


THE READY

Where HR Meets the Future of Work

Table of Contents



Why HR Desperately Needs a Rethink	02
Here's What We Propose	04
STEP RIGHT UP	
A Maturity Model for Future-Ready HR	05
Level 1: The Call Center	07
Level 2: The Brokerage	08
Level 3: The Hollywood Model	09
Level 4: The Marketplace	11
Level 5: The Neural Network	12
Bonus Level 6: The Profit Center	13
GEARING UP FOR THE CLIMB	
Assessing Today's Strengths and Tomorrow's Moves	14
ECOSYSTEM STRENGTHS CHECKLIST	
How Ready Is Your Organization for the Future of HR?	15
Key Capabilities for the Future of HR	17
CAPABILITIES ASSESSMENT	
How Ready Is Your Team for the Future of HR?	18
Onward to a New Way of Working	26
About The Ready	27



HR has always existed and intended to make work better—and those in the profession know its potential.

But most HR teams find themselves in an inflexible function that isn't designed to help the business evolve. HR can lead business in the future of work—if it evolves itself first.



Why HR Desperately Needs a Rethink

Organizations are like a human body.

The brains—a.k.a. the strategy-focused C-Suite—reign over internal systems and plan. The legs are the teams executing daily operations, like production, sales, and accounting. The immune system prevents the body from getting sick or growing sluggish; IT secures data, legal protects against liabilities, and R&D finds ways to preserve long-term health.

Humming alongside these functions is the nervous system, better known as human resources. Its branches include critical functions and activities like compensation and benefits, training and development, hiring and onboarding, conflict resolution, and risk management. But things don't always go smoothly. The brain gets stuck in indecision.* When the unexpected occurs (and it always does), the legs struggle to change course. Each part focuses so rigidly on its own tasks that coordination becomes a challenge, hindering forward movement.

*

Transformation Terminology:

Decision-Making Churn

Ever been in a meeting where no one can commit to a solution or strategy? Where everyone can say no but no one can say yes? (Of course you have.) The conversation circles—do you need consensus? A simple majority? And who decides *that*?—and ultimately the decision gets postponed, to be made at (you guessed it) another meeting. This stultifying process is decision-making churn.

And despite—or perhaps because of—its centralized role, HR's nervous system is often among the body's greatest vulnerabilities. Tasked with both delivering strategic partnership to internal clients and operational support for employees, despite these directives requiring very different (if not downright conflicting) ways of working, HR finds itself overloaded without the infrastructure needed to meet its multipronged mandate.

The net result: A body lacking the ability to clear obstacles—one that relies so heavily on muscle memory that innovation or improvement is hard to achieve. (Ever watched your organization repeat an annual process that doesn't work? Us, too.) This stuckness invariably leads to missteps, and even the occasional faceplant.

But HR also holds the possibility of a new operational model, one that embraces mission-driven, cross-functional coordination with an emphasis on experimentation,* adaptivity, data literacy, and automation—and can nimbly shift its approach as it’s fed new insights. It starts with reimagining the role HR plays, then spreading the transformation across other internal functions. HR’s diversity of directives may be the Achilles heel of the familiar body-like model of operations, but it’s also its superpower. HR is uniquely positioned to usher in real change—the kind that increases efficiency, strengthens agility, creates value, and fosters a way of working that feels human and meaningful.



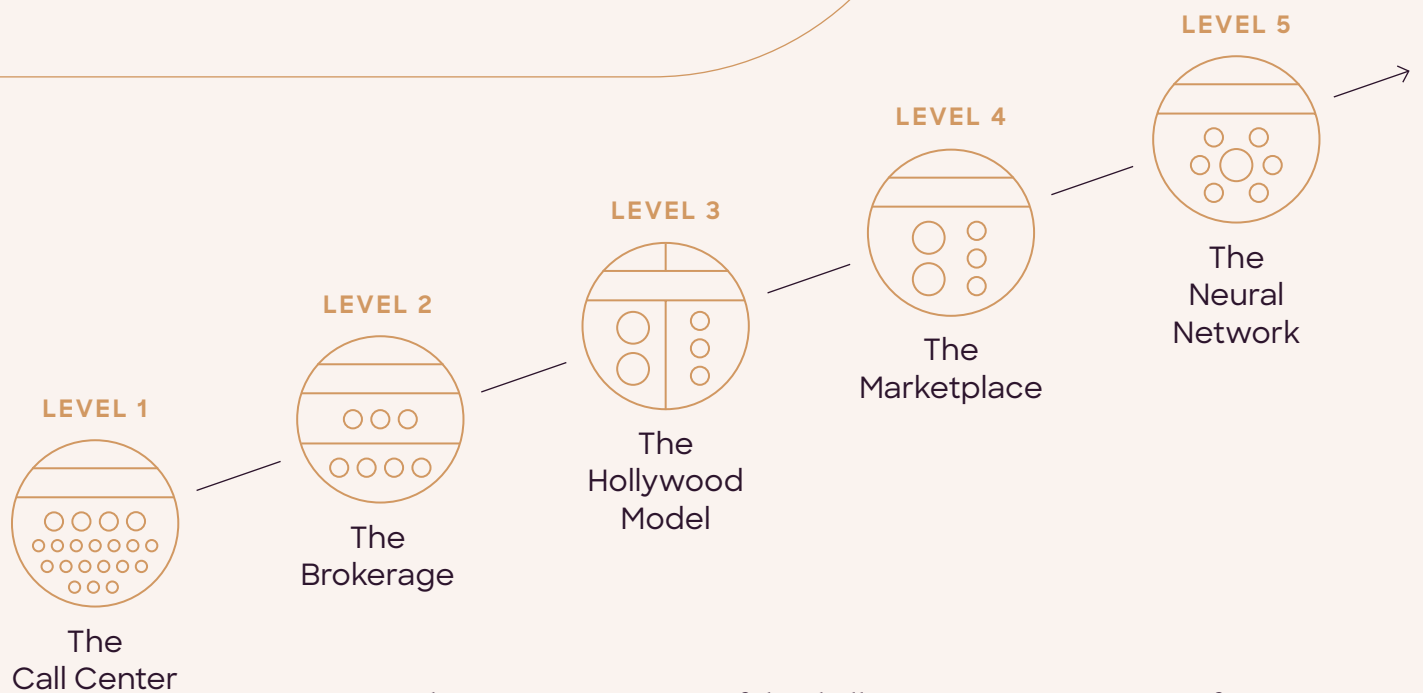
Transformation Terminology: Experimentation

What do we mean when we talk about experimentation? Exactly what it sounds like: Trying something to see how (and whether) it works. But there’s slightly more to it than that. When we advise clients to give something a go, we recommend using the “safe-to-try” method, which involves moving forward with something even if it may be imperfect, with the intention of course-correcting as you go. The idea doesn’t have to be free of potential downsides—it just has to get the ball rolling.

