**ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL CITY BANK’S HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT AND**

**RECCOMENDATIONS FOR A WORLD CLASS HRD SYSTEM**

BY

MATT SCHNORR

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**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this assessment is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the current Human Resource system in place at National City bank. This is a critical time as our company is beginning the tedious task of getting acquired by PNC Bank. While the challenge is great, this is a once in a life time opportunity to gauge where the current HR systems lie and be able to meld them into a world class HRD system with PNC. What follows is my examination of the current state in National City, and what can be improved on by PNC as we transition into one company.

Human Resource Development is a vital area for firms because ideas for innovation, quality and continuous improvement, as well as other critically important inputs needed to compete in the modern, highly competitive business world, come from people and not machines” (Swart and Mann 3). People are the most valuable assets in an organization.

I have created a 20 point assessment on National City in the following pages (17 total as three categories are a combination of two focal points). The topics are taken from a handout given to us by Dr. Gerald Groves in a class I attended called HR Strategy. The topics are what are considered to be behaviors exhibited by a world class HRD system. I have assessed the current standing of the company and graded it on each category.

**CORPORATE VISION AND STRATEGIC BUSINESS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES DRIVE HR PROCESSES, SYSTEMS, AND ACTIVITIES**

The corporate vision for National City was the belief in always doing what is best for the customer. National City does believe in this as the HR Department actually maintains its own HR value map to align the department’s actions with the overall strategy of the corporation. Whereas it has been an issue in a lot of companies that HR was not a strong top level partner in the business vision and strategy, National City did not face this problem. HR has been an integral piece in the company’s future goals and foresight for quite some time. The company recognized that HR is not just a support function, but it is equally important as any function throughout the company. As the career opportunity website states, “National City offers human resources professionals the exciting opportunities you would expect from an industry leader. We are committed to a continuous effort to improve our technologies, pursue best practices and develop superior strategies” (National City Career Opportunities June 2009). As you can see, HR is an integral part of the system and is driven by the strategies it helps develop.

**Grade: A**

**COMPETENCIES DRIVE HR SYSTEMS INTEGRATION**

**And**

**HRD SYSTEM INTEGRATES AND INFUSES COMPETENCIES INTO ALL HRD PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS**

Competencies are a driver for the corporation, especially in the HR Department. However, the emphasis on competencies tends to die off after job descriptions are developed and examined during the hiring or promotion process. There is not a lot of discussion day in and day out throughout the line employees about the competencies required for different jobs throughout the organization or close assessment of the individual competencies and sub-competencies of the employees. Most of the staff throughout the organization is not aware of the competencies required to succeed at other positions and therefore are not building a strong foundation for the company in this aspect. Awareness has to be there for the company to capitalize on this area. I believe this could be an issue at most companies in the business world. While this isn’t necessarily a huge weakness, it is not a strength either.

**Grade: B-**

* Quick Change to Raise Score: A list of positions should be made available on the Intranet that lists all the job positions in the company with the competencies required of them.

**TOP MANAGEMENT AND LINE MANAGER SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT ARE CRITICAL FOR HRD SUCCESS**

When National City went through a culture shift in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s, they realized they had to involve all areas of the business and get everyone on the same page and moving in the same direction. Top management bought in and decided that they must include HR in the planning of the strategy and hold them accountable for their portion of achieving the vision they set out to obtain. In the book Strategy Maps by Robert Kaplan and Edward Norton the authors discussed some of the procedures HR and the company went through to make sure everything was aligned. The bank decided to approach their communications from top down by having top management deliver their HR value map (which is attached below) through a campaign they called “Road to Bestville”. They then encouraged HR employees to tie their own wants and needs to the map. The authors interviewed one of the top managers in the company at the time named Shelley Siefert. She stated that after this, “All HR employees now have a direct line of sight between their responsibilities and corporate goals. This improved clarity provides a unifying focus and strengthens the ability of the HR organization to add measurable value to the corporation. We believe that HR plays a critical role in maximizing the value of human capital at National City, and the Balanced Scorecard provides us with a useful tool to fulfill that mission” (Kaplan and Norton 247).

