

Dollars and Sense

Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) BY GARRY PRIAM

"Change can either challenge or threaten us...Your beliefs pave your way to success or block you." – Marsha Sinetar

Organizations are constantly striving to become more effective, responsive and efficient to meet the ever-changing needs of their employees, clients, and business environment. A lot of organizations currently use a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) in the workplace to help automate HR practices and achieve these goals.

An organization's strength lies in the people who work for it and effectively managing their people and the information they use is essential to a company's overall success. To be successful in human resources it is vital to have quick and easy access to this information.

There are a lot of things to consider if you are thinking about buying one, or simply changing or adding a new feature to your existing HRIS program. You don't have to be a techie to be able to work effectively with one; however, there are some tips and pitfalls of which it pays to be aware.

What is an HRIS?

A Human Resources Information System (HRIS) is a computer database that stores and processes vast amounts of information to assist human resource professionals in managing the data that is vital to the success of their organizations. While some organizations have yet to implement an integrated HRIS solution, the systems do provide an indispensable tool offering a multitude of advantages over manual

tracking and basic spreadsheets. Time and resources are the two most common deterrents to adopting an HRIS, but the benefits are clear.

What exactly does a HRIS do?

An HRIS provides companies with the ability to input information, create and analyze reports based on current, past and potential employees. It also provides HR professionals with the means to improve efficiency in HR decision-making, to effectively manage costs associated with HR and assist in HR strategic planning. In short, HRIS provides HR professionals with access to the quantifiable data upon which key metrics can be implemented to better support the initiatives and strategies pertinent to their success.



Breathe new life into your benefits and retirement plans...

When it comes to benefits, pension and savings plans, making the best choice for your organization can be a challenge.

Morneau Sobeco designs plans for your employees that are flexible and reliable, using leading-edge technology that provides on-line access to benefits and pension information.

With Morneau Sobeco's innovative consulting and administrative solutions, your employee benefits come to life.

**MORNEAU
SOBECO**

Fresh thinking. Innovative solutions.
www.morneausobeco.com

Some of the most common features found in an HRIS are:

- Attendance;
- Benefits;
- Demographic Profiles;
- Job Classifications;
- Succession Planning;
- Employee Records;
- Health and Safety;

Organizational policies and procedures;

- Training/Development;
- Email Alerts;
- Payroll;
- Employee Self Service;
- Performance Management, and
- Applicant Tracking.

Depending on the procedures and philosophies of an organization you may not use all of the features in the HRIS program you choose.

How to choose an HRIS?

If you have been given the task of selecting an HRIS one of the best things to do is determine what your company's current and future needs are. It's important that this is done before an HRIS solution is chosen

because the choice should be based on your company needs and not based on what features the program offers.

The first step is developing a list of the current data sources you currently have (i.e. paper, Excel spreadsheets, etc.) and producing a list of mandatory and optional features, reports and data to be included in the HRIS program.

vendor and also what is expected from your company. Most importantly, think forward. Is the system flexible enough to incorporate the changes and growth your company will experience in the future?

Thirdly, a point that will govern all subsequent HRIS transactions – the price. Program prices vary a great deal from a few thousand dollars to hundreds of

"It is not good enough for things to be planned – they still have to be done; for the intention to become a reality, energy has to be launched into operation." – *Walt Kelly*

Secondly, detail what it is you are looking for in an HRIS program. Make sure you detail everything in writing, so that you have a list of project requirements and an estimated time of completion for each. This will include what is expected from your

thousands of dollars, making it extremely important to determine a reasonable sense of budget and ROI expectations. A system from SAP will cost you a lot more than if you plan to use a smaller vendor. Similarly, the expense attached to the

Are you doing all you can for your diverse staff?

www.L2accent.com
Training for lifetime opportunities.

Boost the effectiveness of your employees!

- resolve communications mishaps
- improve clear speech & listening skills
- increase self confidence and job satisfaction

L2 Accent Reduction Centre retrains employees to produce North American sounds resulting in a professionally enhanced North American accent that lasts a lifetime.



L2 Accent Reduction Centre

604-267-7781, 6093 West Boulevard Vancouver, BC info@L2accent.com

customized implementation of a licensed in-house HRIS compared to the utilization of a hosted program needs to be considered in terms of up-front and ongoing payments as well.

You will spend a lot of time deciding on the best HRIS package for your company and the same due diligence should be used when choosing a vendor who will support and implement the software. There can be hiccups with the simplest of software installations and implementing an HRIS is not a small task. Therefore, the vendor is as imperative as the system. Experience, aptitude and attitude – all key in the hiring process – also apply in the selection of your HRIS software package provider.

Host vs. House

The question of whether you implement your HRIS in-house or have it hosted by a vendor is often answered by the resources at your departmental disposal. An IT department is fundamental in the installation and ongoing maintenance of any in-house solution. Licenses are purchased for the office and the HRIS goes to work after having been configured to suit your

organization's particular needs. Upfront costs and in-house tech support are the linchpins in this scenario.


A web-hosted HRIS takes away the onus of your company having in-house IT support. As implied by the name, organizations access these secure systems via the Internet, where the vendor's host computer server stores and manages the data and software. Web-hosted systems can also be referred to as "software as a service" (SAAS). You usually pay monthly for these systems and a set-up fee may be required at the initial installation.

Ease of Use and Flexibility

Integrating an HRIS into operational mix can take some adjustment. As with any technological shift, there will be early adopters and those less prone to embrace change. As creatures of habit, we like to see the benefits of change. As participants in an exponentially expanding technological workplace, we need to walk before we run.

This necessitates proper training along with a clear communication of the benefits the system will yield for the organization. With the proper due diligence,

the results from any HRIS implementation will become apparent once the training component has been addressed and the system goes live.

There is no real counter argument to an HRIS. Properly conceived and utilized, it automates a number of previously laborious HR practices. As a result an HRIS saves time and money, effectively reallocating work processes, providing competitive advantage and adds strategic value to the organization." 

As the president of Mossa International Incorporated, Garry Priam, B.Sc. provides corporate consulting and executive coaching to assist organizations to develop the bonds between themselves, their people and their clients. He can be reached at garry@mossa-intl.com

HRIS software package list

To further assist you in discovering the HRIS solution that best suits your workplace, the following list of providers was compiled through an industry survey. While not intended to promote a product or vendor, all of the following have systems currently in use by BC HRMA members across the province:

ADP

www.adp.com/employer_services_human_resources.asp
1-800-CALLADP (1-800-225-5237)

SAP

www12.sap.com/canada/index.epx
1-888-DIAL-SAP (1-888-342-5727)

Ceridian

www.ceridian.ca/en/index.html
1-877-237-4342

Highline

www.highlinecorp.com/pro.cfm
905-940-8777

PeopleSoft

www.oracle.com/applications/peoplesoft/hcm/ent/index.html
604-488-5000

Sage

www.sageabra.com/hrms.aspx
800-945-8007

Horizon

Custom HRIS created for ScotiaBank

The UBC Writing Centre offers consultation services and practical help tailored to the specific needs of your organization.

Business and Technical Writing Workshops

You decide the topics covered and length of the workshop and our professional instructors come to your workplace. Topics include:

- overcoming barriers to interpersonal communication
- writing effective proposals and reports
- following format conventions for memos, letters and reports
- polishing presentation skills and persuading your audience
- revising for clarity and conciseness
- editing for word choice, grammar and punctuation.

604-822-1983 www.writingcentre.ubc.ca/pt



Continuing Studies
Writing Centre