The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report

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About This Report

Throughout 2003, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) conducted a survey to benchmark the state of the HR profession worldwide. The survey was conducted in 23 countries and 11 languages. This report focuses on the combined worldwide results.

SHRM collaborated with HR associations worldwide on this survey. These associations sent a link to the survey to a random sample of their membership. Sample sizes varied due to membership sizes of the organizations.

Individual country results as well as worldwide results on the profile of HR practitioners and dimensions of HR professionalism are available for SHRM members at www.shrm.org/surveys.

As with any research, readers should exercise caution when generalizing results. While SHRM is confident in its research, it is prudent to understand the results presented in this survey report are only truly representative of the sample of HR professionals responding to the survey.

About SHRM

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 190,000 individual members, the Society's mission is to serve the needs of HR professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive resources available. As an influential voice, the Society's mission is also to advance the human resource profession to ensure that HR is recognized as an essential partner in developing and executing organizational strategy. Founded in 1948, SHRM currently has more than 500 affiliated chapters within the United States and members in more than 100 countries. Visit SHRM Online at www.shrm.org.

About the Authors

Dr. Lisbeth Claus, SPHR, GPHR, is an associate professor of Global HR at the Atkinson Graduate School of Management, Willamette University in Salem, OR. She is a past president of the Board of the SHRM Global Forum and currently serves on SHRM’s Organizational Development Special Expertise Panel.

Jessica Collison is Manager of the SHRM Survey Program. Her responsibilities include managing the SHRM Survey Program and designing, conducting and analyzing surveys on HR-related topics. She has a graduate certificate in Survey Design and Analysis from The George Washington University.

Acknowledgments

SHRM staff members Brian J. Glade, SPHR, GPHR, vice president, International Programs; Rosaura Barrera, manager, Global Community Development; and Dr. Debra Cohen, SPHR, chief knowledge officer, were instrumental in the development and implementation of the survey.
The purpose of this research was to get a snapshot of the background of HR practitioners around the world, how they chose HR as a career and how they maintain their competencies in order to play a strategic role. The survey also focused on how HR practitioners view themselves and their profession with regard to several dimensions of professionalism (see Appendix A for more information). This research on HR practitioners and the state of the profession of HR, the most comprehensive data set available to date, allowed the establishment of a benchmark for further research on the profession of HR and its similarities and differences around the world. This benchmark is necessary so that the profession of HR can understand its nature as a profession and track its progress as a profession over time.

To gather information on the HR practitioners’ background and self-perceptions, HR practitioners in 23 countries who were members of their national HR professional association were surveyed. The survey was conducted under the auspices of the Society for Human Resource Management in partnership with national HR organizations in various countries around the world. A total of 4,352 HR practitioners completed an e-mail questionnaire during the March-June 2003 timeframe. The questionnaire was translated into 11 languages and localized to each country.

This report presents a profile of HR practitioners worldwide, explores different dimensions of professionalism and ascertains the level of professionalism of HR as perceived by its practitioners worldwide. It also reviews the obstacles that HR practitioners are encountering in the development of their professional careers and their strategies for maintaining their competencies. In conclusion, the report offers some suggestions for increasing HR professionalism and advancing the profession.

1 At the time of publication, the data are two years old. However, it is highly unlikely there would be any significant changes if the data were captured within three months of the publication date.
The SHRM Survey Program and SHRM Global Forum jointly developed the survey instrument. The survey was conducted March through June 2003 under the auspices of SHRM in collaboration with selected national HR associations worldwide. The associations were asked to e-mail the standard questionnaire to a random sample of HR professionals who were members of their associations in 23 countries on six continents: Europe (six countries), North America (three countries), South America (six countries), Asia (five countries), Africa (two countries) and Australia (one country). The survey obtained completed responses of 4,352 HR practitioners (the number of respondents is indicated by “n” in tables and figures). Response rates ranged from 1% to 37%.

The questionnaire was originally developed in English and subsequently translated into 11 languages (Arabic, Chinese, Dutch/Flemish, French, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai and Turkish) using a translator and a back translator. In addition, a staff member of the HR professional association of each country checked the cultural translation by reviewing the relevance of the HR terminology in the country and localizing the survey questions to the national culture. The translation, back translation and localization comments from each country were consolidated with the help of auditors fluent in the respective country languages.

A series of survey questions, with similar format, addressed Freidson’s professionalism ideal-type (see Appendix A for explanation of this method). Using a Likert scale with identical response options of a standard five-point agree/disagree intensity scale, the respondents were given a statement and asked whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or are neutral.
### Table 2: Number of Responses by Country and Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>Chile</th>
<th>Colombia</th>
<th>Dominican Republic</th>
<th>Venezuela</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>South America/Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe/Middle East/Africa</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report

#### Figure 1: Percentage of Respondents by Region

- North America: 37%
- Europe/Middle East/Africa: 20%
- Asia Pacific: 20%
- South America/Caribbean: 23%

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report
Key Findings

Education and Training
- The majority of HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that one must have a university degree of some type to work and advance in HR.
- Almost all HR practitioners have some type of higher education beyond secondary school and almost nine out of 10 (86%) HR practitioners hold a university degree.
- The most common disciplines are human resources (31%), business administration (26%), labor relations (14%) and psychology (13%), together accounting for more than half of the degrees.
- Among the surveyed HR professionals, the following are the most common education activities: (1) attending HR conferences (80%); (2) attending workshops on specific HR topics (79%); (3) obtaining HR information from Internet Web sites (77%); (4) reading HR books (77%); and (5) reading academic HR journals (73%).
- The majority of HR practitioners used the following education activities more than once during the past year: (1) obtained HR information from Internet Web sites (80%); (2) read HR practitioner journals (77%); (3) read HR academic journals (71%); (4) read HR books (70%); (5) read business journals (69%); (6) networked with other HR practitioners (64%); and (7) received on-the-job formal and informal training (58%).

HR Career Aspirations
- Almost half of the HR practitioners (48%) considered a career in HR prior to graduating from a university, yet only one out of eight HR practitioners (13%) considered an HR career prior to completing secondary education.
- The top two reasons respondents gave for selecting HR as a career were that they found HR appealing and wanted to work with people.
- Slightly more than six out of 10 (61%) HR practitioners indicated that they experienced obstacles in advancing their HR careers. The major obstacles in HR career advancement were due to internal organizational factors (43%) and professional factors (27%).

Division of Labor
- The primary professional activities of HR practitioners are HR generalist (31%), HR functions at the executive level (17%), training and development (9%), HR consulting (7%) and administrative HR activities (7%), together accounting for 70% of all HR activities.
- The plurality of HR practitioners tend to be HR/personnel managers (30%) or directors (16%).
- Almost four out of 10 HR practitioners (38%) either report to the chief executive officer (CEO), chief operating officer (COO) or chief financial officer (CFO).
Organization of the Occupation
- HR practitioners who have been in HR less than 10 years tend to have started their career in HR, while HR practitioners who have been in HR for over 10 years had prior work experience that was not in HR.
- Almost four out of 10 (39%) respondents are employed in high-tech (11%), manufacturing/non-durable goods (10%), manufacturing/durable goods (9%) and service (8%) industries.
- Four out of 10 (40%) responding HR practitioners work for a multinational company.
- The majority of respondents (84%) work in the private sector.

