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Equity

Innovation

Business Acumen

Strategy

IPMA-HR HR20/20 TASK FORCE

HR20/20 Report
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IPMA-HR
INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION for HUMAN RESOURCES

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EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Early in 2016, IPMA-HR formed a committee of HR Executives from the Local, State and Federal sectors to research trends that would impact the challenges and opportunities facing HR professionals in public sector organizations. The results of that research and the ensuing dialogue was presented as the HR2020 report. As we move into calendar year 2020 and beyond, a review and refresh of the material was initiated. In completing that task, the Taskforce believed that the principles outlined in the report were enduring and needed little work to remain relevant. The report was refreshed, including the addition of a new lens, and retitled "*The HR20/20 Report.*" This report, and the electronic resources that accompany it, remain a high level and practical guide for the public sector HR professional. The issues and strategies presented here are both a call to action and a roadmap to successfully navigate the road ahead.

It has been clear for some time that the Human Resources function can no longer afford to be purely transactional. Yet many public sector HR departments lack the support, exposure and resources to make the transition from transactional to transformational. Most are understaffed, overworked and coping with antiquated human capital management strategies and tools that are unsustainable in the long run. HR must find the path forward to remain relevant.

The HR20/20 framework contains the critical elements required to help HR professionals bring the future into focus. The framework does not specifically address the technical expertise of the HR profession; rather, the framework is intended to sit on the foundation of that body of knowledge. The framework creates a roadmap of how to build on technical knowledge to create a transformative roadmap and achieve organizational success.

The framework starts with four critical lenses: Business Acumen, Innovation, Strategic Orientation, and Equity. HR initiatives designed to move services from transactional to transformational need to be viewed through these lenses to be effective. In addition to the four lenses, the taskforce identified five areas of focus: Leadership, Culture, Talent, Communication and Technology. HR professionals who strive to put the best possible programs and services in place in these five key areas have the opportunity to fundamentally shift their organizations to a higher level of performance and to strategically position HR as a driver of change and innovation.

> **HR professionals who strive to put the best possible programs and services in place in these five key areas have the opportunity to fundamentally shift their organizations to a higher level of performance and to strategically position HR as a driver of change and innovation.**
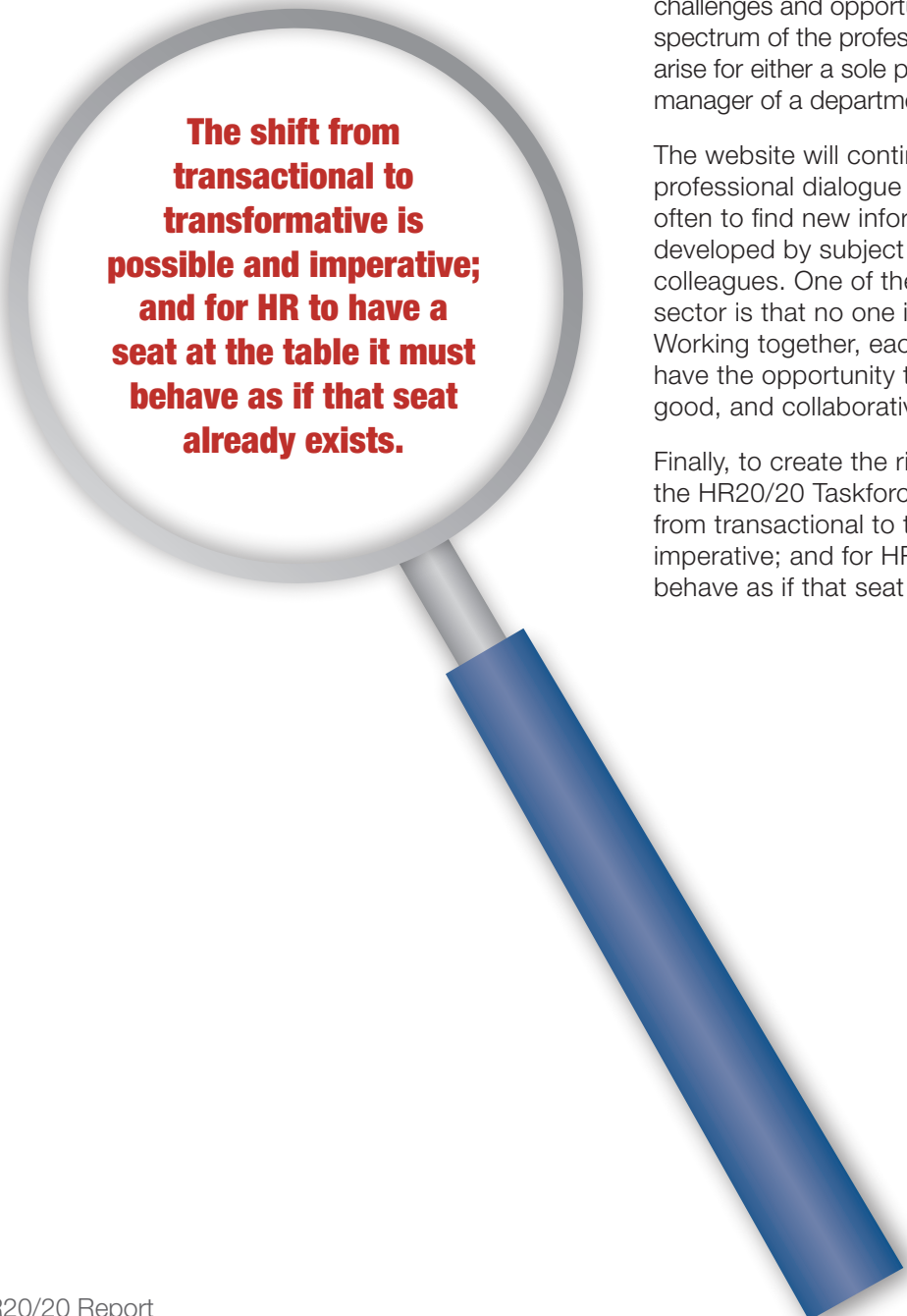
The desired outcome of government is to protect and enhance the quality of life of its citizens. The services provided to respective constituents, at every level of government, are largely driven by the people employed by public sector organizations. Employees who are skilled at what they do, who are committed to the public good, and who act in an innovative, ethical and responsible manner create efficient, effective and responsible government. Because the business of HR revolves around human capital resource management, HR professionals have the opportunity to help fundamentally influence and shape organizational outcomes by identifying future trends and assisting in navigating successfully through them.

The HR profession exists in a rapidly evolving world; volatile economies, environmental impacts, rapid changes in technology, and the changing needs of the workforce require HR professionals to think differently about how to shape the organizations that deliver services to citizens. The unprecedented speed of change is not likely to slow, but to increase, and it is critical that future-focused strategies are developed now in order to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

In preparing this report, the task force reviewed research from a variety of thought leaders. The reports that were the most informative are included in the resource section. In addition, the taskforce engaged in a visioning process to identify current and future states, surveyed public sector HR leadership, and synthesized the data collected over the last several years in a variety of HR related benchmarking surveys. The distillation of this information led to the creation of the HR20/20 framework.

The four lenses and five areas of focus work together to create a holistic framework for planning, communicating and implementing HR services that will meet the strategic and tactical needs of the organization. The framework is scalable and relevant to all sizes of HR organizations.

The following sections of the HR20/20 Taskforce report are presented in a similar manner. Lenses are defined, followed by areas of consideration referred to as Pathways to Success. The information under this heading is intended to help HR professionals navigate from their current state to where they need to be in the future to be most successful. The Areas of Focus are presented in a similar manner but also include an exploration of current and future states as a way of exploring the environmental influences on public sector organizations.

The shift from transactional to transformative is possible and imperative; and for HR to have a seat at the table it must behave as if that seat already exists.

Additional Supporting Information for the HR Professional

This report is intended to provide practical strategies as well as suggested tools and resources. For the sake of brevity in this report, IPMA-HR has created an HR20/20 webpage that can be accessed at http://ipma-hr.org/HR2020. This website contains practical, complementary information, tools and resources to help HR professionals navigate the road ahead. The information is intended to be pertinent for HR professionals at all levels of government and in all sizes of organizations. It is recognized that while there are many challenges and opportunities that exist across the entire spectrum of the profession, there are unique issues that arise for either a sole practitioner of an HR shop of one or a manager of a department that employs hundreds.

