

*Human resources activities can be the unifying force in helping an organization master strategic change. Here is a model for forging the links between business needs and HR practices.*

## ***Strategic Human Resources Management:*** Linking the People with the Strategic Needs of the Business

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There really shouldn't be any mystery about the word *strategic* in the phrase *strategic human resources management*.

According to Horace Parker, director of strategic education at the Forest Products Company, a 17,000-person division of Weyerhaeuser in Seattle, Washington, strategic human resources management is about "getting the strategy of the business implemented effectively." For Bill Reffett, senior vice president of personnel at the Grand Union, a 20,000-person supermarket operation on the East Coast, strategic human resources management means "getting everybody from the top of the human organization to the bottom doing things that make the business successful."

The viewpoints of the academics, although stated in slightly different terms, echo the same themes. A composite definition from this source might include the following:

Strategic human resources management is largely about integration and adaptation. Its concern is to ensure that: (1) human resources (HR) management is fully integrated with the strategy and the strategic needs of the firm; (2) HR policies cohere both across policy areas and across hierarchies; and (3) HR practices are adjusted, accepted, and used by line managers and employees as part of their everyday work.

Together, these viewpoints suggest that strategic HR management has many different components, including policies, culture, values, and practices. The various statements also imply what strategic human resources management *does*, i.e., it links, it integrates, and it coheres across levels in organizations. Implicitly or explicitly, its purpose is to more effectively utilize human resources *vis-a-vis* the strategic needs of the organization.

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