I am including the following strategy map that was developed by the company during this process.

**Grade: A**

Execute A Customer Centric Strategy

Know The Business

Commit to Everyone’s Success

Drive Continuous Improvement

Recruit the Best and Brightest

Drive a High Performance Culture That Enables Success

Deliver Customer Centric Communication

Provide Consistent High-Quality Service

Business Partners

National City Employees

Enable Net Income Growth

Increase NCC Shareholder Value

Maximize the ROI in People

LEARNING

INTERNAL

CUSTOMER

FINANCE

**PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT IS A KEY RESPONSIBILITY OF LINE MANAGERS**

As a current line manager in the company, I can attest to the fact that people development is definitely a key responsibility of line managers. The managers are required to meet with their employees at least twice a year (during semi-annual reviews and annual reviews) to discuss with the employees their strengths and map out a training and development plan to be followed to strengthen the employees and get them better prepared for their jobs.

In reality, it is my experience that this is a little bit of a struggle for most managers. With all of the rest of the tasks that are demanded of the manager, it is difficult to find a consistent time to coach anywhere from five to twenty-five direct reports. There is an opportunity here that should be solved (at least in part) when PNC takes complete control. Their structure allows for what is called a sales and service support manager (SSSM) for a region of 15-20 offices. Their job is to assist the branches in results coaching. That should help alleviate the pressure on the branch managers and also provide more consistency in coaching and building training and development plans.

**Grade: B-**

* Quick Change to Raise Score: The company should mandate one day a month for a manager to be required to quickly coach their staff members and enter it into the HR area on the Intranet. That way a record can be kept that it is being done company wide.

**HR PROCESSES, SYSTEMS, AND ACTIVITIES ARE ALIGNED WITH COMPANY VISION AND SUPPORT COMPANY CULTURE**

This is a tough area to assess as it is the vision and culture for the company to always do what is right for the customer. HR is not a customer facing department, so it is difficult for them to be judged based on those criteria. What I can say from experience is that HR’s processes and systems, along with activities, indirectly support the end customer by strongly supporting the employees that deal with the customers.

The Human Resource Department at National City is very accessible to the employees. The HR system offers a variety of benefits for all employees alike. They offer benefits such as flex work time and a Life Works program. The NCHR website is the link. It says, “The Life/Health section provides information on many HR benefits and programs designed to help employees balance their work and family commitments. Look here for details on health benefits, FlexWork, [LifeWorks®](about:blank) Employee Resource program, Club Wellness, and more” (NCHR Online June 2009). These programs provides any employee with counseling or assistance during tough spots in their lives outside of work, such as dealing with an elderly family member, the loss of a loved one, or dependency issues. These activities show the company not only cares about the working portion of the employee, but rather the employee as a person.

Along with these added features, HR is just one step away for any employee when an issue arises, whether it’s a manager looking for assistance in how to handle an employee issue, or an employee that has questions regarding anything HR related. They are easy to contact and are helpful in assisting anyone who needs them.

As we transition to PNC, there is a lot of emphasis being put on employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. It is the view of PNC that if we have a happy, well taken care of workforce, they will treat the customers well and in turn lead us to good customer satisfaction scores. That will lead to stronger retention on the employee and customer side, which are two very valuable intangibles. While I think National City did a good job, other companies such as PNC had a stronger program in place, so there is room for improvement.

**Grade: B+**

* Quick Change to Raise Score: The manager should meet weekly with the staff as a whole to go over one of the twelve questions listed on the semi-annual employee satisfaction survey. That way a plan can be put in place to improve the lifestyles of the employees at work.

**HR SYSTEMS ARE ADAPTABLE AND SUPPORT TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES**

There has never been a better time than the present to test the adaptability of the HR system as National City begins its transformation into PNC. While the company is double in size, there is a great amount of work and integration to be done to make the move as seamless as possible. National City’s HR Department does appear to be very flexible in its core, and so far, that has proven to be true as the acquisition is taking hold.