“HR is generally in a difficult position. You’re in this tug-of-war between being an innovation center for the employee experience and eliminating risk to whatever extent is possible for the organization. And those are two very different muscles to have to exercise throughout your day-to-day. But rethinking your operating model and the ways of working that bring it to life can solve this problem. From there, people in HR can put the most important stuff at the top of their priority list—and eliminate so much of the busy work that’s always prevented them from doing it. It’s liberating.”

— RODNEY EVANS, PARTNER, THE READY

Here's What We Propose



Now that you've got a sense of the challenges many organizations face, it's time to talk solutions. Your mission, should you choose to accept it (you should), is to reorganize how your organization operates, transforming HR from a split-focus catchall department into a functional team designed to handle tasks with clarity and confidence. The best part? It doesn't require reinventing the wheel. A model's already waiting—and it begins on the next page.

Our five-level maturity model is a progression across six capabilities we believe HR must acquire to effectively lead their organization into the future of work. Its purpose is to get your gears turning—to start by starting rather than plunging into an endless loop of planning, stakeholdering, and debating. This report will show you where you currently are and where you can go.

Let's get to it.



STEP RIGHT UP

A Maturity Model for Future-Ready HR

New approaches to work have been moving mainstream, with many approaches eschewing traditional hierarchy in favor of more contribution-oriented, task-based organizing principles. Some industries have always run this way; just ask anyone in film or television production, where specialists within disparate disciplines come together on projects, execute their respective functions, and disband once the undertaking is finished. Consultants and freelancers are also well-versed in this model, contributing work on a project basis.

Now, mission-based models of work are disrupting historically traditional industries, and those on the ground expect this to continue: According to one study, 79 percent of executives predict that work will become more project-based in the near future.

How might this new modularity function within an HR department? What role will this transformed HR play in the organization at large? And how might these changes lead to a more people-positive[⊛] way of working?

Consider our maturity model an answer to those questions.



Transformation Terminology: People-Positive

At root, this is a philosophy built around the idea that people are inherently trustworthy and self-motivated—which renders time-sucking and demoralizing practices like micromanagement and productivity tracking obsolete. Why talk about this now? Because this ethos goes hand-in-hand with moving along the maturity model. It's not just about increasing efficiency and boosting value. It's also about creating a place where people can do the best work of their lives.

The header features a light beige background adorned with various celestial and geometric motifs. These include several four-pointed stars of different sizes, some with thin orange outlines and others filled with a gradient. There are also larger, textured shapes in shades of orange and brown, including a central circle, a rectangle, and a triangle. Thin, curved orange lines suggest orbits or paths across the sky.

Maturity *what* now?

Our maturity model is designed to orient organizations in their current reality and map where they can go, moving from familiar ways of working to a mission-based approach. We arrived at this model via countless workplace transformation projects, testing and retesting our hypotheses about organizational design and seeing how they played out IRL. We interviewed HR leaders about their own approaches, teasing out strengths and weaknesses. And we dug into a variety of industries seeking novel ways to get work done. The result? An atlas of ascension delivering stronger decision-making capabilities, nimbler responses, and more measurable value creation to any HR department.



LEVEL 1

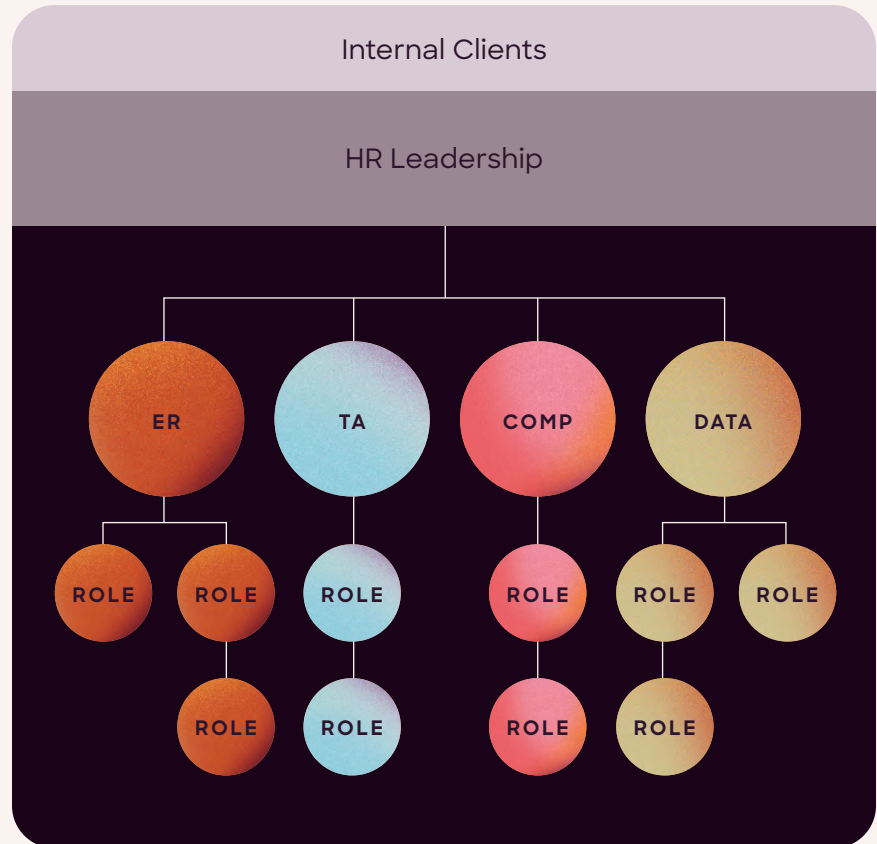
The Call Center

How it works:

Structured hierarchically, mirroring the organization at large. Centers of Excellence (COEs) specialize in separate aspects of HR (think hiring, benefits, compensation, etc.), tackling workflows that repeat, while also reacting to different inquiries from different internal clients. Best practices often rely on the same folks doing the same things the same way for years.* Modernizing workflows from within is a steep hill to climb, as teams are consumed with day-to-day work and evolution isn't anyone's explicit role.

