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Guest Editor

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Some issues of IHRIM.link are more focused toward “buzzwords” than others. It’s hard to imagine a more trendy issue theme than that presented this month, “HR Metrics and Workforce Analytics.” Yet, after years in the HR technology business, I see this trend is actually moving us toward what we’ve all known for a long time — making HR truly a value-added part of our organizations.

What does it mean for HR to be “value-added?” Nick Cihak points out in his article, “Driving Success in Workforce Analytics,” that it means, “productizing the workforce components that generate the most value and then building specific programs and services to enable and deliver these products.” Cihak takes us through the key steps to drive success in workforce analytics, offering some interesting case studies and thought-provoking statistics from the Hackett Benchmark Analysis. While it may seem somewhat de-humanizing to talk about “product,” especially to those of us with lots of years of HR experience, the author makes the important point that our self-perception of human capital is about much more than just the transaction processing and “commodity” HR services that we’re all familiar with; it is crucial to building credibility in and providing maximum value to our organizations. To create a “product” that is meaningful in the same way that financial data is in our organizations, we must create an ability to not only

describe past performance but also predict future performance.

Peter Howes, in his article, “The New Face of HR Metrics,” describes the features of the key performance indicators (KPIs) and how they are relevant to support an organization’s strategic HR priorities. Because Howes draws a direct link between strategic HR priorities and strategic business priorities, the ability to predict future success or failure extends well beyond the boundaries of what HR has traditionally considered its range of impact and influence.

Teresa Pober in “HR Metrics: They’re Not Just for the Private Sector Anymore,” reports that non-profits and higher education institutions are also joining the metrics bandwagon despite the absence of the profit motive. She takes a look at several software packages that have been tailored to the needs of the non-profit sector, and describes the successes of some of the non-profit trailblazers in the use of HR metrics and workforce analytics.

I can’t help but think that we’re on the right path. As professionals, we want to be perceived as people who are integral to the success of our businesses, not just a set of paper-pushers and compliance watchdogs. Within our organizations, we want to be real contributors and not just the “back office.” And in the betterment of society, and ourselves we want to influence and build our organizations into the best that they can be. It’s not that it all

comes down to numbers. It’s that the numbers help us understand where we are, where we can be, and how we can play a key role in getting from here to there.

Special thanks to Department Editor Karen Ericson of Watson Wyatt Worldwide; she came up with a group of interesting and engaging articles, including one that covers my favorite topic in project management: communication, communication, communication! And her article solicitation and delivery was done with a timeliness and efficiency that served as a great model for me, as I carry out my first stint as a Guest Editor. And, thanks also to all of the authors, who provided a wonderful breadth of information and ideas. All of us at IHRIM.link hope that you find useful ideas and inspiration in this issue.