The problem the company faces, however, is mainly outside of its control. Because National City was purchased by PNC and it was not a merger, PNC has taken the upper hand in many endeavors (as one would easily conclude). This is a challenge because a lot of PNC’s ideas and procedures are enveloping the new company, where only tiny bits of National City’s procedures are being utilized. While this is to be expected, if the HR Department was truly World Class, PNC would have had no choice but to adopt the majority of its former competitor’s way of doing things. My argument here is that a business must always proceed with its strongest plan of attack. PNC has a great HR Department. If they feel National City has better aspects, they would be foolish not to incorporate them as we move forward with the acquisition.

**Grade: B**

* Quick Change to Raise Score: Continue to be easily adaptable to the acquisition and the score will improve on its own.

**EMPOWERMENT LEVEL OF LINE MANAGERS IN THE PARADIGM SHIFT FROM PERSONNEL**

**MANAGEMENT TO HRD**

This is another relatively strong concept for the company. As far as corporations go, the line managers at National City are strongly empowered. Out of the two banks I have worked for (going on three with the transition to PNC), National City has given the most authority to act independently as managers. The Human Resource Department provides support to line management from behind the scenes, and partners with them to make the adjustments they require to fit the needs of their individual branches.

National City was openly active in creating a culture in which people were not just managed, but rather empowered to make something of themselves and their careers. Whereas they could be stronger in some respects (such as career planning and mentoring as I will discuss later), they were going in the right direction with their strategy.

**Grade: A-**

* Quick Change to Raise Score: Follow the plan I will put in place to improve career planning and mentoring to affect the empowerment of managers to affect the HR system.

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IS A CENTRAL THEME OF HRD PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS**

Continuous improvement is an important concept for the organization, and HR does a good job in supporting the culture of continuous improvement. Many companies will be happy with just meeting goals with the current pieces they have in place without much regard for the future. This is a major weakness in a lot of organizations and leads to a competitive disadvantage.

National City believes in continually improving processes and procedures throughout the organization. People can openly communicate their opinions and a culture of information sharing is nurtured. The company urges the sharing of best practices, and HR supports this by gathering success stories to be posted on the Intranet from all over the corporation. However the system is poorly maintained and not well utilized at the current time.

I believe the company does a fair job but there is still room for improvement in this area. More employees tend to respond to hearing from their peers about successes they have had as it proves that their intelligence comes from a real world application.

**Grade: B-**

* Quick Change to Raise Score: More peer to peer sharing and sharing by lower-level employees in certain forums would assist in generating even quicker continual improvement.

**THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION MODEL IS THE FOUNDATION FOR HRD**

National City had an excellent learning model in place that was the foundation for development for many employees and supported the future development of the company. The company offered training to anyone at any level that desired to grow and develop their career. Any branch employee could get online training meant for any line employee, if they desired to pursue that career path without any issues. National City urged people to learn as much as possible as they felt it was the way to develop a strong future workforce.

There is plenty of literature to support the importance of the learning organization. In his book Strategic Human Resource Development, Dr. James Grieves writes “As working relationships become increasingly focused on the task, employees are less frequently required to act as functional managers. Instead, they operate in a cross-functional manner aided by new technologies in the pursuit of new knowledge. This pursuit of knowledge has transformed HRD by minimizing the role of the training department and refocusing on learning. The emphasis is therefore increasingly on transforming the organization through personal development and management development” (Grieves 8).

The only issue with this process was getting the time to follow through with it. There was no strong plan in place and no time set aside for each individual to pursue that. It became a very tiring process as you couldn’t get much done during branch hours as there is a constant stream of work to be done. This was still a strong area of the company, but there was an opportunity for the company to set aside time for everyone to pursue it (say one or two hours a week). Instead each branch had to develop their plan and it did not always get done.

**Grade: B+**

* Quick Change to Raise Score: The bank should mandate through a checkmark system on the Intranet that each employee goes through more continual training as opposed to the infrequent updates that are mandated now. Refresher courses should be completed weekly.

