Preface

Everyone knows the old adage, “those who can, do; and those who can’t, teach.” After a notable twenty-two year career at IBM that combined the experience of practitioner (including being a CIO), consultant (including being a manager of consultants), and the last fifteen+ years at Stevens Institute as an academic (including being a Professor, Program Director, Associate Dean, and researcher), I can comfortably say that I have familiarity with all aspects of an IT career. I trust that there might even be some who would say I was a good CIO, consultant, and Professor. My roles as an Executive Vice President of SIM (Society of Information Management) International and an active member of The Conference Board have provided additional insights regarding the challenges facing Information Technology (IT) organizations.

Whether you are a CIO, Information Technology (IT) manager, Human Resource (HR) manager, HR staff member, consultant to IT organizations, recruiter, academic, or in pursuit of enhancing your IT career, you will find the need to appreciate the fundamental Information Technology human resource considerations. These considerations include understanding the trends in:

- skills/careers and development
- recruiting
- retaining

Given the importance of IT HR considerations, it is perplexing why there has not previously been a book available to address this essential area. This book is based on grounded academic research and executive experiences. The insights and examples provided in this balanced perspective make this book a valuable asset for experienced professionals, academics, and students.

In investigating the importance that IT executives have placed on IT HR over the years, my Society for Information Management (SIM) trends research suggests that prior to the new millennium, attracting and retaining IT professionals was not among the top executive considerations, even with Y2K and the dot com boom. In reviewing the top twenty considerations since 1980, IT executives ranked HR considerations between 6 and 19, and more typically in the high end (low is considered more important).

Since 2000, and prior to the economic conundrum, attracting and retaining IT professionals was typically ranked first or second among all considerations. With the economy in recession, IT HR considerations fell back to the pre-millennium rankings. However, with the growth in leveraging IT throughout the business, anticipated retirement of the Baby Boomer generation, and the dip in students graduating with Computer Science/Information Systems Degrees, all indications suggest that IT HR will once again move towards the top of the list after the recession.
Today, new skills are required to compete in a global economy where organizations have new challenges to meet and new alternatives to choose from. Finding and keeping IT professionals with the appropriate skills is no easy feat. Today’s job skills require not only strong technical skills, but also excellent business, industry, communications, marketing, and negotiating abilities. Additionally, the choices for meeting the skills demand include more than just hiring the best candidate(s). Considerations like training/educating existing staff, outsourcing, partnering/collaborating, and acquiring new organizations each provide unique alternatives to the hiring conundrum.

This book provides a comprehensive presentation of current and emerging perspectives focusing on all aspects of managing IT HR from the view of both practitioners and academics located around the globe. It focuses on the results of recent research (from leading practitioners and academics) and their implications to IT human resource considerations. It presents what IT professionals are seeking in a position, characteristics of the IT environment that contributes to the HR complexity, the retention of IT talent, stress in the workplace, IT career development, and the impact of IT outsourcing. Real world examples are presented to illustrate these important insights.

This is a critical subject for IT management and human resource management programs, as well as for all practitioners from IT and HR organizations, and academics seeking to identify program content. This book will also benefit all prospective IT candidates applying for jobs and the recruiters for the hiring companies by presenting them with recruiting guidelines, employee retaining strategies, inputs on developing great talent and recruiting skills, and developing key players to become future leaders. It is paramount to recognize that as technology and business environments change, skills will be required to change; however, it is not just the technical skills that will lead to a successful IT career or IT organization, it is the appropriate balance of technical, business, management, industry, and interpersonal skills.

Among the most important IT management responsibilities is to ensure that the organization has the right personnel for the respective services that they provide, develop new IT strategies in accordance with the dynamic business and technical environment, nurture and develop talent, assist senior executives in sourcing decisions, and have a career advancement process for every employee which will allow them to excel in their professional career.

The purpose of this book is to provide a set of practical and powerful tools to facilitate the understanding of the strategic, tactical, and operational human resource responsibilities for IT management. We have learned a lot from applying the tools and approaches presented in this book. Our experiences have helped identify and measure the key elements that lead to a successful IT career and successful IT organization. Defining what will be demanded of managers and firms to survive and succeed in the information age remains a major challenge. This book prepares IT professionals to meet the challenge.

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