



Keeping up to date with the latest news on Human Resource issues and developments as well as Association news.

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## Interesting Quotes

**“The first step toward change is awareness.  
The second step is acceptance.”**

Nathaniel Braden

## 1. Welcome Note from the Editor

As the heat of the Summer falls upon us, Cyprus is genuinely feeling the heat of the current Economic Crisis. Unemployment, after a brief about-turn in April, continues its upward trend as detailed in HR in Black & White. The tourism and construction industries in particular are feeling the impact. One can only imagine just how difficult times would have been without the measures taken and still in progress by the government of Cyprus and their counterparts all over the world. There is a lot for us all to think about as we head off to recharge our batteries on more economical holidays. Now is an excellent time for new creative ideas to be generated and brought to the Board-room come September, as HR professionals help their organizations rebuild with a more solid foundation of the right corporate culture, managing the conflicts that the present changes may generate and improving the performance management strategies.

The CyHRMA will be working hard through the summer to offer you as much information and support, through a Summer Special Edition of 'Anthropos kai Ergasia' (People and Work) as well as our regular Autumn issue, bespoke Training courses, research results from Cyprus and Europe, exchange visits with other European countries, networking activities and much, much more. Review the Forthcoming events calendar below and make sure you Bookmark the CyHRMA website – [www.cyhrma.org](http://www.cyhrma.org) - to ensure you are always up to date.

Have a Great Summer!

Eugenia Papadopoulou

## 2. HR in black & white

### UNEMPLOYMENT

May 2009 showed an increase in the unemployment rate of 63.8% compared to last year's unemployment rate for the month of May. In numbers, 15,158 unemployed were registered in comparison to 9,253 in May '08. There was also a 44% increase in demand for Unemployment Benefits. Thus, the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance faces challenges in covering the demand.

### GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Charilaos Stavrakis, Minister of Finance, declared that the current government will decrease the number of people working for government. The government has decided to increase productivity and to decrease the number of employees working in government offices by the end of President Demetris Christofias' tenure. In the last thirteen years 14,000 individuals have been hired for the governmental sector, reaching the number of 65,000 employees working in the public sector. According to the results of the Statistical Service, the employment within the government shows a rapid increase compared to the private sector. Even though, there is an increase of the annual employment rate of 1.4% over the last few years, vs an increase in public sector employment of 2.3%.

### RESEARCH FOR WORK-RELATED STRESS

As CYTA wanted to improve the working environment within its organization the company decided to conduct an employee survey. The survey found that in order to reduce work-related stress and to improve the productivity of the employees, organizations should offer quality in the working environment, better communication and interrelations between the management and the employees as well as communication between the employees themselves. Below are some of the important conclusions drawn from the research:

- Employees who have been supported by their managers and their colleagues showed 4,2 and 2,9 times respectively greater satisfaction.
- Employees with greater responsibilities in their roles were found to face more health issues compared to those employees who had clear guidelines and responsibilities.
- Employees facing challenges and difficulties interrelating with their Superiors and colleagues presented 4,8 times more health issues.

### COMMON ENGAGEMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT

The European Commission, has proposed

- To simplify criteria for support from the European Social Fund (ESF), re-programming spending and stepping up advance payments from early 2009, so that Member States have earlier access to up to €1.8 billion to reinforce active labour market policies, refocus support on the most vulnerable, step up action to boost skills and where necessary opt for full Community financing of projects during this period.

- Make changes to the European Global Adjustment Fund (EGF), which was devised to help redundant workers get back to work. If accepted, the proposals would enable the EGF to intervene more quickly to provide cash for training and job placement schemes. The annual budget available under the EGF amounts to up to €500 million.

- To set up a new microfinance facility providing microcredit to small businesses and to people who have lost their jobs and want to start their own small businesses.

**Contributed by  
Maria Christoforou**

### 3. HR On Screen

#### The Proposal ©Touchstone Pictures 2009



When high-powered book editor Margaret faces deportation to her native Canada, the quick-thinking exec declares that she's actually engaged to her unsuspecting put-upon assistant Andrew, who she's tormented for years. He agrees to participate in the charade, but with a few conditions of his own. The unlikely couple heads to Alaska to meet his quirky family and the always-in-control city girl finds herself in one comedic fish-out-of-water situation after another. With an impromptu wedding in the works and an immigration official on their tails, Margaret and Andrew reluctantly vow to stick to the plan despite the precarious consequences. It all falls apart when Margaret realizes that there is more to life than just professional success at all costs. She finally starts feeling emotions beyond greed and ambition.

