

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

IHRIM Journal October - December 2000

## **VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: VAPORWARE . . . OR AROMATHERAPY? . . . . .5**

By Robert H. Stambaugh

Many consultants and practitioners were brought up to be suspicious of vendor claims that a future enhancement would satisfy some part of potential buyers' needs. "Vaporware" was the typical response to such claims. But, things are not as they were. Stambaugh argues that we need to judge vendors as much on vaporware as on existing functionality. Some vendors already listen closely to users when prioritizing system enhancements — recognition that the customer, not the software producer, has the best idea on what "real users" really need. Keeping close to the customer during rapid change is the name of the game. This shift in vendor approach, plus the growth of application service providers (ASP), is sounding the death knell for in-house HR systems. Stambaugh considers strategic planning in this new environment and concludes that the previously maligned vaporware will be an important ingredient in such planning. Not so much vaporware as aromatherapy!

## **VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE . . .8**

By Alfred J. Walker

The workplace will change dramatically from today's office centered environment to a more dispersed wired world, not restricted to a fixed schedule. The workers of the future will be seeking an environment in which they can find interesting and challenging work, where they have an opportunity for continuous learning, and with sufficient scheduling freedom to enjoy the lifestyles they want. This article discusses some of the technology shifts and social and demographic forces that will change the workforce and the way we conduct business, along with the issues these changes portend for the HR function and systems. In this new environment, the future workers will be able to pick and choose their own level of training, whether they work at

home or in an office, as well as co-workers, technology equipment, amount of compensation, level of benefits, benefits supplier, working schedule, etc. Walker gives readers a better understanding of the implications of these changes on the employment landscape, the HR function and the deployment of HR technology.

## **VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: BUILDING THE HR BUSINESS PARTNER . . . . .13**

By Scott I. Tannenbaum, Ph.D.

Will your HR function add more value in the next few years? If your function successfully transitions into a business partner role, then the answer is probably "yes." HR business partners work closely with internal customers to identify and remove obstacles to business success. They provide advice and implement solutions. Regardless of their title, business partners often serve as a type of internal consultant. This article explores the near future of HR by tracking four HR functions, three years into the future. It elaborates on what it means to be an HR business partner and describes the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in that role. It also describes some of the challenges and opportunities to building internal capabilities and successfully transforming an HR function.

## **VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: THE PACE OF TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION . . . . .19**

By Row Henson

In this vision of the future, Row Henson takes a look at the future of HRMS from the vendor's perspective. To really appreciate the pace at which we are seeing technology emerge, Henson starts with a quick reflection of the past from an HRMS point of view. In the future, it's no longer going to be enough just to do transaction processing. We need a convergent business model that combines content with transactions. Workforce analysis tells us what is happening in the organization and hopefully can help us predict rather than react. Marketplaces are going to be the basis for content around knowledge management and the sharing of information within and beyond our virtual walls. The vendor community must begin to understand the true value of their software and how to price and package it accordingly. In the future, customers will look for a better

return on their investment and a reduced price of ownership.

## **VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: THE FUTURE OF EMPLOYEE DATA MANAGEMENT . . . . .21**

By James W. Candler

Since the very beginning of HRIS in the late 1960's, accurate employee data has been virtuously sought, with very few companies achieving the ultimate goal. Accurate people data was not exactly the goal of these efforts but rather a notable by-product of a well-planned and implemented HRIS. We lived in a process-centric world where our success or failure depended on the ever more efficient reduction of the time and materials required to effectively complete a given process or transaction. Today e-directories are totally missing "people-centric" items such as home address, emergency contact, who reports to whom and myriad other important items just important to the people, not the machines. We (HR) are going to lose yet another opportunity to add true value to the corporations we serve. If we don't move now, the time will pass for us to assume a leadership position. We must put the people element into the coming Internet Directory revolution. If we don't, no one else will.

## **VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: WE NEED LESS IM, MORE OLD-FASHIONED HR . . . . .24**

By Vinnie Mirchandani

Vinnie Mirchandani provides a personal perspective about the role of HR in a startup. Myths abound about startups; however, very little research has been done around human resources and organizational development issues involving them. People are vital to startups, so the HR function is critical. On the other hand, their HR technology needs are fairly basic and the mix of HR resource/technology is the reverse found in larger companies. Mirchandani discusses three surprises for managing HR in a startup: (1) HR technology has not been overly impressive; (2) management of growth spurts has been difficult and, (3) benchmarks have been elusive. To sustain the rich innovation startups can deliver, we need to understand their special needs and HR needs to spend more time researching their unique needs to

deliver technology, outsourcing and other customized solutions. Startups deserve to be studied and benchmarked, not just scorned nor envied.

