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**SYSTEMS-PROCESS FRAMEWORK:  
Human Resource Strategies for Graduate Schools**

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I am going to share with you a conceptual framework on HR (human resource) management strategies. It is a framework and not just something copied from the book because it is the fruit of both my consulting experience and my academic research. I want to challenge us to think and to challenge even the word “quality” when it come to human resource strategies.

**System-Process Framework for HR Strategies for Graduate Schools**

Why systems-process framework? I am not here to tell you that this is what you should do and this is what you should not do. My objectives is for you to appreciate the tenacity behind the use of several human resources strategies.

I am going to share with you a technology which I have refined and validated as a result of my consulting experience when we do strategic planning for organization that have merged, that have restructured, that have been forced to close down and would like to begin all over again. I have worked with organizations that had no choice but to close because they gad a lot of financial debts. And of course if you use the critical model, financial debts are only symptoms of a deeper problem. Many times that problem is people. If it's not competence, it's commitment.

**Human Resource's New Role**

Many organizations still have a personnel department, but that personnel department is basically maned by a lawyer and a clerk. But with all the changes happening in organizations, evolution; and research has been undertaken on how to motivate people, and how to develop and choose people. As a result, there has emerged the disciple of human resource management.

Although we really don't have the time. We must review some basics on HR management

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and see the evolution from personnel management to HR management as a background for the human resource's new role.

### **Assumptions**

Before coming to the framework, I should like to state some assumptions regarding Seventh-day Adventist graduate schools; although I don't know if I will be entirely fair since the majority of the present audience are involved in Seventh-day Adventist schools.

1. Seventh-day Adventist graduate schools are service-type organizations; their products are the brand of students; and the services offered are content and process of teaching, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and relevant administrative type of services.

2. They offer courses and degree programs almost always based on the manpower needs of the various Adventist institutions, e.g. schools, offices, publishing houses, missions/conferences, and hospitals.

3. They almost always target Seventh-day Adventists who are almost always SDA Organizational employees.

4. They are governed by Union and Division policies. The majority of board members are clergymen, while a few are educational administrators. There are hardly ever any business men who are either stockholders, investors, or capitalists.

5. It seems that management possesses a "survival mentality" rather than a "winner mindset" an "it's profitable, we can earn; let's go into it" mentality.

### **Globalization Process and Technology Advancement**

Well recognized in to-day's world are the processes of globalization and the advancement of technology which have resulted in slower economic growth, intensified competition, rapidly changing demographics, and a shift in consumer spending patterns.

What is happening within organization? When changes come and organizations experience discomfort, they have choices whether to change or not to change.

One of the competencies of the HR person is the ability to conduct a job evaluation. A job evaluation is done when many times a merger happens, and some one in management will say, "Do I have too many employees?" "How many of them are redundant?" They could identify many of these themselves, but they want to be very subtle about it, so they say, "Let's hire a HR specialist."

Well, as a result of my experience, I got hired, and the result of the job evaluation was that out of 41,555 employees were redundant. You know, I was sleepless for two nights. What will I tell top management? Do I tell the truth? I am being paid to do a good job. What about the lives of those 55 people? I chose to serve my comments and see what would be the more

humane ways. Nine months passed. Now the bank takes over, tries management, makes their decision, and slashes 35!

It doesn't happen to SDA institution here but I heard it happens to some Seventh-day Adventist Institute in the USA. What are we going to do?

### **Some of the Changes in Organization**

Many taller multi-layered organization are becoming more horizontal, flatter. Why? One definition of quality is the worker's ability is to satisfy the requirements of the customers. In taller organizations, the fact is that although the people below give data, it doesn't reach the president. Because when you give the real data, there will be some people who will be very sad and will hate you for telling the truth, when in fact quality is suffering. So with a flatter organizations, decisions are made more easily, there is more movement, and decisions are made faster. So those who are no longer competent need to go to career planning, and have to be ready for an early retirement package.

As an example, when I went to Japan, and went into a restaurant there, I did not find waiters or waitresses. Instead, I found robots. They came to me to get my order. I keyed in my order and another robot came to give me my meal. When I was through, another robot — now his back opens — a dishwasher robot. And then said, "Wow! What I read is really true." It is because of globalization. Note that the three top banks in Japan went through a mini-merger, but what does mean?

### **The Macro-economics Framework**

Now we are going to use the macro-economics framework to understand the environment, the impact of macro and micro economics on our organizations, and their impact upon our organization and its human resources.

So why am I telling about all these changes? Change is reality, and organizational restructuring is happening. People from Europe and America know what I am saying. It is an ordinary thing for them. And it has been a reality for multi-national companies here in the Philippines. The Seventh-day Adventist institution is a multi-national organization.

