

Workforce

JUNE 20, 2005

MANAGEMENT



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MONDAY

DAILY CONFERENCE NEWS

HR depts still struggle for strategic role

By Jonathan Pont

For all the talk about human resources finally getting “a seat at the table”—a phrase that’s likely to be heard dozens of times over the next three days of this conference—there are many who believe that the profession still has a long way to go.

An in-depth study of 50 organizations re-

leased this month by Hewitt Associates finds that human resources is often just plain “stuck,” and concludes that many traditional HR practices stand in the way of sustained organizational change. And in the view of Edward Lawler, who has studied the profession since the 1960s, HR still is not the strategic player it so badly wants to be.

“Human resources is still predominantly an

administrative function,” says Lawler, director of the Center for Effective Organizations at the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California. More often than not, he says, HR gets bogged down in the tactical details related to retirement plans, health care benefits and the myriad regulations that govern employment.

According to Hewitt’s [continued on page 10]

TODAY'S News

12,000 TURN OUT; SHRM EXPECTS NUMBERS TO RISE

So far, attendance at the Society for Human Resource Management’s annual conference this year in San Diego appears to be down considerably. Last year’s conference, which was held in New Orleans, had 17,000 attendees, according to SHRM’s 2004 annual report. This year there are about 12,000 attendees.

Jen Jorgensen, a SHRM spokeswoman, said that the number cited in the annual report includes the hundreds of volunteers from the local SHRM chapter who attend the conference.

Jorgensen conceded that there might be a small decline in attendance this year because the conference overlapped with Father’s Day and because it’s hard for many people to get to the West Coast. But SHRM is still hopeful the numbers will pick up as the conference continues.

“We are still expecting more attendees to come,” Jorgensen says, adding that often people attend the SHRM conference for only one day. “We expect the (final attendance) number to be comparable to last year.”

JOB BOARDS HIT THE STREETS

Monster and Yahoo!HotJobs hit the streets of San Diego on Sunday to tout their job boards. Monster rented ad space on downtown pedicabs and is sponsoring a double-decker bus that offers free guided tours of the city to SHRM attendees. [continued on page 7]



FATHER FIGURE ▲ A bird’s eye view of Sunday keynote speaker Bill Cosby at the convention center hall.

Getting behind the Cos

Opening keynote Bill Cosby tells an appreciative SHRM crowd that he identifies with their struggles.

By Douglas P. Shuit

BILL COSBY kept an audience of 12,000 human resource professionals in stitches Sunday, opening the 57th annual convention of the Society for Human Resource Management in San Diego with a nonstop volley of jokes that

SUNDAY'S Keynote

won him thousands of new friends.

Cosby seemed to hit perfect notes with the audience, talking about the tough job they face trying to deal with the concerns of both workers and management.

Management wants to know how to get rid of an employee and asks human resources to figure out a way to do it, he said. The employee, at the same time, turns to human resources to tell them how [continued on page 12]

FOR COMPLETE ONLINE COVERAGE, GO TO:
www.workforce.com/shrmdaily

INSIDE:

SOME STUDENTS
ASPIRE TO BECOME
HR MANAGERS/7

MEET AND GREET
ISN'T ENOUGH FOR
EXHIBITORS/13

CHALLENGES OF
DEALING WITH
DIVERSITY/14



FLIPPING OUT ▲ Attendees stock up on flip-flop sandals at the Gap's booth at the HRM Marketplace.

Focus on bottom line means vendors must provide metrics

Panelist says companies are "tired of carrying HR as a cost center," and want numbers backing up efforts.

By Jessica Marquez

In the wake of a three-year bear market, CEOs—looking to tighten margins—are more involved than ever in the human resources initiatives of their companies.

Five years ago, employers could team up with HR vendors with the vague notion that someday the service would contribute to their companies' bottom lines. These days, however, the CEO and other top executives usually will sit in on vendor meetings and want to know what re-

sults they will see—and when.

"CEOs and CFOs are putting more pressure on the human resources executives to really align efforts with the bottom line," Don Payne, senior vice president of leadership solutions at Aon Consulting, said in an interview before the start of the SHRM conference. "They are tired of carrying HR as a cost center. They want to understand how their efforts measure up."

For vendors, this means they need to provide specific metrics and benchmarking tools so that human resources executives can show their CEOs how their recruiting, training, retention and other efforts are paying off.

"The ultimate goal for vendors is to be able to track the employee from cradle to deathbed," said Rick Fletcher, presi- **[continued on page 6]**

Insider's Guide TO SHRM

With 800 vendors, dozens of sessions and only 2½ days left, there's just not enough time to do everything. Here are some suggestions for how to spend your Monday. Feel free to stop by Booth 3001 to let us know what we missed.

VENDORS: Mark Marcon, an investment analyst at R.W. Baird, says that time-and-attendance and related technology is hot, with Kronos' Workforce Central 5.0 it's the category's "most successful new product launch ever" (Booth 1429). With absence-management technology, Marcon says, companies can generate significant savings that haven't been fully explored before. Among many others in this genre: CyberShift (Booth 2933), Time America (3512) and Workbrain (1026).

