

The influence of technology in human resource management

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Information technology, also known as IT, has drastically changed the workplaces of the world in the past 50 years. The field of human resources has historically been limited to a clerical or administrative role in the business arena, dealing mainly with tasks like payroll or attendance. In the modern market, new core HR responsibilities include recruitment and training, oversight of legal and regulatory compliance, benefits administration and the safeguarding of confidential employee information, along with many more. These tasks cannot be carried out effectively without the use of high-tech tools.

Advances in technology have not only made the handling of basic administrative tasks more efficient, they have expanded the role of HR and created new disciplines within the field. Database management systems are a prime example of how technology has facilitated the growth and expansion of the HR field. Using a DBMS streamlines the management of employee information. Data entry and tracking, analysis of employee information, benefits administration and applicant tracking are all made easier and less time consuming, with the information available and organized with the punch of a key (Laudon and Laudon, 165).

Human resource outsourcing is a rapidly growing field all on its own. Many businesses, small and large alike, are turning to HR specialization firms such as Aon Human Capital Services, Hewitt Associates, and Affiliated Computer Services. The Braun Consulting Group reported that while saving money is the reason for outsourcing for about half of the companies surveyed, gaining

outside expertise, improving service quality, and being able to focus on their core business were also cited as key motivators.

These companies characteristically offer services in four principal areas of HR functionalities: payroll, time and labor management, benefits administration, and HR management. Some of the most widely used software applications are payroll and compensation management software. Payroll software is designed to automate payroll tasks, including managing payroll tax issues like federal and state calculations. Additionally, payroll software assists in creating paychecks, filing tax forms, and creating employee tax records. Compensation management software automates salary reviews, plans, and budgeting to name a few. This software may be hosted in-house by the operating organization, or may be web-based. Web based providers include Oasis Outsourcing, Intuit, and Amycheck. These service providers have assisted small businesses and large corporations alike in streamlining payroll and benefits management. Employee recruitment and training are widely considered to be two of the most important tasks in human resource management. Attracting and retaining competent, reliable employees is necessary for success in any business.

The advent of the Internet has drastically altered the way organizations search for candidates, and vice versa. The Internet allows businesses to reach a much greater pool of candidates with a greater range of knowledge, skills, and abilities, which in turn increases the odds of finding a good match for the position(s). Larger organizations often employ their HRIS departments in developing in-depth company websites with detailed job descriptions and

requirements, as well as the organization's mission statement and corporate culture, in an effort to attract employees that fit with the attitude and values of the company.

Smaller organizations cannot afford to create and maintain a large and often expensive website like this, but there are many options for outsourcing online recruitment. In addition to outsourced companies, large job posting websites such as Monster.com are popular sites for people searching for jobs to post resumes and search for a wide range of openings. Technology has also been implemented in training employees. E-learning is a widely used tool in employee training and development. The term "E-learning" includes any form of training done with electronic support.

This includes online training and development, tele-class training, chat room training, and video training. The advantages of these forms of training include convenience and the ability to control the pace of the instruction. The use of this medium, however, should mainly be limited to teaching the basic concepts and skills needed for the job, with more in-depth classic training for more specific skills or needs (Smith and Mazin 69). "

Communication is the key to any change" (Rudnick, 45). In any business, effective communication between employees, managers, and customers is not just a nice perquisite, it is vital to the success (or failure) of the organization. The era of paper memos, faxes, and "regular" mail is on its way out the door. Email has rapidly become the most widely used form of communication in the business world. Instant messaging, internal databases, and bulletin boards are also well used to communicate with suppliers,

employees, and customers alike (Laudon and Laudon, 1991). The explosion of cellular phone and smartphone usage has also transformed the way organizations do business.

Many organizations are allowing employees to work more hours from home, conducting business over the internet and phone. Hours are more flexible, and it is no longer necessary for a physical presence in the office for a large portion of the work. Communications with customers are also altered. The Internet has opened a vast new market to many businesses. A webpage has the potential to introduce the company to millions of new customers, and also allows for easier payments, shopping, and ordering, all from home. Businesses also have an increased opportunity for improving customer relations, thanks to the Internet.

Feedback is available almost instantly via email, online discussion forums, and social media. The speed of the feedback allows organizations more time to troubleshoot problems and build relationships with satisfied, returning customers. In HR, this growth in the means of communication has opened new paths to employee relations as well. Many times, employees have avoided complaining about valid concerns due to fear of retaliation. The ability to send emails provides a relative anonymity that allows for more freedom of communication between the human resources department and a company's workers.

This also allows more ready access to information such as disciplinary guidelines and employee handbooks; keeping employees informed helps to

improve the overall attitude of the workplace. One of the newest trends is social networking sites. Millions of people are registered with such sites as Facebook, MySpace, or LinkedIn. A TUC briefing on social media and HR lists some of the larger issues surrounding the use of these sites. Usage of these sites by employees certainly could be trouble for human resource managers. There is the worry that accessing these sites during work hours, on work stations, will interfere with productivity.

Also, the conduct of employee's on these websites has become a potential concern. Posts dealing with breaches of commercial confidentiality or undermining a company's reputation could potentially require disciplinary action. These issues are still controversial at this point. Many advances in technology pertain to assisting disabled people in performing everyday tasks that they would otherwise be unable to do. As Don Dalton says, these solutions "remove the "dis" from various disabilities" and make their transition into the workforce much easier.

This allows companies to hire a more diverse staff and keeps them compliant with EEOC. For people with physical impairments, Dalton lists a wide variety of available technology that can assist in using a computer, for example. The most cost effective is voice recognition software, but there are also many different types of keyboards as well as a head-mounted mouse controller that can be obtained for use in the workplace. Blind people also have options available. Speech synthesizers, document readers, and screen review packages give the blind the ability to access computer documents as easily as those who can see.

These technologies and more allow companies to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. With this explosion of connectivity and technology in the workplace, security is also a huge concern. Hacker, theft, fraud and vandalism have been a classic worry of a business's databases (Laudon and Laudon, 232). With the growing computer literacy of the workforce, and the growing use of computers at work for personal reasons, organizations are becoming more worried about threats from online sources to their networks. Malware became the leading threat to business's online security in 2007 (Dumitru, 2).

While these problems may seem to be a problem for the IT department, the human resources department should also keep up to date on computer security as well. The information in employee files is sensitive, and every precaution should be taken to insure it stays private, including tough security policies as well as strong firewalls. " The greatest tragedy in America is not the destruction of our natural resources, though that tragedy is great. The truly great tragedy is the destruction of our human resources by our failure to fully utilize our abilities, which means that most men and women go to their graves with their music still in them. Oliver Wendell Holmes said it best. The abilities, knowledge, and talents of an organization's workforce are the biggest assets. Without qualified, motivated workers, any business great or small is doomed to failure. The past fifty years have been a remarkable tale of technological advances, however it should always be remembered that the technology is here to assist and uplift men in their endeavors, not replace them. These advances have transformed the field of

human resource management from a minor departmental position to playing a key role in the development and growth of any organization.