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Linking people management professionals around the globe

HR at the Crossroads: Choosing Strategy over Survival

By Musharraf Hossain

Rapid globalization has challenged every organization in the Asia Pacific region to try to gain a competitive advantage in an expanding marketplace, and many talk about the importance of HR's role as a long-term, strategic asset in this effort. But in reality, too many organizations remain focused on short-term fixes as a means to survive, pushing HR out of the picture.

Cost-containment and reducing or freezing HR development efforts are now part of the everyday life of HR departments that just a few years ago were investing like crazy in talent retention. That "survival spirit"—at the expense of strategy—has placed HR at a crossroads never seen before.

A 2011 study from cloud computing firm SuccessFactors and services giant Accenture, *The Link Between Strategic Alignment and Staff Productivity*, revealed that 80 percent of organizations in the United States, Europe, the Nordics, India and Australia admit that they are "not doing their best" to communicate strategy through the organization, let alone executing against it. In the current climate of economic uncertainty and intensified commercial competition, this is unacceptable.

In response, the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management (APFHRM) has taken the initiative to address the challenges and overcome the threats to organizations and our profession. During their April 2015 meeting in Tokyo, APFHRM board members identified two ways forward for HR professionals: reinforce best practices and develop a competency model.

Reinforce Best Practices

Although most organizations say they want to establish HR best practices, they sometimes resort to actions that bypass people management to ensure a quick outcome. But the HR function is often the owner of the very processes and systems that determine the success of strategy execution.

For example, József Poor, a professor of management at Saint Stephen University in Hungary, has noted that to attract and keep talented young people in a workplace, "You have to have something to offer. ... Paying them is not enough; they should have an interesting, exciting job [and] new technology." This responsibility falls to HR.

But adopting next-generation technology is a challenge particularly for cost-conscious small and medium-sized

enterprises (SMEs). According to Poor, governments need to assist SMEs in any way possible so that these enterprises can compete with powerful international companies. Globalization requires retooling working conditions when a briefcase, laptop computer and mobile phone become the office. Reinforcing HR best practices will enable countries to cope with such transformations.



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Historically, HR has rarely fulfilled its potential in this regard, in part because it hasn't had the necessary tools. What marks this moment in time as a special opportunity is that we now have technologies—such as online recruitment systems, enterprise resource planning tools, job portals, digitized personnel files and online social networks—that enable HR to deliver on its business-critical role.

Develop a Competency Model

With this in mind, APFHRM has developed a best-practices booklet for the regional HR community that can be adopted in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. It is based on Dave Ulrich's model of HR competencies, which focuses not just on the knowledge and ability of the HR professional but also on what the HR professional becomes through the use of that knowledge and ability.

Ulrich identified six competency domains, illustrated in the figure to the right.

Through APFHRM's active role as a convener of HR leaders from around the Asia Pacific region, we believe we can meet the challenges of the 21st century and save our organizations from the mindset of short-term thinking, proving HR's value as a strategic partner. We, as HR professionals, are among the best, most sustainable assets an organization has at the ready. **WV**

HR Competency Model



Source: *HR Competencies* (Society for Human Resource Management, 2008).

Musharrof Hossain is President of the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management.

Connecting the Disconnected: Fostering Employee Engagement for Success

By Shanika Ranaweera

"Our greatest asset is our employees." This common phrase among HR professionals and leaders is only valid if these employees are physically, emotionally and mentally engaged in their work.

But the latest research findings indicate that a majority of employees are either "not engaged" or "actively disengaged" in their work, making them much less likely to be productive in the workplace. Disconnected employees drastically increase organizational costs and negatively influence their co-workers.

Employee engagement happens when people are committed to their work and are motivated to achieve high levels of performance that benefit the organization as a whole. Engaged employees are positive, interested in and even excited about their jobs. They are prepared to put in discretionary effort beyond the required minimum level. They anticipate opportunities to take actions that are aligned with organizational goals. They are motivated to contribute to organizational success while at the same time deriving an enhanced sense of personal well-being.

Engagement is not synonymous with employee happiness or satisfaction. Employees may be happy or satisfied, but this doesn't necessarily mean they are working hard or productively on behalf of the organization. Engagement requires more: an emotional commitment to the organization and its goals.

Engaged employees actually care about their work and their company. They don't work just for a paycheck or a promotion—

they are willing to go further, taking extra steps to improve service quality and productivity. For companies, this translates into increased sales, greater profits and higher shareholder returns.

The UK's Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) has identified three dimensions to employee engagement:

- Intellectual engagement—thinking hard about the job and how to do it better.
- Affective engagement—feeling positively about doing a good job.
- Social engagement—actively taking opportunities to discuss work-related improvements with others at work.

