

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

IHRIM Journal January - March 2001

## **VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: FROM "BUILD OR BUY" TO "RENT OR PAINT" . . . . .6**

By Robert H. Stambaugh

Within HRIS, solid data models and robust software were once likened to solid foundations put down prior to building a house. But this analogy faltered when PC-based systems arrived and became less relevant still in the world of LANs, client/servers and laptops. It wasn't so much that big houses with foundations disappeared. Rather, a demand for the freedom of luxurious mobility became the norm. In HRIS terms, this has resulted in greater commoditization (ASPs), mobile communication and disposability (Palm Pilots and the like). Business information is available as never before — but with a catch. To compete with finite attention spans, HRIS practitioners need to personalize the information and services they provide. This doesn't mean abandoning the large HRIS mansions of yesterday — but it does mean updating their contents, making them more appealing, and tailoring their features to a modern clientele. Given a suitable makeover, even fusty old enclaves can be re-invigorated.

## **TECHNOLOGY IN HR: HOW KNOWLEDGE CAN NARROW THE GAP BETWEEN TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND ITS WIDESPREAD USE . . . . .9**

By Jay Stright and David Goodman, Ph.D.

Typically, technology advances lead our ability to use it. We tend to work by the old rules for years before we understand the laws of the new discipline, system or media. The lag time between technological innovation and exploitation differs between industries, corporate functions and cultures. Core profit centers tend to grab technology dollars and HR is left in the dust with antiquated systems that are expected to solve modern problems. It is especially crucial in HR to narrow this technology gap if we

are to fulfill strategic goals by hiring and training the "right team." This is the third article based on the "Beyond the Millennium — Issues and Directions for HR in the 21st Century" research project. The first two articles focused on analyzing data derived from the two-year effort involving over 400 HR vice presidents. The current article highlights an opportunity for a new technology direction for human resources. It suggests transforming HR from a transaction-centric to a human capital-centric value proposition. The authors offer a path to apply today's massive computing power to the key issue facing business leaders in the emerging knowledge workplace — the discovery, quantification and application of human performance variables to dramatically impact business results.

## **MAJOR KEYSTONES IN BUILDING HIGH PERFORMANCE HRIS TEAMS . . . . .13**

By Nick Messerschmidt

"Major Keystones in Building High Performance HRIS Teams" addresses a common dilemma prevalent in the corporate world today: "What should I know and what should I be doing to attract and keep key employees?" The article provides practical concepts and ideas that HRIS managers can use to combat the negative turnover onslaught of employees due to the shortage of technical labor. Listed in the article are eight "human essentials", also known as the "Major Keystones in HRIS Teams," which have been designed to significantly impact the building and keeping of HRIS teams. Since many of us are driven to release HRIS products at "e-speed," we lose sight that employees act out of behavior and need more than just technical stimuli to remain content and well engaged at their jobs. Even high performers achieve elevated results when they operate in an environment of trust and cooperation and are fully informed of both their purpose and value to the company. The author incorporates his own insights and experiences to this article to help us effectively accomplish the HRIS's mission in today's world. High performance does not just happen — it needs to be nurtured and cultivated!

## **VALUE CREATION THROUGH HUMAN CAPITAL: THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE ORGANIZATION . . . . .20**

By Todd D'Attoma

Today's business executives find themselves torn between the immediate delivery of shareholder value and sustaining the long-term viability of their organizations. In an attempt to balance these sometime conflicting objectives, we have tackled a variety of initiatives to drive process improvements, reduce cycle times to create operational efficiencies and cut costs from our business. One of the last opportunities to truly maximize value creation lies in the hands of our people. In most organizations, the human resource department is best positioned to help win the hearts and minds of employees, build the skill sets required to achieve the strategic vision, position each employee to contribute to the business initiatives, and measure progress through defined feedback processes. In short, the human resource department is the linchpin to building a strategy-focused organization. This article addresses the role of the human resource group in human capital value creation and walks through the process of engaging each and every employee in the organization to ensure the achievement of your business objectives.