The website will continue to develop over time as the professional dialogue on this topic evolves. Check back often to find new information and useful resources developed by subject matter experts - public sector HR colleagues. One of the benefits of working in the public sector is that no one is in competition with another. Working together, each lifts the other up. Therefore, we have the opportunity to collectively serve the greater good, and collaboratively help one another succeed.

Finally, to create the right mindset to move forward, the HR20/20 Taskforce offers the following: The shift from transactional to transformative is possible and imperative; and for HR to have a seat at the table it must behave as if that seat already exists.

LENSES

When viewing through a lens, there is an expectation of either magnification or clarity of the item being viewed. With that clarity, the opportunity to shift perspective and develop a roadmap to success presents itself. That is the premise behind the HR20/20 lenses:

- Business Acumen

- Innovation

- Strategic Orientation

- Equity.

As HR professionals look beyond the year 2020, the ability to view the organization clearly and to develop all HR strategies through these lenses is critical to the success of public sector HR. The failure to apply these lenses will result in underperforming organizations and HR being viewed as merely transactional contributors. The ability to use these lenses consistently and effectively is what makes the difference between being viewed as an influencer and strategic partner versus a transactional, supporting player.

Business Acumen:

Business Acumen is the ability to see the organization with an executive-level mentality. This can be further defined as seeing the big picture and understanding how the component parts work together to achieve successful outcomes. HR professionals must understand the operational aspects of service delivery, relevant resource constraints, and key objectives and initiatives of each client served by the HR staff. This understanding requires learning the language of public sector business, including gaining an understanding of metrics and performance measures, finances, technology, public process, and political realities, both internally and externally. Business acumen also includes the ability to understand and clearly articulate in business terms how HR programs impact key objectives of the organization, including the ability to frame a business case, state the value proposition and demonstrate return on investment of key HR initiatives. Finally, business acumen includes the ability to effectively translate a message to all levels of the organization, from line employee to executive.

When viewing through a lens, there is an expectation of either magnification or clarity of the item being viewed.

Shifting Perspective:

- HR professionals can begin developing business acumen with a critical self-assessment of knowledge gaps. Closing a knowledge gap is not difficult, but it does require the willingness to pay attention, ask questions, and check assumptions. There is no need to become a subject matter expert in all areas, but there is a need to achieve a literate level of proficiency that says you understand the business challenges and can offer valuable solutions. The best guides are generally the executives and managers of the organizations served by your HR team.

- Learn the business of the agency and understand where to add value. What is the core mission of the organization? Who are the customers? What are the biggest workforce challenges? What issues need addressing that HR could help to move forward? The best way to answer these questions is to be a student of the organization.

- Read publications intended for HR executives and government officials. There are often insightful articles that will help you think differently about how to use HR services to achieve better outcomes. Read publications that are also intended for the managers and executives of the business lines supported. This reading provides a deeper insight into the challenges and opportunities they face and the ability to understand leading practices in their fields.

- Learn about the bigger issues confronting the organization by attending meetings of elected or appointed officials. If you work at the local level, attending Council or Assembly meetings can be informative. If you work at the state level, pay attention to what is happening in the legislature and how that might influence changes in business operations. If you work at the federal level, pay attention to the priorities at the executive level to seek to understand how those priorities are likely to influence policy direction.

- Make valuable networking connections across jurisdictions. Make it a point to connect with peers at the federal, state and local level, including the private sector. These relationships will prove valuable for you in the short and long run to increase your business knowledge and understanding.

- Learn the finances of the agency inside and out. Be conversant in budget strategies and fiscal projections. Learn what technology initiatives are underway and what outcomes are expected from implementing that technology.

- Learn to talk about HR initiatives in terms of business outcomes and financial strategies. What is the business proposition behind employee engagement? How do wellness strategies impact benefit costs? What is the long term impact of cutting learning and development on business outcomes?

- Volunteer for assignments outside of HR. This demonstrates a genuine desire to understand the business from a holistic approach. Participating in activities with the workforce increases business acumen, provides greater strategic understanding and offers more opportunities for HR to lead innovative initiatives because of being inside the organization.

Innovation:

The pace of change requires that organizations engage in continuous improvement to remain productive and relevant. HR leaders cannot be derailed by hierarchy, bureaucracy and the complexity of government. HR is well positioned to be innovation leaders; HR professionals have a unique and comprehensive view of the organization and as such can assist in finding efficiencies and other opportunities to streamline operations and deliver services more effectively. HR can help drive a culture of innovation through championing process improvement initiatives and by helping leadership engage in effective change management strategies. In the public sector, HR must lead the way by adapting policies and practices to keep pace with the evolving needs of the organization.

Shifting Perspective:

- Learn about process improvement methodologies such as LEAN, and look for opportunities to implement in HR. Use the language of innovation in discussions with HR staff and leaders in the organization.

- Read about leading practices in the industry and critically assess how those practices might serve the organization.

- Don't buy into the "flavor of the month" club. Innovation is key, change for change sake is destructive. Change initiatives should have clear, business related objectives and measurable outcomes.

- Train HR staff to understand why policies and practices are in place, not just what they are and how things are done. Reward reasoned risk taking even if it means something fails, since at least something new was tried.

- Help senior leaders understand the need for change strategies and help them through the process of effective change management, including communication strategies. Become a subject matter expert in this area.

- If change is needed and leadership is not on board, try a pilot project. A small success in one area can often translate into the adoption of the new program or strategy on a larger scale.

- Provide innovative solutions. Be willing to experiment, take risks, and sometimes fail. Fully accept the idea that these experiences will provide an opportunity for learning and growth. Adopt the attitude of "only new mistakes".

Strategic Orientation:

Strategic Orientation is the ability to broadly assess the environment, develop an understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the organization, and craft a pathway from the current state to the future state. It involves understanding how strategies implemented today can ripple through the organization over time to drive future outcomes. It includes the ability to stay on task in the face of changing circumstances, while remaining flexible when course change is needed due to unforeseen circumstances. Applied to the HR discipline, it includes the use of performance measures and metrics that assess the strategic impact of HR initiatives. It requires a shift from transactional process to consultative services.

> **[Strategic Orientation] requires a shift from transactional process to consultative services.**

Shifting Perspective:

■ The practice of strategic orientation demands intellectual space. In Covey terms, it is a Q2 activity, meaning it is important but does not demand urgent attention. Savvy HR professionals will carve out time on a regular basis for reflection. What is working well? What could be working better? Where does the organization need to be in three years? In five? What are the obstacles that are impacting the ability to move forward? How can those obstacles best be addressed? What are the human capital needs associated with the future state?

■ Strategic Orientation is fed through the gathering and analysis of information tempered by intuition and curiosity. Ask questions, challenge assumptions, read professional literature that looks at future trends and leading practices in the HR field, such as the Harvard Business Review.

■ If strategic orientation is difficult, find someone who is good at it and get them to challenge the thought processes. If the organization is big enough, hire someone whose job it is to look toward the future and analyze leading practices. Collaborate with colleagues and pay attention to what other HR departments are doing to be successful.

■ Become outcome focused and communicate this focus to staff and peers. Stephen R. Covey included "Begin with the End in Mind," as one of his Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Making decisions by envisioning the future state shifts the focus from short term cost to long term value.

■ Develop strategic thinking skills. Question your opinions and beliefs, solicit input from people in other departments and at other levels across your organization, and study other strategic thinkers.

> ## HR professionals applying an Equity lens assure that systems provide similar advantages to all employees.

Equity and Inclusion:

Equity and inclusion involves the ability to view the organization's systems, understand how those systems impact various groups of people within the organization and make changes to bring about more equitable outcomes.

Traditionally HR has been concerned with making sure everyone is treated the same even though that means that one group may be advantaged more than another by a program, policy or practice. An equity perspective shifts the focus to assuring an equitable outcome. HR professionals applying an Equity lens assure that systems provide similar advantages to all employees.

