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REPORT



A Pulse Check on the New HR-Model

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Executive summary

The purpose of this report was to document the research group's project at Aker Solutions. The mandate given to the group by Aker Solutions was to perform a “pulse check” on the implementation of the new Human Resource (HR) model, particularly focusing on efficiency, quality and capability to accommodate HR-needs.

The group has used a phenomenological approach to capture the essences of the experiences with the model by a selection of employees. The primary focus was on HR Business Partners and Centres of Excellence. In addition, members of Corporate HR were interviewed to obtain information on how the model is intended to work, as well as to gain a more structural perspective.

To present a theoretical perspective on the findings, the research group has based its work on both the original mind-set for the HR-delivery model, as well as a contrasting theory. This has helped the group to compare the findings in Aker Solutions with other organisations implementing similar HR-models.

The research group has drawn up recommendations for Aker Solutions that presumably may strengthen the model for HR-deliveries. Four recommendations are presented, based on the findings as well as external empirical findings. Each recommendation contains multiple aspects and several resulting implications for Aker Solutions.

The first recommendation concerns promoting the HR-model and mind-set internally in the HR-function, and especially towards the line operation. This is based on a focal finding that the overarching focus on adding value through HR to business objectives was only partially present in the HR-function, and experienced as absent in the line operation.

The responsibility of the line operation for HR-matters should be a cornerstone in the HR-model. The group therefore recommends placing responsibility and decision-making authority for overall HR with the line management, securing close alignment between HR-deliveries and business objectives, as well as utilising a transparent decision-making hierarchy already in place. This supports line involvement as mentioned in the first recommendation, and replies to concerns about governance in the findings.



The third recommendation redefines the HR business partner role, promoting four aspects of the role. Cardinal for the new role is that all tasks have strategic implications, though not all tasks are strategic in themselves. This recommendation may presumably diminish issues found concerning unclear interfaces, bottlenecks and insufficient strategic impact of the business partner in the organisation. Additionally, it will reframe the HR business partner to fill the role as a sparring-partner to the line management.

Finally, the research group recommends creating a strategic sub-unit within the existing Centres of Excellence. This unit will have a unique position to adapt and improve processes to match actual needs to a larger extent than experienced today, as well as providing input to policies and strategies aligned to business goals. This recommendation leans on findings expressing a gap between process ownership, decision-making authority and the executing unit, producing processes partly discrepant with practical needs.



Preface

This research group consists of six students all studying to achieve a Master in Organisation, Leadership and Work at the University of Oslo. Based on the mandate given to the group by Aker Solutions, the purpose of the project “A Pulse Check on the New HR-model” was to examine the new HR-model implemented in 2013.

We would like to thank Aker Solutions for the opportunity to conduct such an exciting research project. We are grateful for being met by helpful and committed employees, as well as the openness and honesty of our interviewees.

Further, we thank the University of Oslo for bringing academia closer to reality and for giving us an opportunity to bring theory into practice.

Finally, we would like to thank our adviser, Jon Frode Blichfeldt, for input to and guidance with the project.

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Table of contents

1	Situating Aker Solutions	1
1.1	Market and position	1
1.2	Vision and values.....	1
1.3	Organisational overview	2
1.4	Financial situation.....	3
2	The mandate – a pulse check.....	4
2.1	Consulting the literature	4
2.2	Revising the mandate.....	4
2.3	Supporting research questions	5
3	Methodology and method.....	6
3.1	Choosing a methodology	6
3.2	A phenomenological approach	6
3.3	Preparing to collect data	7
3.4	Analysis, reliability and validity.....	9
3.5	Sampling, representativeness & generalisability.....	11
3.6	Ethics	11
4	Theory	12
4.1	Introduction of theory.....	12
4.2	Adding value – “from doing to delivering”	12
4.3	The three-box model: Implementation issues.....	13
5	Presentation of findings.....	15
5.1	Interviewing at Aker Solutions.....	15
5.2	Clearing the scope	15
5.3	Findings	16
5.3.1	The three-box model in Aker Solutions	16
5.3.2	Accordance between goals and terms for HR-deliveries	17
5.3.3	Bottlenecks in the HR-process	18
5.3.4	Cooperation between HR-BP, HR-CoE and Business Areas.....	19
5.3.5	Rate of change in work processes	20
5.3.6	Standardised HR-processes and services	21
5.3.7	The new HR-model and job development.....	21



6	Essences of findings	23
6.1	The HR-model: From “doing” to “delivering”	23
6.2	Governance and decision-making authority	24
6.3	Process and process participants.....	24
6.4	Role specification and Business Model Insight.....	25
6.5	Lack of Knowledge	26
7	Recommendations	27
7.1	Choosing a structure – wicked problems.....	27
7.2	Promoting the HR-model and mind-set.....	28
7.3	Improving governance.....	29
7.4	The four essential roles of the HR-BP.....	30
7.5	Empowering HR-CoE to impact strategically	32
	References	34
	Appendixes.....	36



1 Situating Aker Solutions

1.1 Market and position

Aker Solutions (2014a) (Appendix 5) operates in the oilfield service sector as a global provider, supporting client corporations in various activities. These services include activities in exploration, facilities and infrastructure development, as well as the optimisation of production and fields. They design and build production facilities and provide the maintenance of these, as well as decommissioning when the production ends. The services range from installing complex projects in the North Sea to servicing smaller facilities in shallow waters. Aker Solutions cooperates with many contractors in drilling and floating production, storage and offloading, construction and offshore installation. Aker Solutions is well established in the international market. The main customers are major oil and gas companies around the world. The key geographical presence is in the North Sea region, but current focus is on extended operations in a global market. Aker Solutions is currently present in more than 30 countries, employing over 28,000 people in total.

Aker Solutions competes internationally by bidding for contracts, and depend on winning offered tenders to continue as a project-driven organisation. A second dependency is to companies such as Statoil to gain access to current and future oilfield operations. Main competitors for winning tenders are FMC Technologies, GE Oil & Gas, Halliburton etc. Acting in a highly competitive market requires that Aker Solutions implements cost-cutting strategies in both operation and administration to continue the development of a competitive edge.

1.2 Vision and values

The vision of Aker Solutions (2014a) sets the overall goal for the company, which is to strengthen company's global presence. The vision directs the corporation to be the preferred partner for solutions in the oil and gas industry through living the values. Employees are to share a set of values in their work to achieve the company's strategic commitment to their overall goals. The values apply to policies, operations and behaviour, including a strong performance culture. Aker Solutions' values consist of building customer trust, a strong mind-



set on health, safety and environment focusing on security for personnel, team efforts, open and direct dialogue, hands-on management and delivering quality results.

1.3 Organisational overview

Aker Solutions (2014a) has the following seven business areas, henceforth referred to as Business Areas: Umbilicals, Drilling Technologies, Subsea, Process Systems, Engineering, Oilfield Services & Marine Assets and Maintenance, Modifications & Operations. In 2011, the corporation established regional structures in Brazil, North America, Norway and the UK in order to increase competitiveness. Further corporate centres have been centralised in one unit, Business Solutions, organised in five areas within Human Resources, Finance, Strategic Marketing, Operations and Technology. The Human Resources (HR) function was established to deliver cost-efficient shared service products covering HR-needs in the various Business Areas. The organisational changes aim at enabling Aker Solutions to act as one corporation. The new “One Aker Solutions” will function across a complex structure of legal entities, divisional set-ups of the major areas of business and a three-layered organisational structure.

The Human Resource function in brief

The new centralised structure has mandated the HR-function with a stronger responsibility in shaping, servicing and safeguarding the Human Resource area, and has required a new way to organise the function - a new model. The new HR-model aims at strengthening a strategic human resource (Strategic HR) focus. This implies that the HR-function in general shall serve as a link between HR-services and the overall strategic plan of an organisation. Three cardinal boxes make up the new HR-model. The first is Human Resources Business Partner (HR-BP), operating in the various Business Areas. This box links the HR-needs of the Business Areas with the HR-services to be provided. The second box aims at improving quality and efficiency of key services through the founding of Human Resources Centres of Excellence (HR-CoE). In general HR-CoE will professionalise the services based on standard processes and specialised teams with expertise knowledge. The last part of the model consists of Corporate Human Resources (Corporate HR), developing and safeguarding governance on the Human Resource area working with structural themes, rights, duties and obligations issuing corporate wide policies on Human Resource matters. Aker Solutions has established eight HR-CoE gathered in an organizational unit, HR Solutions, with reference to Corporate HR.



Three of the centres will be briefly summarised in the following. HR-CoE Recruitment constitutes a professional employer branding organisation with capacity to develop and execute new ideas. Further, the HR-CoE provides recruitment specialists strengthening the talent sourcing capability. The second centre, HR-CoE People and Organisational Development, is involved in alignment and development of teams, leadership, and culture. It provides consultancy support and advice to Business Areas on development processes and standards. The last centre, HR-CoE Global Mobility, aims at mobilising talents globally in compliance with corporate policies and international regulations, in a consistent and efficient manner. In general, HR-CoE execute services and thereby free up time for the HR-BP to focus on other topics. Among these are Strategic HR in cooperation with management from operations on different organisational levels, Line Management, in the Business Areas. The prime focus for HR-BPs is to translate business needs into Human Resource services. The sum of these two functions, Business Partnering and Centres of Excellence, should improve quality, drive efficiency and reduce cost. This is the model that Aker Solutions commissioned the research group to evaluate. Under which mandate the group is to operate at Aker Solutions is the theme of the next chapter.

1.4 Financial situation

Aker Solutions (2014b) (2014c) entered the first quarter of 2014 with promising numbers, after a disappointing first quarter in 2013. The annual report of 2013 shows an increase in overall revenue of MNOK 42 900 compared to MNOK 41 632 in 2012. The Norwegian home market accounted for nearly half of group revenues in 2013, while sub-Saharan African and European efforts accounted for 13 per cent share of revenues. There are several new discoveries in the Norwegian Continental Shelf under development. This region will be a stepping-stone for Aker Solutions into the Arctic. The order backlog reflects healthy demand for the products and expertise of Aker Solutions for future operations.

Annual reports show that there was an increase in total operating expenses in 2013, compared to 2012, and a decrease in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation with 3.5 billion in 2013, down from 4.1 billion in 2012. Cost-control continues to be a considerable strategic move in 2014.



2 The mandate – a pulse check

Aker Solutions presented the research group with their first draft of the mandate (Appendix 1) containing the overall perspective of the project, some points of interest and specific terms in respect of research methods and number of informants. The primary focus was to evaluate the new HR-model concerning what works and what needs to be changed.

2.1 Consulting the literature

Following a brief coverage of Aker Solutions as a corporation in line with the focus areas presented in chapter 1, the research group decided to step back from the specifics in the mandate proposal and consulted the literature with regards to the model for HR-deliveries chosen by the project owner, Aker Solutions. The research group thought it essential to anchor the project in theory early on, in order to better assess the implications of the proposed scope of research ahead of the revision (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) (Furseth & Everett, 2012). Quickly it became clear that the academic literature covering this thematic is very extensive and provided the research group with a well-diversified first glance at the complexity of the HR-model evaluation.

2.2 Revising the mandate

Drawing on the background information on Aker Solutions, a crude model of how to theoretically anchor the project in theory (Appendix 2), as well as a first introductory meeting with the corporation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 122-123) the research group set out to revise the mandate, framing it in an executable form regarding scope of interest, timeline and workload.

