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Overview

The world of work is rapidly transforming, driven by multiple global forces of change. Globally active organizations will be compelled by these external forces to adapt their internal work processes and roles; those that do so sooner will have a competitive edge when it comes to talent attraction/sourcing and talent engagement/retention. The stakes are strategic, affecting organizations’ ability to expand capacity, grow revenue, increase productivity, and reach greater profitability. The levers are in the hands of HR.

Context

The SHRM Foundation’s 2015 Thought Leaders Retreat, “Engaging and Integrating a Global Workforce,” was held on October 7 and 8 in San Antonio, Texas. A select group of top HR leaders gathered to listen to presentations and discuss how work is changing, as well as exploring the implications for organizations and HR.

Key Takeaways

How work is changing: Multiple forces are converging to reshape the global world of work.

Multiple forces and trends, visible today, are poised to reshape the working world of tomorrow. The convergence of these trends will compel HR leaders to connect the dots between the forces of change and the specific ways in which their organizations can adapt to and embrace them. It will be incumbent upon CHROs to drive strategic responses in collaboration with their C-suite partners to adapt successfully to the transforming talent market.

Many of the sessions identified and discussed specific forces of change, including:

- **Mobility changes.** More people are living outside their birth countries than ever before and younger workers have an unprecedented thirst for working abroad.

- **The rise of emerging economies.** The global workforce will expand, with an unprecedented rise in workers from emerging economies. Emerging markets’ contributions to global GDP and the ranks of large global companies will escalate.

- **Global talent sourcing.** Globalizing corporations are competing for increasingly scarce global talent, particularly technological and professional skills. Global leadership capacity and globally competent workforces are in short supply relative to need. These trends will escalate without new innovative ways to source talent.

- **Demographic workforce shifts.** Baby Boomer retirements are leaving leadership skills gaps, and the rising Generation Z cohort will change the world of work with its unique perspectives on how work should be done, how it fits into their lives, and the kinds of organizations they will work for.

- **Rising cultural diversity in the workplace.** Workforces will become increasingly diverse as companies expand activities internationally—either sourcing talent locally or moving expats in. Domestic workplaces will also reflect the changing demographics and coming shifts in the cultural makeup of America. The diverse perspectives can benefit organizations by improving the quality of decision making and innovation; but the potential for cross-cultural misunderstandings and the need to build culturally competent workforces will be challenging.

- **The collaboration revolution.** Technology-enabled collaboration is poised to change the world of work as dramatically as social networking has changed consumer markets.

- **The explosion of new technologies** will transform workplaces and jobs, requiring the sourcing and development of new kinds of skills.

- **The democratization of work.** How work gets done will change as companies increasingly leverage the economic benefits of outsourcing to global e-lancers, requiring new roles for leaders and changing worker/company relationships. Two themes in the democratization of work are: 1) an all-inclusive global talent market; and 2) social, organizational reconfiguration.

- **Technological empowerment.** Identified in The Future of HR project, this theme encompasses three forces, e.g. exponential technology change, human-machine collaboration, and a truly connected world. Gen Z’s Digital Natives, highly dependent on their personal technology, will demand to continue their collaborative, tech-enabled ways of working when they flood into the workforce.

How HR must change in response: big implications for cultural competency development, engagement, and global talent sourcing.

Participants discussed these disruptive trends. They also identified ways to change HR practices so organizations can leverage the trends to their advantage instead of being blindsided by them. Four themes were continually revisited:

- **Building culturally competent and culturally integrated organizations.** With rising workplace diversity there is a great need for smooth-functioning and culturally competent
Evidence-based practices can help HR prepare organizations to embrace—and profit from—coming changes in the world of work.

Speakers and participants shared evidence-based best practices for building culturally competent workforces, culturally integrating global workforces, engaging and retaining diverse talent, sourcing global talent, and adapting to the fast-approaching realities of the future workplace. Some highlights:

- **Engaging and retaining talent in new ways.** The levers of engagement will change as workforces become increasingly diverse, culturally and demographically. In particular, Baby Boomers’ influence over work cultures and processes will give way to that of the rising Generation Z workforce cohort, one with strong opinions about how work gets done and fits into their lives.

- **Finding innovative new ways to source global talent.** There is a rising need for HR leaders to find new ways to source global talent given the talent shortages and immigration difficulties that are hampering companies’ productive capacity today, even preventing some from exploiting international business opportunities.

- **Adapting organizational processes to embrace the future of work.** Workplaces of the future will look radically different from those of today. Hierarchical, disengaging, constraining corporate processes and cultures are on their way out, to be replaced by more empowering, collaborative, democratic ways of working.
Cultural competency challenges most individuals, which is why globally active and culturally diverse organizations need to provide employees, and particularly leaders, with cultural competency training. Consider:

- On an individual level, to be working either in an unfamiliar culture or with co-workers from diverse cultures requires an ability to see situations from multiple perspectives. Seeing through multiple cultural lenses doesn’t come easily, but those with certain personality traits tend to do better at it, including: paradoxical curiosity, collaborative dexterity, and a globally inclusive mindset.

- From an organizational perspective, providing cultural competency training is a must for any company that employs a culturally diverse or geographically dispersed workforce, or that operates in global markets or diverse domestic ones. The need to train leaders is particularly pressing, since creating a culturally competent organization “starts at the top.” And it’s not just companies that need this training. Allison Abbe has developed a cultural training program that all Army personnel must complete. This grew out of the disconnect with locals that troops often felt during the Iraq War.

“Organizations have got to provide the skills necessary to lead in culturally diverse and geographically diverse workplaces and marketplaces. Without the ability to see a situation from multiple perspectives, we won’t be successful.”
—Neal Goodman

Neural Goodman, Ph.D. (Moderator)
Allison Abbe, Human Capital Program Manager, Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Dottie Brienza, Vice President, Head of Organizational Performance, Bristol-Myers Squibb
Neddy Perez, VP for Global Diversity, Inclusion and Talent Management, Ingersoll Rand

Overview
Organizations that aspire to thrive in global markets require culturally competent leaders and employees. Companies generally know this, but many are at a loss as to how to develop culturally competent leaders and organizations.

Providing cultural training is a must, not only for high-potentials on international assignments but also for C-suite leaders and employees in most functional areas. Importantly, senior leaders need to own cultural competency programs or those initiatives won’t gain much traction. HR’s role is to build a compelling business case that shows the C-suite where and how cultural competency drives business performance.

Context
The panelists discussed cultural competency initiatives in their organizations, while moderator Neal Goodman shared trends he sees in companies’ cultural training. All supplied advice and best practices for building culturally competent organizations.

Key Takeaways
Building culturally competent organizations matters greatly in our globalized world.