## **MAXIMIZING THE KNOWLEDGE SUPPLY CHAIN FOR THE HIGH PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE WORKER . . . . .28**

By Susan Hayden

In the Internet workforce, how can we leverage self-service, business intelligence, and role-based tools to enable our employees to tailor their information experience to their specific needs? Do we have the means to equip today's knowledge worker with the information, knowledge and data for ultimate performance? There are some emerging B2E (Business-to-Employee) automation strategies that can enhance the performance of today's knowledge worker. These include the knowledge supply chain, the delivery of role-based business intelligence and job-enhancing content to our knowledge workers via content providers and personalized employee portals, and an "employment of one" work experience, building a personalized knowledge supply

chain and enhancing the employer brand in order to retain and attract the knowledge worker. This article explores how to deliver information to knowledge workers for increased performance and decision-making in order to achieve the highest possible return.

**BUILDING THE RIGHT WORKFORCE STRATEGY WITH ANALYTICAL APPLICATIONS . . . . .36**

By Norma Penson and Tracy Martin

Companies can put together a brilliant new business strategy, but without people as part of the equation, organizations cannot change the way they do business and adopt new strategies. To connect the business strategy with the talent in the workplace, companies need to align, engage and measure their people strategy. Aligning people with the company's business strategy means more than pointing people in the right direction. Engaging your talent means to foster commitment to the company's basic purpose and direction. Measuring your people to deliver on the company's strategy means providing connected and balanced ways for your company and employees to keep score about how they are doing. When organizations combine all three people strategies, managing the company's talent will help organizations achieve results and add long-term value. In today's fast-paced e-economy, organizations are also focused on the value-add activities of their workforce: Is the function this employee performing contributing to the overall profitability of the enterprise? Are we developing a workforce we will need tomorrow? Are they costing too much and if so, how could we adjust activities to reduce waste? Analytical applications are quickly becoming the accepted standard to solving these questions.

**ENTERPRISE PORTALS, ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE: WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT AT INTERNET SPEED . . . . .41**

By Michael Campbell

New digital technologies and the Internet have fundamentally changed the workplace: how and where we do our work, the kinds of tools available to help us as we work and the way we divide our

time between work and personal life. As businesses ramp up to work at Internet speed and as the employer-employee relationship continues to evolve, human resource organizations are called upon to redefine their own role within the company. At the same time, they are asked to manage and measure the changes that technology brings to a company's workforce.

The enterprise portal captures the power and potential of the Internet, not just to maximize business efficiencies, but also to redefine, restructure and revalue the employee experience, a key responsibility of the human resource organization in the Internet economy. Enterprise portals are proving to be an increasingly valuable tool to human resource professionals as their companies seek to manage and maximize their human capital.

**MOVING FROM MEASUREMENT TO ACTION: AN INTRANET-BASED PROCESS FOR DISSEMINATION OF BEST PRACTICES . . . . .45**

By Steven P. Kirn, Ph.D.

Sears, Roebuck and Co. created its own balanced scorecard for business performance, building a set of operational measures for its vision of becoming a "Compelling Place to Work, Shop and Invest." These measures have been linked empirically through several years of research, demonstrating a clear connection between the company's efforts at creating a satisfying and stimulating work environment, the shopping experience and satisfaction of its customers and, ultimately, the company's financial performance. This article shows how Sears has created an intranet-based reporting system for the "Three Compellings," otherwise known as its Total Performance Indicators. Further, the site immediately links users to a library of over 800 best practices known to characterize stores with either superior or greatly improved performance on a variety of assessment dimensions. Thus, managers are able to immediately connect an identified problem or improvement opportunity with practical action tools contributed by other store managers.

