

The Brave New World of eHR

Human Resources
Management in the
Digital Age

Hal G. Gueutal, Dianna L. Stone
Editors

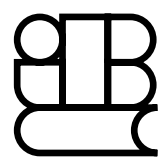
Foreword by Eduardo Salas



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Foreword

Technology is everywhere in our world. We see it every day in activities such as banking, shopping, flying, entertainment, or communicating. We live with technology and we are surrounded by it. We cannot escape its influence and how it shapes our lives. But work organizations are also as dependent on technology as we all are for our daily activities. Organizations use technology for manufacturing, sales, production, marketing and, yes, for human resources actions and interventions.

So this is the focus of this volume—electronic HR (eHR), a new world order for managing human resources in organizations. A world where scientists and practitioners in the industrial/organizational psychology field have much to say and much to offer in order to promote the effectiveness and optimization of eHR technologies and services. And so the motivation behind this volume—to provide practical advice to those who compose, manage, and develop human resources in work organizations.

Hal G. Gueutal and Dianna L. Stone have succeeded in assembling a diverse and powerful group of scholars, practitioners, and providers, all much involved in promoting the optimal use of eHR technology to achieve organizational effectiveness. The authors of the chapters herein focus on providing practical guidance and insights to those who are applying (or currently are using), designing, or delivering HR technologies. Hal and Dianna have done our field a tremendous service by editing this unique volume. The documented practical thoughts, the applied research discussed, the highlighted lessons learned, and the documented guidelines embedded in the chapters will provide an invaluable and rich resource for managers, executives, or those involved in optimizing human resources. And for that, on behalf of SIOP's Professional Practice Book Series Editorial Board and our membership, we

thank you both. We hope this volume stimulates, influences, and promotes eHR to the benefit of people and organizations.

September 2004

Eduardo Salas
University of Central Florida
Series Editor

Preface

Welcome to the new world of eHR. Things will look a bit different here. No longer will you deal with an HR professional to handle your HR needs. The HR portal will take care of you. Need to change your address? How about some online training? Want to check on your latest performance review? The portal is here to help. You can try calling the HR staff, but remember they have been reduced by a third since we went online. Oh, and by the way, most of the HR staff has been outsourced, but our vendor in Bombay assures us that the new staff is well-versed in our practices and in U.S. law.

The foregoing is not fiction, but rather describes HR practice in many organizations today. Our field is changing, rapidly and profoundly. Those of us in HR once wished that we could eliminate all the routine paperwork and concentrate on “strategy” and being a “business partner.” Well, be careful what you wish for Today technology has finally begun to deliver on the promises of the 1990s. We are providing more and better service to all our stakeholders. We have finally made HR data accessible to those who need it. We are no longer the bottleneck in HR information flow. We talk about portal strategy, employee self-service, and data ownership. We have the analytic tools to allow us to be more strategic and become true strategic business partners.

However, all change comes at some cost. Skill sets and skill priorities are changing. Our personal knowledge base may now be vested to an information system, and we may feel isolated from our customers (employees and managers). There may be fewer of us. Our budget may go for different priorities such as online recruiting systems and “analytic modules” rather than training and on-campus recruiting programs. We welcome you to this brave new world, and this book will serve as your introduction.

Contents of the Book

It should be clear from our description that the field of HR is undergoing some dramatic changes, and technology is propelling it in some entirely new directions, labeled electronic human resources management (eHR). Given these changes, this book is designed to provide HR professionals and industrial and organizational psychologists with some insights about the major technological trends in the field. In addition, we take a look into the future of HR and provide a preview of the nature of HR practice in the next decade. Our authors represent a cross section of highly knowledgeable experts in the area of eHR. They range from senior executives at the two leading global systems vendors (PeopleSoft and SAP), to HR professionals with great depth in eHR applications, and researchers with specialized expertise in eHR.

The book is divided into nine chapters. We begin with a very interesting chapter by Patricia A. K. Fletcher, a senior executive at SAP. In Chapter 1, Ms. Fletcher describes the history of eHR and reviews the transformation of HR from manual processes to completely automated systems. In particular, she focuses on three phases of the evolution of eHR, including: (a) the efficiency and control phase, (b) the enabling insight or partnership phase, and (c) the creating value or player phase. The next five chapters concentrate on the effects of technology on several key HR functions, including recruitment, selection, training, performance management, and compensation. For example, in Chapter 2, Dianna L. Stone, Kimberly M. Lukaszewski, and Linda C. Isenhour discuss e-recruiting and consider the effectiveness of online strategies for attracting talent. In addition, they review the existing research literature on e-recruiting and offer some suggestions for HR professionals based on the results of that research. They also discuss some of the unintended consequences of using e-recruiting systems, including adverse impact and privacy issues.