So when changes take place in the environment, the jobs that you felt were secure no longer exist. Then, what if you only know one skill and you have a family, and your wife or husband has no work? You will have a very stressful life. What if you are dependent on only one source income?

But the fact is that globalization affects schools. Because the school is a form of service-type business organizations. Teachers are not just teachers, teachers have become managers of the learning process. It was the business people who taught us the process of managing

learning, and they are the ones now teaching the mechanics of the teaching process. Because after all the school is a business organization! And what is the bottom line of business? Satisfying people.

Thinking of “quality in higher education” presents a problem. In the realm of human resources, it is hard to quantify. How do I know that an individual is a quality employee, a quality manager, a quality executive, or a quality leader? We have to talk in quantitative terms because they are measurable. So I challenge you now rather than thinking of quality to reflect on your core capabilities. We are coming from different schools here, and just like the fingers of our hands, no two schools are the same. No two schools have the same capabilities, but the sad fact is that we want to duplicate if it makes money. So reflect on your core capabilities, but the sad fact is that we want to duplicate if it makes money. So reflect on your core capabilities and develop your competitive edge.

A human resource specialist asks the question, “What do I have that my competitor doesn’t have? What can I do better than he can?” That is my competitive edge — added value. What kinds of customers or markets is he unable to penetrate that I can penetrate? That makes the difference. The greater the competitive edge you have as an educational institution, what would be the result? More quality education.

### **The Formula**

So, here is the formula:

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$$\text{Core Competencies} + \text{Strategic Processes} = \text{Core Capabilities}$$


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Core Competencies are the special knowledge, skills, and technological know-how that distinguish you from other graduate schools. You have to discover that. Our uniqueness and our creativity that are God-given, we seldom maximize, why? Because we have to follow the majority so we lose track of the unique potential and gifts — we lose track of the unique experiences that God has given us.

In the Chinese proverb, every crisis when dissected gives hidden opportunity. So when you have problems or when people run over your head, you should be thankful for they are granting you another opportunity.

What are Strategic processes? The business you use to deliver your special customers and stakeholders.

The framework that I will give you is a strategic process. Take for example the hospital industry. What is the trend now in the hospital industry? If were a patient requiring treatment, I would not go to a hospital that is obscure or difficult to reach. I would simply go to the malls, like MegaMall — it’s all there, it’s complete. Medical service now is a commodity, and

you have to make it. So, study the needs of your customers, and then come up with a framework of how you're going to get to meet those needs. You know customer satisfaction is right — it's okay, it's average. But there is something higher than customer surprise. But there is something even greater than customer surprise, do you know what it is? — customer intimacy.

I take my shoes to Mr. Quickie for repair, and ask them when I may expect them back. "Ma'am, you may get them back on two days." And when he gives back my shoes fully repaired in two days, I am satisfied. But when he gives back my shoes in one day, that's delight. BUT when he gives back my shoes in less than five hours that is surprise. BUT if he returns my shoes fully repaired in just a single hour, that is intimacy.

Intimacy means feeling what the customer needs without their even expressing it, and possibly without their even knowing it. And why were you able to do it? Because you have the tools. Because you never stopped learning — and that is what graduate school is all about. We have to provide education that is relevant. In career management you have to go two to three steps ahead in your preparation, for any eventuality.

Core competencies plus strategic processes would equal core capabilities, which are the most critical and the most distinctive resources a company possesses, and the most difficult to copy when effectively linked with appropriate strategic targets in a value-chain that begins and ends with the company's stakeholders. So what are your core capabilities?

If you cannot identify your core capabilities, you are just going through the routines — just repeating and repeating whatever course — and you don't ever stop to think how you could improve in the process. And indirectly you are saying, "I want to retain the same brand and quantity of customers." Non-verbals — 90% of our communication is non-verbal.

But what is a competence? Competence is knowledge, skills, and attitudes benchmarked unto superior performance.

### **Screening and Selection of People**

How do you screen and select your people? I had a very exciting experience when we started a screening and selection process of a company we worked with. I was very unpopular for coming up with screening and selection process that would eliminate the relatives that wanted to come in. But it was part of my job.

So competence does not refer solely to knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The most important thing is the kind of outputs that you produce. How much and within how short or how long time? You have a lot of academic degrees, but what is your output? The most

important thing according to finance people is results. What is the peso or dollar equivalent of what you produce? So it is not enough just to have qualifications. You have to show your competence by your outputs that you produce, and the equivalent result in pesos or dollars.

