



# WorldLink

Linking people management professionals around the globe

## Seize the Opportunity to Be a Strategic Positioner

By Ernesto G. Espinosa

At an Asia-Pacific HR conference I attended recently, a group of CEOs from large multinational corporations were asked what they believed the role of HR to be in their respective organizations. One gave what I thought was the best answer: “I view HR’s role as being a strategic business partner.”

He noted that HR adds value by addressing organizational concerns that line managers cannot. This generated a round of applause from the audience.

In contrast, another CEO commented, “HR people should not make the mistake of thinking that they are the ones who should decide. They are only there to support the CEO.” This response received a chorus of murmurs—and even boos.

This is the current state of the HR profession. Some companies regard HR as a key player in the organization’s success, while others still do not appreciate its value as a strategic partner.

I recently asked an audience of HR professionals in Sri Lanka how many CHROs they knew of who had risen to the level of CEO. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that, in that country and its neighbor India, there were many. But in my country, the Philippines, I know of only a handful. A more common career path for senior HR professionals is a regional or headquarters HR post or a senior VP job in a large corporation. Many of my former

colleagues have become successful executive headhunters. I have heard company leaders cite a lack of business knowledge and financial acumen as the reason more HR leaders do not rise to the top spot.

Regardless, the role of HR has metamorphosed dramatically from its humble beginnings as “personnel records keeper” and “company picnic planner.” The discipline has evolved and expanded to embrace all realms of human capital management. At the same time, HR skills and challenges have become exponentially more complex.

### Are You a Strategic Positioner?

Dave Ulrich, Ph.D., in his 2012 book *HR from the Outside Looking In*, describes a fairly new role for practitioners: that of Strategic Positioner. It joins the more traditional competencies of Business Knowledge and HR Delivery with newer ones like Credible Analyst, Capability Builder, Technology Proponent, HR Innovator and Integrator, and Change Champion.



The WFPMA Board of Directors met in Mexico City Sept. 13 at the headquarters of Asociación Mexicana en Dirección de Recursos Humanos (Mexican Association of Human Resources Management). **Pictured from left:** Miguel C. Ropert, Peter Wilson, Hicham Zouanat, Horacio E. Quirós, Aida Puello, Fernando Ariceta, Filippo Abramo, Ernesto G. Espinosa, Jorge Jauregui, Robert Garcia, Pieter Haen and Bill Greenhalgh.

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for effectively managing costs and expenses. Moreover, HR should plan and implement programs that take into account the company's customers—not just its employees.

Ulrich is very precise in his assertion that, for HR, “The value should be determined by the receiver, not the giver.” HR should come up with cutting-edge programs that have a big impact on the organization. It should initiate programs that significantly influence the company's profitability, increase productivity, improve operations and save money.

HR is often perceived as a cost center. This impression can be changed if HR will take the lead role in judiciously managing the costs and expenses of the organization while at the same time looking for creative ways to contribute to the organization's competitiveness.

When benchmarking their operations against those of other companies, HR should not make the mistake of simply following the lead of other successful companies. It must go further, understanding and embracing the lessons learned and then striving to outperform these companies by improving on their best practices.

HR should also build capabilities within the company to secure the future, such as leadership succession and crisis management. In these ways, HR can enhance its role as strategic business partner.

Any lack of business knowledge on HR's part can be rectified with adequate support from the top. At the same time, HR professionals should take responsibility for building their own knowledge and skills in finance and accounting, for example, by attending seminars on basic finance and accounting principles and by studying business texts.

It is an exciting time to be working in HR. Business complexities, shifts in employee demographics—like the retirement of Baby Boomers—and rapid changes in the global business environment all point to the critical role HR plays today and will play in the coming years. As HR professionals, we should seize this rare opportunity and start performing our role as strategic business partners. Only then can HR reflect its true worth in this new age of human capital. **WL**

Ernesto G. Espinosa is president of the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management.

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When I am asked by HR colleagues how they can be more strategic, I have a simple answer: You must align HR goals with business goals. I have observed over the years that many HR practitioners tend to report on activity-based instead of outcome/deliverable-based HR initiatives and interventions. This approach fails to demonstrate to CEOs and line managers the direct link between HR's work and the organization's overall business strategy and goals.