Many organizations have focused on diversity of workforce as a desired outcome, seeking to create a workplace that is representative of the community it serves. The traditional definition of diversity includes protected classes such as race, sex, physical ability, religious expression etc. True diversity also includes communities of people that are not traditionally considered protected classes but who bring differing perspectives to the organization through socio-economic status, educational levels, political thought, or gender orientation. It is not enough to diversify the workforce, inclusion takes intentional effort to ensure all people have a sense of belonging in the workplace. Once a diverse workforce is hired, HR should ensure the workplace environment is one where all employees feel they belong; where they feel safe to voice their opinions and perspectives and where their input is truly valued.

■ By giving voice to a diversity of people and ensuring equitable outcomes the workplace becomes inclusive. By viewing systems through a lens of equity and inclusion there is clear understanding of where the current systems welcome the participation of a diversity of individuals and where new ideas or entire groups of people are left behind.

Shifting Perspective:

■ Inequities are not random; they have been systematically created and sustained over time and will not disappear without specific intent. Look critically at existing policies, programs and practices to determine if their application perpetuates inequities. Some examples to consider:

● Health benefits – Shift from the mindset of "if everyone is being offered the same benefits package" to assuring that your benefits packages provide equitable services for different groups of people. For example, does the health insurance plan(s) only provide one annual exam per year and is it based on the gender assigned at birth. Many transgender employees will need both a male and female annual exam. Do prescription formularies cover medication for illnesses that may be more prevalent in one race than another? Is the language of the plan book inclusive?

- Retirement benefits – Do all employees have access to putting money aside for retirement savings or are employees required to work a minimum number of hours per week or be a certain employee status? Can alternative programs be developed that allow all employees to save towards retirement goals and long term financial stability?

- Wage increases - Most agencies utilize a percentage method for applying cost of living increases for employees. Those earning the most receive a greater dollar amount and therefore their buying power increases at a greater rate than those at the lower end of the pay scale. Review wage increase practices to determine if a flat dollar increase or a graduating percentage that is largest for those at the lower end of the pay scale would be more appropriate.

- Build organizational capacity – Commit to the breadth and depth of institutional transformation so that impacts are sustainable. While the leadership of elected officials is crucial, changes take place on the ground, through building infrastructures that creates equity experts and teams throughout the organization.

- Utilize employee resource groups. Ask employees for input into language used in workplace documents and training programs. Ask about their experience in the workplace in general and make adjustments as necessary and appropriate.

- Ensure there is a common organizational language around equity, inclusion, and unconscious and conscious bias. Train the workforce and empower them to create an active dialogue on equity issues in the workplace.

- Be data driven. Learn the demographics of the workforce – where are people of color and women concentrated. Learn what barriers exist in the workplace that may limit opportunities for specific communities of people. If it is in lower paying or temporary jobs, create pipelines to full time and higher level positions. Organizations have been successful at creating job rotations, mentoring and training programs to ensure upward mobility opportunities.

- Review systems to ensure that various communities of people feel welcomed and feel a sense of belonging. Consider:
  - Are recruitment processes accessible to all audiences? Look at the requirements for positions, the language used in job announcements and ensure that positions are accessible to all that may be qualified to perform the duties. As an example, studies have shown that certain words will be more likely to attract male than female applicants or Caucasians versus People of Color.
  - Once hired who is exiting the workforce during probation and why? Who feels included in the work teams or not? Engagement survey results and stay interview responses will shed light on this.

- Operate with urgency and accountability – When change is a priority, urgency is felt and change is embraced. Build in institutional accountability mechanisms to underscore the importance of action. Micro- inequities will hinder an organization's success – make sure to address them immediately. A micro- inequity is a subtle slight or snub that devalues an employee. Micro-inequities have the impact of demoralizing employees repeatedly sending a message that the person does not belong in that organization.

- Partner with other institutions and communities – By creating community partners you can gather valuable input to create success and also create pipelines for recruitment sources and mutually beneficial trainings.

- Adopting a consistent use of these four lenses will bring added value and insight into all HR strategies and position the HR function to have a substantive and relevant impact on the organization.

Once a diverse workforce is hired, HR should ensure the workplace environment is one where all employees feel they belong; where they feel safe to voice their opinions and perspectives and where their input is truly valued.

AREAS OF FOCUS

HR professionals who transform their lives, their teams and their organizations are those who not only do things differently, but see things differently. The transformational process works from the inside out. When HR focuses on not only what they do, but who they are and why they are doing it, HR becomes bettered positioned to lead and influence at a higher level. While the lenses provide a high level view of what an HR professional should look through when leading, the areas of focus provide the magnified priorities and actions through which greater effectiveness can be attained.

Transformational HR professionals are those who can clearly articulate a vision and the value that it brings, who can develop an action plan, and offer the framework and tools to engage others to achieve the most important goals of the organization. While HR professionals serve in countless ways, this report explores five key areas of focus to maximize impact:

- Leadership

- Culture

- Talent

- Technology

- Communication

These areas of focus encompass the HR professions' most critical and widespread service gaps that must be addressed. The exploration of each includes a brief definition, an exploration of the current and future states associated with each area and practical actions to assist HR professionals at all levels.

Leadership

The term leadership is frequently and casually used to refer to a position on an organizational chart, so it is important to define the word in the context of the role of the HR professional. To be a successful HR leader, it is imperative to demonstrate leadership from a systemic organizational approach, both within the HR function and throughout the organization. The systemic leadership approach emphasizes organizational understanding and knowledge of the mission, vision, values and priorities of the leaders. The effective HR leader maximizes the opportunity to link the people component with effective and efficient business strategies to achieve successful, measurable outcomes.

> **The indispensable HR professional positions themselves as a person who understands the pressures and challenges of the leader and is available to help create the best solutions possible.**

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines leadership as the power or ability to lead other people. While this definition provides a simplistic view of leadership, it does not adequately distinguish leadership from management. Peter Drucker did that in his statement, "management is doing things right, leadership is doing the right things." Stephen R. Covey illustrates the difference when he says, "management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall." Both of these examples stress the importance of vision and effectiveness, not simply task and efficiency.

In the Forbes magazine article What Is Leadership?[1] Kevin Kruse suggests that leadership is a process of social influence defined as maximizing the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal. This definition articulates the ideas that leadership is not necessarily a function of formal authority and that ultimately its focus is on action and accomplishment. A leader defines and articulates a vision of an outcome and in the process of sharing that vision persuades others to contribute to the end result. Indispensable HR professionals positions themselves as people who understand the pressures and challenges of the leader and are available to help create the best solutions possible.

A Look at the Current State of HR Leadership in the Public Sector
In 2005, the Human Resources profession was harshly criticized in Keith H. Hammonds' article, "*Why We Hate HR.*"[2] Those critiques included that HR lacks business acumen, pursues efficiency in lieu of value, and forfeits long- term value for short-term cost. Some might argue that in the fifteen years since this article, few improvements have been made in the perception of the profession. In many organizations today, Human Resources is still viewed as a department of technicians focused on enforcement and administration, lacking in both thoughtful vision and business acumen to contribute at a higher level in the business leadership ranks.

A survey conducted by IPMA-HR supports these perceptions, though not as drastically as maybe expected. The participants were asked if HR professionals need to be recognized as leaders within their organization and 95% indicated agreement with the question. However, when asked if their HR department is consulted when the organization makes operational decisions, only 63% agreed. Even more telling, only 40% indicated they have the necessary tools and resources to be viewed as a strategic partner. In addition, many of the comments in this section of the survey noted that their HR function was not viewed as a strategic partner.

Howard Schultz, the CEO of Starbucks, states, "The discipline I believe so strongly in is HR, and it's the last discipline that gets funded. Marketing, manufacturing – all these things are important. But more often than not, the head of HR does not have a seat at the table. Big mistake."[3] It has been over 20 years since Dave Ulrich published Human Resource Champions and advocated shifting the role of HR from administrative to strategic, but practical implementation of his concepts, as the survey indicates, have for the most part been unsuccessful in the public sector.

