



A POWER OF HR TOOL

The HR Metrics Starter

Choose a small set of metrics that matter, connect each one to a business outcome, and set up tracking you can actually sustain.

A companion resource to
The Power of HR
by Joey V. Price

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A companion tool to The Power of HR: How to Make an Organizational Impact as a People-Professional.

The idea behind this tool

The goal was never the metric. The goal is the connection between the metric and a business outcome: if I pull lever A, outcome B moves. A number that does not connect to anything the business is trying to do is a number you will stop reporting by March.

So this tool asks you to do something slightly uncomfortable. Choose a small set. Five to seven metrics you will genuinely track, understand, and report is worth far more than thirty you collect and nobody reads.

There is also a sequence underneath all of this, sometimes called the people data supply chain: strategy leads to operations, operations lead to technology, technology gives you data access, and data access makes analytics possible. Good analytics rests on good HR practice underneath it. If a metric is unreliable, the fix is usually upstream in the process, not downstream in the dashboard.

If you are starting from nothing, published metric standards such as ISO 30414 and existing pre-built HR metric libraries are good places to borrow from rather than inventing your own definitions.

Step 1: Start with the business, not the metric

What are the organization's top three priorities this year?

1.

2.

3.

For each priority, what does the workforce need to look like for it to happen?

Which of those workforce conditions can you actually influence?

Step 2: Draft your candidates

Write down every metric you are currently tracking or think you should be. Do not filter yet.

Common starting points, if you want a prompt: turnover rate (voluntary and total), retention by tenure band, engagement score, time-to-fill, cost-per-hire, quality-of-hire, internal mobility rate, absenteeism, training completion and application, manager effectiveness scores, pay equity ratios, offer acceptance rate, first-year attrition, span of control, representation across levels.

Step 3: Filter to the ones that matter

Run each candidate through these four questions. If any answer is no, set it aside for now.

- ☐ Can I connect this to a business outcome someone outside HR already cares about?
- ☐ Can I get reliable data for it without a heroic manual effort every month?
- ☐ If this number moved, would we do something differently?
- ☐ Can I explain what it means in one sentence to someone who does not work in HR?

Which candidates survived?

Step 4: Build your metric set

This is the core of the tool. Aim for five to seven rows. Resist adding an eighth.

Metric	Why it matters	Business outcome it connects to	Current baseline	Target	Review cadence

Column notes.

- Why it matters is the one-sentence explanation you would give a skeptical colleague.
- Business outcome it connects to must name something specific: a revenue target, a cost line, a delivery commitment, a customer measure, a strategic initiative. "Better culture" is not an outcome. "Reduced project delivery slippage caused by mid-project turnover" is.
- Current baseline is where you are today, with the date you measured it.
- Target is where you want to be and by when. If you do not know yet, write "establish baseline first" and set a date to revisit.
- Review cadence is daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual. Most metrics belong on monthly or quarterly. Very few need daily attention.

Step 5: Set up the tracking

For each metric you kept, complete one of these blocks.

Metric: _____

Definition, precisely. Write the formula. Ambiguity here is what makes numbers argued over later.

Source system: _____

Who pulls it: _____

How often: _____

Segments worth breaking it down by (department, tenure, location, level, population):

What would make this number unreliable, and how do we check?

What action would we take if it moved significantly in either direction?

Metric: _____

Definition, precisely.

Source system: _____

Who pulls it: _____

How often: _____

Segments worth breaking it down by:

What would make this number unreliable, and how do we check?

What action would we take if it moved significantly in either direction?

Metric: _____

Definition, precisely.

Source system: _____

Who pulls it: _____

How often: _____

Segments worth breaking it down by:

What would make this number unreliable, and how do we check?

What action would we take if it moved significantly in either direction?

Copy this block for each remaining metric.

Step 6: Pair the quantitative with the qualitative

Numbers tell you what is happening. The qualitative sources tell you why.

Qualitative source	What it explains	How often we gather it	Who reviews it
Employee feedback and pulse comments			
Exit interviews (read by theme, not individually)			

Qualitative source	What it explains	How often we gather it	Who reviews it
Focus groups			
Manager conversations			

For each metric in your set, which qualitative source explains its movement?

Step 7: Set up the reporting

Who sees what, and when

Audience	Which metrics	Format	Cadence
HR team			
Department leaders			
Senior leadership			
All employees			

For your leadership report, answer these three each cycle.

What is the number?

What does it mean?

What are we doing about it?

Storytelling with data is not decoration. The number establishes the fact; the story establishes why anyone should care. Lead with the business consequence, support it with the metric, and close with the recommendation.

Step 8: Review and refresh

Set a date now.

Next metric review date: ____

At each review:

- ☐ Which metrics did we actually look at and act on?
- ☐ Which did we collect and ignore? Consider retiring them.
- ☐ Which business priorities have shifted, and does the metric set still follow them?
- ☐ Where has our data reliability improved or slipped?
- ☐ Is there one metric we now have the capability to add?
- ☐ How do our numbers compare to industry benchmarks, and does the gap suggest an opportunity?

What are we retiring?

What are we adding?

What did the last cycle of data change about how we work?