### **HR TECHNOLOGY IN THE FUTURE . . .27**

By Row Henson

No discussion of technology can begin without looking at the changing business landscape such innovations must address. In this article, Row Henson expands on her other articles, starting with additional material on some of today's short-term business issues that depend on technology. Technologies that are simply sizzly *Star Wars* phenomena will only grow and survive if they are truly dealing with real-world issues. Some of the technologies discussed in this article — the ones closer to the next decade — are unproven in their ability to really solve business, economic or even personal issues. However, they give us something to think about that may be a little outside our comfort zone. Henson looks out a little farther than might be normally comfortable for anyone trying to predict technology in an attempt to help us see the issues facing us today and to recognize the speed at which we have to adapt and change in the future.

### **GLOBALIZING HR IS THE NEW TRANSNATIONAL MODEL . . . . .30**

By Karen Beaman and Alfred J Walker

The term "global HRIS" has been used to denote many different types of organizations, systems and environments. Indeed, the word "global" has become one of the hottest "buzz words" of recent years. With the accelerating pace of change brought about by the Internet and by high-speed communications and transportation, distances are shrinking and borders are breaking down. Every organization is now running into so-called "global" issues. In this article, Beaman and Walker define a new model for global HRIS that encompasses a new organizational structure, alternative system architectures, and distributed methods of HR service delivery. Drawing on the work of Christopher Bartlett and Sumantra Ghoshal, the authors attempt to elucidate and consolidate the myriad models and architectures that have been talked about over the past decade. The authors also present the results of a small survey

of large global corporations used to test the real-world fit between what organizations are actually doing and what consultants and theorists say they are doing.

### **KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS:**

#### **WE ARE OUR ARTEFACTS . . . . .44**

By Charles Armstrong and Valdis Krebs

Extending organizational capability to meet dynamic market demands continues to challenge most industries today. The organization is expected to respond rapidly and reconfigure itself to adapt to the marketplace. This is a role that human resources is expected to do more and more. Yet the strands of "organizational fabric" cannot always accommodate these demands. These strands must be elastic to respond with agility, and elasticity can only come from improving the learning capability and learning capacity of an organization. Learning within the enclosed confines of a static organization will only beget cloned mindsets and will not extend organizational capabilities sufficiently and rapidly. This is because a closed network is exposed to the same sources of information and ideas. Diversifying connections and extending outside the local network is important for bringing in new data that will fuel innovation. This is the first step to making an organization porous and is essential for improved learning capability. Is HR able to help the captain of the corporation turn the mighty ship in a new direction?

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE MAPPING: BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ORGANIZATION . . . . .48**

By Gerald R. Falkowski

and Robert A. Ray, Jr.

Are your organization's intellectual assets being put to their best use?

Are people exchanging ideas freely and learning from one another?

Are your centers of knowledge fountains or fortresses?

With the growing importance of knowledge management and resulting reliance on knowledge workers (those who generate intellectual rather than physical output), executives today are facing challenges in ensuring that knowledge workers are able to maximize their contributions to the organization in a "penaltyfree" environment where they are encouraged to take risks and learn

from their mistakes. Organizations that establish learning as a priority, through the sharing and reuse of the knowledge and information of their employees, can realize sustainable competitive advantage. Using the Organizational Knowledge Mapping assessment tool to determine if an organization is sharing and reusing information and knowledge optimally, organizations can pinpoint gaps in knowledge sharing and reuse and ultimately develop actions to achieving optimal knowledge sharing.

#### **STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING THE CONSULTANT RELATIONSHIP IN MID-SIZE ENTERPRISE HR PROJECTS . . .52**

By Pat Phelan and Jason Pitou

Today, many of the assumptions about HR technology projects in the mid-size enterprise (MSE) are in flux. MSEs are faced with the same complex business drivers that plague large enterprises, but are more likely to be hampered by resource and budgetary constraints and a risk-averse corporate culture. Contrary to the market hype brought on by the advent of better implementation tools designed for lower-cost implementations, MSEs implementing an HR system remain at a high risk of implementation cost overruns. With leaner staffing models and tighter budgets than larger companies they often rely on third-party consultants and system integrators (SIs). MSEs will more effectively control costs and effort by following certain project guidelines when using these consultants for HR package selection and implementation. This article examines strategies for the MSE-consultant relationship when using consultants for package selection and implementation, rating consultant teams and negotiating well-planned system integrator agreements. Best results are achieved when the enterprise and the vendor approach the project as a part of a long-term relationship with common realistic expectations.

