

Even if you're the kind of leader who absolutely loves budgeting and strategy, annual planning for human resources can be challenging.

It's up to us as leaders to outline a solid strategy that will steer our multinational organizations through whatever we may encounter. It's important to remember that as much as these issues challenge us, each one also represents a major opportunity to make our companies stronger and better.

So, how can we create a [2021 global HR strategy](#) to guide us through whatever might come? This post offers you a framework to get started, including how to leverage stakeholders and tips for focusing your energy. Consider using this as a checklist as you get started:

1. Audit your 2020 activity

Begin looking forward by taking a moment to look back. Audit your allocation of resources last year. Gather all of your KPIs on an organizational level, and also sort performance ratings, voluntary churn, and involuntary churn by manager group and country group.

Make a list of five or ten things that went wrong, and consider why. Look at what worked well, and assess your strengths and weaknesses accordingly. How accurate was your 2020 planning? Where were you more than 5% off from your budget? Make sure you thoroughly understand the year that is almost over. This will help you to learn from your mistakes and recreate your successes.

2. Talk to employees about the current state

As much as we might wish it, leaders cannot be all-knowing. Your prior year audit will tell you a lot about what happened, but talking to your employees will hold the keys to why it happened—which is just as critical to know.

First gather whatever quantitative employee voice data you might have— look at the results

of Net Promoter Scores or engagement surveys you may have conducted, focusing on the comments for clues about your climate. Then take the time to do some qualitative spot check-ins with employees at every level of your organization and every country in which you operate.

3. Talk to leaders about goals for 2021 and beyond

You may think you have a handle on what's coming in 2021, but it's good to sit with senior leaders to talk about their plans and goals. Find out how you can lay groundwork now for long term changes. There may be a [plan to launch in new global locations](#) in 2022, for example, that you should know about now. Talk to leaders about their aspirations for growth.

4. Talk to department heads about 2021 needs

Reach out to department heads, managers or anyone tasked with planning for various global locations or practice areas. Ask them for anticipated personnel changes, hires, and exits, as well as giving them the opportunity to share any issues that need resolution or ideas for new initiatives.

5. Conduct a gap analysis

Once you have established your current state and the business' goals for 2021, conduct a gap analysis to see where you need to make changes to support the organization. Also look for opportunities: What can you automate? What can you outsource? What can you bring in house? What are top risks and challenges? Which countries are using most of your resources and how can you address that?

6. Develop your 2021 strategy

Now that you've established your benchmarks and identified shortfalls and opportunities, you're ready to create your 2021 HR strategy. You will want to include the following sections:

- Summary – Articulate your overall vision for 2021

- Top HR business priorities – List the top priorities for the coming year, as they relate to supporting the business. (We suggest 3 major corporate-wide priorities, along with a list of smaller priorities by location.)
- Top HR initiatives – List the top departmental priorities for the upcoming year. (We suggest limiting this to 3-5 major projects.)
- Top HR focus areas (or countries)– Identify areas for special focus that may fall outside specific annual business goals, but address processes, systems or long-term improvements. It is also useful for some global organizations to identify key countries or locations for additional focus through the year.

7. Create your 2021 budget

Once you have your strategy in hand, it's time to create the budget to support it. You now have a base to discuss with your executive team and align with your organization's priorities and initiatives through your budgeting process.

As you look at your plans for hiring employees around the world, you can [reach out to Globalization Partners for help](#).

For more information regarding onboarding and managing global talent, download our Global Hiring Handbook here:

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