



# WorldLink

Linking people management professionals around the globe

## Diverse Asia Pacific Countries Share Common Challenges

By Ernesto G. Espinosa

In March, the Board of the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management (APFHRM) met in Wellington, New Zealand. One of the most popular sessions at the meeting analyzed the top three challenges facing each of the 15 countries in the region. Not surprisingly, there was a lot of overlap.

Six challenges were identified, with the top three being quality of education/skills gap (7 countries); wage and salary issues, including minimum wage (4 countries); and workforce demographics (4 countries).

But I would like to focus on the second set of three—strategic HR (3 countries), talent management (3 countries) and leadership development (3 countries)—because these are areas where human resource management (HRM) can have a deep and lasting effect on an organization. My country, the Philippines, faces all three of these challenges.

### Strategic HR

For years, our profession has extolled and promoted HR as a strategic business partner, but it seems that in the Asia Pacific region, we are still regarded simply as administrative experts in our respective organizations. And that may be our fault. Instead of developing strategies designed to help grow our companies' business, too many HR professionals are still mired in benefits administration,

personnel files, HRM information systems, disciplinary procedures and the like.

This focus on administrative work stems from the fact that many CEOs still do not see the job of HR professionals as strategic.

The main criticism of the HR function is that it lacks knowledge of the business as well as the acumen to interpret financial statements. HR professionals must endeavor to align HR objectives and strategies with business objectives and strategies, and to cultivate a high-level understanding of both. Without such alignment, HR will not be able to deliver on its true worth as the driver of business growth and employee productivity.

### Talent Management

A "war for talent" is raging all around us. Many organizations are not able to meet their manpower requirements because talent is a scarce resource. Organizations in our region often lose employees through poaching from companies abroad

[Common Challenges continued on page 2](#)



The Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management Board. Front row (L-R): Rachel Walker (HRINZ, New Zealand), Suchada Sukhsvasti (PMAT, Thailand), Ernie Espinosa (PMAP, Philippines), Julia Stones (HRINZ) and Eri Ishibashi (JSHRM, Japan). Second row: Kin-Mei Kwan (HKIHRM, HK), Amanda Mackey (AHRI, Australia), Musharrof Hossein (BSHRM, Bangladesh), Rick Liu (CHRMA, Taiwan) and Aresandiran J. Naidu (MIHRM, Malaysia). Third row: Balbeer Singh (FHRI, Fiji), Peter Wilson (AHRI), Janaka Kumarasinghe (IPMSL, Sri Lanka), R. Mohan Das (NIPM, India) and Yuji Mishiro (JSHRM).



The New Professionalism: Mapping the Roles of HR Practitioners in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom



After the Canterbury Earthquakes: People Management Lessons We Learned in Recovery



Is Personality Testing Right for Your Hiring Process?



Defining Human Resource Management for Sri Lanka



Avoiding Appointment Disappointment

that can pay two or three times an employee's present salary. Because of the low quality of education in some countries (named as the top HR challenge in the region), companies cannot hire enough qualified graduates to sustain growth. Companies fight for highly qualified candidates who are able to negotiate for top salaries and choose the companies they prefer.

Companies must establish an integrated talent management system that covers the entire spectrum of manpower planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, performance management, career management, and succession planning. This will help not only with talent acquisition but also with development and retention. HR should constantly be mining sources of talent through job fairs, referral systems, online recruitment, newspaper advertising and highly specialized searches. And by developing programs around competency-based training, rewards and recognition, career planning, and succession management, companies can effectively retain these talented individuals as long as possible.

### Leadership Development

As difficult as finding good talent is, sourcing and developing good leaders is equally hard. There may be many competent managers, but there is a shortage of competent leaders—that is, those who can inspire, mentor, act as role models and challenge subordinates to perform their tasks exceptionally. Too many organizations try to hire from outside because they lack a succession management program that develops talent internally. They are unable to mold and promote high-potential employees to positions of more responsibility. Moreover, they are unable to train employees according to their culture and way of thinking.

Several organizations in the Philippines have established “leadership academies” as a training ground for future leaders. Here, selected employees are coached on the essentials of effective leadership, using approaches such as business cases/games, simulation exercises and role-playing. I have also observed that in the Philippines, only a few top HR officers have become CEOs in their respective companies—perhaps proof that leadership development programs are not yet as widespread as they should be.

**T**here may be many competent managers, but there is a shortage of competent leaders—that is, those who can inspire, mentor, act as role models and challenge subordinates to perform their tasks exceptionally.