The next chapter, by Jerard F. Kehoe, David N. Dickter, Daniel P. Russell, and Joshua M. Sacco, provides a thought-provoking review of the issues associated with using e-selection systems in organizations. Furthermore, they offer valuable guidelines that should help organizations design, deliver, implement, and sustain these systems. For instance, in their chapter they consider preparation

for testing, test administration, strategies for managing applicant flow, and issues in managing vendor partnerships. In Chapter 4, “Research-Based Guidelines for Designing Distance Learning: What We Know So Far,” Eduardo Salas, Renee E. DeRouin, and Lisa N. Littrell present an exceptionally useful review of the recent research on the effectiveness of distance learning in educational and organizational settings. These authors also offer guidelines based on research that can help HR professionals with the design and delivery of e-learning systems in organizations. Given that eHR systems are new in organizations, there is relatively little research on the topic; however, this chapter should be particularly beneficial to HR professionals.

In the next chapter, Robert L. Cardy and Janice S. Miller address “eHR and Performance Management: A Consideration of Positive Potential and the Dark Side.” The authors examine the potential advantages and disadvantages of using eHR to manage employee performance in organizations. In particular, they argue that the use of technology for performance management has the potential to increase productivity and enhance organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, they suggest that technology often facilitates several important processes, including performance measurement, performance evaluation, and feedback. However, they also contend that technology may have some unintended consequences and cause organizations to focus on narrow performance criteria or arbitrary top-down controls. In addition, it may increase the distance between supervisors and subordinates, which can decrease trust and negatively affect leader-member relationships. They also offer some very helpful suggestions for HR professionals concerned with implementing electronic performance management systems.

In the next chapter, “e-Compensation: The Potential to Transform Practice?,” James H. Dulebohn and Janet H. Marler consider how technology supports the administration of compensation systems in organizations. In particular, the authors highlight how technology can facilitate decision making about compensation, enable round-the-clock access to salary and benefits information, streamline processes, and increase the effectiveness of strategic decision making. Furthermore, they argue that these systems should help organizations enhance internal equity, external equity,

and the overall administration of compensation systems. Apart from these issues, they point out some of the challenges that HR professionals will need to recognize when they implement these systems.

In Chapter 7, Hal G. Gueutal and Cecilia M. Falbe review the recent trends in delivering HR products and services. In particular, they describe and discuss the issues associated with managing several new delivery systems, including HR portals, employee self-service systems (ESS), managerial self-service systems (MSS), and knowledge bases. In addition, they present a business case for using these systems, including their cost effectiveness, user-satisfaction levels, and potential for return on investment. Furthermore, they highlight a number of best practices that can be used to implement these systems and share common errors that organizations should avoid when using them.

In “The Effects of eHR System Characteristics and Culture on System Acceptance and Effectiveness,” Eugene F. Stone-Romero reviews the functional and dysfunctional consequences of using eHR to attract, select, and manage the performance of employees in organizations. He also provides an intriguing review of the cross-cultural differences in the acceptance and effectiveness of these systems. The premise of the chapter is that many eHR systems are developed in Western cultures (for example, the United States and Germany) and, consequently, the HR processes inherent in these systems are rooted in Western cultural values (meritocracy, individualism). As a result, eHR systems may be less effective when implemented in nations with different cultures (Asia, South America, the Middle East, Africa). Thus, various aspects of the systems may have to be modified to make them compatible with values of other cultures. Given that eHR systems are being implemented worldwide, this chapter should be of tremendous help to HR professionals in international or multinational corporations.

In the final chapter of the book, “The Next Decade of HR: Trends, Technologies, and Recommendations,” Row Henson presents a fascinating and futuristic look at HR and technology in the decades to come. In particular, she highlights the needs of organizations in the future and considers prospective changes in workforce demographics, workforce balance, and the increased competition for a diminished set of workers. She also suggests that technology

will continue to transform organizations and help them become smarter, easier to manage, and more adaptable. She describes some remarkable technological changes that may be available in tomorrow's organizations, including the use of intelligent self-service systems, interchangeable devices, cognitive software, nanotechnology, and the convergence of the Internet, digital TV, and wireless communication into a "vibrant network." In addition, she offers some valuable suggestions for the HR professional of the future.

In view of the fact that eHR is having a profound effect on the fields of human resource management and industrial and organizational psychology, we hope that you will find the chapters in this book to be interesting and informative. They should provide suggestions for enhancing the practice of HR management, and we hope they will also foster additional research on eHR issues.

