



# PEOPLE CHALLENGES

The Cyprus Human Resources Management Association's 7th Annual Conference took place on May 28th, 2009 at the Cyprus Hilton in Nicosia. With Mr. George Ashikalis, CyHRMA Treasurer at the time, as Conference Chairperson, the theme of the conference was 'People Challenges in Turbulent Times', in line with the climate of global economic uncertainty. This year's Annual HRM Conference was once again sponsored by Deloitte (Mega Sponsor) and supported mainly by the Employers Federation and the Cyprus Technological University as well as many more organizations who helped promote the event with their financial sponsorships and support.

The main objective of the conference was to present practical themes which are in line with the current trends in organizations and to share specialized knowledge of innovative ideas and recommendations in order for participants to be able to implement them at their workplace to better manage the consequences of today's economic crisis. Well organized with both English and Greek translators at standby, the conference was of world class caliber offering a variety of topics. The international as well as local presenters were successful in delivering their messages to the 130 odd participants who attended the conference.

Opening speeches at the conference were given by Mrs. Sotiroulla Charalambous, Minister of Labor and Social Insurance, who showed her support by congratulating the CyHRMA for organizing this important and useful event, Professor Elpida Keravnou-Papaeliou, President of the Governing Board at the Cyprus University of Technology, Mr. Michalis Antoniou, Assistant Director General of the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB) and finally by Mr. Costas Papakyriacou, Chairman of the Board

of the Cyprus Human Resources Management Association.

The Keynote address was delivered by Mr. Mark Schofield, Partner at Pricewaterhouse Coopers in the UK who talked about Leadership in Challenging Times. Mr. Schofield described the turbulent times that the world is living in and the unprecedented challenges that organizations have to face as a result. Using personal examples, he emphasized the need for high quality leadership, why leadership skills are so important and the different ways in which organizations can develop those skills in their people.

Following the keynote address, Mr. Howard McMinn, Partner at Deloitte UK was invited to talk about Responding to the economic Downturn which he said seems to be impacting all companies, all sectors in all geographies. He challenged the audience to look beyond the news headlines to examples of companies adapting to and succeeding in this harsh environment and hence shared what some of these companies are doing, what strategies and approaches are being taken and what lessons can be learnt from these case studies.





# IN TURBULENT TIMES

Managing the psychological contract in turbulent times was the topic which by Dr. Alf Crossman, Director of International Programmes at the University of Surrey School of Management in the UK. Dr. Crossman described the emotional attachment that exists between employees and their organizations which is frequently overlooked when organizations are faced with difficult times. He went on explaining how too often financial expediency takes priority over humane treatment of employees who may be surplus to requirements. Dr. Crossman emphasized the origins and nature of the emotional attachment, otherwise known as the 'psychological contract', and how organizations can preserve their integrity by 'doing the right thing' while at the same time protecting their finances.

Ms Debbie Palmer, Organization Development and Effectiveness Manager of British American Tobacco, UK presented the topic of Change Management. In her presentation Ms. Palmer shared the story of BAT's most recent change activities that reflected their turbulent and challenging business climate and how BAT used its own Global Change Framework to support and enhance such projects. Ms. Palmer gave real life examples and experiences of these challenges and offered many tools and practical examples that can be easily implemented to help any organization with their change process.

Following Ms Palmer's presentation, Mr. Kris Amiralis, Managing Director of Hay Group in Greece, was invited to share a topic on Rewards and Benefits and the challenges in a downturn. Mr. Amiralis shared survey results that show that many organizations are reacting to the economic challenges by freezing pay or adapting their reward

practices. In his presentation he shared the latest trends in reward management.

At the end of the International speakers, Mr. Ashkalis led a question and answer session followed by lunch. The afternoon was kicked off with a presentation by the winner of the 2008 HR Excellence Award, Mr. Yiannakis Hadjidemetriou of the Cyprus Municipality Association who presented his award-winning project followed by Ms. Eleni Vassiliou of PWC whose essay won the Cyprus representation to the 1st European HR Excellence Competition this year and shared highlights of her essay titled "The Lisbon Agenda for Growth and Employment, the threats to the European Social Model and the current Financial Crisis: The role of HRM Professionals" with the audience.

The afternoon continued with the Master Session coordinated by Mr. Philippos Soseilos, Member of the Board, Cyprus Human Resource Management Association. Mr. Soseilos invited all the International presenters to the panel to discuss the world economy and the resulting crisis which is currently overwhelming businesses. Joining the presenters were Dr. Eleni Stavrou-Costea, Assistant Professor in the University of Cyprus, Mr. Kyriakos Kokkinos, Managing Director of IBM Cyprus, Dr. Marios Mavrides, Associate Professor at the European University Cyprus and Mr. Michalis Antoniou, Assistant Director General of the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB). The heated topic brought about questions from the participants and took on an interactive approach.

A cocktail party and a networking activity with prizes followed the conference ending the extremely successful event on a lovely note by the pool side of the Hilton Hotel.