Consider the example of learning and development. HR sometimes has a penchant for choosing training that is “nice to have” but does not really help fill the organization's competency gaps. Too often, a company leader will hear about a certain topic or tool, and HR immediately signs up with a training provider without scrutinizing whether the need for that training actually exists. HR can be more strategic by zeroing in on the required competencies of the employees and the existing gaps.

#### Strategy in Action

By working to diagnose an organization's needs, HR turns strategies into actions. In a company that I worked with, we conducted an employee survey to determine how workers perceived various work dimensions such as senior management, team management, communication and performance management. By identifying the areas needing improvement, HR was able to analyze and propose ways and means for the company to progress. Then, over the next two years, we instituted several HR interventions. When employees were surveyed again, the company found it had significantly improved business and HR systems and processes in almost all areas.

HR should focus on a balanced scorecard by paying attention not only to employees' expectations but also to the financial and customer issues that shape the organization's goals. HR should be able to demonstrate—on equal terms with its finance and marketing counterparts—the ability to address the financial side of the business. For instance, HR should be able to show an aptitude

## Save the Date for the 2014 WFPMA World HR Congress

Join us in **Santiago, Chile, October 15-17, 2014**, at the Centro de Eventos Casa Piedra for the WFPMA 15th World Human Resource Management Congress. Organized by the Circulo Ejecutivo de Recursos Humanos Chile, this world-class event is designed to address key organizational and people management issues through the sharing of new insights and solutions from internationally renowned speakers, business leaders and practitioners from around the world. The World Congress will provide the delegates with a platform for global exchange, learning and sharing among business leaders and HR professionals.

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# ABCs of ICT for the HR Professional

By Aruna Dayanatha

In the 21st century, the driving force in business is ICT—information and communications technology—and the Internet in particular. ICT is rapidly reaching into every facet of life, particularly in the way people relate and communicate, but, in general, the HR sector has not kept pace with these trends.

HR professionals cannot ignore the influence of ICT—it permeates company culture and processes. Let me illustrate with a few examples provided by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management in the UK:

- An employer terminates an employee for criticizing the bonus granted by the company on the employee's Facebook page.
- HR learns that potential employees will not join a company if the employer has banned social media access.
- A hiring firm insists that job candidates grant access to their personal social media pages as part of the hiring process.
- Employees perceive strict company policies on social media access as a lack of trust by the employer, according to one survey.

**S**ocial media policies that enforce restrictions on employee behavior are unlikely to be immediately popular. Employers must help employees understand the benefit to themselves and the company.

One major evolution, in business as well as society, has been the rise of “virtual relationships.” When I was doing my MBA research, I referenced two articles from the same author. Now that author is a “friend” on my Facebook page, and I have the opportunity to read his blog posts as soon as he publishes them. Having such a relationship with a Harvard Business School professor would never have been a reality for me without ICT.

Social media can bring working teams closer as well. But rather than using public platforms, companies may prefer to set up a more secure Facebook-type platform for employees only, within the virtual walls of the company. Such software is available through commercial vendors and through FOSS (free and open-source software) outlets. Having a social media hub for employees provides them with an opportunity for sharing ideas and identifying troubling “hot spots.” It also allows leaders to take the employees' pulse.

However, every company must have established policies regarding employee behavior and social media use in the workplace. Some firms may opt to have strict controls, while others prefer to offer greater freedom for employees while staying alert for problems as well as the unforeseen advantages of such openness.

## 'E-Cruitment' and E-Learning

You may be surprised to know that the number of Sri Lankans who use Facebook exceeds the total circulation of the Sinhalese newspaper *Lankadeepa* and is double that of the English-language paper the *Observer*. This represents a huge potential for recruitment advertising and communication for HR professionals. LinkedIn-based recruitment is on the rise, and, in time, paper-based CVs may become obsolete.

Learning and development is another growth area for ICT. Classrooms are going virtual. With an online “whiteboard,” you can show PowerPoint presentations, play videos, allow public and one-on-one chats, enable students to communicate with each other and the instructor, and so on. Participants can join from anywhere in the world, even from home. E-learning systems are available free through FOSS.