Asia represents 60% of the world’s population, and therefore can’t be ignored. However, to succeed in Asian product and service markets—and other culturally distinct regions—companies need workforces that understand and navigate in cultures unlike America’s. A home country-centric mindset, which is what most employees have, won’t cut it.

The panelists emphasized this point with anecdotes of business missteps by expatriates who assumed that working in host countries would be similar to home. In one case, European executives of a U.S.-based company entering an African market agreed to unfamiliar contractual terms without realizing what they were doing. In another situation, a European utility company bought out a U.S. utility before learning about the regulatory landscape in America, a $10 million mistake. A shoe manufacturer inadvertently offended consumers of multiple cultures by putting national flags on sneakers.

In the three decades since co-founding Global Dynamics, Neal Goodman has seen an evolution in companies’ cultural competency training needs: from training co-located global teams, to training teams working virtually from geographically dispersed locations, to creating a truly inclusive global organization. All three types of training impart important skills needed in all functional areas.

Yet companies’ efforts to build culturally competent organizations leave much to be desired.

While companies increasingly realize the importance of having culturally sensitive leaders, a recent study by the Institute for Corporate Productivity found that only one-third of companies felt that their global leadership development programs successfully cultivate cultural competency. Moreover, companies don’t do well at capturing and leveraging the knowledge that returning executives on global assignments have gained. More than half of returning expats find that no one in their company has an interest in what they learned overseas, and 50% of expats leave their organizations within two years after returning home.

“Expatriates find that their ideas aren’t sought. People aren’t asking what they’ve learned... It’s no surprise that over 50% leave their organizations within two years of returning home.”
—Neal Goodman

The panelists shared best practices for creating culturally competent leaders and workforces.

Some of the panelists’ recommendations included:

- Don’t leave C-suite leaders out of cultural training. At Bristol-Myers Squibb, senior leaders run training sessions for lower-level leaders so that cultural competency training is cascaded throughout the organization. “It’s a great way to get your leaders to tell stories, because stories resonate and stick,” said Dottie Brienza.

- Mobility-related functions should not be the sole administrators of training programs to acclimate expats to new cultures. Leadership development professionals need to be involved to ensure the right learning happens. “The providers of moving services are not the people who are going to create your future leaders,” said Neal Goodman.

- “Make sure there’s strategic alignment between your HR processes, your succession planning, your diversity function, and your mobility efforts,” urged Neddy Perez.

- Prepare high-potentials for international assignments and assess their readiness by putting them in situations where they are at a cultural disadvantage. It might be a project to manage and people to work with whom they know nothing about, perhaps in a different functional area or different region.

- Know international assignees well. You don’t want people who are combative. You want people who have curiosity about cultural perspectives, are collaborative, listen well, and appreciate diversity and inclusion. People active in employee resource groups or managers who have created diverse teams may have the right traits. Don’t overly rely on assessment; not many are predictive of success.

- In arranging international assignments, make sure the assignee receives sufficient support, including for family members. Check in with them during assignments.

“...you should know the people being put in these assignments, and do some kind of check-in with them so you’re able to help them through this. A little [support] can be a really big thing.”
—Neddy Perez

- Consider placing people into international assignments earlier in their careers. Young people are often more excited about living abroad, particularly if they are single and haven’t put down roots in their communities. Moving the young is often less expensive and complicated.

- Implement systems to capture and leverage the learnings of returning expats for the benefit of the organization. Also, measure the success of cultural training for expats with relevant metrics.

- Provide cultural training for teams receiving a new member from a different culture as well as the new person. Then hold “alignment meetings” among the assignee, their manager, and their teams to clarify what success will look like, with metrics to measure progress.
• Demonstrate to trainees why cultural training is mission-critical to their work. Many employees tune out cultural competency training, not seeing how it relates to them. Show them how cultural competency can help them accomplish their work objectives.

“If you can’t demonstrate to [trainees] immediately how they’re going to use this in their job, they will tune you out. . . . [But] if you frame it as a way to help them get to the point they want to go to, they’re motivated to learn what they need to.”
—Allison Abbe

• Contextualize training for specific jobs. An example would be demonstrating how unconscious biases play a role in interviews, and how awareness of bias might change an interviewer’s style.

• Build trainees’ “perspective-taking” skills so people working in unfamiliar cultures don’t fall back on the Golden Rule (treat others as you would like to be treated), which could be a big mistake in some places. Instead, practice the “Platinum Rule”: Treat others the way they want to be treated.

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Overview

Numerous global challenges affect companies and the HR profession’s ability to attract, hire, manage, and retain talent. Trends such as immigration law changes, currency fluctuations, security threats to intellectual property and IT systems, and the rise of global free-agent workers are constantly shifting the environment. This working session gave retreat participants an opportunity to craft responses to specific challenges related to global talent.

In some of the scenarios provided, work groups decided that HR must respond with haste to head off damaging worst-case situations. In other scenarios, haste could be perilous; these called for well-thought-out responses informed by research. One group even recommended handling one of the situations with a tactic of “delay, delay, delay.”

Context

Working in groups, participants discussed what they would do in one of seven scenarios that global companies have faced, all calling for a leadership response. Spokespersons reported back their team’s perspectives on:

1. What to do first?
2. Whom to engage?
3. What information to seek?
4. What actions to take?
(Note: Only four scenarios were covered in report-outs, but a description of all seven is included.)

Scenarios & Responses

Scenario #1: Employee Returns from Tanzania with Mysterious Symptoms

One of your vice presidents went on a plant visit to Tanzania. When he returned to the office, he was coughing and running a fever.

The person thought they had the flu but when he went to see the doctor, it was a new type of virus. The individual and his home were placed under quarantine. The Centers for Disease Control has been called in. While this is not Ebola, the virus is a unique strain that doctors are not familiar with.

Your Situation: Several employees in your offices in Tanzania and the United States had come in contact with this vice president. What do you do?

PARTICIPANTS’ PERSPECTIVES

One attendee had actually faced a similar situation: During the SARS epidemic an employee returned from overseas with a cough, causing a co-worker who had been in contact with this employee to worry.

Suggestions on actions to take included:
1. Reach out to the CDC for information and help.
2. Quarantine the symptomatic employee and co-workers by requiring them to work from home.
3. Immediately send clear, consistent messages from the CEO to all employees emphasizing that the company was taking the matter very seriously.

Besides the CEO and the CDC, others involved in the response should include PR, communications, legal, and a disaster response team investigating the situation. The company should use the same protocol as with a loss-of-life situation where only the CEO and PR are allowed to speak to the media.

“Whether the threat was real or perceived, it was a concern to an employee, so the situation was dealt with very seriously.”

