

The SHRM Body of Competency and Knowledge™

This document describes the SHRM Body of Competency and Knowledge™ (SHRM BoCK™) which forms the basis for the SHRM Certified Professional (SHRM-CPSM) and SHRM Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCPSM) certifications.



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Introduction to the SHRM Body of Competency and Knowledge™

For more than sixty-five years, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has served the human resource profession. HR professionals worldwide look to SHRM for comprehensive resources to help them function effectively at their jobs, develop their careers, and partner strategically with employers.

SHRM also works to advance the HR profession as a whole, ensuring that as business evolves, HR evolves to meet business needs. Increasingly, business understands that effective people management is a strategic imperative. As a result, employers expect that HR professionals will demonstrate, in addition to a thorough knowledge of HR concepts and requirements, the behavioral competencies required to effectively *apply* that knowledge in the modern workplace in support of organizational goals.

In 2011, SHRM began years of extensive research involving thousands of HR professionals to develop the SHRM Competency Model, which identifies eight key Behavioral Competencies: *Ethical Practice, Leadership & Navigation, Business Acumen, Relationship Management, Communication, Consultation, Critical Evaluation, and Global & Cultural Effectiveness* and one Technical Competency: *HR Expertise* (HR Knowledge) that are the foundation of successful HR practice. The SHRM Competency Model provides HR professionals with a comprehensive roadmap for developing the capabilities they need to advance their careers and improve their effectiveness in the workplace.

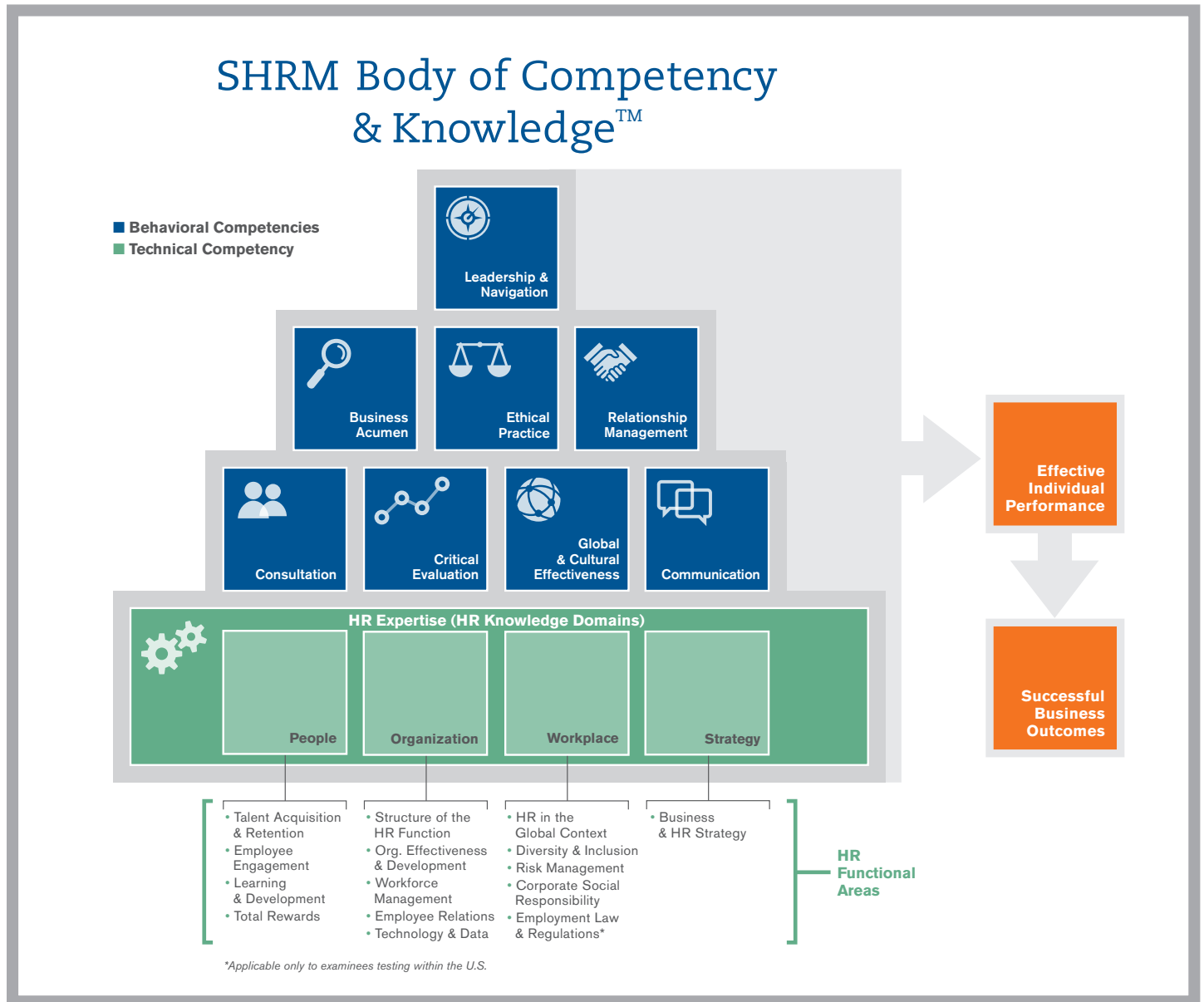
The SHRM Competency Model is fundamental to SHRM's two new certifications, the SHRM Certified Professional (SHRM-CPSM) for early-career practitioners, and the SHRM Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCPSM) for senior-level practitioners. SHRM is launching these new credentials to further two goals: for HR professionals, to reaffirm the importance of acquiring both the competencies and knowledge essential for successful job performance;

and for employers, to provide reliable indicators of proficiency in these critical dual aspects of modern HR practice.

SHRM regards the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP as the new standard in certification for the HR profession. By incorporating key HR competencies into the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP, SHRM is enhancing the relevance of the new certifications. SHRM's new credentials demonstrate to the global business community that the credential holder has strong capabilities in both aspects of HR practice—competency and knowledge—that are required for effective job performance.

The SHRM Body of Competency and Knowledge™ (SHRM BoCK™), summarized in **Figure 1**, also draws heavily on the SHRM Competency Model. The SHRM BoCK documents the HR Behavioral Competencies and Knowledge Domains tested on the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP certification exams. The SHRM BoCK is also the common framework for item writers developing questions and individuals developing exam preparation materials. SHRM operates exam development and study material development as separate, independent functions, and observes a strict firewall between these activities to protect the integrity and credibility of the certification exams.

FIGURE 1: SHRM BODY OF COMPETENCY & KNOWLEDGE (SHRM BoCK)



Development of the SHRM BoCK

The SHRM Competency Model, which provides the framework for the SHRM BoCK, was developed using rigorous job analysis methods with the active engagement of the global HR community (see **Figure 2**). SHRM conducted 111 focus groups involving 1,200 HR practitioners to identify nine critical competencies necessary for success as an HR professional. Focus group participants included HR professionals from 33 countries, representing a diversity of both personal (e.g., career level, tenure) and organizational (e.g., sector, industry, size) attributes.

SHRM then confirmed the importance, relevance, and universality of the SHRM Competency Model through a content validation survey, which drew responses from more than 32,000 HR professionals worldwide. Finally, a series of large-scale multi-organizational criterion validation studies, involving a highly diverse sample of more than 1,500 HR professionals and their supervisors, established that proficiency in these competencies is closely linked to successful job performance.

SHRM conducted a three-part knowledge specification exercise to develop the SHRM BoCK component identifying the key areas of HR functional knowledge or HR Expertise (HR Knowledge), the single technical Competency in the SHRM Competency Model (see **Figure 3**).

First, SHRM performed an extensive review of the existing literature on HR knowledge, including textbooks, curricula, syllabi, and other educator resources, to determine the universe of potential knowledge areas needed by HR professionals. SHRM also consulted SHRM academic and employer surveys regarding the basic functional knowledge needed for participation in the human resources field. SHRM drew on this research to create a preliminary knowledge framework for the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP certifications.

SHRM then established a BoCK Advisory Panel to validate this framework. This panel included 19 HR and business leaders from various industries including retail, research, consulting, health care, and manufacturing. The panel reviewed the proposed framework for HR technical knowledge for accuracy and comprehensiveness; defined key responsibility statements and knowledge topic areas associated with each Knowledge Domain and Functional Area; and developed importance rankings and weights for each Knowledge Domain. After completing these tasks, a panel sub-group further refined the framework by incorporating additional Panel feedback. Upon completion, SHRM adopted the framework as the basis for the knowledge component of the SHRM BoCK.

FIGURE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHRM COMPETENCY MODEL

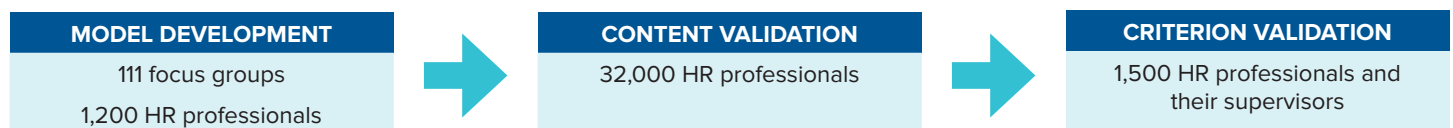


FIGURE 3: KNOWLEDGE SPECIFICATION PROCESS



What Are Competencies?