For HR professionals to help their respective organizations overcome these challenges and become successful, they must be proactive, constructing appropriate interventions to address the inadequacies and gaps. This is the only way HR can enhance its value proposition and strengthen its role as a strategic—and essential—business partner. **WL**

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

## The New Professionalism: Mapping the Roles of HR Practitioners in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom

By Paul Higgins, Ph.D.; Ian Roper, Ph.D.; Nancy Jing Yang; and Sophie Gamwell, Ph.D.

**The bilateral relationship between the U.K. and Hong Kong is important politically, but it is also significant in the world of human resource management (HRM). However, until recently, no one knew the extent to which the areas' two professional HR institutes shared ideas and perceptions surrounding professionalism.**

So a joint team of researchers from City University of Hong Kong and Middlesex University in London set about examining the success of efforts to “professionalize” HRM by both the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (HKIHRM)—and whether the aspirations of the two institutes match the claimed abilities and practices of their members.

Four years ago, the CIPD and the HKIHRM separately restructured their qualification standards, membership criteria and continuous professional development credentials in an effort to increase the perceived value and influence of the HRM profession. The CIPD began with a strategic review designed to forecast the future role of HRM and finished with a new “professional map” built around 10 areas of competence, eight behavioral areas of practice and four bands of professional transition, from entry-level to director. Meanwhile, the HKIHRM was launching its first professional membership scheme built around the practice standards of knowledge, experience and capability.

The researchers initially found that, in fact, the professional standards content of the CIPD and the HKIHRM is broadly comparable and can be collapsed into two overarching motifs—knowledge and behaviors. The knowledge component comprises five shared themes: employee engagement and relations, and related legislation; HR strategy and business; learning and development; performance and reward; and HR planning, sourcing and staffing. The behavior component comprises six shared themes: professionalism, integrity, influence, partnership and collaboration, change, and implementation.





The team then examined whether the normative aspirations of the two professional institutes match the claimed HR knowledge and workplace behaviors of qualified practitioners. For this part of the study, a cross-national survey was conducted among some 1,000 HR practitioners in Hong Kong and the U.K. to empirically examine the current status of HR.

One of the most remarkable findings to emerge from the survey is that among participants in both areas, the higher the respondent's professional membership status, the higher the claimed core HR knowledge. For instance, among the Hong Kong sample, Fellow members claimed more professional HR knowledge than Professional members, who in turn claimed more professional HR knowledge than Associate members.

For the HKIHRM, this finding is very encouraging because it reflects the efforts the institute has made to produce a meaningful career ladder to support members as they move from general responsibilities into management roles and then on to executive-level positions. The CIPD's "professional map" provides a similar function in that it specifies a framework to help navigate HR practitioners' career paths by diagnosing their development needs.

Concerning workplace behaviors, the survey found that Hong Kong-based HR practitioners reported spending most of their time on "professional" activities, such as "ensuring legal/regulatory compliance," "acting with integrity" and "practicing ethical work behavior," rather than on administrative, communications and strategic activities. They spent the least amount of time on basic technical skills, such as being required to apply basic HR knowledge and skills at work and performing repetitive tasks.

Moreover, when sorted by professional membership status, the findings showed that while Fellow-level members had the greatest strategic and communication influences and the lowest administrative and technical responsibilities, virtually the opposite was found for

Associate-level members. This result is in line with the developmental objectives of the HKIHRM and reflects the current structure of the HR profession—meaning that not all HR practitioners are required to perform strategic functions in their work.

When respondents described their roles, most chose the status of "professional," followed by "communicator," "administrator," "strategist" and "technical." Given the professionalization objectives of the CIPD and the HKIHRM, it is encouraging that the role of HR "professional" was chosen by the most participants from both institutes. We can take from this finding that, consistent with actual HR practice, the knowledge aspect of professional standards content could be bolstered to include new explicit material on ethics, independence and integrity—the essence of professionalism.

By strengthening members' formal HR knowledge in this way, HR associations can enhance their value by acting in the capacity of "organizational steward" and "credible activist" for the industry. Their members can then be better prepared to lead the strategic influence of HR within their organizations, nurturing further expertise, trust and integrity for the entire profession. **WL**

The research described in this article was fully supported by a grant from the ESRC/RGC Joint Research Scheme sponsored by the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong and the Economic & Social Research Council of the United Kingdom (Project reference no. ES/J017299/1).

Paul Higgins, Ph.D., is Associate Professor, Department of Public Policy, City University of Hong Kong; Ian Roper, Ph.D., is Principal Lecturer, Department of Leadership, Work and Organization, Middlesex University; Nancy Jing Yang is Senior Research Assistant, Department of Public Policy, City University of Hong Kong; and Sophie Gamwell, Ph.D., is Research Associate, Department of Leadership, Work and Organization, Middlesex University.