#### **AFTER THE VOLCANO ... OR LIFE IN THE NEW HR VILLAGE . . . . .56**

By Sally Grande and Civi Jacobsen

Leaders in large HR and IT departments across North America who are cited for HR best practices still struggle with redefining HR success as measured by contribution to shareholder value,

growth in product and service innovation and market dominance. It seems clear that HR must realign its product offering and service delivery to meet these new metrics (the "Metamorphosis Strategy") or face becoming "HR NewCo." The key differentiator consists of embedding HR into the business and wrapping the business model around the client. From early data mining efforts in the retail sector to one of e-business' most lucrative approaches, the "life event model" is actually a traditional HR model. Business clients will adopt the HR practices they find most valuable, along with those that promote the health of the organization and improve the work-life of employees. These two strategies are not mutually exclusive; they may even be co-dependent. The authors see the internal HR professional becoming more of a negotiator, compliance governor or vendor manager, and envision NewCo's HR staff with both the skills of the past and the knowledge worker's information savvy and analytical abilities.

#### **ALIGNING PEOPLE TO STRATEGY . . .59**

By *Tim Bean and Bernhard Schweizer*

Successful strategy execution requires the engagement of each and every employee. This article describes how HR practitioners need to embrace human capital management (HCM) to communicate, enforce, model and measure the human contribution and become strategic advisors for all people-related processes. A system linking all elements of strategy definition, communication, and execution and simulation, both top-down and bottom-up, is crucial for success. Since change is the only constant in today's competitive environment, simulation capabilities for change readiness, as well as integrated change management tools, are required. These strategic tools will only add value if they are simple to use, flexible to leverage and tightly integrated into the current HRIS system infrastructure.

#### **A SUCCESSFUL WORLDWIDE DECISION SUPPORT SOLUTION -**

#### **A CASE STUDY . . . . .64**

By *Bruce T. Johnson and Robert Rupar*

The merger of Price Waterhouse and Coopers and Lybrand created PwC on July 1, 1998. This milestone brought change to its operating systems, business processes, culture and management,

forcing the organization to face the same complex business challenges it helps its Fortune 1000 clients overcome. One of the most significant challenges the company had to overcome was improving its human resources data collection and management process to efficiently support senior executives from seven distinct lines of business along with other decision makers within the organization. PwC successfully met its HR global data collection and management challenges, and is now sharing its story. This article provides an inside look at how two large, global organizations combined their HR systems into a successful solution for one of the largest companies in the world.

#### **Working in the Connected World**

#### **KISS OF THE LOVE SPIDER . . . . .71**

By *Valdis Krebs*

This article addresses the threat of computer viruses, using the "LoveBug" that recently caused global havoc as a prime example. A distinction is made between computer networks, which carry viruses and the social networks that facilitate their spread. Dense local clusters of people, inter-connected by "bridges" characterize social networks. A virus can spread very quickly within a cluster, because of the multiplicity of infection points available. It is at the bridges between clusters where a virus can best be checked and here the issue of IT diversity arises. The author notes that companies with homogeneous Microsoft-based systems suffered most from LoveBug. An analogy is made with the spread of biological diseases — the greater the diversity, the more robust the population against virus attacks. Diversity acts as a firewall. Companies, it is suggested, should introduce diversity at bridging points, thus reducing their susceptibility to virus attack.

#### **In Their Own Words:**

#### **MICHAEL D. MCMASTER . . . . .75**

By *Robert H. Stambaugh*

In this new column, Bob Stambaugh introduces us to some of the leading gurus of knowledge management, organizational transformation, complexity theory and a handful of other disciplines: George Por, Arian Ward, Ron Burt, John Seely Brown, Etienne Wenger, Michael McMaster. In the next few issues, Stam-

baugh will talk about a few of them in a way that allows you to decide if what they say is relevant to your HRIS and your environment, by providing a representative sample of their ideas, in their own words, from their own books, articles and addresses. The first new face introduced in this new series is Michael McMaster. He has written two key books that address organizations and their behavior in an increasingly complex business environment. Both are centered around the concept that organizations have their own behavior and intelligence, and that it's more than the sum of the behaviors of the people in and around the entity itself.

