



Lexy Martin (alexia.martin@CedarCrestone.com) is director, Research and Analytics for CedarCrestone, a consulting, hosting, and managed services firm specializing in the deployment, management, and optimization of Human Capital Management (HCM), Financial Management (FMS), Campus Solutions (CS), and Strategy and Analytics. She is responsible for the CedarCrestone HCM Survey, now in its 10th year, available at www.CedarCrestone.com. She does extensive work with customers and vendors to help them justify and prove the value from their workforce technologies initiatives.

This issue's theme, "Delivering HR Technologies," covers challenges related to HR technology support organizations themselves. Between the features and departments, this issue addresses the strategic importance and vision for HR technology support and the organization that delivers it, how that support organization has evolved, the skills required by organizations today to deliver support, and which organizational structures are optimal for different situations. And, since the processes of the organization are such keys in defining how technologies are delivered, we look at why process standardization and other governance are so important to deliver holistic business processes through technologies.

Our first article, "Think Local, Act Global," by Karen Beaman, addresses the issue of whether to centralize or decentralize the global HRIT organization. She maintains that we have been going about globalization of HRIT the wrong way, and that we are not even asking the right question. The slogan, "Think Global, Act Local," is completely the inverse of what we should be doing with our HRIT organizations. Rather, it is only by first "thinking locally" to truly understand the needs of our local business communities, and then "acting globally" to seamlessly knit together diverse business functions and systems into a holistic, global approach that we can build an effective, efficient, and competitive organization. Beaman says HRIT needs to move to a Collaborative Transnational Organization model that meets local business unit needs, provides a global service delivery platform and promotes worldwide learning and collaboration, in order to deliver services more effectively in the age of Web 2.0.

In "Versatility – the Key to Success in HRIS," Freddy Silverman looks at the skills and characteristics of an HRIS professional. To be the 21st century renaissance person, versatility must be this professional's stock in trade. One must be an internal consultant. Pulling from research, she describes six key competencies and then describes the eight key skills to maximize effectiveness: technology aptitude, project management, financial acumen (amen), ability to educate, communication flair, global awareness and relationship management.

Practitioner Lorraine Kelly, in "SYSCO's Move to Payroll Process Standardization," discusses how recently many HRO deals have gone awry and, while there are many reasons this might happen, she believes one of the major problems is the lack of really analyzing the processes that support the human resource functions before moving to an outsourcer. Whether you outsource to a third party or centralize a process, it is crucial to analyze how this change impacts the business units. This article describes how this large, decentralized corporation moved to data standardization with a shared central database and then how it created a payroll shared services center that processes payroll for its operating companies requiring even more standardization of coding and processes.

Continuing on the importance of process understanding by HRIT, Jacqueline Kuhn's article, "Business Process Management – from Alpha to Omega," explains why process design and mapping is critical to the delivery of a technology solution. Process design needs to start at the beginning step in the process and end with the last step in the process regardless of what system or person handles the process. The article discusses how to conduct a process design initiative, who needs to be involved, the benefits of this, and lastly, steps for using this as the technology solution(s) are implemented.

Our department editor, Carey Ellinghaus, continues the theme with articles providing further insights.

- Valerie Wandler discusses Aramark's recent journey to implement a standard HR platform to support its historically decentralized organization, both to increase operational efficiency and to enable field HR to provide more strategic support to the businesses. That effort was a key element of HR's long-term strategy and is supported by a more balanced approach to HRIS support.
- Michele Edwards lays out the HRIS challenges of a small to medium-sized business like PTC, including staffing challenges and financial resource constraints.
- Like PTC, Johnson Controls supports its global business using a common HRIS platform and a shared HRIS organization. In her article, Heather Batyski focuses on the challenges of providing HRIS support to a global organization, speaking from a European perspective.
- Next, because we think there are many HR professionals, especially in the U.S., who aren't familiar with HR Access, Cathy Veinbachs sheds some light on their products and services, including their HRIS, hosting support, and their newest HRO offering.
- Finally, Kevin Bryant of CedarCrestone discusses the benefits of outsourcing HRIS hosting and related support.

With this issue, we are also revising the title and focus of some of our departments. "Functional Focus" will continue to provide a focus on a key HR function each issue. "Inner Circle" will become the "Executive Corner." In this piece, we ask an executive to provide insights for C-level executives. "Mixed Bag" will become "Global Perspective," as we are finding so many readers wanting a special focus on global issues of service delivery, and nowhere better to start than in this issue on HRIT. "Solutions for 10K or Less" will now be "Small to Medium Business" focusing on small and medium-sized organizations' issues and solutions. "Talking With" becomes "New in the Market" and will focus on new entrants to the market. And "Tech Notes" remains a more technical piece, focusing on new technologies such as service-oriented architecture, Web 2.0, social networking, Adobe Flex and in this issue, on HRIT technology infrastructure.