In essence, the evaluation of the HR-model would have to build on the experiences of those individuals inhabiting and making up the structure. The first notion of the research group was therefore to re-state the overall perspective to a form more open for a variety of experiences, and easing out the formulated dichotomy of what works well and what needs to be improved. The second notion was to narrow the scope of interest with regards to both the HR-functions to be evaluated, as well as the Business Areas to be included in the research. The last notion was to define a number of superordinate points of interest, which in sum presumably could



elucidate the overall perspective sufficiently. Agreeing on 5-7 points of interest in total, three of these points were adopted from the first draft of the mandate. The rest were to be defined at a later point in the research process, as the contours of the project sharpens.

Aker Solutions accepted the proposal for a revised mandate (Appendix 3) with only one marginal change. Henceforth, the main perspective of the research group was to provide an evaluation of how the new HR-model is experienced by key employees.

2.3 Supporting research questions

A second round with the existing literature of the field was required to clarify and reach consensus in the group concerning the remaining points of interest. Having agreed on a final of six points of interest, the road was open to formulate the research questions building the foundation for a sufficient description of how the HR-model is experienced (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 121-123, 202):

- To what extent is there accordance between goals and the general terms for HR-deliveries?
- Are bottlenecks experienced in the HR-process and if so, how are they met?
- How is the quality of cooperation experienced between Centre's of Excellence and HR Business Partners?
- How is the rate of change in work processes experienced, and how does it influence the quality of HR-deliveries?
- Is there accordance between standardized and demanded HR-processes and services across Business Areas?
- How has the new HR-model affected the individual employee's job development?

How to get the best possible answers to these questions is the thematic of the next chapter.

3 Methodology and method

3.1 Choosing a methodology

The research thematic should direct the choice of methodology in order to achieve the best possible alignment between means and ends (Moses & Knutsen, 2012, p. 6) (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 121) (Creswell, 2007, p. 60). A methodology can be described as a philosophical perspective on science, constituted by ontological and epistemological presumptions setting the frame for relevant methods of research and types of knowledge obtained. Moses & Knutsen (2012) presents two ideal types of methodologies representing end points of an imaginary continuum: naturalism and constructivism. It lies beyond the limits of this document to thoroughly account for the philosophical foundations of each of these perspectives, but it is important to acknowledge the constructivist pledge of the research group for the further reading. In the centre of this methodology is the ontological presumption of socially created worlds or experiences, in contrast to the one objective world of naturalism. This leads back to constructivism recognising the human being as intelligent, reflective and wilful clearly distinct from the naturalistic understanding of human beings as reactive and pattern-following. The epistemological outset of naturalism aims at uncovering singular truths in a falsifiable manner, the nomothetical, whereas constructivism seeks to capture and understand the meaning of social action for the individual performing it, the ideographical (Moses & Knutsen, 2012, pp. 9, 11). Seeing the overall perspective of the research to be done at Aker Solutions in this light, the choice of methodology became obvious.

3.2 A phenomenological approach

A constructivist methodology encompasses several research traditions, and the next step for the research group was to clarify and commit to a method of choice. Various relevant alternatives were considered before the group decided to engage with a phenomenological approach. In some aspects, but not all, this was also an obvious choice considering the overall purpose of this tradition. From one point Creswell (2007, p. 57) explains the purpose as describing the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a phenomenon. Another, but closely related point of view, is found in Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, p. 46) stating the purpose is to reach the essence; the nature of the phenomenon. The research group

will use both of these definitions as guidelines throughout the project. In the same sense, the group has chosen not to completely adopt a certain direction within the phenomenological tradition (Creswell, 2007, p. 59) and instead wield a more open approach (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 45), thereby attaining a more unforced method in total. The choice of method does however still have large implications for the research design to be formed, which is the topic for the sections to come in this chapter.

3.3 Preparing to collect data

A qualitative form of data collection lies implicit in the phenomenological research tradition focusing on description and understanding, as standard has it in a constructivist methodology in social sciences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 31, 45). In line with the proposition from Aker Solutions stated in the mandate (Appendix 1 & 3) and a phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2007, pp. 61, 79), the research group will primarily draw on interviews to collect data and to a lesser extent on documents, for example appendix 4 & 5, and observations.

The research interview is a professional conversation where knowledge is built in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is asymmetric in the sense that the interviewer controls the conversation with the purpose of producing verified knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 22-23, 37, 117). Standard guidelines in qualitative interviewing are not recognized on a general level, and in order to have a point of navigation the research group decided to lean heavily on the phenomenologically inspired semi-structured world-of-life interview described by Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, pp. 33, 35). Central to this form of interviewing is gathering descriptions of world-of-life from the interviewee, and to interpret the meaning of the phenomena in focus. Interviews are performed in accordance with an interview guide (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 47, 137).

There is extensive literature on how to construct and manage the interviewing process, as well as how to draw up an interview guide. The research group sought inspiration from multiple sources (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) (Holter & Kalleberg, 1996) (Jensen, 1991) (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) (Creswell, 2007) about which considerations to include and how to form the guide. Much time and effort were invested in constructing executable guides with clear operationalisations of the research questions, as well as conducting three pilot interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 50, 143-147, 163). A total of four guides were constructed



(Appendix 6-9) to encompass the diversity in job functions and the organisational levels of the interviewees. It is important to note that the mandate (Appendix 3) states to have a primary focus on HR-BPs representing various Business Areas and key representatives from selected HR-CoE. Due to this, a part of the questions asked especially to Corporate HR (Appendix 6) and to Head of Human Resources in different Business Areas (Appendix 7) aim at clarifying intended, structural lines as well as describing personal experiences with the primary subjects of focus by employees senior to them. This serves two purposes. Firstly, elucidating and verifying the actual and the intended organisational structure of the HR-function to prepare for a theoretical comparison searching for implications to be expected for the subjects in focus inhabiting and making up the empirical structure. Secondly, understanding the context in which the phenomena are experienced is cardinal to staying true to a qualitative approach (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 95, 304).

A crucial point in constructing the interview guides was keeping the overall research perspective and the supporting research questions present in mind at all times to ensure alignment. Parallel to, and in constant interaction with this process, was the discussion about how to handle and analyse the yielded data in a way supported by the phenomenological tradition (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 198). The data analysis itself will be thematised at a later section in this chapter, and the focus will now be turned to the role of the interviewer and how to align multiple interviewers.

As stated earlier in this section, the interviewer fills a central role in the interview and heavily influences the quality of the data gathered in the interview given the perspective that this knowledge is constructed in social interaction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 99). A key element in a phenomenological approach is for the interviewer to bracket out as much as possible of any personal experience with the phenomena in question, in order to establish a fresh perspective (Moustakas, 1994 ref. in Creswell, 2007, p. 59) (Spiegelberg, 1960 ref. in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 46). Even though none of the research group members have any personal experience with Aker Solutions, all members have some experience with professional organisations. A further point of importance has arisen since all members of the group will conduct interviews in pairs; that is to establish a joint perspective on the major elements in the interview as a process. The research team has decided on several bearing points, relying on Mayo (1933) referred in Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, p. 65) for in-the-interview guidance, Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, pp. 175, 177-178) for quality measures of the

interview and quality criteria for the interviewer, respectively, as well as the group's own interview guide (Appendixes 6-9) and interview and coding guidelines (Appendix 10). A final remark should be made in relation to possible distortions of data by a broad range of biases (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008), especially concerning self reporting. The team will keep a special focus on the interview effect in which the interviewee adapts answers to maintain or obtain social acceptance (Hellevik, 2011, s. 101-105).

3.4 Analysis, reliability and validity

As briefly mentioned in the previous section, considerations concerning how to analyse data and how to construct the entire process of interviewing go hand in hand. The research group defined two key elements to help navigate in the process planning. The first element was to clearly anchor the analysis within the phenomenological tradition, the second to provide a high degree of transparency to better address concerns about reliability. Reliability can be described as the consistency and trustworthiness of the research results, often in relation to the degree of reproducibility (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 250)

Staying true to a phenomenological approach did by no means dictate a certain process as many options exist (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 115). The research group decided on a mixture between Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, pp. 202-203, 212-213, 221) and Creswell (Creswell, 2007, pp. 60-62), concentrating on condensing the meaning of significant phenomena and at the same time integrating the time- and resource frame of the project. The second element aimed at ending up with a trustworthy and executable model, which was achieved by integrating a four-level content verification process to secure reliability largely inspired by Creswell (2007, pp. 209-211) (see appendixes 10-12 for a full overview). The final result was a two-stage model, where the first stage concentrates on the singular interviews and the second stage on an aggregation of all of the interviews.

In the first stage the first step is to conduct the interview and remain open to the themes chosen by the interviewee, trying to establish a clear image of the essence. A key element is to ask interpretive questions based on recapitulations of the interviewees' answers to obtain confirmations. This is verification level 1. The second is to go through the recorded interview again, aiming at filling gaps in understanding and getting a sense of the bigger picture of the interviewee's experiences. This is verification level 2. The third step in the first stage consists



of negotiating the essential statements from the answers to each of the questions asked in the interview guide including various, additional questions with the co-interviewer. This is verification level 3. The subsequent and concluding step in the first stage for the interviewers is formulating a recapitulation of the answers to construct a summarised answer to each of the six supporting research questions based on the prior negotiation.

In the second stage, the entire research group participates and works through three steps. The first step is to negotiate the aggregated takings from all of the interviews by determining the essential statements from the answers to each of the questions asked in the interview guide including various, additional questions. This is verification level 4. The second step in the second stage is to determine the aggregated, central answers to each of the six supporting research questions. The final step for the group is to negotiate the answers, trends or indicators elucidating structural elements pointing to organisational design issues with possible interest for a discussion against a theoretical base. The outcome of all of these negotiations will serve as direct inputs in the presentation of results, as well as the discussing of the cardinal findings in the research.

The last theme for this section is validity. This is a controversial theme, and many definitions roam the social sciences (Creswell, 2007, p. 202). Pervin (1984) ref. in Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, p. 251) describes validity as the degree to which the findings actually reflect the phenomena being researched. Further, Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, p. 253) suggest to apply validity in the entire research process and not only as final product review. These two statements have guided the research group's overall understanding and work to secure sufficient validity. On an operational level, the group has decided to lean on the seven step process model proposed by Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, pp. 253-254), as well as two validation strategies inspired by Creswell (2007, pp. 207-208). The first is triangulation in the sense of using multiple and changing pairs of researchers as well as multiple and different sources expressed by the four different organisational layers and functions defined in the mandate (Appendix 3). The second validation strategy is peer review, which will be implemented by extensive cross-listening of the recorded interviews within the research group. A last point to bring forward is the suitability and alignment of the overall research perspective as stated in the mandate (Appendix 3) and the phenomenological approach; both having experience as the primary scope.

3.5 Sampling, representativeness & generalisability

This section is concerned with how to choose the interviewees, and the implications of the method. Gobo (2004) suggests to first define the population, which the research group with reference to the mandate (Appendix 3) has defined as HR-employees who have had experience with the new model. The next step is to define a sampling unit, a sub-set of the population, from which to draw the samples. The sampling unit is decided to contain all HR-employees with at least 1 year of seniority at Aker Solutions, or having employment in the new HR-model from its first point. Gobo (2004, p. 414) recommends that to strengthen representativeness, a key point to address is the estimated variance of the phenomenon in question, experiences with the HR-model, to decide on the number of cases needed. The research group expects a high degree of variance to social phenomena, suggesting a large number of interviewees needed in the context of a phenomenological tradition (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 129) (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). The team agreed on 23 interviewees, thereby also keeping alignment with the mandate. Generalisability is concerned with taking the findings in the sample and making them valid for the population by focusing on the general structures to which the single social practices reflect. It is important to notice that many factors influence the path between a supposedly representative sample and the generalisability of the findings (Gobo, 2004, pp. 420, 423).

