
From the Editor

By Karen V. Beaman



In this issue of the IHRIM Journal, we are pleased to bring you the proceedings of IHRIM's June 1999 Conference held in Salt Lake City, Utah. At this conference, the Journal sponsored seven sessions covering a wide range of topics: the visionary musings of industry-recognized experts, the preliminary results of a multi-year HRIS survey on executive management issues, the globalization of human resources, and the effective use of data mining and executive dashboards in managing HRIS.

We begin with thoughts from leading visionaries in the field who served on two panels at the conference entitled: "Visions of the Future" and "New Directions in Self-Service." Gary Durbin, Jenni Lehman, Bob Stambaugh, John Sullivan, and Al Walker share their predictions of what the future holds for HRIS. Jim Candler, Jeff Comport, Jim Spoor, Jay Stright and Al Walker discuss some of the new directions we should be exploring for self-service applications in the future.

Jay Stright and David Goodman bring us the interesting results of a multi-year study they are conducting on the practices and attitudes of HR executives from Fortune 1000 companies in the U.S. Their study, "Issues and Directions for HR in the New Millennium," centers on the challenge of moving the HR function from a mass production paradigm — for which effective HR solutions have been extensively developed — to the knowledge-worker paradigm — for which HR solutions are only beginning to emerge.

In addition to our regular International Perspectives columns, we have two other internationally focused articles in this issue. In the "Globalization of Human Resources," Row Henson provides us with both theoretical background and personal experiences on cultural differences in business around world, sharing with us her adventures working in a global environment over the last year and a half. My own article discusses the growing trend toward "Europeanisation" and the emergence of a common HRIS business environment in Europe, at times in conflict with the strong regional and national differences typifying this region.

Carl Hoffmann's "Driving Your Company down a Data Mineshaft while Using an Executive Dashboard" examines some of the common problems and pitfalls associated with executive dashboards and data min-

participants, and predators who inhabit the HRIS ecosystem with us. He provides a framework to help us effectively identify and manage most of them, and how to live with or defend ourselves from the rest.

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ing. Hoffmann shows that while both tools can be effective ways to represent complex data and to uncover "hidden predictive relationships" within intricate databases, it is important to understand what contributes to these indicators, analyze their cause and take the necessary actions to bring them in line with the company's goals.

John Macy's article "The Component Revolution" provides an examination of component technology and indicates how this new approach to software development is poised to lead the next HR technology revolution. However, in order for component technology to succeed where its predecessor object-oriented technology failed, Macy points out that a business framework with an open market place must be put in place to help developers share their output and to allow competition to reign freely.

Finally, we have two additional feature articles not presented at the IHRIM Conference. Vinnie Mirchandani, in "When Self-Service becomes Self-Defeating," gives us a dose of reality to keep us from seeing self-service as the "silver bullet" for all of our problems. Mirchandani describes current self-service solutions at stage two in the five-stage GartnerGroup "hype cycle" — that is, at the "peak of inflated expectations." He gives us some helpful advice to consider when implementing a self-service initiative that will keep us away from that 50% of initiatives that yield a lower return on investment (ROI) than expected.

The third part of Bob Stambaugh's treatise on "Post-Modern HR Systems" looks at the stakeholders, bystanders, peripheral

I would also like to welcome three new regular contributors to the IHRIM Journal. Joel Lapointe and David Link will alternately be contributing the HRIS Case Study in each issue, taking the "fly-on-the-wall" perspective from the scores of HRIS strategic planning meetings that are taking place in virtually every company and institution around the world. Julian Arturo de Diego, our new Latin American correspondent based in Buenos Aires, focuses on changes in the existing labor relations models in Latin America, where variable wages, multiple competencies, and flexible work hours are being combined with the goal of improving overall productivity and company competitiveness.

If you were able to attend the IHRIM Conference in Salt Lake City, then these offerings will reinforce what you were exposed to there. If you couldn't attend, then I hope this information will give you some insight into the type of the information that is exchanged at IHRIM conferences. In either case, I hope to see you next year in Boston, where the IHRIM Journal will again sponsor several sessions focusing on visionary and innovative solutions, global issues, and strategies for executive management in human resource information systems.

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