In closing, we want to express our gratitude to each of the authors who contributed to this volume. Without their hard work and dedication, this book would not have been possible. In addition, we want to thank Eduardo Salas, editor of the SIOP Professional Practice Series, for serving as the creative force and champion behind this book. We would also like to convey our gratitude to Margaret C. Nelson for her help and support with editing the book. Finally, we want to express our appreciation to Eugene F. Stone-Romero, our mentor and advisor. Gene taught us to chase knowledge throughout our careers, and without his professional guidance and support we would not be where we are today.

November 2004

Hal G. Gueutal
Albany, New York

Dianna L. Stone
Winter Springs, Florida

HGG: To Meg

*DLS: To Gene, Mavis, Joey, Patricia, Sharon, JoAnna,
and J.S.Q.B.S.S.*

The Authors

Hal G. Gueutal, Ph.D., is a nationally known consultant and scholar in the area of human resource management and is the director of an MBA program in HRIS at the University at Albany, State University of New York. Over the past decade, he has worked with a variety of organizations to redesign, enhance, and improve their human resource practices. He has published more than twenty scholarly articles and books and has made over fifty presentations at professional conferences. His work has also been cited in publications such as *USA Today* and *The Wall Street Journal*. He has frequently served as an invited speaker for organizations and professional groups. In 2001, he was named one of just two faculty “thought leaders” by the Board of Directors of the Society for Human Resource Management Foundation.

Dr. Gueutal has extensive experience in helping domestic and international organizations, ranging from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies. For example, he developed national skill standards for manufacturing workers and educational professionals. This national initiative on manufacturing work led to the creation of job standards, training programs, and certification standards for manufacturers across the United States. In addition, he has assisted a variety of organizations with HR issues, including HMOs, business start-ups, financial institutions, banks, and firms in Eastern Europe. He has also taught courses in human resource management in graduate business programs in Zurich, Switzerland; Shanghai, the People’s Republic of China; Saabrucken, Germany; and Budapest, Hungary.

Dianna L. Stone, Ph.D., received her doctorate from Purdue University and is currently a professor of management and psychology at the University of Central Florida. Her research focuses on employees’ reactions to electronic human resource systems; information

privacy; and diversity in organizations, including issues of race, culture, and disability. Results of her research have been published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Personnel Psychology*, *the Academy of Management Review*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *the Journal of Management*, *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, and *Research in Personnel/Human Resources Management*. She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. She has also served as the chair of the Human Resources Division of the Academy of Management and as financial officer for the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. In 2003, she edited *Advances in Human Performance and Cognitive Engineering Research* on the topic of eHR.

Robert L. Cardy, Ph.D., is a full professor of management in the W. P. Carey School of business at Arizona State University. He received his Ph.D. in industrial/organizational psychology from Virginia Tech. His master's and undergraduate degrees are from Central Michigan University. Dr. Cardy has consulted with a variety of organizations, particularly in the areas of performance appraisal and competency model development and implementation. His recent work has focused on identifying key competencies and developing and linking performance standards to those competencies. His consulting work has provided organizations with concrete models of employee success that can be used to drive performance management, employee selection, and self-improvement/management. Dr. Cardy's consulting work has included automobile manufacturers, organizations in the automotive field, as well as consulting firms and tool manufacturers.

Dr. Cardy has served multiple terms as a member of the executive committee of the Human Resources Management Division of the Academy of Management. He has regularly written columns for the *HR Division Newsletter* on new and innovative issues since 1991. Dr. Cardy was the co-founder and editor of the former *Journal of Quality Management*. He has been a member of the editorial review boards for the *Journal of Applied Psychology* and the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and serves as a reviewer for several publications. He has published articles in a variety of journals, including *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Organizational Behavior and Human*

Decision Processes, Journal of Management, Management Communication Quarterly, and HR Magazine. In addition, he has authored or edited several books on human resource management and performance management. He has twice received a “best paper” award from the Human Resources Management Division of the Academy of Management and received a “University Mentor Award” for his work with doctoral students at Arizona State University.

