

From the Publisher's Desk



It's no secret that people are the most expensive and important assets for firms, but many firms struggle with the processes and technologies to manage these assets. In the current global economic climate, human capital may now be more important than ever but what role does technology play in the management of human capital? In this issue, our authors examine the future of ERP, the evolution of HCM market and discuss why it is important for companies to invest in HCM solutions to manage the work force.

We lead off this issue with an article by James Holincheck, "ERP Strikes Back: Are ERP Vendors Relevant in a Talent Management-Focused World?" Holincheck writes that within the last few years a whole new generation of vendors has emerged focused on talent management applications that worked on top of the administrative systems offered by ERP vendors. This occurred because ERP vendors moved too slowly to provide these talent management applications. The author tells us that, in many ways, ERP vendors are well-positioned for both the short-term and for emerging trends. It would be a mistake to count out the ERP vendors. They have large customer bases who have invested a lot of money to buy and implement their solutions. In the current economic environment, customers will be hard-pressed to prove that moving away from these vendors now would be a good investment.

In our next article, "HR in the Year 2015: A Walk through the Future of HR Technology" by Dr. John Sullivan, the author states that rather than focusing on cost-cutting and automating transactions, the goals of modern HR technology will shift more to improving people management decisions. HR technology currently uses most of its resources to simply provide "information," in the form of raw data and reports when it is requested by HR professionals. Unfortunately, the information needed is only half of the decision-making equation. The second more important part is whether whatever is provided actually results in a better decision being made. By expanding the responsibility of HR technology to the entire decision process, HRIS assumes responsibility for ensuring that its work makes all people management decisions faster, more accurate and more effective. Dr. Sullivan provides 16 Foundation Principles to guide HR technology to 2015.

"Integrating People, Process, Technology and Strategy: The Future of Human Capital Management" by Larry Dunivan is our next article. Dunivan poses the question "... with such a high level of interest in managing talent more strategically, why do so many organizations fail to effectively capture, manage and leverage the data associated with their work force?" He says tomorrow's successful companies will 1) prioritize talent management initiatives; 2) commit to integration as the key to a successful HR program that includes talent management and recognize that, while best-of-breed solutions can solve a problem, a fully integrated talent management solution is not necessarily one of their strongest features; 3) understand that employees will increasingly require organizations to cater to their unique styles of working and preferences, and this will only benefit the adoption of talent management systems and strategic use of information for business decisions; and, 4) analyze the software delivery options available to them, recognizing the long-term benefits, and drawbacks, of each model.

David Ludlow contributes our next article titled "The Future of HCM." Ludlow tells us that as companies continue to grow and manage an increasingly global and diverse work force, they will need to invest in people, tools and technologies to help accomplish their strategic business goals. Companies must effectively leverage talent in all lines of business and operations – and invest in the future of HCM. Providing an integrated business platform across talent management, across HR and across the entire business foundation is a key strategy. Yet, organizations can't always implement large "mega" processes at once, so components can be implemented individually or together, and software deliveries don't require a major release upgrade to provide functionality, removing a key barrier for companies to leverage what is available. Together with a clear focus on end-user experience in a collaborative environment, the goal is to enable companies to plan, develop, and build their work forces from a common foundation, based on their unique needs and timelines.

In "Built for Business: A Perspective on Business Management Solutions" by Laura Schroeder and Christine Ferguson say that this article discusses the challenges faced by companies trying to meet modern business challenges using outdated ERP solutions and explores what it means to be "built for business." According to Schroeder and Ferguson, companies are moving away from monolithic ERP applications and turning to simpler, more streamlined and less expensive applications. They are realizing that while they may have an application ecosystem in place that meets basic local requirements, they don't have an efficient way to manage global head count reporting or targeted costing analysis. There is no doubt that ERP solutions have played a key role in shaping modern business, influencing everything from data management to business process design. In today's dynamic global business environment, however, business has no time to wait for systems to catch up with changing circumstances. The primary requirement for modern business systems is that they are flexible enough to be shaped by business – every day – without the enormous costs of upgrades.

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