HR can take a number of specific actions, described below, to create employee willingness to do more.

Measure Employee Engagement

While HR departments tend to be comfortable conducting audits, employee satisfaction surveys, trust index surveys and so forth, most forget to measure employee engagement. But in order to manage something, we have to measure it in a methodical manner that invites corrective actions. A one-time survey that ends up in a filing cabinet will be useless. Engagement must be measured regularly so that HR can identify successes and failures and analyze gaps between what is desired and what is actually going on.

An "employee engagement index" can be set up as a key performance indicator for department heads and managers, who should be thoroughly coached to take an active role in building engagement plans with their employees. Managers should be held accountable for engagement results, with their progress tracked to ensure that they continuously focus on engaging their employees.



Make Engagement a Continuous Process

Annual employee engagement surveys provide a snapshot of the employee engagement level. Unfortunately, companies often do not execute an action plan that addresses problems completely or consistently. When the process is continuous, employee engagement becomes embedded into the organizational culture.

Encourage and Provide Learning Opportunities

One of the top three reasons employees quit their jobs is a lack of learning prospects and opportunities for professional development. Learning does more than improve performance: It builds employee self-confidence and knowledge and, by extension, engagement. Coaching plays a pivotal role in increasing employee engagement, as does giving employees interesting and important work that enhances their drive to learn something new.

Enhance Performance Feedback

People want to know how they are doing and what they should be doing differently. The old performance appraisal approaches of “carrot and stick” motivation and “sandwich technique”—when negative feedback is slotted between two pieces of positive feedback—are artifacts of a bygone age. They must be replaced by mutual accountability and clear communication of the organization’s goals so that everyone can find ways to contribute.

Create a Sense of Ownership

Employees will be engaged and more motivated if they are involved in decision-making about the work they do. Seek out their ideas, thoughts and solutions. This is especially important for Millennial workers, who now make up almost one-third of the working population but who have the lowest employee engagement at work of any generation. These young workers crave involvement in shaping “the big picture” of their work and do not want to simply be told what to do.

Each generation in today’s workforce—Millennials, Generation X and Baby Boomers—has a different value system and sees life and work through a different lens. By respecting the differences, employers can engage each generation of workers to increase their sense of ownership and engagement. This can be done through continuous improvement on the “three C’s”: competency, culture and commitment. Competency development involves creating a “learning

organization” and building a willingness to learn and perform. For Millennials especially, engagement can be strengthened by creating an organizational culture of performance mixed with reward and fun.

Provide Opportunities to Contribute

Engagement can be enhanced if employees feel their voices are heard. This enables them to feed their ideas and views upward and feel that they are contributing. For example, Indra Nooyi, chair and chief executive officer of PepsiCo, regularly reads and often replies to employees’ ideas and opinions on the company’s internal blog. Some companies conduct monthly or biweekly employee forums.

Employees may be happy or satisfied, but this doesn’t necessarily mean they are working hard or productively on behalf of the organization. Engagement requires more: an emotional commitment to the organization and its goals.

Create a Celebratory Environment

Organizations should recognize and celebrate victories. Workers who feel like winners create an atmosphere of positive energy.

An organizational engagement and commitment strategy will be concerned with both strategic goals and values. The components of the strategy may include initiatives to increase involvement, ownership, communication, leadership development and a sense of excitement in the job. HR professionals should build an employee engagement strategy into their HR plan and execute it in full, and continuously.

Finally, employee engagement starts in the executive offices and trickles down. Leaders must demonstrate support for an engaged company culture by personally living the company’s values. Leaders must create a vision that is engaging to others, weave in the stories that help people make sense of the future, and tap into each individual’s unique desires and contributions—not only what is in their hands and their heads, but also what is in their hearts. **WL**

Shanika Ranaweera is Human Resources Manager at B. Braun Lanka in Sri Lanka.

Take the WFPMA Talent Management Survey

By Pieter Haen

The World Federation of People Management Associations (WFPMA) has launched a global survey of members on the topic of talent management in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and family-owned businesses (FOBs).

A major component of the global economy and workforce is concentrated in our SMEs and FOBs, where there may be only one HR manager or where HR management is the role of the business owner. Talent management in these smaller organizations is crucial for the well-being and high performance of these companies.

The survey results are expected to offer a unique view of HR managers in local businesses, who face strong competition in attracting the best talent while competing with large international companies that have entered into their home markets.

I encourage WFPMA federations to circulate the survey to member HR professionals widely. It is available in several languages to make it easy for members to respond. The survey is anonymous and requires no more than 10 to 15 minutes to complete.