#### **HRIS LEGAL UPDATE: Europe**

#### **CATCHER IN THE NET . . . . .80**

By *Phil Jones*

Throughout the summer months, a wide and prolonged debate has taken place in the UK concerning the role of governments in business, the growth of e-commerce and the limits of state intervention in a modern democratic society. When the UK incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into British law in October, it enacted the "Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIP) bill." This allows state security agencies to intercept e-mails and mobile phone messaging, and monitor what individuals and businesses are doing on the Internet. In contrast, employers who regularly monitor their employees' communications, as apparently many UK companies do, could find themselves in breach of the new law. This column considers some of its implications, examines the potential effects for companies and individuals entrusted with decryption keys and the strategic effect on e-commerce in the UK.

#### **Executive Views on HR Technology:**

#### **INTERVIEW WITH PAT J. MENEELY . .84**

By *Jay F. Stright*

The traditional career path for HR professionals was to climb the ladder in one or two firms, working toward a goal of becoming the leader of the HR function. It has been suggested that HR executives of the future will instead move among several firms assisting with human organization issues to create competitive advantage. One factor impacting HR executives' competencies in such a future is the combining of HR and IT portfolios under a

single executive. This issue is discussed with Pat J. Meneely, an executive who has had responsibility for both of these functions over the past 10 years. He contends that both functions are critical components for successful companies and each area is a business within a business, operating as a strategic partner to deliver products and services that have value to customers. Meneely suggests that in the future, professionals will need a combination of IT and HR competencies.

**HRIS Case Study:  
DOWN THE STRETCH**

**THEY COME! . . . . .87**

By Joel R. Lapointe

This is the final case study segment on issues faced in planning for the post-Y2K era. It highlights issues and themes that can be adopted to achieve HRIS objectives. Many factors influence strategy, including new information sources, features and functions, ROI models and business-aligned investments. Implementation of Y2K solutions caused many organizations to defer installation of modules and components: their value now needs to be tested against current business mandates. Proliferation of "information-only" intranet sites is "cross-threaded" with personalized features now commonplace on the Internet and the virtually unlimited content of various databases has resulted in new issues, particularly "info-glut." There is a consequent need to leverage information from all sources, notably from data warehouses and ASPs are a new variable in strategic planning. Justification-of-investment (JOI) is the name of the game. It is imperative that investments support business objectives, provide competitive advantage and empower better performance throughout the organization.

**BOOK REVIEWS . . . . .90**

By Nancy Paule Melone, Ph.D.

The books reviewed in this issue's column focus on electronic business and electronic commerce. Because most such books have a half-life of nanoseconds, the books are reviewed in decreasing order of their probability of content robustness over the long term. *Information Rules: A Strategic Guide to the Network Economy*, by Carl Shapiro and Hal Varian, demonstrates in lay terms how the fundamental laws of microeconomics apply

in the information economy. The second book, *e-Business: Roadmap to Success*, by Ravi Kalakota and Marcia Robinson, shows how conventional business principles of information integration and coordination apply in the "new economy." Finally, *Digital Capital: Harnessing the Power of Business Webs*, by Don Tapscott, David Ticoll and Alex Lowy, presents a taxonomy of future business models. According to the authors, this taxonomy provides direction for developing business Web strategies. The book also includes a chapter on human capital.

**International Perspectives —**

**North America:**

**THE NORTH AMERICAN SCENE . . .94**

By Ian Turnbull

Recent observations of the North American information systems industry, and certainly the HRIS subset of interest to IHRIM members, is the intensity of focus on "e-business" (e-biz). While not disputing its relevance, there is a valid concern that, just as with the client/server explosion, there is far too much emphasis on the technology. In the experience of many consultants, clients and prospective client organizations have the same issues today that they had five, and even 10 years ago. We can certainly expect that the Internet in some form will be part of "the solution" for most organizations. But the technology of the Internet should not be the focus nor should any technology. A huge amount of this business of HRIS/HRMS centers on change management and not technology of any kind. This column focuses on "North American" issues, but clearly there are global initiatives that will be pivotal in North America. For example, the highlights at the recent PC Expo were prototypes of the Sony Palm OS-based handheld computer, an expandable "SD" (secure digital) platform for future Palm-branded handhelds and expansion modules for the Handspring Visor. These non-North American "drivers" will have a huge impact on the business of HRIS/HRMS.