## Forecast: More Clouds

The latest trend in ICT is cloud computing—storing electronic files on the Internet so they are accessible to employees from almost anywhere. Cloud computing software, available through FOSS, enables individuals to use one Internet site to store files, schedules and calendars; publish blogs, discussions and chats; and have full access to their e-mail. Files can also be shared securely with others.

HR's role is to develop policies for utilizing cloud computing, or to adapt policies prepared by ICT professionals, so that the interests of both the firm and the employees are protected. At the same time, HR must have full understanding of the facilities, capabilities and technicalities to prevent security breaches and ensure that procedures are in place to conduct investigations, prosecutions and judgments for disciplinary inquiries. And given the nonstop nature of the new age of computing, HR must be actively engaged 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## Fostering Organizational Citizenship

HR's use of Facebook, LinkedIn, Blogger and Twitter-like tools will be an advantage in networking with employees in the virtual world. But without the capability to understand the social media platforms or probe into issues in a systematic manner, HR risks compromising the rights of the firm and endangering employees' sense of fairness.

When things go wrong, it has been my experience that most cases are due to employee ignorance rather than malice. It takes an IT-savvy HR manager to either prevent an innocent employee from becoming a victim of a flawed ICT system with insufficient security measures or find a not-so-innocent culprit and prove the charges. Managing disciplinary inquiries in the ICT environment requires a special set of skills.

Controls and measures are especially critical in firms where ICT utilization is very high, requiring strong policies related to password protection, data security, controlled access to servers, e-mail content and nondisclosure agreements. In breaches—and, more important, in employee inductions and orientations—the HR professional must be fluent in the technological aspects of these issues and environments. Communicating such policies to employees also requires some finesse. As noted earlier, the existence of strict corporate social media policies can be perceived by employees as indicating a lack of trust in workers. Policies that enforce restrictions on employee behavior thus are unlikely to be immediately popular. Employers must help employees understand the benefit to themselves and the company.

ABCs of ICT continued on [page 4](#)



For example, do employees understand the threats and dangers of industrial espionage? Information can be stolen from e-mail, Skype chats or similar communications. This is a major risk for businesses. In my opinion, such situations call for a higher level of commitment by employees. HR's role is to foster attitudes and behaviors of "organizational citizenship"—what is good for the company is good for the employee.

### ICT and the Law

As ICT matures, almost all facets of the employee life cycle—recruitment, onboarding, transfers, promotions and terminations—are likely to shift to electronic platforms. These are unfamiliar waters for HR professionals who have been comfortable with maintaining paper-based records. Some hesitation is understandable considering the immaturity of ICT usage in many countries' legal and judicial systems that still rely on paper-based evidence in the courts.

But times are changing. Sri Lanka's Electronic Transactions Act states, "If any law requires any document to be available in written form, such requirement is deemed to be satisfied if same is available in electronic media." Recent acceptance of a photocopy of a text message as valid evidence sets a precedent to accept different types of "e-evidence" in a court of law. In some countries, the judicial system has gone a step further, initiating electronic case submissions and enabling judicial proceedings to be accessed over the Internet. For more information about ICT legislation around the world, visit the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament's website ([www.ictparliament.org/legislationlibrary](http://www.ictparliament.org/legislationlibrary)).

With the power of the Internet, intranets and e-mail communications, information-sharing is shifting to passive "self-service" through such platforms as wikis and blogs. When HR communicates key information to employees, it is now incumbent on HR to establish that those communications have reached the target. In a legal scenario, the burden of proof lies with HR. Does HR have the skill set to do this? Clearly, it is crucial that HR systems comply with the basic rules of maintaining electronic evidence. In Sri Lanka, the Electronic Transactions Act offers direction, and relevant authoritative bodies have been established to check the compliance of evidence in courts of law.

Business leaders today are required to be more agile than ever. Employees and clients demand information to be available at the press of a button. HR managers are expected to turn around information and analysis in a heartbeat. With so much information stored in databases, HR departments will have an advantage if they can conduct simple searches and analyses on their own, without relying on the IT department.

