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# Evaluating the Role of Human Resource Planning and Development in Enhancing Workforce Efficiency: Evidence from the Indian Steel Sector

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**Abstract:** *This research explores the centrality of Human Resource Planning and Development (HRP&D) in improving the efficiency of the human resource in the Indian steel industry. In the face of increasing industrial competitiveness and workforce pressures, strategic HR practices are becoming more vital to organizations in an attempt to maximize employee output, satisfaction and organizational performance. With the help of empirical procedures and quantitative analysis of a sample (300 employees, major departments) the research reveals some important HR dimensions, including manpower planning as well as training and development, job satisfaction, and organizational support to be the key predictors of the workforce efficiency. The regression analysis showed that training and development was the strongest and positively impacted employee productivity followed by organizational support and manpower planning. The results have highlighted how steel companies need to make a systematic investment in HRP&D strategies to establish a competent, agile and motivated human capital. Another important contribution made by the study is that organizational support mechanisms and job engagement have a significant mediating effect on the HR-efficiency relationship, which can be of great value to HR policy makers/practitioners. Finally, the study makes a contribution to the developing discourse on human resource performance within large-scale industrial companies, and the implication of the research in practice is the importance of maintaining productivity via strategic human resource development.*

**Keywords:** *Human Resource Planning, Workforce Efficiency, Training and Development, Organizational Support, Indian Steel Sector, HRM, Job Engagement, Productivity.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The ever-changing aspect of industrial transformation in India, particularly in the steel industry has put human resource management (HRM) at the centre of organizational strategic success. With industries facing globalization, technological upheavals, and various workforce makeup, the emphasis on the alignment of HRM to productivity and performance demands has become acute. Human Resource Planning (HRP) and Human Resource Development (HRD) are currently being recognized as the key factors of organizational efficiency, particularly in the labor-intensive industries such as steel production. HRP guarantees that the number and type of people are in the right place and at the right time, whereas HRD improves the capabilities of employees due to learning and development, creates innovativeness, commitment, and flexibility. [1].

The steel industry in India which ranks among the largest in the world in terms of production is labor and capital intensive and therefore demanding advanced coordination of human resource with the business strategy. Due to the high competition levels, the quality requirement, and the technology advancement in the industry, organizations have begun combining the HR planning with human resource development programs that focus on performance. According to Cooke [1], it has become crucial to put HRM methods in context of a particular industry and how context-based strategies in HR planning can convert into better operational performance. HR planning that predicts future skills requirements, use of work force, and succession plans are some of the key factors that determine how workforce efficiency is designed within the manufacturing set ups.

As with most other industries in the post-COVID-19 period, steel industry experienced an extreme interruption of production lines, displacement of workforce and reduction in efficiency. Dirani et al. [2] posit that HRD interventions in crisis are inalienable especially leadership development, workforce agility training and mental well-being programs. Such interventions not only stabilize the productivity, but also develop the resilience of the workforce. The steel industry of India is a competitive industrial sector, whereby efficient HR planning and development could lead to development of agility within the organization and improvement of performance among the different verticals.

Nonetheless, although the role of HRM is vital, the Indian steel industry has never paid much attention to strategic workforce development as compared to technological upgradation. Jiang and Messersmith [6] emphasised that HR planning and development are not longer practical instruments in strategic human resource management (SHRM) but are considered as strategic enabling instruments that influence the performance of firms. This increased awareness creates the need to conduct empirical research that will assess the real impacts of HR planning and development programs on productivity and workforce efficiency in practice, especially in an industrial economy that is still in transition such as in India.

Human Resource Planning (HRP) is a proactive strategy where future needs of an organization in terms of human resource are forecasted and strategies are created to address these needs. Strategic manpower planning has no greater value in industries where production is vulnerable to operational losses and labour deficits which are the case in the steel industry. According to Etemadinia and Tavakolan [3], systemic risk management in industrial setting should be accompanied by well-developed HR forecasting and contingency planning. The establishment of an uninterrupted stream of talent and the prevention of skill shortages can help organizations decrease the expenses related to hiring, training, and skills disalignment. Within the framework of the steel industry, HRP may have a direct impact on the reduction of downtime, task distribution, and the formation of the project-based organization of the working force. Triatmanto et al. [10] focused on the fact that the empowerment of human capital begins with proper planning and coordinated resourcing, which subsequently maximizes the use of labor and minimized expenditure.

