

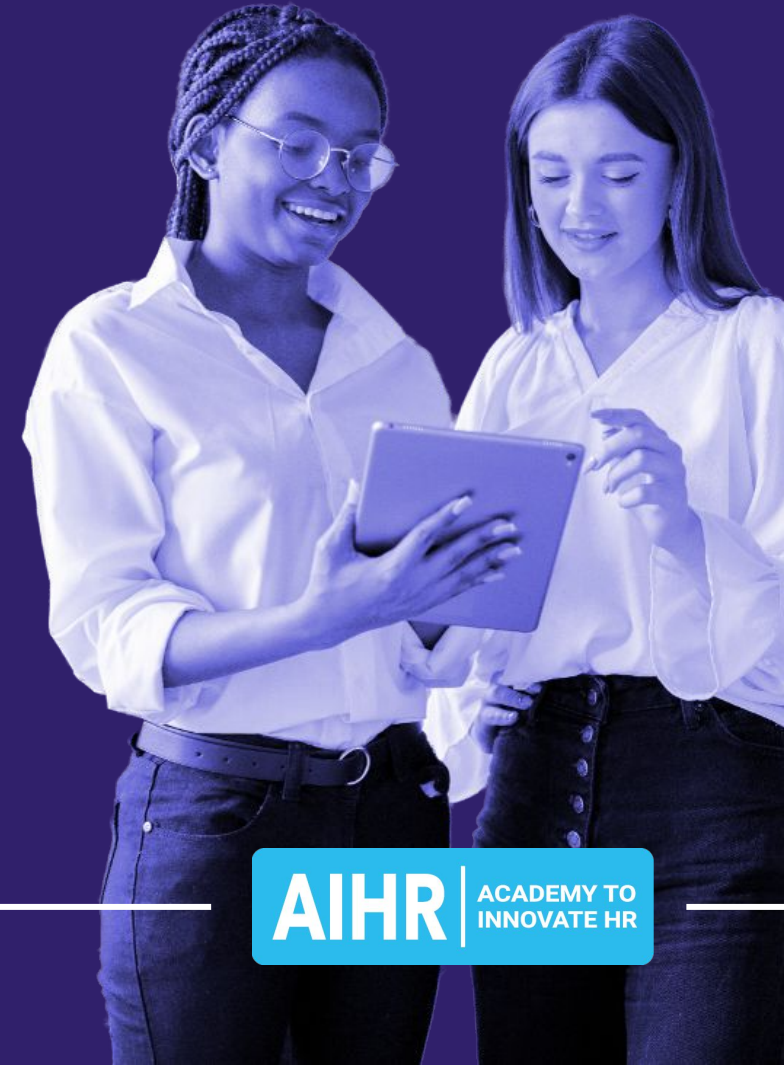
*People Strategy:*

# Is people strategy dead or just forgotten?

Dr Marna van der Merwe

Dr Dieter Veldsman

*June 6, 2024*



# Session Overview

---

**1**

Context to the topic  
of 'People Strategy'

**2**

3 key takeaways from  
our experience

**3**

How to take action  
based on the insights



1

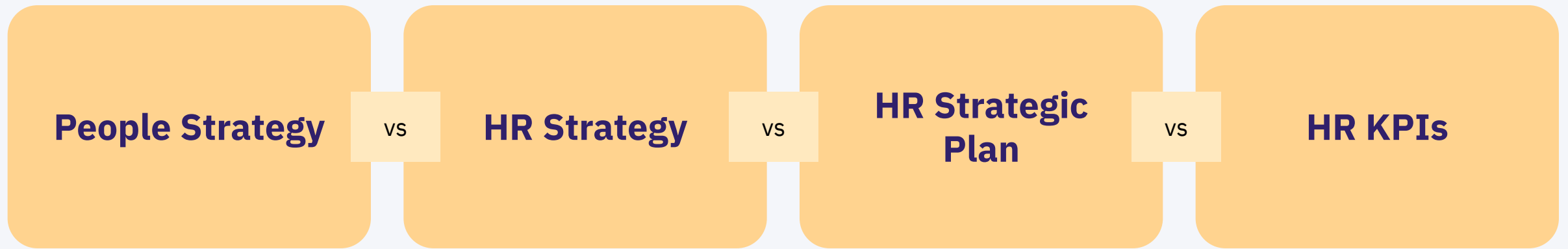
# Context to the topic of 'People Strategy'

## What do you believe is the purpose of a people strategy?

- a. To outline HR's focus areas and deliverables
- b. To define the people philosophy for the business
- c. To communicate HR's value proposition to the business
- d. To create a competitive advantage for the business in attracting and retaining talent



# What do we mean with 'People Strategy'?



# Our research into this topic

“ Does a good people have the potential to create a competitive advantage? ”

What *focus areas* are included in people strategies and how do we *measure* them?