HR should strive to achieve "ICT independence," which means HR professionals must constantly seek to enhance their ICT skills. Honing these skills and knowledge must be a prominent, ongoing part of the 21st-century HR agenda. **WL**

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## Hong Kong Weighs Standard Working Hours

Contributed by the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management

In recent years, HR professionals in Hong Kong have faced more and greater employee relations issues. Following the enactment of minimum wage legislation in 2011, working hours policy has become an increasingly hot topic in Hong Kong, considering its associated complications and uncertainties. A new law may significantly change work patterns across different industries.

It is believed that long working hours, unpaid overtime work and concern about a lack of work/life balance are the three major factors behind a call for standard working hours. Among developed economies, Hong Kong tops the list in both average weekly working hours and percentage of employees working long hours. Statistics from the Hong Kong government indicate that the country's median number of working hours is 45, with some sectors—such as retail, accommodation and food services—recording 50 to 51 hours per week.

**T**he monitoring of overtime work, if not handled properly, may arouse suspicion and hard feelings among employees, even leading to labor disputes.

Working long hours means that employees have less time for personal or family life. Employees who need to take care of children or the elderly face the greatest concerns. Furthermore, overtime work typically is not paid. Office workers frequently work from home after office hours and during holidays, making work/life balance even more challenging.

### What Are HR's Concerns?

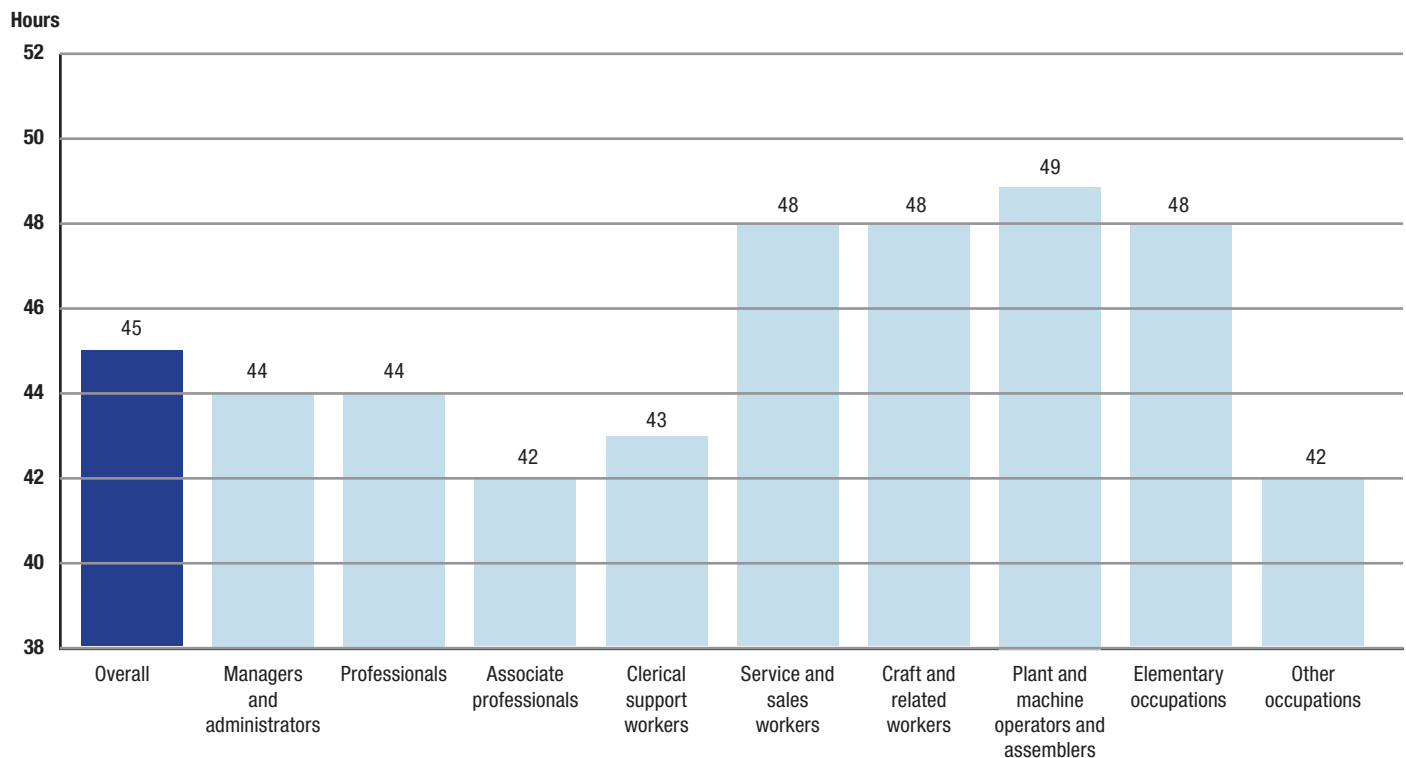
Hong Kong is facing a labor shortage, especially among some labor-intensive sectors such as retail, catering and elder care. If