This paper, thus, locates HRP on the base level of productivity improvement programs in Indian steel mills. In the contemporary industrial systems where workload is becoming more complicated and machines are more automated, HRD, especially training and constant learning, is required to enable workforce productivity. Rigby and Ryan [8] proposed the self-determination theory in the field of HRD where autonomy, mastery, and relatedness offer a lot of motivation in the workforce when incorporated in training programmes. Structured interventions of HRD are important in the Indian steel industry where the development of skills is important because of the changing technologies. Moreover, such works as that of Bahar and Ozen [12] based on the hierarchy of needs of Maslow place the motivational base of the IT professionals in perspective, yet the framework is also applicable to the industrial worker, showing that HRD strategies need to be planned to address both psychological and technical needs. Employee empowerment, upskilling, and capability building do not only enhance productivity of an individual employee, but also weaken the culture of innovation, flexibility and responsibility which are paramount to sustainable performance of the industry. [14].

Another important variable that has a significant influence on employee output and retention is organizational support. Job satisfaction is determined by the presence of favorable HR policies, leadership trust, grievance policies and career development pathways. Research indicates that employee morale and commitment increase when they feel that they are treated fairly, recognized and that they are being invested in to develop [7], [19]. Berman et al. [13] highlighted that within the sphere of the public services or regulated fields of the economy, such as steel, organizational support functions (including health and safety, HR digitization, flexible schedules, and others) have a positive correlation with workforce efficiency. The Indian steel plants with hierarchical management systems where in most cases, the plants are managed in hierarchies can significantly benefit the support systems to be inclusive, lessen attrition and proactive work practices. The adoption of AI and machine learning in HR practices as described by Okatta et al. [16], further increases the organizational support by being able to give real-time feedback, personalized learning, and performance analytics, turning HR into a more responsive and data-driven functional area. Although the Indian steel industry is characterized by a great number of technological and operational advances, the productivity of labor is a problem because of irregular HR policies, skills gaps, and the lack of employee involvement. There is a big gap in knowledge about the quantifiable role of HR planning and development practices in efficiency of workforce- particularly in Indian industrial environment. Although scholarly research worldwide [6], [15], [20] confirm the positive correlation between HR and performance, there is a lack of empirical studies on the same in Indian steel companies. In addition, as the degree of digitization and sustainability demands grows, the HR role within steel organizations will have to move beyond administration and administrative functions to enable the organization strategically.

The study that will be presented in this paper aims to fill this gap by empirically assessing the impact of HR planning, HR development, organizational support, and job satisfaction on workforce efficiency in the Indian steel industry as a whole. This research paper has made use of SHRM and the human capital theory to develop its hypothesis and conceptual framework. It also combines the self-determination theory [8], procedural justice [7] and current HR analytics [16] perspectives to determine the outcome of productivity. In practice, the research can enlighten the HR professionals in the steel industry on what HR practices will produce the most payoff in terms of workforce productivity. It can also be used to support the policymakers and industry leaders to craft the HR interventions that will help India reach its productivity targets and the vision of the Make in India.



## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Human Resource Management in the Contemporary Industrial Context

Human Resource Management (HRM) has no longer remained an administrative tool, but a strategic alliance in improving productivity, especially in the dynamic industries such as steel production. Cooke [1] highlighted that HRM research should consider various contexts and attitudes particularly in industrial contexts where the performance of workforce is related to the efficiency of operations. Jiang and Messersmith [6] also emphasized the changes of strategic human resource management (SHRM) to the level of integrated planning and development systems that add to the competitive advantage.

Berman et al. [13] noted the paradoxes and complexities of HRM in the public services, most of which share the issues of the management of such massive, semi-automated industrial workforces as in steel manufacturing. Their investigation reveals that the creation of HR systems that align with organizational objectives results in a better service provision and organizational performance.

