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Linking personnel and human resource professionals around the globe

Major disparities in European time off provisions

MARKED differences exist between European Union (EU) member states in the total number of days' leave they offer workers, with some countries having almost three-and-a-half working weeks' more time off than others.

Research findings published in July 2007 by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) show that workers in Sweden have 42 days of annual leave and public holidays combined, in contrast to workers in Estonia, who have just 26 days. Average collectively agreed paid annual leave entitlement stood at 25.3 days across the EU in 2006.

Of the 28 countries looked at (the EU 27 plus Norway), 19 have a 20-day minimum entitlement, as laid down in the EU working time directive, but five have a 25-day minimum – Austria, Denmark, France, Luxembourg and Sweden; Malta has 24 days.

In addition, the length of the working week and annual hours worked vary greatly from one country to another. In 2006, the average length of the working week for full-time employees working in their main job varied from 42.1 hours in Latvia to 37.6 hours in France. While the average collectively agreed working week in the EU27 was 38.7 hours, in practice, the actual average working week was 1.2 hours longer, at 39.9 hours.

Of the eight sectors and occupational groups examined in the study, agreed normal weekly hours are highest in the retail sector – at 38.9 hours in the EU27 and 39.7 hours just taking the new member states. Doctors in public hospitals have the second longest hours – at 38.8 hours over the 27 countries, although in the new states civil servants came second (39.6 hours), followed by banking and public sector blue-collar staff (both 39.5 hours), metalworking (39.3), and hospital doctors and nurses and chemicals (all 39.2).

The lowest hours in the EU27 were found in banking and nursing at 38.1 hours.

Overall, the longest annual working hours in the EU are in Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Poland and Romania, while the shortest are in France, Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

- *www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0705019s/index.html*

'Hot buttons' for global HR professionals

NEW TYPES of wage deals in Asia that reward, for example, business qualifications over the more traditional factors for that part of the world such as age, seniority and level in the company is yet another growing trend that HR professionals with international responsibilities need to be aware of, according to Eric Drummond, chief of global HR for the United States' National Basketball Association.

"Understanding what the hot buttons are is key when negotiating salary," he told SHRM Online's *Global Perspectives*. These days, in China, "an employee who has recently earned (an MBA) will have a significantly different value structure than someone who is 10 years older," he said. "HR departments need to watch what the younger, emerging workforce is going to want in the way of compensation. Asian companies are beginning to offer those younger workers new types of wage deals."

Japan too was a classic example where younger workers were saying 'I don't want to wait until I'm 50 to get paid what I'm worth'. As a result, said Drummond, companies in Japan are amending their wage strategies and offering significant commissions to workers as young as 25 in an attempt to match corporate and employee values.

Another trend highlighted in the article is the growth in numbers of expatriate employees who seek multiple international assignments – or 'transpatriates', as Drummond calls them – and for whom the traditional expatriate policy is not appropriate. Drummond advocates the setting up of a global employment company (see *WorldLink*, July 2005, page 4) in order to avoid a situation where such people end up with five or six different pension plans by the time they retire.

Codes of conduct tailored for the region and retention agreements attached to benefits packages also feature in Drummond's list of global HR trends.

- *Top global HR trends, August 2007. SHRM Online Global HR Focus Area*

IN THIS ISSUE

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For further information about the Federation contact David Ang
Secretary General, WFPMA
c/o the Singapore Human Resources Institute
2 Serangoon Road
Level 6, Tekka Mall
Singapore 218227
Tel: +65 6438 0012
Fax: +65 6299 4864
Email: wfpma@shri.org.sg
WFPMA website: www.wfpma.com

WorldLink
welcomes news stories, announcements of events and ideas for articles. These should be accompanied by a telephone number and email address where possible.
Please send items to
Susanne Lawrence
Editor, Worldlink
PPL, 17a Manchester Street
London W1U 4DJ, England
Tel: +44 20 7299 9911
Fax: +44 20 7299 9912
Email:
susanne.lawrence@ppltd.co.uk

