



# **The contribution of HR activities and HR systems to the change process:**

*A multiple case study on organizational restructuring*

Name: Floor Claessens  
EMPLID: 1250110  
Supervisor: Charissa Freese  
Second reader: Rob Poell  
Project theme: Organizational restructuring  
Project period: September 2017 – May 2018

## **Abstract**

In recent years, Human Resource (HR) professionals have been encouraged to play a more active role in the change process. Much of the research on this topic has been normative in nature rather than gathering empirical evidence. The aim of this study is to examine which HR activities and systems contribute to successful change planning, implementation and sustainability. Both the process dimension and content dimension of change were used to capture a complete view of HR's contribution. Up to now, the combination of these dimensions has received scant attention in the change management literature. Fourteen semi-structured interviews have been conducted in five Dutch sheltered employment firms that experienced an organizational restructuring. Based on the literature and the interviews, a list of code categories for both the process and content dimension was developed. As to the process dimension, the more successful restructuring cases show that HR is drawn into the process early with a rather strategic and proactive involvement. In terms of the content dimension, HR in the successful cases generally deployed more and different interventions focused on adjusting HR instruments, leadership, training and development, culture, active participation of organization members, change management knowledge, a clear strategic vision, communication, and the monitoring of (HR) data. One of the most striking findings in all cases was the lack of evaluation of the change process. The lessons drawn from this study may help HR professionals to identify necessary behavioral adjustments where their contribution to the change is not yet up to par. The empirical evidence provides a fruitful starting point for further research into the contribution of the HR function in making change happen.

*Keywords: organizational restructuring, change management, strategic HRM, change agency, HR roles, successful change, case study.*

## **1. Introduction**

The prevalence and urgency of change increase, making it a relevant topic for many firms (Balogun, Hope Hailey, Stuart & Cleaver, 2014; Guest 2004). Throughout the past decades, organizations have been facing more competitive markets, advancing technologies, a changing nature of work and greater demands on cost control (Lee & Teo, 2005; Dicken, 2011). In response to these changing dynamics, firms have been undertaking organizational change projects such as downsizing, reengineering, layoffs, corporate relocations, and restructuring (Van der Smissen, 2015). Restructuring in general has gained great salience in recent years. A firm can restructure in many key areas, such as selling or acquiring lines of business, changing the capital structure or adjusting the internal organization of the firm (Bowman & Singh, 1993). Broadly, this is captured in a distinction between three types of restructuring: portfolio, financial and organizational. Organizational restructuring, which is the focal topic of this study, can be defined as “any major reconfiguration in the internal administrative structure that is associated with an intentional management change program” (McKinley & Scherer, 2000, p. 5). Although organizational restructuring is usually an attempt to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the firm, many of these change initiatives fail to live up to the initial promises. Some scholars reported that only 30 percent of the change programs appears to be successful (Kotter 1995; Keller & Aiken, 2009), however these numbers seem not to be substantiated with empirical data. Hardly any study seems to reveal concrete indications on the degree of success or failure of change initiatives (De Man & Tours, 2016). Not to mention, success or failure can be defined in many different ways, which indicates the complexity of this issue.

Due to the significance of organizational change, its management is a primary skill for leaders today (Senior, 2002). However, the presumed low success rates suggest that a valid and fundamental approach of how to manage change is still lacking (Todnem By, 2005). Many scholars have endeavored to explain how to successfully reach the desired impact of a change initiative, but consensus has not yet been reached (Todnem By, 2005). Failures in change execution are often caused by poor human capital management (Lawler & Mohrman, 2003), which has opened the door for Human Resources (HR) to contribute in the change process. Prior studies have suggested that an important feature of HR can be in the management of change, which emphasizes the change agent role for the HR function (e.g. Ulrich, 1997; Caldwell, 2001; Alfes, Truss & Gill, 2010). The general agreement within the prescriptive literature is that a shift towards such new and more strategic HR roles is desirable, if not crucial, to the future of the HR function (Truss, 2008). However, up to now, much of the research on this topic has been normative in nature rather than gathering empirical evidence on HR’s actual contribution to the success or failure of a change initiative in practice. The existing empirical evidence on HR’s contribution is inconclusive (Truss, 2008). Since the boundaries between HR activities and change management activities seem to become increasingly blurred, it is interesting to assess whether HR professionals help to make the change happen (Ellis, 2007; Ulrich, Younger, Brockbank & Ulrich, 2012). In the present study, the focus is on the planning phase, the

implementation phase and the sustainability phase of the change process, because these three phases offer moments for managers to turn abstract ideas into action (Hayes, 2014).

According to Balogun and colleagues (2014), there is a gap between the most recent insights in academic literature on organizational change and the translation into practical interventions for organizations. Many different theories and models on organizational change proliferate, but it is not clear what works, where and why. These questions press on managers, which withholds them from using academic literature to design interventions. This study seeks to reduce this gap between theory and practice by drawing on the recent literature of strategic human resource management and change management. Following requests by Todnem By (2005), this study aims to identify critical success factors for change management by focusing on the HR activities and systems in particular. Building on the planned approach to organizational change, both the process dimension and content dimension of change will be used to capture a complete view of HR's contribution (Alfes et al., 2010). The process dimension is about the moment that HR practitioners become involved, whereas the content dimension deals with activities that are undertaken to make change happen (Crail, 2007). Up to now, the combination of these dimensions has received scant attention in the literature. All above leads to the following research question:

*Which HR activities and HR systems contribute to successful change planning, implementation and sustainability of organizational restructuring?*

From a practical point of view, the topic of interest to this thesis is relevant because many organizations face challenges in the delivery of change initiatives. The lessons drawn from this study may help other firms to prevent common pitfalls and to increase the chance of sustainable change. Overall, this study contributes to both science and society by explaining which HR activities and systems could be used to plan, implement and sustain organizational restructuring successfully, thereby producing several avenues for both theory and practice.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Managing organizational restructuring**

As explained in the introduction, firms can undertake many different types of organizational change initiatives. The theory about change management has developed significantly over the course of the years, which led to a diversity of theoretical lenses that can be used to study this topic (Todnem By, 2005). Originally, the way of managing change projects was characterized by a strong emphasis on economic value, productivity and sales (Werkman, 2005). After a while, a new generation of management thinking came up, which was more aimed at people and organization development. The command and control approach had been followed up by a more participative bottom-up approach, with a concern for the human needs and human potential (Todnem By, Burnes & Oswick, 2011). The alteration of these approaches to change called for a revamped set of roles, competencies and activities for HR professionals, suggesting that they should also accompany the change process in organizations (Yeung, Woolcock & Sullivan, 1996; Lawler & Mohrman, 2003).

Management of an organizational restructuring is usually facilitated by managers or consultants who act as change agents. The idea that change can be actively led and managed by these change agents originates from the rational planning perspective, which attempts to explain the process that brings about change (Burnes, 2004; Todnem By, 2005). It emphasizes the different stages that an organization has to go through in a change program. To explore the HR activities and systems that contribute to execution of such a restructuring, this study draws not only on the process of managing change, but also on the content (Burke & Litwin, 1992). The process is about the moment that HR professionals become involved in the change process and the role that they take, whereas the content is more about the specific activities they undertake to manage the change (Crail, 2007). Both dimensions should be captured to gain a complete view of the contribution of HR activities and systems in a successful change process. Before the definition of success will be discussed, it is important to shed some light on the organizational change literature to explain the change process. Additionally, the literature on the change agent role of HR will be consulted to explain which activities and systems may facilitate the different phases. The next paragraphs will first start with an explanation of two different dimensions of organizational change.

#### **2.1.1 The process dimension of organizational change**

Research on conceptualizing organizational change as a process has its roots in the early work of Lewin (1947), who developed the idea of three successive change phases: unfreezing, moving and freezing. Many scholars underlined this idea and built further on this multi-phased framework, which led to a couple of different models that all incorporate some form of ongoing process (e.g. Kotter,

1995; Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Barnford & Forrester, 2003; Hayes, 2014). The process approach views change as a series of interconnected events, decisions, actions and reactions (Hayes, 2014). It deals with the ‘how’ of a change and the way the transition occurs. The change agents are in charge of intervening in ways that move the change process through critical stages towards the desired outcomes. In this study, the focus is on the desired outcomes as defined by the organization members in charge of designing the organizational restructuring, which is usually the top management team. This study builds on the five-phased change process developed by Hayes (2014). This change framework incorporates stages from many other change process models in the literature and has been applied in previous HR change agency research (Alfes et al., 2010), which makes the use of the framework in this study an appropriate choice. Although Hayes’ framework is rather prescriptive in connecting decisions and actions in a chronological order, the sequence in practice can be rather iterative. A visual representation of the key stages is presented in Figure 1.

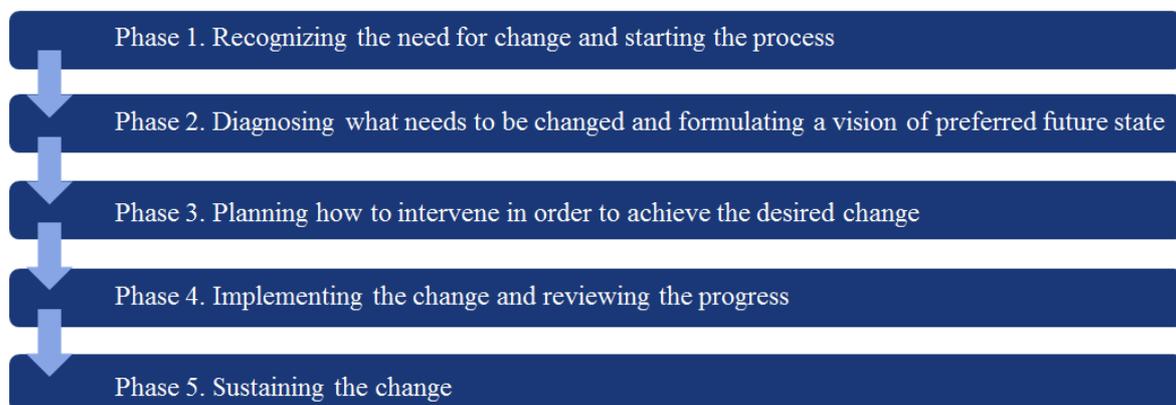


Figure 1. The five key stages as developed by Hayes (2014)

The first phase of the change process of interest to this study is the planning phase, which is about working out how the objectives of the change initiative will be achieved (Hayes, 2014). In this phase, it is important to consider the different types of interventions that will be effective in achieving the desired change. Discussing the resources, tasks and interdependencies associated with these interventions is the start of moving the organization from the current state to the desired future state. Poor decisions during this phase can have implications later on, such as in the implementation phase (Hayes, 2014). The implementation stage is about introducing the changes to the organization. When shifting the focus from planning to action, it is important to constantly review the process and to make sure that the change is on track. It is at this point that all those affected by the change will recognize the full impact. The implementation phase is followed by the sustainability phase. This phase explains why some organizational changes appear to be irreversible, whereas others decay more or less rapidly after a couple of years (Buchanan et al., 2005). Maintenance, durability or institutionalization are terms that can be used interchangeably to describe sustainability. The term sustainability will be

adopted in this study and is defined as a process for maintaining a particular change for an appropriate period of time (Cummings & Worley, 2013). Sustainability can be seen as a continuum ranging from the stability of work methods and achievement of performance targets on the one hand to further developments in organizational configurations beyond initial expectations on the other hand. This study favors to follow the latter way of thinking, since it is unrealistic that change programs maintain all aspects as originally designed or implemented (Stirman et al., 2012). It is preferred that the change program is improved upon rather than sustained at exactly the same level.

To explore the contribution of HR from a process perspective, it needs to be assessed to what extent HR was involved in the different stages of the change process. On the one hand, HR professionals can be involved in all phases of the change program, provide advice to line managers and design change interventions. On the other hand, some HR departments are not involved in all phases of the change process. HR professionals in these organizations are only brought in after the major decisions have been made and once they are involved they are not the ones that drive the change forward (Alfes et al., 2010). The moment that HR becomes involved in the change process and the approach that they take has implications for the range of possible HR activities and systems. The choices for these HR activities and systems belong to the content-oriented perspective, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

### **2.1.2 The content dimension of organizational change**

The existing body of research dealing with content issues focuses on the substance of organizational change (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). The content of change attempts to define which interventions contribute to the success of an organizational change initiative. One of the first content models of organizational change was developed by Burke and Litwin (1992), who identified which dynamics are inherent in successful compared to unsuccessful change efforts. These dynamics are reflected in interventions such as structures, task requirements, culture, management practices, policies and procedures. These interventions can help change agents in understanding where they need to put their attention in designing the change process and how to move the organization towards the desired future state (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

Just as in the process dimension, some HR professionals are expected to be more proactive in terms of the content of the HR interventions than others. Proactive in terms of content means that HR invests a lot of time and effort in exploring how all different HR interventions can be deployed in the different stages of the change process. They make suggestions with the aim to support the change program. In the opposite scenario, HR responds in a reactive way to the needs that are identified by other stakeholders in the change process. According to Ulrich and colleagues (2008), facilitating change is one of the three most important indicators that determine success for the HR professional.

However, they also observed that many HR professionals face difficulties in deciding on the content of their HR interventions in order to contribute to the change program.

As explained above, in order to assess HR's contribution to the change process it is valuable to consider both the process and the content perspective. However, up to now, the combination of these views has received scant attention in the change management literature. This study will in particular focus on three of the aforementioned phases in the change process: the planning phase, the implementation phase and the sustainability phase. This is where the combination of the process and the content perspective becomes relevant for HR, providing us insights into the contribution of HR activities and systems in change efforts.

### **2.1.3 Successful change planning, implementation and sustainability**

To be able to answer the research question, it is important to discuss the definition of successfulness with respect to change planning, implementation and sustainability. Successful can be operationalized in many different ways. Different criteria or measures may lead to different outcomes. Success can for instance be measured by assessing whether the objectives in terms of ultimate change aim, duration, and costs have been achieved (De Man & Tours, 2016). Another way to define success is in terms of change recipients' perceptions, which will be used in the present study. Successful change planning, implementation and sustainability are dependent on the recipient's motives and perceptions about the change interventions and outcomes (Buchanan et al., 2005). These perceptions may differ depending on the organizational level or characteristics of the recipient. Perceptions about the final phases of a change process are influenced by activities that are undertaken in earlier phases. However, even when initial change efforts are successful, change programs do not necessarily continue as originally planned or implemented (Stirman et al., 2012). Therefore, another part of a successful change process is being nimble, meaning that the actual realization of change plans is allowed to diverge from intended change plans if this helps to improve the change plan beyond initial expectations. In terms of HR's role in the change process and contribution to success, this could mean that HR acts as a catalyst, facilitator and designer of the change process, because such active involvement enables them to influence the change recipients' perceptions about the change. This implies that HR is involved early in the change process to offer their service, support and interventions to ensure that employees have the right capabilities, motivation and opportunities to realize the desired changes.

## **2.2 HR activities and systems during change planning**

The literature suggests that HR professionals can accompany the change process step-by-step as value-adding change agent (Lawler & Mohrman, 2003). This change-oriented HR role has been strongly underlined by Ulrich's classifications of HR as change champion and change steward (Ulrich, 1997; Ulrich et al., 2008) and it implies that HR should be engaged in early phases of the change process.

With regard to the planning phase, Ulrich and colleagues (2012) note that the contribution of HR is mainly in translating business issues into decisions and actions for organization members and making sure that the capacity of the internal workforce matches the requirements of the change initiative.

In the planning phase, decisions are made regarding the what and how of change. Since organizational restructurings are usually accompanied by desired changes in behavior, it is wise to involve HR as member of the change team so that they can guide discussions on how the change process will be organized. Specifically, HR could be in the lead of defining the current situation in terms of culture, competencies, supporting systems, work processes and leadership (Ulrich, 1998). Once the current situation is identified, HR should assess what needs to be adapted to move the change initiative forward. HR professionals can be in the lead of making the changes explicit in terms of the activities and systems that need to be aligned with the change program. Additionally, HR needs to take stock of all the initiatives related to the change program and to assess which one should receive immediate attention. To make change happen, HR professionals design, implement and integrate the different and independent organizational activities and systems.

According to Ulrich and colleagues (2012), HR's contribution to the planning phase is in communicating why change matters. The HR professionals can help in defining a clear strategic vision on the desired future state, as it helps to avoid confusion and misunderstandings among employees (Boonstra & Steensma, 1999). It is important to make explicit and communicate to employees how their new approaches, behaviors and attitudes contributes to the change initiative. Persuasive communication is important to build the credibility of the change agents and their representatives (Armenakis, Harris & Feild, 1999).

Additionally, one of the key reasons why change programs fail is because of the lack of involving the right people (Kotter, 199). Active participation in decision making of those affected by the change is crucial in order to deal with power, politics and resistance. This usually involves a combination of lower-level participation and direction from top management (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006). According to Ulrich and colleagues (2012), it is one of the main tasks for HR to involve all the stakeholders.

Despite the fact that several areas for HR contribution can be identified in the literature, it is unknown which HR activities and/or systems are most effective and appropriate for a successful change planning phase. Therefore, the following questions have been developed:

*Sub question 1: Which HR activities and HR systems facilitate successful change planning?*

*Sub question 2: Which HR activities and HR systems hinder successful change planning?*

### **2.3 HR activities and systems during change implementation**

If the organization sets in train a restructuring process, this will inevitably spread out into a whole array of (HR) interventions (Caldwell, 2001). The literature states that HR practitioners usually have considerable autonomy in adapting or translating the change into HR policy and practices (Caldwell, 2001), but in practice it can be a difficult and sometimes frustrating task since they have limited control in steering the implementation of the HR practices forward. In case HR professionals do not execute all changes themselves, which happens regularly, they enable others to carry it out. Therefore, one of the focal points of twenty-first century HR policy and practices is building the change management capacity, mainly in other parts of the organization (Ruona & Gibson, 2004).