To what extent are people strategies influenced by and aligned to *business focus areas*?

How does HR effectively set themselves up to *execute* on people strategy?

50

successful companies  
with publicly available  
information on their  
people strategy



**Qualitative** document analysis +  
**workforce data**

# Our research into this topic

25

Fortune 500  
companies

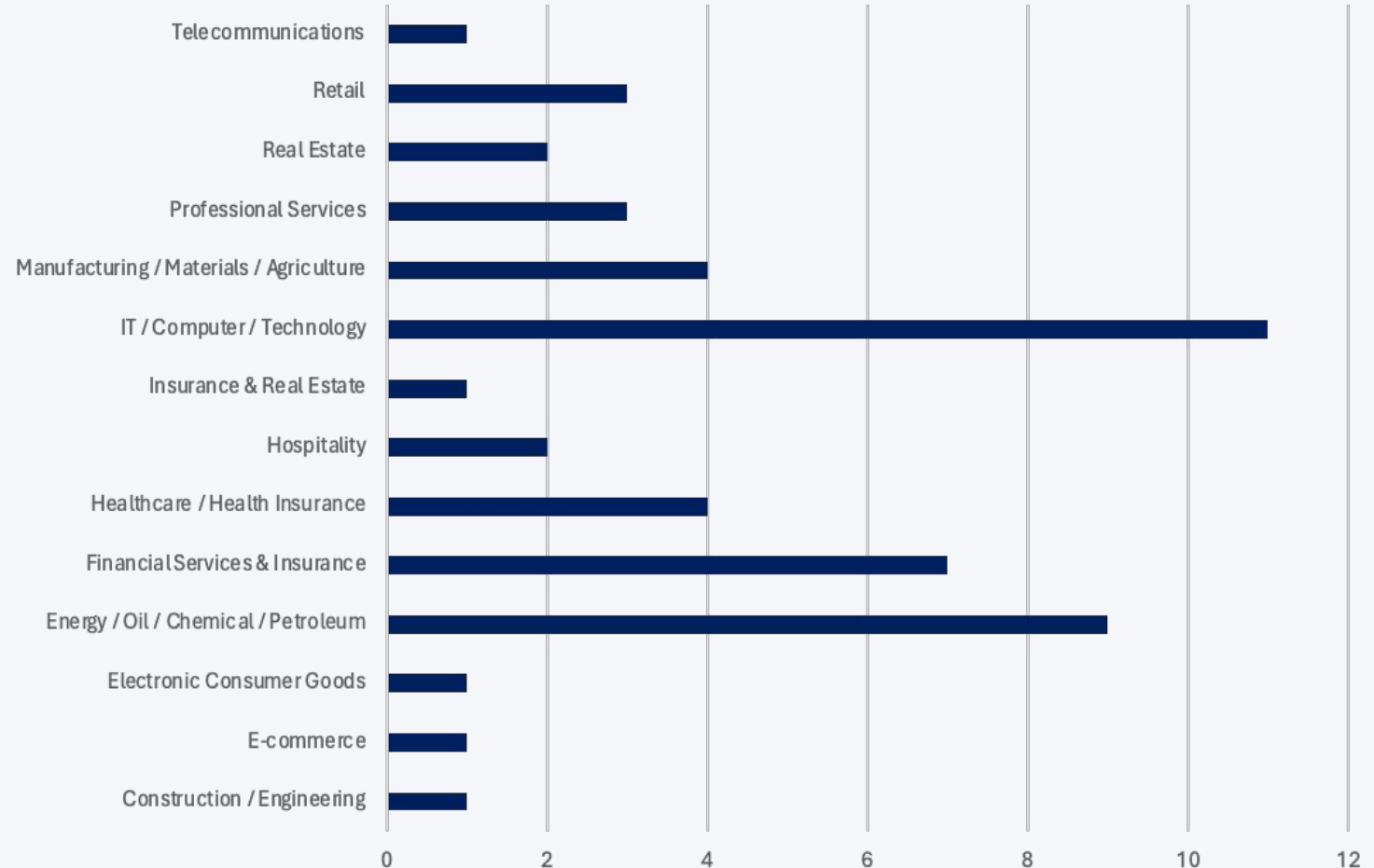
25

Great Place to  
Work companies

## ***Evaluation criteria:***

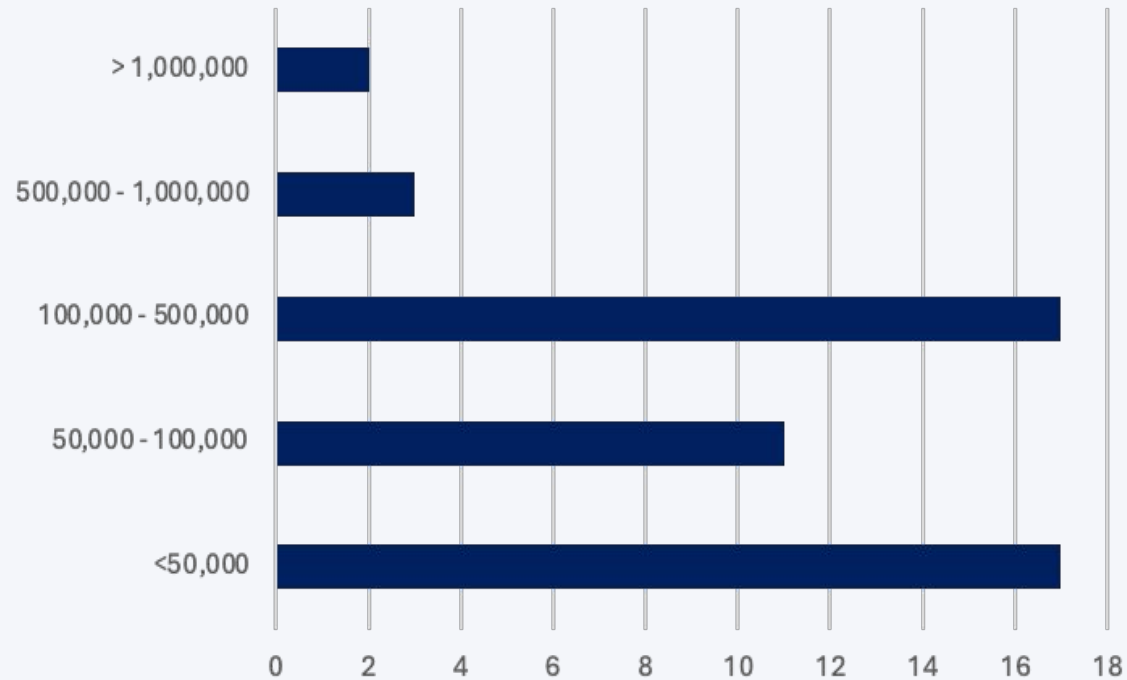
- Business alignment of strategy and focus areas
- Risks and governance
- Visible KPIs
- Core focus areas
- Translation into functional HR domains
- HR workforce data

