



## Up.link

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Nancy Cameron, Guest Editor

From the introduction of the Apple computer in 1976 and the IBM PC in 1981 to the resulting 1990's technology revolution, HR has been playing catch up with technology. In most organizations, HR has been the forgotten stepchild as technology efficiencies were embraced in accounting, on the shop floor and in sales and marketing. Today, as the prophesied labor shortage crisis looms, HR and HR technology are becoming the cornerstones of the organization – enabling, utilizing, growing and developing the workforce.

This issue focuses on The Blueprint of Workforce Technology. We have moved past the basic transactional era and entered the realm of linking technology with HRMS strategy – and moved beyond throwing technology at a problem hoping for a resolution. We now understand that strategic- and people-centric goals must be woven together, supported by technology, to create the solutions to business issues.

For example, Thomas Vernersson talks about the “technology people link” in his article “IT and HR: Forging a Working Partnership.” He recommends providing incentives for responsible end-user behavior as an effective approach for managing technology assets. Vernersson says that software should “work on the principle that operational efficiencies should be based on providing the workforce with the incentive and tools to maximize individual performance.”

To attract and retain the best and brightest in an increasingly competitive market, human capital performance is key – but how should human capital be measured so that it may be reported on and analyzed for action? In “Human Capital Reporting: Dealing with the Data,” Christopher Berry investigates the impact that HR software reporting capabilities had on the overall business when HR software was aligned with human capital reporting. Berry identifies how software solutions measure and monitor people processes and link the results with key performance indicators identifying trends

requiring action and development.

Technology has provided significant gains in utilizing the workforce, and what we're seeing now is the ability of software companies to focus on the strategic issues facing us and craft software with the ability to focus on specific solutions. In “Automating Candidate Assessments...” Ron Selewach identifies a new model for cost-effective talent acquisition. Capitalizing on the future workforce, he discusses today's trends to cut through the résumés and capture the best candidates.

To cut costs and increase financial returns, HR has targeted employee self-service. Sharon Baker's case study of three companies, who have gone the employee self-service route (beyond open enrollment), describes what works, what doesn't work and what was learned in the process. While self-service is a key enabler for employees, the implementation, rollout and change management associated with it brings some interesting challenges to HR, as Baker explains.

Today, we are smarter about technology, its uses, its implementation and its benefits. Department editor Steve Secora has compiled a thought-provoking selection of articles including David Russell's titled “Change Lives Not Software.” Many implementation teams have learned the hard way that a poorly communicated software solution creates its own problems and issues during implementation. Russell offers suggestions on managing the people who implement your software.

When we talk about software implementation, hopefully we've learned a few lessons from the frantic 1990's technology boom, e.g., people and technology must complement each other. Ed Colby's article “Preventing the Post-Implementation, ‘Post-partum’ Blues” addresses the people factor, exploring what to do when the implementation is done and the consultants have left. The maintenance phase of a new technology solution is as critical as the implementation. Early acceptance and approval of a system can be submarined

in just a few weeks, if the maintenance isn't bullet proof.

Workforce technology is essential in the future, because just like everything else the boomers have addressed, their retirement will not be conventional. Boomers have already expressed interest in a “phased retirement” and the workplace will require the intellectual capital the boomers have to offer. In “Talking With,” Mike Rahn addresses options to restructure benefits to fit the changing workforce. For HR, offering varying retirement and benefit packages will require technology's support for success.

Speaking of benefits, new companies and companies ready for a change are re-evaluating their benefit administration software. In “...How to Find the Best Technology to Manage Benefits Online,” Art Brooks addresses the considerations that HR must evaluate when it's time to change or implement new benefit administration systems.

Although the future is a significant concern, what about today's challenges? Kathleen Andrus's article “The Value of Been There, Done That!” talks about the corporate landscape of the last several years and explains that “the window of opportunity” for smaller companies to pick up experienced talent that can “hit the ground running” is right now.

With the changing demands that CEOs are placing on their workforce, HR can quickly feel overwhelmed. However, they're not alone. Mike Nosil, in “Technology's Role in Strategic HR,” provides guidance to HR in picking the right outsourced solutions to meet those changing demands.

As you enjoy this year's IHRIM conference, consider the breadth of product offerings assembled before you. Attend the panel discussions, professional development seminars and education sessions all designed to provide you with ideas, options and solutions to build The Blueprint of Workforce Technology for your organization!