Recognition of HR as a Profession
- More than six out of 10 (62%) HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that HR’s body of knowledge and skills are recognized by society in general.
- The majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that line managers (62%), employees (59%) and non-HR business executives (57%) recognize that HR has specific knowledge and skills that add to the value of the organization.
- When it comes to overall recognition, four out of 10 HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that HR professionals are held in high esteem in organizations today (40%) or that HR professionals are being regarded as a business partner by the leaders of the senior management group (43%).

HR as a Body of Knowledge
- More than nine out of 10 (92%) HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that HR represents a body of knowledge and skills.
- Almost eight out of 10 (79%) responding HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that to work in HR one must have business knowledge and/or business experience. A larger proportion of HR practitioners (88%) agree or strongly agree that business knowledge and/or business experience are required to advance one’s career in HR.

HR Professional Discretion and Autonomy
- Less than half of the HR practitioners (47%) agree or strongly agree that they have considerable autonomy and discretion in doing their work.
- Respondents agree or strongly agree that career advancement of HR practitioners in their organizations is largely determined by HR executives (61%) rather than by non-HR executives (41%).
- The majority of HR practitioners (69%) agree or strongly agree that management has mainly influenced and controlled their work; almost one-third (32%) of respondents agree that employees have done so.
Credentialing and Certification

- Almost two-thirds of the HR practitioners (65%) agree or strongly agree that to work in HR one must have some type of recognized credentials, while three-quarters (75%) agree or strongly agree that such credentials are required in order to advance one’s career in HR.
- Less than half of respondents (45%) agree or strongly agree that to work in HR one should have professional certification from a certifying body or agency within one’s country, while only slightly more (48%) agree or strongly agree that such certification is necessary to advance one’s career.
- Half of the HR practitioners (50%) report that they have a professional certification in HR.

External Professional Control

- Less than one quarter of HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that there is considerable external professional control by government and administrative agencies (26%), labor unions (22%) and work councils (14%).
- Less than one out of five HR practitioners (19%) agree or strongly agree that professional HR organizations have a great deal of control and influence over their work as HR practitioners, and less than one-third of respondents (32%) agree or strongly agree that HR professional organizations impact the development of laws and regulations affecting HR.

Ideology

- The majority of HR practitioners (58%) agree or strongly agree that they place a higher value on doing good work than on their own compensation.
- More than eight out of 10 respondents (83%) agree or strongly agree that HR practitioners are concerned with the well-being of employees in their organizations.
- Almost seven out of 10 responding HR practitioners (69%) agree or strongly agree that they tend to be interested in the financial results of their organizations.
Profile of HR Practitioners Worldwide

To get an overall profile of HR practitioners worldwide, this study explored their educational and professional credentials, their career aspirations and decisions, and their responsibilities and work context. Throughout the analysis, true differences in the data by country and geographic region were tested.

The sample of HR practitioners in this survey came from 23 countries. These countries were grouped into four regions: North America, South America/Caribbean, Asia Pacific and Europe/Middle East/Africa.

Educational Background of HR Practitioners

Professional work generally requires an occupationally controlled training program or schooling that is associated with higher learning at a university level. Professional work also has an occupationally controlled labor market requiring credentials for entry into the profession and career mobility. Since the study of HR as a university discipline and degree program is of fairly recent origin in most countries, HR practitioners were expected to come from a variety of other academic disciplines, most likely in the behavioral sciences and the humanities.

Almost all HR practitioners have some type of higher education beyond secondary school and almost nine out of 10 HR practitioners (86%) hold a university degree (see Table 3 and Table 4.) The number of years after secondary education necessary to obtain a university degree differs around the world but four and seven or more years of higher education are most common.

Survey Results

Table 3: The Highest Attained Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than secondary education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High secondary education</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year post-secondary education</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years post-secondary education</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years post-secondary education</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years post-secondary education</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years post-secondary education</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years post-secondary education</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 or more years post-secondary education</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report

Table 4: University/College Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have a university/college degree</td>
<td>3675</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have a university/college degree</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report

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3 All statistically significant results are at the p=.01 level (the likelihood of repeating the same results is only .01).
4 Many member HR organizations of the World Federation of Personnel Management Association (WFPMA) were contacted for participation in addition to other known non-member HR associations. The Europe/Middle East/Africa region is underrepresented in our sample due to data privacy concerns, timing of the survey and concerns about over-surveying of members in that region.
Not only do most HR practitioners hold a university degree, they often hold multiple degrees in more than one academic discipline. The most common disciplines are human resources (31%), business administration (26%), labor relations (14%) and psychology (13%), together accounting for half of the degrees. The other degrees come from a wide variety of academic disciplines, mainly from behavioral science backgrounds, but also from engineering and other areas\(^5\) (see Table 5).

There are differences in regional trends regarding the types of HR professionals’ academic degrees. In North America, HR practitioners are more likely to have degrees in business administration and labor relations; in Asia Pacific—anthropology and English; in South America/Caribbean—engineering, psychology and human resources; in the Europe/Middle East/Africa region—a variety of disciplines such as education, finance, law, organizational behavior, political science, sociology, social psychology and social work.

Almost all HR practitioners have schooling that is associated with higher learning at the university level, which is one of the main characteristics of professional work. The most common degrees relate to the essence of the practice of HR, namely human resources, business administration, labor relations and industrial/organizational psychology. The type of degree also differs by country/region and depends on the context in which HR is practiced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5</th>
<th>Academic Discipline of University Degrees of HR Practitioners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>1129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business administration</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor relations</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial/organizational psychology</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational behavior</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational development</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political science</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social psychology</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^5\) Because the survey was conducted in 11 different languages, it was not possible to have respondents specify what they meant by indicating “other.”

Note: Percentages do not total 100% as multiple answers were allowed.

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report

HR Career Aspirations
Professions have a great deal of attraction as a career. It is not uncommon for young people to want to be a member of established professions (i.e., medicine, law, divinity). These established professions often use “anticipatory socialization” mechanisms for people aspiring to become a member of the profession. Their practitioners serve as role models for new generations wanting to enter the profession.

In this study, almost half of the HR practitioners (48%) considered a career in HR prior to graduating from a university, yet only one out of eight HR practitioners (13%) considered an HR career prior to completing secondary education (see Table 6). This provides support that HR, in general, is not considered a career track for young people. Almost half of all HR practitioners made their career choice as a result of their university education. The decision was most likely the result of being exposed to the field of HR through a course. The other half entered the practice of HR later and through other channels.

HR practitioners cite a variety of reasons why they chose the field of HR as a career. These reasons were grouped into several categories: (1) professional...
attraction of HR; (2) financial security; (3) serendipity or chance factors; and (4) professional role models. Although financial reasons may appear to be in conflict with a professional ideology of service, economic rewards are generally considered to be associated with professional work along with prestige and recognition. Chance factors should be minimal, as they are usually not considered a planned career track for professional work.

The top two reasons HR professionals gave for selecting HR as a career were that they found HR appealing and wanted to work with people. Taken together, these two reasons account for one-third of all responses to this question. Almost two-thirds of the responses (63%) given for choosing HR can be considered professional in nature. However, almost one-quarter of the responses (23%) were due to serendipity, i.e., people were asked to perform HR tasks and responsibilities, with or without formal competencies (29%), or happened to choose the profession by chance (25%). Finally, HR role models also played a small part (9%) in why respondents pursued the field of HR (see Table 7).

