

# REVAMPING THE HUMAN RESOURCES?



“Those who refuse to accept the advice today that do not cost a thing will have in tomorrow to buy the most expensive price of regret” - Plato



In the last few decades, many human resource functions have strived to reinvent themselves through new visions, strategies, structures, processes, and systems. The HR practitioners know the importance of being strategic and working towards influencing top management on people issues. As the role and impact of the HR profession continue to evolve, we have reached a critical crossroad.

Many human resource (HR) functions have been undergoing unprecedented changes in the last few years; new HR visions are being formulated, innovative HR strategies implemented, advanced HR information systems installed, HR structures redesigned, and HR processes reengineered. To add higher value to their corporations, many HR functions are being driven to lower HR costs, enhance the quality of HR services, and forge stronger linkages with business needs.

In my role in HR for more than

two decades, I've found that most HR departments are muddled in power struggles, bureaucratic programs, and miscellaneous special projects when they should be focused on one objective: maximizing organizational performance.

It is tempting to blame this sorry state of affairs on HR alone. But the fundamental reason has to do with lack of leadership by companies' senior executives, whose job is to focus the various departments on accomplishing the organization's goals.

## The Pain of HR

Working in HR is not as easy as it seems, nor is it as relaxing as many other executives may think. HR practitioners are facing daily challenges that make them unable to sleep at night. Some individual practitioners and companies still cling to the old fashion of personnel administration and policing style. We know wholeheartedly that top HR practitioners are experiencing the negative views of the function

directly, and we keep listening to the following statements:

- My work is not appreciated by the boss
- I can't satisfy any one, they are all angry
- I am unable to convince staff to stay and turnover is increasing
- Department heads are not taking me seriously enough
- What business plan? I hardly got a summary from it, I was not involved
- My phone never stops ringing even during my vacation or day-off
- We don't have the power to make

decisions

- We are dealing with skeptical people

This is a very condensed list of comments that we keep hearing all over the place, no exception. In addition, the Society for HR Management 'SHRM' Global Forum report on "The Maturing Profession of Human Resources Worldwide" (2004) presented that over half (54.8%) of HR professionals say that the most frequently encountered obstacle to career advancement is HR's not being held in high esteem by the organization<sup>1</sup>.

Corrections of errors too often focus on the individual. A quick fix may change such behavior for a short time but the underlying