



SABPP™

SA BOARD FOR
PEOPLE PRACTICES

Setting HR standards

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FACT SHEET

FUTURE WORLD OF WORK SERIES:

KEY THEMES AND QUESTIONS
FOR HR 4.0

INTRODUCTION

This factsheet is the fifth instalment in the series exploring the Future World of Work. The series serves as a prelude to the broader HR community engagements that the SABPP is planning for on the **'HR Standards in the Future World of Work'**. The previous factsheets explored the future forms of organisations, the evolving definition of employees, the employee in and of the future, and future lifespans. The present factsheet brings together the previous discussions to outline the key themes and questions for building HR in the future world of work. That is, HR 4.0. It can serve as a guide for Chief HR Officers (CHROs) on reimagining and building out the people strategies and function in the future world of work; and define the role of HR in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).

The factsheet explores two frameworks. The first framework is from the Whitepaper (2019) of the World Economic Forum (WEF) that focuses on the future of work and the people strategies, role, and function required to address this future. Thereafter, the factsheet explores the second framework, the **SABPP HR Management System Model**. The Model and the HR Standards can guide the HR practitioner to identify future, costed scenarios, the aligned HR architecture and value chain, and what are the good people practices that need to be developed. The factsheet points out key themes and questions to guide the HR practitioner.

WHAT IS HR 4.0?

Key forces and themes of HR 4.0

HR 4.0 imperatives and capabilities

KEY QUESTIONS

Strategic HRM Standard element

Talent Management Standard element

HR Risk Management Standard element

Workforce Planning Standard element

Learning and Development Standard element

HR Technology Standard element

HR PRACTITIONERS' READINESS AND REINVENTION

CONCLUSION

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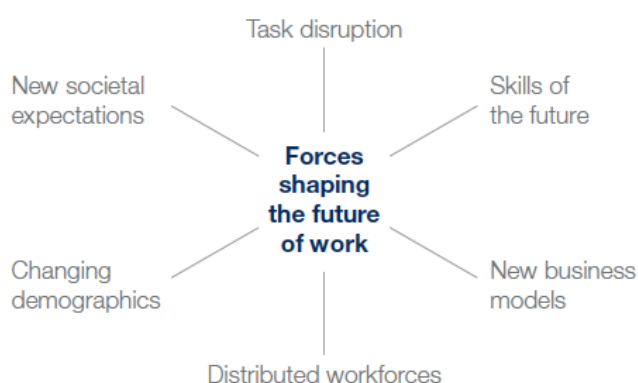


WHAT IS HR 4.0?

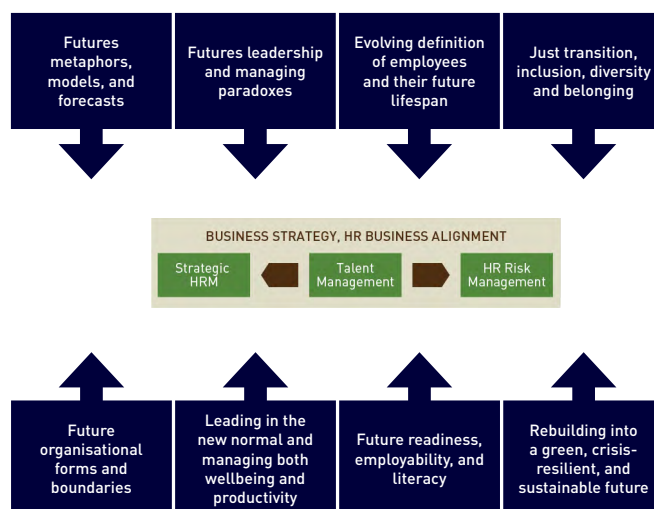
The WEF provides a simple workable definition in its Whitepaper (2019). Therein it defines HR 4.0 as a “framework for shaping people strategies in the 4IR” (p5) and industry 4.0. The key word is ‘framework’. First, it identifies the 4IR forces shaping the future of work and then, second, it articulates the implications for new leadership and HR capabilities. The focus is on work or rather the transformation and reinvention of work and the implications for the workforce. The framework does not attend to workforce and workplace transformations themselves. These can be explored in the previous SABPP factsheets, for example, the factsheet on **workforce transition issues**.