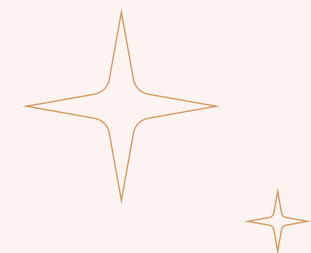
You may notice:

The siloed nature of each COE's specialization can make cross-functional work tricky and slow-going. HR's ultimate value is hard to track and the ownership of strategic initiatives—rather than daily operations—is unclear.



Transformation Terminology: Organizational Debt

A problem common to Level 1, organizational debt is the waste that accrues when past business decisions aren't revisited even as the organization and environment change. In other words, maintaining the meetings, roles, policies, rules, and prior decisions, even if they're no longer useful or drag down the organization.





LEVEL 2

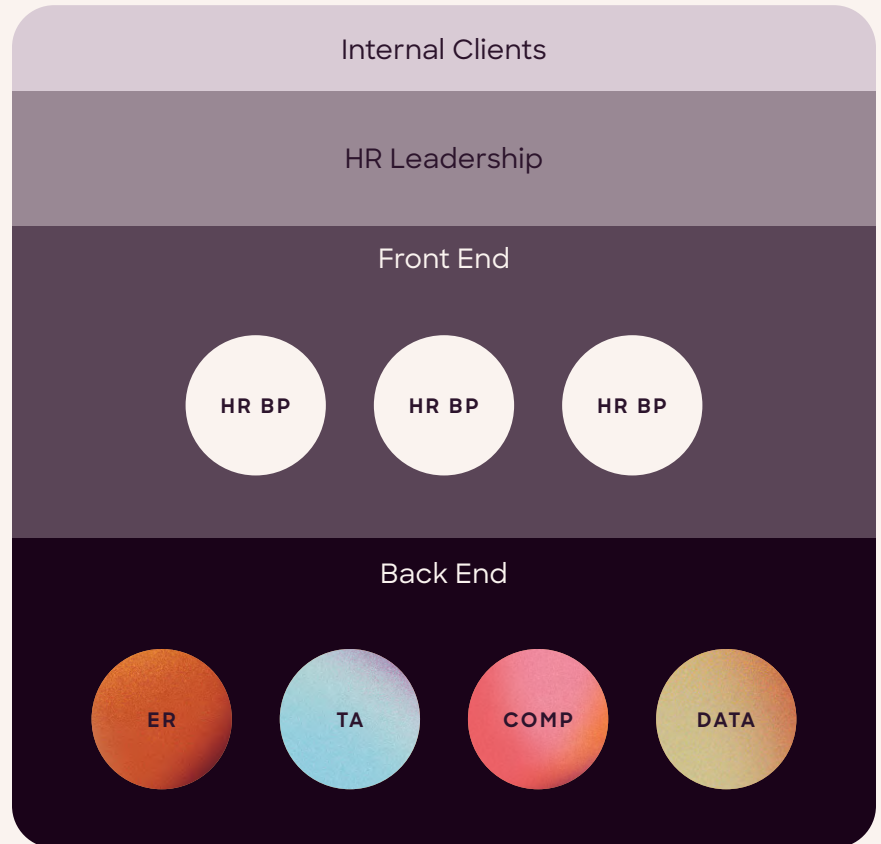
The Brokerage

How it works:

Like the Call Center but with an added role: the HR Business Partner (HR BP). The HR BP, or the client-facing part of HR, serves as a go-between to internal clients^{*} and holds the more strategic aspects of HR, removing that pressure from those carrying out ongoing operations.

You may notice:

The focus of the HR BP is often divided between operations and strategy, which limits how much value they can offer to an internal client. Stuck with the task of ensuring compliance with HR's policies without the authority to adapt them to meet client needs, HR BPs may find themselves in an ambassador-like role, influencing and negotiating among different groups without the ability to change the system itself.



Transformation Terminology: Internal Client

A person or group within the organization that relies on a particular division or department to carry out a certain function. For example, the IT department services internal clients almost entirely; those internal clients rely on IT to handle any and all tech issues.