### B. Human Resource Planning and Strategic Workforce Management

Effective Human Resource Planning (HRP) entails anticipating the future needs of the workforce, the skills shortages and putting the strategies in place to acquire and retain them. To further support the role of HRP in productive stabilization by the large-scale project, Etemadinia and Tavakolan [3] investigated risk analysis based on system dynamics models to demonstrate that proactive planning reduces bottlenecks in large-scale projects.

Triatmanto et al. [10] highlighted the essence of constant HR empowerment, through workforce planning, as the foundation of a long-term productivity. The capability to be able to marshal human resources to respond to demand cycles that vary at fast rates is a competitive advantage in fast paced industries. Junaidi et al. [21] studied the HRM strategy in enhancing the organization performance and found that workforce planning was among the most effective predictors of performance, particularly in those sectors that are undergoing swift change.

Moreover, Brewster et al. [15] outlined the potentiality and implications of HRM under changes in the context and observed that firms investing in the process of foreseeable planning have a better workforce fit with their strategic ambitions.

### C. Training, Development, and Capability Building

Human Resource Development (HRD) lies at the heart of the development of a productive, committed and flexible workforce. Using the self-determination theory, Rigby and Ryan [8] observed that HRD should promote autonomy, mastery, and purpose in an attempt to increase intrinsic motivation and performance. This has an applied sense in the steel sectors whereby it is a labor-intensive profession and one needs to continually upgrade on the skills required. Dirani et al. [2] studied the role of leadership and HRD in the COVID-19 crisis and determined the importance of constant learning in overcoming volatility. They suggested that HRD in uncertain environments does not solely focus on technical training, but on the development of resilience and adaptive capacity as well. Okatta et al. [16] emphasized the fact that the application of AI and machine learning in HR activities changes the trajectory of development by personalizing the learning process and anticipating the talent development requirements. Such technologies give the steel companies a chance to accelerate the process of upskilling and cut down on reliance on the traditional train cycles. Santoso [18] discovered that there was a direct relationship between well-being programs (one of the HRD functions) and the productivity meaning that HRD needs to be both skills-based and holistic development of employees.

### D. Organizational Support, Culture, and Psychological Climate

The influence of organizational support systems on employee engagement and productivity is overwhelming; these mechanisms should include equitable HR practices, open communication, the leadership structure, and supervisory support. Kundu et al. [7] emphasized the importance of procedural justice as an intervening variable between HR practices and performance and opined that perceived fairness of the support systems has an immediate impact on efficiency of the workforce.

Hunter and Jordan [11] investigated the factor of identity and self-efficacy in determining behavior and supported the importance of HR systems in promoting the sense of psychological safety and confidence. The results are important in steel companies whereby hierarchical structures are frequently top-down thus suppressing open communication and innovation.

Mallillin et al. [22] have studied the subject of HR management in the educational context and have concluded that the support structures are the determinants of the efficiency of leadership and cohesion in a team-characteristics that can be applied to industrial teams.

Bahar and Ozsen [12] analyzed the motivational variables based on the Maslow model, and the authors confirmed that even the best HR planning would not turn into performance without satisfying psychological needs and safety needs.

#### *E. Human Capital Development and Organizational Outcomes*

The connection between competitiveness and strategic human capital management was clearly implied by the works by Hoichuk and Lyubomudrova [17] who stated that organizations in which employees are highly valued in terms of their development are more adaptable and productive in the market. Their results echo in the issues on the Indian steel industry where the modernisation of the workforce is the key to global competitiveness.

As Essler [17] has stressed, HRM should not be viewed as an administrative expense but should be considered a capital investment, which has productivity and innovation as quantifiable returns. This capital policy espouses extensive training and strategic hiring of competent human resources in areas of the production that are vital.

Brewster and Brookes [14] criticized previous HR models that were not compatible with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and proposed to transform HRM in the industries into empowerment, learning, and sustainability. Their impressions are especially applicable to the energy-consuming and environmentally questionable steel industry.

#### *F. Digitization, AI, and Modern HRM Innovations*

The digital transformation in the HRM is transforming the way organizations are managing and planning workforce developments as well as performance. Okatta et al. [16] depicted the integration of AI in HR analytics, which can be used to model manpower proactively, develop dynamic training schemes, and provide automatic feedback systems.