A competency is a cluster of highly interrelated attributes, including knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that give rise to the behaviors needed to perform a given job effectively. For example, *Critical Evaluation*, one of the Behavioral Competencies in the SHRM Competency Model, requires an employee to have research design knowledge, critical thinking skills, and deductive reasoning abilities; those KSAs enable the employee to behave in such a way as to perform a job involving critical evaluation.

Competencies can be either technical or behavioral. Technical competencies reflect the knowledge required to perform a specific role. Behavioral Competencies describe the KSAs that facilitate the application of

technical knowledge to job-related behavior. In other words, technical competencies reflect *what* knowledge HR professionals apply to their jobs, and Behavioral Competencies reflect *how* they apply this knowledge.

A competency model is a set of competencies that collectively defines the requirements for effective performance in a specific job, profession, or organization. There are eight Behavioral Competencies and one Technical Competency, HR Expertise (HR Knowledge) in the SHRM Competency Model, which forms the foundation of the SHRM BoCK. **Figure 4** provides an overview of these nine Competencies.

FIGURE 4: COMPETENCY DEFINITIONS

COMPETENCY	DEFINITION
<i>Leadership & Navigation</i>	The ability to direct and contribute to initiatives and processes within the organization.
<i>Ethical Practice</i>	The ability to integrate core values, integrity, and accountability throughout all organizational and business practices.
<i>Business Acumen</i>	The ability to understand and apply information with which to contribute to the organization's strategic plan.
<i>Relationship Management</i>	The ability to manage interactions to provide service and to support the organization.
<i>Consultation</i>	The ability to provide guidance to organizational stakeholders.
<i>Critical Evaluation</i>	The ability to interpret information with which to make business decisions and recommendations.
<i>Global & Cultural Effectiveness</i>	The ability to value and consider the perspectives and backgrounds of all parties.
<i>Communication</i>	The ability to effectively exchange information with stakeholders.
<i>HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)</i>	The knowledge of principles, practices, and functions of effective human resource management.

Organization of the SHRM BoCK Document

The HR competencies and knowledge that will be assessed on the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP exams are detailed in the SHRM BoCK, which consists of the following three sections:

Section 1 – Behavioral Competencies:

This section describes how HR professionals utilize the eight Behavioral Competencies to perform effectively in the workplace. Each Competency includes a **definition**; a broad summary of the primary actions associated with that Competency; and **key behaviors** indicative of proficiency in that Competency. The section identifies behaviors relevant to all HR professionals, and those relevant only to advanced HR professionals.

Please note that some of the key behaviors relevant to all HR professionals reflect transactional tasks in which advanced HR professionals may not be specifically

proficient; nonetheless, advanced HR professionals should understand the concepts behind these tasks and their strategic importance. (For example, an advanced HR professional may not be required to perform the key behavior/transactional task of daily consultation with a hiring manager; nevertheless, an advanced HR professional should be able to ensure that such a key behavior aligns with the strategic direction of the organization, and to mentor and develop this behavior in a junior employee.)

Section 2 – HR Expertise (HR Knowledge):

This section covers the single technical Competency of **HR Expertise** (HR Knowledge). Several introductory paragraphs explain how this Competency is organized into four broad Knowledge Domains (covering People, Organization, Workplace, and Strategy), divided among 15 HR Functional Areas. A subsection on each Functional Area follows, and includes: (1) a

Definition summarizing the key concepts associated with the Area; (2) **Responsibility Statements** relevant to all HR professionals, and those relevant only to advanced HR professionals; (3) pertinent illustrative **Sample Applications of Competencies**; and (4) key **Knowledge Topics** in the Area.

Section 3 – Exam Overview:

This section outlines the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP exams, including the number of questions on each test, and score weightings assigned to each of the Competencies and Knowledge Domains.

Section 1: Behavioral Competencies

This section of the SHRM BoCK identifies and details the eight Behavioral Competencies that will be tested on the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP exams. Behavioral Competencies describe the KSAs that facilitate the application of technical knowledge to effective job-related behavior. SHRM's research indicates that HR professionals who exhibit advanced levels of proficiency in these Behavioral Competencies are likely to be effective in the workplace.

Behavioral Competency #1: Leadership & Navigation

Definition: *Leadership & Navigation* is defined as the ability to direct and contribute to initiatives and processes within the organization.

Effective leadership is associated with numerous positive employee outcomes (Barling, Christie, & Hopton, 2011), in such areas as work attitudes (job satisfaction, organizational commitment) (Burke, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007; Judge & Piccolo, 2004), decreased turnover, and increased job performance (Barling et al., 2011). HR professionals at every level can demonstrate proficiency as leaders and navigators. Early-career professionals can behave in ways consistent with organizational culture and foster collaboration with coworkers. Mid- and senior-level HR professionals can develop strategies to implement HR initiatives and support others' initiatives. Executives can establish a vision for HR initiatives, work to obtain buy-in from relevant stakeholders, serve as transformational leaders to implement change, and lead the organization in the face of adversity. In sum, the Leadership & Navigation Competency recognizes an important role for HR professionals by describing needed attributes.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Leadership & Navigation for **all HR professionals** include:

- Exhibiting behaviors consistent with and conforming to organizational culture.
 - Fostering collaboration among stakeholders and team members.
 - Understanding the most effective and efficient ways to accomplish tasks within the parameters of organizational hierarchy, processes, systems, and policies.
 - Developing solutions to overcome potential obstacles to successful implementation of initiatives.
 - Demonstrating agility and expertise in leading organizational initiatives or supporting the initiatives of others.
 - Setting the vision for HR initiatives and building buy-in from internal and external stakeholders.
 - Leading the organization through adversity with resilience and tenacity.
 - Promoting consensus among organizational stakeholders (e.g., business unit leaders, employees, informal leaders) when proposing new initiatives.
 - Serving as a transformational leader for the organization by implementing change.
- Key behaviors** indicative of proficiency in Leadership & Navigation for **advanced HR professionals** include:
- Leading HR staff in maintaining or changing organizational culture.
 - Working with other executives to design, maintain, and champion the mission, vision, and strategy of the organization.
 - Identifying the need for and facilitating strategic organizational change.
 - Developing the organizational strategy for achieving the human capital vision and mission.
 - Ensuring alignment between the human capital vision, mission, and organizational business strategy.
 - Serving as the influential voice for HR strategies, philosophies, and initiatives within the organization.
 - Managing risk, opportunities, and gaps in business strategy.
 - Overseeing critical large-scale organizational changes with the support of business leaders.
 - Ensuring appropriate accountability for the implementation of plans and change initiatives.
 - Setting tone for maintaining or changing organizational culture.
 - Championing the HR function and organizational mission and vision.
 - Building buy-in for organizational change with agility across senior leadership.

Behavioral Competency #2: Ethical Practice

Definition: *Ethical Practice* is defined as the ability to integrate core values, integrity, and accountability throughout all organizational and business practices.

As it is for all employees, it is important that HR professionals to be ethical by considering the core values of their organization and acting with integrity. Beyond adhering to rigorous ethical standards themselves, HR professionals are often tasked with creating ethical HR systems or reinforcing an organization's ethical climate. These efforts serve several purposes. Most notably, implementing a strong ethical climate can help protect an organization from adverse employee behavior. Ethical HR systems are essential to organizations because they are associated with higher levels of organizational performance (Lado & Wilson, 1994).

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Ethical Practice for **all HR professionals** include:

- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Acting with personal, professional, and behavioral integrity.
- Responding immediately to all reports of unethical behavior or conflicts of interest.
- Empowering all employees to report unethical behavior or conflicts of interest without fear of reprisal.
- Showing consistency between espoused and enacted values.
- Acknowledging mistakes.
- Driving the corporate ethical environment.
- Applying power or authority appropriately.
- Recognizing one's personal bias and the tendencies of others toward bias, and taking measures to mitigate the influence of bias in business decisions.
- Maintaining appropriate levels of transparency in organizational practices.
- Ensuring that all stakeholder voices are heard.
- Managing political and social pressures when making decisions.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Ethical Practice for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Empowering senior leaders to maintain internal controls and create an ethical environment to prevent conflicts of interest.
- Maintaining contemporary knowledge of ethics, laws, standards, legislation, and emerging trends that may affect organizational HR practice.
- Establishing oneself as a credible and trustworthy resource to whom employees may voice concerns.
- Challenging other executives and senior leaders when potential conflicts of interest arise.
- Withstanding politically motivated pressure when developing strategy.
- Setting the standard as a role model of ethical behavior by consistently conforming to the highest ethical standards and practices.
- Balancing organizational success and employee advocacy when creating strategy.
- Developing HR policies and internal controls to minimize organizational risk from unethical practice.
- Creating HR strategy that holds employees accountable for their actions.
- Making difficult decisions that align with organizational strategies and values.
- Communicating the vision for an organizational culture in which espoused and enacted values align.
- Maintaining a culture that requires all employees to report unethical practices and behavior.
- Aligning all HR practices with ethics, laws, and standards.