A Look at the Future State of Requirements for the HR Professional in the Public Sector
The challenges of today's evolving workplace demand an increased need for a change in the focus of Human Resources leaders and a shift in the organizational perception of HR. The HR professional of the future must be aware of and able to address the organization's business needs with strategic and innovative solutions. If the HR function is to no longer concentrate on compliance and efficiency, then what should its mission be? The authors of "Workforce of Tomorrow" provide the following vision:

Often seen as the "rule police" and the "agency of no," the human resources department of tomorrow must be flexible, nimble, creative, can-do, strategic, and staffed by skilled employees who champion people management issues and set the workforce agenda.[4]

The HR Leader should be viewed as an enabler that provides the strategies and tools -- not an inhibiter that quotes the rules. HR professionals who offer thoughtful, sound, and creative solutions to problems are viewed as partners rather than administrative roadblocks. If HR professionals combine the knowledge of the business with the understanding of the workforce that drives the business, new approaches and solutions can be presented. If innovative solutions are offered, the HR professional becomes a needed and valued partner that is positioned to serve as a trusted advisor who provides strategic advice and counsel on the front end of decision-making rather than operating from a reactive state of existence. The strategic leadership provided by the HR

professional is necessary to help guide and influence an organization to have optimal performance.

The skillset that leads to an employee's success in an entry-level to mid-level HR position and eventual promotion often includes attention to detail, technical proficiency, and functional expertise. Those skills lose importance as the HR professional advances within the discipline where their success becomes dependent on developing and demonstrating new leadership skills, such as vision, influence, and creativity. This transition to strategic leadership can be difficult and seldom includes formal training and mentoring or pertinent feedback. To start on the path of accomplishing this transformation, the HR professional must become aware of business strategy, workforce challenges, and customer needs.

The Human Resources Leader must earn a seat at the table by knowing their business and the context in which it operates, raising organizational issues, offering solutions, and regularly challenging the status quo. If leadership is establishing a vision and influencing others to work toward that vision, then a key step in becoming a leader in an organization is establishing credibility by knowing the business. To increase this credibility, HR must add strategic thinking to gain the influence needed to lead within the organization.

Considerations for Action and Areas of Emphasis in HR Leadership
- Interview leaders of other departments, and spend some time with front line employees to better understand how to best link capability and actions to results.

- Concentrate on how to delegate more administrative functions to staff and focus on how to understand the organization more holistically to include financial, strategic goals, and department priorities. If your position requires that you balance both administrative and strategic functions, designate a day or a time of day to focus on the big picture. Continually remind yourself to step back from the daily demands and envision the future state.

- Seek mentoring and feedback opportunities. Making the transition from transactional to transformational can be difficult. Find someone within or outside your organization who will mentor you though this process. If that is not possible, study strategic leaders. Learn to ask for feedback and graciously receive it.

- Develop your HR staff to understand the difference between transactional and transformational HR services and help guide them to apply that knowledge in their functional areas.

- Promote the HR function and your value; consider yourself the Chief Marketing Officer of HR. Educate your organization on the full value of HR in accomplishing its

mission. Ask other functional leaders about their challenges and provide solutions. Demonstrate your commitment to being a strategic partner.

■ Remember that the perception of the HR function from within the department may vary from the perception held by other departments. Solicit input from many different perspectives from within the organization on HR leadership and use this feedback in determining the best approach to implementing strategies and action items.

■ Survey your internal clients to determine what is working well and what could be working better in terms of providing HR services. You can use the survey itself to articulate a vision of strategic HR programs and services and find out from your client's perspective where the gaps exist. This will allow you to target areas for innovation and offer leadership a menu of potential opportunities.

The Human Resources function needs to be strategically positioned to provide leadership to an organization. No other area of an organization is so integral to the acquisition, motivation, and retention of its most valuable asset, its workforce. The Human Resources leader of the future must make a conscious effort to evolve from transactional proficiency to transformational leadership to demonstrate full value and earn a seat at the table.

Culture

Although the examination of organizational behavior formally began in the 1920s, the term "culture" has only been applied to organizations since the 1980s. Simply put, organizational culture involves how an organization functions and expresses itself – its personality. Culture defines the borders of an organization and creates a sense of order, continuity and familiarity that impacts every aspect of its existence.

> **98% of those surveyed reported a gap between the desired and actual behaviors of managers and employees in their organizations.**

Culture has a fundamental impact in that it influences the relationships employees have with leaders and co-workers, the work that is performed and the way in which it is performed, and the type and quality of connection to the organization that is experienced. The culture of the organization is the key factor in determining how or if its goals and objectives can be achieved. As a result, the savvy HR professional will develop a deep understanding of the existing organizational culture and how it either supports or inhibits the objectives and basic strategies to drive organizational culture change.

A Look at the Current State of Organizational Culture in the Public Sector
While culture is widely viewed as important, surveys indicate that it is not well understood. Many organizations find it difficult to measure and more difficult to shape and manage because shifting organizational culture requires both senior leadership support and grass roots effort.

The perception of public sector culture, by internal and external stakeholders, often includes descriptors like: risk-averse, hierarchical, slow in decision making, inflexible, and rule-bound. While public sector organizations might hope to describe themselves with different terms, the HR 2020 Task Force Survey data suggests that there are still significant gaps between the current and desired state of organizational culture; what is espoused versus what is being practiced within organizations (cultural alignment).

When asked if the culture of their organizations supports innovative approaches to doing business, only 50% stated that their culture was very supportive by rating it as either a 4 or 5, on a 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) scale, with only 17% rating it as a 5.

Similarly, only 49% believe that their recruitment and selection processes directly support the culture they are trying to create and sustain by rating their processes as either a 4 or 5, with 5 representing very supportive. Only 11% rated it as a 5. 98% of those surveyed reported a gap between the desired and actual behaviors of managers and employees in their organizations.

On a promising note, Gallup's 2018 Employee Engagement Survey results reported that, "34% of U.S. workers were engaged in their jobs in 2018, tying the highest engagement numbers since 2000: In addition, "The percentage who are "actively disengaged" -- workers who have miserable work experiences -- is now at its lowest level (13%), making the current ratio of engaged to actively disengaged employees 2.6-to-1 -- the highest ever in Gallup tracking. These findings are based on a random sample of 30,628 full- and part-time U.S. employees working for an employer from January to June 2018."

Specific numbers were for the public sector were not updated in the 2019 report, but in 2016, Gallup released data indicating that 29% of US state and local government workers are engaged. The most troubling statistic is among the Millennials, as they represent the future of organizations. "Millennials are the least engaged group, at 29%." Gallup's employee engagement data reveal that Millennials are less likely than other generations to say they "have the opportunity to do what they do best" at work.

A report from Adecco Staffing USA states that 83% of college students believe 3 years or less is the appropriate amount of time to spend at their first job, with 27% believing that one should stay for only a year. Most current government organizational cultures still reflect a traditional desire for career-length tenure for employees. This desire may no longer be possible, or relevant, as public sector organizations move ahead in the 21st century.

There are significant opportunities for HR to help leadership at all levels to meaningfully plan for shaping or changing organizational culture to keep pace with service requirements, client needs and employee desires and capabilities.

A Look at the Future State of Organizational Culture in the Public Sector
The pace of change is escalating, which requires organizations to become more responsive and nimble. The nature of the workforce is changing, traditionalists are all but gone from full time employment and baby boomers are quickly exiting the workforce. Millennials are the fastest growing demographic in applicant pools. Because of the rapid and multiple changes taking place across the spectrum of society in general, organizational cultures will have to evolve in order for organizations to be able to fulfill missions, successfully achieve goals and objectives and retain this valuable workforce demographic.

As an example, analysts predict that employees entering the workforce will not only work for multiple employers during a lifetime, they will also have multiple careers. To be prepared for a more fluid workforce, organizations will need to be mindful of specific continuity needs related to the delivery of services. How new skills are learned and how knowledge is transferred will need to be infused in the culture. Organizations will need to be flexible enough to respond to the availability and readiness of a skilled and trained workforce and to keep that workforce engaged. Understanding and responding to the drivers of employee engagement will shift from "nice to know/trendy" to "mission critical."