One of the traps in the implementation phase is to fail to give sufficient attention to managing the people issues (Hayes, 2014), which illustrates the relevance for employee-focused HR practices in this phase. Some organizational members may see little benefit for themselves, which provides an opportunity for HR to listen to them and support them to make better sense of the change (Van Knippenberg and Hogg, 2003; Balogun & Hope Hailey, 2015). Concerns raised by employees can also be used to hear new ideas about implementation. HR practitioners can engage in dialogues to enable participation and increase the emotional buy-in of change recipients, for instance through employee engagement surveys, focus groups or the use of social media (Balogun & Hope Hailey, 2015). Such dialogues provide valuable feedback that can be used for fine-tuning of the change program and thereby enhancing the implementation and sustainability.

Another domain that requires appropriate HR activities is the development of competence and commitment among all relevant stakeholders in the change (Jacobs, 2002). Specific attention needs to be paid to the development of leadership and role modeling behaviors, since leadership is a crucial factor influencing how HR practices are enacted (Conway & Monks, 2008). Research also showed that leadership behaviors make a difference in organizational change programs (Burke & Litwin, 1992), as the leadership style sets the scene for what counts in an organization. Leadership behaviors can contribute to building trust and relationships, which makes people willing to make changes in behaviors or attitudes (Balogun et al., 2014). HR should place special attention on line managers, because they need to have the right motivation and skills to implement the changes. There are many different tools available for assisting leaders to get insights in their leadership style, such as 360 degree feedback, coaching or training programs. Once the employees have developed the right competences through training opportunities, selecting the right performance appraisal and reward system is a prerequisite for commitment (Jacobs, 2002). The way performance appraisal and reward systems are designed signals what matters in an organization and how the organization wants to commit their members (Balogun et al., 2014). The perceived fairness of such HR systems are important drivers of successful implementation.

In addition, the rise of data-driven decision making offers potential for HR to take advantage of analytics tools to determine how valuable HR policies and practices contribute to the change

processes (Lawler & Mohrman, 2003; Tushman, Kahn, Porray & Binns, 2017). Examples of valuable internal data comprise employee attitudes, satisfaction, absenteeism, productivity, costs, and performance indicators. Managing the large amounts of available data can help to track the progress of the intended change program interventions and to identify factors impacting the change in the organization. This may help to respond quickly to emerging problems and solve them during the implementation phase.

Despite the fact that several practices can be identified in the literature, it is unknown which of these make an actual contribution in reaching successful change implementation. This study therefore aims to identify the HR activities and systems that are crucial for change implementation.

*Sub question 3: Which HR activities and HR systems facilitate successful change implementation?*

*Sub question 4: Which HR activities and HR systems hinder successful change implementation?*

## **2.4 HR activities and systems during change sustainability**

In general, one of the pitfalls during the sustainability phase is that firms forget to anchor the changes to the culture of the organization and thereby fail to build commitment to the change (Kotter, 1995). Since building commitment to the changed state on the individual level is important, it is interesting to explore which HR activities and systems are most conducive to sustain the changes being made.

Research has shown that active participation and empowerment during the planning and implementation phase are likely to secure a committed attitude to the change program among change recipients (Conway & Monks, 2008). The type of HR practices that contribute to the development of commitment need to be both employee-centered and management-centered. Commitment originates from elements such as effective communication, rewards and recognition (Conway & Monks, 2008). These elements can be built by supporting systems and activities, such as appraisal and reward systems, information systems, training opportunities and recruitment and selection policies. To achieve sustainable commitment to the changes, all these supporting systems need to be in line with the desired change objectives. For instance, an increased focus on feedback during the performance appraisal helps to make clear how new behaviors are connected to organizational effects and tangible personal benefits. These tangible rewards can be effective in reinforcing the sustainability of an organizational change (Armenakis et al., 1999). Another practice that may need HR's attention is the policy concerning recruitment and selection. By hiring and promoting organizational members whose values match those of the desired and changed organizational state, HR professionals make the change happen in ways that create sustainable value (Kotter, 1995; Armenakis et al., 1999).

Additionally, tracking the outcomes of the organizational change project with the help of HR metrics enables the celebration of wins on both an individual and team level. The management of such information by HR is a powerful tool for reinforcing the change message and to keep organizational

members in persisting the change outcomes. Diffusion of the change ideas and successes from one group to another can also belong to HR's sphere of influence. Communication enables the diffusion of best practices, because they help change recipients to make sense of organizational values and desired behaviors, which increases the sustainability of a change (Balogun & Hope Hailey, 2015). HR professionals should stress the importance of learn to talk, walk the talk and sustain the talk and walk (Armenakis et al., 1999). They can enable this through the integration of many different initiatives into a change program.

To the author's knowledge, no single study has yet examined which HR activities and systems actually make a difference between organizations in reaching successful change sustainability. Therefore, the following sub questions have been developed:

*Sub question 5: Which HR activities and HR systems facilitate successful change sustainability?*

*Sub question 6: Which HR activities and HR systems hinder successful change sustainability?*

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Research design**

This research was designed as a comparative case study, which refers to the study of a social phenomenon in its natural surroundings. The case study design was selected because it is particularly useful in providing insights into change contexts, underlying assumptions and different perspectives (Van der Velde, Jansen & Dijkers, 2015). Doing a case study was the best fitting approach for testing whether the described theoretical perspectives applied to the real world. A case study made it possible to investigate multiple actors across multiple levels within each the organization.

To allow different cases to be compared, the focus was on Dutch organizations operating in the sheltered employment sector. Firms in this sector assist employers in hiring employees with an illness or handicap and offer workstation supervision (Netherlands Enterprise Agency, n.d.). The sheltered employment sector has been chosen, because firms in this context have to deal with periodically changing reform agendas and a complex political and legal environment. With the introduction of the Participation Act in The Netherlands in 2015, the role of the regional sheltered employment organizations has changed, which led to an increase in the incidence of internal organizational restructurings in this sector. It is expected that this will continue for the coming years. Planning, implementing and sustaining a change initiative in such a context is a challenging task, which makes it interesting to unravel the contribution of HR in the change process.

This study adopted a multiple case design, because the study was conducted among five organizations. Specifically, for each organization, multiple respondents affected by the organizational restructuring were interviewed. Synergizing the different perspectives helped to establish the multiple realities that existed during the organizational restructuring process. The interviews were conducted at

one specific moment in time, which makes the study cross-sectional (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Although the interviews were conducted at one moment in time, the answers do reflect on past challenges, providing us retrospective data. After all data were gathered, the results were analyzed and interpreted. To strengthen the findings and explore the applicability to other sectors, four additional interviews were conducted with people who are considered to be experts on the topic of organizational change in public and private sector organizations.

### **3.2 Sample**

This study focused on Dutch organizations in the sheltered employment sector that have experienced an organizational restructuring. Two different criteria were used to invite organizations to participate in this study. First, to exclude the potential impact of country differences, only Dutch organizations were included in the study. Second, only organizations that were confronted with an organizational restructuring in which functions have been changed between 2012 and 2016 were eligible for this research. This time criterion is in line with Stirman and colleagues (2012), who argue that an organizational restructuring should be evaluated at least two years after the actual change has been implemented. On the one hand, evaluating the change too soon after implementation may not work because the change has not yet been grounded. On the other hand, looking back many years ago makes it difficult to disentangle factors and dynamics that contributed to the change planning, implementation and sustainability at the time. Furthermore, it may be complicated for firms to retrieve the restructuring documents to fill in the survey and answer the questions in the interviews. These characteristics led to the invitation of organizations with similar characteristics to allow generalizability to some degree.

The sample of this study was determined by means of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique whereby the researcher selects cases, which enable one to learn about the topic of interest to the study's purpose (Patton, 1990). Although it is a non-probability sampling method, it was the most appropriate method because the number of organizations meeting this study's criteria was limited. Within the boundaries of the defined population, the study aimed to compose a diverse sample to allow investigation on the range of HR activities and systems that were associated with restructuring success.

This study was part of a larger study on organizational restructurings with a phased research design conducted by Berenschot, a Dutch management consulting firm. In the first phase, a sample of organizations meeting the two predefined criteria was drafted by using the broad network of Berenschot. In total, 139 organizations met the criteria and were addressed to participate in the research. The sampling frame included firms active in the public as well as the private sector. The firms were invited to participate in the study, consisting of a survey and interviews. If firms wished to participate, the survey was sent first. In the survey, the organizations were asked to answer several

questions about the organizational restructuring and the HR department and they could indicate whether they were willing to participate in the interviews. Since the response rate to the survey was not high enough to present representative findings, the survey outcomes were not used for this study. From all survey respondents, five firms were selected to conduct interviews for this case study. To allow the five different cases to be compared, only organizations operating in the sheltered employment sector were selected for the interviews. In total, eight sheltered employment firms completed the survey and wanted to participate in the interviews. Generally, the more cases are being studied the higher the reliability of the study, because more independent information becomes available which enables the researcher to separate the general from the specific features of the phenomenon under study. In line with the guidelines for qualitative research developed by Guest and colleagues (2006), it was expected that by conducting fourteen interviews in total for the five cases and four interviews with experts, saturation would be achieved. An overview of the conducted interviews can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Interview data

	Number of interviews by function		
	HR department <sup>a</sup>	Line manager	Employee
Organization A	1 (Senior HR advisor)	1	1
Organization B	1 (HR manager)	1	0
Organization C	1 (HR manager)	1	1
Organization D	1 (HR advisor)	1	1
Organization E	1 (Staff manager)	1	1

Notes:

a. Function of the interviewees from the HR department in parentheses.

To examine which HR activities and systems contribute to successful change planning, implementation and sustainability, a distinction had to be made between more and less successful restructuring cases. This distinction was made after the interviews based on the respondents' perceptions about the change success rather than using selection criteria during the sampling procedure. Furthermore, when selecting the five cases, the survey helped to reveal some generic insights about the role and involvement of HR during the different change phases. Based on these findings, a diversity of cases was selected to unravel differences in the contribution of HR to the change process and restructuring success. During the analysis, the interview data led to a characterization of each of the five cases by one of the main HR competency domains as developed by Ulrich and colleagues (1997; 2008). This classification was used as a guidance for the reader.

To corroborate the findings, four experts with experience in organizational change and development have been approached. The respondents for the expert interviews were contacted via the personal network of researchers on this topic. All four approached experts replied that they were willing to contribute to the study. The four experts have all contributed to scientific research on the topic of organizational change and experience in practice by consulting firms across different public and private sectors. Because of their position and experience, they have a broad view on the contribution of HR to the change process in different firms. Two out of four experts had extensive experience in the public sector, whereas the other two experts were more involved in the private sector. The firms under study operate in the sheltered employment sector which has an extraordinary context, so the expert interviews have been conducted to explore the applicability of the findings in this study to other sectors.

### **3.3 Instruments**

To answer the research question, organizations were asked to participate in a couple of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews as research method were in line with the nature of this study, since it allowed for gaining new perspectives on complex phenomena (Patton, 1987). Interview guidelines were established to structure the interviews, which helped to improve the interpretability and replicability of this research. The interview guides are provided in Appendix I, III and V (English versions) and Appendix II, IV and VI (Dutch versions). This guideline was self-developed, since there was no predefined set of questions that could be used to answer the research question. In order to avoid social desirable answers, open-ended questions were asked. The structure and length of the interview were similar for the three different groups of organizational members that were interviewed, but some questions were phrased slightly different. The interviews started with some general questions on personal and organizational characteristics, such as *'can you describe your function in this organization?'* and *'what did the restructuring mean for your organization?'* Next, some specific questions were asked about the role of HR in the change process, such as *'when did the HR department become involved in the change process?'* Afterwards, the content of the questions shifted to the contribution of HR in terms of activities and systems to the different phases of the change process. Examples of these questions are *'which activities did HR undertake during the implementation of the restructuring?'* and *'how did employees react to these HR activities?'* Several several questions were asked to reflect on the restructuring process by asking for the interviewees' opinion or perceptions, such as *'what should HR do differently during a next restructuring process?'* For this study, restructuring success was measured by asking for the interviewee's perception: *'do you consider the restructuring to be a success?'* Based on the interviewee's answer, follow-up questions were asked to clarify this perception.

For the interviews with the experts, a different guideline has been developed and used, because these interviews had a distinct objective. The guideline for the expert interviews is provided

in Appendix VII (English version) and VIII (Dutch version). At the start of the interview, the experts were asked several questions about their experience with restructurings and HR in general. Afterwards, specific questions about the findings were asked, such as *'in the sheltered employment firms, it has been found that the HR departments [...]. Do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in? Do you recognize this finding in other public or private sectors?'*

### **3.4 Procedure**

As soon as the research instruments were ready to use, an email was sent to the five sheltered employment organizations that were willing to participate in the interviews. In this invitation, a brief explanation was provided about the study's objective and the interviews. Furthermore, an indication of the duration and location of the interviews was provided. The e-mail with the invitation to participate in the study was sent to the firm's (HR) director. As soon as participation was ensured, the researcher contacted the five organizations to schedule the interviews. In all five organizations, the HR manager selected one line manager and one employee to participate in an interview. The line manager and employee were selected on the condition that they were involved in the restructuring under study.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and in Dutch. The duration of the interviews was approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and content analyzed for central themes. The interviews were conducted to explore the contribution of HR's activities and systems during the change process from different angles. By talking to different sources on different levels of the organization, individual and subjective observations were put into perspective, which increased this study's reliability (Van der Velde et al., 2015). Furthermore, studying multiple perspectives increased the richness of data, because the respondents have different roles and contexts, providing data that incorporates the complexity and context. At the start of the interview, the respondents were informed about the study's objective and the confidentiality of the data collection. Furthermore, permission was asked for recording the interview and all respondents gave their consent. A voice recorder was used to record the interviews. Afterwards, a short introduction of the interviewer and interviewee took place, followed by some introduction questions. To increase the internal validity of the collected qualitative data, the respondent's answers were summarized during the interview. After the interviews had taken place, they were transcribed verbatim and sent to the respondent to verify the content. The purpose of this so-called member check was to validate the responses of the interviewee, which provided opportunities to correct errors or to include additional information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Only one respondent wanted to correct an error. This respondent's answer in the interview implied that HR made a certain decision in the planning phase, but in reality the top management team made the decision. Consequently, one sentence in the transcript was slightly adjusted before the analysis took place.

### 3.5 Analysis

After the interviews had been conducted, the answers were analyzed and interpreted. The audio-recorded interviews were literally transcribed to limit the interviewer's freedom of interpretation as much as possible. The transcribing was done shortly after the interview has taken place, in order to permit enhancements for subsequent interviews and to foster the understanding of the data (Baker, 1999). The interviews were analyzed using the software Atlas.ti.

Data analysis of the interviews was done by using the three-phased coding process by Strauss and Corbin (1990), consisting of open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Coding is about separating the data in meaningful parts to create a certain order. The first phase is open coding, which segments the data into a list of codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During this phase, the researcher breaks down, examines, and compares the data. If a certain fragment of an interview was relevant, a suitable code was assigned. For instance, if a respondent argued that 'HR initiated honest and realistic communication with information letters, presentations and meetings throughout the change process', this fragment received the code 'communication as facilitating HR activity'. As soon as the first interviews had been conducted, this phase of open coding started, since codes could always be adjusted when new information was obtained during subsequent interviews. When no new codes were needed to label fragments that appeared in the data, this phase reached saturation. The next phase, axial coding, is about making connections between codes, leading to a list of categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Based on the theoretical framework and the interview guideline, a list of code categories was developed before the analysis started, so that it could be used in the coding process. By studying the interview transcripts, some new code categories emerged as well. In the present study, the following categories of codes were used for the process dimension: HR role, HR manager, HR part of management team and HR involvement in process. As to the content dimension, the codes were grouped into the following categories: adjusting HR instruments, leadership, training and development, culture, active participation, change management knowledge, clear strategic vision, communication, monitoring (HR) data, and evaluation. Within these categories, the facilitating and hindering HR activities and systems were grouped. As soon as the definition and properties of each category (axis) were clear and no further adjustment was needed, the last phase, selective coding, started. During this phase, connections between categories were studied to make sense of what was happening in the cases in order to answer the research question. By looking for centrality, frequency and logic, the dominant factors and the less important ones were determined (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For this study, the different cases were compared on the identified categories for the process and content dimension. Differences between more and less successful cases were studied to make sense of which factors had the most significant influence on the degree of success. This phase is about interpreting and positioning the findings in the existing literature and to draw conclusions to develop a coherent story. An overview of the factors for the process and content dimension of change can be found in Table 2 at the end of the results chapter. These findings have been checked for

generalizability to other sectors by means of expert interviews. These expert interviews have not been coded.

#### **4. Results**

In the following paragraphs, the interview data gathered in the five organizations is described. The sections are organized as follows. First, for each organization, a brief narrative description of the restructuring is provided. This part is followed by several paragraphs that elaborate on the change process and the HR function in the specific organization in terms of its role, activities and systems. Each of the five cases is characterized by one of the main HR competency domains as described in the typologies by Ulrich and colleagues (1997; 2008). In addition, an evaluation of HR's added value to the restructuring success is elucidated. Finally, the outcomes of the case comparison are presented.

##### **4.1 Organization A: HR as operational executor**

Organization A is a sheltered employment organization that started a restructuring initiative in 2015 in order to deal with an increasing amount of work and changes in the political environment. Two parts of the organization were restructured with the aim to become more professional, business-like and future-proof. Specifically, one business unit was shut down and two supporting departments were restructured.

