

Managing change

Developing the HR Profession in 2007 by Clayton Glen, Director – HDA

One thing that can be said about the UK HR community is that it is quick to innovate, and to lead new global trends – even those that originate elsewhere. At one level this tendency to innovate (experiment?) means that the benefits of transformation come quicker; at another level it means that outright failures and dissonance are more likely than in most other places where transformation is slower.

Five developments in the past decade have led to significant HR capability transformation, and to major HR career implications across the UK:

1. The 'business partnership' movement
2. The growth of e-HR, and HR automation
3. The centralisation of HR within shared services
4. The prevalence of HR outsourcing
5. The increased prevalence of HR offshoring, to the Far East in particular - a more recent trend leading to an array of dramatic predictions about the future (or lack thereof) of the HR discipline

A narrowed world of HR careers

At all stages of my career in HR before becoming a consultant, I (possibly naively) viewed myself as an agent of organisational transformation, a strategic advisor or partner to my company, and coach to my manager colleagues. At no stage of my career though did I feel that I was either strictly a specialist, or that my business advisory role was specifically circumscribed within a specific framework. This was a flexible and empowering place to be as an HR professional.

Within the current highly-delineated HR landscape though, it feels that many of the career development options I enjoyed are narrowed – for example, how do entry-level HR careerists within outsourced HR providers gain the required experience to move beyond the transactional, how do specialist HR practitioners make a logical move into a strategically-focused business partnership role without the opportunity to 'learn' via flexible experience-gains, and how do generalist business partners make a credible move into senior strategic specialist roles, eg. Head of Talent Management, etc?

Rethinking professional development

We have reached a point of dissonance – we have embarked on a fundamental HR transformation, without having real clarity about how we now develop the expertise, knowledge, awareness and aspiration to create a 'new HR'. This is particularly difficult for a discipline better known for its lack of empowerment than it's

commercial expertise. So, the challenge is a tough one.

Whereas in the past, HR career progression was flexible, the new reality means that old ways of thinking about HR careers are outdated, and must change. Effective career coaching and improved commercial awareness within the profession are key to its further development.

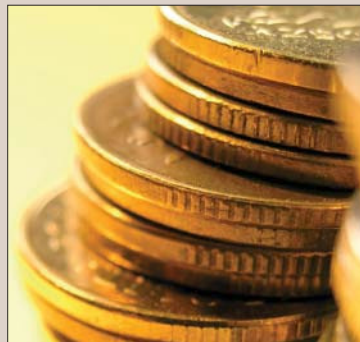


HDA provides consultancy in career transition, leadership and talent development and organisational change

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News

Financial search



The financial services sector is predicted to dominate 2007 global search activity according to retained consultants polled in the recently published Annual AESC Outlook Survey.

The research shows that 71% of consultants worldwide expected the FS sector to be the busiest, up from 66% in 2006.

"Financial services continues to be the strongest and most lucrative sector in retained executive search, which serves as a barometer for the economy in general," said AESC President, Peter Felix.

Felix feels that the optimism surrounding the industry is not surprising when investment banks such as Goldman Sachs are posting record-breaking profits and awarding huge bonuses to top performers.

Beyond FS, survey respondents predict that executive search will also be strong in professional services - including legal, HR and consulting sectors, pharma/biotech, IT, retail and manufacturing industries.

The sectors which are expected to weaken or flatten are non-profit and government. Despite the optimism in the market, nearly 80% of respondents to the survey indicated that competition for executive talent is currently at an all-time high, indicating that talent shortages are still prevalent at executive levels.

Even though the industry is struggling for talent, retained search consultants have a great deal of confidence in search industry growth over the coming year, with 84% expecting expansion, up seven per cent on 2006. In addition, 68% plan to increase their own staff in 2007, qualifying the current competition in the executive search job market.