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What are the New and Emerging Areas of HR and Talent Management Practices to Enhance the Productivity and the Business Outcome?

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Abstract

**Question**: What are the new and emerging areas of HR and talent management practices that we need to start paying attention to in order to enhance the productivity and the business outcome?

**Keywords**
human resources, talent management, enhance productivity, business outcome

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**Comments**

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Executive Summary

Question: What are the new and emerging areas of HR and talent management practices that we need to start paying attention to in order to enhance the productivity and the business outcome?

New HR Trends and Implications:

• In 2012, there were huge volume of discussion on “Analytics”, “Big Data”, “Cloud” and “Social Media” going on in the business articles. Although HR has not been a pioneer or an early adopter in applying new technology trends to its practices, dramatic changes in HR management are expected with the advent of the new technology. When it comes to the business performance, more HR experts pay attention to the new HR trends: Big Data, Cloud and Social Media for HR.

• In the efforts to identify the future HR roles, HR experts should emphasize the significance of the traditional roles such as staffing, development and retention. However, they also clearly state that those HR decisions must be supported by scientific data, analytics and technology in order to measure and predict the business outcome. More importantly, given the global, virtual, flexible workplace environment, HR should be a technology proponent who is able to use technology in enhancing employee engagement to increase productivity.

“Big Data” & “Unstructured Data” for New HR Analytics

• Definition & Background: During the last decade, there were many studies conducted to identify the alignment of human capital practices with business outcome. Now, it seems evident that HR impact has high correlation with the success of the business bottom-line; however, it is also true that HR analytics have had difficulties in providing meaningful data for decision making because of focusing on a wrong metrics, lack of analytical skills and poor data management. On the other hand, marketing professionals, nowadays, enjoy the benefit of Big Data and unstructured data to better understand the customers and predict their consumer behaviors. By definition, “Big Data” refers to datasets whose size is beyond the ability of typical database software tools to capture, store, manage, and analyze. Unstructured data is heterogeneous and variable in nature and comes in many formats, including text, document, image, video and more. Also, unstructured data is growing faster than structured data; as a new, relatively untapped source of insight, unstructured data analytics can reveal important interrelationships that were previously impossible to determine.

• Best Practices: In 2007, when Google received 100,000 resumes per month, the company was not sure if it was successful in identifying the best candidates by screening the right candidates based on GPA score. So, in order to find the best predictor of high performers, Google developed a comprehensive database that collects employee’s attitudes, behaviors, personality and other demographical data and compared them with job performance. Then the company collected the same information from applicants. This analytical approach has helped Google not only to increase its workforce to meet the talent demands but also to predict the likelihood that applicants will succeed at the company.

Another illustration of using unstructured data to predict and enhance team productivity was introduced in the HBR article in Apr., 2012. An MIT professor developed a wearable sensor badge to monitor a team’s communication pattern during the meetings to monitor its relationship with the teamwork performance and financial results. Until recently, mere observation simply couldn’t capture every nuance human behavior. However, since the improvement of affordable sensor technology and analytics capability, companies now can predict team’s performance and financial results by merely analyzing data collected through the sensor badge in
an experimental situation.9

- **Challenge & Preconditions**: A survey shows that only 6% of HR professionals think they are highly skilled. Experts claim that HR professionals do not need to be computer scientists but should maintain curiosity on data. The importance of hiring competent data scientists and building integrated database were also integral success factors.10

**Social Media for higher engagement and productivity**

- **Definition & Background**: Social media are information-based tools and technologies used to share information and facilitate communications with internal and external audiences. Social media also include applications known as “Web 2.0,” a term encompassing blogs, texting, wikis, and etc.11 The exploding growth of social media has not only changed the way we communicate, but these applications present great opportunities for businesses.11 Today, social tools have infiltrated nearly every software platform in HR—enabling nearly every HR practice and process to be infused with social functionality.12 Companies eager to improve productivity by connecting employees to each other and to corporate information sometimes come on too strong.13

- **Effectiveness**: According to a study by Nucleus Research, Chatter(an Internal social networking brand) clients saw a 12.5% rise in productivity and reported that people could find information 52% faster than before. It also claims that users have 27% fewer meetings, a 30% reduction in email use and 39% more collaborations between staff.6 Collaborative technologies seem to be valuable in the workplace because of their effectiveness in improving understanding and teamwork, building relationships and developing lateral communication.11 There are many benefits to using social media tools in a customer service environment. Collaboration and knowledge sharing can benefit employees as they explore customer solutions in real time.15

- **Engagement & Communication**: The best way to get that engagement is through self-direction. The where, how, when and with whom to do things is the autonomy that everyone seeks to have.16 The use of social media can provide employees and leaders in an organization with opportunity to be heard, answered, and be engaged.18 Some companies have made an Enterprise Social Network that could connect company employees across different geographies and time zones, making it a common platform where exchange of ideas/information can take place seamlessly.17

- **Learning**: Blogs are one of the most widely used tools for social networking and can be excellent informal discussion channels. Learning blogs can help employees to engage in conversations with teammates and expand understanding around difficult processes, or provide employees with informal techniques for handling customer issues. Similar to the learning blog, but with even more guidance/focus, discussion starters can be of great benefit. They are a widely used method for collaboration in online learning environments, but they can work just as well for classroom and on-the-job training.15 As such, companies need to embrace social media to enhance learning.16

- **Best Practices**: Molson Coors has been promoting itself internally/externally through blogs, tweets, social networks, videos and fundraisers through platforms and sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr and Yammer19 The CEO of DreamWorks Animation shared strategies for engaging employees. He started a blog where he shares and he responds to all comments. The dialogue builds transparency and an authentic level of trust.25 The BBC has used Yammer to discuss its move to Salford and the 20% budget cuts with employees for two-way conversation.14 Consultancy Deloitte uses business networking tool Yammer to solve problems and pass on information that might be outside individuals' immediate communities.14 IBM originally created social media platform IBM Connections for its own staff before marketing it to other companies.14

- **Challenge & Preconditions**: How to measure the ROI of social media initiatives remains a challenging and hotly debated.21 To maximize the effect of social media, we should let employees to present themselves, put their best self out there, feel safe on their comment, and keep coming back on and make the system simple.22

**Bibliography**


