health care costs continue to skyrocket, it's becoming increasingly difficult to design a total package of benefits and compensation that is both appealing and cost-effective. At the same time, companies are evaluating innovative new approaches to traditional health care costs — such as consumer-driven health care initiatives. More than ever, compensation, benefits, and rewards are key drivers of employee behaviour and retention. But finding the right combination isn't easy.

One useful approach is to look at the problem the way a CFO would. At many companies, there is a quiet, ongoing battle between the CHRO and CFO over who controls compensation and benefits. And because CFOs are generally regarded as better “business people,” they often prevail. To improve their effectiveness and credibility, CHROs must analyse and present information using the same hard-nosed, dollars-and-cents approach a CFO would use.

Alignment is critical. Translating company goals into business unit goals and then into individual goals — so everyone pulls in the same direction. Creating rewards and incentives that encourage behaviours that drive business results. And developing evaluation and alignment processes that reinforce the company's overall goals and help people improve.

### Key Processes:

- **Design and administer performance management and recognition programmes.** Develop an effective approach to performance reviews and 360° feedback. Calibrate and refine the rating scale, processes, and tools on a regular basis. Lead the process to link individual goals with overall business objectives. Develop a strategy and programmes for non-financial incentives. Actively sponsor and participate in recognition programmes and events.



More than ever, compensation, benefits, rewards, and flexibility are key drivers of employee behaviour and retention.

- **Oversee and manage compensation and benefits.** Develop and administer employee and executive benefit plans and compensation, including base pay, short- and long-term incentives, and health, welfare, and retirement programmes. Oversee delivery of the programmes and the increasing complexity of regulatory compliance. Manage the programmes to retain talent effectively and economically.

**Key Performance Measures:**

- Performance improvement rate
- "High-performer" turnover rates
- Employee utilisation/satisfaction with benefits packages



## CHRO as . . . HR Service Delivery and Vendor Manager

How should your HR function be organised to support the business most effectively?

How do you decide which processes and technologies to deliver through internal shared services and which to outsource?

What is the CHRO's role in a mostly outsourced HR environment?

How can senior leaders best utilise HR and people data to support business decisions?

## Delivering the Goods

HR service delivery has changed dramatically in recent years. Transactions that used to be performed in-house are now typically outsourced — shifting the CHRO's focus from internal transaction processing to managing a complex mix of offerings from in-house resources, shared services, offshore and outsourcing vendors, portals, and employee self-service.

No company should be paying a premium for basic HR transactions. Whether a service is provided in-house or through an outside vendor, it's the CHRO's job to benchmark cost and quality against the market's most efficient providers — and to demand a comparable level of performance. After all, that's how the CEO, CFO, and shareholders look at it.

The CHRO is evolving into the market maker for all HR services, both internal and external, giving the company a single point of contact for all its HR needs. The CHRO then must deliver those services seamlessly and transparently, regardless of the source.

In the end, the C-Suite doesn't really care who provides their HR service, as long as it's cheap and effective. Of course, they also expect you to know everything about their function and to anticipate their HR operating requirements — even before they do.

### Key Processes:

- **Determine the HR service delivery model.** Structure the HR function to manage a truly global workforce. Determine the right mix of delivery channels, e.g., shared services, HR portals, external vendors, and employee self-service. Identify HR processes that are good candidates for outsourcing and prepare a rigorous business case.
- **Design and foster the optimal connection between HR and the company.** Manage the interface between HR and all areas of the company. Serve as the single point of contact for all HR services.



It's the CHRO's job to  
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efficient providers.

- **Identify and select external vendors.** Establish selection criteria and a formal scorecard. Lead the selection process, conducting due diligence and checking references.
- **Structure and manage vendor relationships.** Negotiate contract terms and approve the statement of work. Oversee the transition of people and systems as needed. Monitor vendor performance.
- **Oversee operational HR activities.** Demand a high level of quality and efficiency for all in-house HR services.
- **Manage in-house HR technology development.** Keep abreast of technology developments. Advise senior leadership about HR technologies that warrant a "big bet." Oversee development, testing, and rollout of HR systems and infrastructure.
- **Manage HR data, reporting, and analytics.** Identify people-related data and analyses that are critical to the company's business strategy. Market those reports within the company, helping the C-Suite and other leaders understand and act on the insights.

#### Key Performance Measures:

- HR delivery cost per employee
- HR expense as a percentage of total operating expense
- Vendor service level agreements
- Customer satisfaction

## CHRO as . . . Regulatory HR Generalist and Risk Manager

How do you create an ethical workforce?

Which C-Suite executives “own” integrity?

What are the leading models for building a compliance-ready organisation?

## Risky Business

Regulatory compliance is another traditional HR activity that is becoming even tougher. HR teams that were not heavily focused on compliance, ethics, and culture certainly are focused on them now.

Workforce-related regulations — by country and industry — continue to expand and evolve, becoming more complex every day. Companies are abandoning countries and businesses, not because they want to, but because they have run afoul of key regulators. Meanwhile, increasing globalisation essentially multiplies the challenge — with each new country operation injecting new laws and regulations into the compliance mix.

One of the CHRO's primary responsibilities is to define and execute HR policies and procedures that comply with local, state, federal, and international laws. CHROs must also actively manage labour-related risks — regularly auditing HR processes and developing a formal strategy for mitigating workforce-related risks. In addition, CHROs can play an important role in the larger challenge of building an ethical and informed workforce — managers and employees who know, understand, and believe in what they need to do.

In the United States, many CHROs have been key players in Sarbanes-Oxley compliance. Helping determine who has visibility to what. Establishing clear accountability and internal controls. Eliminating potential conflicts of interest. Developing an appropriate tone at the top. And most important, finding ways to use compliance projects as a catalyst for performance improvement, not just for compliance.