## After the Canterbury Earthquakes: People Management Lessons We Learned in Recovery

By Chris Till

On February 22, 2011, a magnitude-6.3 earthquake struck the Canterbury region of New Zealand, destroying large parts of Christchurch, the country's second-largest city, and killing 185 people. It thoroughly unsettled a populace already shaken by a series of major earthquakes and aftershocks over the previous months. But what came afterward proved to be the true test to New Zealanders as they negotiated the challenges of recovery.

At the time, I was general manager of human resources for the Christchurch City Council. What I learned in the days and months that followed is that, for people affected, recovery can feel like living through a second disaster. HR will be put to the test of managing fears and leading a return to workforce stability.

The day after the quake, the city council's executive team assembled at the civic offices in the central business district. Although still in shock, our group projected an attitude of leadership, especially our purportedly "controversial" CEO, Tony Marryatt, who had recently come under fire for accepting a large pay raise.

From that first meeting, Marryatt led from the front. He first divided the team into those who would keep the 3,000-person organization going—including me—and those who would focus on the disaster, including the general managers of operational areas. Even



as the ground beneath us continued to shake, growl and grumble, no one left, no one panicked and everyone got on with the job.

The first HR contributions I made at that meeting were basic but important:

- Make sure people get paid.
- Try to assert some sense of normalcy as quickly, clearly and confidently as possible.
- Don't send out mindless messages trying to cheer people up—they misfire every time.
- Communicate through the normal chain of command as much as possible to assert the accountability, role and importance of all leadership—especially the front-line team leaders who have many direct reports.

As the days unfolded, we could see that many of our staff were traumatized—behaving oddly and, in some cases, seeming to be somewhere else mentally. Small issues became big issues in ways that were out of character for our staff. We provided support to them in many large and small ways. These ways in particular stood out:

- Demonstrate genuine care for your staff. Stay in close, frequent contact and ask how staff are coping. Actions speak louder than words.
- Bring your team together as soon as you can. Have a social get-together or even a “barbie.” Strength lies in solidarity. Strength lies in the team.
- Don't assume everyone feels the same way you do.
- Provide a variety of formal and informal support—like training, counseling, lunchtime learning sessions, or just opportunities to talk and listen to each other.
- Be human, be humble and be real. Try to put yourself in other people's shoes to gain insight and empathy.
- Help people to get back into their workplaces, if it is safe, as soon as possible—even if they might be afraid. Some come back quickly; some will take longer. Be patient, understanding and gentle.
- Get professional advice from psychologists, registered nurses, doctors and counselors.
- Where there are employee concerns about the structural viability of buildings and facilities, enlist the help of experts such as engineers to demonstrate that the workplace is safe.
- Recognize that people's work, home and well-being circumstances are all different. One size definitely does not fit all. Be flexible.

As often happens in a recovery situation, there was a honeymoon period during which our organization was seen as heroic, followed by a period of community disillusionment. We knew that it was only a matter of time before certain organizations came up against people's massive expectations and emotional burdens. Naturally, we became an easy target for displaced anger and frustration. One particularly attractive scapegoat was the city council and the prominent people associated with and working for it, such as mayors, council members, and city executive teams and managers. It was entirely predictable.

**A**s an HR practitioner, it is likely that you will be put to the test one day. It will be more than a test of your professionalism—it will be a test of your personal values, your moral principles and your inner fiber.

Another lesson we learned may sound obvious but is nonetheless worth noting: Don't accept at face value what the media is reporting—including and especially on social media. I know this to be true because, as an “insider” during this period, I saw that what was reported often did not match what was really going on within the organization.

Finally, let me remind you that as an HR practitioner, it is likely that you will be put to the test one day. It will be more than a test of your professionalism—it will be a test of your personal values, your moral principles and your inner fiber. If you don't know what your values and principles are, or if they are weakly held, you may find yourself failing the final exam.

To navigate through any disaster, natural or man-made, you must understand your bottom-line beliefs, standards and ethics, and then hold true to them and yourself. You will come out of the crisis taking pride in your own response and in the responses of the people around you.

And you will never lose that sense of pride—I know I never will. **WL**

Chris Till is Chief Executive of the Human Resources Institute of New Zealand.

