

Keeping you up to date with IES
research and consultancy work

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Going global

Peter Reilly

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Working together

IES provides a unique evidence-based consultancy service for clients in the private, public and voluntary sectors:

- Our experts can assist with facilitating new strategies linked to business needs.
- We provide rigorous and independent auditing, evaluation and diagnosis.
- We have extensive experience of designing practical policies and processes.
- We can help you build organisational capability and develop your HR people.

Whatever your professional and HR needs are, get in touch.

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An increasing share of IES's work now has an international flavour to it. This is not just our public policy work with European institutions, but also the work we do for employers. Yet this shift is not all that surprising: recent CIPD research discovered that 90 per cent of HR respondents believe that global issues impact on their role.

Our forthcoming book with Tony Williams (Director of HR, global banking and markets for Royal Bank of Scotland), *Global HR: Challenges Facing the Function*, describes the issues that HR faces in operating in a global environment. We look at change, especially mergers and acquisitions, in this context: the sort of additional questions that need to be addressed in an international transaction. We examine arguments for and against cultural convergence and the effect this has on diversity, employer brand and employee value proposition. A chapter on talent management considers whether operating in the global sphere changes the content of career management and planning work. We also ask what sorts of governance structure and service delivery model apply to the effective global HR function.

Some of these themes are also picked up in

our consultancy work at IES. For example, we are carrying out two projects for Plan International, a child rights and development charity. One project involves a revamp of their global talent management process to make it more effective and consistent (reported in our previous issue - <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/news/insight13.pdf>). This new design is now being rolled out to Plan's teams worldwide. The other project is piloting a workforce planning method that can be applied organisation wide. The aim is to get a better link between business planning and people planning so that any challenges with, for example, recruitment and retention, are addressed in line with business requirements. The new approach will be co-created at a specially-convened workshop, with Plan's HR teams from East Timor, El Salvador, Malawi and Sierra Leone all

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participating in the development work.

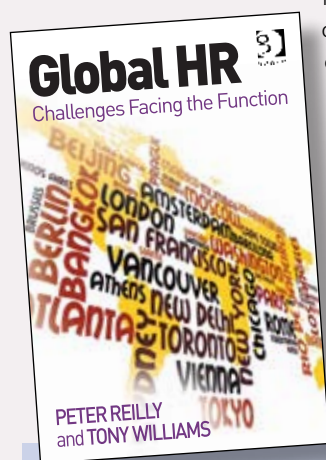
Other smaller pieces of work with global companies have involved workforce planning and expatriate management. The former is a particular preoccupation of large, complex and, especially, dispersed organisations, which are asking how do we get our resources in the right place, particularly if they are in any way specialised? The requirement is often to maximise the level of talent in the growth areas of the world (eg the BRIC countries) whilst simultaneously dealing with the increasing demographic deficit in parts of the developed world (eg Germany and Japan).

Expatriate management is often a subset of the above problem: how do we balance the use of expatriates with the recruitment and development of local staff? Cost clearly forms part of the equation but so does the movement of expertise around the world for personal development reasons and to share knowledge. However much one might want to build up local talent it may be in short supply and only available in a highly-competitive labour market.

Many organisations would choose, where possible, to execute both local and expatriate development. Through *Entreprise et Personnel* we have been helping to train Total's local HR managers in the Middle East and Africa in aspects of the practice of HR management. And with another company, we are supporting the design of their management infrastructure to identify, manage and reintegrate expatriates.

These examples point to a shift in organisations' HR function towards considering the impact global operations or simply interfaces have on their thinking. Wider labour market issues and employment challenges mean that fewer and

fewer organisations can afford to be parochial in their outlook.



Global HR: Challenges Facing the Function, Reilly P, Williams T, will be published in March 2012. For more information, please visit www.ashgate.com. To read more about IES's global HR projects, visit www.ieshr.co.uk

Rock, Visionary or Maverick? Assessing people management behaviours

Dilys Robinson

In just about every organisation, people are promoted to their managerial positions because they are good at their job. Being a manager, however, means managing other people, an activity requiring a set of skills and behaviours that might be very different from those previously used to ensure success. This is an obvious statement, and one that every HR manager, harassed by having to deal with yet another grievance or badly-managed disciplinary, is well aware of – yet organisations persist in promoting high performers with little or no prior training in people management or advice about the behaviours to adopt.