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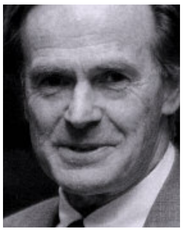
'Leadership' 'management' and 'running things properly'



Alistair Mant weighs into the hoary old leadership vs management debate, suggesting that the L-word (leadership) has been corrupted by current usage and that the HR function is at risk of over-egging the leadership side of the equation. 'Managerial leadership', he argues, is the only term that makes sense

We have become obsessed by 'leadership'. The less we like and trust our leaders, the more we overuse the L-word. It appears here in inverted commas because we can't be sure what it means any more. Like the Red Queen, we want it to mean what we want it to mean – so it has become nearly devoid of meaning.

Meanwhile, the M-word (management) has been relegated to also-ran status. Yet we are surrounded on all sides by cock-ups, blunders and other evidence that we are hopeless at running things properly. If 'managing' doesn't mean running things properly, what does it mean?

Overwhelmingly, when the employees of large organisations are surveyed about their demotivators at work, the most common complaints concern perceived incompetence of superiors and what is generally known as 'office politics'. In other words, the people who really matter at the interface with the customers, clients and the marketplace know that their bosses are often incompetent and self-serving.

It is a matter of judgement whether we describe these as failures of 'leadership' or failures of 'management'. But, as things seem to get worse not better, we should reflect that we have had 30 years of courses and development programmes dominated by 'leadership' and a parallel diminution in attention to good old-fashioned managing. Indeed, most of the front-line workers who despise their bosses seem to understand that an excess of posturing and patronising leadership is a large part of the problem. Please, they plead, can't we have a system that works properly?

In its great wisdom, the Australian Institute of Management devoted its national convention this year (Sydney, September 2007) to the memory of Peter Drucker, who died in late 2005 aged 95. It was Drucker who virtually invented the concept and discipline of modern management after the Second World War. Peter Drucker saw from the start that the management of large systems needed to be systematic as opposed to haphazard and that there were certain things that the best managers did consistently. He didn't set out to teach – merely to draw attention to what works.

Drucker lived to see the ascendancy of 'leadership' from the 1970s on. What he didn't anticipate is that our obsession with leadership (charismatic and visionary heroes leaping over tall buildings) would lead us to take our eye off the managerial ball. It was as if men sensed they were largely hopeless at running things properly (leave that to the women!), so it was necessary to find something they *could* do. Thus Drucker was able to observe the Enron debacle – all 'leadership' and no proper management at all.

Churchill vs chores

Leadership came to stand for the pursuit of dreams or visions and management for the bureaucratic nuts and bolts. The word 'leadership' was thus invested with *value* – the test being that when anybody was asked about the leadership phenomenon, Churchill and Mandela were never far behind. Leadership was seen as good. Management, at best, was neutral – maybe necessary – but no more challenging than doing the laundry, feeding the kids, coping with the broken vacuum-cleaner and all the rest of it. Meanwhile, organisational systems (despite the discovery and application of wonderful new technologies) got worse and worse at seeing to the needs of both customers/clients and employees. But the shareholders and top brass were getting richer.

If it is true that 'leadership' became quintessentially male in the 1970s, we should re-examine the origins of the M-word. Interestingly, it entered the English language by the beginning of the 16th century as a general description of the activity of running things. But the early spellings vary between 'maneg...' (from the Italian: *maneggiare*) and 'menag...' (from the French: *menager*). Maneggiare was a distinctly masculine use to describe handing things (*manus* = a hand) – and especially taking charge of horses in war. Menager, of course, meant careful and sensitive housekeeping – a quintessentially female occupation.

