# The end of the HR function as we know it?
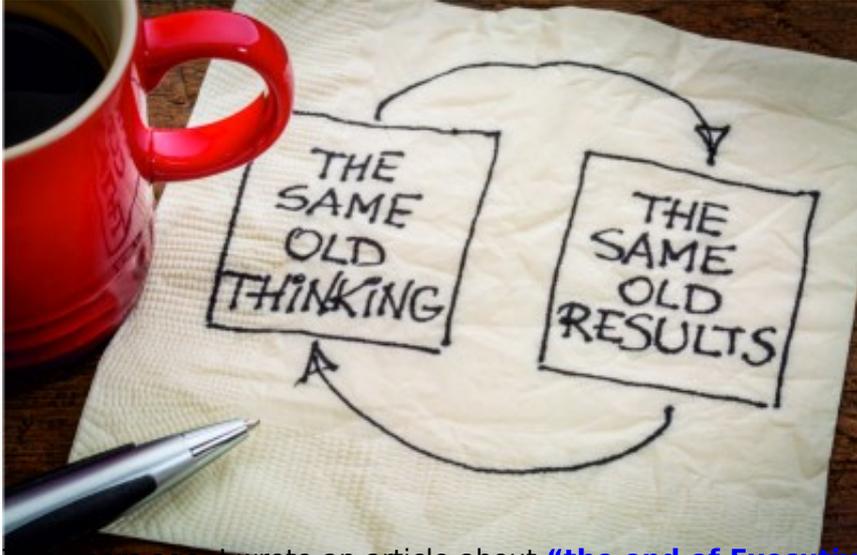


Two years ago, I wrote an article about **"the end of Executive Search as we know it"** mentioning the fact that I considered that even the name of the industry was inappropriate while the value for the customer has actually never been just "search" but way more than that.

Regarding HR, I find that the moment for it to be challenged has come as well. And not just the name but its essence too…

I have to admit I was indirectly encouraged to write this article by some friends as I heard them recently having pretty radical views on the HR function and role.

I expect some HR professionals to be intrigued by the article but I also believe most of the professionals reading it till the end will actually see where I am coming from.

### The name of the function – outdated? or E&A vs HR.

In the above note, I would start by cha(lle)nging the function's name from Human Resources (as "resources" lead my thoughts towards "manageable" and as resources should be managed for optimum results) to a totally new, updated one.

Organizations have indeed created value by managing people and other resources to generate products/services of value for other people. However, in an interconnected world, the most successful business models are, as we all could see, very different than the ones in the past.

As **Mark Bonchek*** says, communication is not from one to many anymore (newspapers, TV, etc.) but from many to many (social media). Plenty of the most successful, inspiring and attractive companies incorporate platforms, connecting people with ideas and skills with people who need them, platforms that encourage co-creation.

We live in times where the *"value is not in the items being produced one at a time but in the connections being made many-at-once"* and where *"connections and co-creation multiply the ability of the assets to create value"* as Mark says.

*The deepest dive I made recently into the refinements of how great companies of today build their strategies, about "unlearning" and new mental models was during Mark Bonchek's class at SU and I have to say I was impressed with him and his theories.*

In times like these, where stakeholders are more connected, customers more empowered, and audiences are no longer passive, my view over the HR function is that it should be called the **"Engagement & Adaptability (E&A) "** function rather than **"human resources (HR) "**. Or even more … - **" Shared Purpose Lead"**

**What about the core of the function?**

**Here is a snapshot of my view on the "HR of the near future" or on E&A/Shared Purpose Lead:**

- The people in **E&A come from business**, from another function that has provided them with enough business exposure to understand it, its strategy, the customer and its evolution
- They are **smart, creative and continuous learners**
- The **E&A** professionals are **real business partners**. For example a good E&A Lead has to be able to **manage the expectations of their CEO. They are proactive** and have a good **understanding of the strategy of the company, the needs of their peers, etc.**
- The E&A Lead has a good understanding about how tech impacts the world, he/she **understands that AI, AR, Big Data have started a profound change of our world.** That in their basics these technologies are replacing/will replace everything which is repetitive or could be done by a software (and I mean here most if not all of the current HR admin part)
- The E&A leads **have as priorities key people engagement, development**, **empowerment, developing adaptability, resilience, a flow encouraging environment**. All done in a **highly individualized/personalized manner**
- They are **compassionate, always up to date, curious, love people & relating to them**.
- They are **forgiving, responsible and have integrity**. They are **proactive and bold** and think of E&A as a critical role. They are confident in the importance of the function
- They ensure that **only the people with the right values are recruited**, especially on key functions if not possible in all cases at first
- They stimulate **co/creation and help employees make their lives better and more meaningful**
- They **provide support for more meaningful jobs** and get their companies truly and genuinely involved in CSR activities, etc.

Today, we all see HR is in a very different shape and very few companies have professionals as described above in their HR departments. To become true **E&A Leads** the current HRs should, in my opinion, reset their mindset, avoid past models, unlearn and relearn. A nice example of unlearning is **here**.

Nobody says it is easy to adapt, change and fulfill all of the above but once we are aware about what comes next, we could start working on becoming better, on adapting. For it is the only way we will beat the machines.

Please do not hesitate to add more features and write back to me. I would be more than happy to receive your opinions.