##### **The role of HR during the change process**

In organization A, HRM is the responsibility of the executive secretary rather than an HR manager. The restructuring initiative was developed by the top management team, which the HR function is not part of. Although the change towards a more professional and decentralized organization had sensitive HR implications such as the change of working roles and habits, HR was drawn into the change process at a later stage to deal with administrative and operational issues. The HR interviewee indicated that HR's contribution was mainly in drafting and adapting job descriptions and the administration side of the change.

According to the line manager, HR's added value in the change process was to provide a sympathetic ear. Sometimes, employees feel too vulnerable to expose their feelings in front of their manager, because they are afraid that it may be used against them in the future. In those cases, they can talk to an HR professional who is perceived as more objective and independent. The line manager also indicated that HR could have been more visible during the restructuring, but this manager acknowledged that HR should receive the opportunity to do so from the directors: *"...our top management team is quite obstinate and they often call in HRM too late..."* To become early involved in the restructuring process, the HR interviewee notes that they have to show in practice how HRM can add value to the organization. As the HR professional indicates, *"...we want to be a serious*

*discussion partner, also on the strategic decision making level, not just in the implementation...*” By fulfilling the administrative and operational role perfectly during the past restructuring, trust has grown from the top management team. Since two years, the HR department is located in the same corridor as the directors. This physical proximity combined with the increased trust has made it easier for HR to be ad hoc involved in strategic matters.

### **The change planning phase**

As explained before, HR was not involved in the planning phase of the change process. During the change process, the top management team was in charge of making the main choices, as illustrated by the following quote by HR: “...*the top management team did not want to lay off any employees, even if they were not fitting the organization anymore, because that would cost a lot of money...*” HR realized that they were forced to respond to the needs of other influential stakeholders in the change process instead of designing the content of the HR activities themselves. For instance, the top management team’s choice during the planning phase to avoid layoffs led to several placements of employees in jobs against which the HR professionals had some objections. HR was in charge of arranging development assessments for the employees that had to be replaced. In some cases, these assessments indicated that some employees were not ready for taking on the new role. Yet, the top management team made the decision to keep the employees.

### **The change implementation phase**

At the moment – three years after the restructuring – a couple of employees are not functioning well in their new job. The question is, however, to what extent they can be blamed for their disfunctioning. There were quite some signals that they would not be able to carry out the new role properly. Besides that, most of them have not been guided accurately to the new job by their direct supervisor. As the HR interviewee indicated: “...*I’m beginning to realize that we have never really invested in leadership...*” Currently, the leadership topic has been added to the strategic agenda and one of the areas of improvement for the top management team is to use a more participative, bottom-up approach in shaping strategic decisions. As a result of the lack of active participation by organization members, the implementation of the change was described as a “*big-bang*”. This issue has been around in the organization for a while, but it takes a lot of time to decide on how to deal with it, because the top management team does not provide a determined impression in their communication. This ambiguity was also addressed during an interview with one of the replaced employees, as he explained: “...*the objectives of the restructuring are not clear, which makes it difficult to determine whether you are on track ... they should give more guidance on what the priorities are...*”

### **The change sustainability phase**

In order to deal with the aforementioned issue, the employees in management positions have recently started with coaching sessions initiated by HR. Some employees continue to do their old tasks rather than their new tasks, whereas others dropped out because they were not able to cope with the new function. Interviewees indicated that HR needs to think about strategic workforce planning in order to make sure that the firm has the right workforce in the short and long term. HR is now making proposals to develop a more uniform and advanced HRM policy, which will contribute to the professionalization of not only the HR function, but also the organization and the employees.

### **Restructuring success**

The three interviewees unanimously agree that, up until now, the restructuring cannot be seen as a success in terms of required behavior changes and organizational outcomes. From the HR perspective, the management team did not sufficiently realize to what extent the change would have an impact on the people working in the organization. Another reason being addressed for the lack of success is the fact that a lot of implementation work was outsourced to an external advisor, thereby limiting line managers to take ownership during the process. These reasons are assumptions, since formal evaluation only took place on the operational level, not on the strategic level.

### **Interpretation of the results: HR's contribution to the restructuring success**

The description of HR in this organization matches the so-called operational executor domain as described by Ulrich et al. (2008). As operational executors, the HR professionals in this organization were busy with activities such as drafting, adapting and implementing policies. It revolved around the ability to make sure that all operational needs of the change were met, as noted by Ulrich and colleagues (2008). The HR interviewee indicated that HR mainly took care of the administrative and operational details of the change process. The case shows that flawless application of the operational and policy issues earns trust and opens the door to more strategic contributions for HR. The HR professionals in this organization have to work hard to achieve a 'seat at the table', a metaphor that symbolizes a permanent role in strategy discussions. According to the HR interviewee, the ultimate goal of the HR function is to become part of the management team, so that they can be a discussion partner and influence the decisions rather than being informed about the decisions.

Despite the fact that organizations often relegate HR issues to the implementation phase of strategic decision-making processes, the implementation phase could still offer considerable opportunities for strategic intervention (Caldwell, 2001). However, also during the implementation phase, the top management team was in charge of making the main decisions in this organization. Because top management did not provide clear instructions on goals and priorities, some replaced employees are still (partly) performing their old tasks. As such, the interviewees agree that the success is not yet a success.

Overall, it can be concluded that during the first stages of the change process, the HR professionals felt a certain distance to the top management team as their contribution was mainly in terms of dealing with operational issues. However, by showing their added value with practical initiatives, they gradually succeed to extend their role in the organization. Specifically, HR's contribution during the sustainability phase was concentrated on building the management capacity to steer the implementation of (HR) practices forward. They have also started developing and professionalizing their own HRM policy. This progress in terms of strategic involvement provides them room to intervene and to take part in discussions, which in the end increase their chances to contribute to future change processes.

#### **4.2 Organization B: HR as strategy architect**

About three years ago, organization B merged with the social services departments of several municipalities. The nature of the change was organization wide and the aim was to become one central organization for participation, work and income in which expertise is combined. During the merger, there were two groups of employees involved: the employees from the sheltered employment organization and the employees from the municipality. This last group of employees had to move from the municipality to the sheltered employment organization. They had to deal with a distinctly different culture, work, and colleagues and caused, as such, most agitation during the change process.

##### **The role of HR during the change process**

The HR manager was part of the management team and thus strategically involved in shaping the restructuring in terms of consequences for the employees. The HR manager was part of the HR project team together with two HR employees from the municipalities. These two employees were experienced in building change management plans and as such, it was a very informative experience for the inexperienced HR manager. The HR manager explained that HR is the figurehead during the restructuring process and it would not be possible to achieve the change objectives without HR. The interviewed business manager agreed with this view and clarified: *"...HR is the most important link connecting everything..."*

##### **The change planning phase**

The planning phase of the restructuring in this organization can be characterized as complicated and lengthy, because institutional and political interests delayed the process. As soon as the decision was made to merge the organizations, four months of intensive preparation started. When preparing the change process, the organization opted for a consultative approach with project teams of employees on issues such as HR, IT, and the reshaping of work processes. However, the developed plans and

schedules were not checked for feasibility by lower-level employees, which led to difficulties with attaining the plans in practice.

### **The change implementation phase**

To start the actual implementation of the change, the directors initiated the communication process by means of group meetings. One of the main issues addressed during the interviews was that the communication could have been more consistent and clear. The HR manager indicated that the strategic vision has been adjusted several times during the change process, which made it difficult for employees to know what to strive for and where to find guidance and support. The first half-year of implementation was messy and chaotic. The HR manager explained: “...*employees did not only start at a new workplace. They also had to deal with new systems, new colleagues and a new way of working...*” During these weeks of implementation, line management was in the lead for guiding employees, whereas HR’s contribution was in signaling problems and advising others on how to deal with it. HR organized for instance so-called “*question hours*”, a sort of open-door policy to support employees to walk in with any questions to allay their fears about the change.

### **The change sustainability phase**

It took a year to get all processes and systems up and running. During that same year, some changes in the management levels occurred, causing continuity and alignment issues. Once the dust was settled, HR initiated a management development program to facilitate the management levels in getting used to each other. Not only making the connection with each other, but also with the employees lower in the organization is very important for top management. One of the managers explained that the directors walked around continuously to show their face and answer questions.

The case informants emphasized that one of the biggest eye openers in the change process was related to culture: “...*we actually thought that the desired culture would arise ... we select a couple of culture ambassadors and they are just going to show you how fun it is to work here...*” At the moment, the HR manager has already more concrete thoughts about how the desired culture. The challenge for now is to translate these thoughts into practices, measurements and rewards that lead to behavior that is consistent with the culture. The HR manager is planning on following a masterclass on organizational culture to enrich her knowledge on this issue.

One of the main discussions following the organizational restructuring concerns the length and magnitude of the change process. With regard to the length of the process, the business manager recommends to start the implementation as soon as possible, because a long preparation period causes unrest in the organization. The HR manager, on the contrary, indicated that the HR department would have preferred more time for preparation. After the restructuring, some functions had to be changed again and some functions were cut due to cost reductions. These issues could possibly have been

avoided with a longer preparation period for HR. Overall, the interviewees indicated that they were so eager to start the implementation that they did not evaluate the process.

### **Restructuring success**

According to the two interviewees, it can be concluded that the restructuring was a success. The change had a positive effect on the employee morale and organizational outcomes. One minor issue as mentioned by the manager is that some employees experience an increased workload since the restructuring, which may tone down the level of employee satisfaction somewhat. Nevertheless, the majority of the employees has become used to the changed working conditions and is positive about the new situation.

### **Interpretation of the results: HR's contribution to the restructuring success**

HR in this organization mainly mastered the strategy architect domain as described by Ulrich and colleagues (2008). The HR manager had a seat at the table for strategic issues and was actively involved in determining the impact of the strategy for the organization and the HR policies specifically. At the moment, she follows training to further improve her knowledge and competences on organizational developments, because the new strategy requests changes of HR processes. In line with the features of this role, HR's contribution was mainly in shaping the strategy for the people side of the restructuring. Hereby, the perception that HR managers are unsuited to operate in the strategic decision making arena if they do not have any experience in restructuring projects is proven wrong (Caldwell, 2001). The HR manager was able to take on a leading role, because she could work together with two other experienced colleagues, which highlights the importance of having in-house change management experience and knowledge. This case shows that the HR function can be of added value as long as they have experienced colleagues by their side in the process. According to the case informants, HR's dedication was a critical factor for the success of the change.

The utterances from the data highlight the importance of combining direction from top management with lower-level participation (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006). As described above, the organization opted for a consultative approach in which project teams were formed. However, it seems the case that only middle and top management levels were involved in the beginning since the feasibility of the plans appeared to be limited. As the case shows, developing such plans without active involvement from all levels could be a waste of time and lead to a messy implementation. On the contrary, during later stages all employees were actively involved by means of question hours and the gathering of complaints. The early and strategic involvement of HR gave the HR function the opportunity to request a more active participation from a diverse group of employees and thereby ensuring the integration of all interests.

The sustainability phase is about anchoring the changes to the culture of the organization, because change without culture becomes random activities (Ulrich et al., 2008). However, not having

a clear vision of the future makes it difficult to ground all the HR work in the fundamental principles of the strategy (Ulrich et al., 2008). It hinders the building of an organizational culture, because it is difficult to clarify from the beginning what is expected from employees in terms of attitudes and behaviors. The idea that culture just arises by appointing some ambassadors reflects the way cultural interventions are often undertaken. However, as this case shows, the first important condition for culture change is defining the corporate vision and values. Since these were not clear and consistently communicated by the top management, HR had difficulties defining the cultural standards and weaving them into HR practices and processes.

#### **4.3 Organization C: HR as business ally/strategy architect**

In order to deal with a decreasing amount of work and changing laws and regulation, organization C decided to cut costs by restructuring their staff and management functions three years ago. This change initiative can be characterized as department-focused rather than organization wide. The aim was to increase the effectivity of the staff and management structure.

##### **The HR role during the change process**

In organization C, the HR manager is part of the management team. As such, he had a pioneering role in the change process from the beginning. The HR manager is the right-hand man of the director, which makes HR the so-called “*thermometer*” in the organization that regularly checks what is going on. In terms of HR’s contribution to the change, the line manager explained that HR can add most value by making sure the procedures are followed and that all dossiers are complete and correct. HR had a critical, but difficult role in the process since they were challenged to deal with conflicting interests between the workforce and the directors. Furthermore, the HR manager strongly believes that having broader ‘organizational’ capabilities is important as well. From that perspective, he explained his role as follows: “...*you have to be a business partner and think along how to get the firm to the next level ... you need sufficient organizational capabilities and political sensitivity...*” He emphasizes that leading a restructuring process is part of the HR profession, because organizations are continuously changing. Next to being a business partner, the HR manager continuously focuses on improving HR activities. As a result of the change initiative, he adjusted the performance appraisal system. He also faced issues with the current salary structure, because it hinders the organization to attract talents for management positions. Consequently, the firm ends up with managers that do not have the drive and qualities that would be preferred in these positions.

##### **The change planning phase**

The HR manager had a leading role and was in charge of bringing forward which business units needed to be restructured. Because the incumbent management team was subject to the restructuring,

only the director and the HR manager were involved in shaping the changes. Besides the management team, the director wanted to restructure the business units. An external consultant was involved to help specifying the future capacity numbers for the different business processes. HR arranged the communication of the restructuring by means of a formal letter and group meetings to create more clarity. However, the interviewed employee indicated that the change message was never fully understood by the employees in the organization and they had the feeling that the preparation could have been more careful.

### **The change implementation phase**

The first step in the change implementation was to replace the management team, as the HR manager explained: *“...initiatives from the top of the organization did not settle down at the bottom of the organization as a result of the many levels of management...”* Some management positions were cut and all members of the team had to do an assessment to decide who would be placed in the new positions. HR initiated competency training for the selected managers to prepare them for the new job. The new management team members were placed on the condition that their business units would function properly within one year. As soon as the management positions were filled, the restructuring of some business and staff units could start. The first period of implementation of these changes was messy. An external agency helped the unit managers in the first months to organize the primary work processes differently. They encountered quite some resistance among the employees, because the organization’s culture feeds on fear for change. The thought that has permeated the workplace is that the restructuring is used to bring the quality of the internal workforce to a higher level, as the interviewees explain: *“...you can see whom they prefer and whom not ... it is not a coincidence that a number of people that can be missed are part of the restructuring...”*

For one of the interviewed employees, the restructuring had highly unpleasant consequences. The employee in question lost his job during the restructuring, but HR promised to place him in a lower-level position. Later, it turned out that another employee could also claim this lower function, but only one of the two could fulfill it. Because not all administrative documents were correctly maintained, it took quite some time to decide who was entitled to the function. This created delay and months of uncertainty for the two employees involved. In the end, another similar function became available, so the problem resolved itself. After these months of uncertainty, the employee felt relieved first, followed by anger about the mistakes being made. This replaced employee indicated that his knowledge, competences and experience gained in the higher position are misused now he is operating in the lower function, but he is not appreciated for that in terms of compensation. The HR manager indicated that a more careful preparation could have prevented the mistake. An impediment in the preparation, however, was the fact that many managers were also threatened with dismissal, making it difficult to find sparring partners to discuss the placing of employees in new positions.

### **The change sustainability phase**

After a year, the business unit managers indicated that their connection with the HR manager was not optimal, because they had the feeling that HRM was only available for the directors rather than the employees. Consequently, the HR manager decided to take a seat at the managers meeting at a regular basis. These meetings provide the opportunity to demonstrate that HR is more than the right hand of the director. Next to that, the HR manager indicated that it is a way to informally test new thoughts from the top management perspective.

During the change process, the HR department was in charge of creating clarity about the regulations and procedures. However, the interviewed employee indicated that HR did not display all alternatives transparently for the employees that had to be replaced, which violated the levels of trust in the organization. Concerning the communication, there were some other issues as well, since the ‘why’ of the change was never fully understood, as the interviewed employee explained: “...*you can give it a different structure or a different name. But if the work does not change, then it is not clear to people why it had to change...*” The employee indicated that they would have preferred a more consultative approach.

### **Restructuring success**

It is ambiguous whether the restructuring can be categorized as successful. During the process, some mistakes were made by organizational members, which had serious consequences for some of the employees involved. Because of the mistakes, those employees cannot perceive the change as successful. Furthermore, employees from lower levels in the organization indicate that they miss the capacity and knowledge from the removed management level. According to the business unit manager, on the other hand, the restructuring was a success, because the organization achieves better financial outcomes with fewer employees. Besides that, he does not miss the removed management level. The HR manager agrees with this thought. He acknowledges that some mistakes were made, but for the rest the change was successful.

### **Interpretation of the results: HR’s contribution to the restructuring success**

In organization C, the HR function was involved in the change process from the beginning. Based on the case description, the HR role can be categorized as a combination of the strategy architect and the business ally from Ulrich and colleagues (2008). The HR manager acts like a business ally because he has an in-depth understanding of the strategic issues and solutions that drive business success. He is, what Ulrich describes as, business literate. The HR manager mentioned for instance that he is focused on improving business processes through lean management. Additionally, the HR role has some features of the strategy architect because the HR manager is involved in shaping the strategy of the organization and he translates business insights into matching HR practices, such as the performance appraisal system. These two competency domains are supposed to help in managing a change process.

Even when the change process moved to a difficult stage because of some mistakes, HR continued to perform a leading role.

In general, it is interesting to note that employees on the management levels of this organization tend to perceive the change as more successful than the employees lower in the organization. The latter group indicates that the change did not make any difference. A possible explanation for this could be a feeling that has permeated the workplace, namely that the restructuring is used (or misused) to bring the quality of the internal workforce to a higher level. Besides that, the organizational culture is built on a fear for change. It is a challenge to overcome such fears, because it requires a deep change in mindset and actions. The HR function could try to solve this issue by working closely with line managers in an effort to motivate employees to change. By involving employees in the change process, it is easier to make change stick. Additionally, this case is the only case that addresses the survivor issue, since direct supervisors did not sufficiently demonstrate their value for the survivors to boost their morale and to make sure that they stay.