—Retreat participant

Scenario #2: Mexican Religious Customs vs. Long-Standing Company Policy

You work in Human Resources for a logistics company. You receive a call from an HR manager that employees in your Mexico office are refusing to work. It is the Virgin of Guadalupe week, and traditionally employees are provided with a blessing by a priest. Your company, however, believes that religion should not be part of the work environment. Your organization has been around for over 100 years and this is your first international operation. It is grounded in traditions.

You talked with your president and head of operations; the company is losing $2.5 million a day when the employees don’t work. The operations leader thinks you should fire everyone and start over, but that is not feasible.

Your Situation: How do you retain the talent and get operations back on track? What would you do?
PARTICIPANTS’ PERSPECTIVES
The first steps should be: 1) speak to the employees refusing to work as well as to their managers; 2) research the culture and the religious holiday; 3) open up lines of communication to better understand what the holiday means to the employees and to leverage the experience of the local leaders.

“We need to take the learner path, and not the judge path.”
—Retreat participant

Scenario #4: Allow a Falun Gong Employee Resource Group?
You are a healthcare-based services company that sells products in China. About four years ago your company launched a major diversity initiative. As part of the diversity efforts, your company has launched employee resource groups. One very enthusiastic employee in the U.S. has approached your diversity officer to see whether the company would sponsor a new employee group.

The employee resource group would be focused on the practice of Falun Gong. The employee shares that many employees would be interested in participating.

Your Situation: Why should you or shouldn’t you approve the launch of a Falun Gong employee resource group? What is the potential impact on the company?

PARTICIPANTS’ PERSPECTIVES
First, a conversation with the interested employee(s) is necessary to understand what Falun Gong means to them and why they want an employee resource group based on it. Research reveals it is a spiritual practice that combines meditation and exercise, which sounds somewhat like yoga. But in China it’s perceived as a cult, and practitioners have been persecuted. Understanding what the group’s ultimate goals might be and the size of the potential group would be key.

Importantly, this decision should not be made until the company fully understands any ramifications on the business that might transpire as a result of having such an employee group, including how Chinese customers’ perception of the company might be affected. Legal might help with anticipating all of the possible impacts and scenarios.

“What action would we take? We decided to delay, delay, delay and research, research, research.”
—Retreat participant

One team recommended having a process established to vet all employee resource group requests. An employee culture council, composed of cross-functional members, would consider the question from numerous angles. The employee culture council would then present recommendations to an executive council for a decision. With such a protocol, an employee would get a well-researched, fair response that reflects equitable treatment of employees and the company would be confident that the decision wouldn’t set undesirable precedents or hurt the business.
THREE ADDITIONAL SCENARIOS

Scenario #5: Proprietary Information in the Wrong Hands
You have a group of three employees traveling to Brazil. The group was sent to explore the opportunity to buy real estate in order to set up a new office. While on the trip, the employees did not realize they had wandered into non-welcoming territory. The employees are held up and robbed. They are eventually let go; however, their laptops with confidential information are stolen. In particular, one of the employees had information about an upcoming acquisition and the value of properties involved in the acquisition.

Your Situation: Millions of dollars are at stake related to the acquisition along with the value of the data and the ability to access the company’s system.

Scenario #6: Executive Caught Between Countries
You have hired a top-notch treasurer who is in the process of being groomed for the CFO position. The individual is from India, and is in the process of being considered for citizenship. Currently he has an H1B visa that allows him to work in the United States. As part of his job, he needed to travel to Canada. When he looked into traveling outside the United States, he was told that it would be fine to travel to Canada. There would be no risk to his citizenship. He booked his flight, completed his meetings, and when he tried to reenter the United States, he was told he could not. As a matter of fact, he was at risk of deportation back to India. He immediately called Legal and HR for help.

Your Situation: Get the employee back to the United States without jeopardizing his citizen application.

Scenario #7: Difficult Boss Hurting Morale
Your company has engineering projects around the globe. The majority of work teams are virtual, so managers have teams in different countries. The company has announced a major reorganization where there will be layoffs, but made it clear that not all employees will be affected and some project teams will not be touched.

As head of operations, you received several calls from employees working for a German vice president. Several of the employees in France, the United States, and United Kingdom reporting to this VP have turned in their resignations and want to be considered for severance packages. After a little digging, you learned that the German vice president is viewed as difficult and challenging, and the employees don’t want to work for him any longer. The president of the division has learned about this, and he is ready to fire the German vice president because he is concerned about the impact on morale and the business. You know the vice president, and think he is very good.

Your Situation: What would you do?
Overview
Eva Sage-Gavin shared the findings from a ‘Future of Work’ project she’s been involved in. To simplify the HR profession’s daunting undertaking of preparing for the future of work, Eva Sage-Gavin and colleagues have distilled five forces of change into two broad trends on which organizations can focus: the democratization of work and technological empowerment.

In the future workplace, leadership roles can be expected to change in four areas: planning, aligning performance with organizational goals, attracting talent, and engaging talent. In particular, engaging a global workforce will increasingly be a function of a company’s culture and community activism, as Gap’s experiences with a successful cultural transition attest.

Context
Eva Sage-Gavin explained how HR leaders can help their companies adapt to forces expected to change the workplace over the coming decade, as well as how leadership roles are likely to change.

Key Takeaways
Five forces are converging to radically alter work as we know it.

In 2013, more than 30 HR leaders working on a project known as The Future of HR interviewed corporate leaders from across the world to identify how the HR profession is likely to change over the next 10 years. They found five sweeping forces are already underway to varying degrees in various industries and companies. These forces are likely to radically alter work by 2025, as well as the practice of HR.

It is incumbent upon HR leaders to prepare organizations for these changes and to adapt their own practice to the coming realities. The five forces of change identified are:

- **Exponential technology change.** All businesses are so dependent on technology that every company is a technology company. Technological advances in robotics and machine learning will change how work is performed; by 2025, an estimated 25% of work tasks will be performed by robots. Ethical questions will arise as machines take jobs from humans. Technological breakthroughs will disrupt markets, heightening competitive threats and providing new growth opportunities. Cybersecurity threats will increase, presenting companies and leaders with new responsibilities and liabilities.

- **Human-machine collaboration.** Artificial intelligence, analytics/big data, and advances in genetics will improve decision making and productivity. Enormous benefits are likely (e.g., improving access to healthcare and education in remote locations as physicians’ and teachers’ services are delivered remotely). But there will be unforeseen implications on work and HR when humans routinely collaborate with human-like machines.

- **A truly connected world.** Organizations are less able to control their stories in a world of smartphones and social media. Even in Africa cell phone penetration was 67% as of January 2014. The developing world has been “leapfrogging” over incremental phases of technology adoption straight to personal mobile Internet connectivity.

