

From the Editor

By Karen V. Beaman, *Jeitosa Group International*

No longer the exclusive domain of computer loving teenagers and college students, social networking has become a tool to drive corporate innovation and facilitate communication from the boardroom on down.

The content of this issue focuses on social networking and begins with an article by Valdis Krebs titled, "Managing the 21st Century Organization." Krebs states that our knowledge economy operates on the complexities of connections. All individuals, teams, communities, systems, and other business assets are massively interconnected in an evolving economic ecosystem. In the connected economy, each network actor is embedded in a larger economic web that affects each participant and, in return, is influenced by that participant. In such a connected system we can no longer focus on the performance of individual actors – we must focus on system outcomes. The key is performance of the connected whole. For the HR department it is no longer sufficient to just "hire the best." *You must hire and wire!* Start new networks, help employees and teams connect to existing clusters and communities. Connect the unconnected for the benefit of both the employees *and* the organization!

Our next feature article, "The Power of Communities of Practice: The Implication of the Design, Function, and Performance of Supply Chains" by Drs. Frank L. DuBois and Daniel P. Sullivan, studies CoPs that are directed by a network organizer because the authors believe that doing so identifies helpful principles and techniques. Specifically, CoPs that rely on voluntary configuration ultimately rely on serendipity, i.e., the patterns of who joins, who stays, who participates, and who trusts who are irregular. This article keenly documents the implications of shifting boundaries and changing borders. Indeed, consistent themes among this diverse community of readings show that industries evolve, leadership standards change, disruptive technologies challenge the status quo, and external shocks realign competitive relations.

In the next article by Don Ropes, "Linking Communities of Practice and Human Resources," the author discusses CoPs as a knowledge management concept and shows a direct link between CoPs and human capital management (HCM). Communities of practice are a proven way to effectively manage knowledge, as well as promote organizational learning, so it is a logical step to aim HCM initiatives towards developing and supporting them. It is Ropes' experience that both the vision and operational goals of an organization's HR department is exceptionally crucial in designing and supporting a learning organization and that CoPs are one strategy to achieving these goals. In the global economy, changing the firm into a learning organization will take on even greater importance – initiating change strategies that are guided by an approach that focuses on people rather than systems. This means that the role of HR management becomes even greater in the organization – supporting the development of learning ecologies requires insight into many complex processes.

"Organizational Transparency Drives Company Perfor-

mance," by Erik Berggren and Rob Bernshteyn, focuses on the execution of strategy in organizations and the transparency of those strategies within organizational structures. Business strategy is distinct from the process of breaking down the strategy into definitive and meaningful components upon which individual employees can act. Employee understanding of those components is critical to the successful execution of the organization's strategy. The authors illustrate this point with what they call "strategy transparency." Though there is no universal model that can be applied to every organization, there are fundamental conditions that need to be in place to foster organizational transparency and, therefore, drive company performance. A clearly defined strategy that is broken down into individual, actionable goals is essential to making employee contributions relevant and purposeful. Further, relentless execution through integrated pay-for-performance relies on fair assessments of employee performance.

Our last article, "Leading Global Knowledge Workers: From Parent-Child to Peer-to-Peer Practices," by Homa Bahrami and Stuart Evans summarizes effective practices for leading and engaging high tech knowledge workers. It is based on extensive field research in more than 50 high-tech companies in different industries, ranging from computer hardware and software to semiconductors, telecommunication, storage products, test equipment, Internet products and services, biotechnology and life sciences. Also, the authors have benefited from their practical experience as ringside observers, board members, advisors, and educators during the past 20 years in Silicon Valley. Knowledge enterprises in Silicon Valley are a montage of versatile capabilities, informal networks and professional relationships. Their productivity depends on knowledge workers' capabilities, commitments, motivations and relationships. A knowledge worker's effectiveness is based on results and credibility, perceived reputation, and network of relationships, rather than on formal authority, job descriptions, and position in the hierarchy. This article puts forward the principle of peer-to-peer leadership in order to describe how effective leaders in Silicon Valley guide, engage, align, and ultimately lead, multi-cultural knowledge workers.

In today's global world, success is all about speed. We tend to think of this speed in terms of technical networks and time to market but it is also becoming a reality in terms of growing our personal networks and business relationships. The speed at which we are able to expand our knowledge, cope the pace of change and remain current on the vital issues and trends' affecting our business specialties has significant impact on the value we provide our enterprise. We hope you have enjoyed this issue and will tell your social network about the *IHRIM Journal*.

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