Because every violation and scandal ultimately has its roots in the workforce, CHROs would seem like a natural choice to champion the compliance effort. Yet it's ultimately the CEO and CFO who sign their names to certify the company's practices and who are personally liable for any missteps. Compliance and ethics are ultimately about people, which means CHROs need to find a way to get some skin in the game.



Companies are abandoning countries and businesses, not because they want to, but because they have run afoul of key regulators.

#### Key Processes:

- **Formulate and execute HR policies.** Develop, document, and execute all HR processes, including performance reviews, benefits and compensation, hiring, and termination — as well as employee complaints and employee/ employer conduct.
- **Manage HR compliance.** Confirm that the company complies with all employee-related regulations, including anti-discrimination practices, harassment prevention, safety, Sarbanes-Oxley compliance, and Title VII adherence.
- **Manage international HR compliance.** Establish HR specialists within each country who can translate and apply company policies to local employees.
- **Manage human capital risks.** Conduct internal audits of HR processes and support external audits. Develop a formal strategy and guidelines to evaluate, prioritise, and manage workforce risk.
- **Report compliance to management and the board.** Report to the board and/or audit committee on key risk areas, including the effectiveness of internal controls. Lead the compliance and sign-off process for disclosures.

#### Key Performance Measures:

- Number of anti-discrimination complaints/lawsuits
- Number of actions taken as a result of exit interviews
- Response time on employee relations complaints

## CHRO as . . . Corporate Governance Advisor

How should a CHRO interact with the board of directors?

What is the CHRO's role in executive succession?

What issues should a CHRO bring to the board?

## A Higher Authority

Governance has been a hot topic lately, driven by a rash of highly publicised accounting scandals and by shareholder demands for improved performance and accountability. Today's top executives face unprecedented pressure and scrutiny. At the same time, the challenge of finding qualified leaders continues to mount, with an outside executive search often costing in the millions.

In the past, most HR leaders had very little direct contact with the board of directors. But today, the relationship is much closer. CHROs help design and administer the processes for board member selection, orientation, compensation, and performance evaluation. They provide insight, analysis, and data for all board-level HR issues. And, they are actively involved with the compensation committee.

CHROs also play a significant role in executive succession planning, helping the company find the right people for its most important leadership positions.

### Key Processes:

- **Manage executive succession.** Specify detailed criteria and competencies. Review internal and external candidates. Advise the search committee on the recruitment and selection process — and on the compensation package. Oversee the process for identifying and developing potential successors from within.
- **Provide board development and administration services.** Design an objective process for selecting new board members, along with a performance review process and compensation plan. Recommend committee assignments and rotation schedules. Develop and conduct a training process to help both new and existing board members to understand the company, its business strategy, and its market environment.
- **Support the compensation committee.** Present to the board on critical issues, such as risk management, compensation and benefits, occupational health, labour relations, executive compensation, and talent management. Provide data, research, and analysis on compensation and other HR-related issues.

### Key Performance Measures:

- Time-to-fill for senior leadership positions
- Results of board effectiveness survey
- Board training and development participation rates



The evolving role of the CHRO  
is about focusing on the  
headline business issues first.

## Be Careful What You Wish For

CHROs are being asked to do more than ever before — serving as both strategist and steward in an increasingly complex business environment, whilst at the same time continuing to oversee day-to-day HR operations.

To succeed, CHROs must be ready and able to take the lead on a wide range of critical business issues. Their personal challenges include:

- **Moving up from strategy implementation to strategy development.** Helping the CEO and other business leaders devise strategies that make sense from a people perspective — informing strategy — then translating those strategies into action through hiring and development programmes that provide the right talent at the right time for the right price.
- **Creating a work environment that helps people perform their best.** Anticipating market trends and taking action early. Responding quickly to the needs of the company. And, offering creative staffing solutions that help the company create value in the “white space” — activities that other companies take for granted.
- **Flawlessly executing the core HR transactions.** Delivering world-class HR services at the lowest possible cost — seamlessly and transparently — whether they are delivered through in-house resources, shared services, outsourcing, or offshore.
- **Staying ahead of the curve on ethics, compliance, risk, and governance.** Confirming full compliance with governmental regulations at the local, national, and international levels. Identifying and resolving critical issues before they become problems. And, working closely with the board of directors to address high-level governance issues, such as board member selection, committee assignments, and executive succession planning and compensation.

CHROs have longed for a time when their executive peers would view HR as a strategic partner. And now that wish has been fulfilled. Talent trends and other HR issues have become a critical factor in company strategy and overall performance. The main issue is whether CHROs are up to the job.

The evolving role of the CHRO is not about putting HR in the headlines. It's about focusing on the headline issues — working directly with the CEO, executive team, and board to set company direction, capitalise on talent, and improve overall performance.



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The information contained herein is based on the experiences of our Deloitte Consulting LLP professionals.

## **CHRO Strategist and Steward**

New business and workforce challenges are making HR and people issues more visible and important than ever. Deloitte Consulting LLP's CHRO Strategist and Steward book series offers an outside-in perspective to help CHROs and CXOs understand and tackle these emerging issues and trends. Each volume provides fresh insights to inspire creative problem solving, as well as a framework for in-depth analysis and discussion. Current topics in the series include: The Evolving Role of the CHRO, HR Transformation, The People Dimension of Transformation, Technology and Regulatory Adoption, and Rewards Transformation. For more information, please visit [www.deloitte.com](http://www.deloitte.com) or e-mail us at [HumanCapitalDTT@deloitte.com](mailto:HumanCapitalDTT@deloitte.com).



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