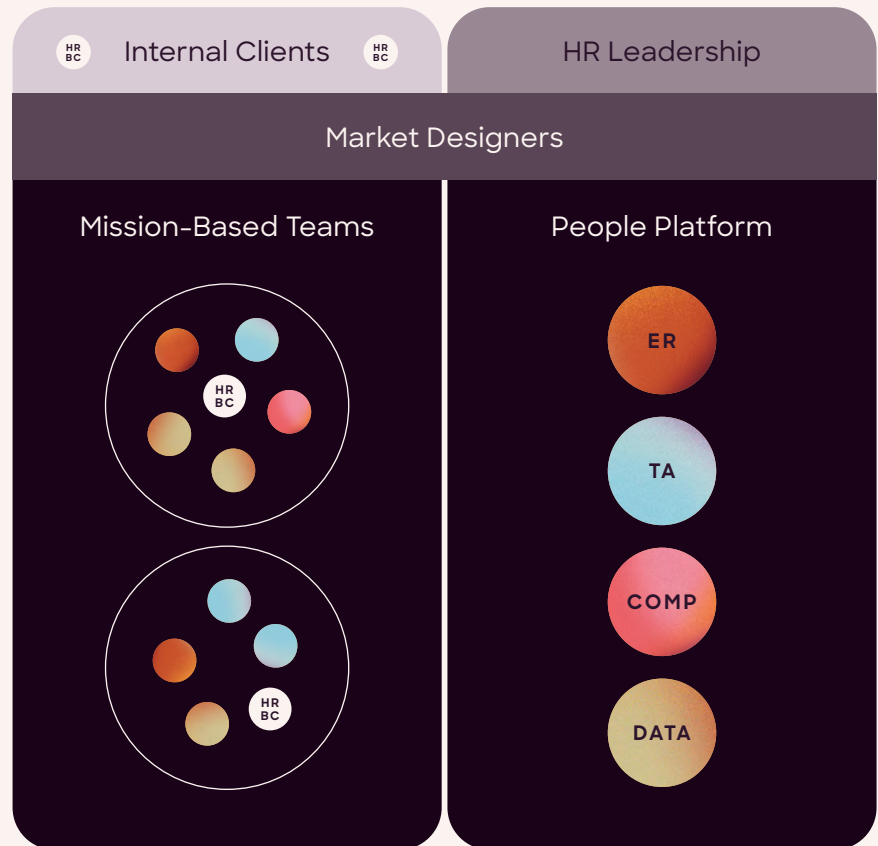
LEVEL 3

The Hollywood Model

How it works:

A foundational shift occurs here, resulting in a new means of executing work and increasing capabilities. Actually, it's not *that* new if you've ever worked in TV or film production. In the same way movie studios hire specialists to collaborate on a film, this model sees teams form to execute missions, then disband once the work's finished.

But these aren't the cross-functional teams you're used to. Missions organize roles and skills around priorities, rather than trying to spread work across an existing org chart—one full of people whose strengths may lie elsewhere. The work once owned by functional areas is now handled by the People Platform, a “team of teams” designed to manage HR's recurring tasks—benefits, talent acquisition, etc. This creates the capacity to form mission-based teams that run after opportunities or thorny challenges.*



HR BPs become what we call HR Business Coaches; they now help client teams prioritize and carry out missions that come from HR leadership, the People Platform, or internal clients.

You may notice:

Staffing mission-based teams requires shrewd resource management and the multidisciplinary nature of these teams can make budgeting tricky.

*

Transformation Terminology: Working Agreements

Collaboratively devised guidelines that delineate how a group would like to work together. Often, these agreements spell out how the team will interact; how work will get done; the expectations each party has for the others; and actions that are acceptable, encouraged, and verboten.

Rewriting Traditional HR Roles



Once upon a time, organizations coined the roles of HR Business Partner and Change Agent to delineate who handled what. HR BPs liaised with internal clients, while Change Agents drove new initiatives to upgrade the department's various functions. Except neither had the power to enable significant advancements. That's why we've reimaged these roles.

The HR BP becomes the HR Business Coach, facilitating an array of mission-based teams and teaching them new ways of working. The Change Agent morphs into the Market Designer, prioritizing missions and allocating staff and budgetary resources to each. What had long been a pair of toothless positions is now a dynamic duo that both drive the department forward and keep it humming day-to-day.



LEVEL 4

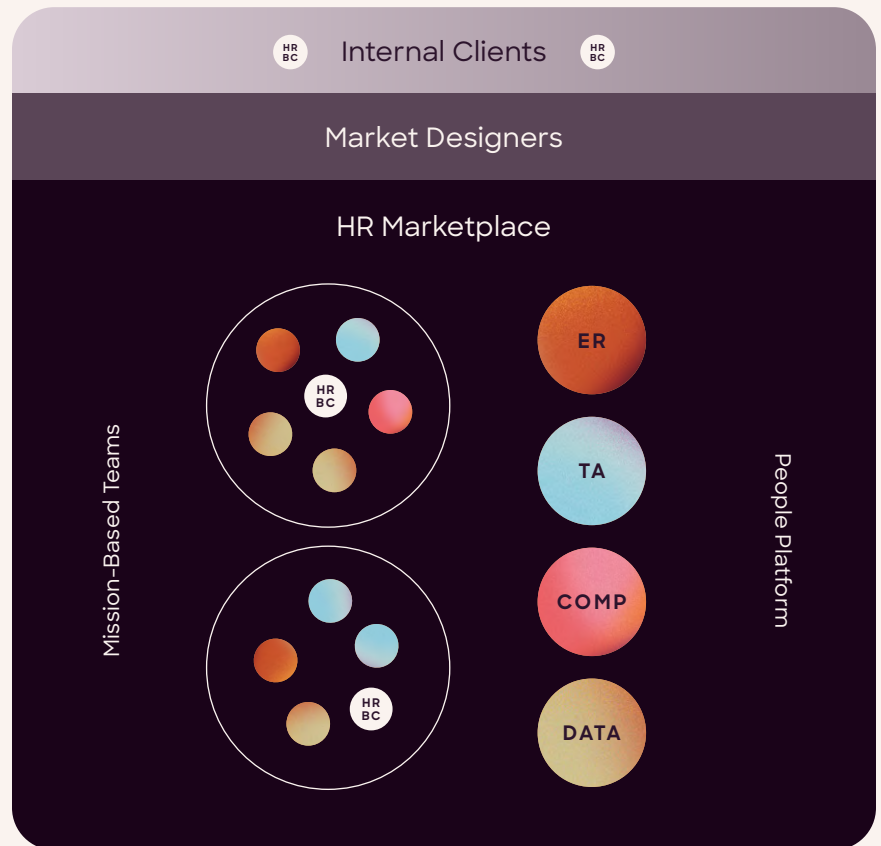
The Marketplace

How it works:

Here, the relationship between mission-based teams (MBTs) and the People Platform levels up, where the system works on the principle of supply and demand. With mission-based teaming now well understood, the marketplace represents a superstructure, where MBTs are stood up and disbanded continuously—and prioritized by the business value each creates. Simultaneously, the People Platform conducts its own process of perpetual self-refinement, using data and metrics to optimize its ways of working and serving as a learning hub where new methods are tested for the rest of the organization.

You may notice:

Leaning into the modeling of potential business value (versus only responding to the demands of internal clients who shout the loudest) demands additional rigor.