Behavioral Competency #3: Business Acumen

Definition: *Business Acumen* is defined as the ability to understand and apply information with which to contribute to the organization's strategic plan.

HR professionals often serve in a consultative role for other organizational members and business units, developing and carrying out HRM practices that support and are aligned with business strategies and goals. In other words, successful HR professionals develop HR systems that positively contribute to organizational success (Becker & Huselid, 2006). To do this effectively, HR professionals need a well-developed proficiency in Business Acumen. This includes understanding business operations and core functions, how HRM practices contribute to them, and the organization's external environment. It also means recognizing how internal and external factors interact to influence organizational performance (e.g., the external competitive environment, internal personnel resources). Last, it requires being able to make the case for HR management to other business professionals—that is, marketing HR within the organization, showing how it can have a direct impact on organizational performance.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Business Acumen for **all HR professionals** include:

- Understanding the strategic relationship between effective HRM and core business functions.
- Being capable of understanding the business operations and functions within the organization.
- Using organizational resources to learn the business and operational functions.
- Understanding the industry and the business/competitive environment within which the organization operates.
- Making the business case for HR management in terms of efficient and effective organizational functioning.
- Marketing HR both internally (e.g., return-on-investment/ROI for HR initiatives) and externally (e.g., employment branding).
- Understanding organizational metrics and their correlation to business success.

- Using organizational metrics to make decisions.
- Leveraging technology to solve business problems.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Business Acumen for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Ensuring that the ROIs for all HR initiatives add to organizational value.
- Assessing risks/SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) of business initiatives as they pertain to human capital, ROI, and shareholder accountability.
- Aligning HR strategy, goals, and objectives to overall business strategy and objectives.
- Demonstrating fluency in the language of business administration as used by senior leaders.
- Developing solutions with analysis of impact on ROI, utility, revenue, profit and loss estimates, and other business indicators.
- Examining all organizational problems in terms of integrating HR solutions to maximize ROI, profit, revenue, and strategic effectiveness.
- Evaluating all proposed business cases for HR projects and initiatives.
- Benchmarking the competition and other relevant comparison groups.
- Communicating direction on local and global labor market and their relation to organizational success.
- Maintaining expert knowledge of business lines and products/services, as well as the competitive market.
- Developing HR business strategies to drive key business results.
- Maintaining expert knowledge of economic factors and the impact of the economic environment on industry and organization operations.
- Evaluating critical activities in terms of value added, impact, and utility derived from a cost-benefit analysis.
- Maintaining expert knowledge of key industry and organization metrics — that is, 'knowing the business.'

- Setting HR and business technology strategy to solve business problems and needs.
- Serving as a strategic contributor to organizational decision-making regarding fiscal, product/service lines, operations, human capital, and technological areas.
- Influencing government policy and proposed regulations.
- Developing business strategy with top leaders of the organization.
- Defining strategy for managing talent within the confines of the labor market.

Behavioral Competency #4: Relationship Management

Definition: *Relationship Management* is defined as the ability to manage interactions to provide service and to support the organization.

Because HR professionals regularly interact with clients and stakeholders, job success is a function of an HR professional's abilities to maintain productive interpersonal relationships and to help others do the same—to display competency in managing relationships. Research has documented positive outcomes associated with productive and healthy interpersonal relationships in the work environment (Reich & Hershcovis, 2011). Positive formal relationships (e.g., between employee and supervisor) are associated with such beneficial outcomes for employees as improved feelings of belonging and inclusion in the workplace (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003), more salary, increased promotions, greater career mobility, and other rewards (Allen, Eby, Potet, Lentz, & Lima 2004). Positive informal relationships are associated with greater job satisfaction, involvement, performance, team cohesion, and organizational commitment, positive work atmosphere, and lessened turnover intentions (Berman, West, & Richter, 2002).

Employees who have better interpersonal relationships with coworkers and supervisors also may perceive the organization as more supportive (Wallace, Edwards, Arnold, Frazier, & Finch, 2009), may be more committed to the organization, and may experience increased perceptions of fitting in with the organization (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). In sum, healthy interpersonal relationships at an organization contribute positively to both employee and organizational success.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Relationship Management for **all HR professionals** include:

- Establishing credibility in all interactions.
- Treating all stakeholders with respect and dignity.
- Building engaging relationships with all organizational stakeholders through trust, teamwork, and direct communication.
- Demonstrating approachability and openness.

- Ensuring alignment with HR strategy for delivering services and information to the organization.
- Providing customer service to organizational stakeholders.
- Promoting successful relationships with stakeholders.
- Managing internal and external relationships in ways that promote the best interests of all parties.
- Championing the view that organizational effectiveness benefits all stakeholders.
- Serving as an advocate when appropriate.
- Fostering effective teambuilding among stakeholders.
- Demonstrating the ability to effectively build a network of contacts at all levels within HR and the community, internally and externally.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Relationship Management for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Designing strategies for improving performance metrics for relationship management.
- Networking with and influencing legislative bodies, union heads, and external HR leaders.
- Championing organizational customer service strategies and models.
- Negotiating with internal and external stakeholders to advance the interests of the organization.
- Designing strategies to ensure a strong customer service culture in the HR function.
- Creating conflict resolution strategies and processes throughout the organization.
- Overseeing HR decision-making processes to ensure consistency with HR and business strategy.
- Developing strategic relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
- Fostering a culture that supports intra-organizational relationships (e.g., silo-busting).
- Designing strategic opportunities and venues for building employee networks and relationships.
- Proactively developing relationships with peers, clients, suppliers, board members, and senior leaders.

Behavioral Competency #5: Consultation

Definition: *Consultation* is defined as the ability to provide guidance to organizational stakeholders.

HR professionals often act as internal consultants or experts on human capital issues within their organizations. In this role, HR professionals can help business units address such challenging issues as staffing, training and development, employee performance, and employee relations (Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006). To be a successful human capital expert, HR professionals must possess requisite knowledge about HRM practices and have the ability to guide internal stakeholders. The most effective HR professionals use a process of engagement and interaction to translate complicated information into actionable recommendations for end users. HR professionals must be able to analyze business challenges, generate creative solutions, and provide accurate, timely guidance based on best practices and research that account for the organization's unique internal and external environments.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Consultation for **all HR professionals** include:

- Applying creative problem-solving to address business needs and issues.
- Serving as an in-house expert on workforce and people management.
- Analyzing specific business challenges involving the workforce and offering solutions based on best practices or research.
- Generating specific organizational interventions (e.g., change management, culture change, restructuring, training) to support organizational objectives.
- Developing consultative and coaching skills.
- Guiding employees as to specific career situations.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Consultation for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Creating talent management strategies by utilizing innovative business solutions that align with and drive business strategy.
- Listening to business leaders' challenges.
- Developing visions for critical solutions to organizational human capital challenges.
- Identifying opportunities to provide HR and business solutions that maximize ROI for the organization.
- Using appropriate analytical tools enabling other leaders to provide input on strategic decisions.
- Identifying creative solutions for the organization and its business units.
- Supervising HR investigations together with legal counsel.
- Recognizing excessive HR liabilities and providing proactive strategic guidance for remediation.
- Coaching executives on people-management issues
- Designing strategic HR and business solutions.

Behavioral Competency #6: Critical Evaluation

Definition: *Critical Evaluation* is defined as the ability to interpret information with which to make business decisions and recommendations.

HR can enhance the effectiveness and usefulness of human capital programs by using appropriate data to inform their development and monitor their success. One example of this data is human capital metrics, which quantify such items as the time to fill a position and the cost per hire. HR functions that collect and properly utilize HR metrics to inform HR activity not only add value to the role of HR in organizations, they are seen as more reliable strategic partners (Lawler, Levenson, & Boudreau, 2004). The rise of data-based HRM practices (such as the increasingly frequent use of “big data” by HR departments) is clearly evident. HR professionals are currently being asked to inform their decisions with data, and this trend is likely to continue and expand in the coming years.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Critical Evaluation for **all HR professionals** include:

- Making sound decisions based on evaluation of available information.
- Assessing the impact on organizational HRM functions of changes in the law.
- Transferring knowledge and best practices from one situation to the next.
- Applying critical thinking to information received from organizational stakeholders, and evaluating what can be used for organizational success.
- Gathering critical information.
- Analyzing data with a keen sense for what is useful.
- Analyzing information to identify evidence-based best practices.
- Delineating a clear set of best practices based on experience, evidence from industry literature, published peer-reviewed research, publicly available web-based information, and other sources.
- Identifying leading indicators of outcomes.
- Analyzing large quantities of information from research and practice.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Critical Evaluation for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Maintaining expert knowledge in the use of data, evidence-based research, benchmarks, and HR and business metrics to make critical decisions.
- Maintaining expert knowledge and ability to interpret data and make recommendations.
- Making decisions with confidence based on analysis of available information to drive business success.
- Setting the direction of HR and the organization through evaluation of risks and economic and environmental factors.
- Seeking information in a strategic, systematic manner for use in decision-making.
- Analyzing information necessary for evaluating and using data and additional information to make effective decisions.
- Sponsoring initiatives for process improvement using evidence-based solutions.
- Communicating the impact on organizational strategy of relevant and important findings from data analysis.
- Applying findings to build effective and creative policies within an organizational context.
- Utilizing one’s awareness and experience of external/environmental factors in decision-making.
- Challenging assumptions and critically examining all initiatives and programs.
- Providing a strategic view to direct and prioritize decision-making.

