

## Member's Quarterly

Spring 2019 Edition

### Perspective

# HR and IT: Harmony works!

## Working together helps organizations thrive

Which came first, the computer or tech support? If we listen to the IT specialists, it was clearly technical support. The conflict that arises between HR and IT is real and sometimes visceral. Some of it is turf and some of it is older thinking. But smart organizations are sorting through this mess because they can't afford not to. They also need both these parts of the organization to work together in order to achieve business success.



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## Different Roles – Same Goal

The IT role in organizations is fairly straightforward. They are the human interface between the employee and machine, between technology and the rest of us. They keep us linked, networked and connected, and if any of these break down, they are there to help. They are more focused on nuts and bolts and bits and bytes. Their job is to determine the technological requirements of an organization and then to deliver and maintain them. They are guided by their expertise and the budget and priorities which are handed to them.

HR on the other hand has a much more complex role. HR handles a series of issues and problems that are not as regulated as the IT section. They have to manage people's expectations in addition to their own priorities and budget. This means dealing with both employees and managers often at the same time. It means that they have to develop plans and procedures to resolve issues. HR may have a policy manual, but it is likely to be more of a list of guidelines rather than instructions on how to fix something.

This makes both sections very different. What makes them similar is that both of their roles and responsibilities are evolving. This can lead to common ground and help both parts of the organization realize that if they work together, they will not only survive, but thrive and grow.

## Three Ways that HR and IT Can Work Together

Technology affects all of us personally and professionally. We live and work in a connected and interconnected world. Technology exists to help us do our jobs. When HR and IT work together, magic can happen. Here are three areas where HR and IT can work together effectively. In fact, they already are.

### *Recruitment*

Social media and analytics are transforming staffing and recruiting across the globe. HR departments and recruiters are much more likely to advertise on social media sites like LinkedIn, Facebook or Indeed than in traditional media. Not only that, but they are identifying candidates and checking their references, even before posting a competition. They are also working with IT specialists to develop data analytic programs that prescreen candidates and prepare behaviour questions for the interview team in order to find the best and brightest for their organization. This partnership between HR and IT is already paying dividends and we have just begun to scratch the surface of its potential.

### *Professional Development*

Professional development has changed drastically over the years. Most employers see the benefits of investing in training their people, including onboarding new employees. This is not a 'maybe' anymore — it has become a 'must-have' and it has been proven to show a positive return on investment for the organization. One of the shifts has been to incorporate technological advances into employee development

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programs. IT helps HR offer and deliver online training programs that their employees can access from anywhere. Many use technology to allow their employees to take Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Most HR departments also have an electronic tracking system that marks each employee's career development. This teamwork is improving the effectiveness and lowering the overall costs of corporate professional development programs.

#### *Performance Management*

Not many people like to give or receive performance evaluations, but technology makes a difficult process a bit faster and a lot easier. There may still be an annual review process where paper and feedback are exchanged, but the current trend is towards ensuring people are being supported throughout the year with continuous monitoring and feedback. This includes incorporating coaching and development and managing goals. To make these processes easier, technology provides backup support, reminders and generates automatic reports that make constant communication and timely interventions possible and practical. IT specialists are working with HR to continually improve their performance management systems and to help managers and employees track their progress at work.

The lines of communication between HR and IT must always remain open. Make sure your teams are on board and working together for optimal results!

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