The survey can be found at:
www.research.net/s/impact-of-talent-2015-eng

The WFPMA expects to present the results of the survey no later than November 2015.

Pieter Haen is Immediate Past President of the World Federation of People Management Associations.

Avoiding Common Coaching Traps: Five Challenges You Will Face

By Ernesto G. Espinosa

One of the best definitions of leadership I have heard goes something like this: “Leadership is about making others better as a result of the leader’s presence and making sure that impact lasts in his absence.” Employee coaching challenges us to be a very unique kind of leader.

As managers of people, many of us have been in situations where senior management has asked us to step in and coach employees who have not responded well to the tasks required of them. Coaching is not the same as mentoring. By its nature, coaching is task-oriented, performance-driven and short-term, while mentoring is relationship-oriented, development-driven and long-term. From my perspective, coaching is more challenging, given the limited amount of time in which to do it and its non-directive nature.

Challenge 1: The Temptation to Spoon-Feed

It is easy for coaches to fall into the trap of giving instructions and closely directing the coachee through every step of a task or a change. It is essential to strike the right balance, allowing coachees themselves to arrive at the solutions to their problems while making sure they stay on the right track and move forward. This can be tricky. Asking leading questions may not be enough for coachees who lack the discernment skills to figure out what to do next.

Although coaching uses a non-directive approach, I believe it can be useful to shift to a more directive approach from time to time if needed. It may be helpful to present several options for solutions, making known the advantages and disadvantages of each and letting the coachee decide which is optimal. Once he or she gains more confidence, the approach can be shifted back to non-directive.

The most important element is the coach’s ability to get messages across in a simple, concise and understandable manner—minus the jargon—and ask the coachee how he or she understood the message. Active feedback is critical.

Challenge 2: Dependence

Some coachees can become too dependent on coaches, relying on them as substitutes to handle tasks they find too daunting. To address these situations, coaches must manage expectations from the very beginning. The coach/coachee roles and relationship must be made clear and explicit and must be reinforced during all coaching moments and conversations.

Challenge 3: Lack of Coachee Commitment

Some coachees are too complacent to grasp the benefits of coaching. They may find the exercise meaningless and will not commit to a coach/coachee relationship. Since coaching opportunities tend to originate from management or HR, coachees, lacking ownership of the process, may go through the motions without fully understanding the inherent responsibilities.

According to Daniel Pink, author of *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us*, the new paradigm for employee development is no longer “carrots and sticks” but autonomy, mastery and purpose. Unearthing a coachee’s sense of purpose can trigger his or her interest and motivation to get the most out of a coaching opportunity.

Challenge 4: Poor or Ineffective Communication

If the coachee is unable to convey to the coach what he or she really wants and needs from the process, it will be impossible for successful coaching to progress. In these situations, the coach should attempt to understand and recognize which communication style and approach will work for this individual.

In multilingual Philippines, for example, coaching may be done in Tagalog-English or in the vernacular, but the most important element is the coach’s ability to get messages across in a simple, concise and understandable manner—minus the jargon—and ask the coachee how he or she understood the message. Active feedback is critical.

Challenge 5: Directionless Coaching

When the coachee has no idea what he or she wants from the coaching relationship, the coach must take the lead to create a structure for success. But how do you start? What sort of format or framework should you use?

One option is the GROW model of coaching developed by performance coach Sir John Whitmore in the 1980s and perfected over the years by other coaching experts.

GROW stands for:

- Goals—what do you want?
- Reality—what is happening now?
- Options—what could you do?
- Will—what will you do?

Such a framework can save the day for coaches because it is a good guide for starting coaching conversations. The acronym and its meaning provide excellent talking points that are open-ended enough to discuss various areas that can complete the coaching cycle while not veering away from the main purpose of a coaching conversation. One can easily get back on track if he or she stays within the framework. A versatile coach can use the framework to ask follow-up questions and elicit deeper insights, preferences, needs and personal values from the coachee.

Winston Churchill once said, “The price of greatness is responsibility.” Indeed, coaching is a major responsibility for anyone who takes on the challenge, but the process and its benefits are central to a high-performing, people-centered organization. HR’s primary strategic goal is to add value, and our creation of a coaching culture that promotes teamwork, pursuit of excellence and professionalism is one of the greatest values we can deliver. WL

Ernesto G. Espinosa is Immediate Past President of the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management and President of the People Management Association of the Philippines.



Megatrends: What's Shaping the Future of Work?

By Peter Wilson

It's clear in 2015 that the world in which we live, work and advance our profession has transformed dramatically from where we were 10—or even five—years ago. The practice of human resource management must evolve accordingly. But to do this, we all must first understand the nature of the macro-level changes we face—in the labor market, in global competition and in worker expectations.