## Is Personality Testing Right for Your Hiring Process?

By Faisal K. Chowdhury

Matching the right candidate to an open position is critical to an organization's bottom line, and mistakes can be costly. Traditionally, the only tools HR professionals have had to make their selections have been application forms, which are impersonal and provide only background; referrals, which tend to mention only good things about a candidate; and face-to-face interviews, which are now being questioned by experts as unreliable.

Given these shortcomings, personality testing has gained ground as a more predictable selection tool and a standard practice in many developed countries. Many employers believe that these tests are better at predicting the future behavior and performance of hires. But the truth is not as straightforward.

### What Is Measured and How?

Personality testing is typically used to assess general patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that people display in their work or daily lives. The goal is to paint a picture of a candidate's personality based on his or her responses to a set of questions. Aspects of

personality that are measured include sociability, creativity, anxiety and personal organization. There are no right or wrong answers to the tests, but useful insights can be formed on how candidates are likely to behave and perform at work.

There are two approaches to personality testing. The “nomothetic” method is based on self-reporting and/or self-presentation. Candidates answer direct questions or provide their impressions about a statement or example—for instance, agreeing or disagreeing with the assertion “People are generally honest.” Common nomothetic tests include the

Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, the Myers-Briggs and the Hogan Personality Inventory.

The “idiographic” method is projective, using photographs, drawings or interviews. This method tends to be utilized more when selecting candidates for high-stress jobs, and in psychiatric evaluations and psychological research. The Thematic Apperception Test and the Rorschach Inkblot Test are some well-known idiographic tests.

### Criticisms and Downsides

The use of personality tests as an HR selection method has drawn a fair amount of criticism over the years. Critics argue that personality is only one of many contributors to job performance, which is also determined by ability, training, payment, supervision, the culture and structure of the organization, and even luck.

Another drawback is that test results are often non-linear. For example, someone scoring high on conscientiousness might turn out to be so rule-abiding that he or she cannot function outside a strict bureaucratic organization. Thus, high scores may not always be better predictors of job success.

Another issue inherent in personality testing is the incentive to “fake.” The right or most correct answer may be evident to many candidates, so firms end up selecting people who know the perfect responses. In other cases, otherwise honest candidates may lack self-insight and are compelled to portray an idealized version of themselves, distorting the results.

Factors affecting test validity include the fact that different demographics tend to perform differently on the same test, although the reasons are debatable, controversial and complex. Companies often try to minimize this by selecting items and questions that have reduced impact and compromise on validity and reliability and by adopting measures such as “banding” (grouping for variations) and “race-norming” (setting different pass levels for different groups).

The right or most correct answer may be evident to many candidates, so firms end up selecting people who know the perfect responses. In other cases, otherwise honest candidates may lack self-insight and are compelled to portray an idealized version of themselves, distorting the results.

Finally, personality testing only captures a small fragment of the whole person. Humans are flexible: They can learn behavior and adapt to changing circumstances—and to personality tests. Similarly, jobs are also multidimensional, so trait-based tests are not effective predictors of overall performance.

### Maximizing the Benefits of Personality Tests

In the search for more-convincing and more-concrete ways of assessing candidates, it is evident why some organizations jump to adopt personality testing methods. Such tests are quick and easy to administer, easily interpretable by someone who has been trained, and save a lot of time and effort in shortlisting candidates for further assessments, hence saving on costs. They are also aggressively marketed by vendors. But by and large employers use personality tests because they know personality matters and is related to career success, and they believe such tests minimize hiring mistakes.



There are several ways employers can get the best results from personality tests, even with their limitations:

**Improve integration between job requirements and the behaviors being tested.** Even the best measuring tools are only effective if the organization or HR knows exactly what to measure. This means job analysis is a must. Employers should be aware of what a job entails as well as which traits a candidate must demonstrate from day one and which traits can be trained. These considerations need to be addressed before selecting a set of questions or tests.

**Administer only statistically validated tests that reflect modern workplaces and organizational practices.** HR should make sure that the tests being administered have been statistically validated by the vendor and that they ask up-to-date, job-relevant questions pertaining to the specific organizational setting. This means job analysis for the role matches closely with the validity studies for the job related to the measurement instrument.

**Use current computer-based testing methods to reduce “faking.”** Technological advances have given rise to sophisticated “item response” tests that prevent candidates from cheating without compromising test validity and level of difficulty. An example is Computerized Adaptive Test (CAT)-based personality measurements, which select subsequent questions based on how the examinee is performing on the test. This enables the test to acquire more-specific information using fewer questions.

**Make personality tests only part of the selection process.** HR should never decide on selection based on personality assessments alone. Personality assessments should be used only in conjunction with skills tests, behavioral interviews and other more-traditional assessments.