- **All-inclusive global talent market.** The rise of the global “e-lance economy” is bound to accelerate; 58% of U.K. office workers think the office will be extinct by 2021. Outsourcing to remote work teams assembled and disbanded by project holds labor-cost and talent-access benefits but also comes with challenges related to confidentiality and security, corporate culture building, virtual collaboration, engagement, and changing managers’ roles. Hiring employees from the global talent pool comes with challenges too, such as issues with cultural competency.

- **Social, organizational reconfiguration.** Increased democratization of work is creating more power-balanced organizational structures, with more project-based relationships. Talent is increasingly likely to engage based on aligned purpose. There will be ramifications for labor policies, diversity, and inclusion, to name a few.

By 2025, approximately 25% of all tasks will be automated through robotics, driving roughly 16% global labor cost savings. Source: McKinsey Global Institute and BCG Analysis.
Two themes can help HR prepare organizations for the future of work: the democratization of work and technological empowerment.

It can be overwhelming for HR executives to figure out how to prepare their organizations for the future of work. The capabilities needed to lead future organizations are staggering. The HR inflection point that Harvard Business Review’s July/August 2015 cover story, “Rethinking Human Resources: It’s Time to Blow Up HR and Build Something New,” calls for was never more sorely needed.

To help break the complexity down, Eva Sage-Gavin and colleagues identified two meta-concepts. If HR focuses simply on driving change on these two fronts, organizations will be better prepared.

- **The democratization of work (encompassing two forces of change: the all-inclusive, global talent market and social & organizational reconfiguration).** Purpose-built networks will connect organizations that have work to freelance talent that is skilled to do it, giving rise to a more agile and responsive view of work. Work relationships will be shorter in duration; managers’ jobs will involve orchestrating the activities of human assets.

- **Technological empowerment (encompassing three forces of change: a truly connected world, exponential technology change, and human and machine collaboration).** Technology is changing the ways we live and work by empowering individuals; for example, via mobile computing, wearables, 3-D printing, algorithms, and machine learning. The early adopters among companies already are leveraging these new technologies to empower workers, customers, and other stakeholders.

Using a four-by-four matrix with each of those meta-concepts representing an axis, leaders can get a handle on where their organizations are now vis-à-vis these trends of the future and envision where their company might be going over the next decade.

- **Quadrant 1: Current State.** This quadrant suggests that the company’s people strategy will be essentially unchanged by 2025, requiring only tweaks in response to the forces of change.

- **Quadrant 2: Turbo-Charged.** Advances in technology are likely to change how the company operates over the next 10 years, perhaps with robots replacing humans, but moving to a 100% non-employee staffing model seems unlikely.

- **Quadrant 3: Work Reimagined.** A highly democratized workplace is likely for a Quadrant 3 company, but revolutionary technological changes aren’t.

- **Quadrant 4: “Uber” Empowered.** Everything is going to change for this company over the next decade as technological advances and the democratization of work disrupt what the business does and how it operates.

  “Think through where you, your organization, and your functions are going to be by 2025 . . . The capabilities needed to lead organizations through this are staggering.”

  —Eva Sage-Gavin

The workplace of the future will compel new roles for leadership.

Naturally, leadership roles will change in such a radically altered world of work. Whatever else changes as a result of technological empowerment and the democratization of work, four foundational aspects of leaders’ roles will remain:

- **Planning** will entail trend forecasting and change leadership. “Sense making” will be a highly demanded competency; i.e., the ability to find meaning within complex, seemingly unrelated data.

- **Attracting** will require creative talent-sourcing and community-building skills.

- **Aligning** will mean creating organizational systems that help achieve performance goals.

- **Engaging** will involve culture and community activism.

All four new roles will serve operational excellence.
Among leaders’ new roles, culture and community activism will be powerful engagement levers.

One of these four new leadership roles has been tried by Gap, to great success: engaging the global workforce through culture and community activism. Accordingly, Eva Sage-Gavin—who for 11 years held various leadership roles at Gap—took a deep dive into the Engage leadership role. She explained what aspects can be expected to change and how:

- **The concept of “employment brand” will expand to “employee experience,”** with “employee” meaning anyone and everyone who participates in delivering the brand’s products and services and has access to company information. That includes supply chain partners, freelancers, and franchisees. “Employee experience” will be about managing the experience of all as they interact with the brand.

- **“Organization development” will become “cultural orchestration.”** Building a consistent corporate culture among geographically dispersed freelancers (think: Uber’s 17,000 drivers around the world) is important to ensure that what they deliver to customers or internal stakeholders comports with the brand promise and upholds the firm’s values.

- **“Employee engagement” will be part and parcel of “community engagement.”** Taking responsibility in the ecosystems touched by your company—even when the lines blur between what is strictly the company’s responsibility and not—will go far in engaging your global workforce. Gap experienced the transformational power of this concept first hand.

> “If you are facing illiteracy, innumeracy, and domestic violence, do you have any responsibility to invest in workers to tackle those? Where do the lines begin and end? Where is a company’s compass?”
> —Eva Sage-Gavin

- **“Team collaboration” will be “community collaboration”** as “employees” are not employees in the traditional sense, but are a community of partners. These partners will collaborate to deliver your products/services and brand promise within an organizational structure that is more an organism than a hierarchy.

- **“Corporate social responsibility” will take focus as an engagement lever, “providing purpose and meaning in work.”** Deep and widespread engagement of your global workforce can be transformational to corporate success and financial results, as Gap experienced.

CASE STUDY: ENGAGEMENT-LED TRANSFORMATION IMPACTED GAP’S BOTTOM LINE

In mid-2007, Gap launched a cultural transformation that stemmed the rising employee turnover rate, increased employee engagement, and boosted earnings per share. Leaders had a strong belief that promoting employee engagement could turn around corporate financial results, and were proven right.

The transformation was launched after exploring the sources of Gap employee pride via surveys that asked: “If you are proud to work for Gap, why? If not, why not?” The results yielded insight that the founding family’s tradition of investing in local communities was employees’ greatest source of pride. The strategy of deepening engagement through culture and community activism was born.

The highly successful transition involved initiatives to:

- **Invest Gap’s work with higher purpose.** The goal was to cause employees to feel that they do far more important work than selling clothes (like the mason who views his job not as laying bricks but building a cathedral). A store leadership conference brought company leaders together to strengthen the sense of shared community, values, and purpose-driven work.

- **Engage workers strategically.** A reverse mentorship initiative sought the ideas of student interns around the concepts of: Plan, Align, Attract, and Engage. The project yielded valuable ideas that the company has implemented to tremendous success.

- **Source talent from unconventional channels.** For example, Gap attracted highly educated but underutilized female Japanese office workers into retail management positions, despite the Japanese culture’s perception that retail work is lowly.

