

# From the Editor

By Karen V. Beaman, The Jeitosa Group



This issue begins with an article by Dave Ulrich, “HR Dreams: Where HR is Headed to Deliver Value.” Ulrich says we can look to our past in text books and articles; we can grasp our present by looking in the mirror of what we do; but we create our future by examining our dreams. These dreams are rooted in the challenges of businesses today and how HR professionals should respond. They also highlight the hopes and aspirations of HR professionals.

This article provides a brief overview of the context of business, and then suggests an over-arching vision for our future, reports 10 challenges that we must address, and concludes with implications for both the structure of the HR organization and the personal requirements for HR professionals. The business world is changing. It requires that HR professionals contribute by creating value. This value is created when HR professionals master 10 proposed principles and can turn that knowledge into a set of organization capabilities. HR professionals are more able to do this value added work when the function is accurately structured and when HR professionals act, play roles, and demonstrate the right competencies.

In their article, “Malleable Mindset and Cultural Contact: A Multi-Factorial Approach to the International Experience,” Karen Beaman and Gregory Guy present a multi-factorial model of the international work experience based on their research study. They identify four clusters of factors that influence the performance and subjective experience of individuals in international settings. First, people bring their own individual attitudes, experiences, and personalities to the encounter. One key factor here is person’s global mindset – a cognitive construct of individual beliefs and attitudes to the international experience. Second, there are cultural factors arising from the practices and attitudes prevalent in the home culture and in the destination culture. Third are identity factors relating to the social role or identity that individuals construct in interacting with the community around them. Finally, there are factors specific to the context or situation of a given individual or experience, such as the kind of job held or the person’s family circumstances.

Overall, the results from their study confirm that accommodation to other cultures is a complex multi-dimensional function driven by many factors. Crucially, there is a malleable component to individual performance: although multiple factors influence the situation, people get better at intercultural accommodation with learning and experience.

Next we preview two articles from the upcoming IHRIM Press book *Common Cause: Shared Services for Human Resources*. The first article is by Holly Newsom Bush and Sariyah Buchanan titled “Services: From Superficial to Sensational.”

The role of human resources in the shared services framework has evolved considerably over the past 20 years. HR in shared services was once largely relegated to the consolidation of administrative (read, “back office”) activities, like other functions that experienced popular inclusion in shared services organizations since the concept’s inception such as finance and information technology. HR shared services now includes centers of excellence and expertise as part of its standard service offering portfolio. The goal of today’s HR shared services is to become a true “one-stop” shop for both employees and managers. To achieve this goal and satisfy the increasing demands for up-to-date, at-your-fingertips information, automation and integration remain critical. In order for a culture of customer service excellence to grow and thrive, management must have a commitment to fostering it and the energy to ensure this commitment spreads and is embedded throughout the organization. Everyone, from the top down, must believe they work for the customer.

Continuing our look at HR shared services, “Operations: The Guts and the Glory” by Tim Palmer tells us that once the excitement surrounding the set up and launch of the shared services model dies down and the consultants and senior management have finished their jobs, the real work – operations – commences.

The majority of the value of any shared services initiative is derived from operations management and people making and sustaining improvement gains throughout its life. HR shared services is a complex system that can be likened to the human organism. None are the same, they each have different DNA, yet there are common components that need to always be present to ensure a successful life. Foremost among these are governance and people management activities. With these two areas working well, most other issues can be overcome.

Shared services rarely get the plaudits they deserve from their clients. People are always willing to blame others for processes not working in quite the right way, especially when they operate in a remote location. Those working in well-run environments really do deserve the glory for all the guts of operations that they handle daily.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of the *IHRIM Journal*.

**Karen V. Beaman**  
Managing Partner  
The Jeitosa Group  
San Francisco, CA USA  
[karen.beaman@jeitosa.com](mailto:karen.beaman@jeitosa.com)