In conclusion, if personality tests are to be successful as selection tools, employers need to first identify important job characteristics to measure, identify traits relevant to those characteristics and, finally, place more emphasis on those traits when selecting candidates. They should also carefully select tests that support content validity and criterion validity. Test results should only be considered alongside results from other selection methods such as interviews, skills assessments and cognitive testing. WL

Faisal K. Chowdhury is a Fellow Member of the Bangladesh Society for Human Resource Management and an HR Consultant at IdeaPreachers.



# Defining Human Resource Management for Sri Lanka

By Ajantha S. Dharmasiri, Ph.D.

There is a growing awareness of and enthusiasm for people management in Sri Lankan organizations, but we have a long way to go in unleashing the true potential of our productive workforce.

Sri Lanka is in the midst of a post-conflict economic expansion and development drive. In this transformative environment, it is time to bring clarity to what human resource management (HRM) really means. There may be hundreds of ways to describe it—some oversimplistic and others highly scholastic—but perhaps the best way to define HRM is in the context of local needs.

A think tank created by Sri Lanka's Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) took up the challenge of developing a suitable definition of HRM—a significant move by the organization, which is the country's pioneering and premier HR institute, now moving toward Charter status.

Our approach was specific and straightforward. We looked at what was available in terms of HRM definitions, identified and listed key points, and then brainstormed their relevance to Sri Lanka. Going further, we also explored how to accommodate the socio-cultural and religio-political dimensions influencing management practices in our unique nation. Our aim was to find the best fit.

Based on our brainstorming and feedback from professionals and professors, the following definition emerged:

*HRM in Sri Lanka is a strategic and integrated approach in acquisition, development and engagement of talent, using relevant tools, with proper policies, practices and processes, in creating a conducive climate toward achieving organizational excellence and societal well-being.*

By “strategic,” we mean working toward achieving the overall goals and specific objectives of the organization—essentially aligning our efforts with broad organizational priorities. This part of the definition highlights the professional significance of HRM and the holistic role it should play.

“Talent” refers to the “three C’s” outlined by HR thought leader Dave Ulrich—namely competence, commitment and contribution. He expressed it as an equation: Talent = Competence × Commitment × Contribution. The multiplication signs symbolize the collaborative and combined nature of the three vital aspects. Competence essentially refers to knowledge (head), commitment refers to action (hands), and contribution is related to values (heart).

## THE DEFINITION:

**HRM in Sri Lanka is a strategic and integrated approach in acquisition, development and engagement of talent, using relevant tools, with proper policies, practices and processes, in creating a conducive climate toward achieving organizational excellence and societal well-being.**

What we do with talent occupies a significant segment of our definition. “Acquisition” refers to hiring (recruitment, selection and placement). “Engagement” relates to a range of aspects such as involvement, attachment and extra effort. There is also a reference to “relevant tools,” which involves incorporating testing methods, assessment techniques and other empirical approaches that are linked to organizational requirements.

We consciously included the term “conductive climate” in our HRM definition. By this we mean creating a supportive environment within the organization. HR has a critical role to play in fostering a workplace climate that can be consciously perceived by organizational



At the event to announce the IPM's definition of HRM for Sri Lanka, IPM President Samitha Perera lights the traditional oil lamp. Also pictured from left to right are Donglin Li, International Labour Organization country director for Sri Lanka and the Maldives; IPM Secretary Shanaka Fernando; Senior Ministers' Secretariat Mahinda Madihahewa; Minister (Senior) for Human Resources D.E.W. Gunasekera; IPM council member Ajantha Dharmasiri; and secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education S. J. Nawaratne.

members—something they can see, hear and feel. That is why we perceive a difference when we enter a hospital versus a police station or a restaurant. In summary, climate is what we see and feel when we enter an organization. Culture, on the other hand, is something much deeper—the bedrock of an organization.

The end product of all HRM endeavors has twin aspects, summarized as “organizational excellence” and “societal well-being.” Organizational excellence is the state of overall performance with continuous improvement. It includes financial results, customer satisfaction, process efficiency and people development—the four perspectives of a typical balanced scorecard.

The goal of achieving societal well-being acknowledges that HR professionals cannot function in isolation, disregarding social realities. This is more relevant to a developing country like ours, where issues such as poverty, unemployment and ethnic tensions cannot be ignored. This part of the definition is a key outcome of HRM in Sri Lanka. It highlights the need to support people outside the organization and protect the environment as well.