IES is using the evidence gathered in our 'Engaging Manager' research to develop a 360° assessment tool which will enable managers to increase their understanding of their management style, and advise them which behaviours to adopt (and which to drop) in order to engage, motivate and inspire their teams to perform well. The method is a fairly standard 360° approach. Firstly, the manager, the team, the manager's own manager, and a small number of colleagues, complete a questionnaire. The

next step is the analysis of the results, and finally the production of a report for the manager. The report shows how the manager 'scores' on different behaviour groups, and how his/her self-assessment varies from that of the team and colleagues. It also describes the engaging (and disengaging) manager types which the manager most resembles. Most importantly of all, it shows the manager which behaviours to adopt in order to improve, in terms of quick wins and more ambitious targets.

So far, we have tested our approach in two member organisations, Centrica (British Gas) and Family Action, and would like to thank the managers who bravely volunteered. It works on paper, so our next step is to create and test an electronic version. We will be looking for more volunteers!

For more information, contact Dilys Robinson: email dilys.robinson@employment-studies.co.uk, or telephone 01273 763 448.

Four follow-up reports to our Engaging Manager research will be published soon. Visit www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs for more details.

Managing the Facebook generation

Andrea Broughton

The world of technology evolves rapidly and it can sometimes be difficult for employers to keep pace. For example, the use of social media, including sites such as Facebook and Twitter, is now widespread among the population. Individuals can place a great deal of personal information and comment on such sites, which can lead to a blurring of private and work life; remarks about colleagues or their employer, or photographs, can be difficult to delete once posted. While most would agree that employers should not try to control what an employee does in their

spare time, boundaries need to be set around acceptable online conduct in relation to the workplace.

Putting a clear policy into place is a good way of communicating to employees where the boundaries lie, and it can usually be based on existing conduct or internet and email use policies. Although individual employers should decide what is right for them, a good basis is the principle "don't do anything online that you wouldn't do offline".

IES researched a full report, *Workplaces and Social Networking: The Implications for Employment Relations*, for the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), which is available from the IES website.

To read the report, visit www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs and search for *Workplaces and Social Networking*.

IES is also contributing to a series of seminars run by Eversheds on the subject of managing the use of social networking sites. Seven seminars will be held across the country between 17 January and 1 March 2012.

To find out more, visit www.employment-studies.co.uk/news

IES collaboration recognises employers who offer work-life balance

Mary Mercer



Mary Mercer, IES Principal Consultant, middle, presented this award to Henmans, as they are actively encouraging the promotion of staff who work flexibly and ensuring these staff get fair performance management reviews, which is something IES has been urging employers to do.

The winners of the Top Employers for Working Families Awards 2011 were announced in September at a ceremony hosted by Citi. The Benchmark and Awards, founded by Working Families in partnership with the Institute for Employment Studies, recognise organisations across the UK that do the most to support the work-life balance needs of all their employees.

Ninety organisations, representing around one million employees, completed a detailed and challenging benchmark survey that examined their flexible working policies and practices. A good mix of private and public sector and large and small employers submitted information. The survey is deliberately designed to paint a picture of the platinum standard in flexible working, and organisations who came close to that are doing very well indeed.

The results clearly demonstrated that employers are showing a growing acceptance that flexible working and work-life integration are vital to an organisation's effectiveness and business success. Approaches such as advertising all posts as available for flexible working, recognising the particular role of fathers (including support groups for separated fathers and generous fully paid paternity leave), and ensuring flexible workers have access to development and career progression, were just some of the key steps taken by those who won awards

this year (who included Centrica, Deutsche Bank and the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Trust).

IES originally designed the survey with Working Families and every year we support the evaluation, the judging and the recommendations to all organisations who want to better at supporting their flexible workers and achieving a flexible workforce. This year's recommendations suggested that, for the future, organisations focus on:

- equality for fathers – too many organisations have focused almost exclusively on the needs of mothers
- equality in performance management outcomes and career development for flexible workers – flexible workers are still losing out when it comes to training and development and the top outcomes from performance management
- the role of line managers in flexible working – line managers are patchy in their skill in managing a flexible workforce. Managers really do need to be more skilled in deciding what type of flexibility is appropriate in their area and in ensuring flexible workers are treated fairly
- monitoring flexible working impacts – many organisations have flexible working as it is 'the right thing to do'. They do not really know about the impact on their bottom line or on their staff.

Good corporate governance

Paul Fairhurst

IES recently ran a joint early-morning seminar with Eversheds, focused on the importance of, and challenges in, ensuring that an organisation's board is working as effectively as it can. There were senior HR people and company secretaries present from private, public and not for profit sectors and, whilst it was recognised that the starting point is to ensure that a board is not fundamentally failing in its duty, there was real interest in how an evidence based review of the board's effectiveness can add significant value to an organisation.