There were differences in the major reasons for getting into the field of HR by region. With regard to professional reasons, HR practitioners from North America were more likely than HR professionals in other areas of the world to indicate that they found HR appealing, always wanted to work with people or that they studied HR in school. HR practitioners from the Asia Pacific region were more likely to indicate that HR has a lot of prestige and that they always knew they wanted to become an HR professional. Those from South America were more likely to indicate that they trained in a related field, recognized HR as a strategic function and always wanted to work with people. They were also more likely to mention financial security as a major reason for their career choice. HR professional role models played a much stronger role in getting people into HR in North and South America than in other parts of the world. These different reasons may reflect the place and cultural context of HR in the various regions of the world.

Serendipitous reasons for getting into HR also varied by region. In South America, HR practitioners were more likely to have entered HR because they were asked to perform HR tasks and responsibilities. This may partially account for the higher percentages of HR practitioners with engineering degrees in some South American countries. Perhaps in South America, there is a greater acceptance of scientific or practical training as a suitable background to enter HR, or there is less of a barrier to enter the HR field without some type of behavioral science credentials. As a reason for getting into HR, a higher percentage of HR practitioners in North America indicated that nobody else wanted to do it. In the Europe/Middle East/Africa region, HR was more likely to be considered an easy occupation to succeed. In Asia Pacific, HR practitioners were more likely to have entered the field by chance.

When examining the career aspirations of HR practitioners around the world (i.e., when they made their decision to enter HR and why), the study found that HR career decisions are made relatively late as only half of the respondents made that decision before completing secondary or university education. Table 6 provides more details on this finding.

Table 6: HR Career Aspirations Before Completing Secondary and University Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did You Consider a Career in HR Prior to Completing...?</th>
<th>Secondary Education (n = 4224)</th>
<th>University Education (n = 3618)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3665</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report
university graduation. In addition, although professional reasons for choosing HR are most prominent, almost one out of four HR practitioners entered the field by chance. Professional work is sometimes characterized by entrants choosing their career early and not leaving it to chance. The results of the survey may point to HR not yet having the same attraction to its entrants as other professional work. The notion that professional work requires credentials for entering the profession, combined with the fact that the threshold to enter HR is relatively low, should provide a caution that HR may not have yet achieved full maturity as a profession.

**Work Context**

Professional work tends to be diversified and has an occupationally controlled division of labor. This results in horizontal (specialization) and vertical (hierarchy) differentiation of its practitioners. With regard to horizontal differentiation, it was expected to find

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>Reasons for Choosing an HR Career</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 4277</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROFESSIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found HR appealing as a career</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to work with people</td>
<td>1648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognized HR as a strategic function</td>
<td>1199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained in HR-related field</td>
<td>774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied it in school</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always knew I wanted to become an HR professional</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found HR to have lot of prestige</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINANCIAL SECURITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic security</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good compensation</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SERENDIPITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was asked to perform HR tasks and responsibilities</td>
<td>1222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By chance</td>
<td>1062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found HR to be an easy occupation to succeed in</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobody else wanted to do it</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HR PROFESSIONAL ROLE MODELS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of a mentoring relationship</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew somebody in HR</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Because the survey was conducted in 11 different languages, it was not possible to have respondents specify what they meant by indicating “other.”

Note: Percentages do not total 100% as multiple answers were allowed.

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report
both generalists and specialists in different areas of HR. It was also expected that some HR specialties would be more prevalent in certain countries as a result of their external environment. With regard to vertical differentiation, it was expected to find practitioners at all levels of the organizational hierarchy.

The primary professional activities of HR practitioners are HR generalist (31%), HR functions at the executive level (17%), training and development (9%), HR consulting (7%) and administrative HR activities (7%). These five HR areas account for 70% of all HR activities. The remaining HR practitioners work in a variety of HR functional specialties at the domestic level. International HR is one of the least represented HR activities (see Table 8).

As expected, there were differences by region with regard to the most common primary professional activity of HR practitioners. In North America, a higher percentage of HR practitioners work as generalists and a smaller percentage have training/development, consulting and administration as their primary professional activities. In South America/Caribbean, a higher percentage of HR practitioners have training/development and administration as their primary professional activities. In the Asia Pacific region, a higher percentage of HR practitioners are HR generalists and work in training/development, while a considerably lower percentage has an HR function at the executive level. In the Europe/Middle East/Africa region, the highest percentage of respondents reported working at the executive level and in consulting (see Table 9).

As illustrated in Table 10, the plurality of HR practitioners tend to be HR/personnel managers (30%) or directors (16%). Almost four out of 10 HR practitioners (38%) either report to the CEO, COO or CFO, indi-
cating that they have close and direct access to the executive team of the organization (see Table 11).

HR practitioners who have been in HR less than 10 years tend to have started their careers in HR, while HR practitioners who have been in HR for over 10 years had prior work experience that was not in HR. This may indicate that in recent years HR is more likely to be chosen as a career path from the start of one’s career and prior to one’s actual work life (see Table 12).

Almost equal proportions of HR practitioners work for companies with fewer than 100 employees (18%), 1,000-4,999 employees (18%) and 25,000 or more employees (17%). Although it is impossible to use universal categories of what number of employees corresponds to small, medium or large companies in different countries, HR practitioners responding to this survey hold functions in companies ranging from very small to very large (see Table 13).

Almost four out of 10 respondents (39%) are employed in high-tech (11%), manufacturing/non-durable goods (10%), manufacturing/durable good...
(9%) and service (8%) industries (see Table 14). The remainder of HR practitioners work for a variety of other industries. Four out of 10 (40%) HR practitioners work for multinational companies (see Table 15), and the majority of HR practitioners (84%) are working in the private sector (see Table 16).
Dimensions of HR Professionalism

In order to ascertain the degree of professionalism of HR practitioners, statements were developed around the following six dimensions of HR professionalism: HR body of knowledge, recognition as a profession, HR professional autonomy and discretion, credentialing, ideology of service and external control.

HR Body of Knowledge

More than nine out of 10 (92%) HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that HR represents a body of knowledge and skills. This indicates that HR practitioners consider that there is a defined body of knowledge necessary to practice HR. As HR is practiced in an organizational context and as a legitimate functional business discipline, business knowledge (organizational knowledge for the public sector) and experience were deemed necessary to add value.

Almost eight out of 10 (79%) HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that to work in HR one must have business knowledge and/or business experience. A larger proportion of HR practitioners (88%) agree or strongly agree that business knowledge and/or business experience are required to advance one’s career in HR. The levels of agreement with the statements regarding the importance of business knowledge and/or experience are higher for advancing than for working in the profession. This implies that HR practitioners perceive that to work in HR, business knowledge and/or experience are important, yet to advance in HR, they are essential (see Table 17).

Although the total number of positive responses to statements regarding the HR body of knowledge and the need for business knowledge and/or experience is high, the responses vary by geographic region (see Table 18). North America had the highest percentage of HR practitioners who strongly agreed with these statements. In South America and the Asia Pacific region, the percentage of HR practitioners who strongly agree with these statements was consistently below the world average.

A high percentage of agreement with the above statements would mean that in terms of body of knowledge HR has reached a relatively high degree
of professionalism around the world. However in North America (especially in Canada and in the United States, but also to a large extent in Mexico), the HR body of knowledge and the need for business knowledge and/or experience to work and advance in HR is much more widely recognized by its practitioners than in the other regions of the world.