Applicant tracking systems are much improved since the last economic expansion, and in demand. iCIMS (3432) signed 28 new clients last quarter and beat last year's revenue for the same period by 180 percent. Competitors include BrassRing (1717), Webhire (456), Deploy (3003), Recruiternet (2944), Peopleclick (2211), Virtual Edge (2633) and Kenexa (3217), to name a few. ... Referrals are the most popular source of new employees, and a host of companies, most of them new, are automating the process. Among them: Forumjobs, Jobthread, H3.com, Y or Z and Jobster (737).

SESSIONS: If you're not already focusing on the aging workforce, start today. Hear about the Supreme Court's recent age-discrimination ruling from Douglas Towns, a partner in the law firm Jones Day, at 10:45 a.m. Masochists can catch it Tuesday at 7 a.m. instead. ... Wal-Mart's lawsuit du jour, filed last month, centers on a sexual harassment allegation. At 10:45 a.m., Myrna Galligano of Holland & Knight will tell you how to keep your company from facing the same fate. ... At 4 p.m., skip the consultants' speeches and listen to Carolyn Shockey explain how her hospital, Norman Regional, sent employee morale skyrocketing. Not a typo: Her team implemented 600 employee suggestions in three months.

AFTER HOURS: Two of the big three job boards are hosting invite-only parties. HotJobs' happy hour features the Village People. CareerBuilder is going to the zoo, an event that spokesperson Jennifer Sullivan says is "sold out." ... The Padres love to beat Southern California's more famous National League baseball team. The Los Angeles Dodgers lead off at 7:10 p.m. today, tomorrow and Wednesday and 12:35 p.m. Thursday. We're raffling off a few tickets (Booth 3001).

Welcome to the first issue of the *Workforce Management* Daily Conference News. We're excited about bringing you daily news from the SHRM Annual Conference & Exposition here in San Diego.

This event is the largest and most important gathering of its kind. With 12,000 attendees, a wealth of educational sessions and 800 exhibitors, there's more to learn, see and do here than anyone could possibly accomplish in four days. But don't worry: Eleven *Workforce Management* re-



Todd Johnson

Publisher's Note

porters and editors are here to help you stay informed with news coverage today, Tuesday and Wednesday. We will also post daily conference news online at www.workforce.com and produce a daily online conference newsletter.

If you have a news tip or suggestion, please visit the *Workforce Management* booth, No. 3001, or e-mail editor John Hollon at jhollon@workforce.com. Enjoy the conference, and rely on *Workforce Management* to bring you the news.

—Todd Johnson
Publisher

5 Minutes with



**TODAY'S
Keynote
8:30 A.M.**

MALCOLM GLADWELL, a slightly built, unlikely celebrity who looks more like an earnest schoolboy than a raging star speaker, theorizes that being short is probably as much of a handicap to corporate success as being a female or black.

"We have a sense of what a leader is supposed to look like," he writes in his latest book, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. "And the stereotype is so powerful that when someone fits it, we simply become blind to other considerations."

Gladwell, SHRM's keynote speaker today at 8:30 a.m., is a master at introducing novel ways of looking at how people make decisions. He's also the author of the best-seller *The Tipping Point* and has become a wildly popular business consultant and speaker who addresses subjects ranging from how executives make hiring decisions to how people make choices about whom to marry—in the blink of an eye.

He studied CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, for example, and learned that the overwhelming majority are just a shade under 6 feet tall. But, only about 14.5 percent of American men are 6 feet tall.

The engaging, 41-year-old sage is not only at center stage on the lecture circuit, he's also a sought-after consultant working for such companies as PricewaterhouseCoopers and Hewlett-Packard. Gladwell is a former business and science reporter for *The Washington Post* and now is a staff writer for *The New Yorker*.

Some insights from *Blink*:

On learning to make better decisions

Gladwell believes that people can manage their unconscious reactions and teach themselves to sort through first impressions to "figure out which ones are important and which ones are screwing us up."

No matter how much people like to cling to the idea that decision-making is the result of rational deliberation, he says that most of our thinking happens subconsciously in a split second.

The task of *Blink* "is to convince you of a simple fact: Decisions made very quickly can be every bit as good as decisions made cautiously and deliberately."

On decision-making

He argues that many of the snap judgments people make are based on previously formed impressions that stem from subconscious biases and unconscious reactions. Once we become aware of this, Gladwell says, we can learn to lis-

ten to our "onboard computer," and know when to be wary of it. We can extract meaning from a "thin slice" of information.

Relying on the good judgment of employees is the key ingredient for a new kind of decision-making environment, he says. And it is judgment that companies should be looking for when interviewing job candidates. With the right people, companies can rid themselves of their obsession with data-driven decisions.

