



Study confirms US' 'ethnocentric' approach to international HRM

United States multinationals largely live up to the stereotype of centralised control over HR policy and restricted autonomy for overseas subsidiaries, according to a major new four-year research study conducted in the UK, Ireland, Germany and Spain.

Particularly in areas like pay and performance management, workforce representation, diversity and management development, US-determined policies and practices tend to prevail and, says Anthony Ferner of the UK's De Montfort University, which led the work, "this 'ethnocentric' approach to international HRM is also seen in the relative lack of concern by US multinationals to seek out and adopt best practices from their overseas operations – in other words, there is little international 'reverse transfer' of learning on HR issues."

Inevitably the widely differing legislation and institutional arrangements of the host countries influence behaviour to some

extent. In Germany, for example, traditionally non-union companies are forced to deal with unions and works councils, while in Ireland, reports co-researcher Professor Paddy Gunnigle of Limerick University, the penetration of performance-related pay is less (affecting only non blue-collar employees) where there are unions.

Nevertheless, says Ferner, the evidence suggests that US companies are particularly proactive in their search for ways round local constraints.

Even in Germany, which is known for its high degree of regulation, US subsidiaries manage to find the necessary flexibility to "do their own thing", reports Anne Tempel of Germany's Erfurt University.

Among the methods they employ to achieve this are moving between different industry employers' associations in search of greater flexibility; leaving their employers' association altogether to conclude company

agreements with moderate unions; allying with works councils that have relatively weak links with unions; or using sophisticated HRM and communication policies to reduce employees' perceived need for works councils.

Overall, the research, which was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Anglo-German Foundation for the Study of Industrial Society, found that US multinationals are good at devising global HR policies and implementing them overseas in a fairly standardised way.

But, there was little evidence of them learning from HR practices originating in the subsidiaries, and subsidiary HR managers "have struggled to find a point of influence over international HR policy-making, with only patchy success," added Ferner.

• A fuller article on the findings, focusing on the distinctiveness of US multinationals, will appear in the April issue of *WorldLink*.

Rio line up

Leading lights from some of the world's major business schools have signed up to speak at the 10th World HR Congress to be held in Rio de Janeiro in August. They include Sumantra Goshal, London, Paul Evans and Dominique Heau, Insead, Joe DiStefano, IMD, and Estelle Morin, Montreal.

CEOs and HR directors include Guenther Fleig, DaimlerChrysler, Antonio Maciel, Ford, Brazil and P.O.Mak, GE, China. See: www.hr2004.com

FIDAP's 40th anniversary

Presidents of FIDAP's 14 national HR associations were well represented at last November's general assembly in Buenos Aires held to elect a new board of directors and celebrate the Latin American federation's 40th anniversary.

Among plans approved were the creation of a permanent Secretariat to be based in Argentina, with Horacio Quiros as the new Secretary/Treasurer, and a scheme allowing all FIDAP associations to share each other's

benefits, such as conference fees or special members' prices of products and services.

FIDAP's Oscar Alvear Urrutia Award to recognise significant contributions to the HR profession went to former WFPMA President and winner of the 1998 Petitpas Award Sergio Hillesheim.



Past President Eladio Uribe (left), new President Cássio Mattos of Brazil (right) with WFPMA President Carlos Aldao

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Labour standards in a globalising world

Peter Brannen, who has just retired after a decade as director of the London office of the ILO, reflects on the growing acceptance of but continuing need for international labour standards

Many people argue that the current period of globalisation with its expanding global trade and division of labour has brought benefits to people throughout the world: in the past 20 years global output has increased faster than population growth, life expectancy in developing countries is up from 55 to 66 years, average incomes have doubled, the proportion of children attending school rose from less than half to over three quarters and infant mortality reduced by half.

On the other hand 1.2 billion people live on less than a dollar a day. Africa is marginalised in the world economy and there are deep economic problems in other regions. A third of the world's labour force are unemployed or under-employed and high levels of youth unemployment are running in parallel with increasing numbers of child labourers and quasi slave labour.

Part of the explanation for these contrasting perspectives relates to the fact that most trade is still between industrialised countries – 24 developing countries account for 24 per cent of trade, and 80 per cent of it is in manufactured goods. Moreover, these 24 countries are also those that have received most foreign direct investment (FDI): 62 per cent of FDI is carried out between 23 OECD countries but 26 per cent goes to 24 developing countries. Only 8 per cent of global FDI goes to the rest of the developing world, with 4 per cent to transition economies.

