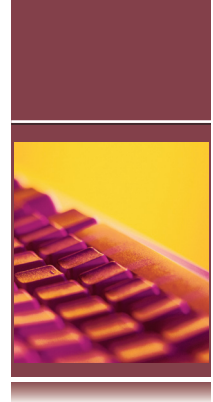


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# From the Editors

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By Karen V. Beaman and Bob Stambaugh



**T**oday people are encouraged to share and create knowledge while staying connected in an increasingly fast-paced workplace. Several articles in this issue focus on social networks and describe how they can be recognized, cultivated and enhanced by HR and HRIS managers. Bob Stambaugh in “Social Network Analysis: Introduction and Resources,” says that considering how easy and inexpensive basic social network and organizational network analysis (SNA/ONA) is, we need to understand it better and begin adding it to HRIS competencies. We cannot afford to do business today without the tools and insights that clarify and explain our modern business settings, behaviors and challenges. The author provides an extensive list of resources including books, articles and Web sites that will help with SNA.

Next, Gerald Falkowski and Valdis Krebs provide, “Predictive Model of Business Transformation: Organization’s Adaptability Quotient.” The authors present research and practical field experience in ONA from 15 global companies representing a broad range of industries including: telecommunications, finance, manufacturing, health, insurance, transportation, retail and utilities. The companies are located in the United States, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Japan, Korea, and Australia and all have had significant business transformation experience.

Kim Sbarcea and Rui Martins, both from Australia, write the next feature, “The Temporary Knowledge Organisation.” They assert that the new management paradigm, which the temporary knowledge organization (TKO) represents, is a shift from technically determined mechanistic activities to socially organized learning, co-constructed knowledge creation and problem solving through sense-making processes within a complex adaptive system. What is yet to be recognized and articulated is the “temporary knowledge organization,” a new concept that this article has introduced and briefly explored through the complexity lens.

“Optimizing Advice Networks for Individual and Organizational Success” is our next

feature and is written by Deone Zell, Cathleen McGrath and Richard Moore. The authors tell us that workers in modern organizations live their work lives in a constant flow of advice giving and receiving. Organizations have an interest in both understanding the dynamics of this process and developing methods for ensuring it is effective. By gaining insight into peoples’ choices about whom to seek for information and social support, managers can help shape and direct the formation of advice networks, and create a context that encourages people to utilize them to improve organizational performance.

Our last two features focus on the hot topic of HR outsourcing. “Understanding the Strategic Motivations for Outsourcing HR Activities,” by David P. Lepak, Kathryn Bartol, and Sharyn D. Gardner reports on the results of a study designed to better understand the different strategic motivations for outsourcing different types of HR practices. Building on transaction cost economics and the resource-based view of the firm, the authors discuss two dominant alternative strategic objectives that firms may potentially realize via outsourcing HR practices – achieving a cost benefit and/or accessing specialized talents in the market.

In our last feature “Outsource and Offshore HR? A Practitioner’s and Contrary View on the Future of HR,” Al Walker acknowledges that there are many views on the strategy of HR outsourcing and offshoring. Walker predicts that there certainly will be more automation, use of the Web, moving work to service centers, and use of outsourcers. But despite these changes, he believes that HR will still look a lot like it does today for most organizations, even 10 years from now. HR will need to be more flexible, quicker to respond to challenges, and more aligned with the business; but it will not be very different in size and scope of responsibility. The author provides his rationale and reasons for his prediction.

Our Departments in this issue are interesting and diverse, beginning with a Letter to the Editor regarding the objectivity of a

particular IHRIM Journal article, followed by a unique approach to decision-making about outsourcing and offshoring, which includes turning to the wise words of Yogi Berra and Satchel Paige. Have HR departments become socialistic? This article says “yes,” and if your goal is to increase your company’s people productivity through the effective use of HR tools and strategies, it’s time to change the DNA of HR. It’s time to change HR so that it focuses on top performers and ensures that it spends most of its time and budget on high ROI activities. In brief, it’s time for HR to become a profit center. Our last department article features Part 2 of “Supporting Virtual Teams using a Program Management Office.” In the authors’ work in support of virtual teams, they consider the PMO roles and responsibilities when they define and implement the management of a complex set of projects.

In our International Perspectives, we continue the Cross Cultural Perspectives theme with a unique article titled “Tidak cocok. Does that Jive?” focusing on the differences in culture and language the author experienced in Indonesia. This article segues into our last article, “HR Outsourcing in Asia/Pacific.” The authors write that outsourcing provides organizations with a known cost, scalable as the organization grows or shrinks. And, more and more local Asian companies are testing the waters with various outsourced components.

Special thanks to Bob Stambaugh for so ably handling the guest editor duties for this issue and to all our authors – we hope you enjoy the content. As always your comments and suggestions are encouraged.

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