> 'the inspiring leader who is not a manager is as dangerous as the meticulous manager who can't, or won't, lead'

So, from the start, management was a useful word – just as appropriate for the hitherto almost exclusively male industrial relations manager (carrying the fight to the unions) as for his wife at home 'managing' to cope with the complex and messy demands of a sick child and a loft extension. Perhaps the rot set in during the 19th century, when the owners of the great factories and mills of the British industrial revolution delegated the dirty work of labour exploitation to their managers. That was the origin of the derisory term 'the management' to describe any group of time-servers charged with separating newly-enriched 'gentlemen' from the brutalised source of all their wealth. The more refined callings – the colonial and civil services – had 'administrators'.

Courses proliferate

HR people need to be very clear-headed about language and meaning. So when they are called on to arrange 'leadership' training for 'high potential' staff, they are obliged to grapple with this confusion of meaning as between the L-word and the M-word. The simple test is to correlate corporate enthusiasm for 'leadership' with the fundamental usefulness of the institution concerned. In the not-for-profit sector, where real social or environmental change is the goal – nobody gets overexcited about leadership. But as the irrelevance of the output increases, so the leadership courses begin to proliferate. If the corporate output is merely frivolous – or even pernicious – expect lots of 'leadership' on the menu. The tobacco business is awash with 'leadership' – it has to be because the 'value-added' of the business itself does not and cannot inspire anybody.

Some years ago, the eminent Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University, Harry Frankfurt, wrote a short monograph entitled *'On Bullshit'*. It has become a cult classic and ought to be read carefully by every HR practitioner. Why? Because the HR function is sometimes called on to paper over the cracks of organisations which survive on 'spin' and little else. Enron's HR practices, as well as its accounting, were textbook.

Viewed from a historical perspective, it looks suspiciously like Professor Frankfurt's new world of bullshit has morphed with the 'leadership' movement – allowing us to postpone the day when we have to face up to the fact that our patterns of production and consumption are irrelevant and unsustainable. This is a very great pity because leadership of *what really matters* is so desperately important.

So, to be helpful, here is a better (more realistic) way of viewing the phenomenon of leadership. The word doesn't make any sense unless we factor in two different facets – identified 50 years ago by the great Scots social scientist Tom Burns and elaborated by the best American writer on leadership James McGregor Burns – the *transactional* and the *transformational*. What this means is that leaders are ineffective without followers, so the ability to trigger the human following instinct is always necessary, but not sufficient. That is what we call the transactional dimension. If you have developed charisma by the age of seven, it will be a huge advantage in later life, but it's not enough. If you are really good – that is, if you *run things really well* – after a while other folk will award you 'charisma'.

The transformational dimension has nothing to do with human behaviour and everything to do with *destination*. The effective leader needs to be smart enough to identify a better destination and to plot intelligent pathways to get there. This calls for brains rather than charm. We can call it 'vision' except that that useful word has also been purloined by the influence-merchants. We tend to wince when politicians talk about 'vision', but that is because most of them made the mistake of delivering themselves up to the world of spin years ago. We tend not to trust what they say because we suspect it has been processed through the bullshit-generator.

So the best leaders are intelligent enough to understand the context and human enough to trigger the best instincts of other people. In the spirit of Drucker, who was always interested in what effective people actually did, we can say that such people always balance the managerial aspect (running things properly) with the leadership aspect (locating the enterprise in a useful external place). Executive coaches will tell you that striking that balance between managing and leading is essential in *every single job*. The client who loves the nuts-and-bolts but lacks confidence in 'blue sky' thinking has to be dragged back to the centre ground. Likewise, the 'big picture' person who loses control of the fine grain has to be re-balanced. Management and leadership are opposite sides of the same coin.

Equal measure

This means that the inspiring leader who is not a manager is as dangerous as the meticulous manager who can't, or won't, lead. If you are placed in charge of an enterprise – anything from a small service unit to the biggest multinational corporation – the work of *running things properly* always calls for both elements – and in roughly equal measure. It is not a matter of personal preference or career choice. That is why it would make sense for us always to refer to *managerial leadership*.

The HR function has to understand all this. It does nobody any favours (least of all its own reputation) if it is drawn into running leadership courses that neglect the managerial dimension. That looks suspiciously like the triumph of fantasy over hard reality. It sometimes leads to managerial leaders becoming more, not less, irritating to their staff.