## ***Industries:***

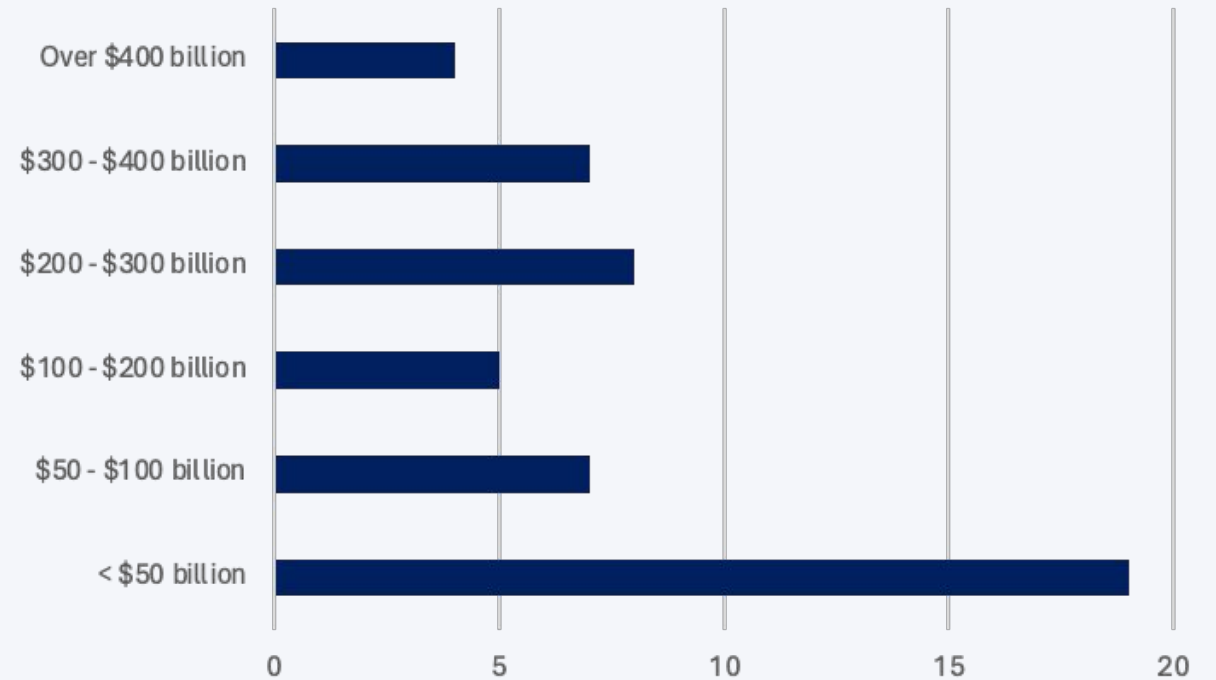


# Our research into this topic

**Workforce size:**



**Revenue:**





A woman and a man are looking at a laptop screen. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right, wearing glasses. They are both smiling and appear to be working together. The image is overlaid with a blue tint.

2

# 3 key takeaways from our experience

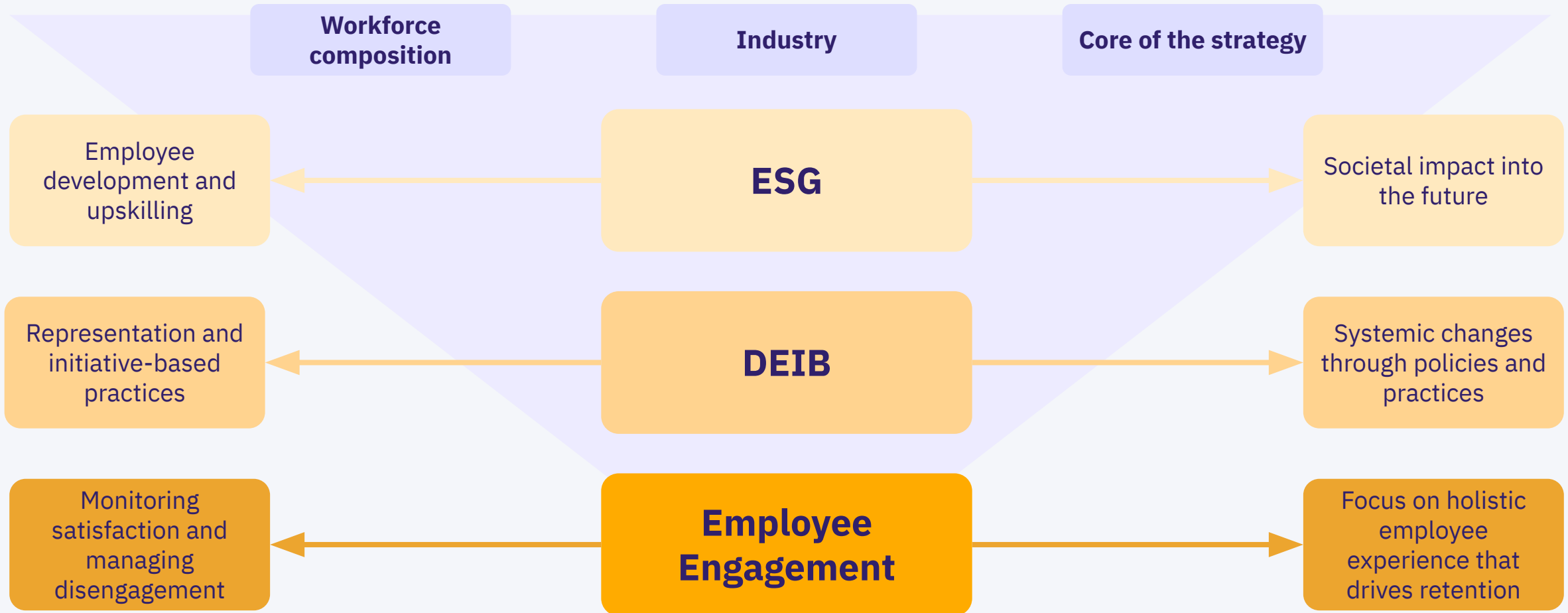
**What do you think all these companies have in common in their people strategy?**

