

The Role Advice Process

In traditional organizations, roles are crafted around tactical performance. They are seen as a set of specific tasks that we need to take on, and our success depends on how well and how fast we can execute them. This approach usually leads to a problematic relationship with work and collaboration because it makes us see our jobs as something completely separate from our personal lives. But what if there was a way to design roles based not only on the company's needs and expectations but on our interests, strengths, and growth? Wouldn't that make us feel more engaged and inspire us to do our greatest work?

In the research paper [*Innovation By All*](#), the consulting firm Great Place to Work states that "employees often are looking for any kind of movement, whether vertical, lateral or even cross-training to learn from another team. What they are missing is the ability to grow in place: the power to take ownership of projects or tasks that encourage self-directed learning and that have a meaningful impact on their organization." So think about your current role for a moment. Could you increase your engagement and deliver your highest impact if you redesigned your role?

According to Neel Doshi and Lindsay McGregor's book [*Primed to Perform*](#), the practice that increases employee motivation the most—**up to 87%**—is none other than role design. Based on that research, the Ian Martin Group created the Role Advice Process (RAP). This tool, as its name implies, allows us to rethink our roles using advice from our colleagues. Here's how the RAP works.

Role Advice Process: Step by Step

The Explorer

Traditionally, organizations create a strategy. They turn their strategies into processes, their processes become job descriptions, and they hire based on "match quality" to those job descriptions. **Then they attempt to train all the differences and uniqueness out of their workforce.** However, designing roles around the skills, interests, and professional growth of employees often result in higher levels of performance.

A Role Advice Process is a way to reconsider your role, the tasks it involves, and your fit to the organization's current needs. Through a RAP, you can solicit feedback on your role and explore whether it can be redesigned to benefit yourself and your team:

Step 1: Embarking on a RAP

This journey begins with the desire to change your role, the realization that you could be doing more, or a suggestion from a colleague that noticed a significant opportunity for improvement.

The Ian Martin Group recommends finding a "peer mentor." This figure will provide guidance and encouragement through your process. Choose someone you trust to be both candid and supportive, someone who has experience with RAPs and can help you process the feedback/advice you get from others. It's best if your mentor is not also an advisor.

Step 2: The announcement

The next step is announcing the start of the RAP to your team. You need to include the date you plan to present your results—it should be no more than a month from the announcement—and an invitation to any team members that want to contribute their advice.

Step 3: Self-reflection

Now it's time to answer these questions for yourself and any others that may contribute to your reflection:

- Why am I doing this process? What led to this?
- What are my strengths, talents, and interests? Where could these best be put to use?
- What is my current contribution to the organization? What is working well? What could be better?
- Could I increase my influence, impact, and engagement by redesigning my role? What specifically could change? What would be gained or lost? Who would assume my current duties?
- What tasks are best aligned with my strengths and are something I enjoy doing?
- How do I feel about this potential change? What worries me? What excites me? What are the pros and cons?

Step 4: Seeking advice

Ideally, you should get advice from at least three team members, including those you invited and those who offered to be involved after your announcement. The same questions you asked in self-reflection are good discussion starters. Make sure to document the high level of what they've told you and repeat it back to them to ensure you understand.

Step 5: The decision

After considering all the advice that came your way, it's time to decide. What do you think should happen next? Your options may include:

- Choosing a different role.
- Altering your current role or accountabilities.
- Changing your compensation.
- Exploring a new path at a different organization. If there's no good fit for your skills and interests in your company, parting ways may be the best decision for everyone involved.

Step 6: Presenting the results

Share the results with your team by creating a summary document. You should include your reflections, reasoning, thought process based on the advice you received, and a transition plan.

Step 7: Taking action

The final step is to execute the transition plan. If no one objects to it, no further approvals are required. Finally, any significant changes in responsibility, salary, or employment status need to be fully documented before they take place. That includes submitting written notice of your new job description, salary, or termination to the team member accountable for HR.

From this point on, you are responsible for ensuring a smooth transition with your colleagues.

Thinking about implementing the Role Advice Process in your organization? Connect with us at connect@humanfirstworks.com. We've helped dozens of organizations implement successful Human First processes.

Do you work at a bigger organization? Check out how the Ian Martin Group does the RAP with 400+ people at teal.ianmartin.com/role-advice-process/.