This article is an adaptation of one by the author that appeared in the Australian Financial Review on September 4, 2007

Alistair Mant, consultant, academic and author, is an Australian who has long worked in the UK, now dividing his time between the two. He is Chairman of the Socio-Technical Strategy Group, which advises on the inherent capacity for change and responsibility within work systems, and specialises in leadership development, the assessment of talent and the debunking of fashionable dogma. His books include The Experienced Manager *(winner of the Institute of Management's Bowie Medal),* The Rise and Fall of the British Manager, Bismarck to Bullock – Conversations about Political and Industrial Contrasts in Britain and Germany, Leaders We Deserve *and the best-seller* Intelligent Leadership *(Allen & Unwin, 1999, see www.allen-unwin.com.au)*

Baby boom retirement aftershock looms

An impending shortage of workers poses some serious economic questions, says Robert Anderson

This article together with the case study below was first published in the *Financial Times*, 4 September 2007. It is reproduced here with permission

Finland will be the first country to experience Europe's demographic shock. From 2010, the so-called 'baby boom' generation will begin to retire, with dire implications for the number of workers for industry and the financing of the country's generous pension and health systems.

"This election term is the crucial one for this problem," says Jukka Pekkarinen, director-general of the Ministry of Finance's economic department. "The bulk of the baby boom generation is still in the labour force – something can still be done."

Finland faces Europe's demographic challenge first because its baby boom generation was comparatively large and came immediately after the war, as Finland's wartime experience was very tough and the country made peace in 1944 before the final German surrender. The shortage of working age citizens is

Unlocking the key to good health and longevity for older workers

ABLOY, the Finnish lockmaker, is one of the first companies to face the country's demographic challenge. At the start of this decade it realised that the number of its workers aged over 55 would double during the next five years, and – given that 59 was the typical retirement age – many skilled employees would leave.

"If we could keep them another five years then we could transfer their knowledge," says Antti Piitulainen, production director. "If they would all retire at the same time then it would be a big problem for us."

Abloy therefore launched a pioneering programme to make work conditions easier for older employees, to give them higher status and perks, and to encourage them to look after their health. This has boosted the performance of older workers and raised the average retirement age by two years.

"The programme has motivated them to work more," says Mr Piitulainen. "They want to be a good example for the younger workers."

Since launching a huge media campaign in the 1990s, Finland has become a pioneer in efforts to make older workers work longer, both by encouraging them to keep working and to look after themselves, and by encouraging companies to hire them, keep them employed and give them conditions that keep them at work longer.

The average retirement age has increased by almost half a year each year over the past five years – the biggest improvement among the 15 older European Union states.

At the personal level individuals have been advised to come to terms with both the necessity to work longer and the need to look after themselves, if necessary by changing jobs to one that is less physically demanding.

"In order to make people work longer you have to take care of them their whole life," says Tarja Cronberg, the labour minister.

At the society level, the state is trying to combat age discrimination. In the past companies have often pushed workers to take advantage of the (soon to be phased out) early retirement programme and have been reluctant to hire new older workers. "There are a lot of negative attitudes to employing older people," admits Ms Cronberg. "We have to change attitudes."

The state also provides financial incentives to individuals and companies to encourage longer working lives.

Pensions were reformed in 2005 to allow those who worked beyond the official retirement age of 63 to accrue higher pensions. Companies have been given subsidies to employ older workers in low paid jobs.

At the corporate level, two thirds of companies are investing in promoting work ability for older workers, because work itself is the main cause of declining performance. "Sixty per cent of the causes for declining performance come from work, not from individuals themselves," says Professor Juhani Ilmarinen of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.

Companies are introducing ergonomic equipment and other technology that assists older workers. Many also encourage employees to look after their health by giving free yearly fitness assessments and subsidised massages and gym membership.