Behavioral Competency #7: Global & Cultural Effectiveness

Definition: *Global & Cultural Effectiveness* is defined as the ability to value and to consider the perspectives and backgrounds of all parties in global business.

Diversity within a team or organization can facilitate success by fostering creativity, promoting healthy working relationships, and equipping the organization with an opportunity to connect with a wider audience (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). In light of the proactive attempts of many organizations to increase the diversity of their own workforces in the context of today's increasingly global workforce, HR professionals must be able to effectively and respectfully interact with colleagues, customers, and clients of varying backgrounds and cultures.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Global & Cultural Effectiveness for **all HR professionals** include:

- Having a strong set of core values while adapting to particular conditions, situations, and people.
- Maintaining openness to others' ideas and making decisions based on experience, data, facts, and reasoned judgment.
- Demonstrating nonjudgmental respect for others' perspectives.
- Working effectively with diverse cultures and populations.
- Conducting business with understanding and respect for the differences in rules, customs, laws, regulations, and business operations between one's own culture and all cultures.
- Appreciating the commonalities, values, and individual uniqueness of all human beings.
- Possessing self-awareness and humility, to learn from others.
- Embracing inclusion.
- Adapting one's perspectives and behaviors to meet the cultural context.
- Navigating the differences between commonly accepted practices and laws when conducting business in other nations.
- Operating with a global, open mindset while being sensitive to local cultural issues and needs.

- Operating with a fundamental trust in other human beings.
- Taking the responsibility to ensure inclusion by teaching others about the differences and benefits that multiple cultures bring to the organization.
- Incorporating global business and economic trends into business decisions.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Global & Cultural Effectiveness for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Setting the strategy to leverage global competencies for competitive HR advantages.
- Using a global economic outlook to determine impacts on the organization's human capital strategy.
- Maintaining expert global and cultural knowledge/experience.
- Maintaining expert knowledge of global economic trends.
- Understanding global labor markets and associated legal environments.
- Fostering the organization's cultural norms.
- Proving the ROI of a diverse workforce.
- Managing contradictory or paradoxical practices, policies, and cultural norms to ensure cross-cultural harmony and organizational success.
- Integrating perspectives on cultural differences and their impact on the success of the organization.
- Setting the vision that defines the strategic connection between employee diversity and inclusiveness practices and organizational success.
- Building cross-cultural relationships and partnerships.

Behavioral Competency #8: Communication

Definition: *Communication* is defined as the ability to effectively exchange information with stakeholders.

Effective communication is one of the building blocks of personal and career success (Showry & Manasa, 2012). This is particularly true for HR professionals. HR professionals at junior career levels may need to field employee grievances, conduct investigations, and intervene to resolve employee interpersonal challenges. Senior-level HR professionals are often required to interact with a variety of stakeholders—to develop, interpret, and distribute policy and initiative information to employees, and to collaborate with other organizational units in addressing business challenges from a human capital perspective. Especially at senior and executive career levels, effective communication is essential for describing the leader’s vision, the organization’s mission, new initiatives, goal-setting, and progress. When HR information is communicated well, employees better understand the purpose and value of policies and practices. For example, employees whose managers effectively communicate HR practices and policies to them perceive the organization’s HRM to be more effective, which in turn positively affects employee satisfaction and business unit performance (Den Hartog, Boon, Verburg, & Croon, 2013).

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Communication for **all HR professionals** include:

- Providing clear, concise information to others in verbal, written, electronic, and other communication formats for public and organizational consumption.
- Listening actively and empathetically to the views of others.
- Delivering critical information to all stakeholders.
- Seeking further information to clarify ambiguity.
- Providing constructive feedback effectively, treating it as a developmental opportunity.
- Communicating proactively.
- Ensuring effective communication throughout the organization.
- Providing proactive communications.
- Demonstrating an understanding of the audience’s perspective.

- Welcoming the opportunity to discuss competing points of view.
- Helping others consider new perspectives.
- Leading meetings effectively and efficiently.
- Helping managers communicate on issues other than HR.

Key behaviors indicative of proficiency in Communication for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Articulating the alignment between organizational HR initiatives and organizational strategy.
- Communicating the corporate mission and vision to other stakeholders.
- Creating strategy to develop a culture that fosters efficient and effective interactions and decision-making.
- Crafting messages to be delivered to stakeholders on high-visibility organizational issues.
- Negotiating with stakeholders to reach the best possible outcomes.
- Soliciting feedback and buy-in from executive-level stakeholders.
- Developing strategy for organizational communication systems.
- Delivering strategic messages supporting HR and business.
- Building support through clear communications.
- Communicating HR vision, practices, and policies to other stakeholders.
- Comfortably communicating with audiences of all sizes.

SECTION 2: HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)

Today’s employers require HR professionals to demonstrate competency in HR behaviors, as outlined in Section 1, as well as knowledge of HR topics, which are outlined here in Section 2. The need for practical as well as technical expertise is a business reality for the modern practice of HR that is reflected in the SHRM BoCK by the Technical Competency HR Expertise (HR Knowledge). As with the eight Behavioral

competencies in the SHRM Competency Model, this Competency was developed and validated through extensive research with HR professionals. This section is focused on describing the Knowledge Domains and HR Functional Areas that comprise the HR Expertise (HR Knowledge) Competency.

What Are HR Functional Areas of Knowledge?

In the SHRM BoCK, HR Expertise (HR Knowledge) has been grouped by common themes into four broad Knowledge Domains: People, Organization, Workplace, and Strategy. These four Domains are associated with HR Functional Areas of knowledge: the knowledge required to perform a specific HR activity (e.g., Talent Acquisition & Retention, Employee Relations).

There are 15 HR Functional Areas of knowledge—what HR professionals need to know to perform their job responsibilities. (see **Figure 5**.) The HR Functional Area of Business & HR Strategy forms its own Knowledge Domain of *Strategy*; the remaining 14 HR Functional Areas form the remaining three Knowledge Domains of *People*, *Organization*, and *Workplace*.

This part of the SHRM BoCK outlines the specific content of each Functional Area listed above. Each subsection contains a four-part description of the Functional Area under discussion (all of which will be tested on the certification exam):

- **Definition:** The types of activities associated with the Functional Area, and how they add value to the organization.
- **Responsibility Statements:** The specific actions indicative of proficiency in that Functional Area. This includes responsibilities applicable to all HR professionals, and responsibilities applicable only to advanced HR professionals (six or more years

of experience). While the latter responsibilities are generally more strategic in nature, advanced HR professionals should be familiar, at a strategic level, with the concepts related to all responsibility statements.

- **Sample Application of Competencies:** Examples of the behavioral and technical KSAs that are relevant to the Functional Area, and are closely associated with professionals who demonstrate proficiency in that Area. All Competencies are relevant to each Functional Area. While every Functional Area requires the Technical Competency of HR Expertise (HR Knowledge), effective practice also requires the application of Behavioral Competencies. The same Competency may be required in multiple HR Functional Areas, but will manifest itself differently in each Area through the distinctive application of KSAs.
- **Knowledge Topics:** The information required to perform the responsibilities in the Functional Area. The same topic may appear in multiple Areas. (For example, the knowledge topic “metrics” is listed in almost every Functional Area.) More specific topics are relevant only to certain Areas. (For example, expertise in the Behavioral Competency of Communication covers knowledge topics as diverse as “coaching and counseling,” listed in the Employee Engagement Functional Area, and “social media usage,” listed in the Corporate Social Responsibility Functional Area.)

FIGURE 5: KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS AND HR FUNCTIONAL AREAS

PEOPLE	WORKPLACE
Talent Acquisition & Retention Employee Engagement Learning & Development Total Rewards	HR in the Global Context Diversity & Inclusion Risk Management Corporate Social Responsibility U.S. Employment Law & Regulations <i>(applicable only to examinees testing within the U.S.)</i>
ORGANIZATION	STRATEGY
Structure of the HR Function Organizational Effectiveness & Development Workforce Management Employee Relations Technology & Data	Business & HR Strategy

DOMAIN 1: People

Functional Area #1: Talent Acquisition & Retention

Definition: *Talent Acquisition & Retention* encompasses the activities involved in building and maintaining a workforce. HR demonstrates value by developing, implementing, and measuring the individual and organizational success of activities and programs for sourcing, recruiting, hiring, onboarding, orientation, and retention.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for all HR professionals include:

- Identifying and selecting appropriate interview and selection techniques that best demonstrate a candidate's technical skills, organizational fit, and competency alignment.
- Seeking and utilizing a wide variety of talent sources to recruit, screen, and evaluate applicants.
- Implementing and utilizing technology to support effective and efficient approaches to sourcing, recruitment, evaluation, and selection.
- Conducting effective background investigations.
- Understanding sponsorship and visa requirements for foreign nationals.