**HRD SYSTEM HAS A MENTORING PROCESS TO SUPPORT IT**

As Gandhi once said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” This is definitely an area of improvement for the company. Throughout field operations there is no true mentoring system in place, and it is up to everyone to decide how they want things done when it comes to mentoring. While this can never be an endeavor with strict guidelines, there could be more structure as to how the process is driven. Some operations in the company place more emphasis on mentoring than others.

It is the responsibility of every employee to involve themselves as a mentor to others and to seek out mentors for their own personal careers. The challenges that arise from this are that not everyone has the confidence to seek out a mentor, nor are they proactive in offering their experiences to someone that has not gone through the things they have. They may feel they are overstepping their boundaries. It is the role of the company to encourage mentor / protégé relationships and provide an environment for them to develop and mature.

**Grade: C**

* Quick Change to Raise Score: The organization should require each employee to list their mentors and protégés and record when they meet with them via the Intranet.

**VERTICAL TRAINING (DRIVEN BY COMPETENCY ANALYSIS) SUPPORTS THE MAINTENANCE OF THE HRD SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

To me, training is one of the strongest aspects National City has. Vertical training is just one sector of the types of training being done throughout the organization. As an employee moves up in the organization, the more training they receive. National City does an excellent job in cascading training from top down, as it should be done. Due to this, everyone is held accountable in training, not just HR, even though they are the backbone of the entire process.

For instance, with the transition to PNC, I begin training in early July. My manager will assist in leading the training, because he has already received the training in the middle of July. The information sharing is very well done, and people help train each other up and down the respective business lines.

**Grade: A**

**HR PROFESSIONALS GET TRAINING TO IMPLEMENT NEW ROLES AS FACILITATORS, CHANGE AGENTS, AND CONSULTANTS TO LINE OPERATIONS**

As I stated in the last section of my analysis, every employee up and down the line receives training, and it is cascaded from top to bottom. While this is vital to ensuring everyone is on the same page and getting buy in, the system would not work without strong HR professionals and trainers acting as consultants to the line employees.

The trainers from National City, in my experience and the experience of other employees I concurred with, are quite good. While I had some experience with banking before I began my job on the lending side, I knew nothing about deposit products. After 6 months of following an extensive training plan that included off site training with HR professionals, along with web-training, I feel exponentially more confident in my abilities to do my job. Without a strong HR Department, I would definitely still feel as lost as I did on my first day on the job.

**Grade: A**

**TWO TRACK (OR HYBRID) CAREER PLANNING SYSTEM VERSUS A ONE TRACK**

This is an area of relative strength for the company. Within the organization, people are definitely can get stuck in one career track or on one career ladder. This hybrid job training and planning structure is only effective because of the assistance provided by HR. Without the involvement of HR, employees could find themselves gridlocked and plateaued with nowhere to go without management assistance. Now employees can strive for any position at any time.

For instance, take my licensed banker. He started his career in the management training program and began to learn all areas of the bank. He then worked for the company as a licensed banker in another office and enjoyed the role. When the management position opened up for my office (before I was employed with the company), he took the role and was the branch manager in my bank for nearly two years. That is when he decided he preferred the investment side of the bank and took a job as my investment broker, and I was then hired. As you can see, without support from HR, his career path would not be nearly as diverse or wide open.

**Grade: A**

**CAREER PLANNING AND SUCCESSION PLANNING ARE LINKED TOGETHER TO IDENTIFY, DEVELOP, AND PROMOTE STAR PERFORMING EMPLOYEES**

This is an area where I believe National City had room to improve upon. The only true yardstick we have to measure employees on (in practice) is set in the old way of impressing your supervisor or someone in power, and then hopefully being in the right place at the right time to get a job that has come open that you desire. There is no strong emphasis by HR or management to sit down and develop a career plan for the employee based on what the employee desires. The goals, training and development are centered on what the company needed from the employee 90 percent of the time, rarely considering what the employee wants to do.