Companies are switching employees' tasks regularly to avoid fatigue and stress injuries, and teaching older workers new skills and moving them to less demanding duties. Some like Abloy have introduced flexible hours or part-time working. Workers in Abloy's Age Masters Club programme, for example, receive up to 20 extra days off depending on age.

accentuated by the emigration of young workers which continued until the 1990s, and which during the late ’60s and early ’70s led to a decline in the population.

About three quarters of a million Finns went to work in Sweden in the 40 years after the war.

Between 2005 and 2020 an estimated 900,000 baby boomers are set to leave the workforce, or 40 per cent of the total, bringing the proportion of people over 65 to 25 per cent of the population. Birth figures are not low by European standards – helped by the family-friendly welfare state – but the country will still experience a decline in new entrants to the job market. The current replacement rate is 1.7, compared to the 2.1 babies per couple required to renew the population.

By 2030 the size of the population over 65 will increase 70 per cent, while the working age population will fall 10 per cent. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) says these changes mean that the number of employed workers to each welfare benefit recipient will drop from 1.7 now to 1.0 by 2030. The shortage of labour is already beginning to bite because of rapid growth.

“We have a big demographic challenge,” says Mauri Pekkarinen, minister for industry and trade. “Because our economy is growing so rapidly and technological change is so rapid we have quickly developed a shortage of skilled workers.”

Employers complain of shortages of engineers and construction workers, while there are also growing problems in the healthcare profession and household services such as plumbers.

“Almost in every sector we have problems now, especially skilled manual workers and engineers,” says Jussi Järventaus, managing director of the Federation of Finnish Enterprises.

Unfortunately there is little space for increasing the size of the available workforce – which at 70.2 per cent of the population is quite high by international standards – as many women are already working.

But the government hopes to push the workforce up to 75 per cent by attracting immigrants, encouraging older workers to keep working and pushing students to finish studying earlier.

It is also focusing on encouraging the unemployed to seek jobs by retraining and subsidising moving, and it is giving incentives to employers for taking on their first workers in high unemployment areas. Mr Pekkarinen, the industry minister, says the government wants to reduce unemployment below 5 per cent, from 7 per cent today. “We don’t want to use the stick but the carrot,” he says.

The second big consequence of the demographic shock will be on Finland’s pension, health and social systems. Without reform, the increase in spending here required by ageing could be equal to as much as 6 to 7 percentage points of gross domestic product (GDP).

Tarmo Räty, senior researcher at the state economic research institute VATT, estimates pension costs could increase from 12 per cent to 15 per cent of GDP by 2030, while health and social spending – which are almost entirely funded by taxation – will grow from 7.5 to 9.5 per cent of GDP.

Finland has little government debt and runs a budget surplus so it has a good starting position to meet these challenges. Moreover, it has also begun to launch fundamental reforms, at least in pensions.

Pensions were re-formed in 2005 to phase out early retirement, raise the pension age to 63, give incentives for working beyond this, and link pensions to life expectancy.

Pension funds were also freed to invest in higher-risk assets from the start of this year. The pension system currently runs a surplus worth 3 per cent of GDP and future expenditures are partially funded already. “We are relatively well prepared for this,” says Mr Pekkarinen of the finance ministry.

In health care the government is offering old people subsidies to stay at home and vouchers for home helps, but real reform is still missing.

“We really have to face the problem of how to take care of our elderly,” says Mr Räty. “Keeping elderly in wards will not work in the future. We need to move from institutional care to home help, to keep our elderly in their own homes, to encourage them to look after themselves.”

Even after the pension reforms the Ministry of Finance’s sustainability scenario predicts that there will still be a gap equal to 1.5 per cent of GDP between revenues and spending needs from ageing up to 2050.

Given that tax increases, budget deficits and higher personal contributions are ruled out, the ministry can only hope for higher productivity in the state sector or faster economic growth if it is to meet this challenge.

John Philpott, Chief Economist for the UK’s Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, tells *WorldLink*:

European countries have spent years talking about the looming demographic threat to economic growth, prosperity and business performance. For some, talk can still take the place of action. But Finland shows that the day of reckoning will be sooner than many appreciate.