#### HR Message:

Margaret's character reflects the high-powered business execs who have created the present crisis. Where were HR professionals when this culture of success at any cost, regardless of the impact, was being created?

It has already been seen that HR practices must change to ensure that leaders give the right example to employees – that success is only important as long as it benefits not only shareholders and leaders' own well-lined pockets, but all stakeholders: ie. Employees, families, the wider community. Not only Compensation and Reward packages need to be completely revised, but the overall culture of Developed and Developing countries needs to change starting from Primary/Secondary education through to workplace practices

Contributed by:  
Eugenia Papadopoulou

### 5. Bright idea

#### How to reply to interview clichés

##### What's your greatest weakness?

It's an interview cliché, but it still gets asked. The key is to come up with something that is truthful, yet doesn't impact your ability to do the job. More important than what you identify as a weakness is the part about how you've overcome it. For example: A computer programmer might say, "Speaking in front of very large crowds really scares me, but I've been working on becoming a better public speaker." It's a good one because public speaking is something most people are afraid of, and it is also not likely to be essential to a job as a programmer.

##### So tell me about yourself?

This is not an invitation to recite your biography. It is an opportunity to draw out the parts of your story that best sell you for the position. For example, if you're fluent in three languages and have worked overseas, then those facts would be good ones to highlight in the interview for the international banking job.

##### Talk about a time you failed and how you recovered.

Since we all mess up from time to time, the important thing is that you choose something where you can demonstrate what you've learned from the experience. A classic example here would be a time that you took on too much responsibility or agreed to do something on an unreasonable timetable, according to career coach and resume writer, Chandlee Bryan. Your recovery could be as simple as the fact that you now feel comfortable raising concerns about what you can deliver on a given schedule.

### 4. Book Review

#### Known brands, unknown stories (Number 1), Issue 3, 2009 Ioannis N. Protopoulos

#### Γνωστά ονόματα, Άγνωστες Ιστορίες

ISBN: 978-960-351-711-5  
Εκδόσεις Σταμούλη Α.Ε. - I  
Πρωτοπαπαδάκης, Αθήνα 2009

It is very interesting how well-known brands and organizations have become so famous and popular around the world during the past century, but their stories are unknown to the people. The book describes how these brand names came up, how their names were developed and how they have managed to succeed throughout the years.

Impressive stories of about 70 brand names becoming so successful like HOOVER, HONDA, MALBORO, MONT BLANC, the ice cream with the exotic taste HAAGEN DANS, the development of home delivery for TUPPERWARE and many others are being described.

One successful example of new ideas is the one introduced by IKEA to provide food for the customers within its stores, as the owner thought that with an empty stomach the customer could not have the motivation to purchase products.

The conclusion is that even in periods of crisis, the owners and managers need to think as creatively as possible and as close to the customer needs, so as to attract more customers to survive and promote their products. Successful managers will manage to get out of the crisis with smart thinking and a bit of luck.



Contributed by:  
Dora Siekkeri

## 6. HR Forthcoming Events

### **CYPRUS**

*(all the below events are now being scheduled for Sept. to Dec 2009. More details will be announced as soon as possible. Please refer to the CyHRMA website for more information)*

#### **CyHRMA Training Seminars**

- **Performance Management – 2-day Seminar**  
Presented by: Susan Coggan, CIPD
- **Conflict Management**  
Presented by: Nicos Paschali
- **Creating a Culture of Innovation**  
Presented by: Dimis Michaelides

#### **CRANET 2008-2009 Survey Results Presentation**

**Leonardo da Vinci Exchange programmes** (coordinated by the International Relations Committee)

- Visit of a delegation from Cyprus to Romania
- Hosting of a delegation from Estonia to Cyprus

## 7. Makes you think!

### **8. EDITORIAL TEAM**

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### **INTERNATIONAL**

#### **15<sup>th</sup> IIRA World Congress**

24-28 August 2009  
Sydney Australia  
<http://www.iceaustralia.com/IIRA2009/>

#### **CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition**

17-19 November 2009,  
Manchester, UK  
[www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

#### **38<sup>th</sup> Annual IFTDO Conference & Trade Show 2009**

19-23 October 2009  
Toronto, Canada  
[www.cstd.ca/iftdo2009](http://www.cstd.ca/iftdo2009)

#### **13<sup>th</sup> World Human Resources Congress (WFPMA)**

27-29 September 2010  
Montreal, Canada  
<http://www.hr2010.com/>



*'What, me? Unemployed?  
Well, I didn't see that coming'*