

Engineering HR for Business Success

India Inc 2000, HR people were rushed off to feet with the directorial and administrative roles, and they once in a blue moon had time to explore tools that could boost their contemporary tasks and effectively make a massive constructive impact on the business success.

The scenario continued over the years, and slowly reached a crisis saturation point when companies continually scale up and back, and get flooded with job seekers. This crisis situation have had a big impact on company profits -- directly, through lost productivity, longer waits to fill positions, and higher recruiting costs; and indirectly, through lower company market value, reduced employee satisfaction, and poorer company image.

THE HR MACHINERY



One of the vital ways to enhance business effectiveness, promote value, and revenue is to empower HR machinery. In spite of the vast clerical workload, HR senior managers need to explore tools that will assist them coerce efficacies company-wide. This may engross spreading out of the current HR tools.

Some first-rate examples of engineered tools that go beyond the nitty-gritty of advantage include the following:

- **Communication on-net** - These tools provide far-fetched ROI, allowing employees to modify their statistic information, apply for time off, review company policy, review job postings and provide for employee suggestions and this results in increased effectiveness, improved the exactness of your data, and high employee morale.
- **E-Performance** – Making it a paperless office, these tools help ensure timely employee performance reviews and provide a documented record of performance data, electronically, which is easily accessible by managers, HR, and senior management. This should be an important part of your risk management efforts.
- **E-Recruitments**- In the down economy, companies were swamped with resumes. In the vast majority of cases, job candidates were ignored, most not even receiving so much as an automated "we have received your resume" email. These candidates may now have a negative view of the company. Consider how they will feel when your recruiter comes knocking at their door in the changing environment, when candidates are harder to find. Among other features, applicant tracking systems, some with Candidate Access Channels, allow job candidates to enter/update their resume information, check the status of their submission, and feel they are getting more attention from your company
- **Succession planning** - Does your current workforce have the skills to meet future demands? Which employees can cover for key positions? Who is being groomed for management positions? With the retirement of the Baby Boomers in the not too distant future, we expect a huge labor shortfall, both in the number of people available to fill open positions and in the skills they possess. Companies should be looking at expanding skill development and training programs, as well as methods to motivate, reward and retain employees. You need to set strategies and plans for how your company will do business when the bodies

aren't there to fill all the jobs. Succession planning tools can help lay the plans for tomorrow.

- **Management for Objectives: HR Metrics** - The new front line in HR is metrics. Metrics is a tool that allows companies to develop and drive corporate strategies through human capital information. Companies identify, track, and analyze key variables, by job function and business need, to highlight human capital trends and the interaction of key variables. Metrics provides a clear statistical perspective on human capital performance. Taken a step further, it provides a benchmark for management to measure itself against company goals and objectives, as well as industry standards. Further, metrics is presented in a language - numbers - that is easily understood by your CEO, CFO, and senior management throughout the company. Metrics can be implemented at all levels, starting with basic data, such as days to fill, cost per hire, and turnover rate, and progressing to more complex analysis such as employee satisfaction and quality of hires, which might involve a combination of factors and/or formulas to calculate.

Metrics has enormous potential as a business tool to:

- Analyze the impact of your HR programs and initiatives
- Develop HR strategy and align HR programs with corporate goals
- Link performance and compensation for key positions/roles
- Analyze department and company "health"
- Compare company metrics to industry metrics

Companies have been slow to adopt metrics, although this tool can really link HR, operations and finance, allowing everyone to talk the same language and plan for the future.

HR is now-a-days becoming a strategic business partner. Although it is becoming increasingly clear that business innovation can be helped by forward thinking human resources function there is reluctance on the part of top management in many progressive organizations to allow HR assume strategic partnership role.

'These HR guys talk about strategic role, e-learning and e-recruitment but they really don't want to do this stuff. They would rather read about it in the quiet of their offices or sit passively in an audience while other people talk about doing it. I have my doubts about their understanding of our business goals'

CAN HR GO TECHNICAL WAY?

We all know that the pace of technological innovation will continue to accelerate. HR can take advantage of these changes by automating HR processes and becoming more effective in communicating with its internal customers. More importantly, by absorbing latest technology, HR can project a forward looking image which will help it earn the respect of skeptical colleagues. Let's talk about e-HR strategy, e-HR transformation and e-HR enablement.

1. HR INFORMATION SYSTEM

As the web is becoming more reliable, organizations are increasingly turning to Application Service Providers to host software and manage it from remote computers. Through this technology outsourcing many companies can avoid up front capital costs associated with buying systems. When managed well there is no performance loss. These ASPs are aware of the security concerns



of their clients and have taken effective steps to allay such fears.

2. HOME PAGES

Web portals offer tremendous advantage in learning and knowledge management support, business process support and employee self-service opportunities. The web has revolutionized the way HR services are offered to employees. Internet and Intranet enabled HR services has facilitated data capture and retrieval and freed HR executives from shackles of personnel administration trivia allowing them to concentrate more on HR strategy and employee well being.

Through web enabled HR services an organization can move rapidly towards a paper less office where Personal Files, Leave Forms, Appraisal Forms will become a thing of the past.

3. HR ON MOBILE

As Personal Data Assistants (PDAs) and digital phones become a fixture in corporate world the next step in the evolution of devices is wireless access to news, personal information and corporate data. Progressive organizations are already offering HR services through hand held Palmtops. For example before walking in for a doctor's appointment an employee can browse through his company's HR web site for a list of service providers (medical practitioners) and also refresh his memory regarding his medical coverage—all on his handheld Personal Data Assistant! 3G which stands for third generation wireless communication technology will raise speed of communication from 9.5K to 2M bit/sec. HR professionals can leverage this 'death of distance' phenomenon sweeping the world by offering HR services on a virtual mode.



4. BLUETOOTH TECHNOLOGY



Bluetooth named after a 10th century king who united Denmark and Norway is poised for widespread roll out later this year. Imagine carrying your mobile phone into office and while it is sitting in your pocket, having it automatically exchange data with your PDA and desktop PC or setting your mobile phone down next to your PDA and checking e-mails without cords or wires. That is the goal of Bluetooth- a wireless synchronization technology invented by cellular phone manufacturer Ericsson. Bluetooth works automatically within a certain radius is relatively inexpensive and provides users with a simple way to manage all their devices.

5. VIRTUAL HR MANAGERS

With the introduction video streaming technology, the HR Manager has a powerful communication tool in his possession. He can stop shuffling video tapes and trying to gather employees in front of the TV for CEO's monthly address. He can beam it to the PCs making it easier for employees to view video without leaving their desk. It is a useful tool for employee communication and training. In combination with webcasting tools, it is also possible to include an array of interactive capabilities, including chat, polling, graphics, and Q & As.



6. INTRANET MONITORING

The media is flooded with articles on internet security and internet misuse. Many organizations are installing sophisticated software to track down web sites an employee is accessing. The HR Manager has to formulate an E-Policy and give it widespread publicity. There are issues related to discipline, corporate ethics that might come up due to increased use of internet and networking technology. The HR Manager has a crucial role to play in formulating and implementing internet policy.

How does transformation differ from change? Although essentially the approach is same, transformation is about starting over from an entirely new perspective. It requires, first and foremost, a change in mindset followed by change in processes, and finally a change in services.

HR is being challenged to transform in order to:

1. Provide flexible alternatives to previously restrictive HR processes
2. Visibly demonstrate value addition to the accomplishment of organization mission
3. Improve individual and organizational productivity
4. Provide change management strategies
5. Partner with operational units to achieve goals and measurable success

To grapple with these challenges in future, HR technology can help.

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