How Finland starts to cope may well provide interesting pointers to other EU member states, not least the UK where newly introduced anti-age discrimination measures plus impending pension savings reform are high on the HR as well as political agendas.

What is becoming clear, however, is that there is no single silver bullet solution to workforce ageing. A mix of policies is needed, combining later retirement, higher pension savings, efforts to raise fertility rates and increased immigration.

The precise policy mix will vary from country to country depending on current practice and the specific demographic trajectory each faces.

Finland is actively devising its mix – other states should be getting their recipes together too.

Singapore’s seniors

A RECENT survey on the employment of older workers in Singapore shows that practice falls a fair way short of principles.

While employers claim to favour hiring older workers because of their experience, skills, job fit and maturity, in fact very few respondents had anyone aged 50 or over on the payroll. For two-thirds of respondents fewer than a quarter of employees were either under 20 or over 50 years old.

As for companies redeploying or retaining employees beyond Singapore’s normal retirement age of 62, 41 per cent said they did not.

• SHRI Survey on Older Workers, *http://www.shri.org.sg*

Yo Soy El Tango

40 YEARS OF ARGENTINIAN HR

Gustavo Aquino, a member of the Board of the Argentinian HR association ADRHA, which this year celebrates its 40th anniversary, traces parallels between the history of professional HR in his country and developments in the tango

The Instituto Argentino de Dirigentes de Personal (IADP) was founded on 5th December 1947, some months before the creation of the American Society for Personnel Administration (now renamed Society for Human Resource Management – SHRM). During that hot Buenos Aires summer, while the 'porteños' were getting ready for their vacations, a group of young personnel professionals laid the foundations of an institution that became a founding and active member of both the Latin American federation FIDAGH and the World Federation (WFPMA) and which today, 40 years later, can claim a membership of around 9.000.

The IADP's first steering committee was led by personnel practitioners from the textile industry (Alpargatas), meat processing (Swift) and the retail sector (La Franco Inglesa and Harrod's). Very soon representatives from oil companies like Standard Oil and Shell also came on board. The matters of greatest concern to these pioneers tended to be legal issues and productivity techniques.

At that time Argentina was changing its profile from an agricultural country to an industrial one; the formerly never-ending horizon of the 'pampas' was being broken up by the factories and their smoking chimneys.

But also the 1940s were the golden years for the tango orchestras; Canaro,Troilo, Pugliese, Darienzo and Fresedo were the kings of Buenos Aires nights in which blue collar and white collar workers danced together in clubs and cabarets. Those were, too, the years of Perón and Evita; the unions, which hitherto had been traditionally socialist, communist and anarchist were becoming peronist and increasing their power due to government support.

In the 1950s the IADP changed its name to Instituto Argentino para las Relaciones Industriales (IARI) as an acknowledgement of the growing dominance and importance of modern industrial relations, and it began to build international links with Brazil, Uruguay and the ILO. During this period some automobile companies such as Ford joined Argentina's HR community. As concern grew about productivity matters and the need for professionalisation was recognised, IARI created Schools of Personnel Management and of Productivity, and also designed and delivered TWI (Training Within Industry) courses to companies.

President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress stimulated investment from the US and with it came management training, so during the 1960s executive and management programmes became key preoccupations for HR people in Argentina. New professionals joined with new ideas and practices from

Traditions

Just as the tango is a mix of ancient European, American and African rhythms, the Argentinian way in human resources is a mix of the European humanist tradition with US pragmatism. On the one hand, our HR community looks up to INSEAD and the London Business School and on the other hand to Michigan and Sloan Management School. There is also some Canadian scent in the air: the first HR guru who visited Argentina was Gerard Dion, Director of Laval University's Industrial Relations Department and the main attraction at the first Personnel Conference of IADP in 1949.

Exxon's and Dupont's HR departments were schools where hundreds of professionals were brought up. There they became familiar with the US mainstream, with the theories of Douglas McGregor and Abraham Maslow. The first Argentine graduates in HR used Dale Yoder's books and learned how to become managers from Peter Drucker.