Key responsibilities for advanced HR professionals include:

- Developing strategies for acquiring and retaining a high-performing workforce, using internal and external resources.
- Analyzing staffing levels to make decisions as to workforce allocation.
- Assessing workforce readiness against organizational needs.
- Designing job descriptions to meet organizational resource needs and to attract qualified candidates.
- Establishing an employer value proposition and employment brand that supports organizational success.
- Designing and implementing strategies for sourcing, recruiting, candidate evaluation, and retention.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Business Acumen**—The ability to understand the organization's strategy and translate it into a robust plan that attracts and retains high-performing individuals.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to interpret staffing plans, market data and other external PEST (political, economic, social, and technological) data, and make sound business decisions and recommendations at the initial phases of the employee lifecycle.
- **Consultation**—The ability to provide guidance on planning and structuring the workforce, based on current and future needs of the organization and key stakeholders.

Knowledge Topics:

- Employee lifecycle phases
- Employee retention techniques
- Employer value proposition techniques
- Employment branding approaches
- External labor market PEST factors
- External and internal recruitment approaches
- Evaluation techniques
- Formal assessment methods and tools
- Identification of bona fide occupational qualifications (BFOQs)
- Interviewing techniques
- Job analysis, evaluation, and design of job descriptions
- Job offer contingencies
- Metrics (e.g., cost per hire, days to fill)
- Recruitment approaches
- Selection approaches
- Sourcing approaches
- Staffing projection approaches

Functional Area #2: Employee Engagement

Definition: *Employee Engagement* solidifies the connection among employee, manager, and the organization's mission, vision, values, and goals. HR demonstrates value by understanding and leveraging the employer-employee relationship from both individual and organizational perspectives, developing effective strategies to address appropriate expectations for performance and behavior from employees at all levels.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for all HR professionals include:

- Developing and implementing employee and workplace policies.
- Investigating workplace harassment and misconduct.
- Understanding requests for workplace accommodations and engaging key stakeholders to determine appropriate responses.
- Conducting due diligence when consulting on workplace disputes.
- Designing and implementing workplace policies, handbooks, and codes of conduct.
- Consulting on satisfactory employee performance and on approaches to performance management.
- Designing and implementing appreciation and recognition programs.
- Consulting on important workplace issues with key stakeholders.
- Managing employee onboarding and assimilation processes.
- Designing, conducting, and analyzing employee surveys.
- Consulting with managers on how to supervise difficult employees, handle disruptive behaviors, and respond with an appropriate level of corrective action.
- Participating in the resolution of workplace disputes.
- Identifying and using appropriate alternative dispute resolution techniques.

Key responsibilities for advanced HR professionals include:

- Evaluating and influencing workplace cultures and norms that allow for collaboration and effectiveness.
- Identifying appropriate conduct and behaviors that support organization cultural success.
- Establishing strategies to address workplace retaliation and violence.
- Developing strategies to determine the effectiveness of performance management systems.
- Applying best practices for workplace flexibility to improve organizational effectiveness.
- Developing infrastructure to support cultural norms and values.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Communication**—The ability to ensure effective communication between the employee and the organization, using a variety of methods and approaches.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to engage and retain employees through positive interactions that support the mission, vision, values, and goals of the organization.
- **Consultation**—The ability to effectively provide guidance and influence decisions that balance organizational with individual needs.

Knowledge Topics:

- Alternative dispute resolution techniques
- Analysis of organizational culture and climate
- Coaching and counseling
- Cognitive biases (e.g., halo bias, similar-to-me bias)
- Complaint resolution procedures
- Conflict management theory and approaches
- Disciplinary procedures and approaches
- Employee lifecycle phases
- Employee recordkeeping and retention
- Investigation techniques
- Management of people
- Metrics
- Motivational theories
- Organizational culture influences
- Organizational change management
- Performance management systems
- Principles of effective performance appraisal techniques (e.g., goal-setting, giving feedback)
- Principles of survey creation, administration, and evaluation
- Recognition approaches
- Retaliation prevention approaches
- Workplace flexibility

Functional Area #3: Learning & Development

Definition: *Learning & Development* aligns organizational business needs with employees' competencies, knowledge, and skills, effectively closing the gap between them. HR demonstrates value by identifying and creating learning opportunities that increase employee capability and organizational knowledge.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for **all HR professionals** include:

- Developing staff capabilities using state-of-the-art learning and development strategies.
- Planning for internal or external resources to deliver appropriate development interventions to target internal audience.
- Creating a forum of internal social networks for effective sharing of knowledge among employees.
- Developing programs to promote the transfer of knowledge to and from experienced and junior employees.
- Advancing organizational learning and development, knowledge management, and the exchange of information about practices and innovations.
- Consulting and providing resources and processes to facilitate experiential learning and development.

Key responsibilities for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Consulting on and guiding the identification and development of critical competencies.
- Designing approaches for resolving competency deficiencies in current and emerging leaders.
- Creating long-term strategies to develop organizational talent.
- Creating strategies to ensure the retention of organizational knowledge.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Business Acumen**—The ability to understand how measures of organizational success are positively influenced by the retention of and increase in individual knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to analyze organizational and training needs assessments, so as to determine the most effective learning and development solutions supporting achievement of individual and organizational goals and objectives.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to manage relationships to determine appropriate learning and development interventions supporting the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

Knowledge Topics:

- Career development techniques
- Career management philosophies
- Change management approaches
- Coaching styles and approaches
- Competency models
- Employee lifecycle phases
- Knowledge-sharing techniques
- Learning evaluation approaches
- Mentoring options
- Metrics
- Organizational intervention design and implementation approaches
- Leadership development techniques
- Learning theories
- Needs assessment techniques (e.g., organizational, training)
- Skill and competency development approaches
- Training design and implementation (e.g., ADDIE model)
- Training and development techniques and solutions

Functional Area #4: Total Rewards

Definition: *Total Rewards* encompasses direct and indirect remuneration approaches that employers use to attract, recognize, and retain workers. HR demonstrates value by designing and administering systems and programs (e.g., base pay, benefits, incentive pay, leave, perquisites, retirement) that support recruitment and retention efforts.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for **all HR professionals** include:

- Designing and implementing appropriate pay, benefit, incentive, and separation/severance systems and programs.
- Complying with compensation and benefits practices, laws, and regulations.
- Performing accurate job analyses and evaluations.
- Differentiating between government-mandated, government-provided, and voluntary benefit approaches.

Key responsibilities for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Designing organizational compensation and benefits strategies and plans that align with the organization's mission, vision, and values.
- Designing and implementing executive compensation approaches that directly connect individual performance to organizational success.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Business Acumen**—The ability to understand organizational strategy and, in turn, create the best balance of monetary and non-monetary payment and rewards offered to employees.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to interpret remuneration surveys, market data, and other external PEST data, in order to make sound business decisions and recommendations about the design, delivery, and success of a total rewards program.

Knowledge Topics:

- Accounting practices and principles
- Benefits (e.g., disability insurance, domestic partners, education, employee assistance programs, families, life insurance, retirement plans, unemployment insurance, wellness programs, workers' compensation)
- Employee lifecycle phases
- External labor markets PEST factors
- Fiduciary responsibilities
- Income replacement programs
- Job analysis, job design, job descriptions
- Metrics
- Perquisites
- Pay practices, policies, approaches, systems, and issues (e.g., base pay, minimum wage determinations, pay compression, pay equity, pay increases, pay levels and banding), and special provisions (e.g., overtime)
- Remuneration data analysis (collecting, analyzing, making recommendations)
- Time-off plans and approaches (e.g., paid and unpaid leave, vacation/holiday)

DOMAIN 2: Organization

Functional Area #5: Structure of the HR Function

Definition: *Structure of the HR Function* encompasses the people-related processes, theories, and activities used to deliver HR services that create and drive organizational effectiveness. HR demonstrates value by selecting the appropriate delivery model (e.g. Center of Excellence/COE, generalist, shared services) with an understanding of stakeholder needs and the impact of decisions on the overall workforce.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for all HR professionals include:

- Understanding business lines and products/services (including revenue generation, profitability, and the competitive market).
- Implementing solutions based on analysis and understanding of the impact on the organization of leading and lagging financial, customer, operations, and learning indicators.
- Designing and implementing the appropriate servicing model (centralized versus decentralized).
- Demonstrating partnership capabilities with non-HR business leaders to capitalize on organizational success or to solve organizational issues.
- Serving as the HR point-of-service contact for key stakeholders within a division or group.
- Providing workforce consultation to all levels of leadership and management.
- Delivering HR services and support that demonstrate one's business knowledge and acumen contributing to organizational success.
- Analyzing data and performance indicators to ensure the effectiveness of the HR organization.