3.6 Ethics

To be conscious about ethical questions is an integrated part of the entire research process. Kvale & Brinkman (2009, pp. 86-87) draw up four main areas to consider when approaching the ethical aspects of the research: Informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the role of the researchers. The research team has engaged with each theme, and will continue to do so throughout the process to ensure a professional standard. Firstly by informing the interviewees about their rights to withdraw, and secondly about the measures taken to guarantee confidentiality in handling the recordings and presentation of findings. Further, the group will evaluate, on a running basis, the consequences of any findings, both for the organisation and for the individuals. Lastly, the asymmetric relation between interviewers and interviewee, as mentioned earlier, will be an area of focus as well as the responsibility of the research group to present any findings as accurately as possible (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 88-94).

4 Theory

4.1 Introduction of theory

As briefly mentioned in chapter 3.3, the research group intends to compare the actual and intended structure of the HR-function with a theoretical perspective, searching for implications to be expected for the subjects in focus inhabiting and making up the empirical structure. To establish a theoretical perspective, the research group draws on two primary sources. The first is Dave Ulrich, commonly recognised as the originator of the mind-set building the foundation of models similar to the HR-model introduced at Aker Solutions (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009). These models exist in many variations, and are often referred to as three-box models, cf. the three cardinal boxes in chapter 1.3. The second source is Hird, Marsh & Sparrow, contrasting Ulrich's original mind-set with research on organisations that have implemented three-box models.

4.2 Adding value – “from doing to delivering”

To be a competitive organisation in the twenty-first century, corporations have to redefine and redeploy HR-practices, functions and professionals to create new organisational capabilities (Ulrich, 1997, pp. 20-21). Increased competitiveness through adding value to HR-services, thereby building HR-deliverables, are the cornerstone of Ulrich's mind-set. The originator himself explains the concept of adding value with these words:

“As champions of competitiveness, HR professionals must focus more on the deliverables of their work than on doing their work better. They must articulate their role in terms of values created. They must create mechanisms to deliver HR so that business results quickly follow. They must learn to measure results in terms of business competitiveness rather than employee comfort and to lead cultural transformation...” (1997, p. 17)

It is not the provider of services that defines the value to be added, rather, it is the user or customer receiving it (Ulrich, 1997, p. 96).

In his seminal book, *Human Resource Champions*, Ulrich (1997) portrays how the HR-function should be structured to achieve business goals and add value. HR-professionals should be business partners and focus on the results of HR-activities (Ulrich, 1997, p. 53). A business partner has the competence of diagnosing organisations and reengineering processes.

In addition, they need to listen and respond to employees, as well as managing cultural transformation. The role as business partner includes four distinct and important elements (Ulrich, 1997, p. 38). The first element in the role of the business partner is the Strategic Partner, who is significant in helping to execute business strategy. In this way, line managers and HR-professionals are sparring partners, jointly performing organisational diagnosis and turning strategies into actions (Ulrich, 1997, p. 81). The second element of the role is the Administrative Expert. In this role, it is important to build an accurate organisational infrastructure. Ulrich points to four promising delivery mechanisms for creating value through HR as an Administrative Expert (Ulrich, 1997, pp. 98-99). The first two mechanisms are brokerage as outsourced HR and the shared service centre for transactional and administrative work. The last two mechanisms are the centre of expertise for transformational work, and the integrated unit with HR-support within the business. The third element of the business partner role is Employee Champion, responsible for ensuring employee contribution and commitment. The final element is Change Agent, which is vital in managing transformation and change.

For the overall partnership between the business partner and the line manager, each of the four elements above are crucial in order to increase competitiveness through adding value to HR-services; thereby creating HR-deliverables. Discounting any of the roles weakens the overall effectiveness of the HR-function (Ulrich, 1997, p. 38).

4.3 The three-box model: Implementation issues

Although Dave Ulrich's mind-set has had an enormous impact on the restructuring of HR-departments in the last 15 years, an increasing number of reports and research show that the implementations do not always work (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009, pp. 1, 3). One of the central points that Hird, Marsh & Sparrow (2009) bring forward, is the discrepancy between the original mind-set and interpretations materialising in three-box models. Three-box models are attractive for many organisations due to the way HR-professionals are supported by efficient, transactional processes as well as more strategic Centres of Excellence (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009, p. 3).

A model in general consists of these boxes: A Service Centre with an administrative focus, a Centre of Excellence with a strategic focus, as well as the HR Business Partner, who serves as



a consultant and a link between the business and HR programs (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009, p. 7). Nevertheless, many organisations face problems with its implementation and use. Critical for a successful implementation of the model is a clear understanding of how the distinct boxes are to be used and aligned in order to add value to HR-services; clear interfaces. Implementation issues can be avoided or diminished by creating clear interfaces and specification of roles for the three boxes. Hird, Marsh and Sparrow (2009, p. 14) also find that a high degree of business model insight among HR staff and line managers is more important than having a mature three-box model.

Hird, Marsh & Sparrow (2009) introduce an extensive range of implementation issues of the three-box model, building on both quantitative and qualitative data. The researchers have conducted a survey of 128 HR-directors and senior HR-practitioners representing a wide range of organisations. The study was performed longitudinally with two data-gatherings from June to October 2008 and again in 2009, and its conclusions are supported by qualitative comments from the survey. In addition, Hird, Marsh & Sparrow (2009) present two case-studies of successful implementation of the three-box model. Specific elements from this research will be brought forward in the discussion to come of the empirical findings concerning the HR-structure in Aker Solutions compared to a theoretical perspective, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter.

A central distinction to include in the theoretical perspective is made by Sparrow (2013) concerning the difference between Service Centres and Centres of Excellence. He argues that many organisations have implemented Centres of Excellence in name only; that they have simply gathered their expertise within an HR-field in a centre without regards to whether or not they contribute to add value or produce strategy to the organisation (Sparrow, 2013). On the difference between Centres of Expertise versus Centres of Excellence, Sparrow (2013, p. 4) states that *“the latter, in addition to containing some high-level functional expertise, has to have a very clear strategic impact.”* Centres of Excellence must therefore go beyond operational and transactional tasks, and focus on their strategic mandate.

5 Presentation of findings

5.1 Interviewing at Aker Solutions

The planned interviews were executed as described in the mandate (Appendix 3) and chapter 3 without exceptions, amounting to a total of 23 interviews with an average time frame of about 50 minutes. In addition, the research group has spent many days in the corporate headquarter, gathering impression through general observations as well as informal meetings with employees. Knowledge and impressions have been shared and discussed between group members on numerous occasions in an unstructured manner and equally important on formal meetings in the group, reflecting and resonating to condensate thoughts. Based on this knowledge, the research group constructed a revised version (Appendix 13) of the crude model (Appendix 2) to guide the remaining part of the project.

5.2 Clearing the scope

A few introductory comments are required before the findings are presented. Firstly, from the 23 interviewees, only 17 represent the primary focus group representing HR-BPs and HR-CoE as stated in the mandate. In the following this group is referred to as recipients of terms, underlining that this group does not have a direct access to influence the general terms under which they operate to secure successful HR-deliveries. Secondly, the remaining 6 informants represent the HR-function at the executive level from both the centralized, corporate function as well as Head of HR in various Business Areas. This group can directly influence the general operating terms in the HR-function, and is henceforth referred to as providers of terms. This distinction will be used consistently throughout this chapter.

Dave Ulrich (1997) refers to HR-services with added value as HR-deliverables, thereby implying a possible future delivery from a theoretical perspective. To underline the empirical and actual form of the service, the research group has decided to use the term HR-deliveries in Aker Solutions in this report.

In the presentation to follow the view of the term providers is constructed as a unity representing Aker Solutions as a corporation, primarily based on consensus among statements and secondarily with an eye to formal authority. The essences of the findings from the



recipients of terms have been placed in categories built on the basis of statements from the interviews. To better assess the strength of these essences, a frequency table was constructed containing three degrees of strength. An interviewee will only be counted once in each category on the frequency scale, regardless of how many entries are noted in the coding per question. It is the essence across interviewees which are of interest. Scale A, “less frequently”, represents replies from 1 to 5 informants. Scale B, “frequently”, 6 to 12 informants. Finally, scale C, “very frequently” represent responses from 13-17 informants.

5.3 Findings

5.3.1 The three-box model in Aker Solutions

This section will briefly outline perspectives on the background for the new HR-model and the tasks for the three distinct boxes in the HR-model based on the interview data. This will serve as the starting point for a later discussion of the model from a theoretical perspective.

The providers of terms highlight centralisation, cost cutting, improved efficiency and the goal of One Aker Solutions (see chapter 1.3) as key elements for introducing the new HR-model. The HR-function in general needs to demonstrate that the new streamlined and standardised processes in the new model provide synergies and cost-cutting effects. The HR-model is constituted of different boxes. The section below will describe how the three cardinal boxes, Corporate HR, HR-BP and HR-CoE, function in Aker Solutions.

The first box, Corporate HR, has three key functions according to the providers of terms: Governance, strategizing and compliance. Governance includes developing the general principles, policies and visions for the HR-function. Strategizing concerns outlining primary frameworks and the strategic guidelines. Compliance implies auditing, supervising and evaluations of the HR-function. The principal finding with regards to the second cardinal box, the HR-BP role, is a degree of confusion concerning how HR-BP is meant to function. The providers of terms understands the HR-BP role to be dual. This means that the HR-BP role is both strategic and transactional. When an HR-BP is strategic, the person is vital in securing long-term HR-goals and making sure that Aker Solutions is aiming in the right direction. When term providers describe a transactional HR-BP, they use metaphors such as administrative “day-to-day” work and helping line managers with the daily tasks. In addition,



the term providers emphasised that the HR-BP should be a partner and the first point of contact for Line Manager in Business Areas. The term recipients primarily describe the HR-BP role in line with a tactical understanding which lies somewhere in between a strategic and a transactional role.

The essence of the third box making up the HR-model, HR-CoE, is that they are involved with mainly transactional assignments, executing orders. The term providers perceive them to function in the manner of “internal consultant companies”. They describe HR-CoE as service units and experts in their domains, where they have to be proactive and execute services according to orders from Line Managers in different Business Areas. In HR-CoE, all informants emphasised their role to be transactional.

Summarised there seems to be no real overall consensus between providers of terms and recipients of terms about how to understand the model, nor is there consensus internally in the two groups.

5.3.2 Accordance between goals and terms for HR-deliveries

The first point of interest addressed is to what extent there is accordance between the goals and the general terms for HR-deliveries. Whether the HR-function has the necessary framework to achieve successful HR-deliveries was the main issue of concern, which will be elaborated in this section. By framework, the research group understands the general terms for HR-deliveries.

For an HR-delivery to be a success, the importance of good process quality was the main finding from the recipients of terms, which was frequently brought up. An example of good process quality is when HR-deliveries are in accordance with requirements outlined by Line Managers in the Business Areas. Essential for good process quality is compliance with deadlines, and good communication between HR-BP/HR-CoE and the Business Area. A further point concerning successful HR-deliveries is the importance of positive feedback from leaders and Business Areas. Lastly, only a few of the recipients of terms highlighted that the HR-delivery has to add value to be considered successful. By adding value, the informants highlight that the delivery has to have an observed effect in the Business Area. One informant states *“I experience a HR-delivery to be successful when I have an impact in the final result of the delivery, and when the delivery has an effect towards achieving business goals”*.