#### **4.4 Organization D: HR as employee champion**

About four years ago, organization D merged with the social services departments of a couple of municipalities. The aim was to create one central organization for providing income and assisting people in reintegration. Even though the nature of the change was organization wide, the restructuring was most impactful for the municipality employees since they moved to the location of the sheltered employment firm. They had to deal with a distinctly different culture, work, and colleagues and caused, as such, most agitation during the change process.

##### **HR role in the change process**

In the year after the restructuring, the HR manager left the organization and up to now the vacancy has not yet been filled, so two HR advisors were interviewed collectively. During the change process, the HR manager was part of the management team and in the lead of the project team that was responsible for guiding the personnel side of the restructuring. The main activity was harmonization of the employment conditions. Although the team consisted of several HR professionals, the HR manager hardly gave them the opportunity to engage in designing the people side of the restructuring. This is in line with the perspective of the interviewees, who describe the HR manager as a rather old-fashioned and dominant manager. An example concerns the selection of a performance appraisal system. The employees from the municipality used to work with rather modern methods based on dialogues and continuous feedback. The HR manager of the sheltered employment firm, on the other hand, chose to apply the traditional method without any interaction. After the restructuring, the employees frequently expressed their dissatisfaction with the system, which forced the HR department to improve the system and align it with the needs of the workforce.

According to some of the case informants, HR could have fulfilled a more active role during the restructuring. Specifically, the interviewee indicated that HR should try to initiate dialogues with employees. The interviewed manager has doubts about the added value of HR to a restructuring process in general: *"...my experience is that HR professionals simply speak the word of the director and that is of no use to the employees. Thus, I strongly believe in external guidance..."*

### **The change planning phase**

Organization D is known as a large and cumbersome organization, in which the power to change is not so extensive. The blueprint of the restructuring has been set up by a small group of people, which made it difficult to trigger a willingness to change. The firm organized a meeting in which all employees came together to get to know each other by means of a game. There was no further preparation or transition to the new situation. It was a challenge for managers to give good structure in times of chaos and unrest. The manager suggested that HR could have organized a separate meeting for all managers before the actual implementation would start. As such, HR can work closely with line managers in an effort to motivate employees to change.

### **The change implementation phase**

Despite the project groups that were established, the interviewees indicated that the organization had to be built from scratch during the implementation, which required a pioneering role from employees: *"... there was not a clear vision. Or maybe there was a vision, but it was not known to me at all..."* The employees from the municipality that came to the sheltered employment organization faced a lot of chaos, stress and unrest. There were no detailed job descriptions for the new functions and no specific training opportunities to prepare employees for the job. The HR interviewees explained: *"...we heard in the beginning that people did not really know what to do... we could not yet enter the systems ... we had to survive the first weeks. We also did not know where our place was. We did not know anything..."* The interviewed line manager tried to create a safe environment by starting each workday with a 'round of openness', a get-together with the team to share ups and downs.

An issue arose with the combination of the cultures of the different organizations, since there were considerable differences between people from the two firms. The difference between the cultures is described as follows by the employee: *"...we [municipality employees] were used to work based on trust. Here [the sheltered employment firm] it was more based on suspicion. They said they stand for transparency, but nothing is less true..."* Despite the fact that HR has thought several times about how to merge the cultures, a project team on culture change never got off the ground. Remarkably, this was not the only project that did not get off the ground. The interviewed employees indicated that many good initiatives are proposed, but there is no integration of these initiatives. The departments are seen as rather isolated islands and the coherence between colleagues could be improved.

### **The change sustainability phase**

In the years after the implementation, there are still many things that are changed all the time according to the interviewees. Despite these adjustments, small wins are celebrated in this organization. They use an app in which all successes are shared in order to appreciate employees for their effort. However, there are some pitfalls, as the manager clarified: *“...we have a director who is a proponent of sharing successes. However, successes were shared with the outside world, but we did yet not feel these successes internally. And that is something you have to be careful with, that you constantly check with the employees whether they feel the same way...”*

The main lesson learned as addressed by the interviewees is the fact that merging the different cultures was not successful. One of the employees suggested that you should not put all employees in an existing building in the case of a merger, because you then automatically take over one culture rather than integrate the cultures. It could be better to start all together at a new place. Next to that, the interviewed line manager wants to use more positive communication towards employees. Such evaluations as the ones mentioned in this paragraph are not performed in the organization. The interviewees indicated that there was no wish to evaluate the change process and the outcomes.

### **Restructuring success**

In terms of organizational results and employee satisfaction, all respondent agree that the restructuring has been a success. One of the HR interviewees indicated that they actively track sources of information, such as the outcomes of the employee satisfaction survey or financial outcomes to determine whether the restructuring can be categorized as a success. She categorized the financial outcomes of the organization as the most important indicator. Despite the chaos during the implementation, the employees seem to view the change as positive. This positivity is shared by all interviewees, although they indicate that there might be still some employees that are pining for the old situation.

### **Interpretation of the results: HR's contribution to the restructuring success**

The role of HR in organization D can be categorized as employee champion, because managers get a great deal of support in HR activities such as selecting new employees (Ulrich, 1997). The interviewed line manager indicated that the HR professionals have close relationships with the line managers in the business units. The HR professionals in this organization have an operational focus on people with the ultimate aim of a competent workforce and employee satisfaction. In line with the employee champion competency domain, HR was mainly involved in the daily employee issues. The HR manager had a leading role in integrating the HRM policies and regulations during the restructuring. However, he had a rather traditional view on HR issues and was in control of deciding on the content of HR initiatives. As such, his controlling management style was not comprehended by other members of the HR project

team and led to suboptimal HR choices. After he left the organization, HR systems such as the performance management system were changed again to align them with the needs of the workforce.

The case illustrates that a merger presents significant challenges for HR professionals, since it had highly different consequences for different groups of employees. The change in the organization was packed with mixed feelings, including fear, curiosity, uncertainty, resistance and excitement. HR faced difficulties in engaging all employees, since for many of them hardly anything would change. HR organized in the beginning a group meeting for all employees to get to know each other, but further initiatives for creating coherence did not take place. During the implementation, the organization faced issues with incompatible organizational cultures of the sheltered employment firm and the different municipalities. Although HR anticipated cultural challenges, they did not take any steps to integrate the cultures. Reasons for this could be the lack of an HR manager after the restructuring who can be in charge of such projects or the lack of adequate competencies to effectively handle such complicated processes.

Despite the fact that managers get a great deal of support from HR, this support is mostly reactive rather than proactive. Since the direct supervisors are important driving forces for change in the organization, active guidance to middle management levels in dealing with people issues could have helped in engaging the entire organization. The interviewed manager was self-reliant in solving the issues for her subordinates, but less experienced managers could have the need to be supported more actively. In terms of engaging employees and making change stick, this organization understands that celebrating small wins or successes with each other is key. The director of this organization pays special attention to such initiatives.

Overall, it can be concluded that HR in this organization could have had a more active role in the change process. Important is that HR professionals do more than speaking the word of the director, since that gave one of the interviewees doubts about a meaningful contribution of HR. Attracting a knowledgeable and progressive HR manager who acts in accordance with the needs of the firm and who is able to engage his HR colleagues and the rest of the organization seems to be the first step.

#### **4.5 Organization E: HR as culture and change steward**

Organization E is a small-sized sheltered employment company. Approximately five years ago, the organization started an organization wide change initiative, which comprised a decrease from five to three departments. In order to deal with the dynamic external environment, the products and services had to be redefined and aligned with the strategy. The aim of the change initiative was to create clear responsibilities for results, an increase in efficiency and a more professional appearance.

### **The HR role in the change process**

Organization E has a staff manager, which is responsible for not only HR, but also finance, facility and IT. Despite the fact that the HR manager has to divide her attention across several disciplines, her past experience in HR functions helps her to strongly represent the interests of the personnel. As staff manager, she is part of the management team and was involved early in the change process. One of the initiators of the change, the interviewed production manager explains: “...*HR ran parallel in the process, because you need HR for the people side of the restructuring...*” Overall, the HR role in the change process can be described as a combination of a signaling, correcting and supporting purpose. Not only support, but also clear and positive communication was indicated as a main HR contribution. This saved repair work in later stages of the process, because the clear instructions for employees made it easy to legitimize corrections. The organization is quite small, so the lines of communication were short and there was no need to document all plans and schedules in detail. For a next time, the staff manager wishes to record the steps in the change process more specifically and to test them through a peer review. Besides that, the restructuring provided the HR function with opportunities to improve their policy and practices. One of the main examples was explained by the staff manager: “...*in the past, we did not steer managers on giving decent performance appraisals ... well, that is a lot better now...*”

### **The change planning phase**

The change initiative started with the two managers and an external advisor, who together discussed how to make the business future-proof. As soon as the decision for the departmental restructuring was made, the HR department became involved to help design the change process. One of the first tasks for HR was to register who was likely to drop out or to give hassle. The interviewees indicated that creating such an overview has been helpful in the subsequent stages of the process.

As a result of the restructuring, the number of production managers had to be decreased from five to three. The five employees had to participate in an assessment in order to determine which three would be hired for the new position. The interviewed employee expressed his opinion about these assessments: “...*they said you are all five eligible for the function. However, I did not believe that, because in my opinion three employees stood out. I had the feeling that the organization always had in mind who they wanted to place in the new position...*” In the end, it was not necessary to use the assessment as a selection tool. Two of the five employees withdrew for the new position, which resulted in three candidates left for the three open positions. This was a natural selection that nobody had foreseen and that was not preferred by the parties involved. Instead of using the assessments as selection tool, they decided to use it as development tool. The manager indicated that they could have prevented this situation by examining the wishes of the five employees and by actively steering on the preferred outcome from an HR and organization perspective.

### **The change implementation phase**

As soon as it was clear which three employees would fulfill the new position, they received coaching and training to prepare them for the job. The employees had to get used to new function, mainly because of the new required competences. As explained before, two employees chose to not apply for the position and HR did not foresee which consequences that would have for the teams. The staff manager explained: *“...it is an iterative process and you have to adapt to the moment. Whatever comes to light needs attention...”* Careful attention has been paid to involving the new managers in the design of the restructured departments. These changes in structure were accompanied by changes in the organizational culture. The culture had first a focus on caring and helpful behavior, which has now developed in a focus on ownership and responsibility lower in the organization. HR has actively implemented initiatives focused on defining the measurement of outcomes, on-the-job training, and using positive communication such as strengths and compliments to build the workforce and culture.

### **The change sustainability phase**

There were no major issues in the first steps of implementation, but after a couple of months, HR faced some complications in the change process: *“...we received complaints not only through the works council, but also through employees themselves that the production managers were too much focused on the external customers...”* HR decided to deal with this issue by organizing a large meeting in which they could take stock of all complaints. All employees were subdivided in small groups under the guidance of an HR professional to spout about their complaints. Because of these initiatives, the employees felt taken seriously and after a while the outcomes of the employee satisfaction survey reached high levels again.

The degree and intensity of evaluation of the change process differed for the parties involved, as indicated by the interviewees. The staff manager explained that the HR function did not evaluate, but in hindsight they know that it would be wise to do in order to learn from the past. The manager and the employee, on the contrary, explained that the business units had four rounds of evaluation to monitor the change progress in relation to the plans and schedules.

### **Restructuring success**

Overall, the three respondents agree that the organizational restructuring can be seen as a success, because the performance of the organization has increased significantly. As the interviewed manager expounds: *“...financially we are doing well, the employee satisfaction survey outcomes are good, our bonding with the customers has improved and the organization is more flexible. Besides that, we really changed the culture...”* As such, the change objectives have been achieved. The interviewed employee adds that the change has taken place in the interest of the firm and employees. Everyone is proud of the achievements and they display this air of positivity during organizational events such as an open day. The interviewees agree that celebrating the success is crucial.

### **Interpretation of the results: HR's contribution to the restructuring success**

The role of this organization's HR function is most similar to the culture and change steward role as described by Ulrich and colleagues (2008). The HR professionals had the right abilities to recognize, articulate and help shape the organization's culture which provided the basis for a successful change. The latest thinking on culture takes an 'outside-in' approach (Ulrich et al., 2008) and that is exactly what was done in this organization, by increasing the attention towards the external customer. The staff manager enacted the culture and change competency domain by initiating change programs in which stories that modeled the desired culture were collected and shared not only within the specific department, but also with the rest of the organization.

The fact that the staff manager had to divide her attention across several disciplines did not hinder her in striving for a successful change effort. HR was active in all stages of the change process by suggesting how HR interventions could support the change. Employees were offered diverse opportunities for training, development and coaching in order to prepare for the new function. The first period of preparation was behind closed doors, which led to some unexpected consequences when replacing the employees. Consequently, careful attention was paid to inviting employees to think along in the later stages of the restructuring design. Such initiatives help to make change happen and build a culture based on positivity, ownership and responsibilities. Part of the success may originate from a clear distinction between the area of attention for HR and for line management. It was HR's role to signal problems and discuss the issues with key individuals, whereas the line managers were in charge of giving instructions to employees, monitoring the progress and examining whether employees needed guidance. This case shows the relevance of careful monitoring, since the organization faced some complications when the employee satisfaction survey revealed complaints and disappointing outcomes. The HR department made the right choice in dealing with the problems, because the satisfaction levels rose quickly after the group meeting intervention.

Contrary to what Ulrich prescribes for the culture and change steward role, the HR function in this organization did not capture the lesson's learned, so that these can be applied in future change efforts. Despite the fact that HR could improve their evaluation and documentation, they were able to adapt to the situations and to set up corrective interventions instantly when issues came to light. This case demonstrates that culture and change competencies are crucial for successful HR change efforts.

### **4.6 Case comparison: successful versus unsuccessful cases**

The following paragraphs describe which factors can explain the differences between successful and unsuccessful restructurings. As elaborated in the method chapter, these factors resulted deductively from the theoretical framework as well as inductively from the interviews. The overall findings and comparison on the factors in the process and content dimension are summarized in Table 2. The categorizations in the top row of the table show whether the change was perceived as a success by the

interviewees. The label '*no success*' means that the interviewees unanimously agree that the change was not a success, whereas the label '*success*' means that the interviewees unanimously agree that the change was a success. The label '*moderate success*' indicates that the interviewees' opinions about the change success differed. The perceptions of the interviewees have been discussed in the case descriptions in the previous paragraphs. Based on these case descriptions, the cases can also be classified for the factors in the content dimension into '*no focus*', '*moderate focus*', and '*extensive focus*'. The category '*no focus*' implies that HR did not deploy any interventions for this factor during the change process. The label '*moderate focus*' means that HR used only one or a few interventions for this factor in some phases of the change process, but HR was mostly reactive to the needs identified by other organization members. '*Extensive focus*' means that HR was proactive in thinking about different HR interventions and actively deploying a variety of them throughout the change process. The findings of this study have been discussed with four experts with experience in the private and public sector to check whether similar findings can be found in other sectors. For each of the following paragraphs, the outcomes of the expert interviews are reported in the last section.

Table 2: Summary of the findings

	Organization A	Organization B	Organization C	Organization D	Organization E
Restructuring success	No success	Success	Moderate success	Success	Success
<b>Process dimension</b>					
HR role	Operational executor	Strategy architect	Business ally/ strategy architect	Employee champion	Culture and change steward
HR manager	No	Yes	Yes	Not any more	Yes
HR part of the management team	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HR involvement in change process	Not from beginning	Yes, from beginning	Yes, from beginning	Yes, from beginning	Yes, from beginning
<b>Content dimension</b>					
<i>HR interventions focused on:</i>					
Clear strategic vision	No focus	Moderate focus	Moderate focus	Moderate focus	Extensive focus
Communication	Moderate focus	Moderate focus	Extensive focus	Moderate focus	Extensive focus
Active participation	No focus	Extensive focus	Moderate focus	No focus	Extensive focus
Leadership	Moderate focus	Extensive focus	Extensive focus	Moderate focus	Extensive focus
Training and development	Moderate focus	Extensive focus	Extensive focus	No focus	Extensive focus
Culture	No focus	Moderate focus	No focus	No focus	Extensive focus
Adjusting HR instruments	Moderate focus	No focus	Extensive focus	Moderate focus	Extensive focus
Change management knowledge	Moderate focus	Extensive focus	Extensive focus	Moderate focus	Moderate focus
Monitoring (HR) data	No focus	No focus	No focus	Moderate focus	Moderate focus
Evaluation	No focus	No focus	No focus	No focus	No focus

## **Process dimension**

### *HR role and HR involvement in the change process*

Although all restructuring initiatives have sensitive HR implications, the cases demonstrate different HR roles in the change process as can be seen in Table 2. HR roles that mastered organization capabilities, such as the culture and change steward (organization E) and the strategy architect (organization B), resulted in successful change initiatives. In these two successful organizations, the HR function was busy with designing and delivering business strategies while serving the interests of the employees. In four organizations the HR manager was part of the management team, but the levels of restructuring success differ between these organizations. A proactive rather than reactive attitude by HR seems to make the difference when it comes to making an impact in the management team. Table 2 also shows that it is important that HR is drawn into the process early to be able to have an influence in later stages and contribute to restructuring success. Organization A was the only organization that was not involved from the beginning and this change initiative was not successful according to the interviewees. This case illustrates that recognition by the management team is an essential condition for HR to contribute to the change process to make it a success. The HR professionals became involved during implementation, but were not able to influence important outcomes. As such, the gap between HR's aspirations and actual role still persists. They tried to seek ways to get a seat at the table in the quest to be viewed as strategic and more important. Additionally, HR has to play a role at the intersection of people and business issues. An improper balance between these issues can lead to undesirable outcomes as organization C illustrates. The HR function in organization C had not enough attention for the human element, which result in a change process characterized by fear, flaws and distrust and in the end a moderately successful change initiative.