On going with your gut

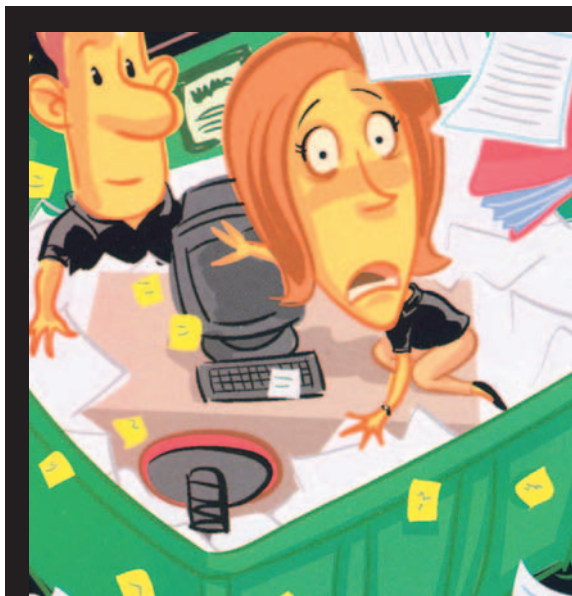
Herman Miller did not heed market research when it created the Aeron chair, the company's best seller ever. Company execs stuck to their instincts and were able to change the customer's notion of what a chair is supposed to look like.

To be successful, companies have to be willing to make that kind of mental leap, he says. It's "only by accepting the risk of failure (that a company will) ever hit a home run."

On hiring

Gladwell writes about Warren Harding: "... One of the worst presidents in American history," got the job not because he was smart, but because he appeared presidential. The way he looked—tall, handsome and distinguished—"carried so many powerful connotations that stopped the normal process of thinking dead in its tracks.

"The Warren Harding error is the dark side of rapid cognition," Gladwell notes. **wfm**



"It all makes sense. Accountability can be measured. Shane was excellent...focused, enjoyable, enthusiastic, to the point."
Kim Fitzpatrick, Manager, Michelin NA

SHRM couldn't have chosen a more energetic presenter for their Rise and Shine Session!

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TODAY'S News

[continued from page 1]

"We are offering free pedi-cab rides to attendees as well," said Neil Costa, director of strategic alliances. Monster also has a Humvee limo trolling the streets.

Yahoo!HotJobs has been running radio spots on San Diego stations the past few weeks in preparation for the conference, said Bryon Labumbard, regional sales manager for the West Coast. The San Francisco company also has taken out ads on taxis throughout the city.

PERKS.COM BOUNCES BACK

Perks.com, a name from the Internet boom era, went from 100 employees to about a dozen. Going from riches to rags to riches, Perks' workforce is now back up to 60, and the company is exhibiting at SHRM for the first time.

"We're like a million other dot-coms," says chief marketing officer Steve Timmerman. "We grew too big."

Perks manages motivation and recognition programs for corporations, including health and safety awards, sales force incentives and rewards for new product launches. Some of its business is geared toward consumers, such as an incentive that a BMW dealership would give people for test-driving automobiles.

MONSTER, WEBHIRE CONNECT

Monster and Webhire are joining forces to create what they say will be a solution that will streamline the recruiting process by consolidating candidate sourcing and applicant tracking. The companies are announcing their affiliation today, and Webhire is the first of Monster's Premier ATS Alliance members.

The integrated hiring solution gives recruiters and candidates near real-time posting, integrated resume search, and "shared apply," which pre-populates a candidate's information from their Monster profile to an application posted by a joint customer using Webhire Recruiter or Webhire Healthcare.

WETFEET RANKS CAREER SITES

WetFeet has come out with a new report on the best career Web sites by corporations. Goldman Sachs came out on top, followed by Boston Consulting Group, Bain & Co., McKinsey, IBM, Microsoft, GE, Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase and Procter & Gamble. The rankings were derived from focus groups of job seekers—from entry-level to midcareer. Participants rated sites on navigation, branding, content and functionality. Said one focus group participant: "If the Web site is not impressive, you start to rethink why you thought you'd be interested in this company in the first place."

"The silver bullet would be one talent management system that does it all. That just doesn't exist yet."

[TITLE continued from page 3]

dent of HRchitect, a Frisco, Texas-based human capital management systems consulting firm.

It's no longer enough for a recruiting program to bring in lots of people. The employer now wants to know what kinds of people are recruited and how they contribute to the bottom line. CEOs want to know how rewards programs and training affected an employee's productivity. "For every HR process, the CEO wants to know, 'What is our return on investment?'" Payne said.

Many vendors of human resources products are enhancing their services to provide metrics on an end-to-end basis. For example, SuccessFactors, a performance management system provider in San Mateo, California, is enhancing its service to include succession planning and, eventually, recruiting. That would allow employers to bring in potential successors to executives from outside the company and keep track of their progress, said Randy Reynolds, the company's senior director for product management, in an interview ahead of the SHRM conference.

The need for this data has fueled a number of recent acquisitions among HR companies.

For example, Jacksonville, Florida-based Recruitmax last year acquired KnowledgePoint, a performance management systems provider. Similarly, Authoria took over Advanced Information Management, and Workscape purchased Performaworks. The alliances answered client demands, said Mark Lifter, executive vice president of talent solutions consulting at Aon. "Companies are looking for more integrated performance management systems," he said in an interview before the SHRM confab.

Will all of these deals result in a few one-stop shops that could meet all of a company's HR needs? It depends on whom you ask. Fletcher said his clients are increasingly looking to work with two or three vendors—rather than seven or eight—to service all of their needs. "The silver bullet would be one talent management system that does it all," he said. "That just doesn't exist yet."

But Jane Paradiso, national practice director for workforce planning at Watson Wyatt, argues that there will always be a need for niche providers. "Some companies would rather have specialized systems that cater to their specific employee bases," she said in an interview. "They are going to continue to want things that are built just for them."

