IB Business Management - Topic 2.1 Introduction to Human Resource Management

Worksheet 4 (Version D)

Focus: Flexi-time, remote work, and force field analysis as tools for managing organisational change

Suggested time	60 minutes
Total marks	50
Instructions	Answer all questions. For multiple choice, select the best answer (A-D). For written responses, show clear business reasoning and use terminology accurately.

Command terms reminder: define (give the meaning), explain (give reasons or causes), analyse (break down with cause-effect), discuss/evaluate (consider different viewpoints and reach a justified conclusion).

Section A: Multiple choice

Choose the best answer for each question. **[10 marks]**

1. Flexi-time is best described as a system where: **[1]**
A. employees choose whether they want to be paid
B. employees work flexible start and finish times around agreed core hours
C. employees must work from home every day
D. employees are hired only on temporary contracts

2. One reason flexi-time can support HR planning is that it may: **[1]**
A. reduce employee loyalty
B. help retain skilled staff, reducing recruitment needs
C. make demand forecasting impossible
D. prevent businesses from meeting customer needs

3. Which statement best defines a 'driving force' in force field analysis? **[1]**
A. A factor that makes change more difficult
B. A factor that promotes or supports change
C. A payroll deduction
D. A fixed rule that cannot be changed

4. Which is an example of a restraining force for long-term remote working? **[1]**
A. Lower office rent costs
B. Improved work-life balance for some employees
C. Difficulty maintaining team culture and informal communication
D. Access to a wider geographical labour market

5. In Lewin's force field analysis, managers can make change easier by: **[1]**
A. increasing restraining forces
B. ignoring driving forces
C. reducing or eliminating restraining forces and/or strengthening driving forces
D. banning communication about the change

6. Which HR strategy is most directly aimed at helping employees cope emotionally and practically with change? **[1]**
A. Facilitation and support
B. Co-option
C. Coercion
D. Redundancy

7. A business that wants to match staffing levels to fluctuating customer demand is most likely to benefit from: **[1]**
A. fixed start/finish times for all employees
B. flexi-time or other flexible working arrangements
C. banning part-time work
D. paying all employees strictly the same amount regardless of performance

8. Which option is the BEST example of HRM contributing to a social objective? **[1]**
A. Reducing staff training to cut costs
B. Maintaining employment in low-income regions while meeting business goals
C. Outsourcing all HR tasks to a software provider
D. Increasing prices to raise profit margins

9. An ethical HR system is most likely to increase performance because it can: **[1]**
A. remove the need for leadership
B. increase trust and motivation among employees
C. guarantee that change never occurs
D. eliminate the need for workforce planning

10. Which of the following is a common risk if managers rely mainly on explicit coercion to introduce remote-working changes? **[1]**
A. Faster implementation with no drawbacks
B. Reduced trust and possible long-term damage to culture
C. Increased employee participation and commitment
D. Improved understanding of the change among staff

Section B: Short answer

Answer all questions in this section. **[12 marks]**

1. Define the term flexi-time. **[2]**

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2. Explain two ways in which flexi-time can influence human resource planning. **[4]**

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3. Define force field analysis. **[2]**

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4. Identify one driving force and one restraining force for remote working. Explain each. **[4]**

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Section C: Data response / case study

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow. **[18 marks]**

Case study: TechConsult Ltd (remote and hybrid working)

TechConsult Ltd provides IT consulting services. During the pandemic, most staff worked from home. Senior management is now considering a permanent hybrid policy (some days in the office, some at home). The HR manager has been asked to evaluate the impact of remote working on performance and to identify the forces that may support or resist the change.

Key indicators are shown below.

Metric	Office-based (2019)	Remote-first (2021)
On-time project delivery	86%	88%
Employee satisfaction (out of 5)	3.4	4.1
Client complaints per month	7	12
Office costs per month	€120,000	€70,000

1. Using the data, analyse whether remote working improved TechConsult's performance. Consider both costs and service quality. **[6]**

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2. Construct a simple force field analysis for a permanent hybrid policy by listing two driving forces and two restraining forces (from the case or reasonable inferences). **[4]**

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3. Recommend one HR strategy that could reduce restraining forces for hybrid working. Explain how it would work. **[4]**

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4. Discuss one ethical issue TechConsult should consider if it uses digital monitoring to manage remote workers. **[4]**

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Section D: Extended response

Answer the question below. Support your answer with business reasoning and, where relevant, information from the case study. **[10 marks]**

1. Evaluate whether adopting a permanent hybrid working policy is likely to help TechConsult create a loyal and flexible workforce. Your answer should refer to evidence from the data and consider how HRM can manage resistance to change. **[10]**

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Answer key and marking guidance (teacher copy)

Use this section for marking. Student responses may vary; award marks for accurate business knowledge, application to the scenario, and logical reasoning.

Question type	How to award marks
[2] Define	1 mark for an accurate definition; +1 mark for clear wording and/or a relevant example.
[4] Explain two	Typically 2 marks per point: 1 for identification, 1 for explanation linked to the question/context.
[6] Analyse	Reward cause-effect chains, depth, and application. Often 3 marks per developed point (identification + development + application).
[10] Evaluate/Discuss	Use the level descriptors provided. Look for balance, application, evaluation of trade-offs, and a justified conclusion.

