



HR FUNDAMENTALS

What is HR?



Boreala Management

We listen. We commit. We empower.

For organizations deeply rooted in their communities, Boreala Management is your partner. We support the development of stronger organizations by building capacity, enhancing collaboration and maximizing potential for sustainable positive impact.

We offer a suite of Strategy, Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness services that are designed to enhance performance and improve efficiency. Our solutions are scalable to your exact needs, be it a large organization looking for additional resources to compliment a team, or a small organization looking to outsource all or parts of your HR function.

We have a team of over 30 multidisciplinary full-time experts, as well as subject matter expert partners that are ready to work as an extension of your team, dedicated to delivering results and creating sustainable change for lasting business impact.



Consulting

Our team are dedicated to supporting our clients to increase effectiveness at all levels. With consulting options in **Strategy, Governance, Talent Management** and **Process Improvement** to name a few, we are your partner o build a stronger organization.



BorealaRISE Training

Enhance capacity for authentic growth through our employee development programs. From individual contributors to people leaders, we offer the following portfolios, **People & Strategic Leadership, Communication, Organization & Employee Effectiveness and Project Management**



Expert Facilitation & Mediation

Benefit from having one of our expert facilitators guide you through your next **meeting, team building session** or **leadership retreat**. In addition to our trained facilitators, we have certified mediators who can be counted on to resolve **workplace conflict**, mediate **team dynamics** or resolve **governance issues**.

HR Health Check

A practical worksheet to identify HR priorities and decide what to strengthen first

Why complete an HR health check?

Many organizations believe that their HR practices could be stronger, but it can be hard to know where to start.

This worksheet helps you look at your organization's current state of HR in a simple and practical way. It is designed to support discussion, not judgement.

- Understand what HR includes
- Identify strengths and gaps in your current HR practices
- Notice areas that may be creating confusion, extra work, risk, or barriers for employees.
- Leave with a short list of realistic next steps

What does HR include?

HR is more than hiring and policies. It includes the day-to-day practices, processes, and tools that help an organization support its people and operate consistently. HR supports:

- Planning for people, roles, and staffing needs
- Attracting, hiring, and welcoming employees
- Setting clear expectations and supporting performance
- Helping employees learn, grow, and prepare for future roles
- Supporting employee experience, wellbeing, and retention
- Recognizing employees and managing pay and benefits fairly
- Keeping HR policies, records, and processes clear and consistent

Not everything needs to be perfect. The goal is to identify where improvement would have the greatest impact.

Step 1: Assess your current state

The assessment looks at five key areas of HR:

A. HR Foundations

The basic HR practices every organization should have in place.

B. People, Staffing and Employee Experience

How the organization understands its people's need, staffing challenges, and employee experience.

C. Hiring and Onboarding

How the organization attracts, selects, and welcomes employees.

D. Employee Performance and Growth

How employees are supported to succeed, receive feedback, and develop.

E. Recognition, Pay and Benefits

How the organization recognizes employees and manages pay, benefits, and rewards.

There are no right or wrong answers. The goal is to identify what it is working well and where improvements would have the greatest impact.

For each statement, choose the response that best reflects your organization today.

Needs attention Not in place, unclear, or creating pressure/risk.	Partly in place Some pieces exist, but they are not consistent yet.	Working well Clear, useful, and working consistently enough for now.
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A. HR Foundations

Having the right HR foundations in place.

Statement	Needs attention	Partly in place	Working well
HR policies are clear, up to date, and consistently followed.	☐	☐	☐
Payroll, employee records, and leave requests are managed consistently.	☐	☐	☐
Employee files and HR documents are organized and easy to find.	☐	☐	☐
Job descriptions are available and reflect current responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐
People know who to go to for hiring, employee issues, and HR-related questions.	☐	☐	☐
Employees know how to raise workplace concerns and get support.	☐	☐	☐

If this area needs attention, you may be noticing:

☐ HR documents are missing, outdated, or hard to find. ☐ Employee information is not always organized or up to date. ☐ People are unsure who to go to for HR questions. ☐ HR processes are handled differently depending on the situation.	☐ Workplace concerns are not always addressed in the same way. ☐ Time is spent fixing issues that could have been prevented. ☐ There is increased risk of confusion, complaints, or disputes.
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Reflection:

What is working well with your HR foundations?

What is one HR foundation that, if strengthened, would make work easier or reduce risk?

B. People, Staffing, and Employee Experience

Understanding people's needs, staffing challenges, and employee experience.

