
From the Editor

By Karen V. Beaman

Before the end of each year, we determine what the themes will be for the next year's issues of *IHRIM Journal*. Project management, the theme of this issue, might (at first glance) seem like an overdue topic. In fact, "been there, done that" comes to mind. But you may not realize how managing projects — especially large, enterprise projects — has changed.

In our first feature, "Avoiding Failure in Large IT Projects: New Risk and Project Management Imperatives," Pat Phelan says that enterprises must recognize that the profile of today's enterprise-level projects has changed to include a new "software ecosystem" of multiple technical environments and user communities and must expand their project definition efforts accordingly. Outward-facing projects increase complexity, time and risk. More participants forming a community of involvement require collaboration throughout the project. The complex technical environments of multi-technology solutions increase enterprise and partner vulnerability. The author provides five recommendations to address the new requirements for a successful enterprise-level project.

Next, Sarah Nehring and Thomas Otter look at implementing large scale, multi-country HR solutions in their article, "Global HR Project Management." The authors tell us that many organizations underestimate the challenges of these projects. Corporate politics, local and global differences, time zones, differing cultures and priorities make these projects a real challenge. To succeed you need a system that can meet local and global needs, a great team, an experienced project manager, a solid methodology, and executive buy-in with active support. There are no short cuts, no magic applications. Hard work, discipline, and a focus on detail are essential.

In our third feature, "Estimating Value of the Indirect Benefits of New HR Technology," Kevin Carlson describes how organizations' purchases of HR technology have generally been aimed at cost reduction. However, the impact of new investments is likely to shift from cost reduction to organization enhancement and current cost-benefit analysis approaches must be

modified to meet the needs of these types of analyses. In addition to the primary intended outcome of making better purchasing decisions, detailed cost and benefit analyses of HR technology investments are also likely to result in a more complete understanding of the implications of each investment decision.

"Sourcing Strategies for the Transnational Organization," by Karen V. Beaman and Gregory R. Guy, tell us that in the pursuit of efficiency, innovation, and competitiveness, the Transnational organizational model offers many advantages over the Multinational, Global or International models. The fundamental message in the authors' research is that no organization can succeed today with a relatively uni-dimensional strategy, emphasizing mainly efficiency or focusing primarily on local needs or leveraging merely the parent company's capabilities. To be competitive, they have to be all three things simultaneously: globally efficient, sensitive to the needs of local business units, and, at the same time, able to leverage innovation and worldwide learning across the enterprise.

In "Focus on the Patient, Not Just the Operation," Bob Stambaugh presents several trends and recent technologies whose emergence and penetration into HR and HRIS could change not only what we are asked to deliver to our stakeholders, but also how we manage the projects we launch to implement our future.

John Sullivan, in "Marketing HR to Your CEO," provides us with tools and strategies that can be used to influence senior managers who almost always require a "business case," and because they have learned to think in analytical terms and to quantify everything, you must also do the same. Sullivan finds that the prime reason that so many HR departments are constantly being cut by the CFO and the CEO is not because HR does not provide a strategic value, but instead, it is because: 1) HR doesn't "brag" and market itself and 2) HR fails to provide proof of their strategic value in a manner and language that CFOs and CEOs have come to expect — dollars and numbers.

Vee Sutherland, Stephen Troutman and Gerald Falkowski, in their case study, "Un-

derstanding Trust in a Virtual Team, Step by Step," discuss how two tools can be used to bring about meaningful dialogue on a team. Trust comes about through common understanding and delivered commitments to a common goal. The Ladder of Inference ensures that you are more likely to get the issues and facts right. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) provides a method to understand individual behavior and a language to deal with behavior problems. Both result in better understanding, better communications, better teaming and better results — and all of these lead to trust.

In our European Legal Update, Phil Jones provides "Waste Not, Want Not," a look at two European Union directives dealing with the disposal, in particular, of electrical and electronic goods — computers, printers, servers, etc. The effect of one of the directives will be that, from July 2006, new electrical and electronic equipment must not incorporate materials such as heavy metals or certain flame-retardants. Reducing the content of such hazardous substances will have environmentally beneficial effects not just in consumer products, but also throughout the whole production process. This directive is primarily of concern to manufacturers.

We close this issue with the article "HR Outsourcing in Latin America..." by Luis Henrique de Oliveira in both English and Portuguese. The article addresses the development of outsourcing in Latin America, in comparison to the Northern Hemisphere, especially the U.S. and Europe where outsourcing is more widely practiced. It sheds light on the hurdles that have slowed the expansion of outsourcing — indeed of all technology growth — in the region and examines the prospects for a rapid growth in the future.

We hope you enjoy this issue and welcome your thoughts and comments.

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