**International Perspective — Europe**

**DOES THE UK WANT TO BE**

**EUROPEAN? . . . . .96**

By Jackie Penticost

This article discusses how the impending decisions of the UK on whether

to fully embrace Europe by adopting the euro will affect human resources management. The next decade or so will vastly change the shape and nature of the EU, defining it not only in geographic, monetary and political terms, but in its attitudes to trading partners. The UK's upcoming referendum will determine whether the UK sits fully within the embrace of the EU and strengthens its trading power or whether it allies itself more with the U.S. as it adopts a position on the fringes of the EU and becomes a gateway for the U.S. into Europe. For the UK, the choice is stark. By adopting the euro, it can expect to be at the center of the European Union fast track: wherever it is heading, we will have a hand on the controls. The UK will also have a voice in the debate about what citizenship of the European democracy really means. UK companies will become part of the new wave of European restructuring and will be able to export more easily within Europe. The price for joining is not insignificant. The UK will miss out on a chance to develop a role for itself independently of the European framework. A U.S.-UK axis might ensure a strong trading relationship where the UK becomes the conduit for goods and services from and to the U.S. and mainland Europe. By adopting the euro, the UK may distance itself from its U.S. trading allies while competing fiercely within Europe.

**International Perspective — Australia**

**HRIS AT A JUNCTURE — THE FUTURE**

**OF E-HR! . . . . .99**

By Ken Pritchett

The Australian experience is that HRIS is at a critical juncture. Too many unmet promises have been made! HRIS is very underutilised. ERP implementations have often been problematic and ESS has not generally delivered the cost reductions or utilisation. Vendors in Australia have not been prepared to be solutions orientated. Systems integrators have had difficulties meeting user's expectations. Implementation costs have often been excessive. The e-world is providing traditional business and HR with its biggest challenge — change or perish! Behind this is a fundamental paradigm shift — from governance founded on control to governance founded on trust. This paradigm shift will require HR to rethink and reform itself

and it must do so rapidly! The major theme is that the real return for HRIS lies in the fundamental workplace integration and cultural change that will flow from a shift to trust/universal access as the key themes of our HRIS systems. This will require OD not HR.

**International Perspective — Asia**  
**FEEDING THE DRAGON: HOW THE EMIGRANT SKILLED WORKFORCE WILL PRIME CHINA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY . . . . . 101**

By James Finlay

China's free market reforms and flooding foreign investment have given rise to a plethora of startups and large multinational enterprises (MNEs) operating in the People's Republic of China (PRC). These organisations are the spearhead of China's entry into the global knowledge economy. A key resource for successful growth that is missing is skilled labour. The short-term solution is to bring home emigrant knowledge workers from overseas. China can adapt to the information age faster than any other country still founded in the manufacturing age, thanks to the new breed of knowledge worker. Returning up-skilled emigrants will be the "starter" fuel for the PRC's penetration of the global knowledge economy. The tag "Made in China" could be associated with technology developed from a base of intellectual capital, rather than low-tech manufactured goods.

**International Perspective — Africa**  
**KNOWLEDGE NEEDS IN A NEW AGE . . . . . 105**

By Lorna Cook

This article examines emerging knowledge requirements as organisations strive to drive innovation, achieve operational excellence and improve customer intimacy, and the relevance of technological solutions in supporting internally and externally focused knowledge management initiatives amongst African organisations. Although technology provides alternative learning solutions, learning is significantly hampered by lack of access to technology. In an African context, poor adult literacy and computer illiteracy, for example, hampers the knowledge acquisition opportunities for employees, particularly in the lower lev-

els of organisations. Knowledge management can still work in African companies if one looks beyond technology solutions alone and seeks to harness the strengths of an intrinsic collectivistic culture to promote ongoing interpersonal and community-focused knowledge sharing.



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## FOOTNOTES:

### Books

1 Robert K. Wysocki, Robert Beck, Jr., and David B. Crane, *Effective Project Management* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995), p. 10.

### Magazine Articles

2 John Kelly, "Distance Education: Closer Than You Think!," *IHRIM.link*, February/ March 1999, pp. 14-22.

### Journal Articles

3 Robert H. Stambaugh, "Cones of Silence: The HR Systems 'Body of Knowledge' and the Real HRIS Ecosystem," *IHRIM Journal*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1998, pp. 22-29.

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### Books

Wysocki, Robert K., Robert Beck, Jr., and David B. Crane. *Effective Project Management*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995.

### Magazine Articles

Kelly, John. "Distance Education: Closer Than You Think!" *IHRIM.link*, February/ March 1999, pp. 14-22.

### Journal Articles

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