Changing Work

Today, five global megatrends and challenges are shaping the future of work and the workplace, transforming the ways workers will go about pursuing their livelihoods in the next decades:

Global competition among almost all firms, in every country, is the new normal. This means that employers and employees are thinking beyond the workplace walls and seeing themselves as global players in product, capital and human resource markets.

Demographic shifts are constantly changing workforce patterns. The most prominent shift is the aging of the population, which raises two concerns: the potential loss of organizational memory and intellectual property when aging workers finally decide to retire, and their subsequent dependence on post-retirement incomes and pensions as well as public health and welfare services drawn from the incomes and taxes of a proportionately smaller future generation of workers.

Technological innovations pose both threats and opportunities to workforce management. Fewer people now need to work in a central office location; more are able to do their jobs remotely. Similarly, customers and suppliers can be better engaged through information and communications technology (ICT) and across a much wider geographic range.

At the same time, ICT is increasing workplace diversity through the growth of a workforce that is multigenerational, flexibly skilled, cross-cultural and crowdsourced. This trend demands more-sophisticated people management practices to ensure that individuals perform at or above their “marginal revenue product” of labor—to use economist jargon.

Evolving work practices in the services sector—where we find 70 percent of current jobs—will continue to dominate employment patterns. The McKinsey Global Institute predicts that 2 billion jobs that exist today will disappear by 2030 due to 12 disruptive technologies, including driverless cars, 3-D printing, mobile technology, innovations in the energy sector, Internet integration, the cloud and advanced robotics.

Modern workers have become much more knowledgeable about their value in a global workplace and the implications on their jobs and future. They are content to work hard but expect to be treated fairly and flexibly by their employers for their efforts.

Many “human jobs” will evolve to be performed by a machine or a piece of IT capability; others will be replaced in ways we haven't yet contemplated. This trend is also driving reductions in labor throughout the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. Even where traditional union activity has been strong, social and political resistance to this shift is finally crumbling. Still, we have an ever-increasing world population that desires cleaner food and agriculture solutions.

Growing social demand for income equity is creating rising tensions as public opinion pushes back against the widening gap

between rich and poor. New standards will be needed to ensure more-equitable income distribution and benefit sharing between wages and profits and to even out regional growth disparities.


Changing Attitudes

In addition to these five megatrends, worker attitudes are changing and having an impact on work, according to research we've done at the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) over the past five years. Modern workers have become much more knowledgeable about their value in a global workplace and the implications on their jobs and future. They are content to work hard but expect to be treated fairly and flexibly by their employers for their efforts.



In researching the attitudes and expectations of Australia's professional workforce today, we discovered some common characteristics:

- These workers see themselves as adaptable in the face of a global financial crisis. Ninety percent of professionals surveyed by AHRI following the recent crisis accepted the need for significant workplace change and appropriate downsizing when global competitive pressures are intense.
- They expect and desire a diverse group of co-workers and want all workers to have equitable access to gainful employment and to be treated fairly.
- They see higher rates of employee turnover (15 to 20 percent annually) as the norm and believe that excessive bureaucracy should not obstruct or impede individual workers from moving on to their next job opportunity.

Members of our profession—in Australia in particular and the Asia Pacific region in general—need to reset their HR policies and practices in light of such megatrends and worker attitudes if we are to keep employee turnover down and productivity and engagement up. 

Peter Wilson is National President of the Australian Human Resources Institute and Secretary General-Treasurer of the World Federation of People Management Associations.

Hong Kong's Human Capital: Meeting the Challenges

By David Li

In recent years, Hong Kong has made big strides in developing labor policy to improve the rights and benefits of its workforce.

These efforts have included a new statutory minimum wage in 2011, statutory paternity leave that began in February 2015, and proposals for standard working hours that are now being carefully considered across various business and industry sectors. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government is also promoting family-friendly employment practices in the private and public sectors, recognizing the apparent advantages for both employers and employees.

But the city faces a human capital conundrum. Hong Kong famously has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. Meanwhile, the city is also facing an aging population at the other end of the continuum. It is estimated that by 2033, 26.8 percent of the city's population will be older than 65.

Human capital is one of the key factors that has contributed to the vitality and economic prosperity of Hong Kong. In the past three decades, the city's economy has grown by an average of 4.6 percent per year—1.4 percent of which can be attributed to growth in the labor force. According to government statistics, Hong Kong boasted a population of 7.24 million in 2014, with a total labor force of 3.88 million age 15 and older. It is essential to keep Hong Kong's workforce sustainable for the city's continued socioeconomic development and competitiveness in the global economy.