Regarding the actual accordance between goals and general terms for HR-deliveries, the key finding is that the majority of the term recipients claim that the necessary framework to achieve successful HR-deliveries is partly lacking. In this respect, four challenges were highlighted. These were: Unclear interfaces, lack of resources, authority, and lack of knowledge. Most important and frequently brought up were unclear interfaces and a lack of resources. Examples of unclear interfaces are lacking clarification of roles and areas of responsibility. Lack of resources might include a shortage of personnel. Less frequently remarked were authority and lack of knowledge. Authority is connected to decision-making, policies and governance, whereas lack of knowledge includes absence of knowledge about expertise and qualifications of others, or actual absence of expertise and qualifications.

From the level of the term providers, a key finding is that only a partial consensus exists regarding whether HR-BP and HR-CoE have the necessary framework in place to achieve successful HR-deliveries. An argument underlining that they have the right framework in place is that HR-BPs have got a “seat at the table”. This means that HR-BPs are included in management meetings with Line Managers in Business Areas. The contesting perception, brought forward by the term providers, is that the necessary framework is partially absent to impact strategically.

5.3.3 Bottlenecks in the HR-process

The second point of interest, improve efficiency, sought to explore the phenomenon bottlenecks. The question to be addressed was “Are bottlenecks experienced in the HR-process and if so, how are they met?” An example of a bottleneck may be the coordination between HR-BP and HR-CoE in a recruitment process. According to informants representing both the term providers and recipients, HR-deliveries often take longer time than necessary because it is unclear to the participants who is involved and who is responsible for different parts of the process. Unclear roles and a lack of communication may lead to HR-BP taking a larger part in the process than intended, resulting in the workload for their position becoming a bottleneck tied up with transactional tasks with no strategic implications.

Frequently identified bottlenecks by the term recipients are unclear interfaces, unclear or uncertain authority regarding decision-making, policy and governance, as well as the position of HR-BP. Less frequently brought up are bottlenecks caused by HR-CoE, lack of resources, and lacking knowledge or lacking awareness of existing expertise. Concerning how



bottlenecks are met, “root treatment” of their causes, such as improving processes, occur less frequently. However, the term recipients bring up treatment of symptoms through temporary solutions and workarounds very frequently. Such workarounds may involve term recipients taking more than their share of the work or by bypassing the formal communication channels. This is in contrast to the terms providers’ view that term recipients should not work around bottlenecks that occur, but rather report them to regional HR to be solved on a higher level.

There is no clear consensus among the term providers regarding the causes of bottlenecks. The majority of the term providers highlight the role of implementation factors such as lacking knowledge regarding how to utilise the new model for HR-deliveries and a lack of insight into the different Business Areas. Additionally, a few of the term providers point to procedural factors, such as unclear roles and uncertainty regarding decision-making authority, as a cause of bottlenecks.

5.3.4 Cooperation between HR-BP, HR-CoE and Business Areas

The third point of interest, improve quality, sought to explore the phenomenon cooperation. Regarding good cooperation between HR-BP and HR-CoE, the term recipients identified good relations, such as communication, feedback, open dialogue and knowledge about expertise. The term recipients point to the importance of clear decision-making authority, as well as clarification of roles and areas of responsibility, for the successful cooperation in processes. However, interfaces between HR-CoE and HR-BP are frequently experienced as unclear, which can have implications for reaching HR-deliveries. In order to actually be able to deliver the services, term recipients often bypass the defined processes. Again, this points to treatment of symptoms through workarounds. In addition, the cooperation can be impeded when both HR-CoE and HR-BP lack business model insight, described as insight in the market, challenges, business principles and processes particular for their industry sector.

The providers of terms express that a lack of experience and expertise among some HR-BPs and HR-CoE may cause the process to slow down. The cooperation is seen as an ongoing process by the providers of terms, implying that cooperation will improve when employees have incorporated the new model to a larger extent. Further, the providers of terms point out that the new model requires fine-tuning, and that the correspondence between ideal and reality is not consistent.



An additional finding is that in relation to the cooperation between HR-BP and HR-CoE, the term recipients very frequently express that extensive in-depth knowledge about activities in the Business Area being served is very important. However, there is no consensus on whether or not sufficient business model insight is present in HR-CoE. Findings testify of divergent views regarding HR-CoE's business acumen and insight. Some HR-BPs point out that they experience major variations in business model insight between the various HR-CoE. HR-CoE themselves claim that they lack essential information from the different Business Areas in Aker Solutions, which points to confusion about who is responsible for providing this business model insight.

5.3.5 Rate of change in work processes

The fourth point of interest addressed the rate of change in work processes experienced by the informants. The main concern was whether the rate of change affects the quality of HR-deliveries.

The essence in the findings show that both term providers and recipients very frequently perceive a high rate of change in work processes, occurring often and simultaneously, thus effectively reducing the quality of HR-deliveries. The term recipients frequently report how work processes are changed through policy, though not consistently adhered in practice due to lack of resources, such as information and time. The high rate of change is reported by term recipients to create confusion and frustration. The informants experience the rate of change very differently, varying across both HR-CoE and Business Areas, some reducing the effect of new HR-model to just another change. The term recipients frequently experience the high rate of change as disturbing, more than improving processes or quality of services.

The term recipients experience a lack of information and unclear interfaces as a result of a high rate of change, which subsequently affects the quality of HR-deliveries, often manifesting in increased delivery time. Term recipients often compensate for the possible loss of quality with working over-time. Both term providers and recipients highlight that this is an issue of the maturity of the model. The term providers emphasise the necessity of change to complete the implementation of the HR-model, and express less consideration for the possible effects of the rate of change. The term providers elaborate that in order to be perceived as a dynamic corporation, the corporation must act in a dynamic manner, but still acknowledging that work processes need time to develop and mature.



5.3.6 Standardised HR-processes and services

The fifth point of interest, sought to explore the phenomenon standardisation. The question to be addressed was: “Is there accordance between standardised and demanded HR-processes and services across Business Areas”?

The term providers articulated that the standardisation must be as standardised as possible and as tailored as necessary. A key point brought up by the recipients of terms is the challenge concerning how to balance standardisation with diverse needs in the different Business Areas. There seems to be variations across Business Areas regarding the intent to be compliant with corporate HR-policies. This leads tailoring HR-deliveries to specific needs to a greater extent than necessary. A further aspect is that where intent to be compliant exists in the Business Area, the recipients of terms express that some HR-BPs develop their own solutions if HR-CoE are unable to provide the degree of flexibility required. A key point to bring forward is that neither recipients nor providers of terms express knowledge of processes regulating deviation from policies, thereby creating a vacuum in which the Business Areas can act unregulated.

Regarding the purchase of external HR-deliveries, the term recipients frequently express positive experiences, through gaining better control of cost and quality, in addition to improved efficiency. However, a wish for a higher degree of internal services is expressed, but this is dependent on acquiring deeper and better knowledge and expertise.

5.3.7 The new HR-model and job development

The sixth point of interest explored the individual’s experience of job development prospects in Aker Solutions after the implementation of the new HR-model. The term recipients expressed great variations in the experienced prospects, most viewing their job opportunities as largely unaffected by the new model. Others highlight the positive effect of “One Aker Solutions” with respect to their career prospects. Finally, some term recipients express doubts concerning whether Aker Solutions continues to be an attractive employer after the implementation of the new HR-model.

The providers of terms highlight that the new HR-models leads to greater mobility for employees within the HR-function, in contrast to the experience of the term recipients. The



greatest contrast concerns HR-BP, which according to the term providers can emerge from anywhere within the HR-function.

The term recipients point to the following key qualifications for the role of HR-BP: Personal skills, experience, business insight and education, and being an HR-generalist is highlighted. HR-CoE seriously doubt if they can achieve on the job qualifications to pursue a career in business partnering. To qualify as an HR-BP, the term providers emphasise knowledge of relations, strategy, basic HR, as well as organisational, cultural and business model insight. In addition come personal qualifications like relations, analytic skills, and being able to manage several tasks simultaneously. The providers of terms can give no specific directions for employees in HR-CoE on how to obtain these qualifications.

6 Essences of findings

In this chapter, the scope will be changed from the various findings of the explored phenomena to the essences across the phenomena. In this section, the research group will draw on the theoretical perspectives presented in chapter 4 to cast light on these essences.

6.1 The HR-model: From “doing” to “delivering”

This section will evaluate the essence of model understanding within the HR-function in Aker Solutions. The main finding from chapter 4 on this matter is the confusion that exists within the HR-function concerning how the different roles are meant to align and function in the new service delivery model. The informants' experiences are only partially in accordance with how the model is meant to function as outlined in “Situating Aker Solutions” in the beginning of this report, and as described by the term providers.

Only a minority of the recipients of terms express comprehension that HR-deliveries first and foremost should add value so that Aker Solutions achieves greater competitiveness.

Throughout chapter 4, a key finding indicates a lack of clarification of roles as well as how the three boxes should align. For instance, lack of clarification of roles was highlighted as an obstacle in achieving successful HR-deliveries. In the previous chapter, there was an indication that the HR-BP role in Aker Solutions is unclear. This might cause further problems, as research implies that if the role of HR-BP is not optimised and maintained carefully, issues concerning the role will accelerate over time (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009, pp. 16, 31).

With a partial understanding of the HR-model, both within HR, but also in the line, this might have fatal consequences. In a service delivery model, the line plays an important role in defining HR-value and utilising the delivery model in everyday business. As findings show in the previous chapters, the HR-function perceives that line managers in Aker Solutions only have limited knowledge of the new HR-structure. This might lead to what Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow (2009, p. 32) define as a “fatal flaw”, whereby the line may lose faith in HR if the networks and relationships do not function appropriately.

6.2 Governance and decision-making authority

The essence regarding governance primarily concerns unclear decision-making authority. This essence has been found present in several phenomena, including bottlenecks, cooperation and general terms for HR-deliveries. Issues regarding governance usually concern who has the authority to design HR-systems or to deliver HR-practices (Ulrich, 1997).

The term recipients state that interfaces between HR-CoE and HR-BP are unclear, which may have implications for reaching their goals. This is partly due to unclear authority relations, both between the three boxes as well as in processes. The research shows that cooperation between HR-BP and HR-CoE can be impeded when policy and actions are not compliant with the overall governance structure, or if the structure is absent. A key to achieving successful implementation of strategic HR is to integrate the line operation in the HR-model, ensuring that the line operation assumes responsibility for aligning HR-deliverables to business objectives (Ulrich, 1997, pp. 25, 110).

6.3 Process and process participants

In this section, the focus will be on the research group's findings concerning process and process participants, which informants report to be a key difficulty in the new HR-model. In order to achieve successful HR-deliveries and good cooperation between HR-BP and HR-CoE, the informants highlight the importance of good communication, as well as sufficient resources. Hird, Marsh and Sparrow (2009, p. 22) state that the coordination of the different HR-functions, especially in the beginning, is one of the most difficult things to accomplish, but that it is essential for the success of the HR-model. To achieve this, there must be a clear logic pertaining to how each box in the model is to function, as well as how they are to work together (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009, p. 32). Many informants express that it is often unclear who is to participate in a process and where responsibility for the processes lie, resulting in confusion regarding which roles are to be involved and which communication lines are to be applied. This is in line with Hird, Marsh and Sparrow's (2009, pp. 16, 18) findings that common difficulties in organisations implementing the three-box model pertain to boundary management (unclear interfaces), relationships and communication between the different HR-functions, especially between HR-BP and HR-CoE. Having a clear understanding and line of communication in the work processes are vital in order to ensure



successful and efficient HR-deliveries. The research group found that bottlenecks often arise in the HR-delivery processes because of communication difficulties. A lack of clear roles and lines of communication leads to a delay in the process, where process participants must clarify the distribution of tasks and responsibilities. This may result in the process participants needing to create “workarounds” in order to complete the process or delivery, which leads to a completed process but does nothing to improve the process in itself. This is an important finding, and is further amplified by the findings of Hird, Marsh and Sparrow (2009, pp. 16-18). They state that issues concerning managing boundaries between the HR-functions decrease somewhat over time, whereas issues pertaining to communication between HR-functions increase over time if they are not dealt with.