Renee E. DeRouin is a doctoral student in the industrial and organizational psychology program at the University of Central Florida. She is the recipient of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology’s Robert J. Wherry Award for 2004. Her research interests include training, distance learning, learner control, and stereotype threat, and her work will soon appear in the *Journal of Management, Human Resource Management Journal, Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management, Advances in Human Performance and Cognitive Engineering Research, and the Handbook of Human Factors and Ergonomics Methods.*

David N. Dickter, Ph.D., is an industrial-organizational psychologist with Psychological Service, Inc. Previous positions include personnel selection management positions at AT&T and Aon Human Capital Services. In those positions he was responsible for AT&T’s employment selection program for customer service jobs and sales jobs, and for AT&T’s computerized employment testing system. Dr. Dickter is co-author of several articles, book chapters, and conference presentations on various topics. He is a member of the American Psychological Association, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, the Society for Human Resource Management, and the Personnel Testing Council of Southern California. He earned his Ph.D. in industrial-organizational psychology from the Ohio State University.

James H. Dulebohn, Ph.D., is an associate professor of human resource management and organizational behavior at Michigan State University. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research focuses on human resource information systems, employee compensation and benefit programs, and decision making in organizations, and it has appeared in the

*Academy of Management Journal, Personnel Psychology, Journal of Management, Journal of Risk and Insurance, Journal of Organizational Behavior, and others. Dr. Dulebohn has also written chapters that have appeared in *Advances in Human Performance and Cognitive Engineering Research, Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management, Research in Sociology of Organizations, and The Handbook of Human Resources Management.* Prior to graduate school, Dr. Dulebohn was employed in the area of information and database management for various organizations, including IBM. He has conducted research and consulting in compensation and benefits for organizations including Monsanto, Dow Chemical, TIAA-CREF, State of Texas, State of Illinois, and Marriott.*

Cecilia M. Falbe, Ph.D., is chair of the Management Department at the School of Business and a member of the organizational studies doctoral faculty at the University at Albany. Professor Falbe's research includes work on the development of entrepreneurial strategies, the role of government intervention to promote entrepreneurship in the telecommunications industry, technology implementation, the impact of vision on financial performance, and an examination of alliances between high-tech start-up firms and their large-firm partners. These works are published in *Administrative Science Quarterly, Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Small Business Management, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Organizational Behavior, International Small Business Journal, International Journal of Management, International Journal of Psychology, Group and Management Studies*, and in a number of book chapters. She also co-edited two books on business and society. Professor Falbe holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University.

Patricia A. K. Fletcher, MBA, is responsible for mySAP ERP strategy and business development at SAP. In this role, she is responsible for contributing to the direction and strategy and positioning and messaging of the mySAP ERP solutions, including mySAP ERP Human Capital Management, mySAP ERP Financials, mySAP ERP Operations, and mySAP ERP Corporate Services. Ms. Fletcher has held a variety of sales, strategy, and management HCM positions at SAP, including pre-sales, solution engineer, business development director, and product marketing strategy director. Prior to joining

SAP, she was a business transformation consultant in Europe and Asia. She has an MBA from the Richmond School of Business in London, England, and a bachelor of science degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix.

Row Henson is a PeopleSoft fellow and has been involved in HR and HR management systems for the past thirty years. For eight years she held the role of vice president of HRMS global product strategy at PeopleSoft, Inc., where she was instrumental in setting the direction of PeopleSoft's flagship human resources product line. Before PeopleSoft, she spent fifteen years in the computer software industry with Dunn & Bradstreet (previously MSA) and Cullinet Software, primarily focused on marketing, sales, support, and development of HR systems. Voted one of the Top Ten Women in Technology by *Computer Currents*, Ms. Henson is the recipient of IHRIM's coveted Summit Award for lifetime achievement in her field. In 2002, Ms. Henson was named the first Visionary of HR Technology at the Annual HR Technology Conference. She is a frequent speaker and has been published in numerous personnel and software periodicals, including *Personnel Journal*, *CFO Magazine*, *Software Magazine*, *IHRIM Journal*, and *Benefits & Compensation Solutions Magazine*.

Linda C. Isenhour, M.S., is a doctoral candidate and is completing her dissertation on the relationship between applicant culture and recruitment outcomes at the University of Central Florida. As a Sloan Fellow, Ms. Isenhour earned her M.S. in management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and has extensive industry experience in human resource management. She has presented papers at the meetings of the Academy of Management, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and the Southern Management Association. She has published chapters on human resources in virtual organizations, and the impact of human resource information systems and of the Internet on organizations. Her research interests include recruitment, compensation, human resource information systems, and strategic management.