LEVEL 5

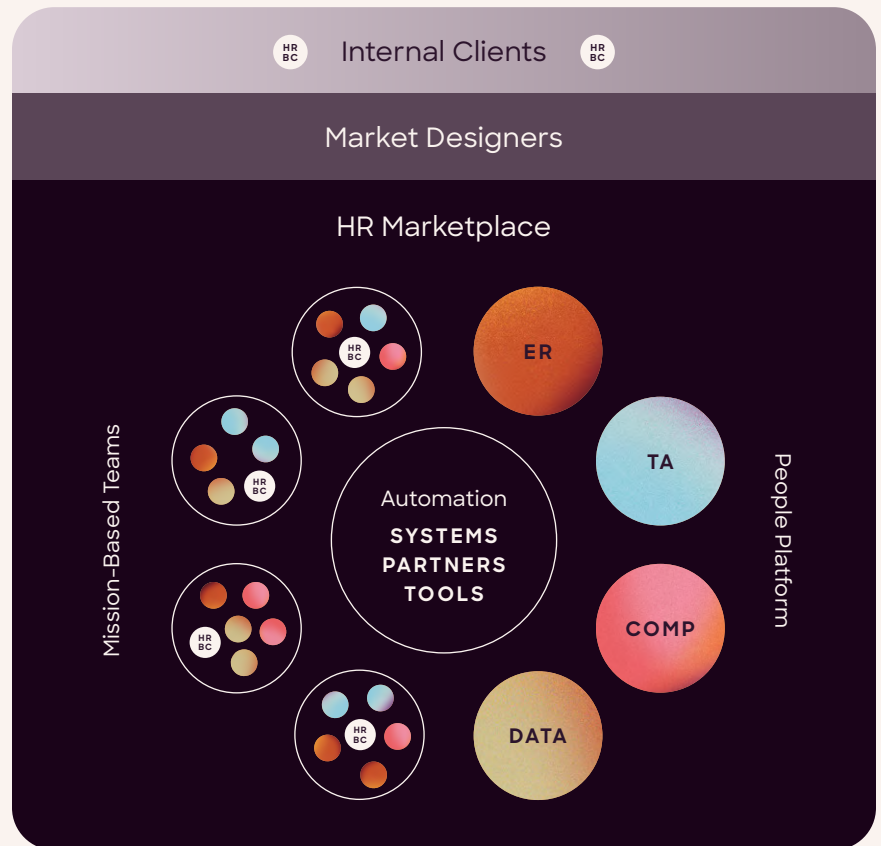
The Neural Network

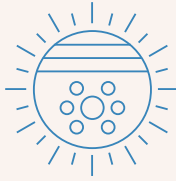
How it works:

With as much of HR's ongoing work as automated as possible, employees are freed up for more strategic thinking. But here's the key factor: data, automation, and even AI become the linchpin of operations, allowing the People Platform to both engage in strategic work and to predict which missions may be necessary *before* they emerge. AI examines patterns to identify persistent pain points (like indecision and money spent) and potential gains (like quicker delivery to market and employee satisfaction), which allows for a more value-driven criteria for prioritizing missions.

You may notice:

Finding safe-to-try ways to experiment with AI and automation can feel inaccessible and overwhelming. Paired with security concerns and the tech's lightning-fast evolution, it's easy to ignore or delay a trend that will inevitably reshape work.





BONUS LEVEL 6

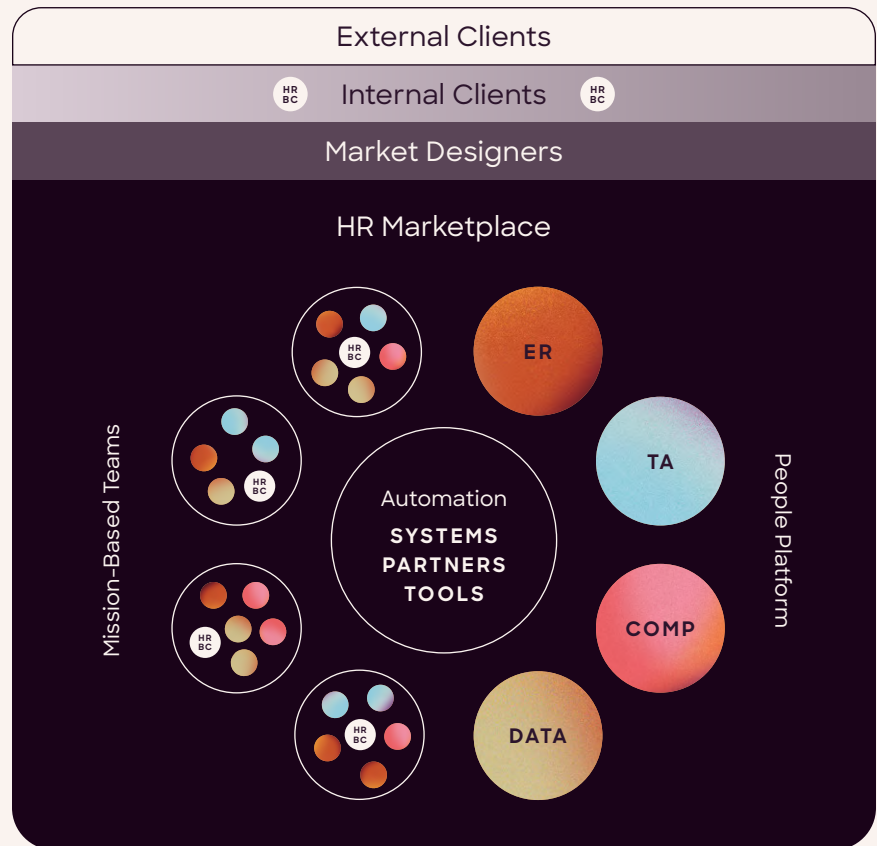
The Profit Center

How it works:

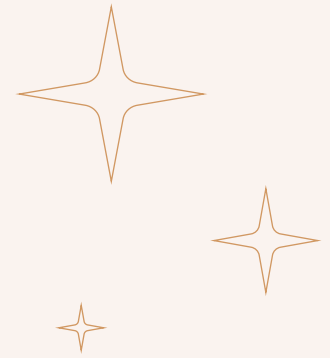
If you've come this far, you're ready for a transcendent unlock. Imagine: What if the adaptive systems you've designed become something other companies pay for? It's possible. Here, you have the aptitude and ability to launch micro-enterprises, professionalizing proprietary approaches to key organizational challenges—hiring, compensation, employee experience, you name it—and turning them into products or services for the external market. Taking on these kinds of missions not only generates revenue; it also increases the brand's stature.