**Recognition as a Profession**

Professionalism usually leads to high levels of recognition by internal and external customers. In the case of HR customers, this recognition should come from society in general, employees, line managers, non-HR business executives and senior management.

More than six out of 10 HR practitioners (62%) agree or strongly agree that HR body of knowledge and skills are recognized by society in general. The majority of HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that employees (59%), line managers (62%) and non-HR business executives (57%) recognize that HR has specific knowledge and skills that add to the value of the organization. However, when it comes to overall recognition, only four out of 10 HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that they are held in high

### Table 18  HR Body of Knowledge by Geographic Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of “Strongly Agree” Responses</th>
<th>Worldwide</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>South America/Caribbean</th>
<th>Asia Pacific</th>
<th>Europe/Middle East/Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR represents a body of knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work in HR, one must have business knowledge and/or business experience.</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advance one’s career in HR, one must have business knowledge and/or business experience.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report*

### Table 19  Recognition of HR as a Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR body of knowledge and skills are recognized as a profession by society in general.</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees recognize that HR practitioners have specific knowledge and skills that add to the value of the organization.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line managers recognize that HR practitioners have specific knowledge and skills that add to the value of the organization.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-HR business executives recognize that HR practitioners have specific knowledge and skills that add to the value of the organization.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, HR professionals are held in high esteem in organizations today.</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR professionals feel they are being regarded as a business partner by the leaders of the senior management group.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report*
Esteem in organizations today (40%) or that they are regarded as a business partner by the leaders of the senior management group (43%) (see Table 19). These numbers indicate that although there is some recognition by society in general that HR has a specific body of knowledge and skills, the fact that these specific knowledge and skills add value to the organization is recognized by only a small number of the major internal customers of HR (line managers, employees and non-HR executives). HR practitioners perceive the highest level of recognition to come from line managers, then employees and non-HR executives. This could be the result of the growing teamwork between HR and line managers where some HR tasks are moving directly to line managers. More problematic is the lack of overall recognition that HR practitioners perceive to receive from their organizations where they feel they are not held in high esteem. Another difficulty lies in HR practitioners’ perceptions that they are not being regarded as business partners by the leaders of the senior management group.

The perceptions of HR practitioners with regard to recognition by the various stakeholders in their organizations vary by geographic region (see Table 20). When it comes to HR body of knowledge and skills being recognized as a profession by society in general, a higher percentage of HR practitioners from North America strongly agree with this statement. However, organizational recognition by employees, line managers and non-HR business executives and the perception of being regarded as business partners are higher in South America than in other regions of the world.

This overall low level of recognition allows the conclusion that HR probably has not reached a very high degree of professionalism, whether with the stakeholders of the organization or with senior management as business partners.

**HR Professional Discretion and Autonomy**

Autonomy and discretion are essential characteristics of professional work. Occupational mobility of professionals and control over their work should not be determined by outsiders (non-HR senior executives, management or employees) but by the professionals themselves or people in their professional hierarchy. HR executives rather than outsiders to the profession should control the mobility of its professionals. Therefore, high percentages of agreement...
with the first two statements in Table 21 and lower percentages of agreement with the last three statements would suggest that, in terms of the autonomy, HR has reached a high degree of professionalism.

Less than half of the HR practitioners (47%) agree or strongly agree that they have considerable autonomy and discretion in doing their work.

Respondents agree or strongly agree that career advancement of HR practitioners in their organizations is largely determined by HR executives (61%) rather than by non-HR executives (41%). This indicates that the professionals themselves, to a certain extent, determine occupational mobility, as it should be for professional work.

The majority of HR practitioners (69%) agree or strongly agree that management has mainly influenced and controlled their work, while one-third of respondents (33%) agree and strongly agree that employees have done so. These findings indicate that, with regard to autonomy and control over their work, HR professionals have reached some degree of autonomy vis-à-vis employees, yet they do not per-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 21</th>
<th>HR Professional Autonomy and Internal Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR practitioners have considerable autonomy and discretion in doing their work.</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career advancement of HR practitioners in their organizations is largely determined by HR executives.</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-HR senior executives largely determine career advancement of HR practitioners in their organizations.</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the organizations for which I have worked, management has mainly controlled my work as an HR practitioner.</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees have mainly influenced and controlled my work as an HR practitioner.</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 22</th>
<th>HR Professional Autonomy and Internal Control by Geographic Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of “Strongly Agree” Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR practitioners have considerable autonomy and discretion in doing their work.</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career advancement of HR practitioners in their organizations is largely determined by HR executives.</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-HR senior executives largely determine career advancement of HR practitioners in their organizations.</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the organizations for which I have worked, management has mainly controlled my work as an HR practitioner.</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees have mainly influenced and controlled my work as an HR practitioner.</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report
ceive that they have a great deal of autonomy and control over their work vis-à-vis management.

Responses to the various statements regarding autonomy and control show differences by region (see Table 22). HR practitioners in the Asia Pacific region have a higher perception of autonomy and discretion in doing their work than respondents in other regions.

Overall, HR practitioners perceive themselves as having relatively low levels of professional autonomy and discretion in doing their work. Autonomy and discretion are considered key dimensions of professionalism, yet HR practitioners in most countries do not perceive themselves as having them. The fact that HR is heavily regulated by national legislation protecting employees may partially account for the low perception of HR practitioners’ autonomy.

### Table 23: Credentialing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To work in HR, one must have some type of recognized credentials.</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work in HR, one should have professional certification from a certifying body or agency within one’s country.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work in HR, one must have a university degree of some type.</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advance one’s career in HR, one must have some type of recognized credentials.</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advance one’s career in HR, one must have professional certification related to HR from a certifying body or agency within one’s country.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advance one’s career in HR, one must have a university degree of some type.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report

### Table 24: Credentialing by Geographic Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of “Strongly Agree” Responses</th>
<th>Worldwide</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>South America/Caribbean</th>
<th>Asia Pacific</th>
<th>Europe/Middle East/Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To work in HR, one must have some type of recognized credentials.</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work in HR, one should have professional certification from a certifying body or agency within one’s country.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work in HR, one must have a university degree of some type.</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advance one’s career in HR, one must have some type of recognized credentials.</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advance one’s career in HR, one must have professional certification related to HR from a certifying body or agency within one’s country.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advance one’s career in HR, one must have a university degree of some type.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report
**Credentialing**

Professions usually have training credentials (e.g., certification, degree requirements, recognized credentials) for entry and career mobility. Controlling entrance through credentialing is an essential characteristic of professional work.

Almost two-thirds of the HR practitioners (66%) agree or strongly agree that to work in HR one must have some type of recognized credentials, while three-quarters (76%) agree or strongly agree that to advance one’s career in HR one must have some type of recognized credentials. Less than half of the HR practitioners (44%) agree or strongly agree that to work in HR one should have professional certification from a certifying body or agency within one’s country, while only slightly more (48%) agree or strongly agree that this is necessary to advance one’s career (see Table 23).

With regard to credentialing, HR practitioners give professional certification little credibility. Almost one-third of HR practitioners (31%) disagree or strongly disagree that professional certification is needed to work in HR and a slightly smaller proportion (28%) disagree or strongly disagree that it is needed to advance one’s HR career. These perceptions could be due to the fact that HR professional certification (as defined in the questionnaire) is not available for HR practitioners in most countries.

