Experiences on the Other Side of the Cloud

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HR solutions have been moving to the cloud for a while now. They join a mix of other assets and applications in the digital HR ecosystem including homegrown apps, several on-premises vendor solutions, and the technology offerings of HR-outsourced partners. Add to this landscape one or more global ERPs (that may be moving to the cloud) and emerging enterprise mobile capabilities, and we can observe a complex set of expensive, mostly transaction- and process-centric business solutions in constant motion.

Cloud-based HR solutions enter this fragmented ecosystem promising lower costs, faster development cycle times with shorter innovation intervals, and an end to the frustrating hamster wheel of implementation and upgrade efforts. Most tout simple and intuitive user interfaces as differentiators and, with a well-run partner program, could provide an effective cooperative system of rapid development and support.

The emergence of suitable HR cloud solutions encourages HR to finally expect (and get) reasonable user experiences, with adoptable standard global processes, for basic "needed-to-play" HR capabilities. Under this premise, HR and the business could sanction these solutions as close enough to work, satisfying basic "Tier 0" self-service capabilities needed for today's HR service delivery models, and delivering the backlog of requests for standard management reports. As a result, HR can focus its attention on new, higher-value opportunities.

At play here is the significant opportunity to move from basic, keeping-the-lights-on capabilities that deliver efficiency and usability, to delivering high-value, high-impact experiences for an increasingly savvy constituency. This means leveraging the assets across the HR ecosystem (cloud and otherwise) in innovative ways for "needed to win" gain.

With basic technology needs met, HR can start to implement the idea of a business- and people-centric agenda fueled by technology. In this view, technology is the "great enabler" to business models, based less on reducing inquiries and more on growing talent and connecting the enterprise in relevant know-how. Imagine the benefits to the business when HR delivers THAT kind of capability…and can "thank its lucky cloud" (real or imagined) for finally getting out from under the weight of basic self service to innovate HR solutions that provide profoundly good outcomes.

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How can we **envision** experiences in an emerging ecosystem focused on a constituent-centric, people mandate?

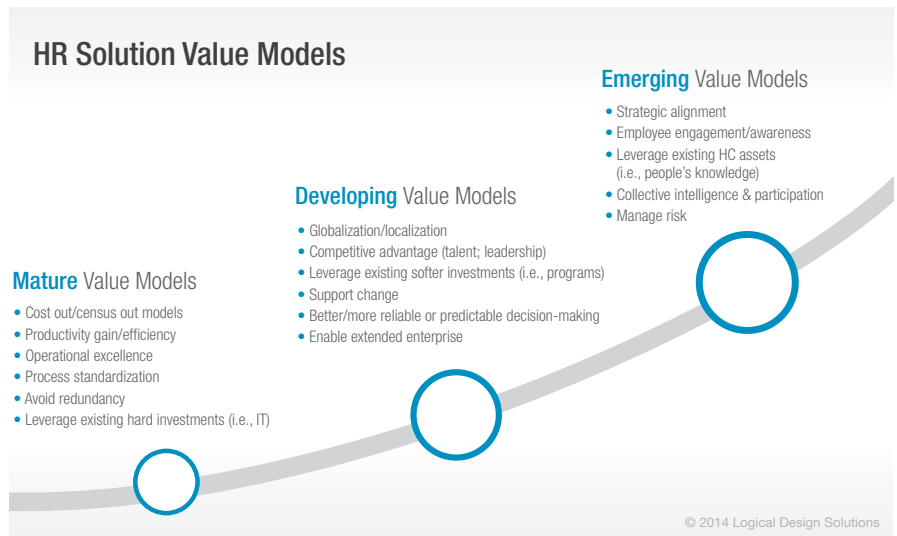## ■ First and most fundamentally, imagine more **value**

We'll need to shift our experience paradigm beyond long-held models based on efficiency and productivity to emerging and more impactful models based on influence, engagement and ambassadorship.

As smarter and better-designed solutions emerge, business owners can move up the food chain to focus on experiences that deliver higher-level value propositions. The whole HR ecosystem comes into play, and we can imagine cross-solution experiences that build know-how and knowledge, connect the enterprise in productive participation, and support manager and leader decision-making. We can be less concerned about visual continuity across HR properties (an idea that we need to let go of) and instead think about creating branded, recognizable experiences and capabilities that resonate with people. We can worry less about counting clicks and basic usability metrics, and think more about understanding and quantifying experiences based on outcomes of usefulness, impact, and engagement.

To find meaningful opportunity here, we can align value relative to our constituents in more focused segments – seasoned candidates, new hires, managers of global teams, and so on. This helps to frame desired outcomes by people's work practices, related decision scope and knowledge needs, preferences, and online behavior to define useful targeting and variability of capabilities that tightly align to their needs and interests.

To be clear, these are value propositions found in the HR business model. And, these are constituent segments known to HR today as its clients and prospects. They are not technology-driven capabilities or ideas. The opportunity exists to bring this "strategic HR" model forward, along with the people who we're trying to engage and serve, and to make this focus the basis of our experiential design.