Key responsibilities for advanced HR professionals include:

- Supporting the communication, understanding, and implementation of the organization's mission, vision, values, and strategy.
- Designing and implementing the HR operational structure to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services.
- Developing appropriate measures and metrics (e.g., balanced scorecard) to demonstrate the value of HR activities in supporting organizational success.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Business Acumen**—The ability to understand and apply organizational strategy, mission, vision, and values in developing and implementing an HR strategy and tactical plan.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to interpret workforce and employee information and data to drive recommendations and decisions concerning people and business.
- **Consultation**— The ability to provide balanced and thoughtful guidance to organizational stakeholders on matters related to people and business.

Knowledge Topics:

- Balanced scorecard philosophy
- Centralization versus decentralization
- Defined approaches to roles and functions for generalists and specialists
- Due diligence methodologies
- HR organizational structure and design
- HR functional integration approaches
- Negotiation and influence techniques
- Stakeholder analysis techniques
- Strategy design and implementation
- Structural model approaches to HR (e.g., Center of Excellence/COE, HR business partner, shared services)

Functional Area #6: Organizational Effectiveness & Development

Definition: *Organizational Effectiveness & Development* deals with the overall structure and functionality of the organization — that is, measuring the effectiveness and growth of people and processes from long- and short-term perspectives, and leading necessary organizational change initiatives. HR demonstrates value by aligning the organization’s vision, mission, and goals with day-to-day operational activities, including organizational design, development, performance measures, and standards.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for **all HR professionals** include:

- Ensuring that workforce activities are accurately reflected in job descriptions and other key documents (e.g., applicant tracking systems, job postings, performance management systems).
- Creating and monitoring metrics to assess organizational development and effectiveness
- Recognizing and eliminating barriers to organizational development and effectiveness.
- Planning for internal or external resources to deliver appropriate short-term development interventions and activities.

Key responsibilities for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Consulting on, planning, and designing organizational structures that align with the effective delivery of activities in support of the achievement of organizational strategy.
- Assessing organizational needs to identify critical competencies for operational effectiveness.
- Consulting on, developing, and designing performance standards and assessment metrics.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Business Acumen**—The ability to understand organizational strategies and apply this knowledge to create a plan for effective growth.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to interpret organizational information and performance data to ensure the implementation of effective and efficient business solutions.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to manage interactions with key stakeholders and provide appropriate recommendations and solutions based on in-depth organizational knowledge and expertise.

Knowledge Topics:

- Business solution and performance analysis
- Change and culture metrics
- Change management theories and approaches
- Consulting techniques
- Design approaches for a motivational work environment
- Design approaches for work activity
- Group dynamics
- How employees learn culture
- How organizational cultures are created
- Influence techniques
- Knowledge management approaches (e.g., organizational storytelling techniques)
- Labor supply and demand analysis
- Motivational theories
- Organizational behavior theories
- Organizational culture versus national culture
- Organizational design structures and approaches (e.g., customer, functional, geographic, matrix, program)
- Organizational learning approaches
- Organizational needs analysis techniques
- Performance management theories, structures, and approaches
- Project management approaches
- Roles and responsibilities (e.g., chain of command, span of control)
- Strategic-tactical alignment
- Types of cultures (e.g., authoritarian, dominant cultures, mechanistic, participative, subcultures)
- Understanding individual differences and perceptions

Functional Area #7: Workforce Management

Definition: Workforce Management enables the organization to meet its talent needs and close critical skill gaps using data-driven processes (e.g., workforce planning, succession planning) that inform HR initiatives. HR demonstrates value by facilitating financial and operational growth, continuity, or stability.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for **all HR professionals** include:

- Implementing approaches (e.g., “buy or build”) to ensure that appropriate workforce levels exist to deliver on organizational goals and objectives.
- Planning short-term strategies to build individual skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies that support organizational bench strength.
- Implementing strategies for restructuring the organization (e.g., acquisition, downsizing).
- Implementing succession plans for optimizing organizational growth and effectiveness.
- Designing and implementing programs and solutions for management and retention of organizational knowledge.

Key responsibilities for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Consulting on and initiating strategies to create a robust workforce plan that addresses current and future organizational needs, including workforce size and structure.
- Initiating and designing strategies (e.g., leadership development, succession planning, training) to address organizational gaps between current and future employees’ competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Designing and implementing strategies to retain organizational knowledge.
- Designing strategies for restructuring the organization (e.g., acquisition, downsizing).

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Business Acumen**—The ability to understand the organization’s evolutionary stage (introduction, growth, maturity, or decline) and ensure that the strategic plan addresses the unique needs of each stage, in terms of size and structure.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to interpret growth or retraction patterns and data, in order to make decisions and recommendations as to organizational size, structure, and reporting relationships, as well as the acquisition (internally developed or externally obtained) of competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to manage interactions with key stakeholders and provide appropriate recommendations and solutions that address current and future organizational gaps.

Knowledge Topics:

- Communication techniques
- Employee development techniques and approaches
- Knowledge management, retention, and transfer techniques
- Learning theories and philosophies
- Needs assessment techniques (e.g., organizational, training)
- Restructuring approaches
- Succession planning techniques
- Workforce planning techniques and analyses (e.g., gap and solution, implementation and evaluation, supply and demand, workforce profile)

Functional Area #8: Employee Relations

Definition: *Employee Relations* refers to any dealings between the organization and its employees regarding the terms and conditions of employment. HR demonstrates value by ensuring that the appropriate framework, mindset, and practices are in place to embrace or react or respond to the employment relationship, including relationships with employee representatives.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for **all HR professionals** include:

- Managing union/employee representative interactions.
- Engaging in appropriate and lawful union-management practices.
- Representing the organization's interests in union-management activities.
- Managing the collective bargaining process, when appropriate.
- Resolving workplace labor disputes internally.
- Managing arbitration and mediation processes.
- Participating in or facilitating alternate dispute resolution processes.
- Understanding and making recommendations to respond to other types of employee representation (e.g. government, legal).

Key responsibilities for **advanced HR professionals**:

- Consulting on and developing an effective labor strategy (i.e., avoidance or acceptance) with the desired impact on the organization and its workforce.
- Educating employees, managers, and leaders at all levels about the organization's labor strategy (i.e., avoidance or acceptance) and its impact on the achievement of goals and objectives.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Ethical Practice**—The ability to maintain confidentiality and appropriate levels of transparency in ways that balance the needs of employees and the organization.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to manage interactions that balance organizational and employee needs.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to interpret labor activity information and data for making appropriate decisions about the organization's response to employee concerns or third-party representation.

Knowledge Topics:

- Alternative dispute resolution techniques
- Causes of strikes, boycotts, and work stoppages
- Child labor
- Collective bargaining process
- Communication approaches
- Contract administration techniques
- Contract negotiation approaches
- Disciplinary techniques
- Standard workday
- Employee engagement approaches
- Governmental labor parties and party relations by nation
- Grievance, complaint, and conflict resolution techniques
- Industrial relations
- International Labor Organization (ILO) core labor standards
- International labor practices
- Investigation techniques
- Labor economics

- Labor environments (e.g., pluralism, radicalism, unitarianism)
- Labor rights
- Living and fair wage concepts
- People-management techniques
- Positive union/management relations approaches
- Recognition approaches
- Service award approaches
- Social movement unionism, new unionism proletariat
- Socialism, syndicalism, anarcho-syndicalism
- Strike actions, secondary actions, general strikes, sit-down strikes, work-to-rule
- Survey techniques
- Trade unions by nation
- Trade union federations
- Unfair labor practices
- Union acceptance and avoidance approaches
- Union attractiveness
- Union membership
- Union structures
- Unionized labor history
- Works councils structures and approaches
- World Trade Organization

Functional Area #9: Technology & Data

Definition: *Technology & Data* deals with the use of tools, technologies, and systems that support the gathering, analysis, and reporting of workforce information, as well as effective and efficient collaboration and communication throughout the organization. HR demonstrates value by developing knowledge about technology uses, trends, and innovations applicable to HR's strategic goals.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for **all HR professionals** include:

- Consulting on effective policies and approaches to address technology use in the workplace (e.g., collaboration, communication, networking, social media).
- Identifying, analyzing, and implementing appropriate technology solutions for the delivery of effective HR services.
- Implementing appropriate HR information systems (HRIS) that integrate with enterprise systems to provide efficient and effective reporting and metrics.
- Accessing appropriate data and information to analyze specific business challenges and recommend solutions.
- Leveraging technology to gain efficiencies within the HR function.

Key responsibilities for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Identifying and implementing technology solutions that support achievement of organizational strategies, goals, and objectives.
- Using technology for data analytics that optimize each HR Functional Area.
- Developing and implementing a technology-driven self-service approach enabling managers and employees to perform basic people-related transactions (e.g. benefit enrollment, compensation administration, information changes, scheduling, timekeeping).