The majority of HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that one must have a university degree of some type to work (56%) and advance (57%) in HR. Surprisingly, much higher percentages of HR practitioners (86%) actually hold a university degree.

The perceptions of HR practitioners with regard to credentialing vary by geographic region (see Table 24). A higher percentage of HR practitioners in the Europe/Middle East/Africa region strongly agree that having some type of recognized credentialing is necessary to work in HR, while in South America it is considered important to advance one’s career in HR. A higher percentage of HR practitioners in South America strongly agree that having a university degree is necessary for working in HR and advancing one’s career.

While the majority of HR practitioners believe that recognized credentials are needed to work and advance in HR and that HR practitioners must have a university degree, there is low agreement with regard to the need for certification to work and advance in HR. Of course, since most of these countries do not have national professional certification programs, the lack of knowledge about professional certification and its potential benefits may be the reason for not regarding it as necessary. Yet, even in the countries that have professional certification, HR practitioners only consider it necessary for advancement in HR.

Credentialing and certification are major means for selecting who may practice the profession. Credentials obtained through training or a specialized university program and often followed by certification have been used by established professions to increase the threshold for entering the practice of the profession. HR

---

**Table 25**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology of Service</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR practitioners place a higher value on doing good work than on their own compensation.</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR practitioners are concerned with the well-being of employees in their organizations.</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>4291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR practitioners tend to be interested in the financial results of their organizations.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report*
practitioners are only marginally convinced that these professionalization mechanisms apply to their work.

**Ideology of Service**

Professions have an ideology of service, meaning that professionals must have a desire of serving some transcendent value and asserting greater devotion to doing good work than to economic rewards. Applied to HR, the service is to the primary “employee” customer and to the organization for which HR professionals work.

The majority of HR practitioners (58%) agree or strongly agree that they place a higher value on doing good work than on their own compensation (see Table 25). More than eight out of 10 HR practitioners (83%) agree or strongly agree that they are concerned with the well-being of employees in their organizations. Seven out of 10 respondents (70%) agree or strongly agree that HR practitioners tend to be interested in the financial results of their organizations.

There are differences by region with regard to the service ideology of HR (see Table 26). It is interesting to note that placing a higher value on doing good work rather than on compensation is not in conflict with choosing HR because of economic security. This is illustrated by the fact that HR practitioners in South America were more likely to choose HR as a career because of economic security yet place a higher value on doing good. The two are not mutually exclusive, but rather compensation is a reward for professionalism. In the Asia Pacific region, the service ideology is less developed with regard to doing good (versus compensation), the well-being of employees in the organization and the interest in the financial results of the organization.

HR practitioners perceive their work to have a high degree of service, whether it is to employees or to the organization. In general, their compensation is considered less important than doing good work, and they are interested in the well-being of their employees as well as the financial results of their organizations. The Asia Pacific countries deviate somewhat from this service ideology: HR practitioners in this region were more likely to have chosen HR for its prestige or by chance.

**External Control**

Professional work should have limited external control, meaning that outsiders do not control the profession. There is a possible exception for laws and regulations which are often the result of lobbying efforts by the professional organization and support the existence of professional monopolies. However, there should be a high degree of agreement with the statements indicating that the professional organization exerts control by and for its members (see Table 27).

In general, one quarter or fewer HR practitioners agree or strongly agree that there is considerable external professional control by government and administrative agencies (26%), labor unions (22%) and work councils (14%). This indicates a high degree of professionalism with regard to external control. However, HR practitioners do not consider their HR professional organizations to influence their

---

**Table 26**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology of Service by Geographic Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of “Strongly Agree” Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR practitioners place a higher value on doing good work than on their own compensation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR practitioners are concerned with the well-being of employees in their organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR practitioners tend to be interested in the financial results of their organizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report*
work and lobby on their behalf. Less than one out of five HR practitioners (18%) agree or strongly agree that professional HR organizations have a great deal of control and influence over their work as HR practitioners, and less than one-third (32%) agree or strongly agree that HR professional organizations impact the development of laws and regulations affecting HR.

Table 28 presents the levels of external control by region. A higher percentage of HR practitioners in North America strongly agree that laws and regulations have mainly influenced and controlled their work. They also see their professional organizations play a more significant role in influencing their work. In addition, they are more likely to strongly agree that their professional organizations impact the develop-
ment of laws and regulations affecting HR. Somewhat surprisingly, HR professionals in North America also feel the control of work councils (i.e., banding of employees within organizations) over their work. This could be due to the fact that they are insecure in dealing with work councils in their companies’ subsidiaries in the European Union and other countries where work councils have been established.

Except for laws and regulations, HR practitioners do not perceive a great deal of external control from government and administrative agencies, labor unions, professional organizations or work councils. This indicates a relatively high degree of professionalism. However, to a certain extent, professional organizations should exert control over professional work and be involved in advancing the profession for its members and become a recognized voice for the profession. This does not seem to be the case throughout the world.

Obstacles

Organized professions create barriers to entry into the profession through education and credentialing; but once the individuals are in the profession, they create monopolies for their practitioners and determine specific advancement tracks. If practitioners encounter numerous obstacles, it may indicate that the profession is not well established and does not have the necessary autonomy and control.

Slightly more than six out of 10 (61%) HR practitioners indicated that they experienced obstacles in advancing their HR careers (see Table 29).

The types of obstacles encountered by HR practitioners in their careers were grouped into four categories: personal factors, internal organizational factors, external societal factors and professional factors.

According to the respondents, the major obstacles in HR career advancement are due to internal organizational factors and professional factors. The internal organizational factors that create obstacles for HR career advancement relate to the lack of strategic HR. The professional factors that create obstacles for HR career advancement are mainly the result of a lack of professionalization of HR. Personal factors and external societal factors also constitute obsta-
cles to career advancement, but to a much smaller degree (see Table 30).

**Development**

Professionals must maintain their credentials through education. The research indicates that HR practitioners undertake multiple activities to further develop their competencies (see Table 31). The most common educational activities are attending HR conferences (80%), attending workshops on specific HR topics (79%), obtaining HR information from Internet Web sites (77%), reading HR books (77%) and reading academic HR journals (73%).

When it comes to the frequency of using these sources of education during the past 12 months, the ranking is somewhat different (see Table 32). Internet, published materials, networking and on-the-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 31</th>
<th>Professional Development of HR Practitioners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend HR professional or academic conferences</td>
<td>3427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend workshops on specific HR subjects</td>
<td>3408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain HR information from Internet Web sites</td>
<td>3325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read HR books</td>
<td>3308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read academic HR journals</td>
<td>3150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a member of an HR professional association in my country</td>
<td>3103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get on-the-job training (formal or informal)</td>
<td>3009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read HR practitioner journals</td>
<td>3020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network with other HR practitioners</td>
<td>2820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read business books</td>
<td>2539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend local HR professional association meetings</td>
<td>2434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach or be coached by another HR practitioner</td>
<td>2458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read business journals</td>
<td>2415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take courses or training programs sponsored by an HR professional organization</td>
<td>2038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take courses or training programs sponsored by a third-party consultant</td>
<td>1761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor or be mentored by another HR practitioner</td>
<td>1425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take business courses (toward a specific degree) offered by a university</td>
<td>1310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take business courses (not toward a specific degree) offered by a university</td>
<td>1291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take HR courses (toward a specific degree) offered by a university</td>
<td>1302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take HR courses (not toward a specific degree) offered by a university</td>
<td>1122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take certification preparation course</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take certification examination</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take online education courses on HR topics</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a member in an HR professional association in another country</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in Internet chat groups</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Because the survey was conducted in 11 different languages, it was not possible to have respondents specify what they meant by indicating “other.”