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JUST BEACHY ▲ Some attendees ran to Thomson West to play its quiz game and receive a backpack on rollers. Others had to wait in line, one of the longest on the exhibit floor Sunday.

Student conference not just for aspiring HR professionals

About 30 percent of attendees are from other disciplines. Many see networking opportunities.

By Janet Wiscombe

FOR MANY of this year's 200 participants at SHRM's Annual Student Conference in San Diego, the subject of human resources takes a back seat to talk of more immediate experiences. And for Casey Hunsucker, a senior in management and marketing at Indiana Institute of Technology, that means airplanes.

To get to San Diego from Indianapolis, Hunsucker flew on an airplane for the first time in his life.

"In the movies, planes are bigger," notes the 21-year-old budding entrepreneur. "I also saw the ocean for the first time. I consider this a productive vacation."

As in past years, Indiana Tech has one of the largest contingents of college students at SHRM. But of the 20 attendees, many aren't planning careers in human resources. Chuck Salvwetti, SHRM's manager of student programs, estimates that about 30 percent of the students who come to the convention are from other disciplines, including engineering and computer science.

"It's a little discouraging," Salvwetti says. "We want them to be lifelong partners with SHRM."

Salvwetti says he has found in recent years that students are a lot more savvy about their careers. "They understand the importance of internships and meeting people. Our surveys show that they overwhelmingly say they want more mentoring opportunities, more intern information. We don't do job placement per se, but we certainly are ramping up our efforts in the area of jobs."

SHRM's student program was created in 1965 to promote interaction between human resource management students and practitioners. Since the first chapter was chartered nearly 40 years ago, the program has experienced explosive growth. It now includes more than 430 affiliated student chapters and nearly 10,000 student members.

Though there are some students who are old enough to have grown children of their own, they tend to be college-age juniors and seniors at schools ranging from places like Indiana Tech, with a student body of 3,000, to large state universities such as California State University, Stanislaus, the chapter that is hosting this year's student conference.

Stanislaus, located south of Modesto in Cali-

fornia's Central Valley, was asked to be the main organizer because there are no SHRM student chapters in San Diego and few in the state, says Wendy Howay, SHRM chapter president at Stanislaus.

Howay is beginning a new job in the HR department at her college. She says the student sessions on mentoring, networking, diversity and workplace change are very helpful in getting a broad sense of the profession.

"Students are here to help develop their

chapters—and themselves," Howay says. "HR is a growing profession. It is one of the most important areas in business."

Some of the participants at the student conference are earning college credits for attending. But for most, the real benefits aren't quite as easy to define, says Jeffrey Walls, a student adviser at Indiana Tech who has been bringing students to SHRM for 12 years.

"We were at a karaoke bar in Washington, D.C., at a SHRM conference in 1993 and one of our students—who had a job at GM putting lug nuts on cars—met someone in HR at GM and was offered a job in management.

"Our students are already getting ready for the conference next year in Washington, D.C.," he says. "SHRM is a phenomenal experience."

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Companies need to focus on developing HR organizations that have the skills, credibility and knowledge to effect critical changes in the business.

[TITLE continued from page 1]

report—titled “Is HR Stuck in the Middle?”—43 percent of HR’s time is devoted to program administration and customer service. For a company of 25,000 employees and 250 HR professionals, that’s more than 140 full-time HR employees who do nothing but answer questions, gather information, process transactions and manage data, according to Hewitt. In other words, they’re doing nonstrategic work.

SHRM president and CEO Susan Meisinger said Sunday in her opening remarks that there is perception in the C-suite that among such functions as finance, sales and marketing, IT and research and development, HR ranked “dead last” in five categories, including strategic contributions and business knowledge.

“Ouch,” Meisinger said. “Is it a perception? Yeah. Is it reality? You tell me.”

Outsourcing, which has gained momentum in the past year, has been marketed as a way for HR to shed the administrative baggage that has kept it from doing its important strategic work. But when a company farms out one or two areas like health benefits and retirement programs to a third party, Lawler says the result is a modest reduction in administrative costs, not a strategic gain.

“Outsourcing is not the final answer” for companies seeking to transform their HR practice from a reactive force to a strategic one, he says. Rather, companies need to focus on developing HR organizations that have the skills, credibility and knowledge to effect critical changes in the business.

In the years ahead, HR organizations will do that work with fewer people, thanks to downsizing that affects staff functions in companies everywhere. Outsourcing also will reduce the overall number of HR positions.

Fewer bodies in HR will not diminish its importance, however. For those who survive the cuts, the hoped-for shift to a strategic model will require that they have more business expertise well beyond the traditional HR realm. One example Lawler cites is the ability to manage complex contracts with a company’s outsourcing vendors. He [continued on opposite page]



SHRM Facts

The conference started in 1948 with 62 attendees and a profit of \$72.68. This year’s conference has 12,000 attendees.

Some 200 students and 25 student advisers from across the country are attending the 2005 SHRM Student Conference.

There is an international flavor to this year’s conference, with 48 countries and 450 international attendees participating. South Korea’s contingent is the largest, with 150 people.

SHRM has joined with EmployeeMedia to back the new .jobs domain. SHRM will oversee the ethics and policies side of the

relationship, while EmployeeMedia will handle the business aspects.