Statement	Needs attention	Partly in place	Working well
The organization understands where staffing challenges exist today.	☐	☐	☐
Leadership has a shared view of the roles and skills the organization will need in the future.	☐	☐	☐
Staffing decisions are connected to the organization's priorities.	☐	☐	☐
The organization understands what affects employee engagement, belonging, wellbeing, and retention.	☐	☐	☐
People-related decisions are informed by useful information, feedback, or data.	☐	☐	☐

If this area needs attention, you may be noticing:

☐ Staffing needs are mostly addressed when there is a vacancy or urgent issue. ☐ Some teams or roles are stretched too thin. ☐ Leadership has different views of staffing priorities.	☐ It is unclear which roles or skills will be most important in the future. ☐ Employee engagement, belonging, wellbeing, or retention concerns are not well understood. ☐ Decisions about people are made without enough information.
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Reflection:

Where is the organization experiencing the most challenges related to people, staffing, or employee experience?

What information would help the organization make better people and staffing decisions?

C. Hiring and Onboarding

Bringing the right people into the organization.

Statement	Needs attention	Partly in place	Working well
Hiring needs are planned before they become urgent.	☐	☐	☐
Hiring decisions are based on clear role requirements and consistent selection criteria.	☐	☐	☐
Hiring is done in a fair and consistent way.	☐	☐	☐
New employees receive clear, welcoming onboarding and orientation.	☐	☐	☐
New employees understand their role, expectations, and where to go for support.	☐	☐	☐

If this area needs attention, you may be noticing:

☐ Vacancies are difficult to fill. ☐ Hiring feels rushed or reactive. ☐ Hiring practices vary by manager, team, or department. ☐ New employees receive different onboarding experiences.	☐ New employees take longer to settle into their roles. ☐ Managers spend extra time addressing hiring or onboarding gaps. ☐ New employees are unclear about expectations or support.
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Reflection:

What part of hiring or onboarding creates the most difficulty today?

What would help the organization hire and onboard new employees more clearly, fairly, and consistently?

D. Employee Performance and Growth

Helping employees succeed and develop.

Statement	Needs attention	Partly in place	Working well
Employees understand what is expected of them.	☐	☐	☐
There is a clear way to set expectations, give feedback, and discuss performance.	☐	☐	☐
Performance and feedback conversations happen regularly enough to have an impact.	☐	☐	☐
Employees have opportunities to build skills and develop.	☐	☐	☐
The organization prepares future leaders or people for key roles.	☐	☐	☐

If this area needs attention, you may be noticing:

☐ Employees are unclear about expectations. ☐ Feedback happens mostly when there is a problem. ☐ Performance conversations are inconsistent or informal. ☐ Managers handle performance issues differently.	☐ Employees have limited opportunities to learn or grow. ☐ Future leaders or people for key roles are not being prepared. ☐ Important knowledge is held by only a few people.
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Reflection:

What makes it difficult for employees to know how they are doing or how to improve?

What would make feedback, performance conversations, or development more useful and consistent?

E. Recognition, Pay, and Benefits

Recognizing employees and managing rewards fairly.

Statement	Needs attention	Partly in place	Working well
Good work is recognized and appreciated.	☐	☐	☐
Recognition practices are fair and used consistently.	☐	☐	☐
Employees understand what the organization offers beyond salary.	☐	☐	☐
Pay and benefits practices are reviewed when needed.	☐	☐	☐
Employees understand how recognition, pay, and benefits are managed.	☐	☐	☐

If this area needs attention, you may be noticing:

☐ Recognition and appreciation are limited or inconsistent. ☐ Employees are unsure how pay or benefits decisions are made. ☐ Employees do not fully understand the benefits or supports available to them. ☐ Managers recognize employees in different ways.	☐ Pay, benefits, or recognition concerns come up frequently. ☐ Employees compare their rewards to other organizations. ☐ Reward practices may not feel clear, fair, or current.
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Reflection:

What is working well in how employees are recognized, rewarded, or supported?

What would make recognition, pay, or benefits feel clearer, fairer, or more useful?

Step 2: Choose Your Top Priorities

Review your responses from the five areas.

Which improvements would make the biggest difference for your organization?

Priority	What needs attention?	Why is it important?
Priority 1		
Priority 2		
Priority 3		

Step 3: Decide Where to Start

Look at your priorities and answer:

If addressed, which priority would make the biggest difference over the next 12 months?

- ☐ Priority 1
- ☐ Priority 2
- ☐ Priority 3

Some questions to consider when narrowing down your priorities:

- Does this create risk for the organization?
- Does this affect multiple employees?
- Will it become a bigger challenge if nothing changes?
- Is it realistic to improve within the next 12 months?

What makes this the most important priority right now?

Step 4: Your HR Action Plan

Progress is often made through small, consistent improvements rather than trying to solve everything at once.

HR Action Plan	
What is working well and should continue?	
What is the most important improvement to focus on next?	
What will success look like?	
What is the first step?	
Who will take the lead?	
When will you get started?	
Target completion date?	



Have any questions?

Contact Us



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