**A NEW INFRASTRUCTURE FOR KNOWLEDGE WORKERS: THE K WORLD EXPERIENCE . . . . .50**

By Gary Abramson

For anyone today who runs a large, complex organization, works deep inside one, or collaborates across enterprises to get work done, the problem of how knowledge is acquired, shared, and acted upon to create value is a matter of critical interest — and frequently, of frustration. Lacking the knowledge-enabling infrastructure that today's problem solvers consider their natural working environment, organizations will fail to attract and retain the very workers on whose creativity and proficiency they most depend. This article is a look at the rationale, experience, lessons learned, and future prospects of the knowledge management initiative at KPMG. The business problem that led the firm to devote two years, more than US\$100 million and a staff of more than 200 employees to the task of building a new knowledge infrastructure was simple enough to understand, and potentially overwhelming. A century-old federation of national practices had to be transformed into a unified, cohesive, global organization or risk becoming unable to compete in the new global economy.

**BUILDING A WORLD CLASS WORKFORCE: GETTING PERSONAL WITH EMPLOYEE SELF-SERVICE . . .56**

By Tod Loofbourrow

In this article, Tod Loofbourrow addresses the need for companies to educate their employees on the true value of their benefits, both monetary and service-related, and on the policies and expectations of the organizations they work for. Doing so, he says, is not only cost-effective, but is a significant factor in employee retention, one of the cornerstones for building a world class workforce. The best way to get relevant, personalized knowledge to employees is by instituting e-workforce communications, i.e., by making reliable, up-to-date HR information accessible via the Internet, corporate portals and/or call centers. Loofbourrow discusses the value added to the HR experience by sophisticated communications technology that empowers employees to make the most advantageous decisions. Employing a case study of the

Wells Fargo/Norwest merger, the author also discusses how e-workforce communications can help smooth over culture clashes in corporate mergers. Finally, he addresses how e-workforce communications can assist telecommuters.

### **CONVERSATION WITH DEE HOCK . . .59**

By Robert H. Stambaugh

In an interview with Robert Stambaugh, Dee Hock, founder and CEO Emeritus of Visa, discusses his theory of chaord, which he presents in his autobiographical book *Birth of the Chaordic Age*.

"Chaord," a derivation of the words "chaos" and "order," is defined by three principles: the behavior of people, organizations or systems is based on the combination of chaos and order; the patterns of an entity cannot be explained by its constituent parts; and, an entity is characterized by the fundamental organizing principles of nature.

Another important characteristic of the chaordic theory is the principle that everyone is born a leader. Hock defines true leadership as a four-step process of managing self, superiors, equals and subordinates. Under this management system, there are no true leaders or followers.

The chaordic theory emphasizes that good business is built on human ingenuity and the unexpected, rather than traditional, mechanical management practices and leadership roles.

### **On the Knowledge Frontier: DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A WEB-BASED PERFORMANCE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR HIGH- DISCRETION JOBS: LESSONS LEARNED . . . . .64**

By George Alliger, Scott Tannenbaum and Winston Bennett, Jr.

In the context of performance support systems (PSS), jobs fall into two main types. Some have stable, routine responsibilities, involve repetition, and can be said to have low discretion. Other jobs have less routine, and tasks are partly determined by dynamically changing business demands. Where work demands cannot be foreseen, employees normally exercise autonomy in decision-making, and such jobs may be said to have high-discretion. This article discusses lessons learned from implementing PSS for high-

discretion jobs. It is argued that the high-discretion employee is an autonomous agent who knows his or her job better than anyone else and has developed specific ways of accomplishing work. For any PSS to be useful to such an individual, it cannot over-simplify reality nor can it dictate solutions. However, if it provides useful support for the complex, changing environment of the modern autonomous professional, it will be used.