HR Solution Value Models

Emerging Value Models
- Strategic alignment
- Employee engagement/awareness
- Leverage existing HC assets
  (i.e., people's knowledge)
- Collective intelligence & participation
- Manage risk

Developing Value Models
- Globalization/localization
- Competitive advantage (talent; leadership)
- Leverage existing softer investments (i.e., programs)
- Support change
- Better/more reliable or predictable decision-making
- Enable extended enterprise

Mature Value Models
- Cost out/census out models
- Productivity gain/efficiency
- Operational excellence
- Process standardization
- Avoid redundancy
- Leverage existing hard investments (i.e., IT)

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HR should explore solutions that move beyond known, mature value models to seek emerging value defined by ideas of influence, participation and just-in-time knowledge.

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■ To realize value, seek rich **context**

Rich context is defined as carefully envisioned and designed elements in the online experience that seek to affect specific behaviors, attitudes, actions, and perspectives and align them to business goals.

Context is realized when highly useful capabilities deliver key value and insight while resonating with the individual. These days, rich context is achieved by leveraging assets across the ecosystem in models of knowledge sharing, contextually relevant social interactions, and just-in-time business intelligence – all harmoniously designed to create an elegant, smart experience with clear and compelling business purpose.

In this environment, HR can think about what its constituents need to know, factor, prioritize, and understand to be aligned with organizational culture, risk tolerances, global business practices, and shared marketplace goals.

This is a significant shift in expectation and approach for HR stakeholders who typically own these strategic programs and business goals, and where technology goals have historically been hyper-focused on launching transactional, global systems. Here, less effort is often focused on considering emerging interaction models and knowledge solutions that align to HR's most strategic and aggressive business goals. Our business-technology teams need to ask more often, "How could an innovative technology approach enable that idea?"

Equally, a focus on rich context experiences can require a big shift in skills and capabilities needed in HRIT to imagine, analyze, design and iterate solutions and these
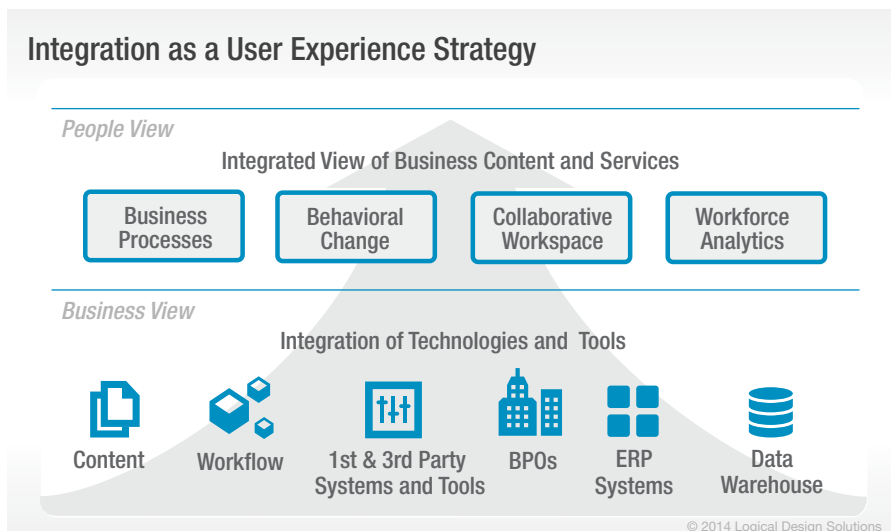
programs. That's not to say that HR functional analysis is no longer needed – many of those core HRIT skills will be needed to manage the HR ecosystem holistically. But, in this new model, fewer people will be needed to do that work, and more people will be needed to do the new work. Transitional as that may be, the scope of strategic and creative work in the new organization offers compelling opportunities.

It's exciting to think about the work ahead, when we can innovate online programs such as creating an integrated talent solution, designing an effective ambassadorship experience, or thinking through the employee relationship lifecycle in new contexts. These are all interesting solutions that will be envisioned and delivered by broad-thinking business analysts teamed with consumer-trained experience designers, insightful change and organizational management experts, and technology-savvy business leaders.

■ Demand more **integration**

Integration is a key approach for realizing ideas of context, and the means for tapping into the value of the digital HR ecosystem as a whole.

Assets across the ecosystem (data, business rules and knowledge, status, workflow) provide critical supporting elements for the context that is the basis of these rich experiences. These assets are factored into superior experience designs so that the user makes immediate connections of related ideas that previously were separated by time and space. To enable this critical context, we need integration strategies and approaches.

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Integration as a User Experience Strategy

People View

Integrated View of Business Content and Services

| Business Processes | Behavioral Change | Collaborative Workspace | Workforce Analytics |

Business View

Integration of Technologies and Tools

Content   Workflow   1st & 3rd Party Systems and Tools   BPOs   ERP Systems   Data Warehouse

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The fragmented state of the HR ecosystem makes thoughtful approaches and standards for integration a critical capability for the user experience.