Jerard F. Kehoe, Ph.D., received his doctorate in quantitative psychology in 1975 from the University of Southern California. After

serving on Virginia Tech's psychology faculty in the Applied Behavioral Sciences Program, he joined AT&T in 1982. At AT&T, he was responsible in various positions for the design, implementation, validation, and maintenance of selection programs for manufacturing, customer service, sales, technical, management, and leadership jobs. In 1997, he assumed overall leadership and direction for AT&T's selection program. He founded Selection & Assessment Consulting in 2003 and serves as its president. Dr. Kehoe has been active professionally, with publications and conference presentations on employment selection topics including computerized testing, fairness, and test validity. In 2000, he edited the Society of Industrial/Organization Psychology's (SIOP) Professional Practice Series volume, *Managing Selection in Changing Organizations: Human Resource Strategies*. In 2002, he began serving as an associate editor of the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. He also has served on numerous professional committees, including the SIOP subcommittee that revised that Society's *Principles for the Validation and Use of Employment Selection Procedures* in 2003. In 2002, SIOP awarded him with the Fellow membership status for contributions to this profession.

Lisa N. Littrell is a doctoral student in the industrial and organizational psychology program at the University of Central Florida. Her research interests include cross-cultural training, team adaptability, team leadership, expatriate employment, and distance learning. She has presented her research on cross-cultural training at the conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

Kimberly M. Lukaszewski, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of management at the State University of New York at New Paltz. She received her MBA in HRIS and her doctorate in organizational studies from the University at Albany, State University of New York. Her research focuses on human resource information systems, information privacy, and race and disability issues in organizations. She has presented numerous papers at national and regional conferences and has published articles on eHR in *Advances in Human Performance and Cognitive Engineering Research* and the *International Human Resource Information Management Journal*.

Janet H. Marler, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of management at the University at Albany, State University of New York, School of Business. She earned her Ph.D. in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University. Prior to earning her doctorate, she was a CPA and held executive and professional positions in the financial services industry. Her research centers on the strategic use of human resource information systems, employee and managerial self-service, compensation and benefits strategy, and alternative employment arrangements. Her research has been published in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Quality Management*, *Academy of Management Proceedings*, and *IHRIM Journal*. She teaches full-time, part-time, and executive MBA programs in HRIS, HR, and compensation strategy.

Janice S. Miller, Ph.D., is an associate professor of organizations and strategic management at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she also serves as associate dean for academic affairs. She received her Ph.D. from Arizona State University, with a concentration in human resource management. Dr. Miller has conducted research in a variety of HR functional areas. One of her primary interests is performance appraisal, particularly in the context of multi-rater or 360-degree settings. Her recent work focuses on employee satisfaction with performance appraisal. In addition, she has done research in executive compensation, both from a theoretical and an applied perspective, and has also investigated technology's impact on human resource management and job attitudes among part-time and seasonal workers. Since joining the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Dr. Miller has consulted for a number of nonprofit organizations in the Milwaukee area, focusing on multi-rater appraisal practices and their link to appraisal satisfaction. She presently serves on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Information Technology Advisory Board.

Dr. Miller is a member of the Academy of Management, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, the American Psychological Society, and the Decision Sciences Institute. She is a recipient of the Business Advisory Council Teaching Award and was a Wisconsin Teaching Fellow in 2002. Her research has appeared in *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Labor Research*, *Group and Organization Management*, *Human*

Resource Management, Human Resource Management Review, and Journal of Management Education.

Daniel P. Russell, M.S., joined Aon Consulting in 1998. He is a member of Aon's Product Solutions Resource Group. His work with the group includes research and development activities with Aon's web-based applicant tracking and assessment products. In addition to research and development activities, Mr. Russell has consulted on and managed a number of projects to develop, validate, and implement selection systems in several different industries for various occupations. His projects have included clients in the public and private sectors, manufacturing, telecommunications and technology, service and retail, healthcare, entertainment, and protective services. This work has led to several innovative high-tech (and low-tech) solutions to organizations' various HR challenges in the areas of recruiting, selection, performance management, talent management, and job classification. Mr. Russell's previous professional experience includes work at the American Institutes for Research, QI International, the U.S. Department of the Army AMEDD Board, and the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education. He received his M.S. from and is currently a doctoral candidate in industrial/organizational psychology at Virginia Tech.

Joshua M. Sacco, Ph.D., joined Aon Consulting in 1999 and is a member of Aon's Product Solutions Resource Group. He is currently the product manager for Aon's *Performance Pathfinder* platform of performance management, talent management, and employee selection applications. His consulting work mainly focuses on performance management, talent management, employee development, large-scale employee selection system design and validation, and research examining the return on investment for selection systems. Much of his consulting work involves implementing technology solutions in these practice areas. He has worked with clients in a variety of industries, including automotive, healthcare, insurance, manufacturing, protective services, retail, and food services. He has presented and published a number of papers on topics such as personnel selection, psychological measurement, and diversity. He received his Ph.D. from Michigan State University in industrial/organizational psychology. At MSU, he