- **Invest in becoming the retail industry’s sustainability leader.** Examples include a partnership with U.S. community colleges to help workers in transition after the 2008 financial crisis (This Way Ahead), a women’s empowerment program that has trained 30,000 garment workers in developing countries in technical and social skills (PA.C.E), and the formation of the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety.
Overview
Jim Leighton agrees with the statement: “With a changing of the guard from Baby Boomers to Millennials, what got us here today will not get us to where we want to go.” The operating model in place in corporations for decades is broken. It fails to regard employees as whole people with unique perspectives and aspirations. Poor levels of employee engagement result.

The solution is a new operating model based on the concept of FIT—fully integrated teams. FIT organizations benefit from having engaged members rowing in the same direction as an integrated whole. Everyone is united by a shared purpose and principles, working to fulfill a promise they believe in. The same FIT concepts that can transform teams and organizations can do the same for individuals’ lives.

Context
Jim Leighton explained how HR professionals can apply the concepts discussed in his book, Getting Fit: Unleash the Power of Fully Integrated Teams, to improve work teams, organizations, and their own lives.

Key Takeaways
Traditional organizational systems hinder engagement by not seeing people in their entirety.

Entrenched in many corporate cultures are dis-integrative ways of thinking about people, making people feel they are not seen for who they are and impeding employee engagement. For example:

- The concept of “human capital” flies in the face of engagement. Viewing people as capital, as though they were assets to be depreciated (instead of appreciated), creates a toxic work environment. Henry Ford said, “Why is it that every time I ask for a pair of hands, they come with a brain?” Depersonalization of workers may have served companies in the Industrial Age, but in the knowledge economy, companies need employees’ brains and hearts invested. Yet, over 70% of today’s workforce is disengaged, and the longest tenured employees are the least engaged. A majority of people report that their least happy days are Monday through Thursday.

“We no longer ‘hire hands’; we hire the whole human being. We need the brain to come with it.”
—Jim Leighton

- Underlying the concept of “work/life balance” is the assumption that work isn’t life. The underlying message is that work and life are separate things, as though people are living when not at work and dead when at work.

- Many U.S. companies operate in a “myopic U.S.-centric way.” Ensnconed in our American “cocoons,” it is easy to forget that we live in a global economy, in which a global focus is increasingly important. However, the world is not U.S. centric. North and South America combined represent just 14% of the world’s population versus 57% for Asia. Globally, 68% of people can’t read and write, only 1% attended college, and about 33% are starving. Jim Leighton’s advice: “Look at the world through the lens of others; keep a broader perspective and remember that we are a tiny part of this world. There are so many lives, so many perspectives, so many talented, thoughtful, amazing people” to understand.

It is time to introduce more purposeful, principled, and integrative ways of working.

The solution is “getting FIT,” a more integrative, holistic approach to people and teams.

Instead of employing a workforce where most people are disengaged, “What if workplaces were filled with highly intentional, productive, engaged, intrinsically fulfilled individuals thriving individually and collectively?” asked Leighton. This scenario is attainable with a process Leighton calls “FIT” for “fully integrated teams.” The concept grew out of research into the practices of successful, sustainable companies.

A “fully integrated team” is a group of individuals who share a common purpose and set of principles, as well as common ways of thinking and mutual support. When team members are emotionally invested in the team’s purpose and believe in its principles and values, then helping fulfill the team’s promise is intrinsically fulfilling. Engagement flourishes.

For successfully integrated teams, however, organizations must provide a “nutrient-rich, toxic-free” workplace; i.e., an environment where everyone feels known and appreciated for who they are. They don’t feel like the company views
them as “hands” or “minds,” or “capital” or “assets.” Only when people feel that their company sees them as whole and wants to help them achieve their aspirations will they want to help the company achieve its goals.

“Our team members are spirited individuals looking for fulfillment... Work to understand them, try to get to know them, and help them to realize their dreams. Only then will they help your organization’s dreams come true.”
—Jim Leighton

The building blocks of a FIT organization rest on a foundation of purpose.

The steps to building a FIT organization include:

- **Purpose.** Why does the organization exist? Define its purpose. Purpose is the foundation on which a FIT organization is built.
- **Principles.** Define a set of purposeful principles that will guide how the organization achieves its purpose.
- **People.** Select the people who will compose the leadership team, making sure they are on board with the FIT operating model.
- **Promise.** Collectively declare your “promise” to stakeholders; i.e., what they expect to produce in terms of products or services.
- **Vision.** Create a collective vision, a vivid description of their desired future state 10 or 20 years into the future.
- **Roadmap.** Build a strategic roadmap for getting to that vision.
- **Resources.** Define the resources needed for the journey and how to access them.
- **Plan for the worst.** Look for black clouds before silver linings, thinking through what could go wrong and creating plans to optimize those situations.
- **Compose work teams.** When selecting people for work teams, take care to get “the right people on the bus,” in the words of Good to Great author Jim Collins. You want “loyalists,” not “benign saboteurs” who are too indifferent to prevent harm or “terrorists” who secretly wish to harm (most organizations have all three types).
- **Create an operating plan that supports the long-term strategies and vision.** The operating plan is tactical and usually covers the next 12 months.
- **Set up systems to ensure measurement of progress toward goals.** Jim Leighton uses the “DMAIC” approach, which stands for: “Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control.”
- **Establish continuous improvement systems.** Measure and analyze continually to ensure continued progress and improvement.

The effects of FIT are transformative whether applied to organizations or individual lives.

Implementing FIT lowered the turnover rate of a large food company dramatically, saving more than $50 million. The former president said: “Having seen firsthand the applications and principles of FIT, I can personally attest to the powerful impact this has had on our business results and in my opinion more importantly in people’s lives.”

Leighton believes FIT is just as beneficially applicable to individual lives as to organizations, having seen the transformative effects it has had in his own life. HR professionals are ideally positioned to implement FIT in their teams and organizations as well as use it to live more intentional and purposeful lives.

“Before becoming FIT, I lived life unintentionally, many times letting circumstances control me.”
—Jim Leighton

The steps for creating a plan for a FIT life:

- **Write a purpose statement.** Ask yourself why you exist, and answer the question. If you don’t know, ask others around you why they think you exist. For example, Jim Leighton’s purpose is to assist individuals, organizations, and teams to become the best versions of themselves possible.
- **Define principles** that support your purpose and reflect your values (Jim’s include honesty and integrity). Resolve never to violate them. Accountability is important for the success of a FIT plan, but unlike at work there is no one to hold us accountable to our principles except ourselves.
- **Choose your team.** No one can accomplish much in life without others. Surround yourself with the right people who will help you realize your vision for yourself, not impede your journey.
- **Write a promise statement** that expresses how your purpose and your passion for it manifest themselves in the world.
- **Write a well-defined vision statement.** Who do you want to be in 25 years? What do you want to have accomplished?
- **Write a strategic plan** to get you to your envisioned future state.
- **Write an operating plan that is very specific, like an athlete’s practice schedule.** Include contingency plans for what you will do in circumstances that aren’t ideal.
- **Decide on metrics to measure your progress, and do measure it at regular intervals.**

“You HR professionals are in a better position than anyone to make this happen, but for you to make it happen [in your organizations], I would highly suggest you first do it yourself... Become FIT across the most important dimensions in your life.”
—Jim Leighton
Overview
The United States is no longer the top source for talent; companies increasingly need global sources to meet their talent needs, particularly for deep technical and professional capabilities. Amid fierce competition for such talent, however, building a sufficient global skills supply chain is a challenge that few companies are prepared to meet. This challenge will only intensify amid multiple disruptive forces changing the global workplace. Needed are more strategic talent-sourcing plans that expand conceptions of how work gets done and by whom.