Two new SHRM offices are opening in China and India.

At the opening reception, president and CEO Sue Meisinger introduced SHRM’s 200,000th member, Feliciano Mendoza, director of human resource management for Jefferson Parish, Louisiana.

A guest at the San Diego conference is Leonard Smith, a founding member and previous chair of the American Society for Personnel Administration, which was founded in 1948 and later became SHRM.

[continued from opposite page]

recently saw one document that ran 1,000 pages.

Perhaps more than anything, companies want HR professionals “who understand the business challenges they face,” says Fran Luisi, a principal in Charleston Partners in Rumson, New Jersey, a firm that matches HR executives and businesses.

To that end, HR professionals should make it a top priority to spend half their time learning the issues that confront different areas of the organization such as operations and finance, says Mike Losey, former president and CEO of SHRM.

More junior practitioners need to get a basic understanding of the business world, something that Losey half-jokingly says “shoe clerks have a better grasp of” than some HR people do.

He recounts a recent certification meeting in which a member of a company’s HR staff asked him the difference between blue-collar and white-collar workers and whether companies were obligated to pay striking employees. Losey says he was amazed that someone with so little grasp of workplace issues had an HR job in the first place.

Despite such anecdotes, there are many companies at which HR functions at a high level and is viewed as a strategic and vital part of the business.

At GlaxoSmithKline in Philadelphia, Tom Kaney, senior vice president for human resources, says that his group is part of the executive strategy team. Kaney meets daily with the pharmaceutical company’s top executives.

Though that kind of formal access is key, Kaney says another factor can determine whether HR initiatives change and thrive: a company’s informal culture.

“People knock on the door and walk in,” he says of his relationship with colleagues. But even the best HR person can’t be effective if a company has a stiff culture and a lack of access to decision-makers. In such cases, HR will forever be “swimming upstream,” Kaney says.

According to Hewitt’s report, HR leaders who want to get “unstuck” and work strategically can do so, provided they have “a clear vision of where to take HR and a plan for getting there quickly.

“To make such changes a reality, HR leaders will have to have the “drive and charisma” to convince everyone in the organization, from the CEO on down, that this is the workforce management path to take, according to Hewitt.

“When led with energy and insight,” the report concludes, “an HR transformation effort can gain enough momentum to deliver exceptional results.”

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SHRM positioning itself for international expansion

The association’s annual report reveals efforts to make human resources a more strategic player.

By Jonathan Pont

GROWTH IN GLOBAL BUSINESS will shape human resources more than anything else in the coming decade, according to comments by SHRM president and CEO Sue Meisinger on Sunday afternoon. But among the business in which SHRM’s members work, she says the international component is still “low on their list of priorities.”

For SHRM, the growth in overseas business led in 2004 to the establishment of an internationalization strategy. Elements of that strategy are getting special attention this year, rising to the top of the list of SHRM’s continuing global efforts for its nearly 200,000 members.

In February, the organization released results from a survey it conducted in 23 countries and 11 languages. And last year, a SHRM affiliate launched a new certification intended especial-

ly for a global audience. Initial reports bode well for it: The number of test-takers exceeded expectations by 50 percent, according to the annual report. This year, SHRM plans to open offices in India and China and establish HR executive exchange missions in those countries. And on the radio, SHRM will lend its name to a new program in which CEOs discuss the importance of human capital issues.

But Meisinger says that despite the speed with which many companies intend to expand global operations, HR is still left out of the loop until the last minute. “An HR manager might get a call on a Friday night from a CEO about a new office in Belgium, asking, ‘What do you know about Brussels?’”

Sunday also marked the official release of the SHRM annual report for 2004. The nearly 50-page document shows the organization implementing a host of new programs over the past year to better align it with the changing nature of the practice. And while globalization is a major theme, the HR effort to become a more strategic partner runs through much of what SHRM is doing to remain relevant in a changing environment.

Those efforts include structural alignment: SHRM has streamlined its presence for its members, establishing seven regional councils. But the primary goal is education of its membership. One initiative for 2005 is studying the feasibility of establishing generally accepted HR standards and practices.

SHRM also released annual surveys that detail its research in areas of benefits, the future of the U.S. labor pool and employee satisfaction.

What makes employees happy are five things: benefits, pay, work/life balance, job security and feeling safe in the workplace.

