



As a management consultant for more than 20 years with Deloitte Consulting LLP, Michael McLaughlin (Michael@ManagementConsultingNews.com) has helped clients achieve their desired results through innovative strategies for project planning, client/consultant collaboration, project execution and change management. He has written extensively on these subjects for major publications and has been a guest speaker at dozens of industry and professional conferences. McLaughlin is the co-author, with Jay Conrad Levinson, of *Guerrilla Marketing for Consultants*, and is the editor of two Web sites and e-newsletters that provide the latest news, strategies, and practices for consultants: *Management Consulting News* and *Guerrilla Consulting*.

Michael McLaughlin, Guest Editor

L *Leading a Workforce in Transition* – For the first time, HR executives are faced with the challenge of simultaneously managing four disparate generations of employees: pre-WWII people born before 1945, the baby boomers, the GenXers born between 1965 and 1980 and the GenYers, who were born after 1980.

Each generation has its own perspective on today's workplace, and it's natural to witness some tension between the groups. The job of HR executives hasn't changed, but it has become far more complex. The HR executive must now be equal parts leader and sociologist to solve the riddle of creating productive, multi-generational teams in our rapidly evolving environment. And that's the focus of this issue of *IHRIM.link*.

We begin with an article by Tamara Erickson and Robert Morison, co-authors of "Workforce Crisis: How to Beat the Coming Shortage of Skills and Talent," who lay out strategies to effectively manage a workforce in transition. Their advice: be careful not to put older workers out to pasture too quickly because the resulting brain drain could prove hazardous to your company's health.

Erickson and Morison offer solid, workable advice for slowing the retirement wave long enough for younger people in the workforce to get a strong foothold.

The impact of a multi-generational workforce reaches to the physical layout of the workplace, including how furniture, offices and workstations are designed. In her Tech Notes article, Marcia Davis, of office furniture giant Herman Miller Inc., discusses the uni-

versal workspace, which can accommodate the needs of every generation of worker, regardless of age or viewpoint.

The Workforce is on the Move – Complicating matters further, today's workforce is a restless one. A study by consultants at Salary.com of 14,000 employees and HR managers shows that 65 percent of workers will be on the hunt for new jobs in 2006. This potential workforce turnover can wreak havoc with the best-laid plans for business growth.

Bob Kustka, a 25-year HR veteran of The Gillette Company, suggests HR executives tear a page from the supply chain management book when creating strategies to recruit and retain a multi-generational workforce. Kustka offers a roadmap for winning the fevered recruitment and retention battles in the market for talent.

To support Kustka's innovative strategies, talent management technologies are essential, especially for career development and workforce planning. In the Function Focus department, Jeff Cooper of Authoria describes how HR can effectively connect employee career development with succession planning to create a clear career path for employees while meeting the staffing needs of the business.

To round out our coverage of the latest technologies, in the Inner Circle department, Susan Magrino, CEO of Workforce OS, discusses the need and an approach for retaining corporate knowledge even if people leave the organization.

Mergers and Acquisition Activity Soars – As HR executives grapple with the realities of managing a multi-gener-

ational workforce, the corporate deck is continually reshuffling. The pace of mergers and acquisitions shows few signs of slowing, either in the U.S. or in Europe. In the first half of 2006, for example, European merger and acquisition transactions topped \$1 trillion, according to Thomson Financial.

Few events can steamroll through an organization like a merger or acquisition, no matter what side of the transaction your organization is on. How executives lead an organization's employees through a merger can mean the difference between success and failure. Judith Glaser, author of *Creating WE: Change I-Thinking to WE-Thinking & Build a Healthy, Thriving Organization*, offers seven strategies to help HR executives navigate the rough waters of a merger, and to capture its value.

The Future is Now – In our last feature, we take a look at the future from the lens of the past. Veteran IHRIM members may recall the predictions for HR systems laid out in the IHRIM book, *21 Tomorrows: HR Systems in the Emerging Workplace of the 21st Century*, published in March 2000. In that book, 20 individuals presented their views on the future of HR systems.

Jim Spoor, long-time IHRIM member, takes a look at the predictions in that book to see which ones were right and which ones missed the mark.

A special thanks to our Departments Editor, Lexy Martin, who not only found articles focusing on the future workforce, but also found articles that focus on several HR technology challenges. We both hope you enjoy this issue of *IHRIM.link* and find it useful in the present and the future.