Note: Percentages do not total 100% as multiple answers were allowed.

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report
job training are the most common types of educational activities. The majority of HR practitioners used the following educational activities more than once during the past year: obtaining HR information from Internet Web sites (80%), reading HR practitioner journals (77%), reading HR academic journals (71%), reading HR books (70%), reading business journals (69%), becoming a member of an HR professional association in another country (67%), networking with other HR practitioners (64%), reading business books (61%) and getting on-the-job training (58%). HR practitioners are very active in continuing education activities by using different education mechanisms and using them frequently.

Table 32  Frequency of Engaging in Educational Activities (Last 12 Months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never n</th>
<th>Never %</th>
<th>Once n</th>
<th>Once %</th>
<th>More Than Once n</th>
<th>More Than Once %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend HR professional or academic conferences</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1407</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>1794</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend local professional HR association meetings</td>
<td>1498</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1715</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend workshops on specific HR subjects</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1237</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach or be coached by another HR practitioner</td>
<td>1469</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get on-the-job training (formal or informal)</td>
<td>1022</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2312</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become member in an HR professional association in my country</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>1451</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become member in an HR professional association in another country</td>
<td>2991</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor or be mentored by another HR practitioner</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1311</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network with other HR practitioners</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2580</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain HR information from Internet Web sites</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3260</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in Internet chat groups</td>
<td>3081</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read academic HR journals</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2890</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read business books</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2408</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read business journals</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2672</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read HR books</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2838</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read HR practitioner journals</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3111</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take business courses (not toward a specific degree) offered by a university</td>
<td>2497</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take business courses (toward a specific degree) offered by a university</td>
<td>2744</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take certification preparation courses</td>
<td>2894</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take certification examination</td>
<td>2996</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take courses or training programs sponsored by an HR professional organization</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>1042</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>1023</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take courses or training programs sponsored by a third-party consultant</td>
<td>1723</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take HR courses (not toward a specific degree) offered by a university</td>
<td>2721</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take HR courses (toward a specific degree) offered by a university</td>
<td>2756</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take online education courses on HR topics</td>
<td>2997</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Maturing Profession of Human Resources: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report
The findings of this survey confirm that, similar to other professions, the HR profession does not operate in a vacuum. This study on HR professionalism is context-specific. It was undertaken in 2003 and carries that time frame in the broader societal context. While there is a great deal of convergence with regard to the background of HR practitioners around the world, there are also country differences. The data must be put into their national context, and these national results must be contrasted and compared across countries and regions. The data obtained through this study suggest that although there is a common worldwide profile of HR practitioners, there is still a lot of room left for the maturing of HR in terms of the various dimensions of professionalism.

The entrance into the HR profession was either motivational or circumstantial. The appeal of HR as a career and the desire to work with people were the two major reasons for respondents wanting to work in HR. The other reasons for career choice were more haphazard as they were circumstantial. People simply don’t grow up aspiring to be an HR professional. In addition, career decisions to get into HR are made rather late in a person’s career development, either at the university level or by serendipity. In light of the HR career decision profile, HR practitioners can play a vital role in mentoring and coaching future HR professionals (especially at the high-school and university levels) and, thereby, providing the needed anticipatory socialization into HR work for future practitioners.

HR is perceived by its practitioners to have a recognized body of knowledge and skills that add value to the organization. Most HR practitioners have a university degree (mainly in business administration and HR) and a substantial number have professional certification credentials. In addition, HR practitioners are extremely active in a variety of educational activities and engage in multiple learning initiatives. Yet, they still encounter many obstacles for career advancement. These obstacles are neither personal (credential-based) nor social but professional. The fact that HR is not held in high esteem, the lack of corporate HR strategy, the lack of HR budget and the lack of top-down implementation of HR strategy are professional obstacles that HR practitioners must face. These obstacles are closely tied to the recognition of HR as a profession. It is recommended that HR practitioners, in addition to achieving personal credibility, work closely with their professional HR organizations to augment the recognition of HR within their organizations.

The degree of HR professionalism, as perceived by its practitioners, is mixed. HR practitioners, in general, believe that there is a distinct body of HR knowledge. They also believe that to work and advance in HR one must have business knowledge and/or business experience. In addition, HR practitioners have a strong ideology of service. They are simultaneously concerned with the well-being of employees and interested in the financial results of their organizations. A body of knowledge and ideology of service...
are strong indicators of professionalism, and they seem to be present and internalized among HR practitioners worldwide.

On the other hand, HR practitioners seem to suffer from low professional self-esteem. Three indicators are especially low and troublesome: the perception of HR practitioners regarding recognition of their work, the need to formally establish their credibility and the internal control of their work. First, HR practitioners do not feel that they are held in high esteem in their organizations today, nor that the leaders of the senior management group regard them as business partners. Second, while HR practitioners agree that credentialing and university education are needed to advance in the profession, they place low value on these for entering and working as HR practitioners. These findings are somewhat surprising in light of the fact that, in general, HR practitioners tend to have a university degree. Few HR practitioners value the benefits of professional certification. Hence, the perception of the need to control entrance into the profession in terms of credentialing (certification and university education) is extremely low compared with other professions that generally aspire to establish barriers to entry in terms of professional credentials. The fact that HR has a low barrier to entry may very well be related to the perception of low recognition by the society and business partners. Third, while HR practitioners claim to have some professional autonomy over their work, they perceive their work to be mainly internally controlled by their organizations. In addition, external control of HR practices is mainly a result of laws and regulations and control by government and administrative agencies.

For HR to gain full professional status, its practitioners must increase their own professional self-esteem and be recognized as a profession by others. Credibility and recognition as a profession are usually gained through occupationally controlled training programs of higher learning, credentialing through certification and ongoing opportunities for the development of new knowledge. While many HR practitioners, in fact, already have these university credentials (e.g., university degrees) and believe that they are necessary for advancement, they seem to attach little importance to them for working in HR. Unless HR professionals place more importance on competencies and credentialing for entering the profession (i.e., hire people with formal training rather than on-the-job induction, attach greater importance to competency development and certification), they will polarize the view that others have about their work which will subsequently affect HR’s recognition as a profession. The results of this survey indicate that HR does not adequately control the entry mechanism into its work and allows people without formal credentials to do HR activities. By allowing anyone to enter but only those with credentials to advance, the HR profession also creates a hybrid external view of its work (occupational versus professional and administrative versus strategic).

Whether or not the self-perceptions of HR practitioners with regard to low professional recognition of HR are based on reality is somewhat inconsequential. If HR practitioners do not perceive that they have a seat at the table, they are very unlikely to legitimately occupy or demand one. Very few HR practitioners give considerable credit to their professional organizations for influencing laws affecting their work (except in North America). The professional organizations, however, can only do that with the support and active participation of their membership in lobbying at the national level. This allows HR practitioners to limit external control on their professional work.