KEY FORCES AND THEMES OF HR 4.0

The below diagram from the Whitepaper provides an overview of the forces that it identifies. These are also some of the key themes one finds in various discussions on the changing world of work.



These forces have been explored in the factsheet series, Future World of Work. These factsheets and the previous ones identified other key themes as well. These are illustrated in the figure below in relation to the strategic alignment aspect of the **SABPP HR Management System Model**. As can be seen in the illustration there is no single, teleological, or given future. The emphasis is on probable futures. The plural signifies that there is no single path or destination. The qualifier probable highlights the uncertainty and ambiguity, but also means that we as humans can shape the futures we will work and live in. One would need to also add the qualifiers, paradoxical and entangled, to the futures possible (see the factsheet on **HR's role in shaping leadership in the new normal**).



HR 4.0 IMPERATIVES AND CAPABILITIES

Given the above forces shaping the future of work, the WEF Whitepaper identifies six imperatives for people strategies and the attendant leadership and HR capabilities required. The first table below provides an outline of the themes that

characterise the six imperatives, and the second table from the Whitepaper provides a summary of the imperatives and required capabilities for the future world of work.

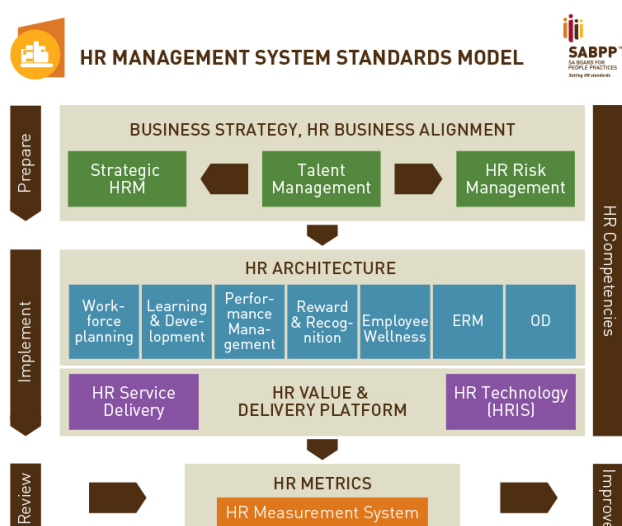
4.0 IMPERATIVES	THEMES PER IMPERATIVE
Developing New Leadership Capabilities for the 4IR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borderless organisations and diverse, distributed teams • Shift to purpose-driven leadership and adaptive leadership in uncertain contexts • Focus on building culture for agile ways of working and organising • Analytics, artificial intelligence, and evidence-based decisions
Managing the Integration of Technology in the Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job reinvention • Reskilling and redeployment • Building talent ecosystems • Engaging all stakeholders in work transformations, particularly automation
Enhancing the Employee Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift to holistic employee experience that promotes purpose and belonging • Real time employee engagement using technologies • Integrated well-being tailored to individuals • Flexible reward and recognition
Building an Agile and Personalized Learning Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning mindset and culture • Personalised, self-driven and digitally-enable learning • Reskilling and upskilling for mobility into adjacent or non-adjacent roles, particularly for employees in at-risk jobs • Skills analytics and aligned learning pathways
Establishing Metrics for Valuing Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics for integrated reporting • Predictive analytics for human capital • Full costing of human capital, including platforms, software subscriptions, and other costs throughout the HR architecture and value chain
Embedding Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and inclusion integrated across the HR value chain • Analytics and evidence-based decisions on diversity and inclusion in the organisation • Embedding diversity and inclusion in the leadership and management development • Stakeholder engagement internally and externally

For an understanding of the paradoxes entailed by these imperatives and themes, including between them, see the **2020 Deloitte Human Capital Report** and the factsheet on **HR's role in shaping leadership in the new normal** for example. The above imperatives and themes are translated into the below leadership and HR capabilities in the WEF Whitepaper (2019). The latter are suggested as emerging HR functions or roles for the future of work.