But Watsonian behaviourism was mixed up with the continental tradition; in fact, Buenos Aires is one of the psychoanalytical capitals of the world and mostly Catholic, Argentine managers are influenced, too, by Papal Encyclicals devoted to labour, from Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) to John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* (1981).

Michigan's professor Dave Ulrich, associated with IAE (Escuela de Direccion y Negocios de la Universidad Austral) in Argentina, is an influence on modern HR management just as Anglo Canadian Elliott Jaques is a standard and his 'requisite organisation' model is taught in every Argentine university and business school.

Armco, Colgate Palmolive, Firestone, Squibb, Goodyear, Coca Cola and IBM, which in turn led to another change in the institution – from IARI to a wider Instituto Argentino de Dirección de Empresa (IADE); more than HR, the key word was management.

The swinging '60s brought new ways of dancing and the tango was temporarily ousted by the twist (and shout), although at the same time Astor Piazzolla, renowned musician and composer, was cooking up the recipe for the tango's rebirth.

Meanwhile, Argentinian business had spread way beyond the boundaries of Buenos Aires and new professional HR organisations grew in other big cities such as Córdoba and Rosario. The universities, too, aware of the increasing importance of people management created new courses of studies, including a Bachelor's degree in industrial relations. Gradually engineers, lawyers and entrepreneurs began to accept and integrate the new HR professionals into their midst.

By 1967, looking for an organisation more focused on their needs, some HR manager members of IADE established a new branch called the Asociación de Dirigentes de Personal de la Argentina (ADPA). Felipe Sudano, HR manager of Farmasa, a national medical laboratory, was its first president and members included representatives from national, European and American companies such as Lever, Nestlé, Gillette, Schering, Ferrum, San Sebastían and Peugeot.

In 1970 Alberico Miglio, the IBM HR manager for Argentina and the South Cone (that is, South America's southernmost countries) was elected ADPA president and he stimulated regional integration and made ADPA a solid basis for the new-born Federación Interamericana de Personal (FIDAP), recently renamed FIDAGH. The Argentine HR community worked really hard to build a strong regional association with colleagues from Chile, Colombia, Perú, Uruguay and México. Some years later the other Latin American countries joined this initiative making up the multicultural FIDAGH of today.

In 1990 Buenos Aires became the venue for the WFPMA's 3rd World Congress, a real milestone in our long and rich history.

The tango was resurrected at the beginning of the millennium, with Piazzolla's music a common soundtrack and part of the symphonic repertoire. An unforgettable Al Pacino danced a Carlos Gardel standard, *Por una cabeza* in 'Scent of a Woman', the Hollywood remake of Dino Risi's *Profumo di donna*. And now thousands of tourists come to Buenos Aires each year to learn to tango.

During these years ADPA merged with the HR division of ADE (Asociación de Dirigentes de Empresas) to create our most recent and resourceful incarnation, the Asociación de Recursos Humanos de la Argentina (ADRHA). From 2002 to 2004 former ADRHA president Carlos Aldao Zapiola served as President of the World Federation, and at the end of last year he hosted a meeting of the WFPMA Board, a truly fitting climax to 40 years of HR activity.

Gustavo Aquino is President of Schein Transitions Advisors: gaquino@schein.com.ar

Raúl Eduardo Lacaze, HR Director of Movistar, one the largest mobile phone companies in Argentina, was elected new ADRHA President in June. He will lead the Association up to 2010

Pact to promote 'decent work'

MORE THAN 100 of Argentina's leading companies and chambers of commerce are expected to endorse a pact on social responsibility and 'decent work' signed last month by President Néstor Kirchner and Minister of Labour Carlos Tomada.

Based on International Labour Office director general Juan Somavia's Decent Work initiative, the pact aims to secure commitment to the creation of more and better jobs, to a reduction in 'informal' (casual) work, to fighting against child labour, promoting employment for young people, stimulating education and training, strengthening labour laws and to more social inclusion.