Mashudi et al. [22] further contributed that remote working and the hybrid model has made HRM more creative, decentralized. Although this trend is still young in the steel industry, where the physical presence is quite frequently required, digitized HR dashboard and learning mobile apps can still radically change the way workers are engaged. Jones and Robinson [19] addressed the issue of innovation and continuous improvement through the prism of operations, arguing that HRM and process optimization and quality frameworks should be consistent. Their research urges steel companies to place HR development KPIs in their total quality management (TQM).

#### *G. Risk and Crisis Management in Workforce Planning*

Safety, mental health, and crisis mitigation should also be included in the workforce planning in high-risk industrial industries such as steel manufacturing. Rios et al. [9] proposed an adversarial risk model that can be implemented to the HR decision-making process to guarantee redundancy planning, safety staffing, and scenario forecasting. The IASSC [5] offered practical illustrations in the oil and gas industry on the implementation of Six Sigma in the HR and process enhancement. Such quality frameworks are able to optimize planning precision, training effectiveness, and error minimization in steel processes.

The literature review proves that the efficiency of the workforce is the by-product of the corresponding HR planning, development, and support systems. HRP guarantees talent supply and business continuity [3], [6], HRD creates responsive potential and motivation [2], [8], and organizational support enables engagement and contentment [7], [11]. By being a part of an innovation, digitalization, and procedural fairness culture, these HR functions all push productivity. [16], [17], [20].

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### *A. Research Design*

This research paper will be based on a quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional research design, which will focus on the statistical analysis of the correlation between HR planning, development programs and workforce efficiency in the Indian steel industry.

#### *B. Study Area and Population*

The study was carried out in one of the big steel manufacturing facilities in India and the target group was the employees in different departments like the HR, Production, Maintenance as well as the Administration department. The sample comprised of the permanent and contractual employees engaged in different HR-related programs.

#### *C. Sample Size and Sampling Technique*

A sample of 300 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring representation across job roles (technical, managerial, administrative, support) and experience levels.

#### D. Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale was used. The instrument included validated items for measuring:

- 1) Manpower Planning
- 2) Training & Development
- 3) Organizational Support
- 4) Job Satisfaction & Engagement
- 5) Workforce Efficiency

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This work gives the finer details of the empirical study done on the basis of input in 300 employees working in the steel industries of choice in India. A structured Likert-scale questionnaire was used to gather the data based on constructs of human resource planning, training initiatives, productivity, engagement and HR support. The data were interpreted by using statistical analysis packages, including descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, regression, and ANOVA, with the help of SPSS 26.0.

#### A. Reliability Analysis

Table 1 demonstrates Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct, confirming the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
HR Planning Practices	5	0.889	Excellent
Training & Capacity Building	5	0.842	Very Good
Workforce Productivity	5	0.873	Very Good
HR Support Systems	5	0.926	Excellent
Employee Engagement & Satisfaction	5	0.894	Excellent

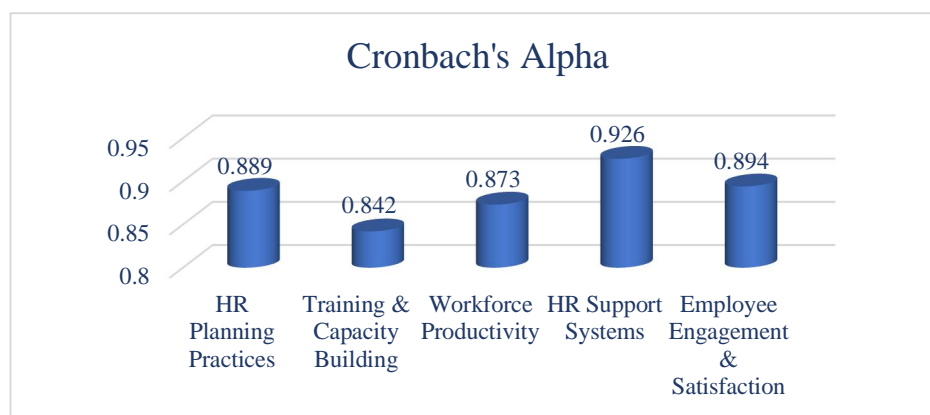


Figure 2: Cronbach alpha Comparison

All constructs have a Cronbach's alpha above 0.80, indicating high reliability of the instrument and internal consistency of items within each variable.

