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## Career advice, insights & tips

### 2010 - a glimpse into HR's role in the decade ahead - HR not out of the woods yet 25/01/2010

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Is 2010 the start of the decade that HR became 'hardly relevant', or the decade that HR re-invented itself? Richard Tyrie reveals...



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### HR shortcomings in 2009

It's true that 2009 was one of the more difficult years for business leaders. Significant strategic changes, budget cuts, recruitment freezes, extensive layoffs and major morale issues required extraordinary effort - especially from HR practitioners.

More pointedly, 2009 highlighted real shortcomings in organisations' HR processes. A lack of useable workforce data, coupled with out-dated technology (and supplier agreements that charge a minimum £1,000 for minor changes) have meant HRDs are flying blind when trying to implement talent strategies. Assuming a talent strategy existed - and if it did there are pretty good odds on it changing during that year. They've not got the basic tools for the insight and agility that's needed in these interesting times.

The pundits are pointing to the end of the recession - technically at least - but HR practitioners are by no means out of the woods yet. Far from it. There's a new world of work emerging. As well as the usual mantra of doing more with less (and of course doing it faster); it's now a more complex, connected transparent world. So there's nowhere to hide when you get it wrong.

Yes, \*when\* you get it wrong, not if. It's inevitable there'll be some mistakes along the way. We're all learning new ways of living and working. Who knew what social media was two years ago, let alone that you might need a social media recruitment strategy or a policy on Facebook use at work.

### What's your business strategy? Key HR trends

Welcome to the new normal.

So as we enter a new decade, here are a few key trends we believe will become increasingly important to business leaders, and by definition, you.

Companies will need a talent vision to navigate the future.

The gulf between the "the business" and the HR department still exists; arguably its widening. Yet business leaders have been saying for years, 'people are our most important asset...' So what's new this decade? Simple. Business leaders mean it now. And there'll be a new cohort of GenY "assets" asking them to prove it.

For years, many sectors have witnessed unprecedented economic growth. Boom time. And hey, if it isn't broke... But now it is broken. Really broken.

But what exactly is HR's role in creating that vision? How do HR help inform and shape corporate strategy? That's really adding value. And let's face it, is much more satisfying than just responding as a mere 'delivery agents'?

Here are a handful of themes HR can (and should!) own. Home territory. The knitting as it were...

## Workforce demographics

Profound demographic shifts around the world mean the global workforce is ageing with over 30% of the existing skills base set to retire this decade. This, together with the dip in the birth rate, will manifest as a serious shortage of middle managers in the next few years. War for Talent? You bet. But it's not going to be fought at a local level. This time it's global.

## Globalisation: BRIC

The rampant growth of competitive knowledge-based economies like Brazil, Russia, China and India coupled with near saturation of connectivity will pose profound Challenges for businesses this decade. And it's already happening. Bangalore: just the domain of cheap, low quality call centre solutions, right? Not anymore. High quality service provision is the name of the game nowadays, with major brands becoming increasingly confident to transfer entire functions.

Only last March, Boeing announced the opening of a research and development centre in Bangalore that will coordinate the work of more than 1,500 technologists, including 100 advanced technology researchers, from across India. And those of you that have called Apple customer services recently will have already witnessed what a country that turns out millions of MBA qualified graduates can achieve. Will this have an impact on UK PLC and its HR community? You'd better believe it.

To further compound the issues, we've got an education system that is teaching the wrong skills and a nation that doesn't believe in life-long learning. In the public sector, over 71% of the current workforce hasn't acquired a new qualification in the last decade. Contrast this with other economies (India, China for example) that see life-long learning as a cornerstone of their future.

Luckily, according to Gordon Brown, our 'Creative Industries' are our greatest asset – so business leaders, you'll be fine, as long as you're in the entertainment industry that is.

## Managing a multi-generation workforce

Since the dawn of the industrial age, managing the workforce has been reasonably simple. The balance of power has been firmly stacked towards the employer, and you guys called the shots. Employees don't like it? No big deal - plenty more fish in the sea. The one-size fits all approach prevailed.

Things are different now.

As the number of baby boomers start to decline and Generation Y and the up-and-coming Generation Z reach critical mass, things are going to get interesting.

According to our digital friends, the balance of power is no longer in favour of the employer. Job for life? Not interested. The employer-employee contract is going to be different for the digital generation and they already have their own (very clear) requirements and they're not going to budge on them any time soon.

Generation Y will expect trust and flexibility and will want to work on their own terms. After all, work is a thing you do – not a place you go, right? After all, you can achieve the same ends irrespective of when and where you do it. We're moving towards a trust-based culture where flexi-time is the norm.

## What will this mean for HR?

Companies will need a talent vision to navigate the future.

Not a bland statement about MIA (not missing in action, but Most Important Assets) – but something uniquely personal to the business. Machinery and technology is common to many organisations within a sector: the differentiator is the accessing the people potential.

Think, talk, discuss, debate, with colleagues. This isn't wrap your head in a towel and have "big thoughts" time. It's a collaborative era. What's \*your\* shared talent vision. How will your business inspire, lead and manage your MIAs to differentiate you from the competition. And that aside, what's the vision for creating a working environment that you enjoy. That you'd want your children (if you have them) to join and be part of.

## HR of the future - talent leaders

Imagine an HR of the future, ten years from now. HR with a clear talent vision, HR as the true talent leaders who actively embrace diversity and globalization: who are inclusive and flexible. A team that works collaboratively with other departments and provides recruitment and talent management advice to line managers. A team that understands the values of their organisation and is reputation-savvy. They are approachable and knowledgeable, they are inclusive and forward-thinking. And above all, they have at last, a seat at the boardroom table. So what's it to be? The world of work is changing. You can either embrace and build an HR of the future or you can resist and go under. It's your choice.

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### Richard Tyrie, co-founder, Jobs Go Public

Jobs Go Public is a leading provider of talent management software and services to the public and not for profit sector, with over 1000 employers having used our services since our inception in 1999.

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