You may notice:

If you're going to sell a service or product to other organizations, you've got to come up with one first.



Assessing Today's Strengths and Tomorrow's Moves



Ascending this maturity model may seem daunting. But with small, steady moves and a willingness to try new practices, it *can* be done.

In this final section, you'll assess your team's current state and identify first steps you can take to move toward the future state you want.

To produce this snapshot, we've created two tools:

- An Ecosystem Strengths Checklist
- A Capabilities Assessment

Together, they paint a nuanced picture of your present position—and highlight moves you can make to spark purposeful evolution. If you're sitting with questions like “Which levels of this model are within reach?” and “How ready is the *rest* of my organization for this sort of transformation?” here's where we answer them.

These suggested next steps are things you can begin testing out today. They're bite-sized to underscore the notion that this leap is both manageable and possible. *And* that taking giant swings simultaneously won't result in meaningful change or momentum. So when we recommend you “Try This Now,” we mean *this* and we mean *now*. But if something suggested for a different assessed level grabs your attention, try it out. These experiments are designed to be safe-to-try—and they'll each elicit learning.



What Are Ecosystem Strengths?

Ecosystem strengths are signals of receptivity, support, and flexibility in the organization around your team. They're important to assess because HR doesn't work in a vacuum. As HR begins to evolve, the strength and receptivity of your ecosystem will influence the degree of effort or pushback you'll face—and impact how quickly you can change.



What Are Capabilities?

Capabilities represent a group's ability to achieve outcomes. They're important to assess, because your department's capabilities define what's currently possible. And capabilities are more than just skills. If you look under the hood of any capability, you'll typically find a mixture of resources allocated, intuitive processes, opportunities for training, practice and repetition, team confidence, and strong relationships. If you want to travel fast and far with a more adaptive structure, strengthening capabilities is the thing that takes you from one gear to the next.

How ready is your organization for the Future of HR?

HR doesn't work in a vacuum. Use our Ecosystem Strengths Checklist to explore your organization's broader context, how ready it is for the Future of HR, and how heavy a lift that change might be.



When we're grappling with retention issues, the organization looks to HR for solutions—or at least starting points.

TRUE

FALSE

☐☐

Our organization is familiar with mission-based teaming.

TRUE

FALSE

☐☐

There's strong competition for talent in our industry and we feel pressure to produce the best possible environment for top talent.

TRUE

FALSE

☐☐

HR has a strong presence at leadership tables, so we can advocate for the funding and resources needed to explore innovative practices.

TRUE

FALSE

☐☐

We have been involved in or run process improvement efforts outside the HR function.

TRUE

FALSE

☐☐

Integrating data-capture and AI into every aspect of our operations is a big organizational priority.

TRUE

FALSE

☐☐

When HR leadership pushes back against the leadership of other functions, our objections and concerns are taken seriously.

TRUE

☐

FALSE

☐

In the past year, internal stakeholders have asked us to evolve our HR products and processes and make them more contextually-responsive.

TRUE

☐

FALSE

☐

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHECKLIST

Tally the number of statements where you indicated “True” and review the corresponding section below.

TRUE

FALSE

--	--

You marked 3 (or fewer) statements as “True”

Your organizational ecosystem doesn’t show strong signs of readiness or support for HR to evolve. This doesn’t mean evolution isn’t necessary! But you’ll need to dedicate time to accessing a budget, demonstrating competency, and “selling” key stakeholders on the potential ROI of a Future of HR transformation.

You marked 4-6 statements as “True”

Your organizational ecosystem shows positive signals around readiness. There’s enough understanding of the potential business gains an HR transformation could unlock, and the rest of the organization shows fluency in innovation, data, and adaptive ways of working. You still need to demonstrate the ROI and may encounter resistance, but there’s enough openness to get started.

You marked 7 (or more) statements as “True”

Congratulations! Your organizational ecosystem is ripe for this kind of transformation. Leadership understands the pain points a conventional HR operating model can’t solve, the rest of the organization has a willingness to learn, and HR has enough trust and influence in key conversations to take on new challenges with minimal friction.

Key Capabilities for the Future of HR

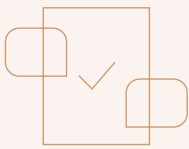
A capability is more than a skill or a resource; it's the ability to achieve an outcome.

In order to move across our maturity model, HR needs to grow six capabilities.



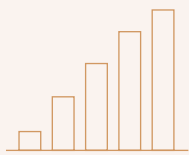
Capability 1: Experimentation + Adaptivity

The degree to which a group can easily identify challenges, test solutions, scale what works, and reorganize in response to new challenges and opportunities.



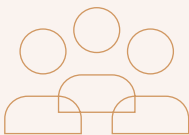
Capability 2: Contracting + Communications

The degree to which a group's communication practices (both internally and externally) support coherence, clear up confusion, specify boundaries, and produce psychological safety.



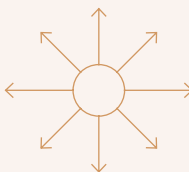
Capability 3: Solution Design + Market Management

The degree to which a group can understand what value means for a landscape of diverse clients, run client-centered development processes, and land on solutions that are both compelling and fit-for-purpose.



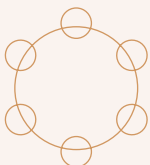
Capability 4: Facilitation + Future of Work Coaching

The degree to which a group can design and facilitate learning spaces and interactions that elicit collaboration, creative ideas, and generative engagement.



Capability 5: User Experience + Decentralization

The degree to which a group can design end-to-end processes that are intuitive, minimize friction, and easily and confidently deployable without centralized oversight.