The experts confirmed that other public and private sector organizations show similar situations with regard to the role of HR in the change process, although they noticed that HR has a somewhat more professional and mature image in the private sector. In general terms, the experts characterize the HR mindset as reactive, harmonious and cautious. HR experiences often difficulties in understanding the strategic dilemmas and in connecting with the business and other support functions such as IT and finance. This is in stark contrast to the need for HR as change agents, characterized by the experts as decisive and visionary persons with a decent amount of business intimacy. All experts agree that there is an urgent need for such individuals, both in public and private firms. In the public sector, influencing skills and politic sensitivity are important additional skills for change agents, whereas the private sector requires change agents to build financial business cases.

## **Content dimension**

### *Clear strategic vision and communication*

The change process usually starts with defining the what and how of change and communicating this to the rest of the organization. The moderately successful case C and successful cases B, D and E focused more HR interventions on developing a strategy that fits with the human capabilities in the organization than unsuccessful case A. When comparing the cases on the communication interventions, the only difference that could be found was in organization E, where HR carefully deployed many interventions on communicating the 'why' of the change initiative. Specifically, HR contributed to this by using positive communication, based on strengths, compliments and dialogues to inform employees, which contributed for a large part to the restructuring success of organization E according to the interviewees. In moderately successful organization C, HR also extensively focused on communication interventions during the change process, but here the interviewed employee indicated that the communication was not always transparent. In the other three organizations, the top management team was in charge of the communication and HR mainly had a facilitating role. Overall, respondents in all cases addressed that continuous communication about the current state of affairs is a very important factor for the success of a restructuring, in which HR can have a facilitating role.

The experts agree that a transparent and clear vision are key for a successful change effort. One of them mentioned that it does not have to be a problem if the vision slightly changes all the time, especially because the strategies of sheltered employment firms are inherent to unstable governmental dynamics. A more important impediment in public sector firms is the high number of hierarchical layers, which hinders clear and uniform cascading of the vision. One of the experts confirmed that HR is usually not in charge of the communication, unless the change is concerned with HR issues or systems. Other experts expressed the need for visionary HR managers again. Such a person can use storytelling as a technique to spread the strategic vision throughout the organization. It helps if this vision is complemented with personal stories of top managers. In addition to that, one of the experts recommended the use of positive psychology by HR or other change agents. Especially in the public sector with tight regulations, it helps to search for positive stories or 'crown jewels' of the organization, which creates a starting point for development and change.

### *Active participation*

Based on Table 2 it becomes clear that successful organizations deployed somewhat more interventions focused on realizing participation and support among employees. Two successful organizations B and E opted for consultative approach, in which different organizational members were invited to think along. The HR professionals had an important role in facilitating the employee participation by means of organizing activities such as group meetings or walk-in hours. As for the other organizations, they provided no or limited opportunities for employees to be involved in decision

making. These organizations indicated that one of the lessons learned is that they need to increase employee participation a next time. As such, it can be concluded that active participation by organization members is a crucial aspect for a successful restructuring process. It is interesting to note that also one of the organizations with a high level of employee involvement wants to further increase the employee participation during a next change initiative, because it worked well.

The experts confirmed the aforementioned findings and stress the importance of involving employees, but only if their input is relevant and only if issues have not yet been decided. It is counterproductive to ask for input and participation while making all decisions top-down. One of the experts provided an example of a firm in the private sector, which successfully designed a change initiative bottom-up. The management team asked all employees to think along how to improve a certain business division. This led to many good initiatives which were enthusiastically implemented. As such, this change method was applied successfully in other parts of the organization as well. According to the expert, this is a valuable example for all firms, no matter the sector they are active in.

#### *Leadership and opportunities for training and development*

As the five cases illustrate, line and middle managers fulfill a central role in the design and implementation of (HR-related) change initiatives. In all organizations, HR paid attention to management by means of a management development program or coaching. However, in organizations A and D, such initiatives were undertaken very late in the change process or were only focused on top management, so these cases received the label moderate focus in Table 2. These findings are interesting, given the fact that the interviewees acknowledged that both top management and line management have a leading role in implementing the changes. In general, the most successful organizations B and E had dedicated initiatives to develop management by means of assessments, coaching and/or training opportunities. HR in the moderately successful organization C also prepared managers for the new job by means of competency training. As for the unsuccessful organization A, the management development program started three years after the restructuring. Overall, it is remarkable that in most organizations, also the successful ones, attention for management had no priority at the beginning of the change process. This is in contrast with the prescriptions in the literature. Since the successful cases prove that leadership sets the scene for what counts during the change process, assisting the development of leaders early in the change process is considered an important activity for HR. When interviewees were asked about the training and development opportunities for employees in general, it became clear that (moderately) successful cases B, C and E offered extensive on-the-job and formal training opportunities, whereas in the unsuccessful case A these opportunities were only offered in response to the training and development needs as identified by employees themselves. Only this subtle difference with regard to training and development interventions could be found between more and less successful cases. The observation in organization

D was not in line with this pattern, because HR did not focus any interventions on training and development for employees, although the restructuring was perceived as successful.

The experts confirmed the empirical evidence and indicated that line management is a frequently forgotten group of employees in the change process. One of the experts observed that top management often assumes that line managers are in favor of the change initiative, but in practice this is not always the case. Therefore, the key to successfully dealing with resistance is paying careful attention to middle management. According to the expert, this group of managers is often involved too late, which may result in a lack of speed and momentum of the change initiative.

### *Culture*

It can be seen in Table 2 that the degree of focus on culture is related to restructuring success. Especially the less successful organizations experience culture as a difficulty. These organizations did not have a dedicated project team facilitating the development of organizational culture. Successful organizations with culture interventions, such as organization B and E, show that the presence of such a team is the first step towards success. In successful organization E, the HR manager acted as a culture and change steward and initiated different activities. Specifically, she clearly defined desired behaviors, competences and outcomes. Afterwards, she asked an external consultant to guide the business units in changing the culture. These different initiatives help to make the desired changes stick. In successful organization B, HR paid attention to culture as well. They searched for people within the organization that had affection with the change initiative and the desired culture. Although these ambassadors did not yet bring the desired outcomes, they are still actively developing interventions to change the organizational culture. The three organizations A, C and D did not focus any interventions on culture and Table 2 shows that these restructuring processes were generally less successful. It was not the case that HR did not want to change the culture in these organizations, but the interviewees indicated that a lack of ideas or competences on how to effectively deal with a change in the culture formed hindrances.

Culture is acknowledged to be a difficult issue in the change process by all interviewed experts. Remarkably, they all recommended HR professionals to stop talking at the abstract level of 'culture change' and rather switch to 'changing behaviors' or 'changing ways of working'. Culture projects often fail in both public and private firms because these projects are propagated as large, abstract, and costly programs with high expectations. However, in practice, it is way more successful to make such initiatives personal, focused and manageable. The ownership for a culture change is often placed at the HR department, but their lack of business knowledge inhibits them to translate the strategy into cultural values and matching HR activities and systems. One of the experts mentioned that introducing flesh blood in the organization has been proven to help shake up habits and behaviors. Besides this so-called outside-in approach, the inside-out approach seems to work as well. The experts

provided the example of a firm that actively encouraged their HR professionals to visit other firms on a regular basis in order to become more knowledgeable.

#### *Adjusting HR instruments*

Certain HR instruments can inhibit or facilitate the change process. The most common heard inhibiting HR instrument in the cases was the mismatch between the performance appraisal system and the desired behaviors. The performance management system needs to translate the change thoughts into measurements and rewards that lead to behavior that is consistent with the desired culture. In organizations C, D and E, the HR manager decided to adjust the system. In addition to that, organization C addressed the fact that he wants to change the compensation and benefit systems to attract more talented managers. HR practices are often driven by a different set of criteria, but these outcomes show the importance of integrating the HR practices with the organizational strategy and culture. No clear differences can be found between more and less successful restructuring cases. The interviewees indicated that adjustments to HR practices were mainly made during the sustainability phase, as these issues arose during the implementation phase and hindered the momentum of the change.

With regard to the HR instruments, the experts confirm that these are regularly inhibiting factors in the change process, because HR professionals fail to oversee the effect of their activities and systems in the organization. As such, the experts agree that if HR wants to deliver a positive contribution to the change process, they need to identify, track and quantify the added value of the HR activities and systems.

#### *Change management knowledge*

The cases illustrate that HR professionals often under-invest in personal growth for themselves. In general, HR professionals who succeed are constantly learning and growing. Interestingly, only the HR managers of organization B and C decided to attend a training program, one in change management and one in lean management. These two organizations were (moderately) successful. Only one HR manager expressed confidence in the change management skills of HR, whereas all the others indicated that there is still a lot to learn. The HR manager from organization B indicated that such knowledge could also be transferred through on-the-job learning if being surrounded by a team of experienced change managers. The lack of change management knowledge was perceived as a real barrier for unsuccessful organization A. In order to deal with the lack of change management competencies, the cases illustrated that HR can gather a team of people, both internally (e.g. business managers) and externally (consultants), who have the right experience and knowledge. In four organizations an external advisor was involved in the planning phase of the change, whereas two organizations used external support during implementation. Close cooperation with such experienced

change agents can help HR in guiding large restructuring projects towards a success, especially for firms in sectors such as the sheltered employment where in-house change expertise is often lacking.

All experts recognize that the HR function in general lacks experience and expertise in managing change. They indicate that being a good HR manager is more than having adequate knowledge of HR topics. Since external support is often only a temporary solution for the problem, the experts express the urgency to adjust the curriculum of HRM studies at universities for the new generation of HR managers. For current HR professionals, on the other hand, it is all about gaining experience. The experts notice that HR in private firms is already becoming more professional. If this transition does not start in the public sector as well, the experts are worried that in the worst case scenario the HR function will gradually disappear and people issues will become the responsibility of other support functions with a more strategic position. In other words, it is key that HR professionals invest in their self-employability. A limited training budget is no excuse, as there is plenty of free online course material.

#### *Monitoring and evaluating the change results*

The literature on change management indicates that it is important to monitor and evaluate the results of the change initiative. With regard to monitoring the change progress, only two of the successful organizations D and E indicated that HR tracked the outcomes of the employee satisfaction survey to assess how employees felt about the change. These cases show that monitoring such indicators helps to understand where further improvements are needed. In the end, such improvements helped to make the change a success. The interviewees from the other three cases A, B and C did not mention the role of HR in monitoring the progress of the change, which can be seen in Table 2. Overall, these cases had a less successful restructuring process. In addition to that, one of the most striking findings was the lack of evaluation in all organizations as illustrated by the no focus labels for all cases in Table 2. The case descriptions showed that evaluation only takes place at the operational level when the results are evaluated in comparison to the change objectives. However, evaluation of the change process on a strategic level did not happen. Although all interviewees acknowledge that evaluation is an important step to collect the lessons learned, they failed to put it into practice. Evaluation is not only relevant when the change process failed, as successful cases can also lead to valuable insights, which can contribute to the success of future change projects.

Again, the experts confirmed that similar results can be found for other organizations. The only difference is that some experts notice a tendency that decisive, dynamic private organizations are more likely to fail to evaluate than bureaucratic public organizations. In general, the experts believe that the lack of evaluation is due to the fact that everyone knows where it went wrong. Furthermore, it is more fun to start something new than to reflect and be reminded of negative experiences. Firms are often focused on the internal situation and the here and now, whereas focusing on the outside and the past are very relevant in creating a learning organization. In line with the agile working trend, one of

the experts suggests that evaluation should take place constantly. In other words, evaluating lessons learned and selecting best practices will become interwoven in the daily work processes. With regard to monitoring, the experts see opportunities for HR analytics to help HR professionals in gaining insight into which change interventions or investments have the desired effect. However, they also notice that in most organizations HR does not yet have adequate analytical skills.

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

This study was motivated by the need to gather empirical evidence on which HR activities and systems contribute to the success or failure of a change initiative in practice. This study specifically focused on the combination of the process and content dimension of change. The findings indicated that there were several differences between successful and unsuccessful restructuring processes in the sheltered employment sector. As such, this study indicates that HR may influence some factors that are imperative for a successful change process.

In terms of the process dimension of change, the cases demonstrated different roles for HR in the change process. The expectations towards HRM professionals in literature are increasing (e.g. Ulrich, 1997; Ulrich et al., 2008; Ulrich et al., 2012), but in practice these expectations are not always fulfilled. The two cases where HR mastered organization capabilities of the Ulrich typology, such as in the culture and change steward and the strategy architect role, had a more successful change process. In the cases where HR was more focused on the operation and administration, it seemed that HR's involvement in the change process was mostly reacting to change rather than driving it forward. Although prior empirical studies are relatively scarce, findings from other studies tend to support this view (e.g. Antila, 2006; Alfes et al., 2010). One case showed that HR was called into the change process in later stages, which made it very difficult to act on a strategic level. This case also illustrated that even if HR professionals do not act on a strategic level in the change process, they can still add value because many HR issues manifest themselves in the operational domain. However, this was not enough to make the restructuring a success. Besides that, the interviewed HR professionals themselves value the strategic role and want to be involved early on in the process. As such, the gap between HR's aspirations and actual role still persists. The successful cases show that top management team support is important for HR to be drawn into the process early, but it is not a guarantee for a valuable HR contribution.

With regard to the content dimension of change, the cases illustrated that HR can focus their interventions on several factors. In terms of specific HR activities and systems, a mismatch between the performance appraisal system and the desired behaviors was noticed in several cases. Consequently, HR adjusted the performance appraisal system in order to integrate the HR practices with the organizational strategy and culture. Since the performance and reward systems signal what really matters in an organization, it is important to be aware of these indicative signals.

Furthermore, the lack of the change agent competences by HR can be due to the fact that line managers fulfill a central role in the design and implementation of the change initiative (Antila, 2006). As the five cases illustrate, HR is not solely done by HR. In all organizations, HR paid attention to building capability and motivation among managers by means of a management development program or coaching. However, in most organizations, also in the successful ones, such initiatives had no priority at the beginning of the change process or were only focused on top management. These findings are interesting, given the fact that the interviewees acknowledge that both top management and line management have a leading role in implementing the changes. This observation is in contrast with the expectations based on literature, as there is evidence that assisting leaders in being a role model for others is useful (Balogun, 2007; Balogun et al., 2014). The cases illustrate that preparing the managers for the change process remains a challenge that HR still seems to stumble over.

Additionally, in many cases, the less successful cases in particular, HR experienced difficulties in changing the organizational culture. The desire for culture change in the cases is in line with the developments in the literature, where authors argue that throughout the past decade more emphasis has been placed on sophisticated softer cultural aspects in landing change programs (Balogun & Hope-Hailey, 2015). The cases illustrate that the most difficult aspect is to translate the change into new organizational behaviors and attitudes throughout the organization. The interviewees indicated that a lack of competences and ideas on how to define the desired culture made it difficult for HR to reflect the key levers of the desired culture in the recruitment, training, reward and performance management activities and processes. However, it is known that for a culture to change, firms need to make early changes to entrenched (HR) systems that support old ways of doing things (Balogun & Hope-Hailey, 2015).

Based on the interviews, it became clear that successful organizations were further in realizing participation and commitment among employees. The cases illustrated that active participation by organizational members is crucial for willingness to change and restructuring success. Particularly as organizations become less hierarchical and employees less deferential (Balogun et al., 2014), interventions imposed by managers are subject to more questioning. This development asks for new forms of leadership, in which change is achieved through negotiations and social interactions. It is through HR systems and processes that open, two-way communication between managers and employees can be facilitated. Reflecting on the data gathered in this study, it can be seen that HR professionals did hardly take a proactive role in facilitating the communication of the change message.

The cases also reveal that HR professionals often under-invest in personal growth for themselves. In general, HR professionals who succeed are constantly learning and growing, whether it is through formal training or on-the-job learning from more experienced coworkers. Remarkably, only two HR managers decided to attend a subject-matter training program themselves. Previous experience and capabilities affect the contribution delivered by HR managers (Truss, 2008). The

successful cases in this study indicated that HR solved the lack of capabilities issue by gathering a team of people, both internally and externally with the right experience and knowledge.

The literature on the planned approach of change indicates that it is important to monitor and evaluate the results of the change initiative (Hayes, 2014). As such, one of the most striking findings was the lack of evaluation in all cases. Evaluation is not only relevant when the change process failed, as successful cases can also lead to valuable insights. Consequently, the failure to learn about change at senior levels in the organization is still present in the cases (Balogun & Hope-Hailey, 2015). Furthermore, there is little empirical evidence regarding HR professionals using analytical skills to monitor the change process through the interpretation of data sets. In only two organizations, the HR department tracked the employee satisfaction survey to get an impression of the change effects. Rousseau and Barends (2011) argue that the evidence-based management movement is slowly integrating in the HR discipline. As such, evidence-based HR can be used as intervention to advise management on decisions and to promote working HR practices, which enables HR to keep momentum of the change across the organization. Overall, the lack of evaluation and monitoring make it difficult for firms to draw solid conclusions about the success of change initiatives and to capture the lessons learned.

In conclusion, the present study has increased our understanding on the contribution of the HR function in change processes in both the process and content dimension. The cases in this study highlight that the new and more strategic change agent roles have not yet completely replaced the traditional roles, which has consequences for the extent to which HR practices can contribute. This raises serious questions about the future of the HR function as independent silo, as the consensus within the prescriptive literature is that a move towards a more strategic role is desirable, if not essential (Truss, 2008).