Two fast-approaching phenomena will further disrupt the future working world: the eruption of Gen Z onto the scene, and the “collaboration revolution.” U.S. companies are ill-prepared for these forces that collectively compel a re- envisioning of work. Organizations that adapt their workplaces sooner will be better positioned to source, attract, and retain talent when the new realities hit.

Context
Jim Link outlined disruptive trends and forces shaping a radically different world of work and compelling radically different strategic approaches from HR.

Key Takeaways
Trends disrupting the global workplace compel more strategic approaches to global talent sourcing.

“As a country and an industrial work society,” said Jim Link, “[The U.S.] is not keeping pace with what’s going on around us.” U.S. companies have yet to deal with multiple trends disrupting the world of work. These include:

MOBILITY
- More people live outside their birth countries than ever. International migrants would constitute the world’s fifth most populous country if they lived in the same country. In companies, mobile employees are rising rapidly, up by 25% from 1998 to 2009 and a projected 50% in 2020.
- Younger generations have a strong appetite for working abroad. The percentage of college graduates who want to work outside their home country during their career varies by continent but is high everywhere, ranging from 93% in Africa to 69% in North America, Asia, and Australia. Yet clearly the U.S. immigration system is broken, hamstringing companies’ ability to source the talent they need from abroad.

“[Immigration] model that we have is not sustainable if we want to have a workforce in the future that’s going to represent the best of what our country has to offer.”
—Jim Link

GLOBALIZATION
- Globalization has huge impacts on talent strategies. Research has found that 72% of the world’s most admired companies report that globalization will have an important or very important impact on their organization; 61% see globalization as one of the top three megatrends impacting their workforce planning, and 58% see it as a top-three trend impacting their engagement strategies. A full 95% say that “getting the right talent in different markets to support growth” is their most critical human capital priority.
- Corporations compete globally for increasingly scarce technical and professional skills, requiring deep capabilities. A 2014 Deloitte study, Global Human Capital Trends, found that 75% of companies rate sourcing sufficient workforce capability an urgent or important problem, but only 15% say they are equipped to address it. Some 60% report current or recent changes in their talent-sourcing strategies, but given the extent of the talent gaps (which are wider in major economies) 60% doesn’t seem to be enough.

The quest for workforce capability
create a global skills supply chain
- Corporations now compete globally for increasingly scarce technical and professional skills
- Corporate workforces have professional - and take years to build
- The gap is wider in emerging economies

75% of respondents rank workforce capability as one of the top three megatrends impacting their workforce planning.


Most companies reviewing or changing sourcing and recruiting
“When did you last revamp or reengineer your talent acquisition process and strategy?”

Source: 2014 Deloitte Development LLC
Future workplaces will be radically transformed by two forces that demand HR’s attention now.

Both the bursting of the Gen Z generation on the workplace scene and the “collaboration revolution” that is fast approaching will demand that organizations adopt less constraining notions of how work gets accomplished and even what constitutes “work.”

GEN Z

By 2020, Gen Z (born from 1995 onward) will make up a projected 36% of the global workforce and 22% of U.S. workers (up from 4% today). Every generation that enters the workforce shapes it with their distinctive expectations and aspirations regarding work, but Gen Z will be particularly critical to companies’ ability to adapt for two reasons: 1) many individuals will work in jobs that don’t yet exist, representing talent assets that employers don’t even know they need; and 2) Gen Z is expected to be more educated and aspirations regarding work, but Gen Z will be particularly critical to companies’ global skills supply chains sufficiently. Solutions are likely to involve new models for how work gets done, where it gets done, and who does it.

“How most of the folks whose skills we’ll need . . . do not have a U.S. passport. We need to think about how we’re going to evolve to get that work done [including] how we do work, where it gets done, and who does it.”
—Jim Link

Some facts about Gen Z and the traits and attitudes that shape their perspectives:

- **Globally, Zs are disproportionately concentrated in China and India.** Many youth in those countries are on STEM educational tracks.

  “It’s pretty clear that if we want to continue growing in the U.S., we’re going to have to figure out a different way to get [STEM] skills into our country. Something has to shift.”
  —Jim Link

- **In the U.S., Zs are diverse and multicultural,** requiring greater cultural competencies in the workplace than American firms have needed before. Notably:
  - Only 55% of Zs in America are Caucasian, with 24% Hispanic, 14% African American, and 4% Asian. Gen Z will be the U.S.’s last generation with a Caucasian majority.
  - Multiracial children are the fastest-growing group of U.S. youth, up more than 50% since 2000 (to 4.2 million).

- **Gen Z’s unique personality traits hold huge implications for workplace cultures.** Notably, this generation:
  - **Judges others on character and achievements, not appearance.** Ask a Gen Z what someone is like and they don’t mention skin color or other physical attributes as older generations do, instead noting personality traits like intelligence or ambition.
  - **Is globally minded.** A full 47% envision a world where the U.S. isn’t the world’s top economic power but where China, India, or Russia is.
  - **Is extremely entrepreneurial.** Zs don’t aspire to leadership positions in large organizations but want to create and run their own technology-based enterprises. That is particularly true of Hispanic and Asian Zs.
  - **Prioritizes community activism.** If you as an employer do not, you will have difficulty attracting Zs.
  - **Is composed of Digital Natives.** Connectivity is so integral to who Zs are that they value it more than their fifth sense: a majority would rather give up their sense of smell (53%) than an essential tech device. Virtually 100% of U.S. Zs are online at least an hour a day, and nearly half (46%) more than 10 hours. The implications for work are profound. For example, high percentages of Zs, varying by country, regard working remotely as a right versus a privilege (ranging from a high of 82% in India to 20% in the United States).

  “What does it mean to be a Digital Native? If you took away their devices, they can’t be successful. Their devices are a component of who they are. They have fluency in the digital world.”
  —Jim Link

What are the implications for employer branding? From employers, Zs most want:

- **Culture-wise:** Zs demand that companies be honest and transparent.

- **Team-wise:** They want to be around experts from whom they can learn.