HR practitioners have a low self-perception when it comes to recognition, especially in terms of the esteem that they receive in organizations and whether the senior management group regards them as business partners. It is critical that recognition be made a priority among HR professionals with responsibility for the maturation process of the HR profession, if progress is to continue unabated. The ongoing discussion in HR circles indicates that having a seat at the table is insufficient to add value. HR professionals must be able to add value to the business in the realm of human capital and talent man-
agement. The well-developed HR body of knowledge and the advanced credentials of HR practitioners indicate that they have the professional background to add value to the business. There is, however, still a reluctance of HR practitioners to professionalize and see the value of professional certification.

Does professionalism, as defined by sociologists, matter to HR or are personal credentials of HR practitioners merely sufficient? As seen from this study, HR is generally being perceived to be a profession with regard to the body of knowledge and service orientation. These two dimensions of professionalism relate directly to the personal credibility of HR practitioners. The other dimensions of HR professionalism (autonomy, recognition, credentialing and control) are perceived by HR practitioners to be more problematic. These dimensions lie much more at organizational and societal levels rather than the individual sphere of influence. Hence, the intervention approaches to augment HR professionalism in these dimensions must be organizational rather than individual. HR practitioners must not only focus on their individual credibility through competency development but also on their strength as a professional group. Due to the context-specific nature of HR as a professional discipline, the professional affiliations of HR practitioners should first be local and national. However, because companies operate across borders, so must the HR professional organizations that serve these companies. As a relatively young business discipline, HR is now at the crossroad of harnessing its professional autonomy while continuing to balance the needs of its multiple stakeholders.
The conceptual framework for the research into the professionalism of HR is based on Eliot Freidson’s ideal-type developed in his book *Professionalism: The Third Logic* (2001). The main question of this research was not whether HR is a profession or merely an occupation, but whether its practitioners perceive their work as meeting the standards generally attributed to professional work by sociologists. These standards are described in Freidson’s professionalism ideal-type.

Using this framework, several dimensions of professionalism were derived and applied to HR. To have a high degree of professionalism, HR should be based on a body of knowledge and skills derived from abstract concepts and theories (body of knowledge) that are officially recognized (recognition) as one and require the exercise of considerable discretion (autonomy). HR as a professional group should have an occupationally controlled labor market requiring training credentials for entry and career mobility. HR should also have occupationally controlled training programs that produce those credentials and schooling that is associated with “higher learning,” segregated from the ordinary labor market. These programs must also provide opportunity for the development of new knowledge (credentialing). Finally, HR should promote a professional ideology serving some transcendent value and asserting greater devotion to doing good work than to economic rewards (ideology of service). The above dimensions of professionalism are considered defining elements that are constant and stable over time. Critical contingencies varying in time and place relate to the organizational context and outsiders that put external control on HR (external control). These range from government laws and regulations to labor unions.

### Professionalism Ideal-Type of Eliot Freidson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>INSTITUTIONAL CONSTANTS OR DEFINING ELEMENTS</strong></th>
<th><strong>CRITICAL CONTINGENCIES VARYING IN TIME AND PLACE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A body of knowledge and skills that is officially recognized as one based on abstract concepts and theories and requiring the exercise of considerable discretion.</td>
<td>1. The organization and policy positions of state agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. An occupationally controlled division of labor.</td>
<td>2. The organization of occupations themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An occupationally controlled labor market requiring training credentials for entry and career mobility.</td>
<td>3. The varying institutional circumstances required for the successful practice of different bodies of knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An occupationally controlled training program which produces those credentials, schooling that is associated with “higher learning,” segregated from the ordinary labor market, and which provides opportunity for the development of new knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. An ideology serving some transcendent value and asserting greater devotion to doing good work than to economic rewards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey Instrument

The HR Profession

In an effort to gather information on the HR profession worldwide, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in conjunction with the SHRM Global Forum is conducting this CONFIDENTIAL survey in 23 countries worldwide.

Results of this survey will appear free to all SHRM members on the Survey Program page on SHRM’s Web site. Please visit the Web site at www.shrm.org/surveys.

This survey should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete.

1. What is your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding the human resource profession in the country where you work? (Check one for each statement.)

   HR represents a body of knowledge and skills.
   □ Strongly Agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neutral
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly Disagree

   HR body of knowledge and skills are recognized as a profession by society in general.
   □ Strongly Agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neutral
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly Disagree

To work in HR, one must have some type of recognized credentials.
□ Strongly Agree
□ Agree
□ Neutral
□ Disagree
□ Strongly Disagree

To work in HR, one should have professional certification from a certifying body or agency within one’s country.
□ Strongly Agree
□ Agree
□ Neutral
□ Disagree
□ Strongly Disagree

To work in HR, one must have business knowledge and/or business experience.
□ Strongly Agree
□ Agree
□ Neutral
□ Disagree
□ Strongly Disagree
To work in HR, one must have a university degree of some type.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

To advance one’s career in HR, one must have some type of recognized credentials.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

To advance one’s career in HR, one should have professional certification related to HR from a certifying body or agency within one’s country.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

To advance one’s career in HR, one must have business knowledge and/or business experience.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

To advance one’s career in HR, one must have a university degree of some type.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

HR practitioners place a higher value on doing good work than on their own compensation.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

HR practitioners are concerned with the well-being of employees in their organizations.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

HR practitioners tend to be interested in the financial results of their organizations.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Employees recognize that HR practitioners have specific knowledge and skills that add to the value of the organization.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

Line managers recognize that HR practitioners have specific knowledge and skills that add to the value of the organization.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree
Non-HR business executives recognize that HR practitioners have specific knowledge and skills that add to the value of the organization.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Overall, HR professionals are held in high esteem in organizations today.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

HR practitioners have considerable autonomy and discretion in doing their work.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Career advancement of HR practitioners in their organizations is largely determined by HR executives.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Career advancement of HR practitioners in their organizations is largely determined by non-HR senior executives.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

HR professionals feel they are being regarded as a business partner by the leaders of the senior management group.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

2. What is your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about HR practice in your country? (Check one for each statement.)

In the organizations for which I have worked, management has mainly controlled my work as an HR practitioner.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Government and administrative agencies have mainly influenced and controlled my work as an HR practitioner.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Employees have mainly influenced and controlled my work as an HR practitioner.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Laws and regulations have mainly influenced and controlled my work as an HR practitioner.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Labor unions have mainly influenced and controlled my work as an HR practitioner.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Professional HR organizations have a great deal of control and influence over my work as an HR practitioner.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Work councils have mainly influenced and controlled my work as an HR practitioner.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

HR professional organizations impact the development of laws and regulations affecting HR.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

3. Which of the following opportunities have you used to develop your HR knowledge and skills? (Check all that apply.)

- Attend HR professional or academic conferences
- Attend local professional HR association meetings
- Attend workshops on specific HR subjects
- Coach or be coached by another HR practitioner
- Get on-the-job training (formal and/or informal)
- Membership in an HR professional association in my country
- Membership in an HR professional association in another country
- Mentor or be mentored by another HR practitioner
- Network with other HR practitioners
- Obtain HR information from Internet Web sites
- Participate in Internet chat groups
- Read academic HR journals
- Read business books
- Read business journals
- Read HR books
- Read HR practitioner journals
- Take business courses (not toward a specific degree) offered by a university
- Take business courses (toward a specific degree) offered by a university
- Take certification preparation courses
- Take certification examination
- Take courses or training programs sponsored by an HR professional organization
- Take courses or training programs sponsored by a third-party consultant
- Take HR courses (not toward a specific degree) offered by a university
- Take HR courses (toward a specific degree) offered by a university
- Take online education courses on HR topics
- Other
4. During the past 12 months, how often did you engage in any of the following activities? (Check one for each activity.)