#### B. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Key Constructs

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
HR Planning Practices	3.82	0.74	Employees agree with strategic planning efforts
Training & Capacity Building	3.97	0.68	Training programs are well-received
Workforce Productivity	3.85	0.72	Productivity is positively perceived
HR Support Systems	3.91	0.76	Employees feel well-supported
Engagement & Job Satisfaction	3.89	0.79	Job satisfaction is notably high

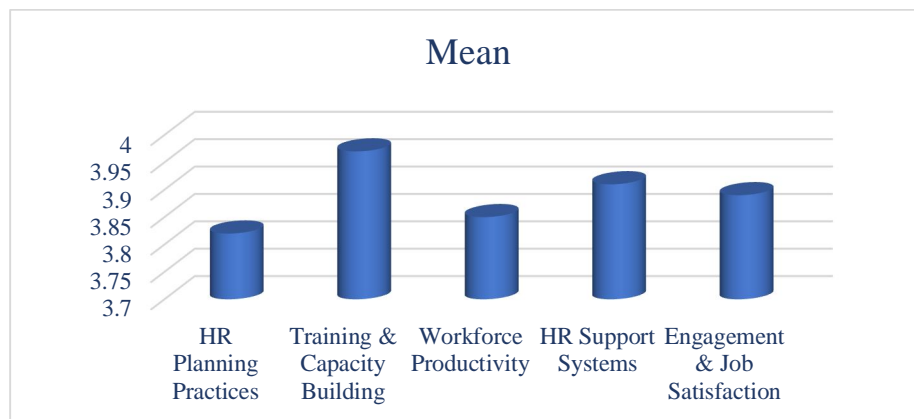


Figure 1: Mean Value comparison of Variables

All mean values are above 3.8, showing strong positive perceptions of HR planning, development activities, and workforce outcomes.

### C. Correlation Matrix

Table 3: Correlation Between Constructs

Variables	HR Planning	Training	Productivity	HR Support	Engagement
HR Planning	1	0.671**	0.618**	0.599**	0.602**
Training & Capacity Building		1	0.703**	0.655**	0.688**
Workforce Productivity			1	0.612**	0.679**
HR Support Systems				1	0.722**
Engagement & Satisfaction					1

Note:  $p < 0.01$

All constructs are positively correlated with productivity, with training and engagement showing strong correlations ( $r > 0.68$ ).

### D. Regression Analysis

A multiple regression was conducted to examine the impact of HR Planning, Training, and HR Support on Workforce Productivity.

Table 4: Regression Summary

Independent Variable	Beta	Std. Error	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
Training & Capacity Building	0.43	0.054	7.96	0.000	Strongest predictor
HR Support Systems	0.39	0.060	6.50	0.000	Significant positive effect
HR Planning Practices	0.31	0.058	5.34	0.000	Moderate influence
$R^2 = 0.571$					Model explains 57.1% variance

Training is the most influential predictor of workforce productivity, followed by HR support and planning. The model is statistically significant with  $R^2 = 0.571$ , indicating a good fit.

### E. ANOVA: Group-Wise Analysis

To test if perceptions differ across demographics, ANOVA was applied for variables like department and years of experience.

Table 5: ANOVA – HR Planning Across Departments

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Between Groups	3.78	3	1.26	4.92	0.002
Within Groups	75.11	296	0.25		
Total	78.89	299			

A significant difference exists in HR planning perception across departments ( $p = 0.002$ ). Line staff and support teams report lower planning transparency than managerial roles.

