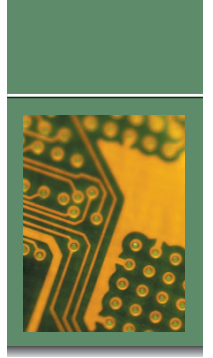


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# From the Editor

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By Karen V. Beaman



The theme of this issue is Shared Services and we begin with “Global Shared Services: Where has it come from? Where is it today? Where is it going?” by Jay Stright who breaks the topic down into five salient points, telling us that our most important challenge is understanding how shared services might add value in helping achieve the core business objectives of the firm. The implications for HR successfully adding value could be enormous. If we can achieve notable increases in return on human assets through shared services, HR can use the example to export learning throughout the enterprise and establish itself as the bastion of human asset optimization for the firm. This particular road could take HR very far indeed.

Our second feature, “Shared Services — The Gateway to Outsourcing?” by David Dell and Glenn Davidson, focuses on the results of a research study they conducted. One of the study’s findings was that a move to the delivery of HR services via shared service centers didn’t necessarily preclude outsourcing; in fact, shared service centers appear to be a precursor to a larger outsourcing initiative. This article addresses issues that companies may consider when deciding whether to open a shared service center, outsource or do both. Dell and Davidson conclude that shared services really is no longer simply an alternative to outsourcing but a gateway, and possibly even a launching pad for a new kind of relationship that enables HR to do the business of HR.

Bruce Jordan, in his article, “Global Shared Services Strategy for the New Generation” says that the war between centralization and decentralization is over, and shared services have won. The new battle is about the global strategy for shared services. In business, “one-size-fits-all” never works. Strategies must be flexible and inclusive. The global organizational models presented provide a new means to evaluate and implement global shared service

options. Companies can identify the model that best matches their organizational structure, culture, and business needs and thus implement a shared service model that works for them.

“The HR supermarket is here, like it or not,” according to Thomas Otter in his article, “Shared Service and HR.” The HR supermarket is here and it isn’t going away. Human Resources functions that act in denial are likely to go the way of the green grocer who didn’t adapt to the supermarket. Successful HR departments must balance low cost, high accuracy administrative delivery with high-end value-added service. Whether they own the supermarket, or bring it in from elsewhere, they will need to deliver administration convenience at rock bottom prices. Only then will the funding and the respect exist to build strategic, valued services.

Paul Tom’s article, “Expanding Shared Services Through Effective Global HR Governance,” explores how an organization can avoid the shared service yo-yo by establishing the right type of governance model before embarking on a shared service center (SSC) project. He also touches on the difference between project governance and the governance of an established SSC. Lastly, he explores how one company got it right, and the process and setup they used to establish a highly effective and efficient service center.

In our sixth feature, we move away from shared services to Bob Stambaugh’s “HRIS: Human Resource Intangible Systems.” The author describes how organizations are moving away from stability of structure and focusing on responsiveness — or a more holistic view of the organization. That means that HRIS professionals need to maintain and even strengthen the old structures that form the backbone of what we can now view as a living organization/organism. On the other hand, we have to create spaces in that organization where old structures and practices do not squelch the flexibility and ambiguity

needed for knowledge creation and employee growth. The author provides eight tools and four concepts for addressing the new HRIS world.

“The Big 12 Personality Traits: What Every HR Professional Needs to Know” tells us that our emotional make-up — our strengths, weaknesses, and even personal values and attitude — is significantly shaped by biological forces. Authors, Drs. Edward Hoffman and Marcella Bakur Weiner, describe the 12 Traits and discuss why gender, age and nationality make little, if any, difference in our emotional makeup. For those responsible for hiring, training and overall workforce performance, this article may provide new insight into yourself as well as those you work with day-to-day.

Be sure to read our Departments in this issue where our authors discuss how HRIS professionals need to deal with the uncertainties that lie ahead; how being strategic means investing the time to identify what others, namely executive leadership and key customer groups, consider strategic; and how some change management will minimize the depth and length of loss of productivity in a virtual team. In the International Perspectives section, you will find an article that describes which intercultural competencies you should invest in and how to develop them; and an article that presents guidelines for some of the primary compliance issues experienced by global enterprises, and how technology can help but is not the total solution.

As always, we look forward to your comments and suggestions.

## Editor-in-Chief

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