- **Opportunity-wise:** Opportunity for advancement is important. But they don’t like career ladders; they want experiences from which they will figure out how to build a career. Also important: more money, meaningful work, a good boss, and a fast growing company.
• **Attraction levers:** Healthcare coverage, training, and workplace flexibility. (Retention levers differ greatly by country.)

• **Caveat:** If your firm doesn’t have an active online presence, you “won’t exist” to Zs.

The big takeaway for HR: Understand the generational composition of your global workforce, and prepare now for Gen Z’s arrival.

**THE COLLABORATION REVOLUTION**

Steve Jobs talked about the coming “collaboration revolution,” expected to be as transformative as the industrial, computer, and Internet revolutions. Companies are already seeing accelerated use of collaboration networks and tools; usage is expected to explode by 2020, transforming the world of work like social media transformed the consumer landscape. The phenomenon will be driven by Millennial and Gen Z employees, as collaboration is “just the way they think.”

“Collaboration networks, changing the way work gets done, are going to be to industry and the world of work what social media was to consumers. Absolutely no doubt.”

—Jim Link

However, there is a gap between the collaboration needs of knowledge workers and current workplace infrastructure.

• Only 55% of employees worldwide give their organizations high marks for effective collaboration across departments and functions.

• Less than a quarter of companies have a strategy to address the IT needs of the next generation of employees.

HR can get organizations ready for the collaboration revolution through training, building knowledge-sharing tools and platforms, adapting IT systems, and giving employees permission to collaborate on tasks. Culturally, companies need to break the hierarchical mindset in which collaboration is not the preferred mode, but they can do so by creating systems of their own design, with built-in safeguards to mitigate intellectual property concerns.
Overview

A decade ago when China’s leading PC maker decided to pursue a global growth strategy, it set out to become a truly international company instead of simply a Chinese company with foreign operations. Supporting that self-reinvention was a people strategy that prioritized multicultural diversity. Cultural competency became a necessary skill. Integrating everyone under a common corporate culture was a challenge, but rolling out the Lenovo Way yielded lessons for HR leaders in creating a harmonious multi-cultural workplace and unifying the corporate culture.

Context

Yolanda Lee Conyers shared Lenovo’s journey to become a truly international organization and her personal journey of “embracing the unfamiliar.”

Key Takeaways

**Lenovo’s people strategy is integral to its successful global business strategy.**

Three “Cs” represent the people strategy that supported Lenovo’s dramatic reinvention from a $3 billion Chinese firm to a $46 billion multinational in a just decade:

**CONNECTION**

Great companies that thrive and grow over time have strong connections to their people. Employees feel that they belong, are valued, and are part of something bigger than themselves. Their engagement leads to strong connections to the company’s customers or clients, which promotes business success.

Forging connections, however, can be challenging with a multicultural workforce. Lessons for leaders working to help team members feel valued and connected include:

- **Listening deeply.** Early in Ms. Conyers’ Lenovo tenure, she was so excited that she tended to interrupt others. She wasn’t listening deeply to her colleagues. Her cultural mentor Gina Qiao helped her see that interrupting Chinese colleagues gave them the wrong impression. She in turn helped Gina Qiao get over her reluctance to speak up in meetings, a vestige of her Chinese upbringing that taught children to convey humility by not speaking out.

  “We’ve created this environment now where we can talk openly about differences and ask questions. We really seek to understand [other perspectives].”
  —Yolanda Lee Conyers

- **Showing respect for others’ cultures.** Respect is conveyed in many little ways. For example, Lenovo adopted a rule that PowerPoints for meetings should be sent to attendees 24 hours in advance to give the native Mandarin speakers time to digest them. When Chinese executives meet at Lenovo’s U.S. headquarters, warm water and tea are always available. For the westerners, the Beijing offices were outfitted with western-style toilets.

**CULTURE**

Ms. Conyers’ definition of “culture”: the values, beliefs and behaviors that bind us in order to work together as one team. “Culture makes us gel as one.” Every country, company, family has a culture. But cultures can take shape from neglect or be formed intentionally.

When Lenovo embarked on its international journey, “We didn’t act as one team or company,” said Conyers. “There was so much drama; it was painful at the top because of the great diversity.” Besides communication challenges, different management practices caused conflicts. Western bosses would tell reports to work out problems among them, whereas the Chinese were used to having bosses work problems out. Besides the international cultural diversity, there were the corporate cultures from the many acquisitions to integrate.

After several years, Lenovo began to unify everyone under one culture, “the Lenovo Way.” Getting it right was difficult, and remains ongoing work. But since the company views culture and people as an integral support to Lenovo’s business strategy, “We’re constantly working on culture.”

“What sets us apart is we see culture and people as important as strategy, so we’re constantly talking and working on it.”
—Yolanda Lee Conyers
BACKGROUND: LENOVO AND YOLANDA LEE CONYERS—CULTURAL PIONEERS

Lenovo, founded 30 years ago by seven Chinese scientists with $20,000 in seed money, grew into China’s top computer company within 20 years. In 2005, it seized an opportunity to buy IBM’s PC division and embarked on an ambitious global growth strategy. In the 10 years since, Lenovo has grown from $3 billion to $46 billion and become a pioneer in international acquisitions, buying eight companies around the world. Lenovo operates in 60 countries and serves customers in 160, with headquarters in Beijing and North Carolina.

When Lenovo made the decision to go global, it committed to remaking itself into a truly international organization. English, the global standard for business, replaced Mandarin, forcing Chinese employees to adapt (with great difficulty). The company aspired not just to operate around the world but to be operated by people from around the world. Seven national cultures and two women are represented in the 10-person executive committee. The diversity at the helm is quite intentional, as diversity and corporate competency were considered integral to Lenovo’s success as a global business.

With such extreme cultural diversity, however, cross-cultural misunderstandings were inevitable. For instance, Yolanda Lee Conyers’ Beijing colleagues initially didn’t like her, finding her overly assertive. When she first requested a meeting via email, worded in a formal way that would have seemed perfectly polite to American ears, her Chinese colleagues read “request” as a command, thinking, “Who does she think she is?” A Chinese colleague Gina Qiao clued her in. Ms. Conyers’ openness to hearing the criticisms without being offended allowed her to correct the misimpressions by tempering her style. That experience led to the realization that cultural competency is as much about mindset as skill set.

The two women became cultural co-mentors, seeing the value of discussing culture openly and non-judgmentally. They created “East Meets West Workshops: Managing across Cultures” to help employees see through cultural lenses.

Given Lenovo’s prioritization of diversity and cross-cultural awareness, the Lenovo story is “a story about our people,” says Conyers. It’s one that she and co-author Gina Qiao tell in their book, The Lenovo Way: Managing a Diverse Global Company for Optimal Performance. Not a typical business how-to book, The Lenovo Way is “about challenges that test you and make you the person who you are.”