There is an online tool that allows employees to input their resume and answer questions about their career desires. Should any position open up that corresponds with what they are interested in, they will be contacted. While this is a great tool, I do not believe it is correctly utilized. I have been there for eight months and discovered it only by accident.

Another area of improvement is in the area of succession planning. This goes hand in hand with the mediocre formal mentoring process that is part of the company. There are no real succession plans built at any of the lower levels of employment. While this doesn’t surprise me when assessing the business world as a whole, it could lead to a competitive advantage if done correctly. I will make some strong recommendations on how to improve on these areas at the end of this analysis report.

**Grade: C+**

* Quick Tip to Raise Score: Begin a strong plan of career and succession planning company-wide that can be tracked by higher level managers. This will ensure a strong foundation for the organization.

**PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION IS A CENTRAL FEATURE OF HRD**

**And**

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IS VIEWED PRIMARILY AS A DEVELOPMENT PROCESS RATHER THAN A SALARY PROCESS**

As stated earlier in my assessment, there is a strong review process in place for the organization. While this is a standard, at least for larger companies in this day in age, National City does a great job on it. The process runs throughout the entire year and is not just an afterthought.

The process begins in January where the manager reviews the prior year’s results. They fill out the annual review for the employee and budget performance raises. The reviews are centered on a mixture of competency based metrics and output based metrics, with different weights being applied for different positions. For instance, my consumer banker who does the most new account openings is reviewed more heavily on metric based tasks then I am as a manager. It is mostly based on structural competencies. The reviews then get approved by the next level of management and submitted to HR for review. Therefore, you can see HR is involved in every performance management document throughout the company. The manager then takes the approved review, delivers it to the employee and sets individual goals and development plans in congruence with the employees for the upcoming year.

In June, a mid-year review is done that follows the same procedure, only this time it is just for a progress check up, and no raises are associated with it. However, the same procedure is followed so again HR is involved. Thus, HR is involved with every employee’s performance measurement at least twice a year.

**Grade: A**

**COMMUNICATION IS OPEN, SHARED, AND TRANSPARENT**

**And**

**EMPHASIZES TEAMWORK**

This again is a strength of National City. The communication provided by the company is very transparent. We regularly get communications from all areas of the business, from the CEO Peter Raskind (during his leadership) on down the line. There is no fear from any employee to reach out to anyone in the organization for assistance or answers to any questions. The belief of the company is that knowledgeable employees are better employees. Every department is easy to access via phone or email. The strongest area of communication for the company is the Intranet which is well maintained and very well done. It has news updates for various levels of the organization, including region specific updates. There is a link to all policies and procedures. There are product and user guidelines for everyone to follow. The only struggle is the search key to access the information. A majority of the time it is difficult to locate exactly what you are looking for. Nonetheless, the information is there if you have the ability and desire to locate it. Overall the communication in the company including HR related topics is very open and transparent.

**Grade: A-**

* Quick Change to Raise Score: Organize the Intranet in a more efficient manner. Make the site more people friendly.

**REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROCESSES ARE MODIFIED TO SUPPORT NEW VISION, CULTURE, VALUES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES**

On the National City Career website, it states, “In a high-performance organization, everyone takes a leadership role. National City has several programs in place to recognize the special efforts of its people. The Excel Award celebrates exceptional employee accomplishments, with a focus on areas such as revenue growth and efficient operations. The Sales Champion Award recognizes sales leaders at the company, typically with an all-expenses paid trip to an exciting destination. And the Champion Award is given throughout the year to individuals or groups who have demonstrated exceptional commitment in putting our Management Principles into practice” (National City Careers June 2009). As you can see National City takes rewards and recognition very seriously.

The basis for the rewards and incentives in the company are consistently being scrutinized. They always support the current direction the company is headed. Every year the employees get new goals and incentive plans for the entire year. This year, our emphasis was on obtaining engaged customers (being the customer’s primary bank). Whereas in the past our incentives were based solely on profitability numbers, the company recognized the importance of being a customer’s main bank and tweaked the incentives to urge employees to develop those relationships. Needless to say, the company has improved in this area, so the plan is effective.