A consultation document published in 2014 by the government's Steering Committee on Population Policy states the objective of Hong Kong's population policy: "To develop and nurture a population that will continuously support and drive Hong Kong's socioeconomic development as Asia's world city and to engender a socially inclusive and cohesive society that allows individuals to realize their potential, with a view to attaining quality life for all residents and families."



To achieve this objective, several priorities have been identified to sustain Hong Kong's long-term human capital development:

- Tackle the problem of an insufficient labor force.
- Enhance the quality of Hong Kong's labor force.
- Attract more talent to settle in Hong Kong.
- Enhance the efficiency of the labor importation regime.
- Explore measures that facilitate forming and raising families.
- Promote "active aging."

Keeping Older Workers

To relieve the mounting pressure imposed on the city's human capital, the government has taken measures and created strategies to enhance productivity and realize the full potential of Hong Kong's labor force. One example is the government's recent initiative to extend the retirement age of its newly recruited civil servants from 60 to 65, effective June 2015—a move quickly adopted by statutory bodies such as the Hong Kong Hospital Authority. Currently, there is no statutory retirement age in Hong Kong.


Although the city's labor force participation rate (LFPR) of people ages 50 to 64 rose from 56.3 percent in 2003 to 62.3 percent in 2013, it is still low compared to other Asian economies such as Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. For people ages 60 to 64, Hong Kong's LFPR stands at 39.4 percent, significantly lower than in South Korea (58.5 percent), Singapore (59.7 percent) and Japan (61.4 percent). The government is Hong Kong's largest employer, with more than 163,000 employees on its payroll, and its having taken the lead in extending the service of civil servants is expected to encourage other employers in both the public and private sectors to consider formulating and implementing flexible measures to prolong the working years of their employees.

In response to the government's initiative, and to explore the views of HR practitioners and professionals in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (HKIHRM) conducted an online survey of HR professionals this past April on the subject of retirement age. Eighty-two percent of the respondents supported the notion of extending the retirement age. Among those in favor, 78 percent agreed that raising the retirement age would be an effective measure to alleviate pressure in manpower shortage.

In addition, 71 percent of those who agreed believed that the retirement age could be set at 65, while 24 percent felt that it could be extended past 65. Without a doubt, extending the retirement age is seen as a palatable option to help reduce the city's manpower shortage. Organizations also see the added benefit of retaining experienced employees who can contribute in areas such as strategic planning, training and consultation. In fact, some of Hong Kong's large corporations in the banking and public transport sectors have adopted employment practices that aim to engage older staff in certain strategic roles.

Smarter Overseas Recruiting

In another measure to rejuvenate the workforce and combat the manpower shortage, the government implemented a series of talent admission schemes to attract high-quality professionals and entrepreneurs from overseas and Mainland China, including the Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents born overseas.

This is just one of many policy measures the government has adopted to raise the quality and quantity of Hong Kong's workforce. HKIHRM, as the leading professional body for human resource management in Hong Kong—representing more than 5,500 members in the profession—will continue to advocate strongly and advise the government on a wide range of human resource issues. Our research, experience and networks are making a significant impact on Hong Kong's long-term human capital development and competitiveness. 

David Li is President of the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management.

State of Play: Taiwan's Complex HR Challenges

By Rick Liu

Taiwan's businesses are constantly evolving to stay in step with today's fast-moving and competitive global marketplace. Global trends such as virtual and diverse workplaces, aging populations, lower birth rates, global vs. local enterprises and the growing need for knowledge workers mean that handling human resources in Taiwan has never been so critical or complex.

The Chinese Human Resource Management Association, Taiwan (CHRMA), recently published a white paper describing observations and insights into Taiwan's current HR challenges and offering solutions for addressing them. The findings were derived from interviews with focus groups of HR experts and practitioners from various industry sectors as well as a survey conducted across companies. The paper highlights five key challenges, described below. Undoubtedly, they will be familiar to HR professionals throughout the Asia Pacific region.

Mismatches and Shortages

The shortage of technical talent in Taiwan—a consequence of many factors—has worsened over time. More students are steering away from technical/engineering disciplines, which require more basic research and longer years of training. In addition, fewer Taiwanese students are choosing traditional vocational schools, which are a critical source of technical talent.

Although the Taiwan Ministry of Labor (MOL) was elevated to ministry level in 2014 as a way to address national HR issues more effectively, serious challenges remain. The MOL needs to better understand technical talent categories, needs and gaps in order to build or invest in talent development if we are to leverage our country's competitive advantages over the next three to six years.

University Graduates

Although the number of university graduates increases every year, the quality of university degrees has fallen. Today, Taiwan's universities have more places for freshmen students than the number of annual high school graduates, meaning that every student who wants to enroll in a university can. The entry bar has been lowered; as a result, employers are seeing less capable talent leaving universities.

