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HBR's 10 Must Reads: On Reinventing HR
Authors: Buckingham, Hoffman, Charan, Others
Book Reviewer: Patt Chowdhury

BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: **HBR's 10 Must Reads: On Reinventing HR**

Authors: **Marcus Buckingham, Reid Hoffman, Ram Charan, Peter Cappelli + Others**

Publisher: Harvard Business Review Press

List Price: US$24.95

Format: Paperback, 208 pages

Publication Date: June 2019

ISBN: 978-1-63369-784-3

Reviewer: **Patt Chowdhury, MBA, MM, PMP**

Review Date: February 2020

Introduction

Even with eight years of business education, I never really felt as though I knew as much as I should about the Human Resources function. Aside from the odd college course or corporate training session on HR topics, most of my learning in this area came from observing HR leaders and on-the-job training as a manager and as an employee.

When I had the opportunity to review this book, I was really interested to do so. While I suspected that there was a good deal of change underway in this space, just from watching the goings-on in the workplace in recent years, I wasn't aware of the angst that existed in the C-suite over the proper place and role for the Chief Human Resources Officer. Like the invitation of the finance vice presidents to the C-suite in the 1980's, and the data processing vice presidents in the 1990's, the elevation of the human resource vice presidents to Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) and the inner circle is underway today. The CHRO must become a trusted advisor to the CEO and part of the decision-making circle rather than just implementing decisions.

HBR's 10 Must Reads: On Reinventing HR is an excellent collection of articles that gives you a front-row seat to the considerations and real change that is underway, the reasons these moves are being undertaken, and the results corporations are seeing. The workplace is changing and its management must change with it to shape the workplace of the future. While this collection of articles is useful for any manager, the Project Manager can benefit from this insight as they manage multi-generational, more

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diverse teams with new tools and new attitudes, in a much more project-focused, faster-paced environment than we previously experienced.

Overview of Book's Structure

This book is a collection of the 11 most important articles, ideas, and best practices on Human Resources according to the Harvard Business Review.

Contents

- "People Before Strategy: A New Role for the CHRO," by Ram Charan, Dominic Barton, and Dennis Carey (BONUS ARTICLE)

- "How Netflix Reinvented HR," by Patty McCord

- **"HR Goes Agile," by Peter Cappelli and Anna Tavis** (this PMP's favorite)

- "Reinventing Performance Management," by Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall

- "Better People Analytics," by Paul Leonardi and Noshir Contractor

- "21st-Century Talent Spotting," by Claudio Fernandez-Araoz

- "Tours of Duty: The New Employer-Employee Contract," by Reid Hoffman, Ben Casnocha, and Chris Yeh

- "Creating the Best Workplace on Earth," by Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones

- "Why Diversity Programs Fail," by Frank Dobbins and Alexandra Kalev

- "When No One Retires," by Paul Irving

- "Collaborative Intelligence: Humans and AI Are Joining Forces," by H. James Wilson and Paul R. Daugherty.

Highlights

For any manager, these articles take the initiatives and experiences of executives in firms that we all consider "household names" – for example, Netflix, GE, IBM, P&G, Cigna and Johnson & Johnson – and examine them, explain why moves were made and how their companies changed as a result.

These articles highlight changes in the workplace that are moving toward easing rules and prescribed policies in favor of allowing the exercise of common sense on the part

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of employees and that favor continuous project and team-based feedback instead of once-a-year performance reviews.

Workplace environments that allow employees the latitude to display their entrepreneurial abilities in support of their firms and companies that expect that those same employees may move on rather than stay when a more enticing outside opportunity presents itself are more common. Top-down planning is being replaced, out of necessity, with "nimbler, user-driven methods (Cappelli and Tavis)."

Highlights: What I liked!

As a program and project manager, the article that was of immediate interest to me was "HR Goes Agile," by Peter Cappelli and Anna Tavis. The authors discuss how many firms have taken the lead of the tech companies (and we know there are many others) that are making speed the center of their activities, adopting rapid prototyping, iterative feedback, and sprints.

Traditional project management practices such as obtaining executive sponsorship, use of consistent process and practices, and use of common tools combined with newer approaches such as the engagement of agile coaches and trainers were cited as elements needed for success (VersionOne's 2016 State of Agile Survey).

Who might benefit from the Book?

Project and program managers, new or seasoned, can all learn from the experiences of these companies. Understanding the expectations of today's employees, their attitudes toward long-term employment, life-long learning and modernized benefits packages can help us better understand how we can motivate, coach, and help our teams perform and succeed.

Conclusion

One of the best features of this book, to me, is the collection format of the articles. This allowed the perspectives of many experts to be presented in one location and provided flexibility in showing the development of ideas through the various article publication dates. I recommend this to any business people, including those engaged in project management, who want a better understanding of today's human resources environment.

For more about this book, go to: *https://store.hbr.org/product/hbr-s-10-must-reads-on-reinventing-hr-with-bonus-article-people-before-strategy-by-ram-charan-dominic-barton-and-dennis-carey/10279*

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About the Reviewer

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Patt Chowdhury is Managing Principal at Patt Chowdhury Advisors LLC, a consultancy offering program and project planning, business research, and training in support of marketing and sales enablement. She is an experienced marketing executive and senior manager with extensive experience in marketing operations, program and project management, product management, process development and information technology at iconic Fortune 500 brands including American Airlines, Sabre, Electronic Data Systems (EDS), Hewlett Packard, and Hewlett Packard Enterprise in the travel and transportation, information technology, consulting, and telecommunications industries, where she managed worldwide programs generating as much as one billion dollars in annual revenues.

Patt has been an adjunct professor at the AACSB International-accredited Gupta College of Business at The University of Dallas for more than 24 years where she teaches Foundations of Marketing, Value-Based Marketing, International Marketing, Business & Society, and Managing Complex Organizations. She is a member of the PMI Dallas Chapter and is Vice President of Programs, overseeing more than 80 events a year that provide professional development and networking opportunities to chapter members and their guests.

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