Capability 6: Data Literacy + Automation

The degree to which a group bakes data-capture into its various workflows, uses data to steer decision-making, and comfortably automates repeatable processes.

How ready is your team for the Future of HR?

Rank how true each statement is for your HR department. (When answering, think about and rank HR *only*. That way, we will be able to produce a picture of the capabilities closest to your everyday work.) At the end, your score will point toward which levels are currently in range—and what you can do to scale new heights.



When someone suggests starting a new project or changing up a process that is within HR's control/domain, we move from an idea to a test within two weeks.

A
Not true at all

☐

B
Occasionally true

☐

C
Sometimes true

☐

D
Mostly true

☐

E
100% true

☐

HR roles and teams have the decision rights and autonomy they need to move quickly and effectively on the ground.

A
Not true at all

☐

B
Occasionally true

☐

C
Sometimes true

☐

D
Mostly true

☐

E
100% true

☐

HR people's time and workloads are primarily dedicated to Mission-Based Teams (time-limited teams created to solve specific problems).

A
Not true at all

☐

B
Occasionally true

☐

C
Sometimes true

☐

D
Mostly true

☐

E
100% true

☐

Creating, reviewing, and improving working agreements are baked into our culture and everything we do.

A
Not true at all

☐

B
Occasionally true

☐

C
Sometimes true

☐

D
Mostly true

☐

E
100% true

☐

Within HR, information is very easy to find and access; our people can find whatever they need to get their work done.

A	B	C	D	E
Not true at all	Occasionally true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We fluently use asynchronous platforms like Microsoft Teams or Slack to make decisions and do creative work, not just for coordination or as an email replacement.

A	B	C	D	E
Not true at all	Occasionally true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Our people and teams regularly and easily recharter their roles in response to evolving work and priorities.

A	B	C	D	E
Not true at all	Occasionally true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When an internal client comes to us with an HR-related problem, we have the bandwidth and skills in-house to create and test a solution for them within three weeks.

A	B	C	D	E
Not true at all	Occasionally true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The solutions we develop and deliver internally are so strong that we could turn them into products for the external market.

A	B	C	D	E
Not true at all	Occasionally true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The rest of the organization knows us as best-in-class facilitators who reliably increase participation, collaboration, and creativity.

A	B	C	D	E
Not true at all	Occasionally true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We almost never have to answer questions about our products, services, and processes, because they're so low-friction and self-explanatory.

A Not true at all	B Occasionally true	C Sometimes true	D Mostly true	E 100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When we want to decentralize an HR product or process and free it up to be more responsive, our team uses a repeatable methodology that also constrains risk.

A Not true at all	B Occasionally true	C Sometimes true	D Mostly true	E 100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Our ongoing HR processes are automated to a degree that no people power is required.

A Not true at all	B Occasionally true	C Sometimes true	D Mostly true	E 100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Our automated products and services produce a sophisticated data picture that can predict HR-related problems (e.g., a specific skills shortage or a competitor headhunting our people).

A Not true at all	B Occasionally true	C Sometimes true	D Mostly true	E 100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We have a cultural norm of defining and using specific metrics to steer and evaluate our work.

A Not true at all	B Occasionally true	C Sometimes true	D Mostly true	E 100% true
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

Review your answers and look for your dominant letter (8 or more questions answered with the same letter). Read the corresponding section below for a snapshot of your current capabilities.

	A	B	C	D	E	
TOTAL:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	MOSTLY: <input type="text"/>

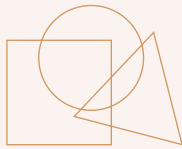


The Call Center

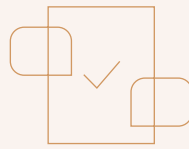
Your capabilities are tuned for centralized products, processes, and services, which enables strength in areas like risk management, compliance, and regulation. Where your capabilities might stall out: innovation, action “at the edges,” and speed.

Recommended Next Steps

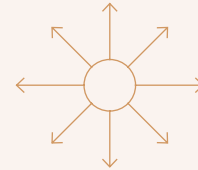
To embody Level 2 (The Brokerage), you'll need to become more nimble and responsive. Focus on building these three capabilities.



EXPERIMENTATION
+
ADAPTIVITY



CONTRACTING
+
COMMUNICATIONS



USER EXPERIENCE
+
DECENTRALIZATION



Try This Now

Work your Contracting + Communications capability and create explicit team working agreements. First, ask everyone to brainstorm responses to this prompt: “What requests can I make of my team to help our shared work run more smoothly?” No need to swing for the fences; consider small agreements first—like, “We’ll dedicate two weekly time slots for group troubleshooting” or “We’ll answer emails within 48 hours unless they’re flagged as ‘Urgent.’” Vote on a suite of agreements the team’s willing to live with for 2-3 weeks. Then, come back to the group and ask: “How’d that go? Did it simplify anything? Any agreements we should change? Others we should consider?”



The Brokerage

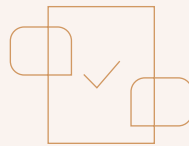
Your capabilities are tuned for representing different parts of your organization, while keeping the reins of process control in HR's hands. Your team has expertise in relationship-building and management—but this strength also enables a system-wide weakness: Your organization leans on HR too much in tough moments, posing a burnout risk for HR BPs and other HR roles and decreasing the pressure the rest of the organization feels to evolve.

Recommended Next Steps

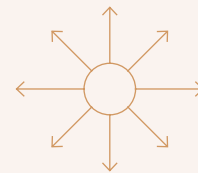
To embody Level 3 (The Hollywood Model), you'll need to develop team-wide approaches for loosening the reins of central control, reducing pressure on individual roles, and creating repeatable mission-based teaming defaults. Focus on building these three capabilities.



FACILITATION
+
**FUTURE OF WORK
COACHING**



CONTRACTING
+
COMMUNICATIONS



USER EXPERIENCE
+
DECENTRALIZATION



Try This Now

Bolster your Facilitation + Future of Work Coaching capability and deliver a workshop that defines 2-3 potential missions. Don't worry about executing the missions right now; figuring out staffing, buy-in, and budgeting can come later. Your present goal is to practice how to facilitate and help a group identify compelling, valuable missions. Make sure you reserve time for a meaty debrief, where you can discuss tweaks to improve your facilitation structure. Then, run the same play with another group of stakeholders.



