
From the Editor

By Karen V. Beaman



What's next on our agenda after the year 2000? With the Y2K conversion problem almost behind us, it's time to leave behind the tactical approach to HR systems we have been taking the last few years. With that albatross finally removed from our neck, we can now focus our energies on more long-term strategic goals. We hope that the *IHRIM Journal* will help you do that!

In this issue, we cover such strategic HRIS topics as scenario planning, knowledge management, the 21st century HR department, competency-based systems, 360° feedback, and the structure of a post-modern HR system. Along with our regular lineup of International Perspectives in HRIS from around the world, we also have columns on the HRIS legal landscape, a "true" HRIS case study, and, of course, several important new book reviews.

We begin, as usual, with our columns on scenario planning by Bob Stambaugh and knowledge management (KM) by Scott Tannenbaum. The scenario that Stambaugh presents in "Visions of the Future: Power to the People" is the type of situation that calls for the implementation of knowledge management strategies of the kind that Tannenbaum describes in "On the Knowledge Frontier: Bigger is not Always Better." Tannenbaum's "think small" approach provides a solution for finding answers to the myriad questions posed by the dilemma Stambaugh presents: how to deal with increasing resource costs, reduced working hours, and a pervasive scarcity of skilled labor created by the new (fictional) programmers and analysts' union. Because large-scale, organization-wide KM efforts are not always possible or advisable, Tannenbaum recommends focusing attention on a smaller, tighter community to pilot concepts, to demonstrate value, and to create the momentum necessary to gain widespread organization acceptance.

John Sullivan's article "E-HR (Electronic HR) — A Walk Through a 21st Cen-

ture HR Department" provides us with an exciting and thought-provoking image of the HR department in the 21st century. Sullivan describes how HR functions will be handled in the not-too-distant future. With the end of HR managers and HRIS as we know them today, Sullivan shows us some ways the new HR will function: e-comp, expert systems, remote assessment, online performance monitoring, e-recruiting, and even e-employee relations. Sullivan pushes our thinking to realms that we never thought were possible. With the death of HR as a "business partner" and the birth of HR as a "business leader," every manager, indeed every employee, becomes a HR person in the e-HR department.

Next, Susan Hayden discusses the challenges of implementing a competency-based management (CBM) system — an approach that ensures that the skill sets required for each job or role in the organization are measurable and are tied to the overall strategic goals of the enterprise. CBM is not based on individuals' performance or length of service, but rather on the skills, behaviors, and accomplishments that the individuals demonstrate on the job. Hayden goes on to describe the steps for implementing a CBM model, pointing out some of the pitfalls to avoid along the way.

In "Beyond Development: Using 360° Feedback Results in HR Planning," Marcia Jones discusses the importance of 360° assessment for creating a more objective and more accurate evaluation of the human capital in an organization. The article explores the misconceptions surrounding the 360°-assessment process and the potential advantages of using such information in strategic staffing decisions in creating a more effective organization.

In our final feature article, Bob Stambaugh presents the first of a two-part series on the design of a post-modern HRIS. The HRIS of the "old days" was built to automate and then streamline the collection

of HR-related information. Stambaugh stresses that current systems retain so much of their predecessors' assumptions and architecture that they cannot fully support the emerging business environment of the 21st century. The HRIS of the 21st century needs to start now with a shift of emphasis from collection to transfer and application of information. This first article begins by defining the structure of a post-modern HRIS. How to apply the new tools and concepts he presents is the subject of the second part, to appear in a future issue of the *IHRIM Journal*.

With this issue we introduce two new quarterly columns - HRIS Legal Updates - from the United States and from Europe. I am pleased to welcome Edward Lee Isler, Esquire, from Ray and Isler, P.C., and Phil Jones from British Airways, who talk about the latest happenings on the HRIS legal front. In their debut columns, Isler presents some guidelines for implementing employee-monitoring systems in the U.S., while Jones discusses considerations around the European Union's Working Time Directive.

I am particularly pleased to welcome to the *IHRIM Journal* staff Dr. Lisa Plantamura as our new Articles Editor and Brian Kimball as our new International Editor. With the support of these two recognized and dedicated HRIS professionals, I am sure we can continue to bring you high quality, innovative and thought-provoking information on the latest research and thinking in the field.

Please send me an e-mail or fill out the enclosed survey card, and let me know what you think.

Au revoir/Auf Wiedersehen/Until next time,

Karen V. Beaman
Editor-in-Chief, *IHRIM Journal*
Vice President, AGConsulting, Europe
kbeaman@agconsult.com
Paris, France
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