The positive practices of organizational cultures of the future will center around three core interdependent values: Caring, Learning and Innovation.

■ Caring is associated with developing policies, programs and practices that support the employees' physical, social, familial, mental and financial well-being which allow the employees to bring their best selves to work.

■ Learning is focused around the creation of a learning organization: professional development, career agility, and knowledge transfer.

■ Innovation is the value of creativity, continuous/process improvement, and agile organizational structure.

■ Additionally, in order for these core values to be accepted, supported and/or funded by external stakeholders (i.e. taxpayers, voters and other influential constituencies), accountability measures should be designed to assure that the desired behaviors and expected results are met. Internal accountability is also critical, and systems should be put in place to assure that there is follow through by senior leadership, HR, and others in a position to influence culture.

Considerations for Action and Areas of Emphasis in Transforming Organizational Culture
■ Research shows that trust and integrity, and the consistent practice of organizational values, are vital in shaping and reinforcing organizational culture. Misaligned cultures can create toxic environments which can contribute to disengaged employees, stifled innovation and reduced productivity.

■ HR professionals are uniquely positioned to help influence leadership because of their understanding of human behavior and the associated trends that support desirable organizational cultures. HR professionals can help by focusing efforts in the following areas:

● Influence senior leadership by providing the reasons "why" specific values should be important to the organization's culture. This influence could take the form of both illuminating and informing senior leaders of what is possible. Ultimately it will be up to senior leadership to make the critical decisions that shape and define the organization's culture; however, HR can have significant impact in supporting good decision-making by providing the business case that supports cultural change.

- Champion employee engagement and climate surveys or other tools to provide a reality check to senior leaders of how organizational values are truly reflected in the workplace. Remind senior leaders they must visibly demonstrate the values of the organization in policy, practice, and personal behavioral choices. Be mindful that engaged leaders are not enough. Create a systemic conversation that promotes accountability for engagement at every level of the organization.

- Work on the systems, policies and procedures that are in alignment with, or are slightly ahead of, the current values of senior leadership, being careful not to move too far ahead of where senior leaders are, or are ready to go, with respect to growth and change. The risk here is the unintended consequence of creating a disconnect between what is espoused by senior leaders and what is practiced by them (i.e. "not walking the talk"). This can result in a high degree of dissonance and frustration for others in the organization, which in turn, can slow, stop, and even reverse the progress of any desired change that may have been intended or already set in motion.

- Always remember to communicate that you heard/listened to the feedback, you acted on that feedback and remind employees of the actions taken. Communication of actions associated with employee engagement survey feedback is often forgotten, yet it is in most cases, the only way employees will know or see that actions have in fact been taken and implemented. This is a critical step in the process.

- Adopt and promote innovative practices for attracting, selecting and promoting employees who possess the desired personality characteristics (e.g. agility and curiosity) for the future state of the needed workforce. Don't discard technical competencies for job success, but encourage hiring managers to hire for desired attributes and train for technical skills when possible.

Talent

Talent Management is a systematic approach to performance excellence achieved by creating a culture of continuous improvement, high engagement, workforce capability and capacity through integrated talent strategies and learning and development programs that are aligned with the agency mission, vision, and core values. Talent Management requires that organizations recruit, retain, and reward top talent and match the right people with the right roles to support the overall organization's mission and vision.

Talent management identifies mission critical positions, gaps in the workforce, and high performers. Through talent management, achieving optimal performance is influenced more by preparing workforce members to handle present and future challenges and less by simply adding more employees. The adoption and implementation of a talent management program provides the opportunity for organizational leaders to improve organizational performance despite not increasing workforce size.

A Look at the Current State of Public Sector Talent Management
For decades, talent management has been considered synonymous with succession planning. There has been considerable attention given to top executives and high potentials. The public sector has realized that talent management goes beyond those two specific groups and is focused on ensuring there is a high performing workforce in place to execute and meet desired results. Many government agencies, have also been in the midst of transitions and reforms marked by new "rules" defining how they organize, recruit, develop, manage, and engage talent in the 21st century. The public sector in general has realized that acquiring, developing, deploying, engaging, and rewarding employees with the right knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies are critical to managing talent. However, there are few public sector organizations which have focused the right amount of energy and resources on developing an innovative talent management strategy and implementation plan. The importance of talent management to the success of public organizations now and during the next 5 years was recognized by the respondents in the HR20/20 Taskforce survey. 97% of respondents rated it as a 4 or 5, with 5 being very important, and 73% rated it as a 5. There was a dramatic shift when the following questions were asked:

Is your organization prepared to meet the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and rewarding top talent in the next 5 years – only 7% responded with being very prepared (5) and another 30% reported somewhat prepared (4).

Are your classifications and pay structures adaptable enough to allow non-traditional movement without adverse impact to the employee, team, and/or organization – only 7% of those surveyed rated their organizations as completely adaptable(5) with another 22% reporting that their systems were somewhat adaptable(4).

Understanding why a talent management strategy is important, even for a small public sector agency, is crucial to meeting customer demands for the future.

First, let's look at the many reasons for developing a talent management strategy for an organization. Research

indicates the following six high priority concerns within the public sector that create the urgency needed for leaders to make talent management a priority within the organization:

1. The departure of experienced employees, particularly as the baby boomers retire, creating a shrinking workforce and loss of institutional knowledge;

2. The lack of confidence with managers in the hiring process, particularly in the ability to attract qualified applicants as compared to the private sector;

3. The lack of employee engagement that remains globally low, impacting performance;

4. Leadership gaps in key roles as senior level employees depart the workforce and the lack of workforce planning, resulting in an unprepared pool of talent to replace those strategic contributors in mission critical roles;

5. Antiquated workplace practices within the public sector ill-equipped to meet the needs and desires of the next generation of more mobile and diverse talent; and

6. High turnover rates due to the current tendency of the newer generation's "job hopping" every 3-4 years and the current mindset within the public sector that "job hopping" is not a positive attribute.

It is important for today's leaders to consider the strategic view of leading an organization from a system's perspective versus in silos and isolation between divisions and departments. Championing a 3 Rs formula – Recruit + Retain + Reward – as the framework for developing an integrated talent management strategy helps government entities focus upon preparing the next generation of leaders. This framework keeps the voice of the customer paramount in all iterations of talent management strategy and L&D solution development.

This approach supports the leadership discussion earlier in the report, emphasizing the importance of HR professionals leading with a systemic understanding of the department, and/or agency. The lack of a current systems thinking model for organizational performance excellence integrated into the strategic planning and forecasting areas hinders executives from being able to successfully benchmark top talent and identify talent gaps. Often public sector leaders lack an understanding of organizational culture and how culture connects directly with creating a high performing workforce. The HR professional is key in driving this approach throughout the organization and leading the talent strategy.

Many times HR professionals do not consider the importance of training their executives and managers in a systems thinking model that promotes a consistent and integrated approach to recruiting, retaining, and rewarding talent. This lack of consideration results in the lack of alignment in business processes, procedures, and practices throughout the organization. The lack of modernizing antiquated organizational structures away from hierarchical and bureaucratic frameworks hinders continuous improvement and innovation within the public sector. The status quo mindset often prohibits people from getting the work done and serving citizens in the most efficient and effective way because the continuous improvement mindset is lacking within the culture. While the responsibility of the deployment of an effective talent management strategy involves the whole organization, the HR professional must step up to facilitate the strategic conversation and implementation of programs that support recruiting, retaining, and rewarding talent.

By creating the urgency among agency leadership for Talent Management, the public sector can avoid trailing the private sector in the search for top talent.

A Look at the Future State of Public Sector Talent management
Public sector HR professionals need to create the urgency for designing a talent management strategy within their organizations by developing a business case that demonstrates the importance of recruiting, retaining, and rewarding talent for the present and the future. By creating the urgency among agency leadership for Talent Management, the public sector can avoid trailing the private sector in the search for top talent. It is important to recognize that recruiting talent in the public sector is different than recruiting talent in the private sector. The public sector must identify the top differentiators for government service and accentuate those areas in a recruiting strategy that will attract those who align with the mission, vision, and values of public service. For example, a top recruiting differentiator for the public sector is attracting individuals who want to make a difference in the lives of others and have a "greater good" approach to work and service.