The Hollywood Model

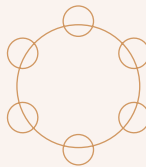
You have muscle for meeting new challenges. You've also got significant work afoot and the rest of the organization most likely views HR as a problem-solving partner. Where things get wobblier is in evolving internal team processes and practices. Turning the mirror on yourself to optimize how HR works can be uncomfortable—and worthwhile.

Recommended Next Steps

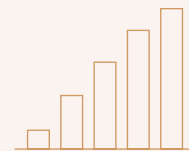
To embody Level 4 (The Marketplace), you'll need to become laser-focused on one thing: what value means to your users and internal clients and orienting your operations around *that* value. Focus on building these three capabilities.



EXPERIMENTATION
+
ADAPTIVITY



DATA LITERACY
+
AUTOMATION



SOLUTION DESIGN
+
MARKET MANAGEMENT



Try This Now

Nudge the capabilities named above by turning the mirror on HR's persistent processes and reimagining one. Select an HR task or need where seamless completion would mean high value for internal customers—like a painless bereavement-leave request process or an easy way for managers to see what competitors are paying star talent. Map out the current process HR uses to complete these tasks and flag where delays, bottlenecks, or confusion trip up the end-user—or where you're wasting time and energy troubleshooting. Brainstorm how you could make just one of these pain points 10% lighter and run one experiment.

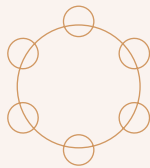


The Marketplace

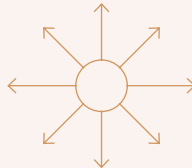
You're strong across all six capabilities, consistently generating business value and working dynamically in evolving contexts. There's a significant opportunity to recoup human capacity and energy (and devote it to generating explicit business value) by automating ongoing HR work.

Recommended Next Steps

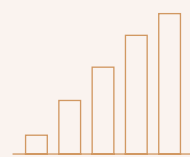
To embody Level 5 (The Neural Network) and leverage the full power of automation, focus on building these three capabilities.



DATA LITERACY
+
AUTOMATION



USER EXPERIENCE
+
DECENTRALIZATION



SOLUTION DESIGN
+
MARKET MANAGEMENT



Try This Now

Strengthen your User Experience + Decentralization capability and explore how you'd safely decentralize a risky decision. Pick something that feels sensitive or tricky (think reputational risks, compliance concerns, or privacy issues) and ask a team of people with skill in that specific area to reflect on their cumulative experience and generate a list of Do's and Don'ts. Congratulations, you've created heuristics! Now, examine those heuristics and challenge yourself: What's required to make this type of decision safe-to-decentralize for 2-3 weeks?

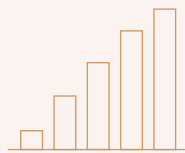


The Neural Network

Wow! You're incredibly strong across all capabilities. Your work is data-driven, creative, nimble, and produces exceptional value. In fact, consider aiming for Bonus Level 6 (The Profit Center), which will enable you to engage in micro-enterprise: selling HR solutions you've developed to other companies.

Recommended Next Steps

The only thing standing between you and The Profit Center? Your productization muscle. Focus on Solution Design + Market Management—and the sky's the limit.

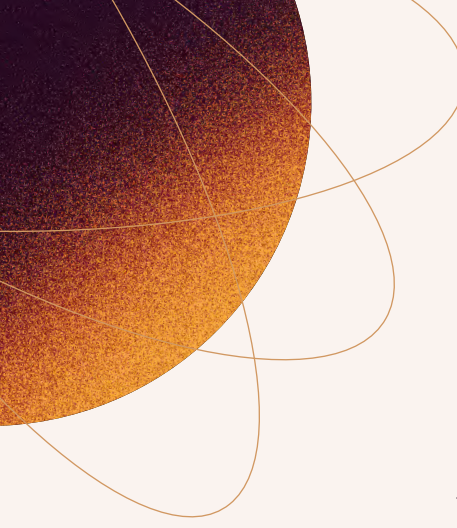


SOLUTION DESIGN
+
MARKET MANAGEMENT



Try This Now

Take your Solution Design + Market Management capability for a test drive and draft a simple description for one of your star services. Ask several internal clients to describe what they love about the HR products and processes your team has created. Which ones have made hiring, onboarding, compensation, benefits, or administration the easiest and simplest? Use this outside perspective (and their end-user language) to frame the sticky problems you solved in terms the external market can understand.



Onward to a New Way of Working

When people are placed in new contexts without the skills needed to thrive in them, it's easy to snap back to the status quo. As old problems re-emerge, the new environment is there with a bullseye on its back, ready to be blamed for any seemingly novel hiccup or headache.

After all, change isn't easy—especially when you've been doing things the same way since time immemorial. But if you can bear in mind that these new capabilities and ways of working have a genuine *purpose*—that you aren't doing things in a new way for novelty's sake—it's likely that these shifts will feel far more achievable and more satisfying to make.


What is that genuine purpose? To unearth more adaptive, efficient, and human ways of working. To make every employee's life easier. To alter your approach to work to better align with the realities of the world. And to abandon processes that don't make sense in favor of those that do.

The HR department is a linchpin of any company's strategic trajectory—one that is, by its very nature, inherently cross-functional and people-first. That gives it the ability to serve as a catalyst, modeling and spreading the ways of working that will lead the organization toward a more adaptable and resilient future. With HR in the lead, your organization will fly at a higher altitude, embracing—and thriving in—the future of work.



READY TO GET STARTED?

Great, so are we. Reach out now to learn how The Ready can help your organization reimagine the way forward. Connect with us at fohr@theready.com





About The Ready

*The Ready is a future-of-work consultancy committed to changing
how the world works—from business as usual to brave new work.*

*Since 2015, we've helped hundreds of organizations—from Roche to Airbnb,
from the Federal Reserve Bank to Sweetgreen—transform how they work.*