Over 40 per cent of workers in Argentina are engaged in 'informal' or casual work, which is not covered by labour laws or social protection and offers no benefits, and the situation is similar across Latin America.

"We want to recognise companies that are leaders in this link between society and the workplace", said Labour Minister Tomada. "We can build a process of change and of improvement in the working conditions of the country."

Argentina's Minister of Labour Carlos Tomada (left) with President Néstor Kirchner at the pact signing on 3 September

United States association appoints new senior executives

The US Society for Human Resource Management has appointed a new member to its top team. China Miner Gorman, formerly President of HR consultancy DBM, North America, and before that President of Lee Hecht Harrison, a global HR resources and outplacement company, has taken up the new position of Chief Operating Officer for SHRM. She will be responsible for strategic planning as well as overseeing day-to-day operations, and will report directly to President and CEO Sue Meisinger.

Certification

Meanwhile, the Human Resource Certification Institute, which is affiliated to SHRM and responsible for certifying its members, has a new Executive Director. Mary E. Power is a former president and chief executive of the Convention Industry Council, where she championed the development and implementation of voluntary standards and the global expansion of a voluntary certification programme.

Before that she held various sales positions with Sheraton Hotels.

Part of Power's new role is to educate the business world on the value of HRCI certifications for practising HR professionals.

Her predecessor Cornelia Springer is now Operations Director, HRCI.

Correction

Dr Hans Böhm and Professor Christian Scholz are co-editors of the forthcoming EAPM book on HRM in Europe, as well as contributors to it.
Our previous note (*WorldLink*, July 2007) implied they were the sole authors.
We apologise for any confusion.

THE WORLDLINK HR CALENDAR

October 15–17, 2007
Sun City, South Africa
51st IPM Annual Conference
Tel: +27 11 789 1384
Email: info@ipm.co.za
Website: www.ipm.co.za

October 18–20, 2007
Montevideo, Uruguay
ADPUGH National HR Conference
Tel: +59 82 903 940/941
Email: adpu@adpu.org
Website: www.adpu.org

October 22, 2007
Melbourne, Australia
WFPMA Board Meeting
Contact: Secretariat
Tel: +61 6438 0012
Email: david@shri.org.sg

October 25–26, 2007
Quito, Ecuador
ADPE XV National Congress
Tel/Fax: +593 2 2222 121
Email: adpe@interactive.net.ec
Website: www.interactive.net.ec

October 30, 2007
Maarssen, Netherlands
NVP Annual Conference
Tel: +31 343 578140
Email: talent-event@nvp-plaza.nl
Website: www.nvp-plaza.nl

November 7, 2007
San Gwann, Malta
FHRD Annual Conference
Tel: +356 21 378895
Email: mpchircop@fhrd.org
Website: www.fhrd.org

November 7–9, 2007
Isla Margarita, Venezuela
ANRI National Congress
Tel: +582 762 83 55 or +582 762 20 43
Email: informacion@anri.org.ve
Website: www.anri.org.ve

November 16–17, 2007
St Malo, France
ANDRH Annual Conference
Tel: +33 1 56 88 18 28
Email: andrh@andrh.fr
Website: www.andrh.fr

November 20–21, 2007
Lisbon, Portugal
40th APG National Conference
Tel: +35 1 21 352 27 17
Email: global@apg.pt
Website: www.apg.pt

November 28–29, 2007
Hong Kong
27th HKIHRM Annual Conference
Tel: + 85 22 881 5113
Email: info@hkihrm.org
Website: www.hkihrm.org

December 4–5, 2007
Prague, Czech Republic
CSRLZ Annual Conference
Tel: +420 2 22 56 00 73
Email: info@csriz.cz
Website: www.csriz.cz

April 14–17, 2008
London, England
12th WFPMA World HR Congress
Tel: +44 20 8612 6248
Email: conf@cipd.co.uk
Website: www.cipd.co.uk/congress

World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA)

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