IMPERATIVES	EMERGING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES	EMERGING HR FUNCTIONS
Developing New Leadership Capabilities for the 4IR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embrace and explain ambiguity Combine operational management, technology integration and people management skills Use culture as the new structure Use analytics as a key tool in the distributed organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Ambassador Digital HR Lead
Managing the Integration of Technology in the Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build strategies for job reinvention, reskilling and redeployment of talent Identify reskilling pathways for talent whose work is being transformed by automation Orchestrate a combination of actions to address the impact of automation Build a talent ecosystem encompassing alternative work models and employ different methods of finding needed skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Work Reinvention and Reskilling Head of Relevance and Purpose
Enhancing the Employee Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a human-centric, holistic and purposeful employee experience Rethink and invest in employee well-being Align the employee experience with the agile operating model Use technology to engage employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee Experience Specialist Bot Monitor
Building an Agile and Personalized Learning Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster a culture of lifelong learning and shared responsibility Engage and pro-actively manage employees in at-risk jobs Unlock the learning mix that is right for the organization Track and measure skills in your organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Ambassador
Establishing Metrics for Valuing Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use new technologies and data to develop new human capital metrics Use technology and data to drive the business decision making Create external reporting on the value of and value added by human capital Include all forms of human capital within the organization's metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Insights HR Data Scientist
Embedding Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively manage diversity in alignment with business growth Embed D&I into concrete steps in culture and process Use data analytics rigorously to measure diversity and assess inclusion Engage with stakeholders and knowledge sources beyond the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity & Inclusion Officer

KEY QUESTIONS

Where and how do we start? This may be the question CHROs are grappling with, especially with the various descriptions and prescriptions on the future, the number of themes stemming from these, and the urgency of employability and productivity. The SABPP HR Management System Model, comprising thirteen HR Standard elements, provides a guiding framework to evaluate the current people strategies and function and then to systematically reimagine the people strategies, value proposition, and function required for the future world of work.



Below the example of the HR Standard elements related to strategic alignment are used (which was discussed above). A set of questions for these HR Standard elements and a sample of Standard elements of the HR value chain and delivery platform is provided. These can help locate the themes that are explored above and form the basis for us to challenge what we do and how we do it. Reference to the related factsheets that could provide an entry point into the key issues and the insights from various debates are made in parenthesis. The factsheets are referenced by their number and date of publication, for example, FS 2/20 means the factsheet number 2 published in 2020.

In HR Audit terms, the quality of approach of the audited organisation will depend on the extent to which the organisation has addressed these questions. As HR practitioners, we have to ensure that we have equipped ourselves with enough knowledge to enable us to understand the scope of these questions and to apply them to our organisations, however large or small, to co-create the future with our executives and line managers.

STRATEGIC HRM STANDARD ELEMENT

1. Are our HR strategy, processes and systems promoting efficiency in current operations (fit) as well as building capability to transform our products, operations and workforce to meet new competitive [and technological] challenges as they arise? (FS 2/20, 1/21)
2. Are we actively networking within and across sectors/ industries to identify relevant innovations and potential disruptions? (FS 2/20)
3. Have we reconsidered the role of HR and the relevance of HR practices in the light of the need to consider multiple ways for people to work for/with our organisation? (FS 1/21)
4. Have we chosen a model for our 'HR4.0' framework? (FS 1/20)
5. How are we viewing technology and human agency together? (FS 1/20, 4/20, 6/20)
6. Have we challenged the relevance of our Employer Value Proposition in relation to different, and changing, segments of our workforce? (FS 11/20)
7. Have we reviewed the roles, structure and skills of our HR practitioners for future requirements and put in place plans to implement any changes needed? (FS 1/20)