Also, for most countries, commodities trade – particularly in agricultural products – is still the most important trade relationship. However, while that trade has always been biased against the South, in recent decades it has become exceedingly biased through the combined effects of a collapse of commodity prices, high and in some cases increasing tariff barriers and subsidies paid to American and European farmers. Because of this, in the current round of WTO trade negotiations ministers were subject to growing pressure to cut back on tariffs and subsidies such as the EU CAP. Although these talks collapsed, it is inconceivable that over the next 20 years high tariff barriers and subsidies in the industrialised countries will not come down in agricultural and related products.

One important effect of both the increased competition in manufactures and sharper global focus on poverty in those countries that trade in commodities and, like much of sub-Saharan Africa, are increasingly marginalised within the world trade system, has been both a renewed interest in labour standards issues, and also in the links between trade and poverty.

There are a number of key events which are indicative. In 1994 the ILO set up a working party on the social implications of globalisation which in its early meetings had a particular emphasis on labour standards. In the following year the UN's World Summit for Social Development endorsed the ILO core labour standards as global basic human rights, as did the first ministerial meeting of the WTO in 1996, although ministers there rejected any explicit sanctions link between trade and labour standards. In the same period the OECD published a study arguing the link between labour standards and economic development was largely benign.

In 1998 the ILO set out its basic principles on rights at work, which became binding on all 165 member states, and included an annual review and monitoring report on compliance. More recently the UN global compact, which by 2003 had 1200 participating companies worldwide, put core labour standards as four of its nine principles. Finally, at global level the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation, which will report early this year, has core labour standards explicitly in its remit. Within the WTO there continues to be a minority movement pressing for an explicit link between trade and labour standards, but now focused on the most persistent and egregious cases.

The pressure at international level has also been reflected in regional economic organisations particularly the European Union. Within the EU economic progress and social cohesion are seen as complementary pillars of sustainable development, and respect for labour standards is an integral part of the European model. The main objective of EU development policy is poverty reduction, so it presses for social alongside economic development.

Cooperation agreements between EU and third countries have contained a clause defining human rights – including core labour standards – as a basic element since 1992. In 2000 the Cotonou agreement on economic and trade cooperation between EC and African, Caribbean and Pacific states included a specific clause committing the parties to core labour standards, an approach which may be extended to other agreements.

Stronger enforcement

While the EU general system of preferences (GSP) currently favours core standards, it is moving to a positive and sanction-based regime on all core standards after 2004 with stronger enforcement and monitoring. So "serious and systematic violations of the four core labour standards" could mean temporary, full or partial withdrawal of GSP benefits.

The pressure on and by governments to ratify core labour standards has at one level been very effective: over last the five years there has been a huge increase in ratification, such that most countries now ratify the ILO core conventions. It is also becoming increasingly difficult for countries that have not ratified to be credible major international players. This amounts to a formal global endorsement of basic labour market regulation by almost all governments.

While this endorsement is partly a result of the momentum of international pressure, it also reflects a switch in the way labour standards are perceived in the world of economic and social development. In the new rights-based and empowerment discourse they are seen as creating empowerment by improving the mechanisms of 'voice' and representation, as having a key role in making state institutions accountable to workers and citizens in general and enhancing the institutional structure and democratic running of national societies. So the links are to political pluralism and the creation and maintenance of democratic structures. They also provide a framework for opportunity by reducing inequities and inequalities among social groups, widening people's opportunities and choices, reducing social polarisation and fragmentation and combatting exclusion.

More flexibility

This also creates a number of economic advantages, including increased flexibility in relation to economic shocks, a stable environment for investment, better information flows, increased long term HR investment and utilisation of labour force

capacities and better motivation and effort. Others, however, argue that labour standards can diminish comparative advantage in countries or sectors that depend on low labour costs. This could be a big problem for China. But it is also the reason that an international legal framework is necessary.

In parallel with this labour rights has emerged as a major consumer concern. Ethical consumerism, while still a minority concern in western industrial countries, has been growing in recent years – in part linked to pressure group campaigns in sports goods and clothing but also in the markets for commodities such as tea, coffee and cocoa – as reflected in those who have signed up to the global compact. There is also increasing evidence that the capital market is beginning to be concerned about how companies treat their workforces. So in the US in 1999 socially responsible investment funds were 13 per cent of all funds under professional management; socially responsible investment has increased in the UK too and the FTSE 4 Good index, which includes core labour standards as part of its human rights envelope, is one reflection of this trend.