What’s even more impressive is the frequency with which incentives and rewards are changed. Due to how the company recalculated spread income on CD’s, there was no possible way for any manager to achieve their profitability goal for the first six months until goals were adjusted. Once the company realized that, they decided to pay a flat incentive to every branch no matter what their actual profitability showed. They were proactive and it made a large difference in the morale of the field.

**Grade: A**

CUMULATIVE GRADE ASSESSMENT GRADE POINTS

CORPORATE VISION AND STRATEGIC BUSINESS GOALS AND

OBJECTIVES DRIVE HR PROCESSES, SYSTEMS, AND ACTIVITIES - A 4

COMPETENCIES DRIVE HR SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

And

HRD SYSTEM INTEGRATES AND INFUSES COMPETENCIES

INTO ALL HRD PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS - B- 3.2

TOP MANAGEMENT AND LINE MANAGER SUPPORT

AND INVOLVEMENT ARE CRITICAL FOR HRD SUCCESS - A 4

PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT IS A KEY RESPONSIBILITY OF LINE MANAGERS - B- 3.2

HR PROCESSES, SYSTEMS, AND ACTIVITIES ARE ALIGNED

WITH COMPANY VISION AND SUPPORT COMPANY CULTURE - B+ 3.6

HR SYSTEMS ARE ADAPTABLE AND SUPPORT TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES - B 3.4

EMPOWERMENT LEVEL OF LINE MANAGERS IN THE

PARADIGM SHIFT FROM PERSONNELL MANAGEMENT TO HRD - A- 3.8

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IS A CENTRAL THEME

OF HRD PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS - B- 3.2

THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION MODEL IS THE FOUNDATION FOR HRD - B+ 3.6

HRD SYSTEM HAS A MENTORING PROCESS TO SUPPORT IT - C 2.8

VERTICAL TRAINING (DRIVEN BY COMPETENCY ANALYSIS) SUPPORTS

THE MAINTENANCE OF THE HRD SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION - A 4

HR PROFESSIONALS GET TRAINING TO IMPLEMENT NEW ROLES AS

FACILITATORS, CHANGE AGENTS, AND CONSULTANTS TO LINE OPERATIONS - A 4

TWO TRACK (OR HYBRID) CAREER PLANNING SYSTEM VERSUS A ONE TRACK - A 4

CAREER PLANNING AND SUCCESSION PLANNING ARE LINKED TOGETHER

TO IDENTIFY, DEVELOP, AND PROMOTE STAR PERFORMING EMPLOYEES - C+ 3

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION IS A CENTRAL FEATURE OF HRD

And

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IS VIEWED PRIMARILY AS A DEVELOPMENT

PROCESS RATHER THAN A SALARY PROCESS - A 4

COMMUNICATION IS OPEN, SHARED, AND TRANSPARENT

And

EMPHASIZES TEAMWORK - A- 3.8

REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROCESSES ARE MODIFIED TO SUPPORT

NEW VISION, CULTURE, VALUES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES - A 4

**OVERALL - B+ 3.62**

**SCALE**

**A = 3.9 to 4.0, A- = 3.7 to 3.89, B+ = 3.5 to 3.69, B = 3.3 to 3.49, B- = 3.1 to 3.29,**

**C+ = 2.9 to 3.09, C = 2.7 to 2.89, C- = 2.5 to 2.69, D and F = Failed**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

After my assessment, I have identified the five largest categories that need some attention. They are as follows, from smallest need for adjustment to the largest.

Number 5 - COMPETENCIES DRIVE HR SYSTEMS INTEGRATION AND HRD SYSTEM INTEGRATES AND INFUSES COMPETENCIES INTO ALL HRD PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS

As I stated in the assessment portion of this paper, the company is competency based but it does not place enough emphasis on communication and awareness of competencies. This is not a major fix for National City. The pieces of the puzzle are already there, they just need to be put together and brought to the forefront of communication throughout the organization. This is a large area of opportunity as most companies face a similar problem. The bank could turn this into a competitive advantage if done correctly. The time frame on getting this established could be as short as 3-6 months. The main thing that could be done is an online training tailored to every department that shows all the competencies that are required department wide. You could also link to other departments if your career planning is geared in that direction.