standard working hours were in place, the ability to deploy sufficient manpower to maintain normal operations would be the top concern of HR professionals. Corporations may have to rearrange work schedules and/or hire more part-timers to ensure smooth business operations. This may be especially true for sectors with high and low seasons.

Standard Working Hours continued on page 5



## Median Hours of Work of Employed Persons by Occupation in Hong Kong in Q1 2013



Source: Quarterly Report on General Household Survey – First Quarter 2013, Census and Statistic Department

### Standard Working Hours continued from page 4

Another concern is cost. To comply with the stipulations, companies may have to offer overtime pay or add part-time staff, increasing operational costs (i.e., wages and relevant benefits). Higher administrative costs would stem from tracking overtime hours and calculating overtime pay.

Addressing the cost issue will be a significant challenge for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular. Costs likely would be passed on to consumers, creating a cycle of cost inflation. In Hong Kong, some 98 percent of employers are SMEs, so their sustainability is important.

Other core issues revolve around employee relations and employee wellness. The monitoring of overtime work, if not handled properly, may arouse suspicion and hard feelings among employees, even leading to labor disputes. When overtime pay is stipulated, it may be harder for employees to refuse supervisors' requests for overtime work. This will defeat one of the purposes of introducing standard working hours—to ensure work/life balance.

The introduction of a minimum wage in Hong Kong has already resulted in workers migrating from labor-intensive sectors to those with better working conditions—from cleaning services to building security services, for example. If some job categories are exempted from the protection of standard working hours, they may be regarded as less favorable by job seekers. This may cause further staff shortages in less-favorable sectors, intensifying the current manpower mismatch issue.

### A Need for Social Dialogue


The Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (HKIHRM) believes that flexibility is the key to avoiding the adverse impact of standard working hours on stakeholders. Indeed, setting standard working hours for some types of workers may prove impractical. For instance, it is very challenging to tie creative professionals to a fixed 9-to-5 work schedule when the reality is that creative ideas emerge at unpredictable times. Investment bankers and wealth management

professionals have to work around-the-clock to monitor their investment portfolios in different parts of the world. Police officers and firefighters should not stop protecting citizens and saving lives because they have worked the mandated number of hours for the day.

At present, public opinion on standard working hours is divided, with employer organizations opposing it and labor unions pressing for legislation. HR professionals may find themselves caught in the middle of the discussion. On the one hand, they foresee employee relations issues resulting from the implementation of standard working hours. On the other hand, they are responsible for proposing employee wellness measures.

The HKIHRM conducted a survey on setting standard working hours in 2011 and found that almost equal numbers of respondents were for and against it. But now two years later, following some structural changes in the local economy—such as the introduction of a minimum wage, which has changed the labor market landscape to a certain extent—we may expect different views from various stakeholders.

Because the notion of a working hours policy is new to Hong Kong, we believe that the government should take the lead in starting a social dialogue, inviting input from employers and employees as well as other stakeholders such as HR professionals, academics and nongovernmental organizations. The government should act as the facilitator to ensure a balanced approach that will benefit the Hong Kong community as a whole.

Debating such a significant public policy will require examining the experiences of other countries and regions, and exploring any scenarios that are unique to the city. Any new arrangements in the working hours regime will write a new page in the history of Hong Kong and may introduce significant changes to the economy as a whole. In the coming few years, we may expect more heated debate on standard working hours. 