Defining HRM clearly is an important step toward delivering sustainable results. Now we need to put our definition into action, ensuring awareness, appreciation and application among Sri Lankan HR professionals. The journey has just begun. **WL**

Ajantha S. Dharmasiri, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer attached to the Postgraduate Institute of Management, Colombo, and a Council Member of the Institute of Personnel Management, Sri Lanka.

# Avoiding Appointment Disappointment

By Peter Wilson

One of HR's most important roles is to hire—and fire. Unfortunately, sometimes our appointments turn out to be very big *disappointments*. In my country, Australia, about 20 percent of external hires fail within two years after onboarding; the rate is much higher in other places.

So what happens in the hiring game, and where do the problems occur? The sequential process of making a hire can be quite complex. The most common weaknesses—traps and bad choices—generally occur at six different stages, as follows.

## External Recruitment

External recruiters can cause problems by raising excessive or incorrect expectations in candidates. For example, if a new employee has been led by a recruiter to believe that he or she has an extended period to settle in and is bulletproof to any changes in the job or the employer's condition, "appointment disappointment" can occur. Worse, Australian courts have ruled that commitments by recruiting agents can be binding on an employer.

## The Interview

The interview medium itself can be a source of trouble. Some candidates may be gifted "professional interviewees" but are nonperformers on the job. Broadening the interview process to a wider set of inputs and perspectives is wise. A proven technique is to utilize a broad-based panel of, say, three people with different perspectives on the job than the boss's. Also useful are 360-degree or "road testing" interviews, where the likely candidate walks around the office for a day, meeting individuals he or she would be working alongside. This can reveal whether candidates see themselves, and are perceived by others, as a good fit. It may seem painfully costly to have a top candidate withdraw at the last minute, but it is cheaper than the price of appointing someone who will rumble around the place for a year or so, achieving little but upsetting much, and then depart with a large termination package—leaving an expensive gap to refill.

## References

Faulty or casual reference checking is a major risk area. Reference check questions should relate specifically to the role, and employers should wait until all answers are received in writing for all candidates before any provisional job offer is made.

## Psychological Evaluation

The use of psychological testing in recruitment is still controversial among HR professionals, but I use it to supplement interviewing and reference checks wherever possible. Good tests, like the Occupational Personality Questionnaires or the California Psychological Inventory, are impossible for candidates to game, and if they try, the consistency score part of the test will drop like a stone. Then you know you are dealing with someone who is misrepresenting who they really are.

These tests also will show how a candidate relates to others, what gives them stress, how they are likely to react to it, and whether the candidate can see the big picture or prefers working with granular operational details. In other words, does this person have more or less of the traits that suit the job? Is he or she going to become an "emotional terrorist" in your midst?

One suggestion: Advise candidates early on that a psychological testing instrument is to be used. Expect negative reactions if it is revealed too late in the process.

## Employment Contracts

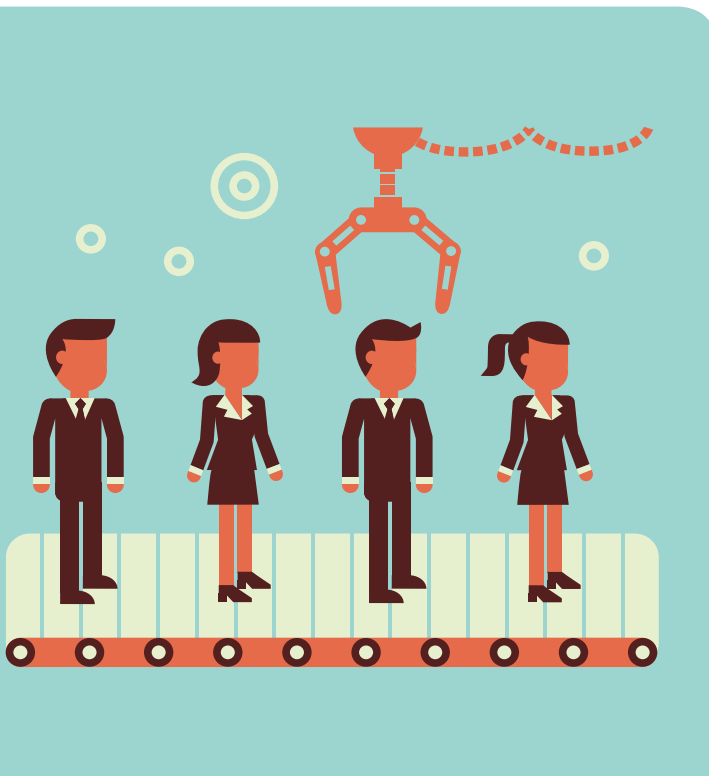
The writing and execution of employment contracts should not be delegated to a third party. HR should supervise the preparation of an employment agreement that meets current employment law standards and that reflects the nature of the role and the company's objectives. Contracts should cover all critical employment issues around service, behavior, performance, termination, leave and remuneration, as well as critical company policies and compliance requirements. Too many unfair-dismissal cases reveal that the employer failed to exercise an appropriate level of care and patience in this matter.