You have your values, you have your vision, you have your mission; that is okay, it gives you direction. But, we've got to take care of the operational things. You may have the best technology, you may have a lot of money with you, but if you don't have the right staff of people, you can't move far. You can mark time, but you cannot advance.

So what am I saying now? Human resources, globalization, restructuring, closures, mergers, people? Are you going to wait for the merger? Are you going to wait for the close down. Of course, no one wants it, but many who do not want it, experience it. That is the sad reality.

### **Organizational Alignment**

I am now introducing a process known as alignment. And the framework which I am now giving you which is dealing top down, is real alignment in detail. Alignment is the process wherein all the elements of a company work together in concert within the context of the company's core ideology and the type of progress it needs, to achieve its vision.

What is the difference between a mission and the vision? Mission is commitment, the reason of existence; and vision is a picture of what your institution or system can achieve in the coming years.

Does your school has a vision. Personally, I have vision which i share with my husband — the vision to make full use of the talents and opportunities that God has given me in whatever role I have as a wife, as a career woman; and to provide a living environment that would be conducive for optimum learning.

Before going to the framework, consider the alignment between what is planned by organizational leaders and what is actually happening at the lower organizational levels. When we do organizational diagnoses for organizations — much like a doctor before giving a prescription makes a diagnosis, we too have to make a diagnosis — this, we use instruments. One would be the Organizational Diagnosis Survey which would bring to the surface human resource problems, and another would be an Organizational Alignment Survey which would bring to surface whether the strategies that are being planned at the top are really clearly being translated into the jobs of people.

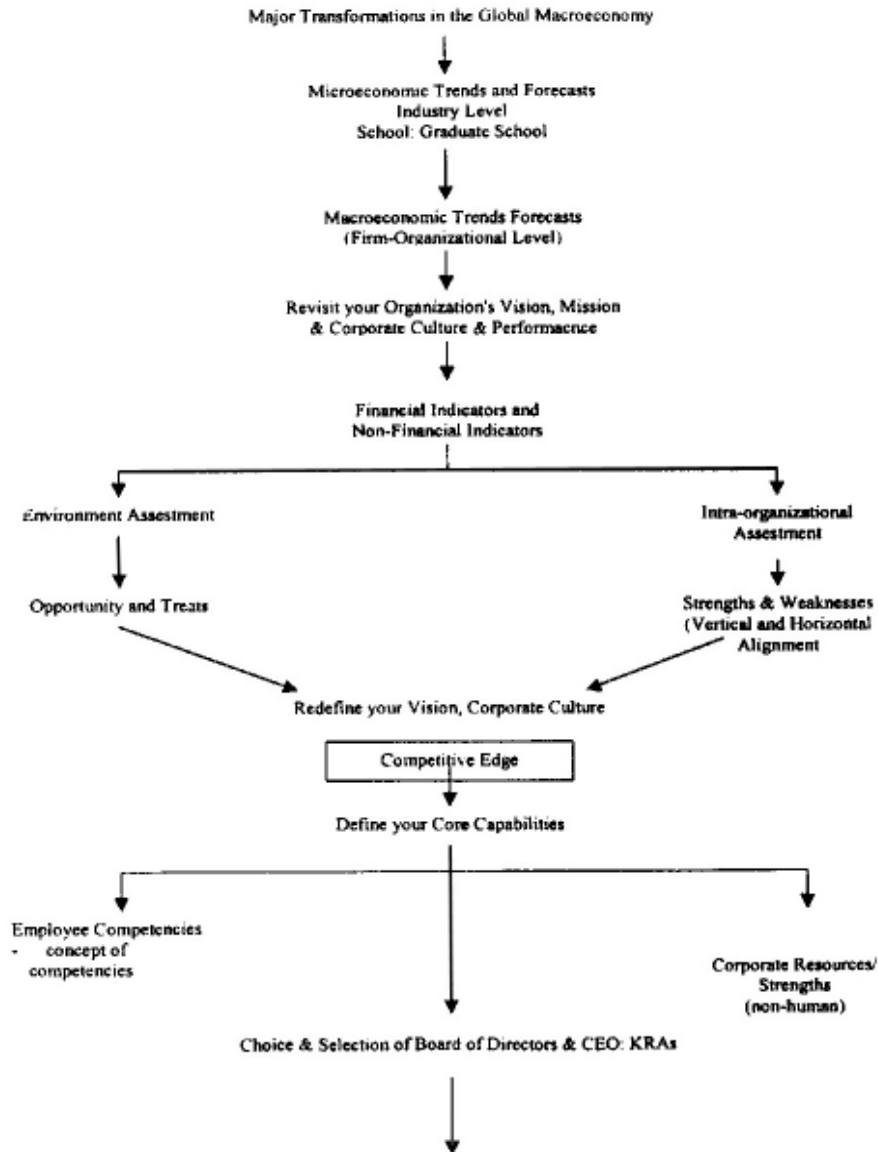
Many companies indicate that they do have strategic plans. So I go to their strategic plan, and then when I observe and interview and look at the result of the diagnostic instrument assessment, I see that there is a gap between what they have said they want and what is actually happening (from the consultant's perspective, that is a negative). So the alignment will tell whether the strategies which are being planned at the top are being translated clearly