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Human Resource Expertise**—The ability to maintain up-to-date knowledge about core business and HR technologies to solve business challenges.
- **Business Acumen**—The ability to understand and apply technology solutions that support achievement of the organization's strategic plan.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to efficiently access information and data in order to make business decisions and recommendations.
- **Communication**—The ability to develop technology solutions that promote the effective exchange of information among key stakeholders, regardless of location.

Knowledge Topics:

- Business process integration approaches
- Data analytic techniques
- Data management protection approaches
- Electronic recordkeeping approaches
- Electronic signature acceptance
- HR information systems and sources
- HR management and information system design
- Information management theory
- Procurement approaches
- Product development
- Project management theories
- Social media practices and usage
- Systems integration approaches
- Technology use policies and practices

DOMAIN 3: Workplace

Functional Area #10: HR in the Global Context

Definition: *HR in the Global Context* focuses on organizational growth and workforce-related issues and impacts, viewed from domestic, multinational, transnational, and global perspectives. HR demonstrates value by understanding how global PEST factors influence business decisions, and by applying this knowledge to day-to-day HR activities, policy creation, and business solution recommendations.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for **all HR professionals** include:

- Recognizing and responding to global issues that influence domestic business practices.
- Maintaining up-to-date knowledge of PEST, HR, and legal trends in global terms.
- Developing expert knowledge of global trends and best practices.
- Balancing the organizational desire for standardization with localization through a “globalized” approach to decision-making.
- Building cross-cultural relationships and partnerships with global stakeholders.
- Implementing and conducting audits of global HR practices.

Key responsibilities for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy to address issues affecting business, people, and the workforce on a global basis.
- Consulting on and developing strategies to define global competencies.
- Consulting on labor and economic trends, cultural implications, and the legal environment for business decisions and risks.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Communication**—The ability to effectively exchange information with stakeholders to ensure that a global perspective is considered in decision-making.
- **Global & Cultural Effectiveness**—The ability to value and consider all parties’ perspectives and backgrounds.

- **Consultation**—The ability to provide guidance on global matters to internal and external organizational stakeholders.

Knowledge Topics:

- Creating a global organizational culture
- Cross-border HR management techniques
- Cultural models (e.g., Hall, Hofstede, Schein, Trompenaars)
- Global discrimination prevention practices
- Global legal systems (e.g., different nations’ approaches to government-mandated, government-provided, and voluntary benefits, extra-territoriality of laws and legislation)
- Global mindset techniques (e.g., communication barrier removal, cultural awareness training and assimilation, understanding PEST factors)
- Global trends in benefits, compensation, diversity and inclusion, employment laws, ethics and sustainability, labor markets, labor relations, safety and security, staffing management
- Managing international assignments (e.g., approaches and trends, effective performance, compensation adjustments, employee repatriation)
- Moving work (e.g., co-sourcing, near-shoring, offshoring, on-shoring)
- Taxation approaches
- Totalization agreements
- Visa and work permit considerations

Functional Area #11: Diversity & Inclusion

Definition: *Diversity & Inclusion* encompasses the qualities, life experiences, personalities, education, skills, competencies, and collaboration of the many different types of people who are necessary to propel an organization to success. HR demonstrates value by creating opportunities that leverage the human experience to address organizational needs or solve issues on a global basis.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for **all HR professionals** include:

- Consulting on the difference between issues of performance and those of culture or personal style.
- Developing expert knowledge of global trends and best practices in diversity and inclusion.
- Maintaining expert global and cultural knowledge.
- Facilitating an organizational culture that promotes a global mindset for diversity and inclusion through development activities and experiences.
- Championing diversity and inclusion programs with external stakeholders (e.g., diverse suppliers).
- Providing mentoring, training, guidance, and coaching on cultural trends and practices to employees at all levels of the organization.
- Implementing audit practices to ensure cultural awareness on a global basis.
- Demonstrating nonjudgmental respect for others' perspectives.

Key responsibilities for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- In conjunction with other business leaders, developing, implementing, and overseeing programs, practices, and policies that make the strategic connection between a global mindset and organizational success.
- Ensuring that equitability for all internal and external stakeholders is considered when designing programs, policies, and practices.
- Taking diversity into account when planning and implementing programs, policies, and practices.
- Fostering and influencing an inclusive organizational culture.
- Fostering an environment that embraces and encourages global mobility, which allows for diverse experiences.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Ethical Practice**—The ability to recognize and mitigate the influence of bias in business decisions.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to manage interactions that provide service to and support the organization from a global perspective.
- **Communication**—The ability to effectively exchange information with global stakeholders.
- **Global & Cultural Effectiveness**—The ability to value and consider the perspectives and backgrounds of all parties.

Knowledge Topics:

- Approaches to a multi-generational workforce
- Developing cross-cultural relationships
- Effective approaches to building trust and relationships
- Emotional intelligence
- Glass-ceiling prevention
- High- and low-context cultures
- Inclusive leadership
- Influence of the 4 T's (travel, training, transfers, and teams)
- Intercultural wisdom
- Issues related to disability, ethnicity, gender, language, race, sexual orientation
- Level of global acceptance of diversity (e.g., disability, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation)
- Mindful communication
- Religious influences and accommodation
- Techniques for cultural awareness and respect

Functional Area #12: Risk Management

Definition: *Risk management* is the identification, assessment, and prioritization of risks (defined in ISO 31000 as the effect of uncertainty on objectives), followed by the coordinated and economical application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the probability and/or impact of unfortunate events or to maximize the realization of opportunities.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for **all HR professionals** include:

- Directly or indirectly developing, implementing and overseeing the execution of programs, practices, and policies that mitigate risk and support organizational success (e.g., appropriate use of technology, fiduciary responsibility, fraud, theft, workplace safety and security, workplace violence).
- Maintaining accountability for recording and reporting workplace safety compliance.
- Developing crisis management and contingency plans for the HR function and the organization.
- Designing and implementing continuity plans for the HR function and the organization.
- Communicating critical information about risk mitigation to all stakeholders.
- Communicating information about workplace safety and security issues to all levels of employees.
- Auditing risk management activities.

Key responsibilities for **advanced HR professionals** include:

- In conjunction with other leaders, developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy to address and mitigate risk on a global basis.
- Leveraging technologies (e.g., communication systems, computer security, contingency systems, records backup, social media) to manage and protect workforce and organizational data.
- Examining and providing guidance on potential threats to the organization.
- In conjunction with other leaders, developing strategies to ensure the sustainability of the enterprise.
- Evaluating labor market trends and industry standards for their impacts on business.
- Designing standards-based systems for mitigating risk.
- Leading after-action debriefs.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Human Resource Expertise**—The ability to maintain current and up-to-date knowledge about the role of HR in risk management.
- **Business Acumen**—The ability to understand and apply information to develop the organization’s risk management strategy.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to interpret internal and external information and data to make risk-based business decisions and recommendations that align with the organization’s level of risk tolerance.
- **Communication**—The ability to effectively exchange information with stakeholders that increases their understanding of approaches to mitigate risk exposure.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to manage interactions that provide risk-based service and support to the organization.

Knowledge Topics:

- Business recovery planning
- Continuity of operations planning
- Corporate espionage and sabotage prevention
- Data integrity mechanisms and practices
- Data management protection and disclosure approaches
- Drug prevention
- Duty of care
- Emergency/incident response plans
- Health and safety practices and procedures
- Information management theory
- Kidnapping and ransom prevention
- Natural disaster and severe weather emergency preparation
- Occupational injury and illness prevention, compensation, and accommodations

- Public health preparedness and response
- Safety auditing techniques
- Terrorism prevention and responses
- Theft and fraud prevention approaches
- Whistleblower protection approaches
- Workplace incident investigations
- Workplace safety risks and hazards
- Workplace violence prevention techniques

Functional Area #13: Corporate Social Responsibility

Definition: *Corporate Social Responsibility* represents the organization's commitment to operate its business in an ethical and sustainable manner. HR demonstrates value by understanding the societal impacts to business decisions and using this insight to improve the quality of life for the community—people, organization, and planet—through philanthropy, ethics and governance, and environmentally sound practices, respectively.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for all HR professionals include:

- Acting with personal, professional, and behavioral integrity, in conformance with an HR code of ethical conduct.
- Investigating, evaluating, and responding to all reports of unethical behavior, conflicts of interest, and associated levels of organizational risk.
- Advising executives on any reports of unethical behavior or conflicts of interest that increase risk tolerance or risk of liability.
- Designing mechanisms for employees to report unethical behavior or conflicts of interest without fear of reprisal.
- Demonstrating the highest ethical standards and practices and organizational values—espoused as well as enacted.
- Consulting on and demonstrating the appropriate level of transparency in organizational practices.
- Understanding PEST factors and how they affect organizational and workforce decisions.
- Establishing the HR team as a credible and trustworthy organizational resource for internal and external stakeholders.
- Consulting on management decisions related to ethics, governance, and social involvement.
- Aligning HR's decisions with the organization's strategies and values.
- Developing and implementing organizational standards for the confidentiality of workforce and organizational data.