Section A answers: Multiple choice

Q	Answer	Rationale (brief)
1	B	Flexi-time provides flexibility while still requiring agreed core hours.
2	B	Flexi-time can improve retention and allow staffing to match customer demand patterns.
3	B	Driving forces push change forward; restraining forces resist it.
4	C	Culture and communication challenges can restrain remote-working change.
5	C	Reducing resistance and strengthening support increases the likelihood of successful change.
6	A	Facilitation/support includes training, resources and reassurance.
7	B	Flexibility helps align labour input with demand patterns.
8	B	HRM can support social objectives, such as maintaining employment, alongside strategic goals.
9	B	Ethical HR practices can improve commitment and reduce conflict, supporting performance.
10	B	Coercion may be quick but can harm trust and motivation.

Section B markscheme: Short answer

1. Define the term flexi-time. **[2]**

Indicative answer: Flexi-time allows employees to vary their start and finish times while still working an agreed total number of hours and usually attending agreed core hours when everyone must be present.
Marking guidance: 1 mark for flexibility of hours; 1 mark for core hours/total hours requirement.

2. Explain two ways in which flexi-time can influence human resource planning. **[4]**

Indicative answer: Flexi-time can (i) increase retention/loyalty by helping employees balance commitments, reducing recruitment and training needs; (ii) help match staffing to variable demand by scheduling more employees when demand is high and fewer when demand is low (other valid explanations acceptable).
Marking guidance: 2 marks per explained way, max 4.

3. Define force field analysis. **[2]**

Indicative answer: Force field analysis is a change-management tool that identifies driving forces pushing for change and restraining forces resisting change, so managers can strengthen drivers and/or reduce restraints to implement change successfully.
Marking guidance: 1 mark for change tool; 1 mark for driving vs restraining forces.

4. Identify one driving force and one restraining force for remote working. Explain each. **[4]**

Indicative answer: Driving force: lower office costs or higher employee satisfaction (flexibility) - this supports a hybrid policy. Restraining force: higher client complaints or weaker communication/culture - this makes hybrid working harder

to sustain.
Marking guidance: 2 marks per force (identify + explain), max 4.

Section C markscheme: Case study

Case study: TechConsult Ltd (remote and hybrid working)

1. Using the data, analyse whether remote working improved TechConsult's performance. Consider both costs and service quality. **[6]**

Indicative answer: Performance appears mixed. Costs improved: office costs fell from €120,000 to €70,000 per month and on-time delivery rose from 86% to 88%, while employee satisfaction increased from 3.4 to 4.1. However, service quality may have weakened in some areas because client complaints rose from 7 to 12 per month. Overall, hybrid working may be beneficial if TechConsult addresses communication and client-management issues.
Marking guidance: Up to 6 for balanced, data-based analysis that weighs trade-offs.

2. Construct a simple force field analysis for a permanent hybrid policy by listing two driving forces and two restraining forces (from the case or reasonable inferences). **[4]**

Indicative answer: Driving forces: (1) lower office costs; (2) higher employee satisfaction/flexibility. Restraining forces: (1) increased client complaints/communication issues; (2) weaker culture/team cohesion or data security risks (any valid two).
Marking guidance: 1 mark per valid force, max 4.

3. Recommend one HR strategy that could reduce restraining forces for hybrid working. Explain how it would work. **[4]**

Indicative answer: Facilitation and support - invest in secure collaboration tools and provide training in remote client communication; set clear hybrid routines (e.g., team days in office). This reduces restraining forces such as communication problems and protects service quality, which should lower complaints and support performance.
Marking guidance: Up to 4 for a relevant strategy with clear explanation linked to restraints.

4. Discuss one ethical issue TechConsult should consider if it uses digital monitoring to manage remote workers. **[4]**

Indicative answer: Ethical issues include privacy and trust: constant monitoring may feel intrusive, increase stress and damage motivation; employees may not consent or understand how data is used. TechConsult should be transparent, collect only necessary data, consult employees, and ensure monitoring is proportionate and fair.
Marking guidance: Up to 4 for identification plus discussion/mitigation.

Section D markscheme: Extended response

Question: Evaluate whether adopting a permanent hybrid working policy is likely to help TechConsult create a loyal and flexible workforce. Your answer should refer to evidence from the data and consider how HRM can manage resistance to change. **[10]**
10-mark extended response (evaluation) - marking guidance
Award marks using a best-fit approach.

0: No relevant content.
1-2: Very limited knowledge; largely descriptive; little/no reference to the case; no judgement.
3-4: Some relevant knowledge; limited application to the bank; limited analysis; judgement is asserted rather than justified.
5-6: Clear knowledge and some application; some analysis of advantages/limitations; a conclusion is present but may be unbalanced or weakly supported.
7-8: Very good knowledge and strong application; balanced analysis including resistance to change; conclusion is well supported and context-based.
9-10: Excellent, integrated response; strong, precise application; perceptive evaluation (including trade-offs/ethics) and a fully justified conclusion.

Indicative content: Hybrid working may increase loyalty through flexibility (supported by satisfaction rise) and help create a flexible workforce and wider recruitment pool. It may also reduce costs, freeing resources for training and development. However, rising client complaints suggest risks to service quality and culture; resistance may come from managers who prefer visibility or employees who lack good home workspaces. HRM can manage this through clear communication, participation in policy design, training/support, and measured performance indicators. A strong answer uses data and ends with a justified judgement.
Marking guidance: Use the 10-mark level descriptors provided.