In addition, the gap between what students learn at university and what is expected by employers grows larger every year, despite attempts to address this issue. Classroom theories and real-world practices do not align. Students report to their first job and instantly experience frustration, and corporations have to invest more in training to bring new graduates up to speed.

For the government's part, new policies must be designed to encourage and reward universities, institutes and industries for creating partnerships.

Better academia-industry interfaces can help to narrow gaps between classroom theories and real-world practices. Possible solutions include engaging industry in designing curricula and placing current students into specific technical skill training, internships or joint research projects to meet industry needs. One university, located near the Taoyuan International Airport, offered a series of aviation courses to meet specific local demands and to differentiate itself from other universities. It has attracted not only Taiwanese students, but also students from China and Singapore.

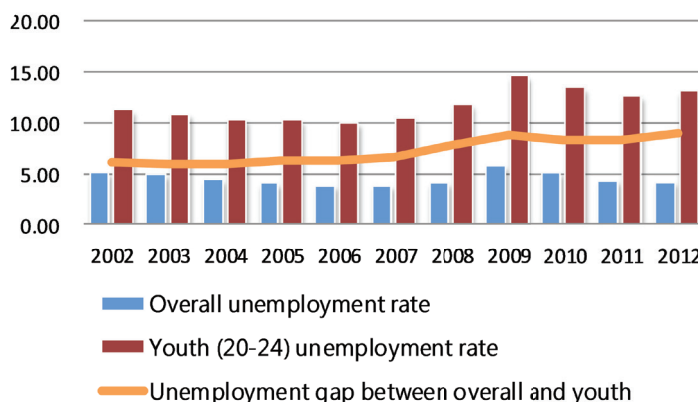
For the government's part, new policies must be designed to encourage and reward universities, institutes and industries for

creating partnerships. At the same time, existing higher education policies should be retooled to increase the quality, rather than quantity, of degrees.

Outflow and Inflow

Every year, Taiwan experiences a worrying outflow of more than 10,000 people, mostly white-collar or technical talents who leave the country for greener professional pastures. For Taiwan's talented young technical graduates, entry-level salaries have flattened in the past decade, so they choose opportunities in other countries as steppingstones for experience or higher incomes. Countries like China and Singapore actively recruit talent from Taiwan, offering lower income tax rates and better compensation and benefits.

Taiwan Unemployment Rates, 2002-2012



Source: Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan.

As for inflows, controls have become strict for foreign workers, although their number has grown to around 500,000, accounting for 5 percent of the total working population. Like many Asian countries, Taiwan struggles with unskilled or low-skilled labor shortages as a result of aging populations and low birth rates. Government officials are torn between securing employment opportunities for Taiwan's own citizens and allowing more foreign blue-collar workers in to fill labor gaps.

One proposed solution is to allow foreign blue-collar laborers to do less-skilled work while encouraging native workers to pursue more-skilled trades through improved training and support.

Working Hours

Taiwan has strong restrictions on weekly working hours, the daily working hour ceiling (including training hours), and night shift and working hours for young and female workers. These rules are artifacts based on factory work and no longer fit the needs and practices of non-manufacturing employers. Many HR professionals in Taiwan believe that regulations should be changed to span monthly or bimonthly periods of work, rather than using the current rigid weekly restrictions. This flexibility would allow employers to better

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cope with seasonal variations or collaborations with schools on joint research or internships.

Youth Unemployment

Taiwan's overall unemployment rate has hovered between 4 and 6 percent over the past decade, which is not bad compared to other Asian countries such as South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. However, the youth unemployment rate has been 12 to 14 percent, which is high compared to the rates in these other countries. It means that 40 percent of Taiwan's unemployed are between the ages of 20 and 29. As mentioned above, young graduates are not

prepared for the demands of industry. Funding and resources given to universities should cover more than academic studies to better prepare students in making the transition from school to employment.

The five human resource issues outlined above not only illustrate the current challenges that the Taiwan human resources sector is facing, but also echo global trends in the talent war and the gap between academic education and real-world practices. In today's fast-moving global context, talent supply and demand must be given top priority. [WL](#)

Rick Liu is President of the Chinese Human Resource Management Association.

New Advisory Council for WFPMA

By Horacio Quiros

The Board of the World Federation of People Management Associations (WFPMA) has approved the creation of an Advisory Council made up of its past presidents.

This council is a consultative, non-executive body whose mission is to transmit the tradition and the spirit of the WFPMA globally and to provide opinions, experiences, guidance and advice to the Board, especially when making decisions that will impact the Federation's management and future.