A lack of recognition for HR-BP’s strategic perspective in the role may result in them being overloaded with transactional work. According to Hird, Marsh and Sparrow’s (2009, p. 16) research, these problems may increase over time. Increased consciousness regarding transactional tasks with no strategic implications, contrary to transactional tasks with clear strategic attachments, may free up time for HR-BPs to concentrate on the right matters. This distinction between tasks is absolutely crucial to the HR-BP role. The double capability problem, HR-BPs understanding their own role as well as being understood by the line, may hamper with the implementation of the HR-model (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009, p. 32).

6.4 Role specification and Business Model Insight

Concerning Aker Solutions, the research group found integral challenges connected to the need to specify roles and a need to clarify and improve existing knowledge about the Business Model in general. Unclear interfaces between HR-BP and HR-CoE, in addition to a lack of business model insight have led to flaws in efficiency, such as bottlenecks and increased HR-delivery time. In accordance with Hird, Marsh and Sparrow (2009), the research group’s findings show that problems may be connected to the workload of HR-BP and varying perceptions of their role from both providers and recipients of terms. Informants expressed the belief that if clearer role specifications were in place and acted out, bottlenecks could be reduced, thus freeing up time and resources.

Research on the implementation of the three-box model shows that issues concerning the HR-BP role usually increase over time, whereas issues concerning the HR-CoE role usually



decline (Hird, Marsh and Sparrow, 2009, p.16). A need for role specification in the early stages is adamant in adding value to business objectives, and should focus on reducing HR-BP's involvement in transactional and tasks without strategic implications, which hinder the strategic intention of the HR-BP role from materialising (Hird, Marsh, Sparrow, 2009, p. 16).

A lack of care in dealing with unclear interfaces between elements of the HR-structure may hinder the successful implementation of the HR-model, and should be attended to as early as possible (Hird, Marsh and Sparrow, 2009, p.10).

The research by Hird, Marsh and Sparrow (2009, p. 14) states that it is four times more important for an organisation's HR-function to possess a high level of business model insight than having a mature Ulrich structure (three-box model). They also found that simply pursuing Ulrich's structural solution is not sufficient grounds for HR to be perceived as adding value to the organisation. Our findings suggest that the term recipients partly lack the information or knowledge necessary to utilise their roles in the new model, resulting in bottlenecks and efficiency issues.

6.5 Lack of Knowledge

The essence of lack of knowledge or awareness of existing expertise is present in the phenomena concerned with HR-deliveries, bottlenecks and standardisation, and particularly cooperation.

Cooperation issues due to either lack of knowledge or lack of business model insight referring to the various Business Areas are reflected in Hird, Marsh & Sparrow's (2009, p. 17) findings, which state that this is not an issue that improves over time unless it is tackled by improving business model insight. In addition to being an issue in itself, lack of knowledge of existing expertise also complicates communication across the HR-functions and is detrimental to the overall HR-delivery process. Hird, Marsh & Sparrow (2009, p. 17) also point out that communication issues between the HR-functions increase in prevalence over time.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Choosing a structure – wicked problems

Despite extensive knowledge about processes of change in organisations, many such attempts and models fail in their implementation. To illuminate the change process in Aker Solutions, the research group will draw upon a theoretical perspective on restructuring organisations. Although an organisation has implemented larger changes, the employees may in reality perceive that little has changed. Grint (2010) explains this phenomenon by the fact that the organisation has changed the formal structure, but not realised that it is the relationships tied to the structure that enable it to work. The result is that a structural change may not result in a genuine change.

Grint (2010) therefore argues that organisational change is what he terms a wicked problem, where there is no one solution that will enable it to work, as it is not only a complicated problem, but also complex. In addition, there is no clear relationship between cause and effect, so that one component of the system cannot be fixed or replaced without affecting the other components. The implication is that the framing of the problem will affect the consequent approach to resolving it. The leader's role in a wicked problem, therefore, is to ask the right questions rather than provide the right answers, because the answers may not be self-evident and will require a collaborative process to make any kind of progress. As for all organisations undergoing a process of change, this is also applicable to Aker Solutions. By reviewing the process at such an early stage, Aker Solutions has the possibility to adjust the model for glitches and problems before the structure is fully set. In this context, the research group's recommendations may help Aker Solutions to adjust the direction in which they develop their HR-model, with other words, framing the problem.

Based on the findings and analysis presented in this report's previous chapters, we will now present our recommendations, which may strengthen and accelerate the implementation of the model. These may enable Aker Solutions to grow, as well as to increase the value added to the corporation by the HR-function. However, it is important to stress that the recommendations given by the research group are ideals which cannot be fully realised in any organisation. Nevertheless, they provide guidelines for the organisation's development and the questions for the management to ask. As the research group's mandate is to evaluate and



take a “pulse check” on the new model, our recommendations will not focus on detail, but rather on major issues.

We acknowledge that the new HR-model is still at an early stage, and not fully implemented. The research group have been impressed by employees’ proactive attitudes, as well as their ability to work hard and promote problem-solving. During the interviews with the providers of terms, the research group acknowledged that the management to some extent are aware of some of the issues brought forward by our findings, and that actions have been taken to resolve these. The following recommendations are based on the issues themselves, not on the actions already taken.

7.2 Promoting the HR-model and mind-set

The concept of adding value is the very foundation and the overarching key point to the service delivery model chosen by Aker Solutions. It is crucial to recognise that this concept is by no means simple to comprehend, and has many implications for the actions of individuals as well as for the organisation as a whole. The first aspect of this recommendation is for the HR-management to refresh the cardinal points and re-evaluate the implications to secure alignment to the original HR mind-set. The second aspect refers to the recipients of terms expressing very little consciousness about the concept of adding value as discussed in an earlier chapter. The research group recommends a targeted and intense campaign in the HR-function to promote the mind-set until the point where the concept is no longer diffuse and ungraspable but concrete and part of corporate everyday language accompanying all HR-related decisions (Ulrich, 1997, pp. 119-120). The last recommendation originates from the providers of terms stating that the line operation, Business Areas, have little knowledge about the HR-model and its implications. A central point in the achievement of successfully implemented strategic HR is the involvement of the line operation, as well as their readiness to accept responsibility for executing and aligning to HR-policies on both a global and local level (Ulrich, 1997, pp. 25, 110) (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009, p. 21). It is essential for the line management to reach the same level of understanding of the model and mind-set as the HR-function. Two key points are to be acknowledged in this respect. Line management must embrace the HR-BP as a partner (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009, p. 35). This will be elucidated later on. Line management must also learn to see HR in general as a business opportunity, ready to be realised by adding value to the bottom line by a professional HR-



function. Without the line being involved, understanding and taking responsibility, the service delivery model does not fulfil its potential - there is just HR doing HR, since the line defines the value to be delivered (Ulrich, 1997, pp. 48, 95) (Hird, Marsh, & Sparrow, 2009, p. 21). The recommendation is to campaign intensely to integrate the line operation in the HR-model and mind-set, and continuing to do so on a long term horizon to secure consciousness and involvement in integrating HR-strategies with day to day operation and long term business objectives (Ulrich, 1997, pp. 119-120).

7.3 Improving governance

The research group's recommendations regarding governance have three aspects, namely how decisions are made, how strategising is to be performed, and finally how processes are generated. Initially, bringing forward decision-making, the research group extend the recommendation from 3.1 about making line operations more included. We recommend placing the decision-making authority with the line management in the different Business Areas. The implications will be that it is now the line management's responsibility to secure alignment to corporate policies on HR-matters, drawing on the expertise of HR-BPs and HR-CoE. Any decision regarding deviation from policy is to be made within the line organisation by a person with the necessary power of attorney to carry the economic consequences. Decisions conflicting with corporate policies will be reported to Corporate HR and the regional structure through HR-BP for evaluation.

From a theoretical perspective, this will ensure alignment to Ulrich's (1990) (1997) original model and create the opportunity to add value to Aker Solutions. Ulrich additionally states the importance of placing the decision-making authority concerning HR-matters into the line operation. Contrary to the common belief in organisations that both line managers and human resource professionals have equal responsibility, Ulrich & Lake (1990) emphasises that it is the line managers who have the primary responsibility for HR-matters, as "*each manager needs to be accountable for understanding, defining, and implementing management practices that build competitiveness*" (p. 78). For Corporate HR, this implicates that the tasks will no longer direct corporate policies on HR-matters, but instead balance corporate visions and values, and the overall business objectives, as for example "One Aker Solutions" with corporate actions continuously improving and adapting policies to reality.



To further strengthen implementing strategic HR at Aker Solutions, we recommend taking the adding value concept in the service delivery model a step further. This means seeing the HR-strategy as an integrated part of the overall business strategy, formed dynamically through mutual influence. Given this perspective, it is required that HR-strategy originates directly from the various Business Areas, and is developed in cooperation between line management and HR-BP. This will further utilise the line management side of the HR-BP's double capability, as described earlier. One implication of this is that the focus of Corporate HR on strategising matters will change to a more coordinating and integrating effort to form the corporate HR-strategy aligned to business objectives through the input of Business Areas.

Based on the research done at Aker Solutions, the following recommendation aims at bringing processes more in line with daily operations. To accomplish this, the group recommends relocating the responsibility for work processes from Corporate HR to a new sub-unit within HR-CoE, where they have the experience and capability to make necessary changes to work processes. The specifications for the new unit will be clarified at a later point in the report. For now, only the implications for Corporate HR will be elucidated. Corporate HR's new role will focus on creating synergies and awareness across HR-CoE, as well as alignment to corporate policies and objectives.

7.4 The four essential roles of the HR-BP

For Aker Solutions to succeed with the new HR-model the research group recommends to redefine the HR-BP role, and enable a greater value-adding focus.

The research group's recommendations concerning the HR-BP role are based on Ulrich's (1997) *original* mind-set described in chapter 5.1.1. The four roles of the HR-BP are strategic partner, employee champion, change agent, and administrative expert. The key point is for HR-BP to focus on tasks with clear strategic implications, which also might include transactional operations, and move away from transactional tasks with no strategic impact.

In order to succeed, a primary prerequisite for the HR-BP role is extensive business model insight. The HR-BP and the Line Manager responsible for HR should be completely aligned on business objectives and HR-strategies, enabling the HR-BP to represent and speak on behalf of the Line Manager downwards in the organisation. The Line Manager utilises the HR-BP's capability in HR-matters, securing added value to business strategy. The HR-BP



utilises business model insight and HR-expertise to secure added value to deliveries, thereby enforcing the double capability effect. It is not sufficient that HR-BPs have got a “seat at the table” in meetings, which seems to be the reality in Aker Solutions today.