- a. Employee experience
- b. Talent management
- c. DEIB
- d. Strategic risk management
- e. ESG
- f. Employee engagement
- g. Performance management



# Insight #1

## Similar, but different focus areas



## Insight #1

# Similar, but different focus areas

### Implications

- Business context and operating environment has an impact
- Core areas to focus on in a good people strategy
- Impact should be described in concrete terms - what does this mean within our context?

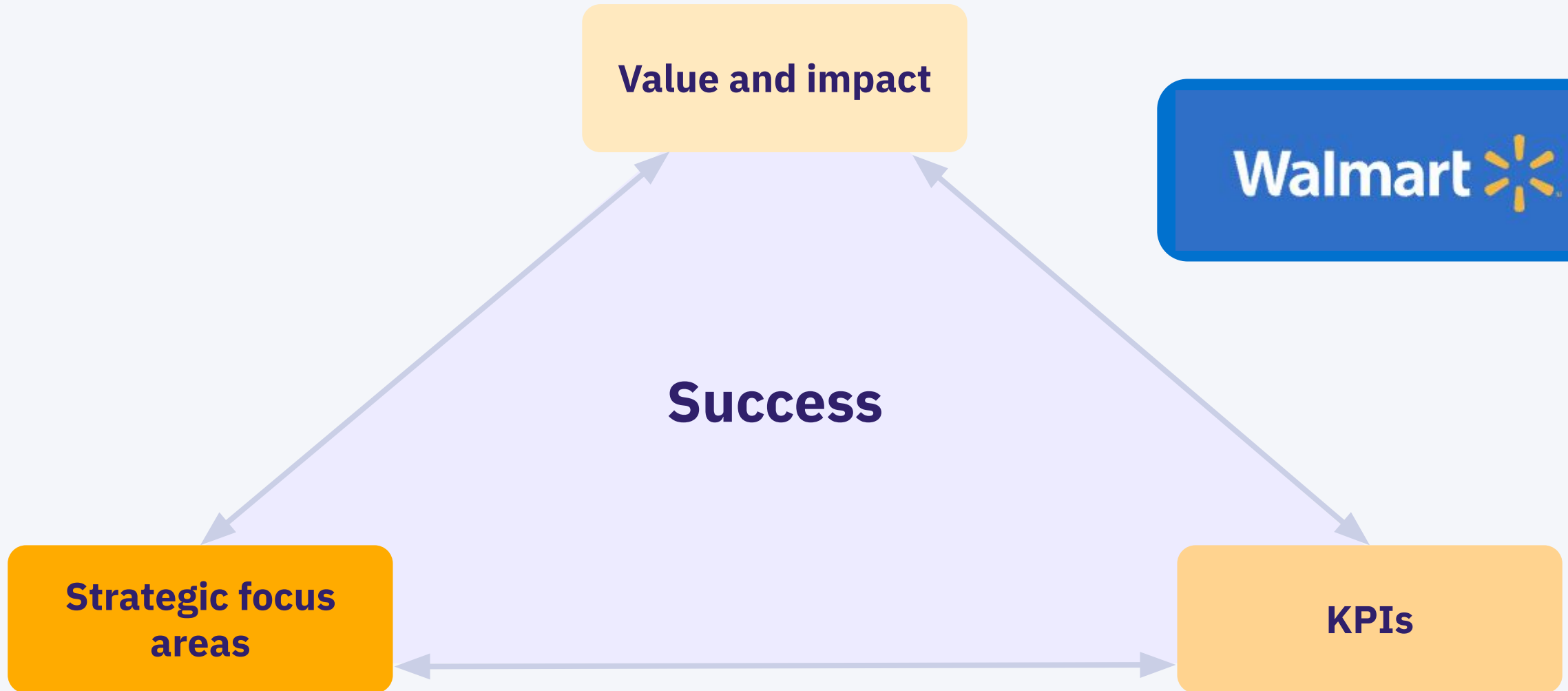


### Actions to take:

1. Does the people strategy accurately reflect the business context, as well as the business realities?
2. Is there a focus on ESG, DEIB and employee engagement to support this?