Producer response can be seen in an increasing amount of activity in codes of conduct, guidelines and voluntary initiatives, which are seen as important instruments in promoting social development and core labour standards through strengthened corporate social responsibility. The EU argues that CSR, whereby companies integrate social concerns into business operations and interaction with stakeholders, is part of a long term strategy for business success and increased shareholder value. It also argues that codes of conduct should use ILO core

conventions as minimum baselines in (voluntary) labelling schemes such as those under ethical and fair trade initiatives.

Multi-stakeholder codes are growing; the best example is the Ethical Trading Initiative, but also SAI (social accountability international), the Clean Clothes Campaign and the UN's Social Compact.

There has been an increase in framework agreements between global union federations and multinational companies – 20 were signed between 1999 and 2002, covering retailing, telecoms, manufacturing, minerals, agriculture and food sectors – and intergovernmental codes, such as the OECD Guidelines for MNE and the ILO Declaration of principles on MNCs, have also taken on a new lease of life.

Finally there has been a rapid increase in company codes, with the ILO recording 300 now compared with 200 in 1998. The most successful reflect vision/leadership from the board and stakeholder engagement, and are integrated into mainstream HR and operations systems.

Trade sanctions

All this has appeared on the radar screen in the last decade and particularly the last three years. I don't want to suggest it has been entirely a result of fear of social dumping, driving down of standards in the West or economic undercutting, but changing terms of competition in manufactures have certainly been a significant factor. And pressure continues to subject countries of the South to trade sanctions if they are in breach of core standards.

So there is a strong argument that the issue of core labour standards has more salience, formal underwriting and support than ever before in history.

At one level a new international consensus has emerged, which some see as the basis for a new global labour compact. There are also historically high numbers of workers covered by basic standards and this will continue to increase as manufacturing extends in the countries of the South. This is because growth and in particular changes in the structure and composition of employment are the key factors in raising standards.

In effect labour standards are becoming a key issue in the emerging globalisation of social and economic management. The corporate world cannot ignore it and the most successful organisations are incorporating it into both global and local strategies. HR professionals play a major role in this but it is also important to CEOs, finance, marketing and operations directors and the functions they control.

Peter Brannen is Visiting Professor in the UK's University of Southampton School of Management



Jeans factory in Lesotho, southern Africa: labour rights have emerged as a major consumer concern

PHOTO: courtesy of the Clean Clothes Campaign

Trends in international long-term assignment compensation

A current and ongoing challenge for international companies is to contain the cost of expatriation without demotivating employees from being globally mobile. However, the latest results from PricewaterhouseCoopers' annual survey of international assignment policies imply that economic pressures are not such as to outweigh the need to move talent around the world and indeed most companies predict either no change or an increase in international assignments.

When this survey was first conducted in 1990, the data showed major differences in practice based on headquarters countries, as many assignees were typically from HQ. Those with headquarters in high salary/low tax countries tended to use a home country compensation system, while those in low salary/high tax countries tended to opt for a host country system. Both served the objective of meeting potential assignees' expectations.

With the increase in international mergers and acquisitions over the past 15 years and the consequent need for companies to meet the expectations of many different nationality assignees, we have begun to see less focus on headquarters location as the basis for approach to compensation.

The data in this article relates to long-term assignments (generally three to five years), which are typically for a strategic business need. Over the years, firms that started with only a long-term policy have developed varying policies for short-term, developmental and indefinite assignments

BY CAROLYN GOULD

and 'localisations' (expatriates not intending to return home who subsequently convert a to local national compensation package).

By far the most important decision in determining the basis for a long-term policy relates to compensation philosophy. The system chosen must not only provide an incentive for employees to take an assignment but also not over-incentivise them, as this would make it hard for them to return home: a difficult balance when dealing with a multitude of nationalities.

Based on the latest survey results, three quarters of the companies who responded pay the expatriate a home country-based or modified home country-based compensation package and the use of these systems continues to grow. Table 1 (below) summarises the various approaches and trends, including the differences between North American-based companies and others. It shows that, although the home country-based system is the most widely used, a local package or the better of a home or host package are also used frequently outside the US.