An implication of all HR-BP’s tasks having strategic impact is that they can no longer serve as a “first point of contact”. Another aspect of the same point is that given that the Line Manager holds responsibility for HR-matters, the manager must be capable of navigating the HR-model, placing inquiries and orders where they are due - sometimes with HR-BP, sometimes with HR-CoE, and sometimes with Centre for People.

Regarding the second role, employee champion, the role of the HR-BP is to increase the employees’ commitment and capability. Therefore, the research group recommends that HR-BP should develop experience and knowledge of what actually happens on site from both a line management and an employee perspective. We further recommend that HR-BPs visit sites and have regular meetings with site managers and employees. This is a requirement in order to represent employee perspectives on a strategic level with line management.

In the third role, change agent, HR-BPs in Aker Solutions are important participants in drawing up the future lines for the corporation. To succeed as a change agent, it is crucial for HR-BP to have a deep understanding of the business in order to develop HR-strategies supporting the business objectives and adapting the organisation to meet future demands.

The final aspect of the HR-BP role is the administrative expert function such as constructing efficient structures in everyday work-processes. This role must be viewed from the perspective of securing adding value to deliverables in an efficient and quality-oriented manner, thereby enabling the HR-BP to successfully complete the value chain. With reference to the findings in Aker Solutions, it is important to point out that it is the responsibility of HR-BP to make sure HR-CoE have the necessary business insight, the HR-BP being the connecting point between operations and HR-organisation. This will enable HR-CoE to generate HR-deliveries with the quality defined by Line Managers.

Finally, it is necessary to state that the role for an HR-BP with these four aspects is challenging and requires particular skills and abilities, such as excellence mind-set, extensive business model insight, as well as leadership experience.



A way to strengthen and enforce the strategic aspect of the HR-BP role is to reassign the primary organisational point of reference from the regional matrix to the Business Area. In consequence, the HR-BP refers directly to the Line Manager being represented, thereby securing alignment and partnership between the two roles. The research group strongly recommends Aker Solutions to consider this structural change.

7.5 Empowering HR-CoE to impact strategically

The research group recommends establishing a unit within the existing HR-CoE-unit in order to fulfil the strategic mandate of a Centre of Excellence. The strategic perspective is lacking in this function. According to Sparrow (2013) Centres of Expertise differ from Centres of Excellence in that they do not focus on strategic impact and value adding; their scope is delivering effective and specialised competencies to the organisation. Our recommendation is that HR-CoE in Aker Solutions continues to deliver such competencies, but in addition houses the aforementioned sub-unit to secure a value-adding and strategic focus to this HR-function. This new sub-unit will wield a three-sided impact on the organisation and consist of selected senior members of HR-CoE, Corporate HR and HR-BPs. The first area of impact is improving processes and process quality, by matching processes more closely to the reality in which HR-deliveries are processed. The need and motivation for workarounds by process participants will be diminished by moving the authority to evaluate and modify processes closer to their origin of execution. The participation of HR-BP will secure a better flow of information between HR-CoE and Business Areas, as well as providing the necessary business model insight where it is needed to provide efficient and high-quality HR-deliveries.

The second area of impact is on policymaking. Hird, Marsh and Sparrow (2009, p. 21) stress the need for the HR-model to be organised in a way that is based on meeting the needs and requirements of the clients, also with an eye towards future development. HR-CoE must therefore focus on providing a strategy within their field of expertise in order to add value in a long-term perspective. Giving expert advice on the path forward within their area of expertise to corporate policy is a cornerstone in securing that HR-CoE execute services in a value-adding manner. Equally important is that HR-BP can influence the corporate HR-infrastructure, filling the role as administrative expert and securing efficient processes for HR-deliveries.



These two areas of impact will in sum enable HR-CoE to excel as experts in both their professional area of expertise, as well as advisors on corporate HR-policies and processes being sparring partner to both HR-BP and Line Managers on practical solutions in alignment with policy.

The third and final area of impact is auditing compliance to HR-policies in Business Areas. The responsibilities and work of the new sub-unit will qualify it to perform HR-audits producing essential business intelligence with various purposes. Taking the implications of Strategic HR to the fullest, an HR-audit will bring transparency to the degree of alignment to HR-policies in Business Areas. This will strengthen the accountability of line management in taking on primary ownership and responsibility for HR-matters, not to confuse with HR-deliveries. Another purpose is producing valuable input to HR-CoE on where to evaluate, improve and adapt policies and process out of tune with business needs.

Implementing this sub-unit will supposedly reduce the issues faced by process participants concerning communication, flow of information and unclear interfaces. This may be secured, as processes are generated by participants with actual process involvement based on policies designed to add value to services.

This recommendation also carries implications for Corporate HR which are in line with the consequences of recommendations discussed earlier. The role of Corporate HR will focus on creating synergies and awareness across HR-CoE and sub-unit, as well as developing and evaluating corporate HR-policies based on input from the sub-unit, corporate management and Business Areas.

A final remark addresses the findings that both term providers and recipients experience a high rate of change in work processes. Placing responsibility for processes in the new sub-unit will enable the unit to assess the degree of readiness in the organisation for new changes weighed up against the urgency of the process change to come.



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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Original mandate



Preferred partner

Project Mandate title:

From distributed to centralized & crosscutting HR solutions
-a pulse check on the new model

Scope of work:

HR in Aker Solutions has just been through an organisational change process and would like to have an evaluation of what works well and what needs to be changed or improved.

Has the new HR delivery model...

- Enhanced the capability to accommodate Aker Solutions HR needs?
- Improved quality in HR deliveries?
- Improved efficiency in HR deliveries?

Suggested approach:

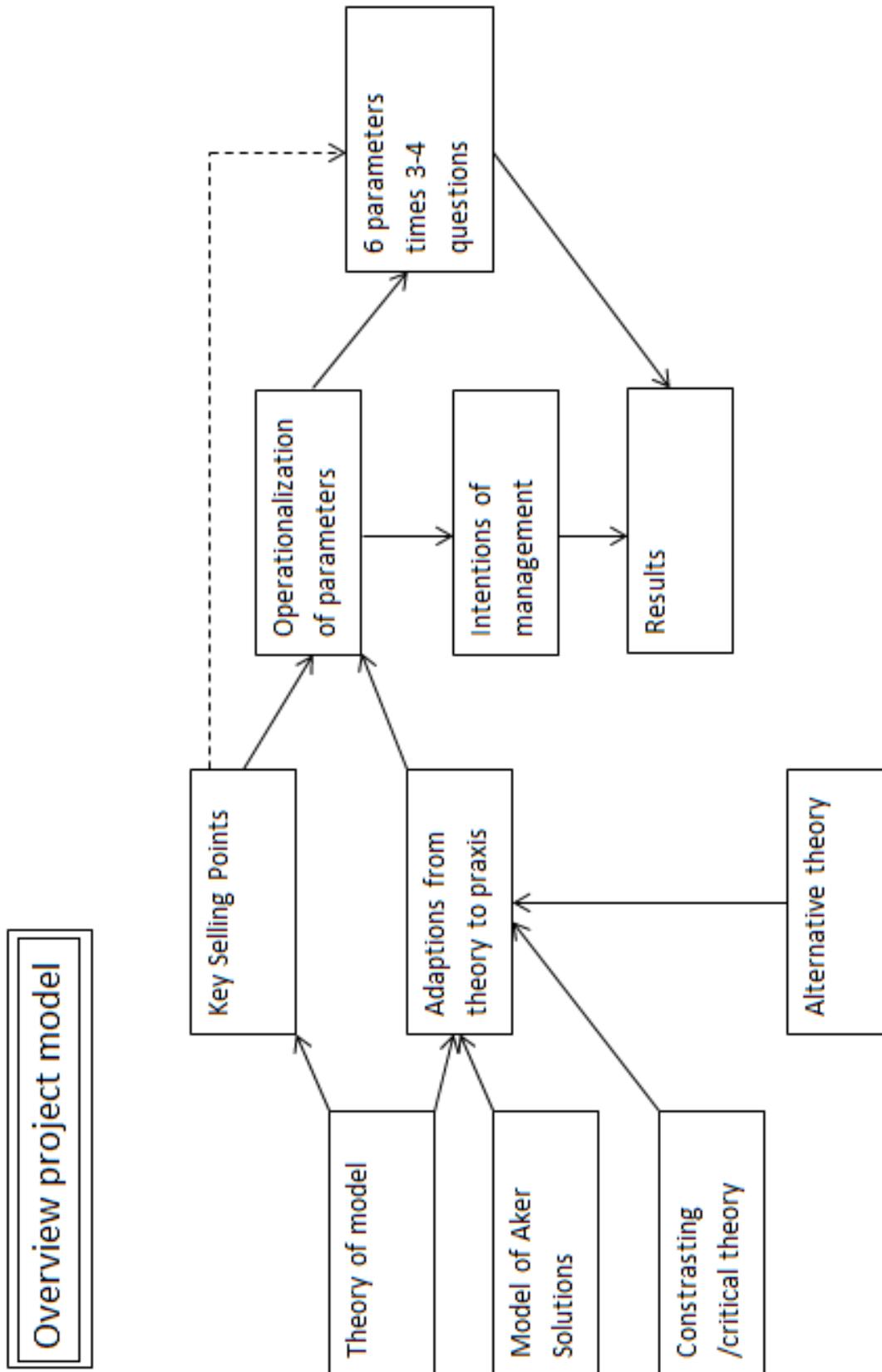
Set up and run 20 Qualitative interviews with key roles/functions at the Fornebu site

- 10 within HR Solutions
- 10 with managers from other parts of Aker Solutions
- Anchor the approach in relevant theory
- Discuss the new model in light of relevant theories
- Benchmark the new model against two other comparable companies (ex. Statoil, DNV, Total)

Project set up & budget:

- University of Oslo:
 - o Put together and build a multidiscipline team before February 1st 2014
 - o Provides an external supervisor / expert on the project topic before February 1st 2014
 - o Provides weekly lectures to the team on relevant topics during the whole period
- Aker Solutions:
 - o Develops a short mandate (this document) and provides background materials
 - o Provide a contact person that will chair a bi-weekly follow up meeting from Feb 1st to June 1st 2014
 - o Supports the team in finding relevant respondents in February 2014
 - o Sets up a presentation meeting and invites relevant audience to it in June 2014
 - o Pays a project fee of 50 000 NOK after receiving the report
 - o Provides access to Fornebu s36
 - o Provides 2 PCs
- UiO OLA Team:
 - o 4-5 people from different disciplines
 - o Creates a project description and plan based on the project mandate before march 1st 2014
 - o Develops & implements the research design between March 1st and May 1st 2014
 - o Delivers a 30 page report within June 1st 2014
 - o Delivers a presentation based on the report in June 2014

Appendix 2: Project model





Appendix 3: Revised mandate



Preferred partner

Project Mandate title:

From distributed to centralized & crosscutting HR solutions
-a pulse check on the new model

Scope of work:

HR in Aker Solutions has just been through an organisational change process and would like to have an evaluation of how the new model is experienced by key employees.

The project will have a primary focus on HR business partners representing various Business Areas (BA) and key representatives from selected Centres of Excellence (CoEs). Given the restrictions in the framework and timeline for this project the number of both BA and CoEs participating in the evaluation will be limited to ensure sufficient depth in the analysis.

Selected BAs are: ENG, SUB, DRT & MMO

Selected CoEs are: Recruitment, People and Organization & Global mobility

The project will define 5-7 superordinate parameters in order to elucidate the overall perspective of evaluating the new HR-model. Three parameters are initially defined as:

- Has the new HR delivery model **enhanced the capability** to accommodate Aker Solutions HR needs?
- Has the new HR delivery model **improved quality** in HR deliveries?
- Has the new HR delivery model **improved efficiency** in HR deliveries?

