

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

IHRIM Journal

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VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: POWER TO THE PEOPLE!4

By Robert H. Stambaugh

Beginners in the scenario planning game often develop detailed descriptions of events that are likely to occur, and then use the resulting scenarios as an alternative to traditional planning activities. While such an approach certainly creates an interesting perspective for planning, it is not as effective as using a radically different, less likely starting point — and freeing up planners' minds to look at a wider range of organizational response. Trying to attack problems in a traditional planning approach yields fairly predictable results: scenario development adds little if any value to the process. It is only through coming up with "outside-the-box" possibilities that we can achieve real breakthrough thinking. Stambaugh envisions a time in the year 2001 (after the Y2K efforts are over) in order to illustrate that what's important is to raise everyone's awareness of their starting point and to generate a completely new set of ideas that can be used in developing the company's strategic long-term initiatives.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE FRONTIER: BIGGER IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER6

By Dr. Scott Tannenbaum

When it comes to knowledge management (KM) initiatives, bigger is not always better. Despite business trends towards organizational transformation and system integration, large-scale, organization-wide KM efforts are not always possible or advisable. Tannenbaum argues that it can often be better to "think small" and focus attention on a tighter community of jobs. Smaller, more focused KM efforts can proceed with limited resources and greater speed. They provide an opportunity to pilot test concepts, demonstrate value, and create momentum. The premise behind the "think small" approach is

that a team of people from a focused community of jobs is familiar with the knowledge-related issue within that community. They know the knowledge gaps and can often identify solutions that can address those gaps without a major organizational change. Solutions from credible, knowledgeable sources are more likely to address the needs of the community and are more likely to be accepted. Tannenbaum describes a seven-step process for launching a successful, smaller KM effort.

E-HR – A WALK THROUGH A 21ST CENTURY HR DEPARTMENT11

By Dr. John Sullivan

Everyone knows that technology is playing a bigger role in HR, but few see how it will totally change the way we do HR work. This article "literally" walks us through a 21st century HR department and shows, in a narrative way, how HR jobs will be radically changed by this exciting (but somewhat threatening) new technology. Imagine a HR department with no HR staff, where all HR work is done by line managers, and HR people are consultants and strategists to the organization. Imagine an environment where the HRIS is managed remotely by the software vendor through the Internet and where HRIS is just a normal part of everyday IT business. Imagine a company where HR is not just a business partner but a true leader in organizational change and innovation. This article is a "heads up" for all those who think only HRIS people need to learn about technology.

COMPETENCY BASED MANAGEMENT: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTATION16

By Susan Hayden

Competency-based management (CBM) works by ensuring that the skill sets required for each job or role are measurable and that they are tied to the overall strategic goals of the organization. Once implemented, the CBM model can become the foundation for other HR functions. Corporations implementing CBM can face a series of challenges including design, global, and technological issues. State-of-the-art CBM software helps organiza-

tions to overcome some of these challenges by cutting across the traditional HR "silos" and weaving functionality together in a holistic, integrated approach, allowing data to be accessed across the organization to support workforce-related decisions. Perhaps the best bottom-line advice to human resource managers contemplating CBM is to keep it simple at first. Once the CBM model is in place and the results are favorable, managers can continue to build, basing more HR programs on the competency model and expanding the programs to cover additional regions and divisions.

BEYOND DEVELOPMENT: USING 360° FEEDBACK RESULTS IN HR PLANNING25

By Marcia L. Jones, Ph.D.

Human resources professionals have used multi-source assessment processes for individual coaching and development for over 20 years. Despite a tremendous investment in dollars and "person hours", most organizations make minimal use of this valuable information. The 360° assessment process provides organizations with a less-biased, more accurate means of evaluating the human capital in their organization. A properly designed and administered program encourages collaboration, promotes cooperation, reinforces innovation, and facilitates corporate agility. Technology now allows organizations to administer, protect, analyze and integrate assessment information into corporate strategic plans. Including 360° feedback appraisals in strategic staffing decisions can increase the effectiveness of organizational development. This article explores the misconceptions surrounding 360° assessment processes and the potential advantages of using the information in strategic staffing decisions. By taking 360° data beyond development and into the HR planning function, organizations can leverage their investment in the assessment process and create more effective organizations.