## **5.1 Theoretical implications**

This study was built on the body of literature on HR functional roles within a planned approach to organizational change. The findings of this study offer some interesting outcomes and expand the literature in the domain of strategic human resource management combined with change management.

First of all, this research expands the literature by building on both the process dimension and content dimension of change on a micro-level case study to capture a complete view of HR's contribution. The combination of these views has received scant attention in the change management literature (Alfes et al., 2010). The predominant focus in the literature is on analyzing organizational change in a rather limited scope by focusing on only one set of dimensions, since taking into account multiple dimensions is not a straightforward task. In addition to that, there are only few studies that consider the specific content of HR's role in managing change (Alfes et al., 2010). This study separated the HR contribution into content and process dimensions in order to provide a more nuanced

and holistic understanding of how the HR function contributes to change. As such, this study responded to the request by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) for more attempts to unify both content and process issues in the field of change management.

Second, the findings of the current study are conform the results of the studies by Ulrich and colleagues (1997; 2008; 2012), who argue that HRM still drops stitches when it comes to change management aspects of work in its persistent quest to establish strategic credibility. However, it was evident from this study that the strategic and change oriented HR practices were important for success as an HR professional and the change initiative. This adds empirical ground and relevance to the claims in the literature that are made about the importance of change management competencies for HR. No single prior study seems to discuss the HR roles and competences per phase of the change process. Reflecting on the data gathered, a generalized map of a successful HR journey through the change process can be developed. The scope of this study was the planning, implementation and sustaining phase, because these coincide with three translation moments when HR can turn abstract ideas into action. The change process framework by Hayes (2014) as presented in the second chapter has been used to plot the generalized HR journey of the successful cases. This generalized journey is illustrated in Figure 2 and shows the HR role and corresponding competences.

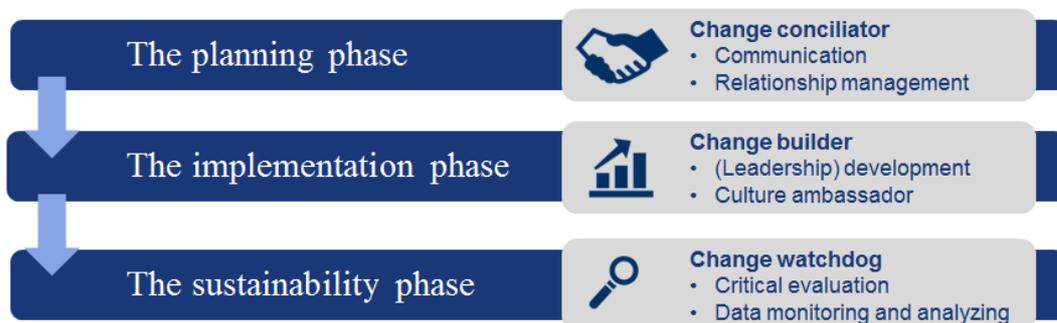


Figure 2. The HR journey through the change phases

In the planning phase, HR's successful contribution is in acting as the *change conciliator* with the aim to gather information and represent the voice of all relevant stakeholders. Active HR involvement in planning contributes to spreading a change message that helps people to make their own personal transitions through the change. In the implementation phase, HR is the *change builder* with the aim to educate all organization members for the right expertise and competences. Successful HR professionals do this by translating the organizational culture into HR activities and systems and by celebrating small wins to build confidence in the change initiative. Finally, in the sustainability phase, successful HR professionals act as a *change watchdog* with the aim to stabilize the change and capture the learning. Successful HR professionals invite all relevant stakeholders to evaluate the process and

lesson's learned. Based on this HR journey through the change process, several avenues for future research can be distinguished.

## **5.2 Limitations and future research**

As with any study, this research is subject to some limitations that provide directions for the future research agenda. One of the most pressing limitations concerns the scope of this study, as it is based on five Dutch cases in the same sector. The small sample size restricts the generalizability of the findings to other organizations. This limitation is a logical consequence of case study research, which is meant to generalize to theory rather than statistical generalization to a larger population (Eisenhardt, 1989). Similarly, the research is exclusively conducted within the sheltered employment sector, which has been chosen because firms in this sector have to deal with many restructurings as a result of politic dynamics. The expert interviews have been conducted in order to explore the applicability of the findings in other sectors. As such, the outcomes of these expert interviews enhance the generalizability to other sectors since the experts confirm that similar findings can be found in both private and public sector organizations. Although the study of five cases within the same sector limits the generalizability to other sectors, it allows for a rich inter-case analysis without having to account for external contextual differences. Additionally, only Dutch organizations have been included in this study, which limits the generalizability of the results to other national contexts. Future research could be applied to a larger and broader sample of organizations, to investigate the interplay between institutional, cultural and geographical variables and the contribution of HR to the change process.

Secondly, it should be noted that qualitative research may be biased by the way the researcher asked the interview questions and interpreted the results (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). During the interview, the researcher may unintentionally be biased to ask questions that confirm pre-conceived beliefs. In this study, semi-structured interview guidelines were developed to reduce the possibility of this bias. With regard to the data analysis, an interpretive validity bias may have an effect on the data. Researchers can interpret the same interview outcomes differently, because they may experience difficulties separating their own opinions and beliefs from the data (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In this study, only one interviewer coded and interpreted the collected data. The possibility of interpretive bias was reduced as much as possible by summarizing the answers to the interview questions and by verifying the transcript with the interviewee. However, readers still need to be aware of the possibility that other interpretations of the findings are plausible. Specifically, the characterization of each of the five cases by one of the main HR competency domains (Ulrich, 1997; Ulrich et al., 2008) is subject to the interpretation of the researcher. This characterization was used to give the reader some guidance in understanding the differences between the five cases, but it should be interpreted with caution.

Thirdly, it has not been possible to conduct interviews with all desired respondents. The aim was to conduct an interview with the HR manager, line manager and employee in each organization.

In organization D, the HR manager left after the restructuring and as such, two HR advisors were interviewed to gain insights into the contribution of HR. Furthermore, in organization B, it was not possible to conduct an interview with an employee who was involved during the restructuring due to time constraints. These slight adjustments in the respondents could provide an incomplete view per organization, because not all perceptions could be investigated. However, an acceptable number of different actors have been spoken, so the diversity of information has been preserved. As such, the reliability of the results is guaranteed to a certain degree as it can be analyzed whether the respondents confirm or contradict each other. Additionally, it has to be noted that the interviewed line managers and employees were chosen by the HR manager instead of random selection. It could be the case that organizational members with a favorable attitude towards the change initiative or with certain personality characteristics were more likely to be chosen by HR. This may have an impact on the interpretation of the findings. For future research, it would be interesting as well to interview members of the top management team to get an insight into the opportunities that are provided to the HR function to be involved in the change process in public firms. It was beyond the scope of this study to include these interviews as well, but it provides an interesting avenue for future research.

Fourthly, the definition and measurement of change success can be operationalized in many different ways, which indicates the complexity of the issue in theory and practice. There is not one common criterion or measure that can be used to determine the success of a change initiative, as different criteria or measures may lead to different outcomes. The answer to the question whether the change is a success also depends on the person who is asked this question. The present study tried to deal with this issue by gathering data from multiple perspectives. Since this study did not distinguish different dimensions of success, it is recommended for future research to measure success in different ways and from different organizational perspectives. Despite the difficulties and limitations of measuring success, it should not be left behind in research since it provides firms with the opportunity to capture the lessons learned.

Follow-up studies need to consider that businesses feel the pressing need to develop more agile mindsets. As agility is becoming the new mantra of today's business environment, the question arises whether traditional processes and approaches to change management work in an agile environment (Accenture, 2016). Most change management techniques are based on linear and sequential approaches and may thus not be dynamic enough for an agile organization. Traditional techniques in managing change are bolted-on change programs, whereas agile practices are built on change management principles that are embedded in how all people work, think and collaborate (Accenture, 2016). The context of the public sector creates a working environment where incremental, emergent approaches may be more appropriate than top-down, linear planning processes (Truss, 2008). As such, the agile practices may in particular be suitable for public firms that need to deal with discontinuity. As organizations move towards a more agile mindset, the question is what kind of approach or set of responsibilities HR needs to adopt. Current HR activities and systems may impede

efforts to create an agile workforce. More research is necessary to advance our understanding of how HR can assist in moving towards agile work environments. Furthermore, it would be interesting to consider how the HR function fits in agile organizations, as change management becomes an embedded capability in all workers rather than driven by HR.

Another compelling avenue for future research is based on how people analytics may support change management. People analytics can be used to make better evidence-based HR decisions and to solve business issues in general (Rousseau & Barends, 2011). Another avenue for people analytics to add value may be in working closely with change management. People analytics may help to make empirical and grounded decisions instead of 'we have always done it this way' for the design of HR and change programs. According to Tushman and colleagues (2017), change management is becoming increasingly data-driven, but not all companies are yet ready for this. Similar lines of thoughts were provided by one of the interviewed experts. This development merits further research in order to explore how HR can effectively build a connection between people analytics and change management and to assess the contribution to the success of a change initiative.

Based on the HR journey through the change process as presented in the theoretical implications section, two other avenues for future research can be distinguished. First of all, this diversity of roles for HR requires a wide range of knowledge and competences. Since there are noteworthy differences between successful and unsuccessful cases in terms of the HR journey, it can be concluded that a traditional HR development path does not always provide the skills required for these roles. Consequently, there is a strong need for research examining how the identified HR competences can be most effectively developed, acquired and nurtured. Several competences may be acquired through formal training, whereas others require experiential or on-the-job learning. Theoretical guidance for future research addressing these issues may be accessible in the literature on training and development (Roehling et al., 2005). Another compelling avenue for future research concerns the question under what circumstances HR professionals fulfill each of these roles in the change phases. One specific starting point for further research is based on a statement by Scott-Jackson and Mayo (2016) who argue that changes in HR are unlikely to happen without intervention of an innovative CEO or CHRO. As such, studying the leaders in key positions in the HR function may unravel insights into whether successful evolution towards a strategic and change oriented HR function is due to the leadership within the HR function or to other factors. The leaders of the HR department guide and influence other (HR) professionals within the organization, which may subsequently influence change outcomes. Do current HR leaders in less successful restructuring cases not get the chances by top management and line management or do they get chances but are these insufficiently used? The discussion of these issues is a useful addition to existing literature and a starting point for future research.

### **5.3 Practical implications**

The findings of this study provide a number of implications for HR practitioners who have to deal with managing change processes. In recent years, HR managers have been encouraged to play a more strategic role in change processes in their organizations. The first and foremost implication for organizations is that HR practitioners should keep in mind that even if they do not have a strategic role in the change process, they can still add value. Successful HR facilitation relies on strong personal relationships built on the mutual trust and respect, as it does not work to insist on being heard simply because you are from HR. Flawless application of the operational and policy issues earns trust and opens the door to more strategic contributions for HR and a 'seat at the table'. In addition to that, it is recommended to ensure physical proximity of the HR department to the top management team, as the cases illustrate that this increased the ad hoc HR involvement in strategic matters.

This study has also implications for the staffing and development of HR practitioners. Depending on the wishes of HR's contribution to the change process, the case study findings indicate areas in which organizations need to invest time and money. It seems that HR managers in general do not yet have deep change management knowledge and they have several options to deal with this. On the one hand, it is advised to invest in the development of the change capability of the HR function and the rest of the organization. On the other hand, it is advised to develop strong working relationships with external change management experts. Either way, HR needs to create an army of change agents throughout the organization capable of leading change. As such, HR professionals should recognize the critical and complex change role of middle and line management. Teamwork is crucial in the role division between management and HR, but in practice these disciplines often act based on conflicting interests. HR can develop interventions to engage the managers in the process and to equip them with the right skills to take up leadership for change in their part of the organization.

Unsuccessful organizations can learn from successful organizations with regard to developing the desired organizational culture. One of the key messages to HR professionals is to be more proactive in putting culture on the agenda and to design interventions that help to translate the strategy into tangible actions and changes to everyday behaviors. Additionally, HR practitioners should early on identify and change entrenched HR activities and HR systems that support the old culture and old ways of doing things.

Despite these recommendations, it should be noted that organizational restructuring is an iterative process and it is not possible to foresee everything. In reality, there is no template for successful organizational change management as every organization is different. Some cases showed that HR professionals still drop stitches when it comes to change management aspects of work, whereas other cases made it evident that active HR contribution in several domains led to success for the HR professional and the change initiative. By analyzing a few change cases in the sheltered

employment sector, this study has specified some areas of attention that HR can rely on in their effort to bring the change from planning to reality.

## References

- Accenture (2016). HR drives the Agile Organization. On March 27, 2018, retrieved from [https://www.accenture.com/t20160913T220140\\_\\_w\\_\\_/\\_usen/\\_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/DotCom/Documents/Global/PDF/Strategy\\_3/Accenture-Future-of-HR-Trends-Agile-Organizations.pdf](https://www.accenture.com/t20160913T220140__w__/_usen/_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/DotCom/Documents/Global/PDF/Strategy_3/Accenture-Future-of-HR-Trends-Agile-Organizations.pdf)
- Alfes, K., Truss, C., & Gill, J. (2010). The HR manager as change agent: Evidence from the public sector. *Journal of change management*, 10(1), 109-127.
- Antila, E. M. (2006). The role of HR managers in international mergers and acquisitions: a multiple case study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 17(6), 999-1020.
- Armenakis, A., Harris, S., & Feild, H. (1999). Paradigms in organizational change: Change agent and change target perspectives. In R. Golembiewski (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational behavior*. New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Armenakis, A. A., & Bedeian, A. G. (1999). Organizational change: A review of theory and research in the 1990s. *Journal of management*, 25(3), 293-315.
- Baker, T. L. (1999). *Doing Social Research*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Balogun, J. (2007). The Practice of Organizational Restructuring:: From Design to Reality. *European Management Journal*, 25(2), 81-91.
- Balogun, J., Hope Hailey, V. H., Stuart, R., & Cleaver, I. (2014). *Landing transformational change*. London: CIPD.
- Balogun, J., & Hope Hailey, V. (2015). *Leading Transformational change: Closing the gap between theory and practice*. London: CIPD.
- Bamford, D. R., & Forrester, P. L. (2003). Managing planned and emergent change within an operations management environment. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 23(5), 546-564.
- Boonstra, J.J. & Steensma, H.O. (1999). Succesfactoren voor grootschalige veranderingsprocessen. *Congres Grootschalige veranderingsprocessen*, Focus, Amsterdam, 9-10 juni, 1999. (14 blz.)
- Bowman, E. H., & Singh, H. (1993). Corporate restructuring: Reconfiguring the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 14(S1), 5-14.
- Buchanan, D., Fitzgerald, L., Ketley, D., Gollop, R., Jones, J. L., Lamont, S. S., Sharpe, A. & Whitby, E. (2005). No going back: A review of the literature on sustaining organizational change. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7(3), 189-205.
- Burke, W. W., & Litwin, G. H. (1992). A causal model of organizational performance and change. *Journal of management*, 18(3), 523-545.
- Burnes, B. (2004). *Managing change: A strategic approach to organisational dynamics*. Pearson Education.

- Caldwell, R. (2001). Champions, adapters, consultants and synergists: the new change agents in HRM. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 11(3), 39-52.
- Conway, E., & Monks, K. (2008). HR practices and commitment to change: an employee-level analysis. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 18(1), 72-89.
- Crail, M. (2007). HR's role in managing organisational change. *IRS Employment Review*, 885.
- Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (2013). *Organization development and change*. Cengage learning.
- De Man, A.P. & Tours, H. (2016). *Mislukt 70% van de verandertrajecten?*. Retrieved from [http://www.sioo.nl/files\\_content/pdfs/white%20paper%20Mislukt%2070%20procent%20van%20de%20verandertrajecten.pdf](http://www.sioo.nl/files_content/pdfs/white%20paper%20Mislukt%2070%20procent%20van%20de%20verandertrajecten.pdf)
- Dicken, P. (2011). *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy, 6th edition*. London: Sage.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of management review*, 14(4), 532-550.
- Ellis, F. (2007). The benefits of partnership for OD and HR: The changing roles of OD and HR create a new partnership dynamic. *Strategic HR Review*, 6(4), 32-35.
- Fernandez, S., & Rainey, H. G. (2006). Managing successful organizational change in the public sector. *Public administration review*, 66(2), 168-176.
- Guest, D. (2004). The psychology of the employment relationship: an analysis based on the psychological contract. *Applied Psychology*, 53(4), 541-555.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, 18(1), 59-82.
- Hayes, J. (2014). *The theory and practice of change management*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jacobs, R. L. (2002). Institutionalizing organizational change through cascade training. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 26(2/3/4), 177-182.
- Keller, S., & Aiken, C. (2009). The inconvenient truth about change management. On September 15, 2017, retrieved from <http://www.projektmanazer.cz/kurz/soubory/modul-c/the-inconvenient-truth-about-change-management.pdf>
- Kotter, J. P. (1995). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review* (access: HBS customized digital book).
- Lawler III, E. E., & Mohrman, S. A. (2003). HR as a strategic partner: What does it take to make it happen?. *People and Strategy*, 26(3), 15-29.
- Lee, G., & Teo, A. (2005). Organizational restructuring: Impact on trust and work satisfaction. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 22(1), 23-39.
- Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in group dynamics: Concept, method and reality in social science; social equilibria and social change. *Human relations*, 1(1), 5-41.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (Vol. 75). Sage.