Number 4 - PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT IS A KEY RESPONSIBILITY OF LINE MANAGERS

Again this is an area with a quick fix and is more of a question of emphasis and importance being placed by the company, rather than not having anything set up. The company does encourage people to develop, however they leave the details up to the individual teams and branches. What needs to be done is have a system set up much like I described the performance appraisal process. Managers must be held accountable semi-annually (at least annually) as to their reports and the progress they are making in accordance to their career planning. I ranked this as fourth highest in terms of needing attention as the bigger issue as I describe shortly is career planning and getting that done correctly. This goes hand in hand with that category. The time frame on this is one year or less.

Number 3 - CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IS A CENTRAL THEME OF HRD PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS

My largest recommendation for the company to improve on this area is to set up a very functional area on the Intranet where best practices can be shared. There are ways to find some best practices on the site now, but it is unorganized and not nearly as well developed as it should be. Real world experience is valuable, especially when it comes to daily line operations. When surveyed, my staff in particular felt this would be a huge asset to them in accomplishing their jobs. Happier, more productive workers will exponentially strengthen the HR Department as it relates to them. The site is there, so the tweaking can easily be done within 6 months to a year for what should be little cost.

Number 2 - CAREER PLANNING AND SUCCESSION PLANNING ARE LINKED TOGETHER TO IDENTIFY, DEVELOP, AND PROMOTE STAR PERFORMING EMPLOYEES

As I alluded to just a short time ago, this is an area where large strides can be made and will have a strong impact on HRD. Again, there are already some tools out there but there is no strong process to utilize the tools. There needs to be more emphasis placed by the company and accountability must be maintained.

Along with semi-annual and annual assessments, this needs to be done on the same time frame. This is very similar to my plan for improving people development as technically it is a way to develop the employees. While you are reviewing accomplishments and assigning current training and development activities, you must include the employees and their thoughts. What are their dreams and aspirations? Would they be a better fit in another job and/or department? You must work hand-in-hand to strengthen the talent pool of the company. Again this is a common issue among many companies, and an area that could lead to a competitive advantage for National City/PNC if improved upon. The time frame on this again is 6-12 months.

Number 1 - HRD SYSTEM HAS A MENTORING PROCESS TO SUPPORT IT

The final area to put an improvement plan in place for based on my assessment is mentoring. This, for the company, is the area with the largest opportunity and would have a huge impact on HRD. Although this can be implemented quickly, unless it is continually emphasized, it will lose its effect. The results of this won’t be seen for at least a year or two. Most companies are not that patient and lose interest in areas like this if immediate results are not witnessed. It will take strong upper management and HR buy in and urging to fix this.

Again, accountability must be maintained and a strong process must be put in place. Employees must reach out to each other to develop mentor/ protégé relationships. They can mutually agree and keep records of their interactions to reflect upon. They then must be held accountable to sit down quarterly and have open discussions with their mentors. The problem with this is that mentoring is not an exact science and cannot be held to a time line. It’s more intangible. The company must make this initiative an integral part of their culture. Only then will its true potential be recognized.

**CONCLUSION**

After assessing the organization, I would consider the Human Resource Department of National City to be strong to very strong. I do not believe they have achieved world class status as of yet, but are on the precipice of being one of the greats. I have identified and made recommendations on the five largest areas of opportunity that would have the largest impact on the strength of the HR system. It is easy to see why these areas need improved upon. If you look at the HR strategy map developed by the company that I included earlier in my paper, there is not much if any emphasis placed on these areas. Overall the National City employees that I interviewed were a great resource and echoed a lot of what I personally saw on the HR side of the company. If the company takes my recommendations and puts them into effect, there is no doubt the HR Department will be that much closer to being considered world class.

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