

From the Editor

By Karen V. Beaman, The Jeitosa Group

As we began 2006, we did so without our longtime friend and colleague, Bob Stambaugh who had passed away in December 2005. We paid tribute to Bob in the *Journal* throughout 2006 for his forward thinking and the enormous contributions he made to IHRIM and the field of HR systems technology. As a co-founder of the *Journal*, Bob spent many hours writing and developing articles and was one of the *Journal's* greatest advocates.

In this issue, we present the "Best of 2006" and it is appropriate to begin with Stambaugh's article, "Patterns of Use: Mapping Human Resources Information Delivery for the Modern Corporation." He wrote the article in 1994 and even then, he was advocating that HR information management could be vastly improved through mapping, collaboration and social networks. It is a testament to his forward thinking that these concepts are now a key part of the strategy of many corporations worldwide.

"A Short History of Social Network Analysis in Organizations" by Valdis Krebs, a pioneer in the field of social network analysis and developer of a software tool used for SNA, is our next feature – and a good follow-up to Stambaugh's piece. Krebs historical perspective commences in the 1930s and he divides the article into two parts: BC, which is for the era before computers and AM, which is the era after microprocessors. SNA has parallels to HRIS as both were influenced and grew rapidly after computing power was easily available. Krebs tells us that without computers these two fields would be mostly theories and unimplemented ideas, but sociology and technology need to work together to produce knowledge out of the data that we gather and process.

Our next feature is "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.

Recognized at 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 foreseeable 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.

Our next article is by Dave Ulrich and is titled "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 an 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.

Dr. Daniel Sullivan authors our last article, "Contemporary Organizations: Emergence, Forms, Functions and HR Implications." Sullivan says that how a company organizes its operations is one of the most provocative issues in business today. He states that although there are defenders of the 80-year-old hierarchical management model, there is growing support that the 21st century has ushered in a fundamental shift that appears to give greater rewards to those companies that forsake predictability and control for the challenge of developing organizations that support effective knowledge-generating and decision-making relationships among workers.

This issue concludes our 10th year publishing the IHRIM *Journal*, and we hope you have enjoyed reading it – and will continue to do so. It continues to be our goal to provide thought-provoking, leading-edge articles focusing on knowledge, education and solutions supporting human capital management.

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