Currently, I am serving as chair of the council. Going forward, however, the council will be chaired by the WFPMA immediate past president at the end of his or her term, and he or she will serve as chair for two years.

Building an enduring network of past presidents is intended to reference and benefit from the Federation's long history, as well as to help guide the exciting evolution of the HR profession. This is how we keep the dream of our WFPMA founders vibrantly alive now and in the future. [WL](#)

Horacio Quiros is a Past President of the World Federation of People Management Associations.

WFPMA Past Presidents

Term	Continental Federation	President
1976-1980	FIDAP	Marco Antonio Flores, Mexico
1980-1984	EAPM	Antonio Sáenz de Miera, Spain
1984-1988	SHRM	Thomas Snediker, USA
1988-1992	APFHRM	John S. Maxwell, Australia
1992-1996	FIDAP	Sergio W. Hillesheim, Brazil
1996-1998	EAPM	Alberto Fuster de Carulla, Spain
1998-2000	SHRM	Michael R. Losey, USA
2000-2002	APFHRM	Eddie H.K. Ng, Hong Kong
2002-2004	FIDAGH	Carlos Aldao Zapiola, Argentina
2004-2006	EAPM	Geoffrey Armstrong, United Kingdom
2006-2008	NAHRMA	Florent Francoeur, Canada
2008-2010	APFHRM	Ernesto G. Espinosa, Philippines
2010-2012	FIDAGH	Horacio Quirós, Argentina
2012-2014	EAPM	Pieter Haen, The Netherlands

Australia Unused leave



Australia's workforce of 6 million people is collectively owed more than 123 million days of unused annual leave—or more than four workweeks per person—despite 75 percent of them taking at least one trip within the year, according to public research firm Roy Morgan Research. Among male workers, excess leave averages 22 days, while female workers are owed an average of 18 days. At Australia's new minimum wage of US\$13.39 per hour, the unclaimed entitlements have a value of around US\$1.65 billion. Concerned HR experts in Australia say that when employees accrue a glut of vacation days, it puts a significant financial burden on companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises that must absorb the costs of paying departing employees a lump sum for unused leave.

Hong Kong Disengaged workers



As many as 31 percent of Hong Kong employees expect to leave their organizations within two years, compared with the global average of 26 percent, according to the Towers Watson 2014 *Global Workforce Study*. Just 38 percent of survey respondents expect to stay at their companies—significantly less than the global rate of 46 percent. The research revealed that employees in Hong Kong are less engaged and less loyal to their employers than their global counterparts and are particularly concerned with the equity and fairness of their pay when they compare compensation with both their internal colleagues and external peers at the same level.

India Morning people



The first two hours at the office are the most productive period for a majority (65 percent) of India's employees, according to a new survey from JobBuzz. For 70 percent of workers, the two-hour period after lunch was the least productive part of the day. Those who work best in the mornings also tend to work longer hours—8 to 10 per day—compared to the remainder, who reported working 6 to 8 hours. Monday was revealed to be the most productive day for 45 percent of respondents, while Wednesday was best for 19 percent. Thursday emerged as the least productive workday for Indian employees.

Japan Encouraging working women



Haruko Arimura, Japan's new minister for the empowerment of women, has said that the country should try to repair its shrinking workforce by enabling more women to work before resorting to the "Pandora's box" of importing foreign workers. Last year, Japanese women accounted for just over 8 percent of management positions in the country's private-sector companies employing more than 100 people. Arimura has said that while the government has no intention of interfering with the lifestyles of the 1 in 3 Japanese women who want to devote themselves to their families, it will work to support women who feel pressured to abandon careers because of family responsibilities or who wish to resume working after raising children. A new draft bill will require employers with more than 300 staff to publish gender breakdown statistics and their plans to promote women. While non-compliance carries no penalty, the legislation is expected to reveal how women are faring at work and what problems they face.

Malaysia Family-friendly measures



Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak has called for measures to increase the number of women in the workforce that could include requiring private companies and government departments to provide day care centers or nurseries on their premises. The government has set a target to have 55 percent of working-age women employed by the end of this year, up from 52.4 percent last year. A 2013 survey of publicly listed companies by accounting

firm PricewaterhouseCoopers Malaysia revealed that the majority of corporations in Malaysia did not offer family-friendly facilities or flexible work arrangements. Only 27 percent provided a designated car park for pregnant women, 18 percent had a nursing room for mothers to pump breast milk and 6 percent provided child care.