**POST-MODERN HR SYSTEMS
(PART I)31**

By Robert H. Stambaugh

Most HRIS activity in “the old days” was designed to automate, then streamline the collection of HR-related information. It was, and remains, a technical occupation, the evidence of which is its failure to become even a small “blip” on executive management’s radar screens. Current systems retain so much of their predecessors’ assumptions and architecture that they cannot fully support the emerging business environment of the 21st century. Changing this view means developing a framework for post-modern systems. It needs to start now with a shift of emphasis from collection to transfer and application of information. It may need to shift again in the future, when we know more about turning information into knowledge. This article is the first step toward the definition of a post-modern HRIS structure. How to apply the new tools and concepts introduced in the article will be the subject of Part 2, to appear in a future issue of the *IHRIM Journal*.

**International Perspective:
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PROGNOSTICATIONS42

By Carl C. Hoffmann, Ph.D.

This article looks at the impact that integrating e-commerce with standard human resource, benefit and payroll information will have on the organization, its employees and its HR function. By integrating information from the Web with its own home web page, a company can provide access to the full range of services that employees need. This can create a “virtual community” for employees, making them feel well-cared for and binding them more closely to the organization. The HR function will become gatekeepers and quality controllers, monitoring the wide variety of information available and ensuring that the service providers are servicing employees and the organization well. Organizations should be aware that e-commerce can break down the boundaries of the company by providing a vast amount of competing information to employees. But, if companies design their systems carefully, e-commerce can provide them with the mechanism for reinforcing the cor-

porate culture and community, and for integrating and controlling its employees.

**International Perspective:
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THE YEAR OF THE EURO46

By Karen V. Beaman

1999 will forever be known as the year of the euro. The introduction of Europe’s new common currency can certainly be considered one of the most important economic events of the 20th century. The euro binds the eleven European countries into a strong political and economic force rivaling the United States. The new common currency will hasten the process of European integration, promoting a convergence of the eleven national economies. With diminishing trade barriers, the progress toward a common business environment and the ongoing movement toward “Europeanisation” will grow even stronger. However, European Monetary Union is besieged with a plethora of business, systems, social, cultural, and psychological issues that must be dealt with. This column addresses the business, system, and socio-cultural issues brought about by the introduction of the euro, and the impact that these issues will have on our human resource information systems and personnel.

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HR AND THE INTERNET50

By Gabor Erdi

As a result of its global expansion, the Internet has inevitably invaded the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Slowly but surely, the Internet is penetrating into the mind and everyday business of HR professionals operating in the region. Although a wide variety of HR services such as online training and employee self services are already available through the Internet, the most commonly used functionality is still recruitment. Unfortunately the vast number of job sites tend to lack any logical structured links between them, and consequently make it difficult for the users to apply these services effectively. The chaotic situation could be improved by the development of central web sites (integrators) which would

help the Internet surfers access the required information in a structured manner. Although, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, the Internet utilization in CEE is still lagging behind the west, due to the fast economic development of the region, the gap is shrinking and will gradually fade away.

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By John Macy

Malaysia is small country with a big vision for the future. The country has managed to support the vision with a technology infrastructure development, known as the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), and a government policy that ensures training to develop the local population is carried out by industry. From a human resource information system’s perspective, all of the cultural and technological ingredients are there for successful implementations. However, there are very few HRIS vendors actually selling their product in that country. Some of the reasons HRIS vendors have not really broken into the market are the cost factor and the absence of local HRIS expertise. There is nothing particularly special about HRIS requirements and most vendors’ products will go a long way to addressing the functional needs. However, systems need to cater for the additional types of data collected, different data formats (such as name records) and specialty modules to support people management functions.

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By Phillip Booth

Workplace equity must take on a far broader meaning within the African continent. Due to the economic, social and political imbalances of the past, social equity is required to assist in creating a more equitable society. Within South Africa, the private sector must play an active role in addressing equity within the workplace while simultaneously assisting in greater economic integration. In this scenario, HR professionals need to develop flexible plans that not only involve their immediate environment but also the broader com-

munity. We take a look at this complex situation as well as the role of HR systems within this scenario.

**WORKING IN THE CONNECTED WORLD:
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By Valdis Krebs

Theorizing about the Internet has reached a fever pitch. Everyone is predicting how the Internet will change the rules of communication and commerce. Two things are certain; first, the Internet will change the world and second, we have no idea how!