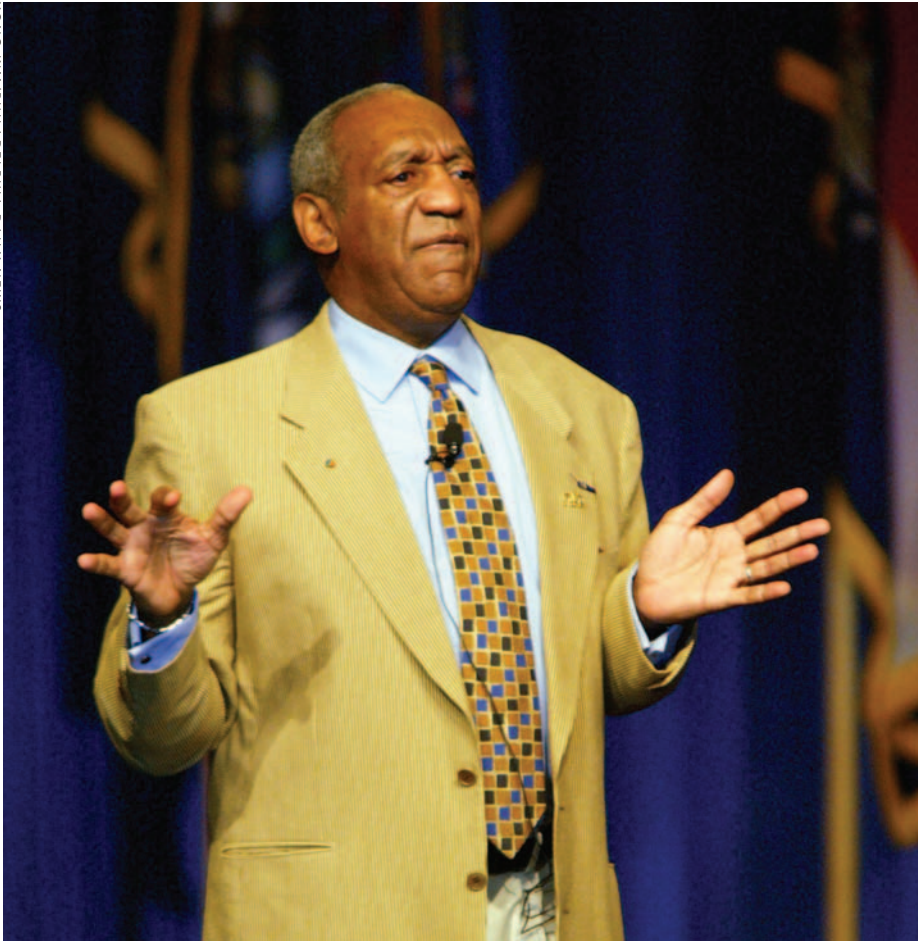
But the top five aspects for HR professionals are the relationship with an immediate supervisor, management recognition of employee job performance, compensation, benefits and communication between employees and senior management.

The disconnect, says SHRM chief knowledge officer Deb Cohen, is how HR and employees define job satisfaction. “If you are an HR professional, you think strategically about how to make everything work,” she says. “You aren’t necessarily in the head of the employee.”

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT ▲ President and CEO Sue Meisinger gave a brief state-of-HR update ahead of Sunday’s keynote speech.



BILL COSBY

Born: July 12, 1937, Philadelphia

Wife: Camille Olivia Cosby (née Hanks), producer; married January 25, 1964

Education: Obtained his bachelor's degree in radio/TV/film from Temple University in Philadelphia. Earned a master's degree in education in 1972 and a doctorate in education in 1977 from the University of Massachusetts. Cosby also has an honorary doctorate of music from Berklee College of Music for his commitment to higher education and for his longtime love and promotion of jazz.

Films

Ghost Dad

Jack

Leonard Part 6

Uptown Saturday Night

Television

Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids

The Cosby Show

The Cosby Mysteries

I Spy

Recordings

Bill Cosby at His Best

Wonderfulness

Bill Cosby Is a Very Funny Fellow—Right!

Books

Fatherhood

Congratulations! Now What? A Book for Graduates

Learning to Learn

[COSBY continued from page 1]

to save their job.

"And that's why (you) drink," he told the audience, cracking up the group by asking, "So why are you here instead of drinking?"

Cosby frequently drew biblical analogies in his talk, adding his own interpretations to the story of Creation. Sunday's talk was no different.

He called God the first workforce manager; Adam and Eve were his first employees. Even though they had a relatively simple task to do, tending the Garden of Eden, they made a mess of things. The pair got diverted, he said.

"Just like people at work, they want to do something else, run someone else's job," he said, getting a solid laugh.

In the same vein, Cosby told the story of two geniuses and two human resources professionals all trying to get into heaven at the same time.

The gatekeeper told them that they could get into heaven if they came up with a question God couldn't answer. The geniuses were stumped, but the human resources pair got in.

"They asked God when the company they were working for was going to get their shit together," Cosby said, getting one of his biggest laughs of the day.

Seats in the massive San Diego Convention Center hall began filling up early Sunday afternoon. The early arrivals were entertained by Beach Boys music piped into the cavernous

hall, including "Good Vibrations," which set the tone for the day.

"He's very funny," Mary Williams, vice president of human resources at the Foothills Bank in Yuma, Arizona, said of Cosby. "I think he felt sorry for us because being in charge of human beings is like trying to herd chickens."

Karen Doyle, with the Colorado State Employees Association, said Cosby seemed to understand the problems faced by the profession.

"I feel caught in the middle all the time," she

kind, when he talked about tensions between men and women, he didn't mention minorities in the workplace. Burt Collier, human resources supervisor at the Orlando Utilities Commission, said it would not have been appropriate for Cosby to address that issue.

"I'm not surprised he didn't bring it up," Collier said. "It would have lent controversy to the expo, and this is not the forum for that."

Wearing a dark suit, white shirt and patterned tie, Cosby impressed the audience by

"All of you have to be prepared for the new, and if you don't, HR will become something that stands for somebody to blame."

said, leaving the convention hall with a smile on her face.