New Zealand Migrants for rebuilding



New rules by New Zealand's government should make life easier for the extra migrants needed as the peak period of rebuilding the city of Canterbury after the 2010 earthquakes approaches. An additional 5,000 construction workers are needed now through the crest of the rebuild in December 2016. The new rules will make it easier for migrants to change employers to meet ongoing rebuilding needs and to extend the maximum stay—to three years from one—for visa applications or renewals received from July to December. The government will also introduce an accreditation scheme for companies that recruit and employ migrants in order to combat unfair labor practices that have been the subject of complaints by imported workers.

Singapore Earn and learn



Singapore's new "earn and learn" program, modeled after Swiss and German apprenticeship schemes, kicked off in April with its first batch of Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and polytechnic students who will undergo on-the-job training and mentorship while studying to improve their qualifications. In addition to a sign-on bonus from their employers, participants will be paid salaries through the duration of their 12- to 18-month stints. At the end of the program, ITE graduates will have gained industry experience and a diploma, while polytechnic graduates will have earned an advanced or specialist diploma. To encourage employers to take part, companies that employ an ITE or polytechnic student under the scheme will get grants of up to US\$10,800 per trainee to offset their costs. The program is part of Singapore's SkillsFuture initiative, which aims to create a more skilled workforce by placing less emphasis on academic qualifications and more on professional and technical capabilities.

Taiwan 60,000 new hires



Large enterprises in Taiwan are planning to employ a total of 60,000 new workers by the end of July, according to a Ministry of Labor survey released last month. Big businesses in the manufacturing sector are looking at hiring an additional 25,000 employees in total, while the accommodation and food service industry will add 9,000 and the wholesale and retail sector will add 7,500, the poll showed. Most of the new positions are for professionals and lower-ranking employees. The Ministry of Labor said the growing labor demand is likely due to an expected increase in tourism this summer.

Vietnam Lump-sum reversal



Vietnam's legislature has agreed to amend a policy that prohibits employees from collecting a lump-sum payment of their social insurance coverage if they resign, after the new law prompted tens of thousands of factory workers to hold a weeklong strike in March. Parliament ruled to overturn Article 60 of the social insurance law, which would have gone into effect next year and required workers to wait until retirement age—60 for men and 55 for women—to collect their insurance payments. The law will be revised to allow workers to take a lump-sum payment either immediately after resigning or when they reach legal retirement age.

Sources: *The Straits Times*, *SMB World*, *TimesJobs.com*, *Bloomberg Business*, *Staffing Industry Analysts*, *Stuff.co.nz*, *The Establishment Post*, *Focus Taiwan*, *Radio Free Asia*.

HR CALENDAR

August 27–28, 2015

New Zealand HR Expo
TSB Bank Arena, Wellington, New Zealand
E-mail: events@hrinz.org.nz

September 9–10, 2015

AMEDIRH 50th Human Resources International Congress
Centro Banamex, Mexico City, Mexico
E-mail: contacto@amedirh.com.mx

September 16, 2015

Singapore HR Congress and Business-Connect Exposition
Singapore (Venue TBA)
Website: www.shri.org.sg

September 30–October 1, 2015

2015 Annual National Conference “Traefpunkt Human Resources 2015,” Dansk HR—The Association of Danish HR Professionals
Øksnehallen, Copenhagen, Denmark
E-mail: info@pid.dk
Website: www.danskhr.dk/traefpunkt-hr

October 8–10, 2015

National Institute of Personnel Management of India 34th National HR Conference
Le Meridien Hotel, Coimbatore, India
Website: www.natcon2015.com
E-mail: info@natcon2015.com
nipm@cal2.vsnl.net.in

October 22–23, 2015

49th AEDIPE National Congress/27th EAPM Congress on HR
Hotel Balneario Resort Las Arenas, Valencia, Spain
E-mail: info@aedipec2015.com

November 3–5, 2015

APFHRM Regional Conference
Orchid Country Club, Singapore
Website: www.apfhrm.com

November 4–5, 2015

CIPD Annual Conference & Exhibition
Manchester Central, Manchester, UK
<http://www.cipd.co.uk/events/annual/conference>

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WorldLink is the newsletter of the World Federation of People Management Associations (WFPMA). It is published by the Society for Human Resource Management, which is the Secretariat for the Federation. For further information, contact Peter Wilson at Peter-Wilson2@ahri.com.au or the WFPMA Secretariat at WFPMA.Secretariat@shrm.org.

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welcomes news stories, announcements of events and ideas for articles. These should be accompanied by a telephone number and e-mail address.

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *WorldLink* will be published in October 2015 and will feature the Interamerican Federation of People Management Associations and HR news from Latin America. © 2015. Material may be reprinted with credit to *WorldLink*, WFPMA.

Design and Production by the Society for Human Resource Management, Alexandria, Virginia, USA