In his speech, Stephen Haddrill, Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), emphasised that evaluations should be bespoke in their formulation and delivery. He also noted that some companies are still reluctant to engage an external facilitator, with some boards believing that they are the best judge of their own effectiveness. However, he responded, "We believe that, over time, as Boards learn to value the benefits of external evaluation... these doubts will ease."

The FRC, in the introduction to its updated Corporate Governance Code states that: "The challenge should not be underrated. To run a corporate board successfully is extremely demanding. Constraints on time and knowledge combine with the need to maintain mutual respect and openness between a cast of strong, able and busy directors dealing with each other across the different demands of executive and non-executive roles. To achieve good governance requires continuing and high quality effort."

Building on our reputation for evaluation as an independent, objective, apolitical organisation, IES has developed a rigorous approach to assessing a board's adherence to the basic principles of good governance. In addition, we believe that there are higher levels of board performance that are based more on the people and relationship issues, such as how effective board meetings are and what they focus on, rather than just whether they happen or not. Our suite of evaluation tools allows organisations to choose what level of assessment and support they want to deliver their required business outcomes.

To learn more about how IES can help your board become more effective visit www.employment-studies.co.uk/boardimprovement or contact Paul Fairhurst at paul.fairhurst@employment-studies.co.uk

The changing workforce deal

Peter Reilly

The local government sector (and indeed much of the public sector) is going through substantial change at present and will be doing so for at least the next three years. This will involve a substantial reduction to employment numbers, though the precise size of the cut will vary between organisations. Much of this reduction will come via redundancy, some voluntary and some compulsory. There will also be traditional outsourcing or the creation of new bodies to undertake local services; in both cases staff transfers will occur. Moreover, there have been changes made to terms and conditions of employment, diminishing some of the benefits of local government employment, which may be of a temporary or permanent nature.

Against this background, there is an important question to ask about what the employment offer will look like in the sector in three years time. This question has to be answered once councils start recruiting again, but it is also relevant to the existing workforce. To a greater extent than in the past, council employees will have to deliver high productivity if the 'more with less' aspiration is to be delivered. The research is clear that employee productivity comes in part from their engagement with the organisation. How can organisations ensure that at the end of the cutting process they will have a motivated workforce?

One way that Councils might engender demotivation is through the way they manage change. Poor leadership, poor communication and poor line management will generate lack of engagement. How the change is managed (restructuring decisions, redundancy selection and appointment processes) is critical. Get this wrong and they will lose employees' hearts and minds. Moreover, having the wrong people in the wrong jobs will, like disengagement, also damage productivity, especially where roles are ill defined or structures impede

collaboration and good performance management.

There is a lot written on managing change processes well and one would hope (or exhort) councils to take note of this best practice. Perhaps, whilst they are making change happen, they may find it harder to focus on the future employment vision, especially how this is understood by the workforce. Yet most councils will still be employing the majority of the same people in three years as now. What do they have to offer them?

To explore the changing psychological contract and to try to build a new deal for the workforce, IES has received support from London Councils to conduct focus groups in Waltham Forest and Haringey and an employee survey in the latter. The aim has been to track employee perceptions of what they currently 'get' from their council and what they 'give' to their employers, against a background of significant change taking place. We hope this will inform future discussion on what the organisational offering to employees might look like in the future, building on earlier London Councils-sponsored research on total reward.

aroundIES



IES, Brighton

Introducing our latest members

We have recently welcomed eight new organisations to the HR Network, a select community with exclusive access to up-to-the-minute HR research and thinking:

- NHS Employers
- ISG plc
- Treasury Solicitors Department
- Network Rail
- Birmingham City Council
- Astra Zeneca
- The Housing Ombudsman
- Kingston University

We are sure they will enjoy being part of our network of leading-edge professionals, with exclusive seminars and conferences, access to IES experts, involvement in shared research and a members-only knowledge base.

To find out more about the HR Network go to:
www.employment-studies.co.uk/network/



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About the institute

IES, a not-for-profit organisation, is the UK's leading independent centre of research and consultancy in employment policy and HR practice. We contribute to corporate strategy and performance, through research and evidence-based consultancy commissioned by individual employers. IES is also commissioned by government departments, agencies and other bodies to research and advise on the effectiveness and development of public employment policy. Our expertise is available to all organisations through research, consultancy, publications and the Internet.