Table 6: Item-Wise Mean Scores for HR Planning

Sr. No.	Statement	Mean	SD	Agreement Level
1	HR policies are clearly communicated.	3.85	0.76	Moderately High
2	There is a clear workforce planning strategy.	3.91	0.73	High
3	Forecasting of workforce needs is efficient.	3.78	0.82	Moderately High
4	HR planning is aligned with departmental goals.	3.68	0.80	Medium
5	Recruitment aligns with long-term manpower plans.	3.86	0.77	Moderately High

Items Q2 and Q5 scored the highest, indicating employees feel long-term alignment and strategy communication is effective.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation – Engagement Level vs Productivity Ratings

Engagement Level	High Productivity	Medium	Low Productivity	Total
High	78	16	6	100
Moderate	42	38	20	100

A clear positive relationship exists between engagement and productivity. 78% of high engagement employees reported high productivity.

Table 8: ANOVA – Training Effectiveness by Experience Level

Experience Group	N	Mean Score	F-value	p-value	Significance
Less than 1 year	30	3.71	5.643	0.001	Significant
1–3 years	72	3.85			
4–7 years	96	4.02			
8 years and above	102	4.11			

The F-value is significant ( $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that perception of training effectiveness increases with experience.

Table 9: Regression Model Diagnostics

Diagnostic Test	Value	Threshold	Result
$R^2$	0.571	$> 0.5$	Good Fit
Adjusted $R^2$	0.561	$> 0.5$	Acceptable
Durbin-Watson	1.89	1.5–2.5	No Autocorrelation
VIF Range	1.42–2.10	$< 5$	No Multicollinearity
Standard Error of Estimate	0.67	—	Acceptable



The model is statistically sound with no signs of autocorrelation or multicollinearity.

Table 10: Composite Productivity Index (CPI) by Department

Department	Mean HR Score	Mean Productivity Score	CPI Score (HR × Prod)
Production	4.05	4.01	16.24
Maintenance	3.91	3.84	15.03
Administration	3.74	3.69	13.80
HR	4.15	4.09	16.96

HR and Production departments show the highest Composite Productivity Index (CPI), suggesting efficient HR practices correlate directly with perceived output.

Table 11: Rank-wise Impact of Variables on Workforce Efficiency

Rank	Variable Name	Regression Beta	Influence Strength
1	Training & Development	0.43	Very Strong
2	Organizational Support	0.39	Strong
3	HR Planning Strategy	0.31	Moderate
4	Job Engagement	0.28	Mild
5	Internal Communication	0.23	Weak but Positive

Variables are ordered by decreasing predictive strength toward workforce productivity.

## V. DISCUSSION

The results of this research paper shed light on how Human Resource Planning and Development (HRP&D) is important in the efficiency of the workforce in the Indian steel industry, specifically when operating in a high-performance setting where output and competitiveness are closely connected. In the empirical analysis, it was found that among all the HR constructs investigated, Training and Development was the most instrumental factor that led to the productivity of the employee, closely followed by Organizational Support and Manpower Planning. These findings are in line with earlier studies which point out the role of continuous skill improvement and institutional support systems in increasing employee engagement, morale as well as efficiency in their tasks. It is noteworthy that the average scores of major constructs are high, which suggests that the employees were highly satisfied with the relevance and existence of good HR practices. What is more, the robustness of the data collection tool is supported by the reliability and internal consistency of the constructs (Cronbachs Alpha is more than 0.80). The regression coefficients proved that strategic HR interventions significantly influence the productivity in not only direct way, but indirectly, contribute to job satisfaction and commitment as the essential elements of dynamic industrial settings. This information implies that steel companies cannot afford the luxury to consider HR as a marginal operation; instead, they will have to engage HRP&D throughout their strategic map to develop a strong and effective workforce. On balance, this study contributes to the discussion of the effectiveness of HR in the industry and provides practical proof of policy changes and talent development programs in such large-scale organizations.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The paper has come up with a conclusion that Human Resource Planning and Development (HRP&D) plays important role in improving the efficiency of the work force in the Indian steel industry by having a strategically aligned, skill-based, and engaged workforce. According to the analysis, training and development programs, efficient manpower planning, and strong organizational support systems are the key levers to facilitate productivity, job satisfaction, and performance in general. Having great empirical evidence, it is clear that steel organizations can no longer afford to stick to the conventional modes of HR functions and instead must consider a holistic, development-based approach to HR in order to stay afloat in an ever more complex industrial environment. In finality, HRP&D is not only an administrative requirement, but a long-term strategic requirement to the success of the organization.

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