Incentive premiums

There has been a trend to eliminate incentive premiums, to pay them as lump sums or by a method other than per pay period, as illustrated in Table 2. Most organisations that have started global operations in the past five years do not provide a premium, as an international

assignment has become part of career development and, as such, standard practice for many global companies. That is not to say that there is never a need for personal adjustments but rather that monetary incentives tend not to be the main drivers today for acceptance of these assignments.

Goods and services

In 1992 fewer than a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents customised their cost of living data; in 2003 this had increased to over half. Customisation generally relates to removal of elements provided separately. For example, for companies which provide cars, the indices have this element removed so that there are no duplicate reimbursements in the system. Another major change is the use of consultants' data that assumes the employee has been in a location for more than six to nine months and therefore has some familiarity with the local marketplace; previously used historical data assumed the person had just arrived and therefore would experience much higher prices due to unfamiliarity with the local market.

Housing

In keeping with the traditional home country-based package, more companies today are requiring that employees contribute to the overall cost of housing. Deducting a home country housing norm is consistent with the balance sheet philosophy of limiting an employee's

gains or losses with respect to purchasing power. Even for those companies using more of a host country-based package, free housing is becoming less popular. The survey data shows a significant difference between North America and non-North America, as illustrated in Table 3, although this difference has been narrowing over the years as more companies focus on reducing costs while still keeping within their current expatriate compensation philosophy.

A notable change to the delivery of host country housing is the method of funding the host location rent. More companies are negotiating the lease directly with the landlord and paying rent direct. Quite often in the past, assignees would take on the lease and the company would pay them the rent to pay on to the landlord. In many countries, company-provided housing (ie where the company is the lessee) is a tax planning opportunity and can reduce the company's tax reimbursement costs.

Tax reimbursement

Tax reimbursement policies tend to be the most controversial area when regions discuss the various approaches. Table 4 summarises these, showing the strong preference for tax equalisation.

These results can vary dramatically according to headquarters location. For example there is a big difference between North Americans using tax equalisation policies (92 per cent) and others (71 per cent). There are many reasons for this, not least that countries with high tax rates allow employees to keep windfalls as an additional incentive.

Hardship/Location allowances

Based on the most recent survey, over 80 per cent of companies provide a hardship/location allowance for locations deemed challenging to live in. Historically companies would use government data to rank hardship, but as the accuracy of this has come into question over the years, there has been a trend to use data from consultants - over 60 per cent of companies did so in the latest survey. In addition to the allowance, more than half (54 per cent) of companies provide 'Rest and Relations' trips (R&R) with the number of trips and days determined by the ranking of hardship for the location. The company will typically cover air fare, hotel and meal costs to the closest safe place. However, unlike the allowance

TABLE 2 INCENTIVE PREMIUMS	1992 Results	2003 Results
No premium paid	27.8%	57.7%
Premium paid lump sum either prior, on return or both	18.4%	10.3%
Premium paid per pay period or lump sum dependent on location	3.3%	1.3%
Premium paid annually	2.4%	1.3%
Premium paid each pay period	43.4%	15.4%
Other	4.5%	14.0%

TABLE 3 HOME HOUSING NORM CHARGED	North America	Non-North America
No, provide free housing	32%	56%
Yes, employee pays a portion of the host housing cost in all cases	62%	39%
Other	6%	6%

TABLE 4 TAX REIMBURSEMENT METHOD FOR COMPANY INCOME	1992 Overall	2003 Overall
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Tax equalisation where the expatriate is expected to pay taxes at a level similar to what they would have paid if they had remained at home. They would not be allowed to retain any tax windfalls resulting from the international assignment.	79.2%	87.0%
Tax protection where the company reimburses the expatriate for taxes in excess of the amount they would have paid if they had remained in the home country. The expatriate would retain the windfall in those countries where the taxes are less than they would have paid at home.	10.0%	2.6%
Use both tax equalisation and tax protection depending on location	2.6%	5.2%
Laissez-faire where the employer does nothing to assist the expatriate with the home and/or host country tax obligation using the theory that this is the expatriate's personal responsibility.	3.1%	2.6%
Other	5.1%	2.6%

TABLE 5 WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TRENDS IN THE EVOLUTION OF YOUR EXPATRIATE POLICY?	1994	2003
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Formalising or refining policy	53%	54%
Cost reduction	52%	48%
Simplifying policy and administration	35%	42%
Reviewing selection, training and repatriation	23%	21%

NB Figures relate to percentage of participants who chose the response listed as 'Very important'

which has increased in use, the provision of R&R has been decreasing.

