



Ed Colby, Guest Editor

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Ed Colby, senior workforce management consultant for Kronos Incorporated, is a self-professed HCM technology evangelist who has held director level positions in professional services, strategic solutions consulting, and marketing for several leading-edge HCM technology providers. He holds a M.B.A. degree from Northeastern University and a B.S. degree from Tufts University. In addition to his current role on the Editorial Committee of IHRIM.link magazine, his previous leadership roles with IHRIM have included Content Chairperson – Annual Conference, Professional Development Committee, and the New England Chapter board of directors.

For nearly a decade, the HR/HRIT community has heard and read volumes on how to build higher performing organizations. Attention has been primarily centered on *talent management*: programs, tools and systems associated with *talent acquisition* (sourcing, assessment and selection); *talent development* (goal alignment, performance management, development and career planning, and learning management), and; *talent retention* (compensation and benefits management, succession planning and retention planning). However, these discussions have tended to obscure visibility to other significant paths organizations can take to optimize operational performance, customer satisfaction and competitive positioning.

This issue focuses on *workforce optimization*, and explores performance-enhancing tools, techniques and concepts, which have received relatively minimal attention in our community. We review new ways to maximize the utility and effectiveness of your current workforce – how to ensure you have the right number of the right people, in the right place at the right time, with the right skill set performing at their peak performance – and at the most effective cost structure. This discussion is critical to managing and optimizing individual and workforce effectiveness, helping organizations attain a *de facto* increase in productive capacity without increasing headcount.

We begin by exploring the rapidly blossoming area of *enterprise workforce management*. In “Optimization through Strategic Workforce Management Tools,” Tim Lett reveals a whole new world of automated tools for those whose experience has been focused on the more “core HR” disciplines. The tools described help organizations optimize their labor spend and reduce costs, while ensuring policy compliance and increasing customer satisfaction and revenue. He explains why these tools are particularly critical in industries where product and service output requirements vary dramatically on an hourly, daily or weekly basis – requiring dynamic changes in the size and compo-

sition of the workforce (i.e., retail, health-care and manufacturing).

David Caruso extends and reinforces Lett’s thoughts by looking closer at what’s happening in the manufacturing world in “People, Productivity and Profit – Why Workforce Management is the Next Strategic Performance Advantage for Manufacturers.” After years of applying Lean and Six Sigma initiatives to supply chain and manufacturing processes, Caruso says manufacturers are now recognizing that the last frontier of high performance may be the workforce. Efficient use of labor and reducing “employee downtime” become critical to maintaining competitiveness.

HR metrics has been an extremely hot topic for us recently. We turn up the heat with two articles that discuss *workforce analytics* and the strategic use of labor data in driving talent and workforce management. Tim Phoenix, Bradd Craver and Ashish Desai tell us how to utilize workforce analytics in “Workforce Analytics: Driving Talent Management Strategies through Workforce Data.” Using client examples, they describe how organizations can mitigate the impact of the impending talent crisis through segmented use of workforce data, and develop strategies that increase overall workforce effectiveness.

In “Workforce Analytics: Enabling HR Transformation,” Bert Pereboom and Bruce Johnson explain how realization of the full value of workforce analytics requires a broader HR transformation effort to ensure that HR and HRIT have the credibility and expertise to support the business in decisions related to human resources and skills management. They reveal practical tips to ensure that workforce analytics becomes more than just another unused icon on the managers’ portal, and how HR and HRIT must lead the transformation.

Rounding out our features are two articles that discuss *optimizing individual performance* from rather unique perspectives. In their article “Preparing for International Deployments,” Seery Maggio and Allan Matos provide the ben-

efit of their extensive experience with international engagements by revealing tips and techniques that will maximize individual effectiveness and help ensure the success of international project engagements. Just speaking the language isn’t sufficient, and the subtleties and nuances of culture and communication can prove to be disastrous.

We’ve been bombarded recently with medical reports and studies that extol the virtues of getting enough sleep and exhort us to “step up to the bar” in this area, or as I should say “lay our head on our pillow.” In “Tools for Managing the Effects of Fatigue on Workforce Performance,” Samuel Moise shows us how fatigue impacts the workplace and reveals an emerging tool that is used to assess, predict and manage fatigue-induced risk. The consequences of not properly managing fatigue in the workplace can have obvious and potentially disastrous results.

Thanks to Department Editor Sherry Green for assembling a complementary array of articles rounding out our theme of workforce optimization. You’ll discover factors that are critical to success in enterprise-wide succession planning, and why workforce planning is *the* key activity in making any talent management program work. You’ll read about *targeted retention* – why every step in the employee lifecycle has a critical impact on current and future employee retention. You’ll receive a peek at the 21st century world of work and five megatrends shaping the future. And finally, you’ll see why implementation of a service oriented architecture should be viewed as a journey necessitating cultural change, rather than just as a technical destination.

To those of you joining us at the annual IHRIM conference in Houston, Sherry and I wish you a big Texas WELCOME! Look us up! We hope you take full advantage of the multitude of networking opportunities and educational sessions that help make IHRIM *THE* professional association for HCM professionals.