Key responsibilities for advanced HR professionals include:

- Consulting on, developing, and implementing the organization's corporate social responsibility strategy.
- Consulting on, developing, and implementing an organizational culture that supports responsible and ethical decision-making.
- Leveraging the organization's corporate social responsibility programs to enhance the employee value proposition.
- Consulting on, developing, and implementing a code of conduct that reflects the appropriate level of corporate self-governance.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Consultation**—The ability to provide balanced guidance to stakeholders that will have a positive impact on the organization's reputation, internally and externally.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to manage interactions with external stakeholders that demonstrate corporate citizenship.

Knowledge Topics:

- Anti-bribery approaches
- Caux principles
- Charitable/community giving approaches
- Code of conduct development
- Community inclusion approaches
- Compliance program evaluation
- Confidentiality measures and approaches
- Conflicts-of-interest avoidance
- Corporate citizenship and governance programs and legislation
- Corporate philanthropy approaches
- Corporate social responsibility best practices

- Economic trend analysis
- Ethical decision-making in a global context
- Ethical employee management practices
- Investigation techniques
- ISO standards
- Key performance indicators
- PEST factors
- Privacy concerns
- Social auditing techniques
- Social media usage
- Transparent decision making
- Volunteer programming

Functional Area #14: U.S. Employment Law & Regulations

Important Note: This Area is applicable only to examinees testing within the United States; examinees outside the U.S. will not be tested on it.

Definition: *U.S. Employment Law & Regulations* deals with the knowledge and application of all relevant laws and regulations in the United States relating to employment. These provisions set the parameters and limitations for each HR Functional Area and for organizations overall. HR demonstrates value by ensuring the organization's compliance with laws and regulations domestically and globally (including extraterritorially).

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for all HR professionals include:

- Maintaining a current working knowledge of relevant employment laws, domestic and/or global.
- Establishing criteria for organizational compliance.
- Educating and advising the executive team on legal compliance relating to HR issues as a factor in decision-making.
- Promoting broad-based HR knowledge to ensure compliance with laws and regulations.
- Ensuring the alignment of HR policies and procedures with laws and regulations.
- Overseeing and consulting on HR issues involving legal and financial risk to the organization.
- Brokering internal or external legal services for the interpretation of employment laws.
- Establishing or positioning HR technology approaches for compliance and reporting.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Human Resource Expertise**—The ability to remain current on relevant laws, regulations, and legal rulings.
- **Ethical Practice**—The ability to immediately respond to reports of unethical or illegal behavior.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to interpret legal compliance information and data to make business decisions and recommendations.
- **Leadership & Navigation**—The ability to direct and contribute to legal compliance processes within the organization.
- **Communication**—The ability to exchange information on legal compliance with internal stakeholders.
- **Consultation**—The ability to provide knowledge of legal compliance to internal stakeholders.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to manage interactions that provide service and support to the organization.

Knowledge Topics: Listed below are six broad categories of U.S. laws, regulations, and cases relating to employment, together with examples. (This is *not* an exhaustive list of categories *or* examples.) Local laws and regulations, such as those on the state or municipal level, are not included.

- **Compensation**

- » *Examples:* Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA); Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA; Wage-Hour Bill; Wagner-Connery Wages and Hours Act) and amendments; Equal Pay Act of 1963 (amending FLSA); Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009; *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.* (2007).

- **Employee relations**

- » *Examples:* Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 (LMRA; Taft-Hartley Act); National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (NLRA; Wagner Act; Wagner-Connery Labor Relations Act); *NLRB v. Weingarten* (1975); *Lechmere, Inc. v. NLRB* (1992).

- **Equal employment opportunity**

- » *Examples:* Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) and amendments; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and ADA Amendments Act of 2008; Civil Rights Acts; Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 (amending Civil Rights Act); Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (1978) (29 CFR Part 1607); *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.* (1971); *Phillips v. Martin Marietta Corp.* (1971).

- **Job safety and health**

- » *Examples:* Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988; Guidelines on Sexual Harassment; Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

- **Leave and benefits**

- » *Examples:* Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA; expanded 2008, 2010); Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA; ACA; “Obamacare”); *National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius* (2012).

- **Miscellaneous protection laws**

- » *Examples:* Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988; Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA).

DOMAIN 4: Strategy

Functional Area #15: Business & HR Strategy

Definition: *Business & HR Strategy* involves organizational planning to achieve success and create value for stakeholders. HR demonstrates value by contributing its perspective and expertise to development of the enterprise strategy, and by developing, implementing, and evaluating an HR strategy aligned with the organization's goals, values, and tactics, as defined in the enterprise strategy.

Responsibility Statements:

Key responsibilities for all HR professionals include:

- Developing results-oriented metrics and scorecards that contribute to organizational success.
- Using knowledge of business and metrics to make workforce and business decisions.
- Ensuring that all HR initiatives demonstrate measurable value to the organization.
- Demonstrating a working knowledge of the labor market and its relation to organizational success.
- Benchmarking the competition and other relevant comparison groups, to better understand market position and competitive advantage.
- Creating an action plan for managing talent within the confines of the labor market.
- Maintaining advanced knowledge of key industry metrics and how the organization compares to the standard.
- In conjunction with other leaders, establishing measurable goals and objectives that create a culture of accountability, and regularly monitoring results against goals in support of business strategy.
- Evaluating critical activities in terms of value added, impact, and utility derived from cost-benefit analyses, revenue, profit-and-loss estimates, and other leading or lagging indicators.
- Applying consistently to internal HR processes and policies the principles of finance, marketing, economics, sales, technology, and business systems.
- Maintaining a systems-wide perspective when making business decisions.

Key responsibilities for advanced HR professionals include:

- In conjunction with other leaders, developing a business strategy aligned to the organization's goals and objectives.
- Aligning HR strategy, goals, and objectives with overall business strategy and objectives, to drive business results.
- Developing and evaluating business cases proposed for HR and other functional projects and initiatives.
- Developing strategies for employment branding and marketing communications that will reach internal and external audiences.
- Identifying key talent requirements to successfully execute the business strategy.
- Developing and implementing an action plan for capturing, developing, and managing the talent needed to execute the business strategy, including the effective management of a global workforce.

Sample Application of Competencies:

- **Business Acumen**—The ability to understand and apply information to develop the organization's strategic plan.
- **Critical Evaluation**—The ability to interpret information and data to make business decisions and recommendations.
- **Leadership & Navigation**—The ability to direct and contribute to initiatives and processes within the organization.
- **Consultation**—The ability to provide guidance to organizational stakeholders.
- **Communication**—The ability to effectively exchange information with stakeholders.
- **Relationship Management**—The ability to manage interactions to provide service and support to the organization.

Knowledge Topics:

- Approaches for linking organizational and HR strategies
- Balanced scorecard utilization
- Business intelligence factors
- Change management techniques
- Competitive analysis techniques
- Conflict management techniques
- Due diligence techniques
- Effective communication techniques
- Ethical decision-making framework
- Goal-setting approaches
- HR systems integration approaches
- Labor market analysis
- Leadership theories, approaches, and evaluation
- Leading and lagging indicators
- Mission, vision, and values creation
- Organizational growth strategies, evolution stages, and success factors
- Project management methods
- Quality assurance techniques
- Strategic management considerations
- Strategic planning stages (i.e., strategy formulation, development, implementation, and evaluation)
- PEST factors
- SWOT and environmental scanning techniques

Section 3: Exam Overview

The SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP exams are based on the SHRM BoCK and its two major aspects of modern HR practice, Competencies and Knowledge. Accordingly, the exams contain two types of questions:

- Knowledge items, which cover the four Knowledge Domains (People, Organization, Workplace, and Strategy) associated with the SHRM BoCK's Technical Knowledge competency; and
- Situational judgment items, which cover the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) associated with the SHRM BoCK's Behavioral Competencies.

In addition, both exams contain “field test” items (see below), the answers for which will not be scored.

Knowledge items assess candidates' understanding of factual information. Examinees are asked questions

on particular subject areas. Situational judgment items assess candidates' KSAs and decision-making skills, which are not easily measured using traditional knowledge-based questions. Examinees are presented with realistic work-related scenarios and asked to choose the best of several possible strategies to resolve or address them.

- The SHRM-CP exam contains 160 items: 130 scored questions (90 knowledge items and 40 situational judgment items) and up to 30 unscored field test questions.
- The SHRM-SCP exam contains 180 items: 150 scored questions (90 knowledge items and 60 situational judgment items) and up to 30 unscored field test questions.

“Field Test” Questions

The field test items on the SHRM-CP or SHRM-SCP exams will be interspersed randomly in the exams so that candidates will not know which they are. Examinees' answers to field test questions will not count toward any part of their final exam scores.

Field-testing gathers data on a question's effectiveness before it can be included on future exams as a scored item. This process facilitates SHRM's efforts to continuously assess and improve all aspects of its certification program.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the score weighting for the SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP exams.

FIGURE 6: SCORE WEIGHTING FOR EACH SUBJECT AREA

Subject Area	SHRM-CP (160 items)	SHRM-SCP (180 items)
Behavioral Competencies	35%	50%
Technical Knowledge		
• People	20%	10%
• Organization	20%	10%
• Workplace	15%	10%
• Strategy	10%	20%

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