From single sign on, to deep-linking, to data integration and web services, application vendors need to open up their emerging and cloud environments (i.e., our emerging environments) to enable a wide range of secure integrations.

HR organizations shouldn't have to "buy up" in a single vendor technology stack in order to realize meaningful, user-centric integration. Rather, HR should expect and require these platforms to support significant integration approaches that make these solutions – along with HR's business rules and data – transparent and available for user experience purposes. Doing so avoids one-off integration negotiations, and instead enables a connected ecosystem regardless of our outsourcing choices.

The objective is not to undermine HR's investments in these new solutions by integrating with them without clear purpose. Rather, integration enables HR to deliver on profoundly useful business-driven scenarios – such as integrating business data with broad talent goals of the business, and delivering employee data to help managers understand effective recruiting practices. HR need not be limited by vendor policy or other unnecessary conflicts to provide the flexibility that our businesses require.

Unfortunately, many HR business owners don't understand these various models of integration, and most vendors don't proactively address this important issue or requirement. HR needs to think beyond the "honeymoon" period with emerging vendor products and plan for the long-term interoperability of the digital HR ecosystem. HR needs to create context across multiple online properties to support people's existing and emerging business knowledge needs.

We can apply similar, relevant lessons learned from early HR outsourcing models to our cloud-based solutions to avoid misaligned expectations later.

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Expect more **change management** and **planning**

Emerging innovative HR solutions based on rich context with cross-organizational scope require a heightened focus on organizational change management and planning to realize the investment.

A comprehensive change management program focuses on early and continual stakeholder management and socialization to build advocacy and gain critical early insight from senior stakeholders. Similarly, constituents need to be regularly engaged in a structured program, with participation from around the company and across the globe. This is important as the sophistication of these solutions warrant periodic, thoughtfully organized opportunities for constituents to experience, explore, and think about them in the context of regular use.

Strategic and operational governance models – tailored to these cross-functional, future-state solutions – must be carefully socialized and agreed upon by all parties, especially those with ongoing governance responsibilities. Solutions of this magnitude more commonly fail due to poor organization and operational people systems than as a result of poor technology delivery.

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Governance Model Structure
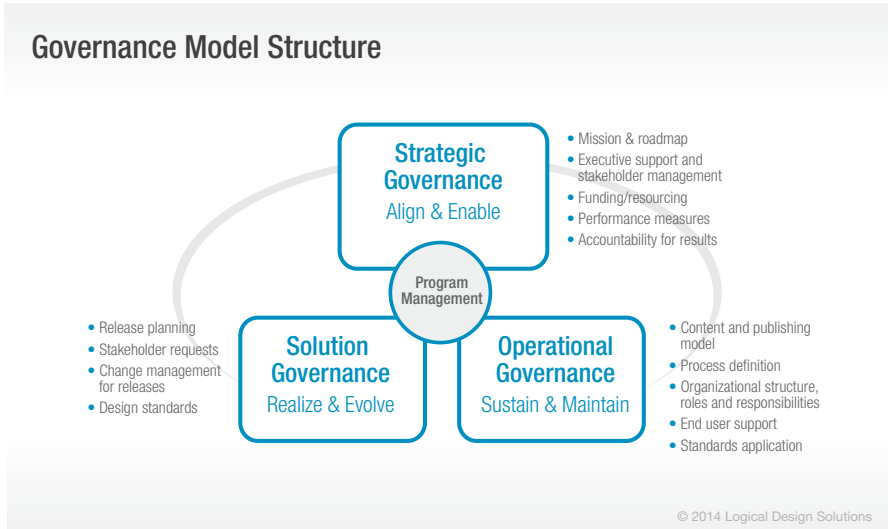
Planning for governance and sustainability requires an organized and integrated approach, owned by the business.

New interaction models that reflect new work practices deserve special attention. Use of social and integrated business intelligence capabilities, for example, should be monitored to ensure the vision and expected value is being realized. Measurements should focus on levels and value of engagement, patterns of participation, and overall constituent satisfaction with these new capabilities.

A staple of good governance and change management is a well maintained and published roadmap that provides a clear line of sight for developing programs and a place to park ideas and future state requirements. The roadmap provides business leaders and other key stakeholders the foundation for their support.

We need to grasp this opportunity to move from delivering basic HR capabilities to creating high-value, high-impact experiences for HR's increasingly sophisticated constituencies. The greatest asset in achieving this goal is the passionate, committed, "believing without seeing" sponsorship of one or two key executives. There will be times where clout, conviction, and the ability to get beyond typical organizational barriers are critically needed.

Bold HR agendas such as these need a few great leaders willing to chart a new course to next generation ideas and experiences . . . based more on HR **next** practices than best practices.

About Logical Design Solutions

LDS is a consultancy that envisions and designs enterprise digital solutions. Since 1990, LDS has been a recognized brand among technology-focused management consultancies and trusted partner to Fortune 200 clients.

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At LDS, we design the ideas that set organizations apart.

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