Cosby, a hugely successful television star and comedian who also wrote the best-selling books "Fatherhood" and "Time Flies," stayed away from controversial subjects in his SHRM speech.

Last year, he created a storm of controversy when he criticized poor African Americans for what he said was a lack of personal responsibility.

Although Cosby touched on diversity, of a

clearly coming down on their side in what is a tough job.

"You just want to make a difference going up against the sandbags they keep piling up against you. Am I right or wrong?" he asked. He got his answer when the audience roared their assent.

Human resources faces numerous challenges, he said, from poorly educated workers to finding jobs for people with special needs.

"All of you have to be prepared for the new, and if you don't, HR will become something that stands for somebody to blame," he said. **wjm**

Meet and greet isn't enough for exhibitors seeking leads

Merely piling up the business cards won't bring in clients, consultant says; it's about quality face time.

By Jessica Marquez

GETTING FACE TIME is the name of the game for any exhibitor at any conference. But at an event like this one, where there are more than 800 exhibitors and 12,000 attendees, getting the attention of the right people is crucial.

Unfortunately, most exhibitors do not have any metrics in place to measure the effectiveness of their booth staff or determine the return on investment, said Jefferson Davis, president of Competitive Edge, a Charlotte, North Carolina, consulting firm that specializes in helping exhibitors make the most of trade shows.

The easiest thing to do is count leads at closing time, and most companies do that, Davis said. "But most companies do not determine the cost per lead, and they definitely do not measure the cost per lead from show to show to determine which ones are delivering the most value," he said in an interview.

In a presentation Sunday titled *Inside the Numbers*, Davis described to about 60 exhibitor managers attending the steps they should take to measure the value of a conference.

First, he recommends that companies figure out their costs for exhibiting at a show and decide whether they are reasonable. Companies need to dissect those costs and benchmark them, Davis said.

The average exhibitor allocates 24 percent of the total sales and marketing budget toward exhibitions, Davis said in his presentation, citing a 2000 study conducted by the Center for Exhibition Industry Research. "If you are way below that number or way above it, you should think about it."

After examining external cost benchmarks, exhibitors then should create internal benchmarks to figure out what their expenses have run from show to show. Identifying the attendees to target is crucial to making a conference valuable, Davis said. Most conference producers will

provide data on the titles of attendees who are coming to their shows. Some will even provide names and e-mail addresses, he said. Exhibitors must figure out the profile of their target audience and which attendees fit that profile. "And then they need to get into preshow marketing mode and touch those people and get on their agendas," Davis said in the interview.

Too often companies just assume that any business cards they get qualify as leads, but exhibitors need to understand that generating leads is about quality, not quantity, Davis said. "A client told me that his company got 5,000 leads at a recent conference," Davis said in his presentation. "Those were people who swiped their cards at the booth. I told him, 'Those aren't leads, those are contestants.'"

It's important for exhibitors to make the most of their time with visitors to their booths. "The average interaction is 7.3 minutes, according to industry research," Davis said.

Davis advises exhibitors to define a lead as a situation in which the exhibitor was able to understand the attendee's business problems and ascertain that there is an actual business opportunity. Furthermore, everything about the interaction should be documented so that when the exhibitor follows up, they can refer to the conversation.

To determine return on investment of a show, exhibitors should look at both

hard dollars—the actual cash brought in—as well as soft dollars. Davis defines soft dollars as savings that result from exhibiting at a show.

For example, if the cost of a field sales call is \$322 and the cost per interaction at a conference is \$122, the company has cut the cost of the interaction by \$200, Davis said in the interview. "If you interacted with 350 people, that's \$700,000 in soft dollars," he said.

Davis said that companies should aim for a return on investment that is \$3 to \$5 back for every \$1 spent over a measurable period of time. The timeline depends on a number of factors, including the typical length of the company's sales cycle and the frequency of the show. "Companies need to exhibit by objectives instead of exhibiting by hope, which is what eight out of 10 exhibitors do," Davis said. **wfm**



FOCUS EFFORTS ▲ *Competitive Edge's Jefferson Davis says identifying which attendees to target is crucial for vendors.*



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Creating a 'third culture' for growing Hispanic workforce

Employers are urged to capitalize on the best of American business ethos and workers' cultural background.

By Todd Raphael

VERIZON WIRELESS announced last week that it will hire 200 bilingual employees in the Washington, D.C., area because so many of its customers now speak Spanish. It's not surprising: After increasing in number by 142 percent since 1980, Hispanics are now the largest minority in the United States, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

In a Saturday/Sunday session at SHRM's annual conference, Cendant Mobility senior trainer Diane Mullen and Adriana Medina-Lopez-Portillo, an independent corporate trainer, discussed how to best work with Hispanic employees. Mullen says that a colleague of hers has coined the term "third culture" to describe what effective companies are doing.

They're not ignoring the Hispanic heritage. At the same time, they're encouraging employees to learn English and making sure they understand the idiosyncrasies of American business. "Capitalize on the best of both cultures," she says.

Many desires of Hispanic employees are the same as for all employees, says Janet Nicolai, who is taking over the HR director's job at the New Jersey Compensation Rating & Inspection Bureau in Newark, where many supervisors are Hispanic. "I can honestly say that I have not noticed any difference in managing Hispanic employees," Nicolai says. Nevertheless, Mullen describes some of what drives this growing demographic:

Saving face: Hispanics, she says, tend to take slightly more personally what Americans consider just a business conversation. "Everything for Hispanics is intertwined," she says.