- McKinley, W., & Scherer, A. G. (2000). Some unanticipated consequences of organizational restructuring. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(4), 735-752.
- Netherlands Enterprise Agency (n.d.). Participation Act and job agreement. On March 26, 2018, retrieved from <https://business.gov.nl/regulation/participation-act/>
- Patton, M. Q. (1987). *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation*. California: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (2nd edn). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis J. (2003). *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Sage Publications.
- Roehling, M. V., Boswell, W. R., Caligiuri, P., Feldman, D., Graham, M. E., Guthrie, J. P., Morishima, M. & Tansky, J. W. (2005). The future of HR management: Research needs and directions. *Human Resource Management*, 44(2), 207-216.
- Rousseau, D. M., & Barends, E. G. R. (2011). Becoming an evidence-based HR practitioner. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 21(3), 221–235
- Ruona, W. E., & Gibson, S. K. (2004). The making of twenty-first-century HR: An analysis of the convergence of HRM, HRD, and OD. *Human Resource Management*, 43(1), 49-66.
- Scott-Jackson, W. & Mayo, A. (2016). HR with purpose: Future models of HR. On April 17, 2018, retrieved from [https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/52286583/Future-Models-of-HR\\_Full-Report.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1524146812&Signature=dFJJV9qIwejDHaiVF%2BWOSIB77D8%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DHR\\_with\\_Purpose\\_future\\_Models\\_of\\_HR.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/52286583/Future-Models-of-HR_Full-Report.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1524146812&Signature=dFJJV9qIwejDHaiVF%2BWOSIB77D8%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DHR_with_Purpose_future_Models_of_HR.pdf)
- Senior, B. (2002). *Organisational Change* (2nd edn). London: Prentice Hall.
- Stirman, S. W., Kimberly, J., Cook, N., Calloway, A., Castro, F., & Charns, M. (2012). The sustainability of new programs and innovations: a review of the empirical literature and recommendations for future research. *Implementation Science*, 7(1), 17.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Grounded Theory Methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Todnem By, R. (2005). Organisational change management: A critical review. *Journal of change management*, 5(4), 369-380.
- Todnem By, R. T., Burnes, B., & Oswick, C. (2011). Change management: The road ahead. *Journal of Change Management*, 11(1), 1-6.
- Truss, C. (2008). Continuity and change: the role of the HR function in the modern public sector. *Public Administration*, 86(4), 1071-1088.
- Tushman, M.L., Kahn, A., Porray, M.E. & Binns, A. (2017). *Change management is becoming increasingly data-driven. Companies aren't ready*. Retrieved March 27, 2018, at <https://hbr.org/2017/10/change-management-is-becoming-increasingly-data-driven-companies-arent-ready>

- Ulrich, D. (1997). *Human Resource Champions. The next agenda for adding value and delivering results*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Ulrich, D. (1998). A new mandate for human resources. *Harvard business review*, 76, 124-135.
- Ulrich, D., Younger, J., Brockbank, W., & Johnson, D. (2008). *HR Competencies: Mastery at the Intersection of People and Business*, Alexandria, VA: Society of *Human Resource Management*.
- Ulrich, D., Younger, J., Brockbank, W., & Ulrich, M. (2012). HR talent and the new HR competencies. *Strategic HR Review*, 11(4), 217-222.
- Van der Smissen, S. (2015). *Contemporary psychological contracts: How organizational change and generational differences affect employer employee relationships* s.l.: Uitgeverij BOXPress
- Van der Velde, M., Jansen, P., & Dijkers, J. (2015). *Praktijkgericht onderzoek: Opzetten, uitvoeren, analyseren en rapporteren* (2nd ed.). Hilversum: Concept uitgeefgroep.
- Van Knippenberg, D., & Hogg, M. A. (2003). A social identity model of leadership effectiveness in organizations. *Research in organizational behavior*, 25, 243-295.
- Werkman, R. A. (2006). *Werelden van verschil: hoe actoren in organisaties vraagstukken in veranderprocessen hanteren en creëren (Doctoral dissertation)*. Retrieved from <http://dare.uva.nl/document/2/40030>
- Yeung, A., Woolcock, P., & Sullivan, J. (1996). Identifying and developing HR competencies for the future: Keys to sustaining the transformation of HR functions. *People and Strategy*, 19(4), 48-58.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix I. Interview guideline for HR manager (English version)**

#### **Introduction**

- Short introduction of interviewer and interviewee
- Explaining aim of the interview: insight into contribution of HR to restructuring
- Specifying the structure of the interview: the interview lasts about one hour and is recorded for analysis. Afterwards, the transcript will be sent for verification. Confidentiality and anonymity of the responses in reports is guaranteed. There are no right or wrong answers.
- Are there any questions beforehand?

#### **General**

- Can you briefly describe your function in this organization?
- How long have you been employed in this organization?

#### **Restructuring characteristics**

- When did the restructuring take place (start and ending)?
- What did the restructuring mean for your organization?
- Was the restructuring organization-wide or at departmental level?
- What was the aim of the restructuring?
- What were the effects of the restructuring on the organization?
- Who were involved in the restructuring (incl. external service providers)?
- What was the reaction of the organization members to the restructuring?
  - Were there any differences between groups?
- Do you consider the restructuring to be a success?
  - If yes/no, why?
  - What do you consider to be success criteria?

#### **HR department**

- How does the HR department of your organization look like?
- Is HR part of the management team?
- At what moment was the HR department involved in the restructuring process?
- Can you explain how you were involved in the restructuring?

- How many other HR colleagues were involved in the restructuring? Which role did these colleagues have in the restructuring?

### **HR activities and HR systems during the planning phase**

- To what extent was HR involved during the planning phase of the restructuring?
- Which activities/systems did HR undertake/use during the planning phase? For instance focused on:
  - Inventory of current situation
  - Developing strategic vision for future situation
  - Deciding which HR instruments need to be adjusted
  - Communication
  - Active participation of organization members
  - Other activities/systems, namely: ...
- Which of these HR activities/HR systems were facilitating the restructuring?
- Which of these HR activities/HR systems were hindering the restructuring?
- What was the reaction of line managers to the HR activities/HR systems?
- What was the reaction of employees to the HR activities/HR systems?

### **HR activities and HR systems during the implementation phase**

- To what extent was HR involved during the implementation phase of the restructuring?
- Which activities/systems did HR undertake/use to implement the restructuring? For instance focused on:
  - Training and development
  - Attention for leadership
  - Attention for line and middle management
  - Initiatives to reduce resistance
  - Gathering feedback
  - Monitoring change (by means of data (analytics))
  - Adjusting change initiatives
  - Adjusting HR instruments
  - Other activities/systems, namely: ...
- Which of these HR activities/HR systems were facilitating the restructuring?
- Which of these HR activities/HR systems were hindering the restructuring?
- What was the reaction of line managers to the HR activities/HR systems?
- What was the reaction of employees to the HR activities/HR systems?

### **HR activities and HR systems during the sustainability phase**

- To what extent was HR involved during the sustainability phase of the restructuring?
- Which activities/systems did HR undertake/use to sustain the restructuring? For instance focused on:
  - Communication
  - Adjusting HR instruments
  - Monitoring change (by means of data (analytics))
  - Evaluation of the change process
  - Celebrating success/wins
  - Spreading best practices throughout the organization
  - Other activities/systems, namely: ...
- Which of these HR activities/HR systems were facilitating the restructuring?
- Which of these HR activities/HR systems were hindering the restructuring?
- What was the reaction of line managers to the HR activities/HR systems?
- What was the reaction of employees to the HR activities/HR systems?

### **Reflection on the restructuring**

- Has the restructuring been evaluated?
  - If yes, how did the evaluation take place?
  - If not, was this desirable?
- To what extent did HR contribute to the success of the restructuring in your opinion?
- What would you do the same in a subsequent restructuring?
- What would you do differently in a subsequent restructuring?
- What do you think are the most important factors that determine the success of a restructuring? And why?

### **Closing**

- Would you like to correct or add something to the things you said during the interview?
- Do you have any questions?
- Explain follow-up: transcript will be sent for verification
- Thank you

## **Appendix II. Interview guideline for HR manager (Dutch version)**

### **Introductie**

- Voorstellen
- Doel van het interview aangeven: inzicht in de bijdrage van HR aan een reorganisatie
- Opzet van het interview aangeven: het interview duurt ongeveer een uur en wordt opgenomen voor analyse. Achteraf wordt het transcript opgestuurd ter verificatie. Antwoorden worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en komen geanonimiseerd in scriptie en eventueel in een rapport van Berenschot. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden.
- Zijn er vragen vooraf?

### **Algemeen**

- Kunt u kort uw functie beschrijven in deze organisatie?
- Hoe lang werkt u al in deze organisatie?

### **Reorganisatie kenmerken**

- Wanneer vond de reorganisatie plaats (start en afronding)?
- Wat hield de reorganisatie in voor uw organisatie?
- Was de reorganisatie organisatiebreed of op afdelingsniveau?
- Wat was het doel van de reorganisatie?
- Wat waren de effecten van de reorganisatie op de organisatie?
- Wie waren er allemaal betrokken bij de reorganisatie (incl. externe dienstverleners)?
- Wat was de reactie van mensen uit de organisatie op de reorganisatie?
  - Was er een verschil tussen bepaalde groepen?
- Beschouwt u de reorganisatie als een succes?
  - Zo ja/nee, waarom?
  - Wat beschouwt u als succescriteria?

### **HR afdeling**

- Hoe ziet de HR afdeling van uw organisatie eruit?
- Is HR onderdeel van het management team?
- Op welk moment werd de HR afdeling betrokken in het reorganisatieproces?
- Kunt u uitleggen hoe u betrokken bent geweest bij de reorganisatie?
- Hoeveel andere HR collega's waren betrokken bij de reorganisatie? Welke rol in de reorganisatie hadden deze collega's?

### **HR activiteiten en HR systemen tijdens de planning fase**

- In hoeverre werd HR betrokken tijdens de planning fase van de reorganisatie?
- Welke activiteiten/systemen heeft HR ondernomen/gebruikt tijdens de planning van de reorganisatie? Bijvoorbeeld, gericht op:
  - Inventarisatie huidige situatie
  - Ontwikkelen strategische visie voor toekomstige situatie
  - Beoordelen welke HR instrumenten moeten worden aangepast
  - Communicatie
  - Actieve participatie door organisatieleden
  - Overige activiteiten/systemen, namelijk: ...
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten bevorderend voor de reorganisatie?
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten belemmerend voor de reorganisatie?
- Wat was de reactie van lijnmanagers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?
- Wat was de reactie van de werknemers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?

### **HR activiteiten en HR systemen tijdens de implementatie fase**

- In hoeverre werd HR betrokken tijdens de implementatie fase van de reorganisatie?
- Welke activiteiten/systemen heeft HR ondernomen/gebruikt om de reorganisatie uit te voeren? Bijvoorbeeld gericht op:
  - Training en ontwikkeling
  - Aandacht voor leiderschap
  - Aandacht voor lijn- en middenmanagement
  - Initiatieven om weerstand te verminderen
  - Feedback verzamelen
  - Monitoren van verandering (d.m.v. data (analyse))
  - Veranderinitiatieven bijstellen
  - Aanpassen HR instrumenten
  - Overige activiteiten/systemen, namelijk: ...
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten bevorderend voor de reorganisatie?
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten belemmerend voor de reorganisatie?
- Wat was de reactie van lijnmanagers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?
- Wat was de reactie van de werknemers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?

### **HR activiteiten en HR systemen tijdens de nazorg fase**

- In hoeverre werd HR betrokken tijdens de nazorg fase van de reorganisatie?

- Welke activiteiten/systemen heeft HR ondernomen/gebruikt om de veranderingen na de implementatie van de reorganisatie te behouden? Bijvoorbeeld gericht op:
  - Communicatie
  - Aanpassen HR instrumenten
  - Monitoren van verandering (d.m.v. data (analyse))
  - Evaluatie van het veranderproces
  - Vieren van successen
  - Verspreiden van best practices
  - Overige activiteiten/systemen, namelijk: ...
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten bevorderend voor de reorganisatie?
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten belemmerend voor de reorganisatie?
- Wat was de reactie van lijnmanagers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?
- Wat was de reactie van de werknemers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?

### **Reflectie op de reorganisatie**

- Is er na de reorganisatie een evaluatiemoment geweest?
  - Zo ja, hoe vond dit plaats?
  - Zo nee, is of was dit gewenst?
- In hoeverre heeft HR volgens u bijgedragen aan het succes van de reorganisatie?
- Wat zou u bij een volgende reorganisatie hetzelfde doen?
- Wat zou u bij een volgende reorganisatie anders doen?
- Wat zijn volgens u de belangrijkste factoren die het succes van een reorganisatie bepalen? En waarom?

### **Afsluiting**

- Wilt u nog iets corrigeren of toevoegen aan de dingen die u heeft gezegd tijdens het interview?
- Heeft u nog vragen?
- Vervolg uitleggen: transcript wordt opgestuurd ter verificatie
- Bedankt

## **Appendix III. Interview guideline for line manager (English version)**

### **Introduction**

- Short introduction of interviewer and interviewee
- Explaining aim of the interview: insight into contribution of HR to restructuring
- Specifying the structure of the interview: the interview lasts about one hour and is recorded for analysis. Afterwards, the transcript will be sent for verification. Confidentiality and anonymity of the responses in reports is guaranteed. There are no right or wrong answers.
- Are there any questions beforehand?

### **General**

- Can you briefly describe your function in this organization?
- How long have you been employed in this organization?

### **Restructuring characteristics**

- What was the aim of the restructuring?
- What did the restructuring mean for your organization?
- What were the effects of the restructuring on the organization?
- Can you explain how you have been involved in the restructuring?
- What was your reaction to the restructuring?
- What was the reaction of other organization members to the restructuring?
- Do you consider the restructuring to be a success?
  - If yes/no, why?
  - What do you consider to be success criteria?

### **HR activities and HR systems during the planning phase**

- In which HR activities/systems were you involved as line manager during the planning phase?
  - Inventory of current situation
  - Developing strategic vision for future situation
  - Deciding which HR instruments need to be adjusted
  - Communication
  - Active participation of organization members
  - Other activities/systems, namely: ...
- Which of these were facilitating the restructuring?
- Which of these were hindering the restructuring?
- What was the reaction of employees to the HR activities/HR systems?

### **HR activities and HR systems during the implementation phase**

- In which HR activities/systems were you involved as line manager during the implementation phase? For instance focused on:
  - Training and development
  - Attention for leadership
  - Attention for line and middle management
  - Initiatives to reduce resistance
  - Gathering feedback
  - Monitoring change (by means of data (analytics))
  - Adjusting change initiatives
  - Adjusting HR instruments
  - Other activities/systems, namely: ...
- Which of these were facilitating the restructuring?
- Which of these were hindering the restructuring?
- What was the reaction of employees to the HR activities/HR systems?

### **HR activities and HR systems during the sustainability phase**

- In which HR activities/systems were you involved as line manager during the sustainability phase? For instance focused on:
  - Communication
  - Adjusting HR instruments
  - Monitoring change (by means of data (analytics))
  - Evaluation of the change process
  - Celebrating success/wins
  - Spreading best practices throughout the organization
  - Other activities/systems, namely: ...
- Which of these were facilitating the restructuring?
- Which of these were hindering the restructuring?
- What was the reaction of employees to the HR activities/HR systems?

### **Reflection on the restructuring**

- Has the restructuring been evaluated?
  - If yes, how did the evaluation take place?
  - If not, was this desirable?
- To what extent did HR contribute to the success of the restructuring in your opinion?
- What would you do the same in a subsequent restructuring?

- What would you do differently in a subsequent restructuring?
- What do you think are the most important factors that determine the success of a restructuring? And why?

**Closing**

- Would you like to correct or add something to the things you said during the interview?
- Do you have any questions?
- Explain follow-up: transcript will be sent for verification
- Thank you

## **Appendix IV. Interview guideline for line manager (Dutch version)**

### **Introductie**

- Voorstellen
- Doel van het interview aangeven: inzicht in de bijdrage van HR aan een reorganisatie
- Opzet van het interview aangeven: het interview duurt ongeveer een uur en wordt opgenomen voor analyse. Achteraf wordt het transcript opgestuurd ter verificatie. Antwoorden worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en komen geanonimiseerd in scriptie en eventueel in een rapport van Berenschot. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden.
- Zijn er vragen vooraf?

### **Algemeen**

- Kunt u kort uw functie beschrijven in deze organisatie?
- Hoe lang werkt u al in deze organisatie?

### **Reorganisatie kenmerken**

- Wat was het doel van de reorganisatie?
- Wat hield de reorganisatie in voor uw organisatie?
- Wat waren de effecten van de reorganisatie op de organisatie?
- Kunt u uitleggen hoe u betrokken bent geweest bij de reorganisatie?
- Wat was uw eigen reactie op de reorganisatie?
- Wat was de reactie van mensen uit de organisatie op de reorganisatie?
- Beschouwt u de reorganisatie als een succes?
  - Zo ja/nee, waarom?
  - Wat beschouwt u als succescriteria?

### **HR activiteiten en HR systemen tijdens de planning fase**

- Bij welke HR activiteiten/systemen werd u als lijnmanager betrokken tijdens de planning fase? Bijvoorbeeld gericht op:
  - Inventarisatie huidige situatie
  - Ontwikkelen strategische visie voor toekomstige situatie
  - Beoordelen welke HR instrumenten moeten worden aangepast
  - Communicatie
  - Actieve participatie door organisatieleden
  - Overige activiteiten/systemen, namelijk: ...
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten bevorderend voor de reorganisatie?

- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten belemmerend voor de reorganisatie?
- Wat was de reactie van de werknemers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?

### **HR activiteiten en HR systemen tijdens de implementatie fase**

- Bij welke HR activiteiten/systemen werd u als lijnmanager betrokken tijdens de implementatie fase? Bijvoorbeeld gericht op:
  - Training en ontwikkeling
  - Aandacht voor leiderschap
  - Aandacht voor lijn- en middenmanagement
  - Initiatieven om weerstand te verminderen
  - Feedback verzamelen
  - Monitoren van verandering (d.m.v. data (analyse))
  - Veranderinitiatieven bijstellen
  - Aanpassen HR instrumenten
  - Overige activiteiten/systemen, namelijk: ...
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten bevorderend voor de reorganisatie?
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten belemmerend voor de reorganisatie?
- Wat was de reactie van de werknemers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?