# The View from Australia: Labor Market Mindbenders

By Peter Wilson

Globalization and talent management are the continuing top challenges for the HR profession, not only for Australia and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region but also across the world. Today, global labor markets and the general economic environment are exhibiting some new features that are becoming permanent and will condition the professional responses we are able to undertake in today's workplaces.



The Manpower Group recently concluded that there are 3 billion people over age 15 who are working or interested in finding full-time employment, but there are only 1.2 billion jobs available. The world's population continues to grow, but the skill set of the population doesn't always align with the jobs that are available.

Further, 250 million workers are employed in foreign countries, and that's expected to reach half a billion by 2020. This will be a huge change for world labor markets to manage.

In Europe, nearly 25 million people are unemployed, but there are only 4 million job vacancies. In the United States, 8 million jobs are posted on the Web every month, but 13 million people are still looking for jobs. Clearly there is a critical skill and/or labor mobility mismatch in the world's two largest economically developed regions.

Europe is forecast to see 50 million workers retire by 2020, but there are still bureaucratic barriers to skilled migration in the much-needed trades of engineering, finance and health care. Added to this, fertility rates are declining in both regions as well as in China: The population has stopped growing in the United States and Europe, and will do so in China by 2020.

Meanwhile, employment opportunities are not reaching into the sectors of society that need them the most. Poor people are becoming permanently marginalized, denied access to education, decent homes and the resources they need to start their own businesses.

These structural labor market and demographic challenges, together with the economic environment, are putting major constraints on how work is getting done. Although our IT workplace capabilities are now very powerful, HR professionals are beginning to understand that they have to work daily with their technical-minded colleagues on cybersecurity—preventing breaches that can shut businesses down for days—and on the use of social media for both good and ill.

Looking out more broadly, we are seeing large emerging economies like China becoming more aggressive in securing the natural resources necessary to feed their economic growth potential. That could mean buying up companies in Australia or bringing on a diplomatic scuffle with Japan, Vietnam or the Philippines over ownership of marine resources in the seawaters that separate them. In the past, it was access to technology that threatened emerging economic growth rates. Today, it is access to scarce natural resources, because so much

technology is now widely available and relatively affordable.

Add to this the ever-present threat of some new terrorist group, and their facilitated access to weapons of mass destruction, and we have a globalized world that's a much different place than what ticked over into the new millennium 13 years ago.

From our perspective in Australia, with so many of our citizens working abroad and so many expatriates coming to work here, the HR profession faces a huge challenge to its workforce planning and integration skills. Some of our profession's more positive responses to these challenges are as follows:

**Spending more time on workforce planning.** Just what skills do we need and when, where and how?

**Making talent management part of the employment life cycle.** Talent management no longer consists of just celebrating people headed for the executive suite (if that still happens anywhere). For example, at Infosys in India, turnover rates in the first two years of a person's employment were so high that leaders created career development initiatives for each worker on a daily basis. That's right, a daily basis—because there were recruiters waiting in the elevator lobby with job offers for these company's employees as they made their way home.

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**Increasing productivity,** especially through flexible working arrangements that distinguish times when people need to be together and other times when they can work independently, often from home.

**Managing employee longevity and skill retention** by pre-empting final retirement with a mix of some continuing work and mentoring, and access to a phased set of recreational pursuits as well.

**Outsmarting the smart machines**—in other words, keeping up with the rapid pace of communication changes and their potential, mastering social media application potential and risk mitigation, and staying on top of the systemic IT risks that cause workplace meltdowns.

**Understanding the convergence of the workplace with a compassionate society.** Members of Generation Y in particular want to work with a responsible employer that is also active in social change. "Connecting the dots" to understand this can be a major source of positive engagement and productivity.

**Keeping abreast of the changing big picture,** as it will influence how HR professionals spot and connect their own professional dots in this extraordinary new world of work. **WL**

Peter Wilson, AM, is national president of the Australian Human Resources Institute.





# Organizations of the Future: Technology-Driven, But People-Centered

By Grace C. Sorongon

In our increasingly wired and digital world, much of our future work will focus on collaborative processes among people. There will be new definitions of work and new paradigms for the world of work in general. The most competitive businesses of the future will be multicultural and diverse, but, most important, they will be able to restore people to the heart of the organization.