in to the jobs of the people; and if there are really performance measurements which will evaluate whether what is to be done is really being done, and whether those people who are really doing their best actually get rewarded appropriately. One thing that would kill morale and commitment is when you make people do their best and don't recognize and reward them (that is motivation). And the thing is start with your people and then all your processes. Do your systems, policies, communication patterns, leadership style, manager relationships result in customer satisfaction?

In an organization you have two sets of customers. You have internal customers and external customers. If I were an HR executive, my internal customers would be the people inside the organization. And the people inside the organization cannot give customer satisfaction if they themselves are dissatisfied. You cannot reap what you have not sown. You cannot keep what you don't have. Do you want to have more customers? Do you want to target the upper bracket of your market nice? Looking at the morale, look at the competence of the people expected to deliver the job. Do they match?

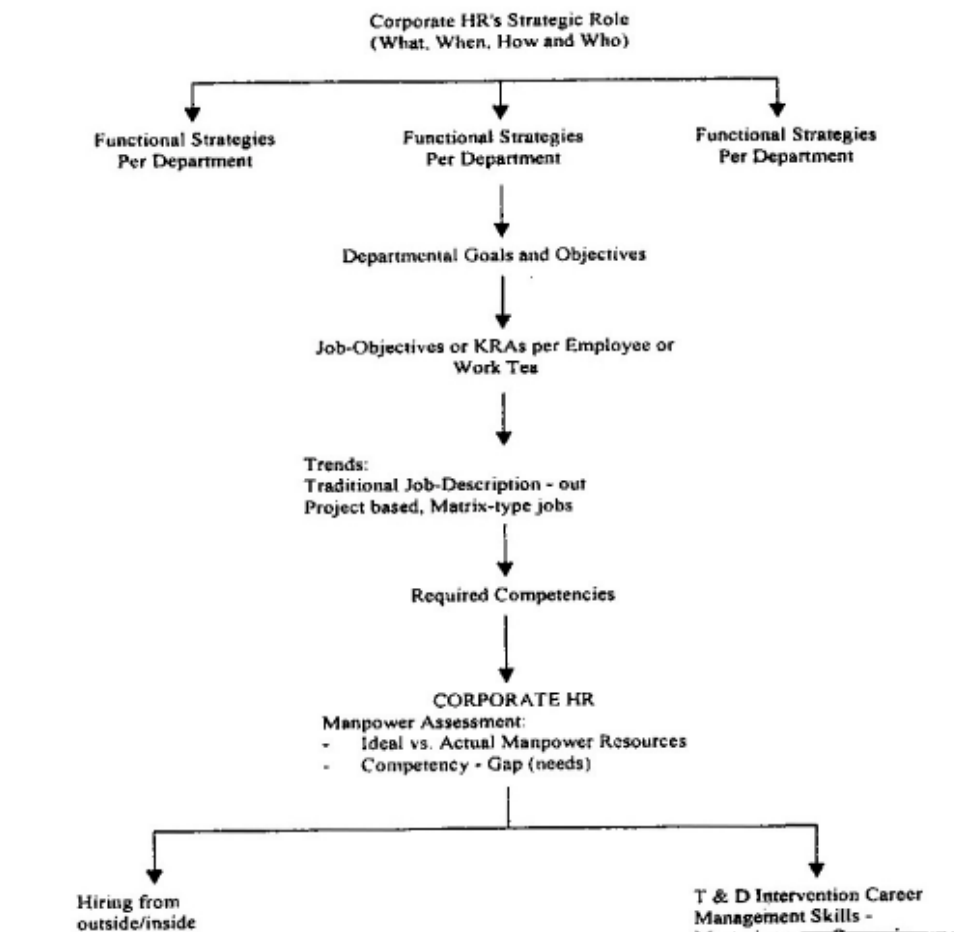
**The Framework**

### SYSTEM -PROCESS FRAMEWORK





SYSTEM -PROCESS FRAMEWORK (cont'd)



The framework is summarized diagrammatically on the following two pages.