The future

In the 1994 survey we added a question to capture where companies were focusing their energies. As Table 5 illustrates, almost 10 years later the issues remain the same: that is, they still try to find more ways to reduce cost through either policy review/simplification or reducing administration. Companies continue to focus on the overall compensation approach in light of the globalisation of the marketplace and the mobility of the workforce. As a result, there continues to be much discussion on the ability to use an approach focused more on the

local market than on the home country. Some companies have even switched to a compensation approach which starts with the host country package and provides add-ons as needed rather than the one which assumes that you begin with the home country package.

In a perfect world, an expatriate assignment would be treated like any domestic transfer. However, until there is a harmonisation of salary, tax and pension programmes, these international moves will always require some special handling.

Carolyn Gould is a Partner, HR Services, with PricewaterhouseCoopers based in New Jersey, and President of the North America Human Resource Management Association

TABLE 1 COMPENSATION SYSTEM USED MOST OFTEN	1992 Overall*	2003 Overall*	2003 N.America**	2003 Non-N.America
Headquarters-based system – HQ compensation structure applied	43.8%	7.5%	9.5%	0.0%
Home country-based system – home country salary structures applied	34.9%	68.8%	71.4%	58.8%
Modified HQ/home country system – a combination of the home country system and a chosen standard	11.9%	8.8%	9.5%	5.9%
Better of home or host – the higher of the home or host country system	2.0%	3.8%	1.6%	11.8%
Local/modified market package – host country compensation structure with additional allowances in some cases	4.0%	3.8%	1.6%	11.8%
Other	3.4%	7.4%	6.4%	11.7%

*These percentages represent the average of all respondents. **The current database reflects that more than 65 per cent of the respondents are North American headquartered companies. To better understand differences between regions we have looked at the data by region and throughout this article, where differences do exist by region, we have highlighted these.

Neither David nor Goliath:

optimising HR support in a medium-sized international business

Very small firms have to manage as best they can, while large multinationals can be very complex. Here Cherry Mill, European Regional HR Manager for a high-performance computing, visualisation and storage company with 550 employees, shares her personal experience of the best way to organise HR resources internationally

work for Silicon Graphics Inc (SGI), which makes graphics supercomputers for virtual reality applications like the special effects in *The Lord of the Rings*, and in many scientific and engineering arenas.

Our head office is in California and we have approximately 3000 employees worldwide. In Europe we have 550 people, with operations in the UK, France and Germany, employing about 100 people each, and in 11 other countries employing between six and 30 people each. The small countries are attached to the large ones, and managed by three regional sales directors. We have a centralised multilingual technical call-centre and some centralised business support teams – order processing, legal, tax, some finance – located in the UK.

Many people work remotely from home or in virtual teams. For example, our European general manager is British and works from whichever office he is visiting

or from his home office. His PA is German and works from her home office in a hilltop village outside Rome, and they are a very effective team!

There are eight HR professionals, including three part-timers, split into three regional HR teams based in the UK, Germany and France. The three European region HR managers operate as a self-managed team and report direct to the VP for HR in California.

One stop shop

We operate as far as we can on the principle that our customers should have a 'One stop shop' in HR. So each country has an HR business partner, as do the three regional sales directors and the European marketing, customer services and finance directors. My own role includes being HR business partner to the European Senior Vice President, and representing HR on the European management team. Behind the scenes in the team someone takes responsibility for HR data management, co-ordinating European-wide compensation programmes and managing European training initiatives.

The business structure changes every year – which is common in the IT industry. This gives us an opportunity to swap responsibilities, and means that we have all had experience in many different countries, client groups and HR specialisms. The structure we have today has evolved through a mix of business demands and team skills/preferences, so is not a blueprint. Alternatives could be to take the same 'One stop shop' approach and have just one overall manager or to have all small country and European management support and centralised HR internal team roles located in one place.

BEA, a US middleware company with 750 employees in EMEA and a European HR team of 11, has a similar model. All the HR business partners are the single contact for both a country and a pan-European function leader (eg marketing) or an HR specialism (eg learning and development).

The function/specialist partner makes sure things get done via the country partners. Each function/specialist partner belongs to a virtual global team led by the HR business partner supporting the global function head (eg Chief Marketing Officer) or the global HR specialist (eg Global Learning and Development Director).