TALENT MANAGEMENT STANDARD ELEMENT

1. Have we reviewed our leadership capability model and identified the changes we need for the next stage in our business model? (FS 1/20)
2. In so doing, have we tapped into stakeholder needs in developing our concept of the leadership we need for the future? (FS 5/20)
3. Have we done any re-imagining of our organisational ecosystem so that future focus is more on partnerships, free agents and talent platforms alongside internal teams, as the boundaries of our organisation change? (FS 4/20 and 11/20)
4. How effective are we at promoting and harnessing diversity and achieving inclusion and belonging? (FS 1/20)
5. Have we critically reviewed our career management processes to take account of disruptions to future concepts of work and jobs? (FS 1/21)
6. Have we critically reviewed how our human capital and technologies can augment rather than replace each other? (FS 4/20)

HR RISK MANAGEMENT STANDARD ELEMENT

1. Have we adjusted our organisational and HR risk maps to allow for future pandemics and/or global disruptions?
2. Have we considered the future twin digital and green transformations, identifying the accompanying risks and opportunities? (FS 4/20)

WORKFORCE PLANNING STANDARD ELEMENT

1. Have we mapped the quantitative and qualitative impact of changes in employment and jobs over various time periods and prepared plans to get from Now to Then? (FS 4/20)
2. Have we carefully reviewed our talent assessment practices to meet the new Assessment Standards of South Africa? (FS 7/20)
3. Have we understood and critically reviewed the use of AI for workforce and talent decisions? (FS 6/20, 7/20)

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARD ELEMENT

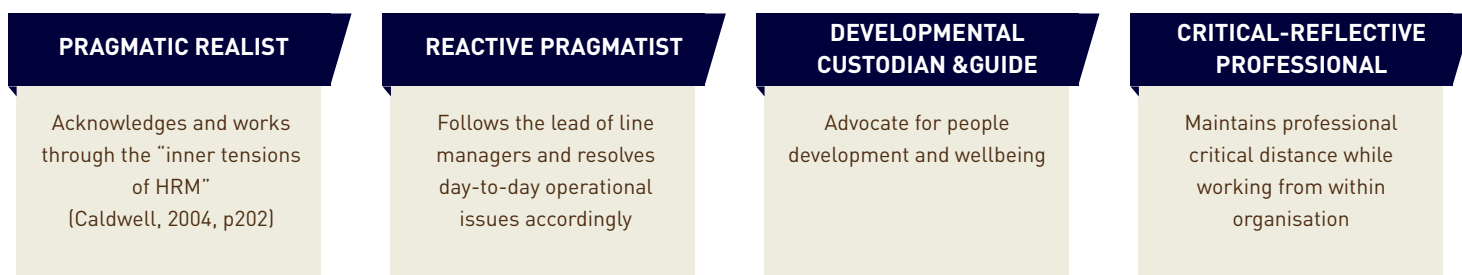
1. Have we taken the changes of roles, jobs, tasks and skills envisaged in our Talent Plan and Workforce Plan and developed a skills transition plan? (FS4/20)
2. Is our L&D strategy encompassing the concepts of building people's employability and readiness for changes in the workplace? (FS 2/21)
3. Have we appropriately adapted the strategy, design and delivery of our L&D for digital learning, and ensured fair access for all who need it? (FS 8/20 and 9/20)
4. Are we creating an agile and personalised learning culture? (FS 1/20)
5. Are our L&D practices supporting the need for proactive innovation? (FS 3/20)
6. Are our leadership assumptions and maps critically reviewed for the new normal and future world of work? (FS 5/20)