Given the changing and competitive landscape of organizational development (OD), what is its future? As our workforce adapts to the waves of change, how will OD evolve to guide the effectiveness of the organizations of the future?

OD professionals are confronted with technological advancements that are changing the landscape of work in revolutionary ways. Marketplaces are changing, and workforces are adapting. The greatest opportunities organizations can seize today are interactive, and OD is positioned to play a unique role in maximizing the behavioral dimensions of technology.

We're moving into the workplace of empowered learners, giving employees access to tools and putting them in communities of trust. The interesting challenge for organizations is going to be how we can build on that, rather than be threatened by this revolutionary environment.

But how do we deal with the impacts of gadgets and tools like tablet computers, smartphones, blogs and Facebook? How do we use these gadgets to help people overcome hurdles or close performance gaps, and how do we wish to shape the culture that grows up around this technology?

It seems that OD professionals are going to have to play with these gadgets, get their hands dirty, understand the technology and become change advocates—even strategic coaches.

We're moving into the workplace of empowered learners, giving employees access to tools and putting them in communities of trust. The interesting challenge for organizations is going to be how we can build on that, rather than be threatened by this revolutionary environment.

We need a new definition of OD—a definition that integrates and accommodates new methods to enhance the effectiveness of our organizations. It may not be a definition at all, but rather a set of guiding principles around which the field of OD self-organizes for now.

Change is all around us—technological, cultural, political, societal. It is often unseen, like the air we breathe. Our organizations are slowly evolving, changing into new forms. We see the necessity of distributed groups and the opportunity to leverage the immense cultural and geographical diversity in the world. Today and in the future, OD can play a leading role in guiding these virtual organizations toward awareness and mastery of their virtual environment.

An organization must adapt at its core to respond to changing market conditions with a virtual, diverse and continuously learning workforce; creative technologies; and aligned business processes.

OD can lead this change, championing the values of inclusion, integration and innovation.

In 10 years, can you envision a thriving, competitive, sustainable organization that does not fully leverage the strengths of its virtual workforce? Shouldn't we begin preparing for this today? [WL](#)

Grace C. Sorongon is president of the People Management Association of the Philippines.





## Australia Tougher bullying laws



New workplace bullying laws go into effect Jan. 1, 2014, entitling workers to apply to the Fair Work Commission, Australia's industrial tribunal, with allegations of mistreatment. Currently, no Australian legislation specifically prohibits workplace bullying, so victims have had to rely on laws related to occupational health and safety, workers' compensation and anti-discrimination, as well as the general protection provisions of the existing Fair Work Act. The government has estimated that workplace bullying costs the Australian economy more than \$5 billion every year. The new law extends to contractors, subcontractors, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, students gaining work experience and volunteers. The Fair Work Commission predicts as many as 3,500 applications per year may be received under the new rules.

## Bangladesh Funding the future workforce



The Asian Development Bank will lend Bangladesh \$500 million to help finance a major overhaul of secondary education to meet the exploding demand for skilled and technology-trained workers. The funds will support the country's \$17 billion, 10-year secondary education reform plan, supplying 145,000 new teachers and 10,000 new schools with new equipment, laboratories, classrooms and teacher training, and scaling up learning based in information and communications technology.

## Indonesia Coming management drought



As Indonesia closes in on a \$1 trillion economy, rapid economic growth and industrialization have opened up a potential chasm of talent at the management level, according to research from the Boston Consulting Group. It projects that by 2020, Indonesia will lack between 40 percent and 60 percent of the middle management staff required to fill existing positions. Fifty-five percent of the country's talent needs will be in higher-skilled administrative or managerial jobs compared with 36 percent today. Experts agree that while there are no easy solutions, two issues must be addressed: boosting the quality of education in Indonesia and enhancing the accessibility of jobs to people living across the country's 33 provinces.

## Japan Death by overwork



The government does not have to disclose the names of companies whose employees become sick or die due to prolonged working hours, according to Japan's Supreme Court. The court backed the decision of a lower court that rejected the demands of a civil society group representing employee families. The number of deaths in Japan that are classified as "karoshi," or death by overwork, is estimated at around 200 annually, according to Japan's labor ministry.