### **HR activiteiten en HR systemen tijdens de nazorg fase**

- Bij welke HR activiteiten/systemen werd u als lijnmanager betrokken tijdens de nazorg fase? Bijvoorbeeld gericht op:
  - Communicatie
  - Aanpassen HR instrumenten
  - Monitoren van verandering (d.m.v. data (analyse))
  - Evaluatie van het veranderproces
  - Vieren van successen
  - Verspreiden van best practices
  - Overige activiteiten/systemen, namelijk: ...
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten bevorderend voor de reorganisatie?
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten belemmerend voor de reorganisatie?
- Wat was de reactie van de werknemers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?

### **Reflectie op de reorganisatie**

- Is er na de reorganisatie een evaluatiemoment geweest?
  - Zo ja, hoe vond dit plaats?

- Zo nee, is of was dit gewenst?
- In hoeverre heeft HR volgens u bijgedragen aan het succes van de reorganisatie?
- Wat zou u bij een volgende reorganisatie hetzelfde doen?
- Wat zou u bij een volgende reorganisatie anders doen?
- Wat zijn volgens u de belangrijkste factoren die het succes van een reorganisatie bepalen? En waarom?

### **Afsluiting**

- Wilt u nog iets corrigeren of toevoegen aan de dingen die u heeft gezegd tijdens het interview?
- Heeft u nog vragen?
- Vervolg uitleggen: transcript wordt opgestuurd ter verificatie
- Bedankt

## **Appendix V. Interview guideline for employee (English version)**

### **Introduction**

- Short introduction of interviewer and interviewee
- Explaining aim of the interview: insight into contribution of HR to restructuring
- Specifying the structure of the interview: the interview lasts about one hour and is recorded for analysis. Afterwards, the transcript will be sent for verification. Confidentiality and anonymity of the responses in reports is guaranteed. There are no right or wrong answers.
- Are there any questions beforehand?

### **General**

- Can you briefly describe your function in this organization?
- How long have you been employed in this organization?

### **Restructuring characteristics**

- What was the aim of the restructuring?
- What did the restructuring mean for your organization?
- What were the effects of the restructuring on the organization?
- Can you explain how you have been involved in the restructuring?
- What was your reaction to the restructuring?
- What was the reaction of other organization members to the restructuring?
- Do you consider the restructuring to be a success?
  - If yes/no, why?
  - What do you consider to be success criteria?

### **HR activities and HR systems during the planning phase**

- Which HR activities/systems did you experience during the planning phase? For instance focused on:
  - Inventory of current situation
  - Developing strategic vision for future situation
  - Deciding which HR instruments need to be adjusted
  - Communication
  - Active participation of organization members
  - Other activities/systems, namely: ...
- Which of these were facilitating the restructuring?
- Which of these were hindering the restructuring?

- To what extent was your line manager involved in these HR activities/HR systems?
- What was your reaction to the HR activities/HR systems?
- What was the reaction of other employees to the HR activities/HR systems?

### **HR activities and HR systems during the implementation phase**

- Which HR activities/systems did you experience during the implementation phase? For instance focused on:
  - Inventory of current situation
  - Developing strategic vision for future situation
  - Deciding which HR instruments need to be adjusted
  - Communication
  - Active participation of organization members
  - Other activities/systems, namely: ...
- Which of these were facilitating the restructuring?
- Which of these were hindering the restructuring?
- To what extent was your line manager involved in these HR activities/HR systems?
- What was your reaction to the HR activities/HR systems?
- What was the reaction of other employees to the HR activities/HR systems?

### **HR activities and HR systems during the sustainability phase**

- Which HR activities/systems did you experience during the sustainability phase?
  - Which were facilitating the restructuring?
  - Which were hindering the restructuring?
- To what extent was your line manager involved in these HR activities/HR systems?
- What was your reaction to the HR activities/HR systems?
- What was the reaction of other employees to the HR activities/HR systems?

### **Reflection on the restructuring**

- Has the restructuring been evaluated?
  - If yes, how did the evaluation take place?
  - If not, was this desirable?
- To what extent did HR contribute to the success of the restructuring in your opinion?
- What would you do the same in a subsequent restructuring?
- What would you do differently in a subsequent restructuring?
- What do you think are the most important factors that determine the success of a restructuring? And why?

**Closing**

- Would you like to correct or add something to the things you said during the interview?
- Do you have any questions?
- Explain follow-up: transcript will be sent for verification
- Thank you

## **Appendix VI. Interview guideline for employee (Dutch version)**

### **Introductie**

- Voorstellen
- Doel van het interview aangeven: inzicht in de bijdrage van HR aan een reorganisatie
- Opzet van het interview aangeven: het interview duurt ongeveer een uur en wordt opgenomen voor analyse. Achteraf wordt het transcript opgestuurd ter verificatie. Antwoorden worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en komen geanonimiseerd in scriptie en eventueel in een rapport van Berenschot. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden.
- Zijn er vragen vooraf?

### **Algemeen**

- Kunt u kort uw functie beschrijven in deze organisatie?
- Hoe lang werkt u al in deze organisatie?

### **Reorganisatie kenmerken**

- Wat was het doel van de reorganisatie?
- Wat hield de reorganisatie in voor uw organisatie?
- Wat waren de effecten van de reorganisatie op de organisatie?
- Kunt u uitleggen hoe u betrokken bent geweest bij de reorganisatie?
- Wat was uw eigen reactie op de reorganisatie?
- Wat was de reactie van andere mensen uit de organisatie op de reorganisatie?
- Beschouwt u de reorganisatie als een succes? Zo ja/nee, waarom?
  - Zo ja/nee, waarom?
  - Wat beschouwt u als succescriteria?

### **HR activiteiten en HR systemen tijdens de planning fase**

- Welke HR activiteiten/systemen heeft u ervaren in de voorbereiding van de reorganisatie?  
Bijvoorbeeld gericht op:
  - Inventarisatie huidige situatie
  - Ontwikkelen strategische visie voor toekomstige situatie
  - Beoordelen welke HR instrumenten moeten worden aangepast
  - Communicatie
  - Actieve participatie door organisatieleden
  - Overige activiteiten/systemen, namelijk: ...
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten bevorderend voor de reorganisatie?

- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten belemmerend voor de reorganisatie?
- In hoeverre was uw lijnmanager betrokken bij deze HR activiteiten/systemen?
- Wat was uw reactie op de HR activiteiten/systemen?
- Wat was de reactie van andere werknemers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?

### **HR activiteiten en HR systemen tijdens de implementatie fase**

- Welke HR activiteiten/systemen heeft u ervaren in de uitvoering van de reorganisatie?  
Bijvoorbeeld gericht op:
  - Training en ontwikkeling
  - Aandacht voor leiderschap
  - Aandacht voor lijn- en middenmanagement
  - Initiatieven om weerstand te verminderen
  - Feedback verzamelen
  - Monitoren van verandering (d.m.v. data (analyse))
  - Veranderinitiatieven bijstellen
  - Aanpassen HR instrumenten
  - Overige activiteiten/systemen, namelijk: ...
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten bevorderend voor de reorganisatie?
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten belemmerend voor de reorganisatie?
- In hoeverre was uw lijnmanager betrokken bij deze HR activiteiten/systemen?
- Wat was uw reactie op de HR activiteiten/systemen?
- Wat was de reactie van andere werknemers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?

### **HR activiteiten en HR systemen tijdens de nazorg fase**

- Welke HR activiteiten/systemen heeft u ervaren in de nazorg fase van de reorganisatie?  
Bijvoorbeeld gericht op:
  - Communicatie
  - Aanpassen HR instrumenten
  - Monitoren van verandering (d.m.v. data (analyse))
  - Evaluatie van het veranderproces
  - Vieren van successen
  - Verspreiden van best practices
  - Overige activiteiten/systemen, namelijk: ...
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten bevorderend voor de reorganisatie?
- Welke van deze HR activiteiten/systemen werkten belemmerend voor de reorganisatie?
- In hoeverre was uw lijnmanager betrokken bij deze HR activiteiten/systemen?

- Wat was uw reactie op de HR activiteiten/systemen?
- Wat was de reactie van andere werknemers op de HR activiteiten/systemen?

### **Reflectie op de reorganisatie**

- Is er na de reorganisatie een evaluatiemoment met u geweest?
  - Zo ja, hoe vond dit plaats?
  - Zo nee, is of was dit gewenst?
- In hoeverre heeft HR volgens u bijgedragen aan het succes van de reorganisatie?
- Wat zou HR bij een volgende reorganisatie hetzelfde moeten doen?
- Wat zou HR bij een volgende reorganisatie anders moeten doen?
- Wat zijn volgens u de belangrijkste factoren die het succes van een reorganisatie bepalen? En waarom?

### **Afsluiting**

- Wilt u nog iets corrigeren of toevoegen aan de dingen die u heeft gezegd tijdens het interview?
- Heeft u nog vragen?
- Vervolg uitleggen: transcript wordt opgestuurd ter verificatie
- Bedankt

## **Appendix VII. Interview guideline for additional expert interviews (English)**

### **Introduction**

- Short introduction interviewer and interviewee
- Specifying aim and structure of the interview
- Are there any questions beforehand?

### **General**

- What is your expertise in change management? Which sectors?
- What do you think are the most important factors that determine the success of a restructuring? And why?
- What are the most common hindering factors in the change process?

### **HR department**

- What is in your opinion the current role of HR in the change process in most organizations?
- From which moment is HR in general involved in the change process?
- Does this role differ per phase of the change process? Planning/implementation/sustainability?
- Which HR activities and HR systems can HR deploy during the restructuring?
- At what moment in the change process can HR add most value?
- Are there any differences per sector in terms of the role of HR?

### **Specific questions**

#### *HR role and instruments*

- In sheltered employment firms, HR was regularly not acknowledged by the top management team. Is this due to the specific sector in which they operate or does this impediment also occur in other organizations (public/private)?
- In sheltered employment firms, a common hindering factor was the performance management system. Does this also occur in other public/private organizations?
- In sheltered employment firms, a common hindering factor for attracting high quality management was the remuneration system. Do you recognize this in other public/private organizations?
- In sheltered employment firms, it was striking that changes in HR instruments were often made later in the change process. Does this also occur in other organizations (public/private)?

### *Leadership*

- In sheltered employment firms, management development programs were only focused on top management and were used quite late in the change process. Is this due to the specific sector in which they operate or does this impediment also occur in other sectors (public/private)?

### *Culture*

- In sheltered employment firms, the HR departments of the less successful organizations often experienced difficulties in changing the culture. They indicated that they do not know how to approach this issue. Is this due to the specific sector in which they operate or does this impediment also occur in other sectors (public/private)?
- In sheltered employment firms, a culture of fear for change can often be found. Is this due to the specific sector in which they operate or does this impediment also occur in other sectors (public/private)?

### *Active participation*

- In sheltered employment firms, the HR departments had difficulties determining whether/when employees had to be involved in the change process. How do other organizations in public/private sectors deal with this?

### *Change management knowledge and external support*

- In sheltered employment firms, the HR departments did often not invest in their own growth and development. Is this due to the specific sector in which they operate or does this impediment also occur in other sectors (public/private)?
- In sheltered employment firms, external consultants were mainly deployed during the planning phase of the change process and not so much during the implementation of the change. Do you recognize this in other public/private organizations?

### *Clear strategic vision and communication*

- The sheltered employment firms had regularly an unclear vision, goals and priorities. Do you recognize this in other public/private organizations?
- In sheltered employment firms, HR's contribution to the development of the vision, goals and priorities was rather limited. Is this due to the specific sector in which they operate or does this also occur in other sectors (public/private)?
- In the sheltered employment firm where HR contributed by means of positive communication, the change was a success. Do you see this in other organizations in other sectors as well?

### *Monitoring and evaluation*

- In sheltered employment firms, the restructuring is usually not evaluated on a strategic level. Is this due to the specific sector in which they operate or does this impediment also occur in other sectors (public/private)?
- In sheltered employment firms, not all HR departments actively monitored the change. Is this due to the specific sector in which they operate or does this impediment also occur in other sectors (public/private)?

### **Reflection on the restructuring**

- To what extent can HR contribute to the success of a restructuring?
- How do you see the ideal future role for HR in the change process? What is going well? What are common mistakes? What can HR still learn/improve?
- Have you seen a change in the contribution of HR to the change process in recent years?
- What is your most important lesson learned about change management?

### **Closing**

- Would you like to correct or add something to the things you said during the interview?
- Do you have any questions?
- Thank you

## **Appendix VIII. Interview guideline for additional expert interviews (Dutch)**

### **Introductie**

- Korte introductie interviewer en interviewee
- Doel en opzet van het interview aangeven
- Zijn er vragen vooraf?

### **Algemeen**

- Korte introductie interviewee
- Wat is uw expertise binnen verandermanagement? In welke sectoren?
- Wat zijn volgens u de belangrijkste factoren die het succes van een reorganisatie bepalen? En waarom?
- Wat zijn in het algemeen de meest voorkomende belemmerende factoren als het gaat om veranderingsprocessen?

### **HR afdeling**

- Hoe ziet u de huidige rol van HR in veranderprocessen?
- Vanaf welk moment wordt HR over het algemeen betrokken in het reorganisatieproces?
- Verschilde deze rol per fase van het veranderproces? Planning/implementatie/nazorg?
- Welke HR activiteiten en systemen kan HR inzetten tijdens de reorganisatie?
- Waar ligt de meeste toegevoegde waarde voor HR in het veranderproces?
- Zijn er verschillen per sector als we kijken naar de rol van HR?

### **Specifieke vragen**

#### *HR rol en instrumenten*

- In Sociale Werkbedrijven werd HR regelmatig niet erkend door het top management team. Komt dit door de specifieke sector waarin zij opereren of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere organisaties (publiek/privaat)?
- In Sociale Werkbedrijven was een veelvoorkomende belemmerende factor het performance management systeem. Komt dit ook voor in andere publieke/private organisaties?
- In Sociale Werkbedrijven was een veelvoorkomende belemmerende factor voor het vinden van kwalitatief goed management het beloningssysteem. Herkent u dit ook in andere publieke/private organisaties?

- In Sociale Werkbedrijven viel het op dat veranderingen in HR instrumenten vaak pas laat in het veranderingsproces werden gemaakt. Komt dit ook voor in andere organisaties (publiek/privaat)?

#### *Leiderschap*

- In Sociale Werkbedrijven viel het op management development programma's vaak alleen zijn gefocust op top management en te laat in het proces worden ingezet. Komt dit door de specifieke sector waarin zij opereren of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren (publiek/privaat)?

#### *Cultuur*

- In Sociale Werkbedrijven hadden de HR afdelingen van de minder succesvolle organisaties vaak moeite met het veranderen van de cultuur. Ze gaven aan dat ze niet weten hoe ze dit moeten aanpakken. Komt dit door de specifieke sector waarin zij opereren of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren (publiek/privaat)?
- In Sociale Werkbedrijven heerste regelmatig een cultuur met angst voor veranderen. Komt dit door de specifieke sector waarin zij opereren of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren (publiek/privaat)?

#### *Participatie*

- In Sociale Werkbedrijven hadden de HR afdelingen moeite om te bepalen wanneer werknemers moeten worden betrokken in het proces. Hoe gaan andere organisaties in de publieke/private sector hiermee om?

#### *Verandermanagement kennis en externe support*

- In Sociale Werkbedrijven investeerde de HR afdelingen vaak niet in hun eigen groei en ontwikkeling. Komt dit door de specifieke sector waarin zij opereren of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren (publiek/privaat)?
- In Sociale Werkbedrijven werden externe consultants vooral ingezet tijdens de voorbereiding van het veranderproces en heel weinig tijdens de implementatie. Herkent u dit ook in andere publieke/private organisaties?

#### *Duidelijke strategische visie en communicatie*

- In Sociale Werkbedrijven was er regelmatig een onduidelijke visie, doelen en prioriteiten, en een beperkte bijdrage van HR daaraan. Komt dit door de specifieke sector waarin zij opereren of komt dit ook voor in andere sectoren (publiek/privaat)?

- In het Sociale Werkbedrijf Organisatie waar HR bijdroeg aan communicatie door middel van positieve communicatie werd de verandering een succes. Hoe kijk jij hier tegenaan en zie je dit ook in andere organisaties in andere sectoren?

#### *Monitoren en evalueren*

- In Sociale Werkbedrijven wordt het evalueren van de reorganisatie na afloop op strategisch niveau vaak overgeslagen. Komt dit door de specifieke sector waarin zij opereren of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren (publiek/privaat)?
- In Sociale Werkbedrijven deden niet alle HR afdelingen de verandering actief monitoren. Komt dit door de specifieke sector waarin zij opereren of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren (publiek/privaat)?

#### **Reflectie op de reorganisatie**

- In hoeverre kan HR bijgedragen aan het succes van de reorganisatie?
- Hoe ziet u de ideale rol van HR in de toekomst veranderprocessen? Wat gaat er al goed? Wat zijn veelgemaakte fouten? Wat kan HR nog leren/verbeteren?
- Heeft u de afgelopen jaren een verandering gezien in de bijdrage van HR?
- Wat is uw belangrijkste geleerde les m.b.t. veranderprocessen?

#### **Afsluiting**

- Wilt u nog iets corrigeren of toevoegen aan de dingen die u heeft gezegd tijdens het interview?
- Heeft u nog vragen?
- Bedankt