### **Working in the Connected World : THE SOCIAL LIFE OF ROUTERS: APPLYING KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN NETWORKS TO THE DESIGN OF COMPUTER NETWORKS . . . . .69**

By Valdis Krebs

We often forget that computer networks are put in place to support human networks — person-to-person exchanges of information, knowledge, ideas, opinions, insights and advice. This article looks at a technology that was developed to map and measure human networks — social network analysis — and applies some of its principles and algorithms to designing networks composed of routers and switches. The article explains some standard network metrics, discussing concepts such as "activity," "betweenness" and "closeness." Standard internetwork topologies are evaluated using these metrics, revealing the strengths and weaknesses of each network design. Some of the conclusions are counter-intuitive. A well-known and successful backbone topology is analyzed revealing that social network measures accurately describe a well-designed network. Human network metrics are useful rules of thumb in evaluating computer network designs!

### **HRIS Legal Update: Europe ELUSIVENESS OF EQUALITY . . . . .75**

By Phil Jones

In the light of recent suggestions that many women still encounter prejudice and alleged discrimination in their careers, this article reviews how such discrimination is increasingly being constrained by European social legislation. Taking the equal opportunity provisions of the founding EEC treaty as a starting point, the article traces the development of legal directives in this area. In particular, the contribution of the European

Court of Justice in this field is explored, and landmark cases are outlined. It is also noted that, within Europe, a future decline in the working population is anticipated — on top of an existing shortage of skills in the technology field. An obvious solution, it is suggested, is action to increase the participation of women in all areas of employment. Evidence suggests that many women remain unaware of the legal rights that are steadily being put in place to support their full contribution to economic prosperity.

### **HRIS Case Study: SCUTTLE YOUR BOATS BEFORE ADVANCING . . . . .78**

By Robert H. Stambaugh

This case study considers the dilemma facing Marcy, an HRIS manager fielding demands for corporate funding from an existing customer base and a new corporate VP. Her problem of delivering as much work as possible with meager resources is a familiar one. The specific difficulty is an aftermath of the Y2K era — an avalanche of pent-up demands dating back to the 1999 development "freeze." This challenge is compounded by the fact that the new VP wants electronic copies of business reports sent to every business manager within 24 hours of the close of each business week. What is Marcy supposed to do? She needs to keep traditional customers supplied with data, but also satisfy her new boss — and the two demands seem in conflict. This study considers Marcy's options. What emerges is a win-win transition to a new reporting and analysis environment. Sometimes, burning your boats is the best stimulant to progress!

### **BOOK REVIEWS . . . . .81**

By Sharon Lampton

Three widely different books are reviewed in this issue. The first, *Net Worth* by John Hagel III and Marc Singer, explores how to create a profitable Internet business. The authors posit the creation of a new entity — "infomediary" — that might track surfing and shopping habits and make recommendations based on this information. The second book, *The Five Temptations of a CEO*, is a charming book with lessons for leaders, expressed in the form of a fable. It lists five possible

traps for the unwary CEO, and suggests some counter-strategies. Finally, *Champions of Change* by David A. Nadler describes the role that top managers play in leading organizations through a change initiative. The author offers a model to classify types of change and discusses possible responses to the various challenges they each bring. Both *Net Worth* and *Champions of Change* use extensive examples throughout, making their points very interesting and understandable.

#### **International Perspectives -**

##### **North America:**

#### **LEARNING TO SHARE THE DRIVERS**

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By Ian Turnbull

Although North America, and in particular the United States, has prided itself in being the world's economic leader and the seedbed of development and innovation, this can no longer be maintained with the same degree of certainty. At the time of writing this article, both Canada and the U.S. were in the midst of elections that will continue to shape the legislative frameworks of both nations. What is clear, however, is that the forces that will impact HRIM are not so much legislative but economic and technical. How effectively will our organizations utilize the capabilities of the Web, sift through the overwhelming access to information to build knowledge, and compete with new labour markets that operate with less expense and redefine how and where companies produce products? These are the issues that will make or break North America in the coming years and need to occupy the minds of HRIM professionals.