There are ten best practices within an effective talent management strategy that are essential for developing the workforce of the future. Those practices are:

1. Career planning,

2. Competency management,

3. High potential development,

4. Learning and development,

5. Performance management,

6. Leadership development,

7. Workforce planning,

8. Recruitment,

9. Professional development, and

10. Retention.

While large organizations may be able to implement each practice, it is important to note that one approach for smaller organizations might be to prioritize the ten practices and begin with the highest priority. Together all ten practices create a systemic and robust approach to recruiting, retaining, and rewarding talent. (Definitions of the unique practices can be found in the supplemental section of this report on the HR20/20 webpage.)

The integration of the ten talent management practices within an organization can help to offset a less competitive salary, and provide a marketing strategy that brands government as an employer of choice. Public sector employers of choice focus on the development of people, provide a sense of purpose and serving a greater good, and create job variety and experience. In order for the public sector to meet the demands of the changing needs of the citizens it serves, a comprehensive talent management strategy must start at the top of an organization and resources must be allocated to recruiting, retaining, and rewarding employees. Edward Lawler, Director of the Center for Effective Organizations at the University of Southern California, recommends that as a rule of thumb, senior managers should spend 30-50 percent of their time on talent management, and in public sector organizations, even more time should be dedicated to employee development and growth.

Deloitte recommended a comprehensive approach to talent in a paper called "It's 2008: Do You Know Where Your Talent Is?" They noted that recruiting and retaining strategies do not work unless organizations have methods and programs that engage employees and help them develop knowledge, skills, and competencies for success. The Deloitte paper stressed the importance of developing talent in traditional

and non-traditional ways beyond classroom and online learning programs. It is important for HR professionals to assist managers in helping their employees develop by giving them stretch opportunities, on-the-job cross training, and networking experiences with the goal of connecting employees to the greater mission of the organization and increasing workforce engagement.

There is significant data to support that the public and private sectors across the nation will continue to face challenges in recruiting, retaining, and rewarding top talent. Those challenges threaten productivity by having to get more done with less, and make meeting diverse customer needs, working within constrained budgets, and staffing within a forecasted labor shortage difficult to achieve.

With a focus on an integrated approach to the ten practices of talent management, the HR professional can enlist the sponsorship of executive and senior level leaders and secure the allocation of resources needed for developing the workforce both today and five years from now.

In the supplemental section of this report (found on the HR20/20 webpage: http://ipma-hr.org/HR2020), there is a tool for the HR professional to use as a guide for creating a talent management process for the public sector. Application of this tool will help an organization prioritize investing in individuals who demonstrate the skill for leading people. So many times, individuals are promoted because they have technical expertise. It is critical for managers to assess leadership potential among employees to ensure the right people are leading others.

The talent review process uses the Nine Box Performance and Leadership Potential Matrix tool to assist supervisors and employees in assessing leadership potential and performance. The tool helps to identify emerging and potential leaders. With the results of the talent review assessments, leaders can create Individual Development Plans for employees to increase engagement, improve performance, and map career planning goals. The ability to adapt, innovate, and add strategic value in significant ways is what continues to set high performance organizations – in either the public or private sector – apart as a magnet for 21st century talent.

Organizations need to foster a culture of learning and engagement so that employees are empowered to make government more efficient and effective. Government needs to offer customized learning opportunities that develop and sustain a high performing workforce. Public sector leaders are responsible for developing and retaining top talent by building a continuous learning culture that equips employees, supervisors, and leaders with the tools needed to excel in their roles to achieve the strategic business goals and objectives and serve the citizens with efficiency and effectiveness.

Considerations for Action and Areas of Emphasis in Developing a Talent Management Strategy

- Public sector HR must educate itself not only on what is talent management but also the urgency for implementing talent management strategies within the organizational culture.

- Revisit and revise antiquated employment rules, policies, and procedures to address the needs and expectations of a changing workforce and demands of a diverse customer base in order to be recognized as an employer of choice.

- Understand the roles and responsibilities of executive leaders, senior level leaders, and employees in the talent management process, referencing the Roles and Responsibilities Talent Management Tool.

- Create a culture that focuses on employee engagement and organizational values by emphasizing the importance of leadership development, and workforce and succession planning to build bench strength and grow and prepare leaders for the future.

- Revisit and revise policies and practices around classification and compensation. Make adjustments that do not result in adverse consequences to employees moving laterally within the organization. This adjustment includes not only compensation but minimum qualifications.

Between demographic shifts, hiring freezes, the growing attrition of eligible retirees, and bureaucratic structures that fail to attract younger or more specialized workers, talent managers and learning leaders in government agencies face unique workforce challenges. Gallup (2016) has estimated the cost of growing skill gaps and "disengaged" workers to state and local governments to be up to $100 billion. In both the public & private sector, learning cultures have continued to emerge as a key differentiator in the competition for talent. Talent Management is the heart of all HR programs and services. It is the way HR professionals assure we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time, with the right set of skills to move the organization forward. Creating an integrated systems approach to Talent Management better enables the HR professional to meet the evolving needs of the agency and the workforce of the future.

Technology

Technology plays a critical and foundational role in providing human resource services. For the purposes of this report, technology is defined not only as automated processes and devices but also the analytics that can be derived from such tools which can give leaders visibility into issues across their organization. Technology, more than any other

factor, is driving the speed of change and employees, clients and constituents are educated enough to demand that technology is used to optimize work processes and that data is delivered with more accuracy, speed, transparency and relevance.

Technology is a key driver in creating potential opportunities and success as HR prepares organizations to deliver services and respond to the challenges of the future.

> ## Technology is a key driver in creating potential opportunities and success as HR prepares organizations to deliver services and respond to the challenges of the future.

A Look at the Current State of Technology in the Public Sector

A single platform delivering employee lifecycle servicing would be advantageous from an integration and resource perspective. However the current state of technology is a multifaceted array of opportunities provided through diverse platforms. Each layer that is available provides additional options to be considered in the delivery of HR services. As an example, an organization's ERP system may be enhanced by a "bolt on" time and attendance system. Applicants may apply and be tracked through a hosted service, and recruiters may use social media platforms (Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter) to effectively connect with candidates in a proactive manner. These choices promote the ability to deal with opportunities and challenges in a quick and insightful manner that is likely to lead to good outcomes – a clear demonstration of Business Acumen - but also present challenges in sifting through which technology strategies will have true strategic impact.

The private sector technology environment thrives from constant innovation, and technology clearly allows HR to optimize service delivery in innovative ways. That innovation comes with a significant price tag and most public sector agencies are not positioned to keep pace with the rate of change. Furthermore, the implementation of new technology, while promising long term benefit, is often accomplished at the short term detriment of the organization as resources are funneled into the implementation projects and away from other key initiatives. As a result, technology initiatives require HR's full engagement to sustain strategic development and growth.

In the HR20/20 Taskforce Survey, 94% of respondents indicated that technology was very important in achieving HR priorities in the next 5 years. When asked if IT systems readily

provided credible information, the response was mixed with 57% of respondents referencing data integrity issues. When asked about using data for benchmark comparisons and process improvement, only 50% said they relied on their data for such purposes, which is another byproduct of data integrity issues. And similarly, 50% of respondents shared that there were difficulties in being able to budget appropriately to meet technology needs. The inference from these results is that while technology is important, challenges such as budgeting and data integrity, are limiting the full potential technology can offer.

A Look at the Future State of Technology in the Public Sector
Looking forward with the past as a predictor, technology solutions will continue to optimize processes and procedures as well as drive efficiency. Diverse platforms of technology that are unique and practical will yield numerous options to tailor the delivery of HR services. Technology promises a lot and, as a result, needs and gaps must be identified, and predictive analytics should be utilized to confirm that the potential solutions offered by the platform meet the real and ongoing needs of the organization. Managing expectations will be key and performance measures should be used to validate productivity and return on investment. A challenge will be getting from where an organization is today to the desired future state if resources continue to be limited by stagnant to decreasing revenue bases. Automated digital processing is preferred over paper based processing which slows down HR and introduces human error into workflows and limits the scalability of these processes. HR must manage technology in a way that balances resource constraints with business optimization.