## Insight #2

Success > Measurable outcomes + KPIs



## Insight #2

# Success > Measurable outcomes + KPIs

### Implications

- HR's value and impact has be defined and communicated to business through aligned strategic focus areas
- KPI's provide insight into tracking strategic impact, but also informs impact and value



### **Actions to take:**

1. Does the strategic focus areas reflect HR's intended impact?
2. Do KPIs provide insight into the extent to which business impact is delivered or are they operationally focused?

# Who is the target audience for the people strategy?

- a. Employees
- b. Line managers
- c. Prospective employees / talent
- d. CEO and executive team
- e. Shareholders



## Insight #3

# Different stakeholders, different translations





## Insight #3

# Different stakeholders, different translations

### Implications

- People strategy has to be simplified, to be translated
- You have to understand your stakeholder landscape
- Congruence of the core strategy across various audiences is critical



### Actions to take:

1. What does your strategy 1-pager look like?
2. What are the various talking points you would highlight when speaking to various stakeholders?




3

# How to take action based on the insights

# 3 action steps to get the best out of your people strategy

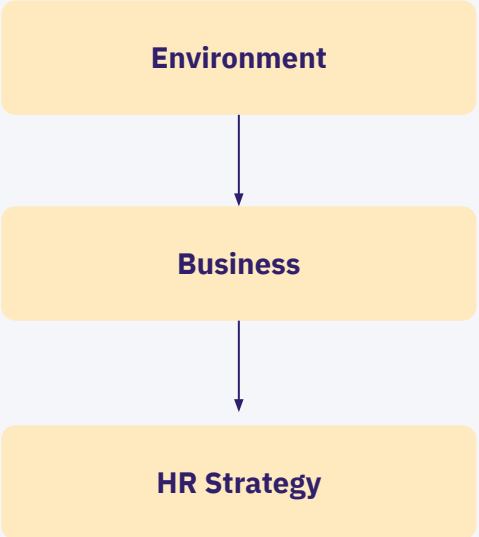
## #1 | Audit your current people strategy

- 
- Is your strategy clear about the core of the business and people strategy (human-centred, performance-centred, etc)
  - How does your strategy include DEIB, ESG and employee engagement as core components of the strategy?
  - Does the strategy adequately consider industry, legislative and external factors in how it differentiates itself?
  - Do you proactively manage risks as part of your people strategy?
  - Do your KPIs reflect strategic focus areas and showcase HR impact?

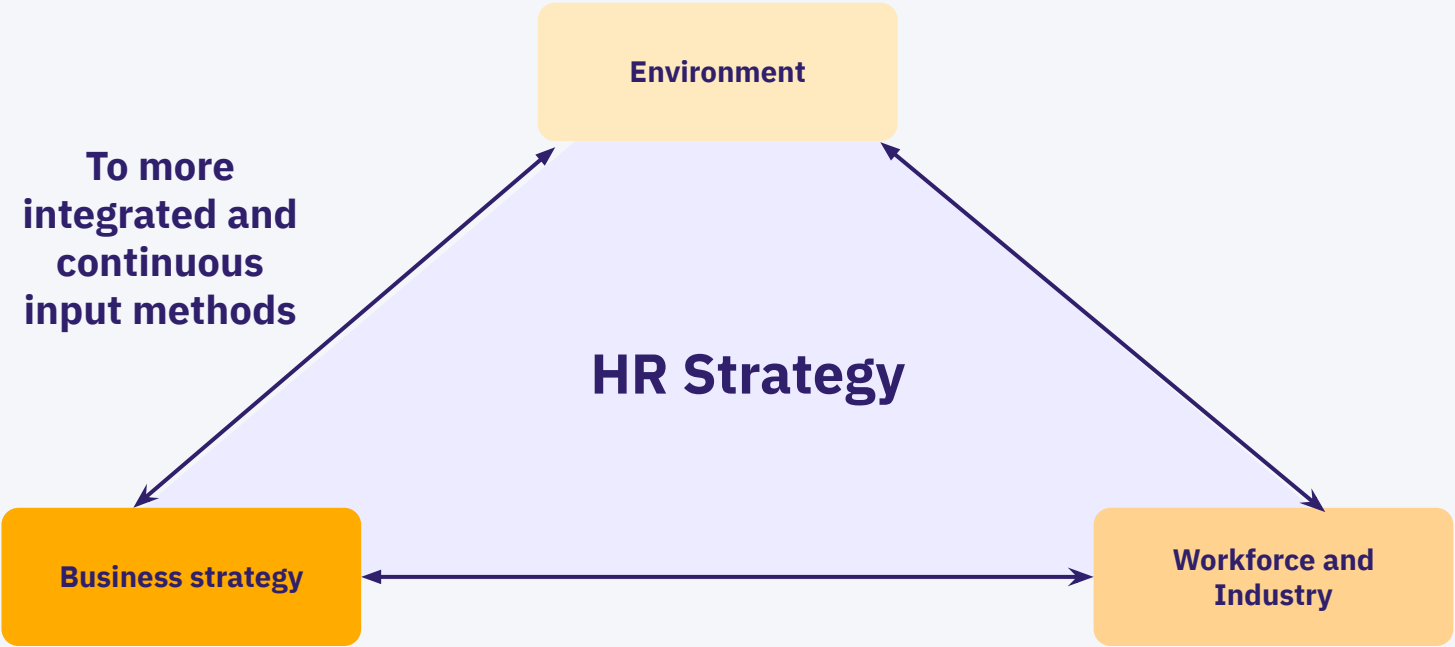
# 3 action steps to get the best out of your people strategy