Three simple, interrelated rules are being bantered around the Internet with promises that they hold the key to our future: *Early Mover Advantage* – the first competitor to market uses the law of increasing returns to dominate a market segment. *Metcalf's Law* – any node added to a network increases the network's utility not by 1 but by n^2 [n being the number of nodes in the network]. *Disintermediation* – the network will remove all intermediaries as we participate directly with each other in friction-free exchanges.

Krebs explains how these simple rules lead to false results and how modeling our interconnected economic systems is the only way to get at the real rules operating in complex adaptive systems.

**HRIS Legal Update: USA
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By Edward Lee Isler, Esq.

Employers have long been involved in monitoring the workplace performance of their employees. Technological changes in the last 20 years, however, have significantly enhanced an employer's ability to monitor employees in the workplace for performance and security purposes. Specifically, today's employers increasingly find themselves in possession of technology that permits them to record telephone calls, track an employee's use of the Internet, review employee e-mail, and monitor keystrokes. Before availing themselves of such technology, however, employers should consider laws relating to the privacy rights of employees to ensure that the use of such technology does not result in unwanted employee litigation.

Thoughtful, well-articulated policies will not only prevent inadvertent violations of employee privacy rights, they will also undermine any claim that the employee was unaware that monitoring was taking place. The purpose of this article is to provide employers with some practical guidelines for the monitoring of employees in the workplace.

**HRIS Legal Update: Europe
CLOCK WATCHING63**

By Phil Jones

On 1 October 1998, the UK joined the rest of its European neighbours in regulating the number of hours which employees can work. The driving force behind this was the European Union's (EU) Working Time Directive, of November 1993, which the previous conservative UK government had challenged in a case before the European Court of Justice. The purpose of the directive is to protect working people by limiting unreasonable working hours, promoting family life, and reducing the risk of accidents caused by tiredness. The directive confronts the fact that persistent long hours result in diminishing returns in productivity and quality of output. The directive may provide the impetus to reshape corporate culture via greater emphasis on efficiency and flexibility. Training and development programmes to improve time management and delegation skills may also be relevant. Either way, clock watching is set to become a hot issue — not just for impatient or overworked employees, but for diligent employers too

**HRIS Case Study:
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DISCRIMINATION? A CORPORATION
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By Carl C. Hoffmann, Ph.D.

The case study presented here is different from the case studies presented in this column previously. It focuses on the use of data stored within HR information systems to analyze a specific issue – in this case, race discrimination. The case and expert analysis demonstrate that powerful analyses can be generated from this data, but that, to be understood, the data must be properly analyzed. Currently, warehousing and decision support tools provide individu-

als within companies access to this kind of data and analysis, and it is important that HRIS professionals develop the skills to use this information effectively. Hoffmann illustrates how a company defended itself against a race discrimination suit by presenting both sides of the legal argument.

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By Sharon Lampton

This column has something for everyone: two very different works on Knowledge Management, an exploration of the virtual Human Resources department, a novel about project management, and finally a book on improving your personal effectiveness. *If Only We Knew What We Know* explores how to turn your company into one that transfers best practices effectively throughout the organization, and the *Harvard Business Review on Knowledge Management* helps you understand why this is important. *Virtual HR: Human Resources Management in the Information Age* is filled with examples of companies employing intranet technology to turn HR into a virtual organization. *The Deadline* is an inventive novel illustrating the principles of project management. And, if you're feeling a little overwhelmed, perhaps *The High-Tech Personal Efficiency Program* is just what you need.



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AUTHORS' GUIDELINES

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The mission of the *IHRIM Journal* is to build a recognized body of knowledge targeted to current and emerging thought leaders and senior management and dedicated to increasing individual and organizational effectiveness in the workplace through visionary and evolving uses of technology.

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The *IHRIM Journal* content is specifically written for executive management and senior-level human resource and information technology leadership (e.g., CEOs, CIOs, VPs, and Directors), university professors and students, and other current or emerging thought leaders and visionaries.

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The goals of the *IHRIM Journal* are to be:

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- ◆ a forum for high-level (i.e., executive-level, not broad-brush) discussion and debate of current and controversial issues;
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Articles - bibliography:

Stambaugh, Robert H., "The Tectonics of Human Resource Information Systems," *IHRIM Journal*, 6, November 1997, pp. 9-16.

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