

David Ulrich and Wayne Brockbank, *The HR Value Proposition*, Harvard Business School Press: Boston, MA, 2005

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For several decades, Human Resources (HR) have been perceived as a paper pushing, benefits administering, and legal woe of the company. Many have attempted (some success has been reached) to transform HR into a more respected profession. HR professionals are seen as more of an asset today. They have been able to attend seminars and coaching courses that have assisted learning all sides of the organization in order to grasp the concept of being intangible. They must also live and breathe an ethical way of life in order to succeed.

Through *The HR Value Proposition*, David Ulrich and Wayne Brockbank provide a proposition that focuses on HR activities with their true and actual role in the business world. The authors begin with the statement, “We like Human Resources”. In order to fully comprehend what exactly the authors like about HR, you have to view HR as a talent. Talent in recruiting: Disneyland wouldn’t have boring employees or “cast members” as they like to call them to represent their brand, so why should HR be any different? HR deals with people and their performance. HR must either develop or recruit the best possible talent. To create an infrastructure that affects people positively would be a good investment. That is where *The HR Value Proposition* comes into play.

Time and time again the authors argue that HR value requires a deep understanding of external business realities and how key stakeholders both inside and outside the company define value. To create value you must know what value is. So what is value? Is value having the mind set on what a company needs to be competitive? Does value reflect the standards of the firm? The book elaborates upon value: HR professionals add value when their work helps someone reach their goals. Value is worth obtaining when an employee receives worth out of the 8 hour long orientation, not just the fact that there was a presentation prepared. When others receive value from HR work, according to the authors, HR will be credible, respected, and influential.

The authors clearly state that this is not a basic “HR for dummies” book; this book is a complex performance evaluation of HR, which includes the challenging factors that are relevant in today’s competitive marketplace. The book includes a complete set of practical guides, action plans, and tools necessary for proper implementation of an HR professional. Examples are given in the development process along with recommendations. This book is an essential tool for HR professionals, consultants, and executives looking for the true function of HR.

Ulrich and Brockbank outline the path HR professionals must take in order to help lead their organization into the future. With their in-depth examples and bulleted questions, HR professionals should be able to cogently discuss external realities after reading this book.

The book emphasizes that HR professionals are to develop customer literacy. They must think and act like a customer to gain the internal perspective. They must learn that keeping a customer is more profitable than attracting a new one. Ways to ensure the external stakeholders (investors and customers) have a clear employee value proposition are to resolve misconceptions of HR, build relationships of trust, focus on deliverables, not-do-ables, prioritize capabilities and create an action plan for delivering them. HR professionals must listen and learn to understand the logic, language, and concepts. HR professionals represent the “soul of the enterprise” when they have accomplished creating an employee value proposition. Organizations and people become intangible assets: readers must have a clear understanding on how to focus on people to organizations where people work.

HR helps employees build personal ability. By creating an employee value proposition that represents the employee’s interests, support is given between the employee and organization. The book explains how to implement the value proposition in the HR field. The nature of the book is quite advanced; however, examples on HR Practices that add value, development, and strategy can be attainable for any organization. Readers who are entering the world of HR may need clarification of the text on how HR is valued today. It is a must read for those seeking to develop their organization into something more than inputs and outputs. People don’t plan to fail, they simply fail to plan. That is why this wonderful blueprint is given; as professionals we are to plan it out ourselves. Your organization isn’t going to achieve everything overnight; you must be a student before you are a leader. By grasping the concepts laid out by Ulrich and Brockbank, you are on a blueprint of success.