## #2 | Redefine the people strategy process

Move away from linear approaches

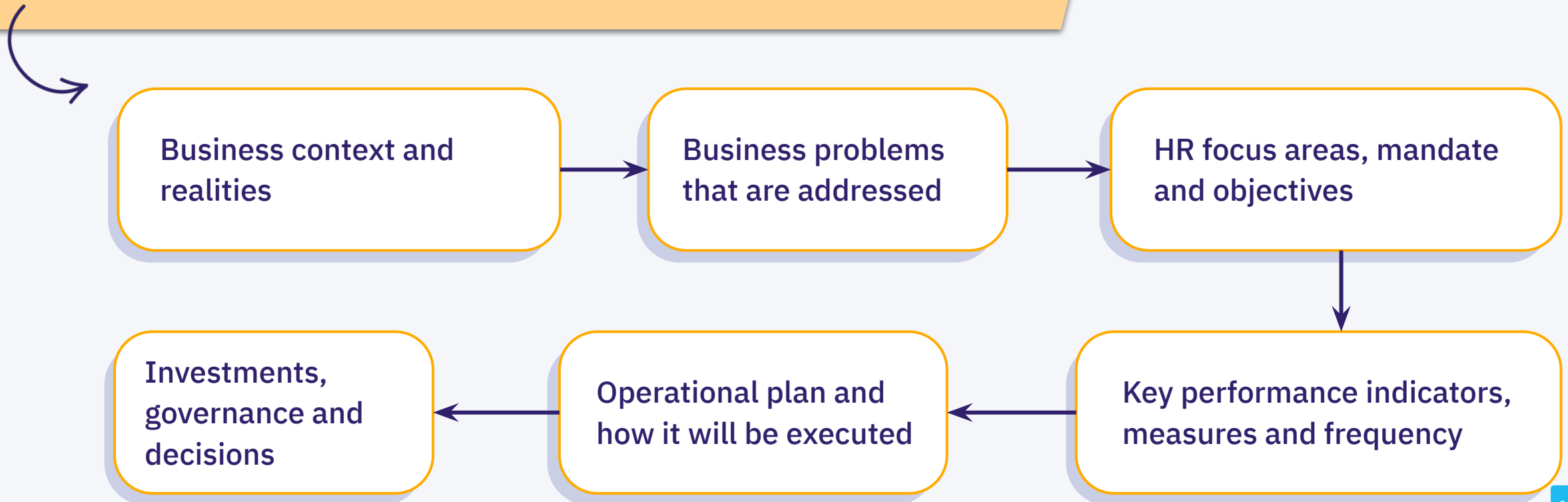


To more integrated and continuous input methods



# 3 action steps to get the best out of your people strategy

## #3 | Include content that speaks to all stakeholders





**Any questions?  
Ask away!**