## Managing Potential Change

Another risk area involves handling potential changes to job responsibilities and/or location. Australian courts have ruled that employers have an obligation to consult with employees about significant changes to their roles, especially those that fall far outside the original agreement. Rapid, unilateral changes may even constitute a form of employer bullying, so HR must be careful in how contract clauses are both expressed and executed.

By being vigilant of hiring risks and preparing for the pitfalls, HR can get more-sustainable hiring results and free up time for doing more-productive things than repeated recruiting exercises. [WL](#)

Peter Wilson is the Chairman and National President of the Australian Human Resources Institute.



## Australia Anti-bullying recourse



Australian workers now have additional avenues to remedy workplace bullying. Although victims were previously able to lodge complaints under workplace health and safety laws, they can now apply to the government's Fair Work Commission for an official order to cease workplace bullying. If an employer does not take appropriate action, the worker can appeal to the federal court, which can order large fines against a corporation. Bullied workers may also lodge a workers' compensation claim for any alleged illness or injury stemming from workplace bullying.

## Hong Kong Hiring confidence



Almost half of Hong Kong's employers plan to recruit more staff in the second half of this year, representing the strongest hiring trend since late 2011. The poll reflects growing confidence among the city's bosses, said international recruitment agency Hudson, which conducted the survey. This is a sharp rise since the last survey was released in January showing that 38.3 percent of employers planned to hire staff. The findings come amid employer complaints of labor shortages and record-low unemployment levels.

## India Economic reform agenda



India's new government will pursue a broad economic reform agenda focused on job creation through public and private investment that also makes containing inflation its top priority, newly elected President Pranab Mukherjee has said. The government's response will include introducing a general sales tax, encouraging foreign investment and speeding up approvals for major business projects. The government also pledged to ramp up reforms to the state-run coal sector and defense industry to attract private investment, and to continue to promote labor-intensive manufacturing industries.

## Japan Rising pay; tighter harassment rules



The average rise in pay rates will top 2 percent this year for the first time in 15 years, according to a Japanese Trade Union Confederation report. The wage rise is attributed in part to employers' desire to retain valued workers.

Japan has also tightened prohibitions on sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. Amendments to the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, which came into force this month, prohibit employers from unreasonably requiring job applicants or employees to accept internal transfers involving relocation as a condition for employment. This tactic was found to be used to discriminate against or harass female workers, who are considered to have less flexibility in relocating than male workers.

## Malaysia Economy boost groundwork



Malaysia's government has launched comprehensive initiatives to boost 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) in its mission to become a developed nation by 2020. The NKEAs are expected to generate US\$466 billion in public and private investment activities over the next 10 years. Also, new labor legislation raised the retirement age from 55 to 60 and implemented a minimum wage. The Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management is introducing a comprehensive range of training programs to develop and enhance pools of skilled and competent HR professionals to meet these national targets.

## New Zealand Employment rise



In the first quarter of 2014, the New Zealand economy saw its largest rise in employment in almost a decade. According to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the country's economic recovery translated into employment growth of 3.7 percent. Labor force participation hit 69.3 percent—the highest level since data collection began in 1986. However, the unemployment rate (6 percent) was unchanged as job participation rates also rose to close the gap in employment demand.

## Singapore Worker protection



Singapore's Employment, Parental Leave and Other Measures Act, which took effect in April, makes significant changes to the Singapore Employment Act. It extends protection for workers while also recognizing employers' practical business concerns and need to remain competitive. The new law improves employment standards and benefits for employees, brings more flexibility to employers, and enhances enforcement and compliance with employment standards.

## Thailand New HR standards



The Personnel Management Association of Thailand is going forward with developing a set of national HR professional standards and qualifications in partnership with the Thailand Professional Qualification Institute, a government agency that directly reports to the Office of the Prime Minister. The institute is responsible for the support and development of professional and occupational standards in Thailand to nurture the country's global competitiveness. The new standards and qualifications are expected to be completed by June 2015, positioning Thailand to join the ASEAN Economic Community.

Sources: *Global Employment Law*, HR in Asia, CNBC, *Japan Times*, Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management, Xinhua News Agency, SHRM, Personnel Management Association of Thailand.