The remaining parameters will be defined further on in the process based on initial meetings, interviews, observations and other relevant documentation.

Approach:

Set up and run up to 20 qualitative interviews with key roles/functions at the Fornebu site. As a starting point the interviews will be distributed as follows:

- 2 interviews with each of the selected BA's including at least one HR Business Partner in each BA to a total of 8 interviews
- 3 interviews with each of the selected CoEs including the head of each of the selected CoEs and two subordinate employees involved in the daily operations to a total of 9 interviews

Additional interviews will be set up if the project estimates that further documentation is required in order to strengthen a specific area of interest.

The final report will anchor the new model in relevant theory and discuss it in the light of alternative, theoretical approaches to structuring an organization.



Project set up & budget:

- University of Oslo:
 - o Put together and build a multidiscipline team before February 1st 2014
 - o Provides an external supervisor / expert on the project topic before February 1st 2014
 - o Provides weekly lectures to the team on relevant topics during the whole period
- Aker Solutions:
 - o Develops a short mandate (this document) and provides background materials
 - o Provide a contact person that will chair a bi-weekly follow up meeting from Feb 1st to June 1st
 - o Supports the team in finding relevant respondents in February 2014
 - o Sets up a presentation meeting and invites relevant audience to it in June 2014
 - o Pays a project fee of 50 000 NOK after receiving the report
 - o Provides access to Fornebu s36
 - o Provides 2 PCs
- UiO OLA Team:
 - o 4-5 people from different disciplines
 - o Creates a project description and plan based on the project mandate before march 1st 2014 (revised mandate)
 - o Develops & implements the research design between March 1st and May 1st 2014
 - o Delivers a 30 page report within June 1st 2014
 - o Delivers a presentation based on the report in June 2014

Appendix 4: The working smarter initiative

Background I: The working smarter initiative

Working smarter is about how we work and cooperate across business areas, who we are, the quality of our work and how we communicate and perform acting as 'One Aker Solutions'.

The main objectives of Working smarter are to:

- 1 - Improve quality
- 2 - Drive efficiency
- 3 - Reaching business goals

To secure the "One Aker Solutions" approach to key functions and services rather than in individual business units or legal entities, the initiatives will be aligned with a regional set-up. This approach will enable us to further strengthen and professionalise key services and offer the same high level of service to the entire organisation.

One of the major milestones is establishing the new HR delivery model.

Important parts of the new HR delivery model are the Centres of Excellence. The Centres of Excellence (CoEs) are teams of people with specialized expertise within HR functions to be shared across Aker Solutions. The main objective is to increase effectiveness and cost efficiency by delivering common standardized solutions with high quality. People working in CoE's shall be developed within their field of expertise to ensure that they can promote best practices in their area of expertise. We have established CoE's in the following areas: Recruitment, Learning & Development, Organisational Development, Global Mobility and HR Operations. Employees working for one of the Centre of excellence will be our experts in their field and to become our main point of contact when need some assisting

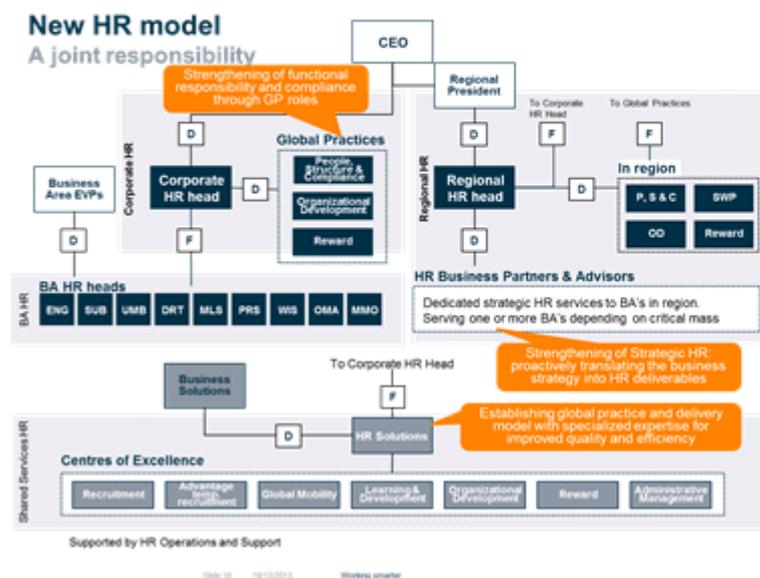


Figure1: HR Model



Appendix 5: This is Aker Solutions



Preferred partner

Background II: **This is Aker Solutions**

Aker Solutions provides oilfield products, systems and services for customers in the oil and gas industry world-wide. Our knowledge and technologies span from reservoir to production and through the life of a field.

Aker Solutions fast facts:

Employees: 21,500

Contract staff: 6,500

Operating revenues: NOK 44.9 bn (2012)

EBITDA: NOK 4.7 bn (2012)

Market Cap: NOK 25.1 bn (November 2013)

Vision: To be the preferred partner for solutions in the oil and gas industry through living our values

“Aker Solutions brings together engineering and technologies for oil and gas drilling, field development and production.”

Broad portfolio and experience

Our portfolio of oilfield products, systems and services, stretches all the way from the reservoir to the wellstream processing systems generating marketable and valuable hydrocarbon products. Our target is to deliver the best. Each product, system and service competes on a standalone basis in the market. But, with our broad portfolio and experience, we understand the challenge and apply the knowledge to create optimal solutions.

Aker Solutions ASA is the parent company in the group, which consists of a number of separate legal entities. Aker Solutions is used as the common brand and trademark for most of these entities. In 2011 Aker Solutions had aggregated annual revenues of approximately NOK 36.5 billion. The company is listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange.

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Appendix 6: Interview guide Aker Solutions, Corporate HR

INTERVIEWGUIDE – CORPORATE HR

Preparation before the interview:

- Set the air-condition
 - Water
 - Mark seats according to the model
 - Turn off cell phone
 - Ensure that the Dictaphone is working
-

Introduction/presentation of the group:

- Master students in the program ‘Organisation, Leadership and Work’ at UiO.
 - As a part of the course ‘Projectforum’ we have got an assignment from Aker Solutions to evaluate how the new HR-model is experienced by key employees. Among 20-25 individuals will be interviewed.
 - A written report will be handed in to UiO and Aker Solutions. You will be invited to a presentation of the results in the beginning of June.
 - The report and presentation will not contain any personal information that can identify you or the other informants. You are ensured full anonymity.
 - Provide letter of information/approval.
-

Warming-up questions

- Who are you? Can you tell a little bit about yourself?
 - Can you shortly tell me about your education and what you have done before you started your career in Aker Solutions?
 - For how long have you been in Aker Solutions and for how long have you been in your current position?
-

ACCOMMODATE NEEDS: *Phenomenon is delivery*

Problem to be addressed: To what extent is there accordance between goals and the general terms for HR-deliveries?

1. Could you tell us briefly about the grounds/background for the new HR-model?
 - a. Do you consider the implementation of the new HR-model to be complete?
 - b. (If NO-) What remains?
2. Could you tell us briefly about the main/key tasks for Corporate HR?
3. Could you tell us briefly about the main/key tasks for SVP HR?
4. Could you tell us briefly about the main/key tasks for HR BP?
5. Could you tell us briefly about the main/key tasks for CoE?



IMPROVE EFFICIENCY: Phenomenon is *bottleneck*

Problem to be addressed: Are bottleneck experienced in the HR-process, if so, how are they to be met?

1. Does the structure for cooperation between HR BP and CoE create grounds/a basis for “bottlenecks”?
 - If NEEDED:
 - Are the roles clearly defined?
 - Lines of command
 - Different Business Areas?

IMPROVE QUALITY: Phenomenon is *cooperation*

Problem to be addressed: How is the quality of cooperation experienced between Centre’s of Excellence and HR Business Partners?

1. Could you tell us how you picture/view/envision/imagine the interaction between SVP HR, the person responsible for/in charge of/manager of the business area and HR BP?

CHANGE/STABILITY: Phenomenon is *rate of change*

Problem to be addressed: How is the rate of change experienced and how does it influence the quality of HR-deliveries?

1. Do you perceive Aker Solutions as a continually changing organisation/Do you consider Aker Solutions to be a continually changing organisation?
2. Can you explain the connection/link between the organisation’s basic structure and changes in the market?

BEST PRACTICE: Phenomenon is *standardisation*

Problem to be addressed: Is there accordance between standardised and demanded HR-processes and services across Business Areas?

1. “One of the aims/goals of the new HR-model is to deliver standardized services and processes.” Do you see any challenges concerning/related to standardisation/standardising and business-specific needs?
2. Do you see a connection/link between the standardisation/standardising and buying/purchasing/using external HR-services?



JOB DEVELOPMENT: Phenomenon is *job development*

Problem to be addressed: How has the new HR-model affected the individual employee's job development?

1. Point out/to four key qualifications for an HR BP?
2. Which career path do you imagine/picture/see for an employee in a CoE?

Catchwords:

Follow-up questions:

- Is this ...
- By this do you mean
- Do you mean that
- Can you explain/elaborate what you mean when you say.....
- Can you be more specific when you describe
- Could you concretize what you mean by ...
- Can you give me an example of

Recapitulating questions:

- Have I understood you correctly when you say
- When you say that do you mean that



Appendix 7: Interview guide Aker Solutions, Business Area, Senior Vice President HR

INTERVIEWGUIDE – HR-SVP

Preparation before the interview:

- Set the air-condition
 - Water
 - Mark seats according to the model
 - Turn off cell phone
 - Ensure that the Dictaphone is working
-

Introduction/presentation of the group:

- Master students in the program ‘Organisation, Leadership and Work’ at UiO.
 - As a part of the course ‘Projectforum’ we have got an assignment from Aker Solutions to evaluate how the new HR-model is experienced by key employees. Among 20-25 individuals will be interviewed.
 - A written report will be handed in to UiO and Aker Solutions. You will be invited to a presentation of the results in the beginning of June.
 - The report and presentation will not contain any personal information that can identify you or the other informants. You are ensured full anonymity.
 - Provide letter of information/approval.
-

Warming-up questions

- Who are you? Can you tell a little bit about yourself?
 - Can you shortly tell me about your education and what you have done before you started your career in Aker Solutions?
 - For how long have you been in Aker Solutions and for how long have you been in your current position?
-

ACCOMMODATE NEEDS: *Phenomenon is delivery*

Problem to be addressed: To what extent is there accordance between goals and the general terms for HR-deliveries?

1. Could you tell us briefly about the main/key tasks for you as SVP HR?
2. Could you tell us briefly about the main/key tasks for HR BP?
3. Do you consider BP and CoE to have the necessary framework/framework conditions (it takes) to achieve good/quality HR deliveries?



IMPROVE EFFICIENCY: Phenomenon is *bottleneck*

Problem to be addressed: Are bottleneck experienced in the HR-process, if so, how are they to be met?

1. If you consider/based on a typical process for an HR-delivery between HR BP and CoE, have you experienced/do you perceive the emergence/that this causes “bottlenecks”?
2. How are these handled/met/faced?

IMPROVE QUALITY: Phenomenon is *cooperation*

Problem to be addressed: How is the quality of cooperation experienced between Centre’s of Excellence and HR Business Partners?

1. Could you tell us how you picture/view/envision/imagine the interaction between yourself, the person responsible for/in charge of/manager of the business area and HR BP?
2. Do you perceive the role of HR BP to be clearly defined?/In your opinion, is the HR BP role clearly defined?