HR TECHNOLOGY STANDARD ELEMENT

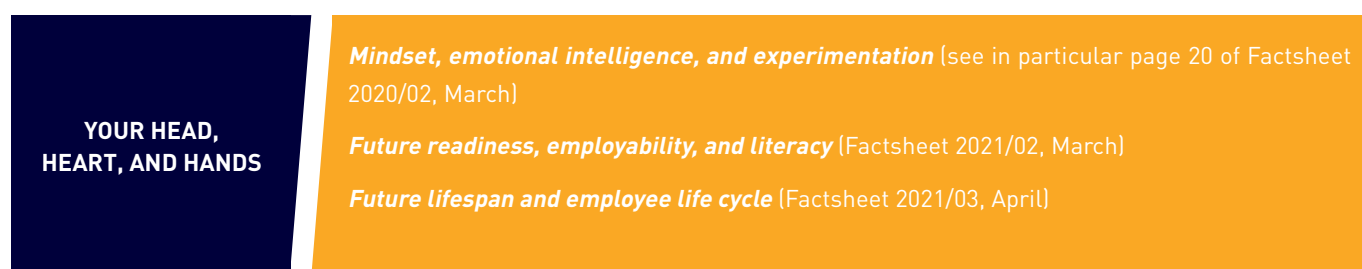
1. Have we automated our HR measurement processes and system? (FS 6/20)
2. Have we implemented the POPI Act fully to protect employee data? (FS 6/20)
3. Can we explain and defend algorithms and AI used in the various platforms? (FS 6/20, 7/20)
4. Have we considered the employee experience when engaging with our various technology platforms?

HR PRACTITIONERS' READINESS AND REINVENTION

As we consider the reinvention of work and organisations, we need to acknowledge, as HR practitioners, that we need to transform for the future world of work. This is not only in terms of skills and roles, but also in relation to our identity as practitioners and as a profession. As noted in the February 2020 factsheet, to reinvent ourselves we need to understand the identity-work required, how this is shaped by the positions we take up in our respective organisations, and our defensive reactions (of fight, flight and freeze) that may be activated. The factsheet provided the below diagram, which identifies the range of positions HR practitioners take up within traditional HRM (Caldwell, 2004; Jivan, 2017).



We can also consider the simple and holistic leadership development model, that of head, heart, and hands. This includes our mindset; the ways we see learning, experimenting, and the future; how we enrich our mental models; our emotional vocabulary and maturity; how we develop mastery and expertise in various skills; and how open we are to skills sets outside of our field.



CONCLUSION

The factsheet explores the key themes and questions for HR 4.0. It explores two frameworks from the WEF and the SABPP to help HR practitioners develop the people strategies, practices, roles, and function that will be required to address the future work, workforce, and workplace. Before the HR practitioner engages in these frameworks, they need to focus on themselves and their head, heart, and hands.

EARN 1 CPD POINT

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PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THE FACT SHEET

2020

February	HR'S PLACE IN THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
March	INNOVATION AND DISRUPTION DILEMMAS FOR FIRMS AND THEIR HR FUNCTIONS
April	CORONAVIRUS AND COVID-19
May	WORKFORCE TRANSITION ISSUES FOR THE DIGITAL, GREEN AND CRISIS-LED TRANSFORMATIONS
June	HR'S ROLE IN SHAPING LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW NORMAL
July	THE ROLE OF ALGORITHMS, AUTOMATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
August	CHANGING TALENT ASSESSMENT LANDSCAPE
September	DIGITAL LEARNING: SOUTH AFRICA'S EVOLVING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK
October	ASSIMILATING DIGITAL LEARNING INTO YOUR ORGANISATION
November	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN BLENDED WORK ENVIRONMENTS
December	FUTURE WORLD OF WORK SERIES: FUTURE FORMS OF ORGANISATIONS

2021

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March	FUTURE WORLD OF WORK SERIES: FUTURE READINESS, EMPLOYABILITY, AND ACTIVISM
April	FUTURE WORLD OF WORK SERIES: FUTURE HUMAN LIFESPAN AND THE EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLE