

People strategies

A proactive guide
to building your
people plan

Personio



Developing a proper people strategy

For leaders of People Teams, a people strategy is a must. That's because it can play an active role in determining and shaping the success of any organization, based on one key asset: **their people**. But, where do you even begin?

In this guide, we will walk you through defining a people strategy, its most important assets, and some relevant action steps you can take to make yours a reality. It can help ensure that your HR is both strategic, and is deserving of a seat at the table of senior leadership.

What is a people strategy?

A people strategy may be owned by a company's HR function, but it's on behalf of the entire organization in the end. Therefore, it's a **strategic outline** that clearly aligns the **goals of HR** with the **overall goals of the business**.

It does this by thinking about the ways in which HR can address and shape the future of your company. Think of it as a way to plan for the future of work, allowing your organization to:

Essentially, this takes your people function and turns it from overlooked into a **point of emphasis**.

It does this by thinking about the ways in which HR can address and shape the future of your company. Think of it as a way to plan for the future of work, allowing your organization to:

- Outline your vision and culture to reinforce the type of company you want to be.
- Align on growth targets that are achieved by people.
- Define your workforce needs and how you can attract top talent.
- Drive employee engagement, development, and retention.



Your people strategy is your roadmap

Let's think about the basic anatomy of your people strategy, and how it can guide you...

Vision

The bigger picture of where you want to go

Data

To bring your vision to life through your people

Challenges

The things standing in your way

Outcomes

Where you will ultimately end up.

Feedback

How your plan aligns with other people's ideas.

Excite

Bringing your strategy to life in front of others.

Visualize & Communicate

Explaining how your strategy works in simple terms.

Track & Adjust

Treating your strategy like the living document it is.

But first, where do you begin?

Before we start crafting your people strategy, it helps to take a long, hard look at where you currently stand and where you want to go.

Let's start by asking yourself some of the following questions:

- How are employees performing against their role expectations?
- Are people given the opportunity to realize their full potential?
- What things are potentially causing employees to stagnate in their roles?
- Are your team being developed in the right ways?

In order to craft a people strategy, you need to have an accurate read on where your people currently stand.



If you are struggling with an objective way to answer these questions, pose the question to your employees. Consider an employee engagement survey, to help unlock insights into where your company currently stands. You can start by [**downloading this template**](#).

Breaking down your future people strategy

Now that we know the essential elements, how do we bring each to life? Consider this your rundown of each, and how you can make them happen...

01

Vision

The first thing your future people strategy needs is a vision. That means understanding, keeping track of, and even looking into the future of your organization.

Think of it as everything you are working toward for your organization. Then, distill it into an understandable and succinct vision statement.

It needs to be aspirational of where you want to go. Then, it needs to be inspired by the data that you are able to collect and analyze.



02

Quantitative Data

The next step is all about collecting data. This allows you to ‘feed’ your plan and your vision, to give it energy and what it needs to become more real.



It starts with qualitative data.

- Diversity (ratio of male-to-female employees, for instance)
- Hiring data (application to offer or offer acceptance percentages)
- Turnover rate
- Sick days
- Overall performance metrics
- Glassdoor or other external peer benchmarking data

Ideally, this kind of data would live in your HR software. This could be a place where this data is housed, securely, with easy access for anyone involved. For example, within **Personio** each of these analytics are easily visible and clearly presented for easy reference.

Qualitative Data

Then, we need to mix in something a bit more qualitative. This could include employee feedback, feedback from leadership, various team leads, pretty much anyone who has a read on your business.

**Structured
interviews**

**Employee
surveys**

To gain access to these insights in a consistent way, try using the following: Complement it by compiling a range of retrospective trends, too, as well as projecting into the future of what you expect (and want) to see. This can determine both where you will go, and what new skills you may need to get there.

03

Challenges & Outcomes

Now, let's challenge ourselves. After analyzing the data, the next step for your people strategy is to identify any potential challenges and the outcomes you want to see.

A people strategy needs to be reflexive. This means that it needs to identify problems before they occur, and to solve them in a proactive fashion.

Your people strategy is far more than a mission statement or a vision. It works because it foresees gaps, issues, or roadblocks while finding and tracking various solutions.