Similar structures exist in Novell and Rational Software.

The advantages of these models are that they meet both geographic and functional management needs. They also result in multiple 'connections' to the corporate HR team, resulting in closer teamwork, and avoid Europe being left out of corporate planning or developing a 'fortress Europe' mentality!

We have developed a European 'HR service portfolio', which is like a team job description, outlining our global HR team purpose and mission and the HR services we offer in Europe:

Global HR purpose To attract, retain, develop and optimise human talent and capabilities to achieve SGI's vision and meet/exceed business objectives

Global HR mission To provide consultation, systems and tools that increase the capability and productivity of individuals, teams and the organisation to achieve or exceed our business objectives

HR services HR consultancy, OD, hiring, compensation and benefits, learning and development, performance management, employee communications and motivation, legal, HR data.

We all do our own administration and have streamlined and automated processes as far as possible to minimise this; we use client team administrators for organising interviews, training/event logistics and induction programmes, etc. We have a global HR information system, which is working towards having managers and employees manage their own data. We also have a well-developed intranet which provides information for employees; manager guidelines on core HR processes;

and, increasingly, self-service tools. We have a shared drive for shared documents. It is important to keep all this up to date.

France, Germany and the UK get a higher level of service than the smaller countries because they have more employees – and because the HR teams are physically located there. The HR business partners attend weekly country management team meetings, do walkabouts and do more interviewing and get involved in more employee-related issues than in the smaller countries.

In the smaller countries we only do interviews for senior roles and the finance team does much of our work, like employment contracts and benefit administration. We have developed a framework for HR support to the smaller countries to try to ensure a consistent approach across the team.

This involves:

Scheduled monthly conference calls:

at least one call a month with the country management team as a whole and one with each individual manager. The management team discussion covers the current HR strategy and priorities, while the individual calls are like preventative 'HR health checks', where we run through every heading in the HR portfolio to check progress and agree action points. The conversation starts by asking the manager how the team is doing, and ends by asking how they are doing personally. Managers appreciate this, and hearing how other countries are tackling similar issues.

Quarterly/six monthly visits: visits are for at least two days. They include an 'All hands' presentation/discussion with the whole team, a live meeting with the country management team and each individual manager, and one-to-one meetings with any employees who want to raise/discuss issues. In addition, there may be a particular piece of work we need to do – eg job matching for a salary survey – or we may do a training workshop or a teambuilding activity. The employees appreciate such initiatives and just having someone from HR visit and be available.

In addition to the scheduled calls and visits, we work with managers on day-to-day operational issues as they occur, and make extra visits to deal with major issues or interview for a senior job.

We have a good HR support team in the USA, which provides global compensation plan designs, co-ordinates salary survey input, manages some global benefits, runs a senior leadership development programme, provides remote training via conference calls and produces headcount reports and HR statistics. We use recruitment consultants/headhunters for most jobs, and external trainers for any major training initiative.

How do we communicate within the team?

VP HR: bi-weekly update conference call with the three European region HR managers
European region HR managers: bi-weekly conference call to share information and discuss shared issues – eg progress on our quarterly objectives, projects and problems
European HR team: quarterly conference calls to update on the business, and share ideas and practice, plus one annual live meeting

Location teams: monthly team update and one-to-one meetings

Ad hoc: we constantly share issues and ideas in the location teams and by phone with our colleagues in the other countries.

Success factors

What are the key factors for a successful HR partnership with the business?

- Get to know your customers. Start with a visit to the country/team just to meet everyone. Talk to each person; find out a bit about them, what they are happy with, what not. Take brief notes on each person

to refer back to, and photos of the team so that you remember everyone. Doing this will prove invaluable later!

- Establish what they expect from HR so you can make sure you set realistic expectations and focus on their priorities. Be clear what your role is and what you offer. This is good to do at a team presentation on your first visit. Different countries and different people have different understandings of HR's role
- Set realistic objectives and deliver on them on time. Follow up on every commitment. Also make sure they follow up on their commitments to you!
- Stick to your schedule of regular meetings/conference calls. You don't have to use all the allocated time, though you will usually find that there are plenty of things to talk about when it comes to it. Otherwise you can lose touch
- Be proactive. Keep in active contact; ask probing questions to uncover what is happening so that you avoid surprises. It is easy to miss clues on the phone
- Overall, providing effective HR support to a complex matrix of geographies, functions and cultures requires contracting clear expectations, a balance of discipline and flexibility, a proactive, service and business-driven approach, good communications within the team and with the business and a willingness to take risks and innovate.