> ### HR must manage technology in a way that balances resource constraints with business optimization.

With an evolving market place, current jobs will be disappearing and new jobs and approaches will be appearing due to emerging technology such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA). Research suggests that children being educated now will perform work in the future that has not yet been created. This introduces the question, "What will the government workforce look like in the future?" What is clear is that technology will influence how work evolves, what skills and abilities are present in future applicant pools, and how motivated employees are to work for a particular organization. The best and brightest applicants will want access to the technology that will help them optimize their contributions – employees need the tools and resources to do their job well.

Employees want to perform meaningful work and have a say in how, when and where they perform work, with an increasing number wanting to maintain a positive work-life balance. Flexibility is becoming increasingly important and technology enables employers to provide more options to employees. The 2018 Mercer Global Talent Trends study cited permanent workplace flexibility as one of the top three factors that employees and job candidates look for in an employer.

A 2017 McKinsey Global Institute report predicted that by 2030 globally, 400 – 800 million individuals could be displaced by automation and need to find new jobs. While employment in some occupations may not decline, workers will be performing new tasks. There were 42% of the respondents to the 2019 IPMA-HR Employment Outlook Survey who indicated that technology now handles all or part of activities done by employees. Only 6% either laid off staff or reduced staff hours, with almost 90% reassigning affected staff.

While some occupations will see an employment decline other areas will have increased demand but not enough supply of workers. A critical challenge for governments will be providing job retraining and reskilling to ensure it has the talent with the need skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century. In response to a shortage of cyber security workers, the federal government has established a Cyber Reskilling Academy that graduated its first class in 2019. All of the 30 graduates were federal employees coming from 11 different federal agencies.

It is predicted that automation will take over much of the menial and simple labor jobs. Skills that will be most needed in the future include the ability to manage diverse employees, creativity, relationship building, innovation, and working as a team. The 2019 Workforce Trends survey released by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence found that interpersonal skills are the number one skill sought by state and local governments.

Human Resource Information Systems will continue to become more sophisticated and robust, offering HR professionals the opportunity to collect and leverage data to drive business decisions and create strategic initiatives. This would include managing organizational, regulatory and compliance requirements such as ensuring licenses and certifications are kept current to limit liability risks. Issues with data will continue to be at the forefront. Organizations will require more accurate, transparent, current and relevant data to drive business decisions. Tech savvy employees will demand the ability to manipulate that data through more intuitive and user-centric platforms. There will be pressure to use data to drive predictive analytics rather than lagging measures. Data security, including the protection of

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) will be paramount. Data Integrity, including the identification and correction of errors in Human Resources databases, will continue to be problematic until systematic approaches to data quality management are incorporated into business processes.

Considerations for Action and Areas of Emphasis in Technology

- HR professionals must have access to accurate, real time workforce data. This can be achieved through the use of a human resource information system. At this point in time, most organizations employ this type of technology. In smaller organizations, a Human Resource Information System (HRIS) system may be lacking, or more likely, a clumsy tack-on to a system largely designed for other purposes. If so, HR professionals should determine what information is the most relevant and create systems through existing tools to gather and analyze the data.

- Magnifying the challenges of technology through the lenses of business acumen, innovation and strategic orientation, a common thread appears in the use of mobile applications and social media. The language of business is being defined via these approaches, and innovation is constant. In addition, the cost of this technology ranges from very affordable to a significant investment depending on the type, customization and quality of the end user experience. Because it is scalable, most organizations can find an entry point that is reachable from a resource standpoint.

- There is little to no direct cost other than staff resources to enter into the Social Media realm. An organization has widespread ability to communicate, stay on message and be flexible via its social media presence. Social media can become the public face of the organization and allows an organization to create a branded presence. Content can be delivered with speed and agility and the platform is readily accessible by a large number of people. The challenges will be infrastructure and resources allocated to support this approach – it takes time to keep a social media site fresh and the content inviting.

- Delivering customer driven information and data is paramount. HR should take steps to assure that Personally Identifiable Information is safeguarded. As long as data integrity can be assured and appropriate security protocols to avoid breaches are implemented, applications and social media should be considered as a significant opportunity to be leveraged in data delivery. Open data is a growing trend in public sector organizations and HR professionals should remain current in understanding what is possible as public demand increases.

- Technology should also be utilized to enhance the opportunity for communication with employees who are teleworking and training, employees who are collaborating on shared projects, and customers who wish to speak with and see the HR organization they are working with. Leveraging centralized or shared services could mitigate budgetary considerations.

- Outsourcing transactional processes has the potential to allow HR to move from a transactional focus to value-added activities.

HR Professionals must become knowledgeable in how technology can be used to enhance productivity and business outcomes: it is a key component of business acumen for the 21st century. Understanding cost drivers, organizational impact, and resource constraints will allow an HR professional to develop effective technology initiatives to meet the needs of the organization.

Communication

Communication touches every area of the business and every employee. The importance of messaging - both in content and frequency, is key to any successful initiative and program. The HR professional should be sure to include a communication strategy and planning with all change initiatives and programs and validate that the messages have been received and understood. Here are some very practical approaches to sound communication in light of the realities of technology, speed of delivery and change.

Communication is rapidly changing in messaging, frequency and the manner in which the message is transmitted in order to be effective. The proliferation of communication channels, along with the changing dynamic of the workforce, requires organizations to be innovative in developing communication strategies that reach all employees in all locations. Specifically, HR has a leading role in ensuring employees are well informed and communication gaps are minimized throughout the organization.

A Look at the Current State of Communication in the Public Sector

Current challenges exist because the lines are blurring between internal and external communications and as society becomes increasingly interactive with social media platforms and other sharing mediums, what was once considered internal communications will become external due to social sharing. Another primary factor to consider when developing communication strategies is the demographic make-up of the workforce. The speed of communication is increasing and there is an evolving expectation, particularly with the younger demographic, that relevant information is provided quickly. In the absence of information, the speed of communication means that the rumor mill moves information much more quickly.

The lines will continue to blur between internal and external employee communications. Today, employees have a 70 percent greater social media footprint than their employers. That means anything that is communicated may or may not get shared. The research shows:

■ Content shared by employees receives eight times more engagement than content shared by brand channels (Source: Social Media Today).

■ Brand messages reached 561 percent further when shared by employees vs. the same messages shared via official brand social channels (Source: MSLGroup).

■ 98 percent of employees use at least one social media site for personal use, and 50 percent are already posting about their organization (Source: Weber Shandwick).

Respondents to the HR20/20 Taskforce Survey indicated that communication is inconsistent and many expressed concern over the level of difficulty in reaching employees, some of whom do not have daily access to computers or mobile devices that are provided by their employer.

Taskforce Survey indicated that communication is inconsistent and many expressed concern over the level of difficulty in reaching employees...

A Look at the Future State of Communication in the Public Sector
Multi-generational workforces will demand diverse communication strategies and tactics to effectively distribute vital information throughout the organization. HR professionals play a key role in how effective communication channels operate and connect the workforce with one another across business units and departments.

Communication strategies may vary according to generational preferences. For example:

■ New to the Workforce – Social media, secure access from anywhere, mobile devices, push notifications, apps

■ Young Professional – Social media, secure access from anywhere, mobile devices, in-person meetings, digital signage, print

■ Established in Career – Mobile devices, in-person meetings, digital signage, face-to-face, telephone, email, print, in-home mail

According to the HR20/20 Taskforce Survey, only 25% of organizations have a dedicated internal employee

communications staff. In addition, responses to the survey indicate that 25% of those polled rely on top-down methods of communication. Clearly, given the dynamic nature of communication and increasing expectations related to the speed of delivery, communication remains a top priority for HR professionals.