Attend HR professional or academic conferences
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Attend local professional HR association meetings
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Attend workshops on specific HR subjects
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Coach or be coached by another HR practitioner
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Get on-the-job training (formal and/or informal)
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Membership in an HR professional association in my country
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Membership in an HR professional association in another country
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Mentor or be mentored by another HR practitioner
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Network with other HR practitioners
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Obtain HR information from Internet Web sites
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Participate in Internet chat groups
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Read academic HR journals
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Read business books
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Read business journals
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Read HR books
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once

Read HR practitioner journals
□ Never
□ One Time
□ More Than Once
Take business courses (not toward a specific degree) offered by a university
☐ Never
☐ One Time
☐ More Than Once

Take business courses (toward a specific degree) offered by a university
☐ Never
☐ One Time
☐ More Than Once

Take certification preparation courses
☐ Never
☐ One Time
☐ More Than Once

Take certification examination
☐ Never
☐ One Time
☐ More Than Once

Take courses or training programs sponsored by an HR professional organization
☐ Never
☐ One Time
☐ More Than Once

Take courses or training programs sponsored by a third-party consultant
☐ Never
☐ One Time
☐ More Than Once

Take HR courses (not toward a specific degree) offered by a university
☐ Never
☐ One Time
☐ More Than Once

Take HR courses (toward a specific degree) offered by a university
☐ Never
☐ One Time
☐ More Than Once

Take online education courses on HR topics
☐ Never
☐ One Time
☐ More Than Once

5. Have you experienced obstacles in advancing your own career in HR?
☐ Yes
☐ No—Skip to Question 7

6. What obstacles have you experienced in advancing your own career?
(Check all that apply.)
☐ Age-biased glass ceilings
☐ Gender glass ceilings
☐ HR not held in high esteem
☐ Lack formal HR education
☐ Lack of a mentor
☐ Lack of business acumen
☐ Lack of certification
☐ Lack of corporate HR strategy
☐ Lack of HR budget
☐ Lack of opportunity to grow
☐ Lack of top-down implementation of HR strategy/programs
☐ Lack of university credentials
☐ No clear HR career path
☐ Racial glass ceilings
☐ Size of the organization
☐ Other
7. In which of the following functions are you primarily engaged? (Check only one.)
- Administrative
- Benefits
- Communications
- Compensation
- Consultant
- Diversity
- Employee assistance programs
- Employee relations
- Employment/recruitment
- Health, safety, security
- HR functions at the executive level
- HR generalist
- HR information systems
- HR research
- International HR
- Labor/industrial relations
- Legal
- Organizational development
- Training/development
- Other

8. What is your title? (Check only one.)
- President, CEO, owner, partner, principal
- Vice president of HR, personnel or other
- Assistant or associate vice president of HR, personnel or other
- Director of HR, personnel or other
- Manager of HR, personnel or other
- Supervisor
- HR generalist
- HR specialist
- Administrator
- HR representative
- Legal counsel
- Academician
- Librarian
- Consultant
- Other

9. To whom do you directly report? (Check only one.)
- CEO
- COO
- CFO
- Chief HR officer
- Vice president of HR
- HR director
- HR manager
- HR supervisor
- Other

10. Do you have a professional certification in HR (i.e., an official endorsement by an authorized body or agency to practice your profession)?
- Yes
- No

11. What is the highest education level that you have attained? (Check only one.)
- Less than high school (secondary education)
- High school (secondary education)
- 1 year post high school (secondary education)
- 2 years post high school (secondary education)
- 3 years post high school (secondary education)
- 4 years post high school (secondary education)
- 5 years post high school (secondary education)
- 6 years post high school (secondary education)
- 7 or more years post high school (secondary education)

12. Did you consider a career in HR prior to graduating from high school (secondary education)?
- Yes
- No

13a. Do you have a university/college degree?
- Yes
- No—Skip to question 15
13b. What is the academic discipline of your degree? (Check all that apply.)
- Anthropology
- Business administration
- Communications
- Education
- English
- Engineering
- Finance
- Human resources
- Industrial organizational psychology
- Labor relations
- Law
- Marketing
- Organization development
- Organizational behavior
- Philosophy
- Political science
- Psychology
- Social psychology
- Social work
- Sociology
- Other

14. Did you consider a career in HR prior to graduating from a university/college?
- Yes
- No

15. What was your MAJOR reason for getting into the field of HR? (Check all that apply.)
- Always knew I wanted to become an HR professional
- As a result of a mentoring relationship
- By chance
- Easy occupation to succeed
- Economic security
- Found HR appealing as a career
- HR has a lot of prestige
- Knew somebody in HR
- Nobody else wanted to do it
- Pays well
- Recognized HR as a strategic function
- Studied it in school
- Trained in HR-related field
- Wanted to work with people
- Was asked to perform HR tasks and responsibilities
- Other

16. How many years have you been working overall?
- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- More than 30 years

17. How many years have you been in HR?
- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- More than 30 years
18. Do you work for a multinational organization?
☐ Yes
☐ No

19. How many employees does your organization have worldwide?
☐ 1-99
☐ 100-249
☐ 250-499
☐ 500-999
☐ 1,000-4,999
☐ 5,000-9,999
☐ 10,000-14,999
☐ 15,000-19,999
☐ 20,000-24,999
☐ 25,000 or more

20. What industry best represents your organization? (Check only one.)
☐ Agriculture, forestry, fishing
☐ Construction and mining
☐ Educational services
☐ Finance
☐ Government
☐ Health
☐ High-tech
☐ Independent consultant
☐ Insurance
☐ Library
☐ Manufacturing (nondurable goods)
☐ Manufacturing (durable goods)
☐ Newspaper publishing/broadcasting
☐ Oil and gas
☐ Real estate
☐ Service
☐ Transportation
☐ Utility
☐ Wholesale/retail trade
☐ Other

21. Do you work in the public or private sector?
☐ Public sector
☐ Private sector
Available to members and the public

2. Workplace Productivity Poll Findings (17 pages, January 2005)
4. Employee Trust and Organizational Loyalty Poll Findings (14 pages, July 2004)
10. HR Implications of the Attack on America (23 pages, September 2002)
11. Corporate Credibility and Employee Communications Survey (14 pages, August 2002)
15. HR Implications of the Attack on America: Executive Summary of Results of a Survey of HR Professionals (13 pages, October 2002)
17. Search Tactics Poll (8 pages, April 2001)

Available to members only

12. SHRM Eldercare Survey (40 pages, December 2003)
14. Undergraduate HR Curriculum Study (45 pages, October 2003)
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<td>SHRM/SHRM Foundation 2003 Benefits Survey</td>
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<td>Employer Incentives for Hiring Individuals With Disabilities</td>
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<td>Fun Work Environment Survey</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Aligning HR With Organizational Strategy</td>
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<td>26</td>
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**www.shrm.org/surveys/results**