Outline in this framework is process that I myself have validated in my practice. I have worked together with other consultants who are in the area of economics who work in the area of finance. I find this concept strong.

Looking at the framework, you have major transformations in the global macro-economy. Macro-economic means economics in industries such as the telecommunication industry, or the educational industry. What is happening in the global macro-industries? As we go beyond the industries in the Philippines we are now going global. We are doing global business in the local setting, but we have to think global.

So here in AIIAS you are very confident because you have a lot of people here. Major transformations in global economy will have an impact on the micro-economic trends and forecast of a specific industry — in our context it is a graduate school. That will have an effect on the specific firm, for example Adventist University or the Philippines, Manila Sanitarium and hospital. So this has an impact.

You have to revisit your visions and missions your values and your culture and performance. You know a lot of our organization have very beautiful visions and missions, by they never dissect their culture — their norms, beliefs, and values.

A client of mine was experiencing operational problems, so I asked the general manager to allow me time to sit down with him and his board, not to talk, but just to listen. I wanted to just feel the pulse of the board. He replied that this wasn't really needed, there was no time. I could feel there was something of a gap between general manager or the president, and the board. I felt the board was not receiving the right signals. Consequently, when I felt that the general manager was stubborn, I felt. After three months he called me back. He wanted me to meet with him and his board.

### **Choice and Selection of Board of Directors and CEO**

When you select board, the board and the CEO will determine key result areas, for example “improve profitability by . . .,” “reduce turn over by . . .,” “hire 30% competent personnel by . . .”. These are key result areas, but at the end of the quarter watch out. If I don't see the key indicators, something is wrong — I have to justify why I am not performing up to par.

Those key result areas from the CEO and board level, provided you have the right board members, are then translated into functional objectives, and these are translated into department strategies. These strategies are translated into goal objectives, and the goal objectives, and the goal objectives are then translated into the jobs of people. That is the reason why job descriptions are passe. Job objectives have now taken the place of job

descriptions.

### **Job Objectives**

Job objectives talk about the result, what you produce — at the end of the year — you should be able to produce profit. So, traditional job descriptions are out, being replaced by project based, matrix-type jobs. What is a project based, matrix-type job? A manager, an employee, who has the ability to engage in two or three different but related projects in a year — he is multi-skilled in others words. If he only knows one task, if I were investor, he is not an assets (I am speaking in business terms). This seems harsh, but, looking at it from the perspective of the principles of stewardship. We are stewards of God's resources. For any resources given to us we are accountable. So, in dealing with such a single-capability worker, that's where you need HR skills — retraining and development management skills.

When this job objectives have been developed, HR would determine the competencies of people needed to be able to do this job, this project? So when HR determines this competencies that can handle the job, then the screening and hiring process begins. It is only then, you can think about what screening and hiring strategies you would use, after going through the process of alignment. This process validates the emergence of the HR expert, an individual who should be a partner in strategic planning.

In terms of HR structures, I would like to emphasize the point that before taking any action, or implementing any strategy, one would need to review the philosophy behind doing so. I am recommending HR strategies in five areas. It has something to do with our human philosophy, the policies the programs, the practices, and the processes. The HR philosophy is just a result of the vision and mission. HR cannot come up with its own philosophy if the company at the board level has not honestly formulated and openly participated in the process of strategic planning.

There are companies who hire us to do strategic planning. The individuals who hire us are usually the vice -presidents or the corporate planning managers. When we say we need the general managers and the board of directors, we're often told that they are to busy. Under those conditions we cannot serve as their strategic consultants. That is not ethical consulting practice. We're not just there for the money. We won't do strategic planning when the CEO and the board are not involved, because it's useless.

### **Conclusion**

HR strategies depend on our own leaders. Today's leaders are reinventing everything but themselves. Yet, this is why so many attempts to revolutionize business fail. Unless

executives realize that they must change not just what they do, but who they are; not just their sense of task, but their sense of themselves; they will fail.

And so, I would like to close with a prayer, entitled "Disturb Us, O LORD".

Disturb us O, LORD

When we are too well pleased with ourselves  
When our dreams have come true because we've dreamed too little  
When we arrived in safety because we sailed to close to the shore

Disturb us O, LORD

When with the abundance of things we possess, we have lost our thirst  
for the Water of Life  
When having fallen in love with time, we have ceased to dream of Eternity.  
And in our efforts to build the New Earth, we have allowed our vision for the  
New Heaven to grow dim.

Stir us O, LORD

To dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas, where storms shall show Thy Majesty.  
Where losing sight of land we shall find the Stars.  
In the name of him who pushed back the horizons of our hopes, and invited  
the brave to follow Him. Amen.