## Register for the 15th WFPMA World Congress Today



The World Federation of People Management Associations invites you to Santiago, Chile, on October 15-17 to explore the theme "It's All about People." Internationally renowned speakers, business leaders and practitioners from around the world will discuss facets of the essential global management trend of putting the person at the center of everything we do.

Visit [www.lapersona.cl](http://www.lapersona.cl) for more information, and register at [www.lapersona.cl/ingles/index.html](http://www.lapersona.cl/ingles/index.html).



# WorldLink Calendar

**August 18-21, 2014**

Associação Brasileira de Recursos Humanos (ABRH-Nacional) 40th Annual HR Congress

**Transamerica Expo Center, São Paulo, Brazil**

Website: [www.conarh.com.br](http://www.conarh.com.br)

**August 19-21, 2014**

Australian Human Resources Institute National Convention and Exhibition **Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre**

E-mail: [events@ahri.com.au](mailto:events@ahri.com.au)

Website: [www.ahri.com.au/conferences-and-networking/event-type-overview/ahri-national-convention-201](http://www.ahri.com.au/conferences-and-networking/event-type-overview/ahri-national-convention-201)

**September 10-11, 2014**

2014 AMEDIRH H.R. International Congress **World Trade Center, Mexico City**

Website: [www.amedirh.com.mx](http://www.amedirh.com.mx)

**September 11-13, 2014**

National Institute of Personnel Management (NIPM), India **33rd Annual National HR Conference**

**Kolkata, India**

E-mail: [nipm@cal2.vsnl.net.in](mailto:nipm@cal2.vsnl.net.in)

Website: [www.nipm.in](http://www.nipm.in)

**October 15-17, 2014**

WFPMA 15th World Human Resource Management Congress

**Centro de Eventos Casa Piedra, Santiago, Chile**

Website: [www.lapersona.cl](http://www.lapersona.cl)

**October 22, 2014**

47th Portuguese Association of People Management (APG) National Conference

**Belem Cultural Centre, Lisbon**

E-mail: [global@apg.pt](mailto:global@apg.pt)

Website: [www.apg.pt](http://www.apg.pt)

Phone: +351 21 358 09 12

**November 9-12, 2014**

Institute of People Management (IPM), South Africa

Annual Convention 2014

**Sun City, North West Province, South Africa**

Tel: 011 716 7504/03

**October 19-21, 2016**

WFPMA 16th World Human Resource Management Congress

**Istanbul, Turkey**

## World Federation of People Management Associations (WFPMA)

**WFPMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2012 – 2014**

**President** Pieter Haen, The Netherlands

**Immediate Past President** Horacio E. Quirós, Argentina

**Secretary General/Treasurer** Jorge Jauregui, Mexico

**Members AHRC:** Hicham Zouanat, Tisetso Tsukudu

**APFHRM:** Ernesto G. Espinosa, Peter Wilson

**EAPM:** Izy Behar, Filippo Abramo

**FIDAGH:** Fernando Ariceta, Aida Josefina Puello

**NAHRMA:** Henry G. (Hank) Jackson, William (Bill) Greenhalgh

**WFPMA 2014 Chief World Congress Officer** Miguel C.

Ropert

### MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF THE WORLD FEDERATION

#### AHRC (28)

AFRICAN HUMAN RESOURCES CONFEDERATION

Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

**President: Hicham Zouanat, Morocco**

#### APFHRM (15)

ASIA PACIFIC FEDERATION OF HRM

Australia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand

**President: Ernesto G. Espinosa, Philippines**

#### EAPM (28)

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Macedonia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom

**President: Izy Behar, France**

#### FIDAGH (15)

INTERAMERICAN FEDERATION OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Perú, Uruguay, Venezuela

**President: Jeannette Karamañites, Panama**

#### NAHRMA (3)

NORTH AMERICAN HRM ASSOCIATION

Canada, Mexico, United States

**President: Jorge Jauregui, Mexico**

#### ©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 Jorge Jauregui at [jorgeandres.jauregui@gmail.com](mailto:jorgeandres.jauregui@gmail.com) or the WFPMA Secretariat at [WFPMA.Secretariat@shrm.org](mailto:WFPMA.Secretariat@shrm.org)

#### WORLDLINK

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

Martha J. Frase

Editor, *WorldLink* **E-mail:** [Martha@frasecommunications.com](mailto:Martha@frasecommunications.com)

#### NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *WorldLink* will be published in October and will feature the Interamerican Federation of People Management Associations (FIDAGH) and HR news from Latin America.

© 2014. Material may be reprinted with credit to *WorldLink*, WFPMA.

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