## Malaysia More-demanding jobs



Nine out of 10 Malaysian workers say they expect their jobs to become more challenging over the next five years, according to a new Randstad survey. Employees cited the increasing influence of digital technologies in the workplace and more employers seeking out multi-skilled workers. The survey also found that 95 percent of the Malaysian workers were willing to develop their skills to adapt to these changes.

## New Zealand Technology pros and cons



Use of smartphones and other technologies has led to employees spending more hours working and increasingly taking work home, according to findings of the Great New Zealand Employment Survey. While some respondents saw this as a positive, allowing more freedom and flexibility, others felt there was a psychological price to pay. One-quarter said this trend is harmful to their personal lives, citing reduced family time and criticism from partners.

## Philippines Gender gap



The number of highly educated women in the Philippine workforce has grown over two decades, but the ratio of working women to men is still only 55 percent, according to a new report, *Women Power and Economic Growth in Asia*. The Philippines ranks behind Thailand and China in Asia-Pacific gender equality. The report cited a range of factors behind the gap, including sociocultural norms, traditional beliefs and government policies.

## Saudi Arabia Tweeting for better pay



Despite their country's oil wealth, many Saudis say their salaries are too low to support life in a high-cost country. Activists have recently turned to social networking to raise awareness. The Twitter hashtag #thesalaryisnotenough generated more than 17 million tweets in its first two weeks. The campaigners have called on King Abdullah to increase civil servant salaries, which now average between \$1,051 and \$6,599 per month. According to the World Bank, private-sector employees in Saudi Arabia are the lowest paid in the Gulf states—averaging \$1,706 per month.

## Singapore Curbs on foreign recruitment



New rules will force many companies operating in the city-state to consider Singaporeans for skilled job vacancies before turning to candidates from abroad. Starting in August 2014, firms with more than 25 employees must advertise vacancies for professional or managerial jobs paying less than \$9,700 a month on a new government jobs bank for at least 14 days. Only after that period can the company apply for an employment pass to bring in a foreign national.

## Taiwan Shrinking workforce



Beginning in 2015, Taiwan's workforce will begin to decline, a result of extremely low birthrates over decades. A report from the Council for Economic Planning and Development finds that four out of every 10 people will be age 65 or older by the year 2060. Taiwan has also recorded lower labor participation rates than most other major Asian economies for two demographics: men age 24 and younger and men age 45 and older. The figures indicate that Taiwanese workers are entering the job market late and retiring early, which will likely worsen the burden of an aging population on a dwindling workforce.

Sources: Mondaq, Al-Arabiya, *Jakarta Globe*, *Japan Daily Press*, Asia News Network, *New Zealand Herald*, Rappler.com, The National, Reuters, *The China Post*.

# THE WORLDLINK HR CALENDAR

**November 1, 2013**

Annual All-Russian HR Forum

**Moscow**

E-mail: nsk@kadrovik.ru

Website: www.kadrovik.ru

**November 3-6, 2013**

Institute of People Management 57th Annual Convention

**Sun City, Northwest Province, South Africa**

Tel: +27-11-716-7503

Website: www.ipm.co.za/content/2013\_ipm\_annual\_convention.htm

**November 5, 2013**

26th Bi-Annual EAPM Congress

**Manchester Central, Manchester, UK**

Tel: +44-(0)20-8612-6248

Website: www.eapm.org/eapm-congress-2013

**November 6-7, 2013**

CIPD Annual Conference & Exhibition

**Manchester Central, Manchester, UK**

Tel: +44-(0)20-8612-6248

E-mail: training.hotline@cipd.co.uk

Website: www.cipd.co.uk/events/annual

**November 6-7, 2013**

PERYON 21st People Management Congress

**Lutfi Kirdar Congress &**

**Exhibition Center, Istanbul, Turkey**

E-mail: peryon@peryon.org.tr

Website: www.peryonkongre.com/kongre2013/index.html

**October 15-17, 2014**

WFPMA World HR Congress

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

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Website: www.wfpma.com/upcoming-2014-world-congress

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#### WORLDLINK

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

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