CHANGE/STABILITY: Phenomenon is *rate of change*

Problem to be addressed: How is the rate of change experienced and how does it influence the quality of HR-deliveries?

1. Do you perceive Aker Solutions as a continually changing organisation/Do you consider Aker Solutions to be a continually changing organisation?
2. Do you see a connection/link between the pace/rate of change and the quality of HR-deliveries?

BEST PRACTICE: Phenomenon is *standardisation*

Problem to be addressed: Is there accordance between standardised and demanded HR-processes and services across Business Areas?

1. “One of the aims/goals of the new HR-model is to deliver standardized services and processes.” Do you see any challenges concerning/related to standardisation/standardising and needs specific to your business area?
2. Do you see a connection/link between the standardization/standardising and buying/purchasing/using external HR-services?



JOB DEVELOPMENT: Phenomenon is *job development*

Problem to be addressed: How has the new HR-model affected the individual employee's job development?

1. Point out/to four key qualifications for an HR BP?

Catchwords:

Follow-up questions:

- Is this ...
- By this do you mean
- Do you mean that
- Can you explain/elaborate what you mean when you say.....
- Can you be more specific when you describe
- Could you concretize what you mean by ...
- Can you give me an example of

Recapitulating questions:

- Have I understood you correctly when you say
- When you say that do you mean that



Appendix 8: Interview guide Aker Solutions, Business Area, Business Partner HR

INTERVIEWGUIDE – HR-BP

Preparation before the interview:

- Set the air-condition
 - Water
 - Mark seats according to the model
 - Turn off cell phone
 - Ensure that the Dictaphone is working
-

Introduction/presentation of the group:

- Master students in the program ‘Organisation, Leadership and Work’ at UiO.
 - As a part of the course ‘Projectforum’ we have got an assignment from Aker Solutions to evaluate how the new HR-model is experienced by key employees. Among 20-25 individuals will be interviewed.
 - A written report will be handed in to UiO and Aker Solutions. You will be invited to a presentation of the results in the beginning of June.
 - The report and presentation will not contain any personal information that can identify you or the other informants. You are ensured full anonymity.
 - Provide letter of information/approval.
-

Warming-up questions

- Who are you? Can you tell a little bit about yourself?
 - Can you shortly tell me about your education and what you have done before you started your career in Aker Solutions?
 - For how long have you been in Aker Solutions and for how long have you been in your current position?
-

ACCOMMODATE NEEDS: *Phenomenon is delivery*

Problem to be addressed: To what extent is there accordance between goals and the general terms for HR-deliveries?

1. Could you tell us briefly about the main/key tasks for you as HR BP?
 - a. (Wish to uncover if the position is: Transactional, strategic or tactical)
2. What does it take for you to perceive/experience an HR-delivery as a success?
3. Do you consider yourself to have the necessary framework/framework conditions (it takes) to achieve a successful HR-delivery?



IMPROVE EFFICIENCY: Phenomenon is *bottleneck*

Problem to be addressed: Are bottleneck experienced in the HR-process, if so, how are they to be met?

1. If you consider/based on a typical process for an HR-delivery, do you experience “bottlenecks”?
2. How are these handled/met/faced?

IMPROVE QUALITY: Phenomenon is *cooperation*

Problem to be addressed: How is the quality of cooperation experienced between Centre’s of Excellence and HR Business Partners?

1. What do you think characterizes a good cooperation with CoE?
2. If you evaluate the quality of everyday cooperation with someone in CoE, to which degree do you experience that you achieve/reach your goals/targets?
3. Do you feel/have the impression/experience that CoE knows your Business Area?
4. Do you feel/have the impression/experience that the Line Manager in your BA knows your role as HR BP?

CHANGE/STABILITY: Phenomenon is *rate of change*

Problem to be addressed: How is the rate of change experienced and how does it influence the quality of HR-deliveries?

1. Do you perceive Aker Solutions as a continually changing organisation/Do you consider Aker Solutions to be a continually changing organisation?
2. Do perceive/experience that the pace/rate of change affects the quality of HR-deliveries?

BEST PRACTICE: Phenomenon is *standardisation*

Problem to be addressed: Is there accordance between standardised and demanded HR-processes and services across Business Areas?

1. “One of the aims/goals of the new HR-model is to deliver standardised services and processes.” Do you see any challenges concerning/related to standardisation/standardising and needs specific to your business area?
2. Do you see a connection/link between the standardisation/standardising and buying/purchasing/using external HR-services?



JOB DEVELOPMENT: Phenomenon is *job development*

Problem to be addressed: How has the new HR-model affected the individual employee's job development?

1. Which key qualifications are central/essential to fill/fulfil the role as HR BP?
2. If Aker Solutions were to become a more attractive/desirable workplace for you in the future, which two factors would you highlight/point to?

Catchwords:

Follow-up questions:

- Is this ...
- By this do you mean
- Do you mean that
- Can you explain/elaborate what you mean when you say.....
- Can you be more specific when you describe
- Could you concretize what you mean by ...
- Can you give me an example of

Recapitulating questions:

- Have I understood you correctly when you say
- When you say that do you mean that



Appendix 9 (Interview guide Aker Solutions, Centre of Excellence)

INTERVIEWGUIDE – HR-COE

Preparation before the interview:

- Set the air-condition
 - Water
 - Mark seats according to the model
 - Turn off cell phone
 - Ensure that the Dictaphone is working
-

Introduction/presentation of the group:

- Master students in the program ‘Organisation, Leadership and Work’ at UiO.
 - As a part of the course ‘Projectforum’ we have got an assignment from Aker Solutions to evaluate how the new HR-model is experienced by key employees. Among 20-25 individuals will be interviewed.
 - A written report will be handed in to UiO and Aker Solutions. You will be invited to a presentation of the results in the beginning of June.
 - The report and presentation will not contain any personal information that can identify you or the other informants. You are ensured full anonymity.
 - Provide letter of information/approval.
-

Warming-up questions

- Who are you? Can you tell a little bit about yourself?
 - Can you shortly tell me about your education and what you have done before you started your career in Aker Solutions?
 - For how long have you been in Aker Solutions and for how long have you been in your current position?
-

ACCOMMODATE NEEDS: *Phenomenon is delivery*

Problem to be addressed: To what extent is there accordance between goals and the general terms for HR-deliveries?

1. Could you tell us briefly about the main/key tasks for you in your CoE?
 - a. (Wish to uncover if the position is: Transactional, strategic or tactical)
2. What does it take for you to perceive/experience an HR-delivery as a success?
3. Do you consider yourself to have the necessary framework/framework conditions (it takes) to achieve a successful HR-delivery?



IMPROVE EFFICIENCY: Phenomenon is *bottleneck*

Problem to be addressed: Are bottleneck experienced in the HR-process, if so, how are they to be met?

1. If you consider/based on a typical process for an HR-delivery, do you experience “bottlenecks”?
2. How are these handled/met/faced?

IMPROVE QUALITY: Phenomenon is *cooperation*

Problem to be addressed: How is the quality of cooperation experienced between Centre’s of Excellence and HR Business Partners?

1. What do you think characterizes a good cooperation with HR BP?
2. If you evaluate the quality of everyday cooperation with an HR BP, to which degree do you experience that you achieve/reach your goals/targets?
3. Do you think it is important to have extensive/in-depth knowledge of the activities in the Business Areas that you serve/service?

CHANGE/STABILITY: Phenomenon is *rate of change*

Problem to be addressed: How is the rate of change experienced and how does it influence the quality of HR-deliveries?

1. Do you perceive Aker Solutions as a continually changing organisation/Do you consider Aker Solutions to be a continually changing organisation?
2. Do perceive/experience that the pace/rate of change affects the quality of HR-deliveries?

BEST PRACTICE: Phenomenon is *standardisation*

Problem to be addressed: Is there accordance between standardised and demanded HR-processes and services across Business Areas?

1. “One of the aims/goals of the new HR-model is to deliver standardised services and processes.” Do you see any challenges concerning/related to standardisation/standardising and needs specific to different business area?
2. Do you see a connection/link between the standardisation/standardising and buying/purchasing/using external HR-services?



JOB DEVELOPMENT: Phenomenon is *job development*

Problem to be addressed: How has the new HR-model affected the individual employee's job development?

1. How do you see your future/continued career/career course/career path in Aker Solutions?
2. Has the new HR-model affected your work/career prospects in Aker Solutions?
3. How has the new HR-model affected your view/perception of Aker Solutions as an attractive/desirable employer?
4. If Aker Solutions were to become a more attractive/desirable workplace for you in the future, which two factors would you highlight/point to?

Catchwords:

Follow-up questions:

- Is this ...
- By this do you mean
- Do you mean that
- Can you explain/elaborate what you mean when you say.....
- Can you be more specific when you describe
- Could you concretize what you mean by ...
- Can you give me an example of

Recapitulating questions:

- Have I understood you correctly when you say
- When you say that do you mean that

Appendix 10: Interviewing and data coding guidelines

PR. INTERVIEW		
During the interview		
Participants	Interviewer 1	Interviewer 2
(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 148-149)	Tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution of the structured part of the interview • Responsible for the time frame • Structuring questions 	Tasks to achieve depth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up questions • Specifying questions Tasks to achieve verification level 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretive question based on recapitulation of the interviewees answer
	Additional tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking notes • capture possible quotations 	Additional tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking notes • capture possible quotations
After the interview		
Participants	Interviewer 1	Interviewer 2
	Hearing through the entire interview again to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrich the understanding attained by the interviewer to achieve verification level 2 • upgrade qualitative of notes • Identify additional. possible quotes 	Hearing through the entire interview again to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrich the understanding attained by the interviewer to achieve verification level 2 • upgrade qualitative of notes • Identify additional. possible quotes
Participants	Joint activity	
(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 221)	Negotiation between the interviewers to achieve verification level 3 by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determining the essential statements from the answers to each of the questions asked in the interview guide including various, additional questions • formulating a recapitulation of the answers to construct an answer to each of the six supporting research questions based on the operationalized questions and obtained answers <p>Negotiation of possible quotes that reflect an essential taking.</p> <p>Filling out the individual interview book with the above statements as well as the interview book containing the total sum of interview statements</p>	



TOTAL FROM ALL INTERVIEWS	
Participants	The research group
	<p>Negotiation between the entire group to achieve verification level 4 of the aggregated takings by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determining the essential statements from the answers to each of the questions asked in the interview guide including various, additional questions • determining the central answers to each of the six supporting research questions <p>The research group will incorporate two perspectives where possible in the overall negotiation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a crude scale of frequency to better elaborate the strength of the findings • a division of answer based on organizational role and authority the central divider being the direct possibility to affect the frame of operations. <p>A further point of negotiation is answers/trends/indicators elucidating structural elements pointing to organizational design issues with possible interest for a discussion up against a theoretical base.</p> <p>The outcome of these negotiations is the direct inputs to the presentation and discussing of the central finding in the research to be included in the final report.</p>



Appendix 11 (Individual interviewing book)

KODEBOK PR. INTERVJU			
Informant	Business Division	Position	Level (premisstager/premissgiver)
Dato	Intervjuer 1	Intervjuer 2	Lydopptak
Særlige hendelser			

Parameter 1				
Spm. 1	Spm.2	Spm. 3	Spm. 4	Spm. 5
Sammenfatning av Parameter 1:				
Citat-tider:				
Citattekst:				

Etc....

Appendix 13: Revised project model