Cherry Mill is European Region HR Manager for Silicon Graphics Computer Systems

The division of responsibilities between managers and HR specialists is not rigid, but our 'portfolio' gives us a starting point and a checklist to make sure everything that we need to do between us gets done effectively. Here is an extract:

HIRING – HR ROLE	HIRING – MANAGERS ROLE
Provide hiring tools and advice 'Culture check' candidates	Define job Hire best person to do it
HR RESPONSIBILITIES	MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES
Advise on team organisation, job profile, job level, target salary and hiring strategy Manage hiring approval process Open-post job Advise on and brief agencies/ headhunters; agree contract and rates Review shortlist Second interviews Advise on final selection and salary Do contract (finance in small countries) Co-ordinate relocations Advise on induction	Decide on team organisation, job profile, job level, target salary, and hiring strategy Complete hiring approval request Day to day liaison with agency/headhunter Shortlist CVs for interview First and final interviews Final selection; decide salary within guidelines Induction plan and execution

PHOTO: Silicon Graphics Inc

Gollum in a scene from the latest of 'The Lord of the Rings' movies, for which SGI provided the high performance computer and storage power that enabled millions of terabytes of data to be moved and manipulated into the epic trilogy's visual effects

THE WORLDBLINK HR CALENDAR

February 18-20, 2004

Toronto, Canada
HRPAO Annual Conference
 Tel: +1 416 923 2324
 Fax: +1 416 923 7264
 Email: mpawych@hrpao.org

March 22-24, 2004

Bal Harbor, Florida, USA
SHRM International Conference
 Tel: +1 703 535 6033
 Fax: +1 703 535 6497
 Email: shrm@shrm.org

March 23-25, 2004

Madrid, Spain
AEDIPE 39th Annual Conference
 Tel: +34 91 420 0612
 Fax: +34 91 420 0894
 Email: aedipe@aedipe.es

March 24-25, 2004

Bal Harbor, Florida, USA
WFPMA Board Meeting
 Tel: +44 20 7299 9911
 Fax: +44 20 7299 9912
 Email: susanne.lawrence@ppltd.co.uk

April 22-24, 2004

London, England
CIPD Human Resource Development Conference and Exhibition
 Tel: +44 20 8263 3434
 Fax: +44 20 8263 3367
 Email: conf@cipd.co.uk

May 19-20, 2004

Colombo, Sri Lanka
IPMSL Annual Conference
 Tel: +94 74 809 902
 Fax: +94 74 511 107
 Email: ipmsl@slnet.lk

May 27-29, 2004

Galway, Ireland
CIPD Ireland National Conference
 Tel: +353 1 676 6655
 Fax: +353 1 676 7229
 Email: info@cipd.ie
 www.branchwebs.cipd.co.uk/ireland

May 30-June 2, 2004

Melbourne, Australia
AHRI National Convention
 Tel: +613 9918 9200
 Fax: +613 9918 9201
 Email: enquiries@ahri.com.au
 Website: www.ahri.com.au

June 10-11, 2004

Guatemala City, Guatemala
AGRH 15th HR Congress
 Tel: +502 361 1520
 Fax: +502 361 1520
 Email: agrh@intelnett.com

June 17-18, 2004

Wiesbaden, Germany
DGFP 12th National Conference
 Contact: Ute Graf
 Tel: +49 211 5978 150
 Fax: +49 211 5978 179
 Email: graf@dgfp.de

August 17-20, 2004

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
WFPMA 10th World Congress on Human Resource Management
 Contact: Luiz Edmundo Rosa
 Tel: +55 11 3256 0455
 Fax: +55 11 3214 0858
 Email: information@hr2004.org
 or abrh@conarh.com.br
 Website: www.hr2004.com

The auditorium of the WFPMA - 10th World Congress on Human Resource Management



WFPMA - World Congress on Human Resource Management. From August 17th thru 20th, 2004 at RioCentro, Rio de Janeiro. Confirmed speakers: Paul Evans, Dominique Héau, Kenneth Cooper, Guenther Fleig and Sumantra Ghoshal amongst others. Keep up to date through our site: www.hr2004.com

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