Considerations for Action and Areas of Emphasis in Communication
There are four components to a robust communication strategy: 1) Connect, 2) Content, 3) Consistent, and 4) Conduit. Each component is highlighted below and offers a brief analysis of the current feedback from HR professionals regarding the state of communication versus the future realities driving workforce needs.

■ The first component is Connect and focuses on how the workforce connects to one another, to leadership within the organization, and to those served outside the organization. According to the IPMA-HR HR20/20 Task Force Survey, the most widely used form of employee communication is email. Seventy-one percent of respondents do not have a communication strategy that measures communication channel effectiveness for the organization.

The workforce will continue to diversify demographically and will require an employee communication strategy that encompasses a multi-generational approach. Today, there are three distinct generations in the workplace and communication must be convenient, easy and natural for each group. Some are comfortable with email and telephone, while others will respond and rely on established and emerging digital technologies. There is no right or wrong approach to multi-generational marketing among employees. The key is to segment your workforce and utilize the communication channels that secure the highest response rate among them.

Not only is it critical to create a strategy for employee communication, it is equally as important to integrate an interdepartmental approach as well. Consider the following:

● Partner with departments and agencies across the organization to connect employees to the big picture;

● Create a two-way information pipeline that feeds information to the communication channels;

● Employees want to hear it from the organization first and by sharing a wide range of information, employees will be more empowered and engaged. They will feel more connected by having a broad understanding of how every department of an organization works and contributes to the overall success.

- Constantly monitor and measure the effectiveness of communication channels. By utilizing an email marketing platform (Constant Contact, Mail Chimp, etc.) analytics can be used to measure response rates, areas of greatest interest, click-through, etc. This provides the capability to adjust and tailor content to drive the response rates.

- Email marketing can be used to target several audiences within the organization. Content that is of interest to particular groups can be customized by target audience. For example: executive leadership, all employees, HR managers, and front line supervisors.

- Through email marketing platforms, content can be easily tailored and customized to specific groups which will increase response rates because information is relevant to what they do and they want to hear about it.

- Depending upon the size of the organization, consider utilizing pilot testing of communication technologies to ensure proof of concept prior to widespread investment. For example, if a large organization is considering launching digital signage, they may be faced with a high entry cost to launch. Consider a limited pilot program in a concentrated area of the organization and measure the success to justify the full launch investment.

■ The second component of an effective communication strategy is Content. When it comes to effective employee communications, content is king!. Do not waste money investing in communication technology without giving careful consideration to what content is to be delivered, how it will be delivered and who is tasked with gathering, developing and deploying the information. Make sure the content of any communication is fresh, relevant, reliable, fun, engaging and time sensitive.

The size and complexity of your organization will determine the level of resources needed to effectively and efficiently communicate with your workforce. Your staffing strategy should include a sufficient number of marketing and communication specialists to ensure your communication plan is implemented, measured and constantly adjusted to meet the needs of the organization.

A communication plan should include a well thought out chain of events, including dissemination of the message to certain audiences at specific time gates. Identify all the audiences within the organization and build a list

management system to constantly update the lists for accuracy. Create the communication chain according to the most logical sequence. Build messaging that is appropriate for social platforms yet ties to the organizational objectives. HR professionals should engage staff members who are savvy users that can craft and deliver messages for sharing, but also provide statistics to help gauge the response and interaction rates. It is important to assign a single point of contact to manage the social media platforms to ensure consistency, freshness and relevance.

The HR professional should always encourage executive leadership to cascade all information to their leadership teams and to employees, where applicable. Studies show that employees absorb, retain and act on information that is shared by their respective leader. They are likely to have a higher rate of personal buy-in and be receptive to the message when it is reinforced by their direct supervisor.

■ The third component in an effective communication strategy is Consistent. To extend the communication reach, consider developing diverse communication channels designed to meet the needs of a widely disbursed, multi-generational workforce.

It is important for the HR professional to be consistent and constant in messaging. Create a look/feel for all communication that is consistent so that it is easily recognizable by employees, similar to branding. The more often people see it, the more likely they are to read and/or absorb it, and then expect it. Once the tactic that works best for any given segment is established it will then be adopted, and the demand for information will grow since the expectation was formed.

Investment in a multi-channel approach to communication is imperative to successful and effective delivery of communications. Employees want to hear, learn and share information about their organization through various platforms and channels such as print, digital, social and visual. A consistent multi-channel approach will ensure that a variety of audiences receive the information in a way that works best for them. By investing in multi-channel communication, the HR professional controls the brand and message while ensuring that the information absorbed and shared aligns with the department's strategic goals.

Think of employees as a huge, robust army of brand ambassadors.

■ The fourth component of an effective communication strategy is <u>Conduit</u>. Understanding the push and pull approach to communicating helps HR professionals become reliable communicators within the organization and HR is seen as the outlet for workforce communication. It is important for the HR professional to seek and utilize ongoing feedback to constantly innovate to help the organization stay current and relevant. While distribution of messages throughout the organization is the push point, ensuring that the communication staff is pulling information from the organization as well is of equal importance. There may be a certain team responsible for being the distribution point for information; however, it is imperative that all employees within the organization see their role in the communication strategy and implementation plan.

The HR professional must diligently work to monitor and measure the effectiveness of communication by utilizing metrics and adjusting the communication where necessary. Electronic platforms, such as email marketing platforms, provide analytics to measure delivery rates, A/B testing, email open rates, weblink click rates and email bounce rates. Social media campaigns also provide analytics to measure how many people are reached and how many people have engaged with a campaign. In addition, mobile apps provide metrics of how many people are engaging with the app. Traditional forms of communication require a more subjective measurement such as focus groups and surveys.

Analytics are essential to creating an effective communication conduit for all channels whether electronic or traditional. Analytics inform the pull of information from the organization to help the HR professional effectively adapt their communication technique to better suit the audience and push the most appropriate information to reach the optimal number of people.

Think of employees as a huge, robust army of brand ambassadors. The workforce is the most efficient marketing and communication tool in the toolbox. Make it easy for employees to share internal communication content externally via their personal social networks.

Communications Commitment

Investment in communication requires the support of leadership. Tools, resources and commitment are required to ensure effective communication today and in the future. In a rapidly changing environment, the future of communication is the heart of the HR20/20 framework. With digital transformation at the forefront of the future of work, the ability to communicate will continue to be the driving force to organizational success and effective HR leadership. Leading companies are succeeding by building processes, systems and a culture of accountability that link communication to employee engagement and business results. HR professionals must prepare themselves to be strategic contributors in developing an organizational communication strategy in order to position HR as a significant driver of workforce engagement and connectivity.

Think of employees as a huge, robust army of brand ambassadors.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The HR20/20 Taskforce hopes that this report has served the purpose of creating a compelling case for moving beyond transactional HR to transformational HR, while also providing a path to success with practical ideas and suggestions for consideration. The framework provided here tees up the opportunity for engaged dialogue and action. Focusing on the areas of Leadership, Culture, Talent, Technology and Communication through the lenses of Innovation, Business Acumen and Strategic Orientation and Equity and Inclusion will create or enhance your "seat at the table". Whether this is the first step in shifting perspectives or the perspective is already clear, the HR20/20 Taskforce has provided thought provoking ideas and practical actions to enable the HR professional to approach the future with increased confidence.

The best advice the HR20/20 Taskforce can offer is to be a continuous learner by leveraging a network of peers and building upon the work of other HR professionals. The public sector HR community has many talented, insightful HR leaders that are happy to share not only their successes, but also the hard lessons learned along the way. While it can be challenging to work in the public sector due to resource constraints, the most valuable resource we have is each other.

Network with other HR colleagues by getting involved with the public sector HR community through IPMA-HR. There may be an IPMA-HR chapter nearby. Contact IPMA-HR for opportunities to join an HR Directors roundtable event. Attend a regional or international conference. Leverage your education by becoming a certified HR professional. And of course, visit the HR20/20 website http://ipma-hr.org/HR2020 where there are tools and resources relevant to the information provided in this report.

> **While it can be challenging to work in the public sector due to resource constraints, the most valuable resource we have is each other.**

Endnotes

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[2]Hammonds, K. H. (2005, August). Why We Hate HR. Fast Company, 97, pp. 40-47.

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