"Everything is a reflection of who you are." Saying "You're doing that wrong," can insult an employee's sense of dignity. A more constructive phrase, she says, is "How about we take a new approach and take Manuel's way of writing the report?"

Religion and family: Work/life balance—important to all employees—can be more so to Hispanics. "Money is still a motivator, but an environment where they really have a work/life

balance is very appealing to them because family is so important. Family is pretty much where their world begins and ends," Mullen says. "They tend to not only live with their parents until they got married, but they also live with their extended family. Everyone takes the responsibility of raising children."

For businesses, this means employees are likely to mourn the loss of a cousin's cousin, and to take leave for a cousin's funeral. Hispanics may network extensively through their family connections. Nepotism is more accepted than in American culture. When a company is holding a dinner and it's too expensive to allow family members, Mullen suggests holding a potluck.

Sense of time: "For Hispanics, time is relative," Mullen says. "There's a different sense of urgency." A manager wants a task done by a certain date, and the employee may not deliver. But that employee, far from being lazy or unmotivated, is merely thinking, "I'm working on it. I'm working on it hard, but I haven't finished it. Do you want to give me a product that isn't 100 percent or do you want it now?"

Risk avoidance: Americans tend to focus on the future, investing in real estate with long-term goals or career planning for a job that may be a decade off. For many Hispanic employees, however, "it's in the here and now," Mullen says. One session participant said she has trouble getting Hispanic employees to invest in the company's 401(k) plan. She was able to persuade an employee to buy into the company's life insurance once she explained how important it was to the employee's family.

Personalismo: Americans often wait to see how reliable a co-worker or vendor is, and then become interested in a personal relationship. When first meeting someone, an American manager might think, "All I want to know is, 'Can I get the product by this afternoon?'" Mullen says. A Hispanic employee, on the other hand, may appreciate someone who takes the time to get to know them, who cares about the employee's friends and family and later asks about the product. "Relationships," Mullen says, "are money in the bank. It's not what you do, but who you are."



"Everything for Hispanics is intertwined. Everything is a reflection of who you are."

— Cendant Mobility senior trainer Diane Mullen

wjfm

On booze, Bonzo and broadening HR's horizons

What were SHRM attendees talking about on Sunday in San Diego? Everything from problems at work, lawsuits, international business and the state of HR to tequila, chimpanzees and the pair of Maltese dogs that squeaked through registration.

Heard IN THE HALLS

From a resting spot outside the SHRM Bookstore, Jason Reynolds, a 32-year-old African-American ethics officer at Georgia Power, shared his thoughts about his difficulty gaining the trust of his fellow black colleagues. He was named coordinator of workplace ethics at the utility company two years ago after the firm was sued in a class-action lawsuit by a group of African-American employees.

The workers claimed that the company did nothing about the racially disturbing hangman's nooses that were seen hanging from the rafters at company facilities. The lawsuit was thrown out, but Reynolds said many of his black colleagues continue to be distrustful of him and of management.

"They say to me, 'Are you just a token?'" Reynolds said he tells them: "This is part of the process, and I am here to help you."



Not far from where Reynolds discussed work problems, Philip Benson, a professor of human resources at New Mexico State University, browsed through the global section at the bookstore. He had just returned to the U.S. on Saturday from an international HR meeting in Australia, and he said he was disappointed there weren't more Americans there—probably no more than about a dozen out of 150 participants from around the world.

"This is my real issue," Benson said. "There is no such thing anymore as a non-international American business. That's why I think students should live abroad for six months. Too many people in HR haven't even been out of the country and they're trying to provide expat support."

"As Americans, we need to broaden our horizons."



Although anger over U.S. job losses because of offshoring has dominated media and politics recently, a manager at a Florida utility is more concerned about a looming dearth of employees in the U.S. workforce.

Burt Collier, human resources supervisor at the Orlando Utilities Commission, said the biggest challenge facing HR is how to replace the millions of baby boomers who will retire over the next 20 years. "It's going to be increas-



GUEST STAR ▲ CareerBuilder's booth featured the chimps who starred in its Super Bowl ads.

ingly difficult to fill positions. Nationwide we're facing a shortage of people," he said. "The numbers are staggering."

Collier suggested the U.S. would have to boost immigration to meet the employer demand.



Kate Morris, marketing manager at Legiant, a time and attendance tracking company in Austin, Texas, lamented the problems she's had with the company's trade show booth. At her suggestion, the firm had planned to give out virgin margaritas with little bottles of tequila for visitors.

But at another conference last month, the San Diego Convention Center's employee union wouldn't allow the company to serve alcohol without hiring a union bartender.

"I mean, come on, human resources and payroll people and tequila, what's better than that?"



Mayflower Transit did serve margaritas at its booth, and they went fast. Trade show manager Linda Nosko said servers at the booth had poured 560 of them in the first 30 minutes of a reception Sunday in the Exhibition Hall. And promptly ran out.

"We reordered," she promised. "Three times the regular order, and so we're good—we'll be good."

Workforce

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