**Identify your objective
(what you want to achieve).**

**Take stock of the resources
you need to achieve it.**

**How long it will take for your
organization to get there.**

**The ways you will measure or
monitor it along the way.**

04

Feedback

A proper people strategy needs to be informed not simply by HR, but by everyone in the organization! In sum, the business needs to be the owner of your people strategy, not simply your people teams.

If you want to collect accurate, meaningful feedback, think about it in the following ways:

- Collect feedback from team members across the organization and roles.
- Identify sponsors or nominees who can join various project groups.
- Engage with people to support buy-in for your people strategy.

The truth about feedback is that it is not simply about feedback. It is about engaging everyone, across the organization, to see themselves in your people strategy.

05 **Excite**

Not only does your strategy need to exist, but it needs to excite those around you. In this case, it helps to present a final strategy document or policy in an accessible and employee-friendly manner. Consider the following:

- **Is there a team-wide setting where you can present it?**
- **How can you help people feel part of it?**
- **Is there a way to make your presentation visually appealing?**

Put yourself in an employee's shoes. You need to be able to excite them, because this policy is basically about them.



06 **Visualize & Communicate**

Presentation is one thing, but you need to think beyond that. Not only does your strategy need to be in employee-friendly language, but it needs to be formulated in a way that makes it easy to understand and easy to communicate.

Think about it like this: If your people strategy doesn't fit on two sides of A4 paper, at most, it's going to be too long and will be put into a drawer and forgotten about.

For this reason, it needs to be basic and it needs to be comprehensible. Like any good piece of content, it needs to be written so that an elementary school student could understand it.

07

Track & Adjust

A people strategy is not a set-it-and-forget-it matter, you need to be able to track it rather than tuck it away and hope for the best.

So, you need to devise your people strategy, explain it, set it in motion, and continuously check in on its progress.

Your People Strategy Timeline

One Month

Are people taking to your strategy? Can they explain it?

Three Months

Does your people strategy have real examples of success?

Six Months

Are there performance indicators tied to your strategy available?

Nine Months

Gather feedback from employees on your people strategy's journey.

One Year

Review your strategy to see if it needs large-scale changes.

Strategic HR starts with operational excellence

The fact is that people strategies rely on a people function that isn't tight for time. When operational excellence has been achieved, it unlocks the productive potential of organizations to focus on things that make a difference rather than make due.

Your people strategy is one of them. Now that you know all of the vital ingredients that go into one, you likely need the time. That means taking care of all your core HR process, including:

Applicant Sourcing & Tracking

Attendance & Absence Management

Tracking Hours

Reporting & Analytics

Onboarding

And More...



“A people strategy can ensure that your People Teams have the vision, the data, and the plan to really put your people first. It can serve as a key difference marker not only for your HR but for your entire organization.”

Ross Seychell
Chief People Officer
Personio

Need a strong partner by your side?

Personio is the all-in-one solution designed with all of your core HR processes in mind. Best of all, we can help you get back the time you need to focus on strategic HR initiatives. It can start with your people strategy, but the sky is truly the limit.

Reach out to us today to book your very own personalized web demo, where we can show you exactly how Personio can help you make time for what matters most: people and strategy.

Book your demo today

Personio

The screenshot shows the Personio software interface. At the top, there is a header with the Personio logo and a search bar labeled "Search for employees, applicants or features". Below the header, the word "Reports" is prominently displayed in a large, bold font. Underneath "Reports", there are two tabs: "System Reports" (which is currently selected) and "Exports". The main content area is divided into a grid of report cards. There are three columns and four rows of reports. The reports are as follows:

- Headcount**: This report shows the amount of internal employees in your workforce... (Category: HR Management)
- FTE**: This report shows all FTE based on the weekly working hours. (Category: HR Management)
- Birthdays**: This report shows all upcoming birthdays of the next 30 days. (Category: HR Management)
- Salary**: This report shows the combined salary of active internal employees in your... (Category: Payroll)
- Probation Periods**: This report shows all employees who are currently on probation period. (Category: HR Management)
- Terminations**: This report shows all employees scheduled to leave the company. (Category: HR Management)
- Missing Data**
- Absence Days**
- Absence Rate**

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The People Operating System