#### **International Perspectives -**

##### **Western Europe:**

#### **TERMINATION AND HIRING**

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By Jackie Penticost

In Europe, countries place significant restrictions, which vary by country, on who may or may not work in any particular country, in what category and for how long. Consequently, HRM systems need to assist users in complying with hiring and termination restrictions defined in individual contracts of employment, by collective agreements or by national or European Union (EU) law. For the most

part, the law falls firmly on the side of protecting an employee's rights within an employment relationship, and the trend is towards increased protection of those rights, especially for part-time and non-permanent workers. Non-compliance can mean heavy penalties, especially when dismissing employees. HR professionals would be wise to plan any large scale hiring or restructuring campaigns well in advance, and take specialist advice where collective agreements have many local exceptions. This article explores the issues around termination and hiring practises in Europe, while addressing key systems issues that will assist HR professionals in managing this delicate matter effectively.

#### **International Perspectives - Asia/Pacific:**

#### **MANAGING THE HR REPERCUSSIONS**

#### **OF MALAYSIA'S WAVE OF BANKING**

**MERGERS . . . . .89**

By James L. Finlay

The Malaysian Government has mandated that the country's 58 financial institutions must merge into 10 mega banks by December 31, 2000. This is, by far, Asia's largest-ever single instance of corporate mergers. Whilst the reasons are many (ostensibly to prepare the finance market for the WTO enforced liberalisation of the banking sector in 2003), the repercussions for the workforce employed in the industry will be significant by Malaysian standards. Although "right-sizing" will be inevitable, cultural expectations and legal requirements dictate that this will occur in a manner that minimises the negative impact on workers. Whilst managing the HR repercussions will be work in progress for at least the next year, the systems, plans and processes being put in place have already proven to be successful in mergers within the financial services industry of other economies. They will, however, require some modification to adapt to Malaysian cultural sensitivities, but are expected to be successful despite the daunting scale of the exercise. This article examines the challenges for management in helping one of Malaysia's largest communities of skilled workers adapt to significant cultural change, whilst ensuring the business success (from an HR perspective) of the plethora of mergers occurring in this compact timeframe. This will inevitably

become one of the great HR challenges to unfold in Asia in years.

#### **International Perspectives - Africa:**

#### **AN AFRICA RENAISSANCE? . . . . .93**

By Sarel Snyman

Africa is a continent of contrasts. Colonies have come and gone. Freedom wars have left deep scars on the continent. And yet, Africa is still one of the richest continents in the world — rich in natural resources, the diversity of its people, the contrasts of land, resources, religions, philosophies and cultures. New ideologies were brought to Africa. Unemployment is high, poverty is high and HIV is killing off its most valuable asset — its people. Why then is it possible to refer to Africa as an awakening giant? Because there are pockets of positive development and growth all over the continent, putting Africa in a good position to leapfrog ahead with the aid of technology. While computerized payroll and basic people administration systems have been around for some time, HRMS is a relatively new development in Africa. Since South Africa's recent entry into the international markets, new technologies and sophisticated HRM systems have flooded the market. Many companies have used the opportunity to beef up their systems for the international competition. Many have successfully implemented ERP systems. Many are still struggling to extract value from their newly acquired HRM systems. The giant is slowly awakening ... a real Africa Renaissance is awaiting the world.

#### **International Perspectives - Latin America:**

#### **HRIS ISSUES IN LATIN AMERICA . . .96**

By Vicky Nunes and Gloria Rodriguez

In most HRIS implementations around the world, the strategic human resources issues can burden a project a hundred times more than the technical issues. While the technologies utilized may be immature or imperfect, resolutions to such issues can usually be found within the relatively close-knit technical community. Strategic issues, on the other hand, require participation from various functional areas, often escalating to senior management. The failure to properly manage the strategic issues presents a high degree of risk to any project, whether they involve changes in

HR's philosophy and mission, transition to outsourcing, redistribution of HR responsibility to the line organization or a complete redefinition of HR's goals. For HRIS implementations in Latin America, the project may very well face all of those risks plus some that are unique to the history, economy and culture of this proud and colorful region. This article identifies some of the more difficult aspects of application localization as well as the change management issues associated with implementing an HRIS in a region where the pride and history of the Latin culture will always come first.

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### 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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