

From the Editor

By Karen V. Beaman, *The Jeitosa Group*

In this issue of IHRIM Journal, our authors focus on the evolution of HR technology by examining the benefits, describing how the new technology can measure the effect of human capital investments on customer and shareholder value, how it impacts leadership within the enterprise and how it has become the catalyst for creating and sustaining social networking.

We begin with “The Promise of Web Services: Why SOA Means Better HR Service” by Karen Beaman and John Macy. The authors say that Web Services and Service Oriented Architectures promise to provide a technology platform that will better enable cross-functional, cross-organizational collaboration, at a significantly lower total cost of ownership due to the ease of integration and ongoing maintenance. But, balancing the hype associated with any new technology against the promised benefits requires a pragmatic approach to identify exactly where the measurable benefits will be achieved. In the case of SOA, we are able to analyze the processes within a typical HR business operation and focus on the processes that can be aided by the new technology platform. Once identified, we can estimate with confidence the potential benefits that can be delivered.

In “The Evolution in HR Technology,” Michael Moretti, the author describes how Human Resources is taking advantage of leading edge technology to leverage its strategic importance to the enterprise. If this trend continues, it is not difficult to imagine the e-HR department running the annual global company meeting and providing each member of the meeting across the entire company with their own personalized statistics on every activity generated by the department over the last year with quarterly projections, including workforce projections and their costs, as well as the return on investment.

Yves Lermusi article “The Future of HR Technology: On-Demand” tells us that Software-as-a-Service is a revolution for the delivery of software services globally. It effectively democratizes application software, providing easier, quicker and broader access. Talent management has led the adoption and proven performance of this architecture on a large global scale. Now it is likely that all HR, enterprise applications, and desktop applications will follow.

Recognized as the “father of human capital benchmarking,” Jac Fitz-enz contributes our next article, “From Metrics to Intelligence.” The author explains how every organization, profit or not-for-profit, is composed of three types of capital: structural, relational and human. Optimum effectiveness and value creation is a function of how well the three interact. This is achieved through the application of human intelligence that utilizes the most advanced tools of management analysis. Human Resources is at a point in its evolution wherein simple metrics are no longer sufficient. Given the demands of the market today and into the fore-

seeable future, we need to step up a level. Technology has given us the electronic tools to manipulate data. Decision science and business intelligence have provided analytic processes for seeing patterns and connections within data. It is time for HR to take up these tools, apply the processes, and become a value-adding business function.

“The Changing Nature of Leadership” by André Martin explains how connected leadership is an emerging view of leadership as an inclusive and collective networked activity occurring throughout organizations. Out of this project grew the Changing Nature of Leadership research project. Its focus: to explore the current field of leadership and forecast future trends. The CNL relied on several interdependent streams of research, including academic literature, surveys, benchmarking and classroom research. It’s no longer the time of the heroic leader; the leader who walks in and takes up all the space in the room. The job of today’s leader is to create space for other people – a space in which people can generate new and different ideas; a space where seemingly disparate departments and people in the organization come together and have a meaningful conversation; a space in which people can be more effective, more agile, and more prepared to respond to complex challenges.

In “My Mob’s Smarter than Your Mob,” Bennett Reddin takes us into today’s reality of social networking exemplified by MySpace and Friendster. These sites have gone from places where you could express yourself, upload pictures, music and videos, and even customize most of the look and feel of your personal pages – to sites that have evolved in rapid time from being products on their own, to becoming platforms for other products. Extrapolating from MySpace’s world to potential changes in the systems and practices of HR is a piece of vision-casting. A social networking-aware HR will concentrate more on organizational development than on reconciling headcount reports, more on coaching and managing virtual teams than on compliance issues. The HRIS professional will need to support these disciplines by understanding the data models on which network mapping is based, on the data capture and reporting that will be meaningful in this environment, and especially on the tools to virtualize teams and projects, e.g., team scheduling displays and responds very differently to a user than does individual scheduling.

We hope you enjoy reading these articles about the evolution and business impact of HR technology.

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