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Guest Editor

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I recall an anecdote I once heard of a father who took his young child boating, distracting the child with conversation along the way. Then, with no land in sight, he asked the child to plot a course back to the harbor. Confused, the child's response was "I can't. I don't know where we are!"

Looking at this same scenario from a business perspective, does your organization know where it would like to be within a given timeframe? Is there awareness of the current state of affairs? Achieving success requires not just knowing where one wants to be, but also realizing where one is now in order to determine how to get from here to there in the most efficient and effective fashion. This issue, with its "Back-to-Basic" theme, hopes to assist in some of your mapping endeavors.

One excellent management tool used to ascertain the pulse of an organization and assess the strength of the workplace is employee surveying. In her article, Melanie Rembrandt asks "Are Your Employee Surveys Worthy?" This first feature article presents a list of survey types to see what could best fit your specific business needs, provides tips to gain a higher success rate, identifies what not to ask to avoid litigation, and sites an example of a patient confidentiality survey conducted at a medical institution with quite a successful outcome. Today's surveys are no longer the dreaded event of the past.

It has been two years since the 9/11 attack, and we find that security and privacy are still very hot topics. With recent

technological advances, escalating movement into Internet-based self-service solutions, increasing presence of intrusive software and security breaches, and the government's interventions in light of recent corporate scandals, Marianne Coleman presents our second feature article, "Protecting Your Data." She addresses some of the pressing data security issues created with new technologies, looks at areas of responsibilities made more complicated by a mobile workforce, and makes us aware of some of the laws and regulations established to create a structure for data protection purposes.

John Sullivan says in "The Six Levels of HRIS Technology" in *21 Tomorrows: HR Systems in the Emerging Workplace of the 21st Century* (an IHRIM publication), "Merely providing information does not automatically improve quality decision-making... HRIS must provide ... the right information..." To continue our Back-to-Basics theme, David Moore, HRIS Manager at Alticor, Inc. takes a look at "Data Reporting Needs." His article explores what to report, as well as how, from various perspectives: strategic, operational and regulatory.

Ken Anderson, director of worldwide HRIS at Levi Strauss & Co., walks us through a successful optimization project in our final feature. The project's focus was on standardizing global processes, providing remedies to data inconsistency issues, and re-implementing the organization's hierarchy in Levi's PeopleSoft

HRMS to facilitate more accurate reporting and prepare for future self-service plans. He starts out with identifying the business driver, and defining the initiative, then moves on to laying out the approach taken. Challenges were plenty: a globally distributed team, security and data privacy concerns, matching resources' skills with roles, and resistance to change. How the team overcame the challenges and completed this global project on time and on budget is well worth reading.

How can you get to where you want to go if you do not know where you are? By the same token, if you do not know where you are going, how will you know you've arrived? We hope that this Back-to-Basics issue sheds a bit of light in plotting your course to success.

Special thanks is extended to this issue's Department Editor, Jay Fernandez, for his efforts in providing interesting and educational articles on a wide variety of topics including privacy, 360 feedback, and database basics to name a few. In addition, we want to thank Jay for his service on the *IHRIM.link* Editorial Committee for the past three years, as he moves to a different company and into a new career path.

COMMENTS?

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