“Over 25 years ago when I began my career as an African American female engineer rising through a high tech company, they looked at me like I was a unicorn... I felt like I had to work twice as hard to overcome being the only African American in the room.”

“I wasn’t sure what to expect when I traveled to Beijing, China... to work for Lenovo, a Chinese heritage company. To my surprise, it was an incredibly refreshing experience... [W]alking into the executive boardroom, I thought I had walked into the United Nations. I had never seen so much cross-cultural diversity at the very top.”

“My Beijing colleagues... didn’t treat me as an African American woman. They hadn’t lived the U.S. history. They looked at me as an engineer, a human resources leader, a high tech executive who understands Western practices.”

—Yolanda Lee Conyers
Conyers’ advice for other leaders working on culture:

- Keep the business strategy clear and simple, then define the culture—i.e., the set of values, beliefs, and behaviors—that will best support the strategy.
- Let the people define the culture. Lenovo’s employees were engaged in defining what elements of culture were most important and came up with the “five Ps” that work for Lenovo: Plan, Perform, Prioritize, Practice, and Pioneer.
- Lead culture from the top. In 2009, the owner of the company came back as chairman, devoting all his time to culture. Company leaders cascaded the Lenovo Way, interpreting its principles for their teams throughout the company.
- Embed the culture in day-to-day life by sharing stories that exemplify and celebrate it.

“If you give employees a chance to contribute to defining culture, if you model it at the top, and if you embed it in the day-to-day life of a company, you have a culture that is intentional, not one of neglect.”
—Yolanda Lee Conyers

CHANGE

At Lenovo, change is about innovation, or “how we ensure that we overcome obstacles and sustain success.” Innovation at the company is a “systematic approach to intentional change.” Two points of advice regarding change:

- Embrace change with a “zero mindset.” When people fail to innovate it is often because they are closed to new ways of thinking. They don’t leverage diversity of thought and perspective. They may rest on the laurels of past successes, but “past success does not equal future success,” particularly amid fast-changing global markets. The antidote is what Ms. Conyers calls a “zero mindset,” starting fresh continually. It involves taking a hard look at where past successes might get in the way and what the best solutions are for the new global culture.
- Embrace personal change. Self-assess, commit to a new course, and resolve to get out of your comfort zone.
**BIOGRAPHIES**

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**Allison Abbe, Ph.D.** has worked closely with the U.S. Army to develop cross-cultural training for the troops. She was the principal scientist with Synergist Research and Consulting. She previously held positions in the federal government with the interagency High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group and the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. Dr. Abbe has a Ph.D. in personality and social psychology and B.A.s in psychology and political science. She is a recipient of the Army Research and Development Achievement Award and a member of the InterUniversity Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, the Association for Psychological Science, and the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

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**Dottie Brienza** is the vice president/head of organizational performance at Bristol-Myers Squibb. She has held senior positions at Merck, Hilton Worldwide and Johnson & Johnson. Dottie brings executive experience in the pharmaceutical, consumer products, medical device, aerospace, and hospitality industries, with expertise in human capital strategy, talent management, large-scale change leadership, mergers and acquisitions, and sales. She has a strong track record of delivering people solutions to drive the business strategy, and she's developed expertise in transforming organizations and improving business performance via human talent strategy.

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**Yolanda Lee Conyers** is the vice president of worldwide human resources and the chief diversity officer for technology giant Lenovo, one of China's first global brands and the world's number-one personal computer-maker. In this role, she has developed industry-leading expertise in navigating across boundaries to create a company culture built to last. In addition to founding the first-ever diversity office for a company of Chinese heritage, she has transformed Lenovo's day-to-day human resource operations by ensuring consistency of processes, systems and data for a complex global company with employees in more than 60 nations. A 25-year high-tech industry veteran, Yolanda pioneered “The Lenovo Way,” a blending of the best of Eastern and Western business cultures, by harnessing culture and diversity as core strengths. Using this strategy, Lenovo has grown from a $3 billion China-based company to a $39 billion global powerhouse. Yolanda’s first book, *The Lenovo Way – Managing a Diverse Global Company for Optimal Performance* (McGraw-Hill, 2014), reveals the challenges behind Lenovo’s strategy to go global and how the company overcame them during its acquisition of IBM’s personal computer division and its iconic ThinkPad product line in 2005. The book is co-authored by Gina Ciao, Lenovo’s SVP of HR.

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**Yolanda received her bachelor’s degree in computer science from Lamar University and an MBA in international business from Our Lady of the Lake Executive MBA Program.**

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**Neal Goodman, Ph.D.** is an internationally recognized authority in global human resource management and organizational development. Dr. Goodman designs training programs for multinational corporations and international organizations, and his programs have helped thousands of corporate executives to be more effective. Dr. Goodman is the co-founder and president of Global Dynamics, Inc., an international consulting firm that designs, organizes and implements cross-cultural training programs. Dr. Goodman has assisted clients such as AT&T, Johnson & Johnson, Citi, G.E., Axciom, BD, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Lucent Technologies, Samsung, BOC, Bechtel Corp, The NBA, Fujitsu, Daimler Chrysler, Monsanto, Philips, Sun Microsystems, Genentech, Reynolds Metals, Hyundai, Volvo, Conoco Phillips, HP and The World Bank. A frequent speaker at professional meetings, Dr. Goodman is also on the faculty of several corporate universities. He received his Ph.D. from NYU and has three times been honored with invitations to be a Fellow at the East-West Center in Hawaii. He has lectured at scores of colleges and universities, including Georgetown, NYU, Princeton and UNC. Dr. Goodman has authored numerous books and articles on the globalization of organizations. He has served on the Executive Committee of the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (Sietar) and the editorial board of the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*.

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**Jim Leighton** joined Boulder Brands Inc. as the new chief operating officer in October 2013 and is currently serving as the interim CEO. He is also the author of Getting FIT: Unleash the Power of Fully Integrated Teams, winner of a 2013 Small Business Book Award in the Management category. He has been a member of the board of the Boulder-based food company since August 2007 and continues to serve on the board as an employee director. In his role as COO, Leighton oversees manufacturing, R&D and food service. Prior to joining Boulder Brands, Jim served as president of Perdue Food Products, a privately held Maryland company that’s part of the Perdue Farms family of companies. With more than 35 years of experience in the consumer packaged goods food and beverage industry, Jim has held senior management and executive positions with ConAgra Foods, The Hain-Celestial Group, Celestial Seasonings and Nabisco. Jim was founder and CEO of National Health Management Inc. and is a graduate of University of Iowa.

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He holds a master's degree in business administration and has taught leadership and organizational behavior as a senior faculty member at Keller Graduate School of Business. Jim serves on the board of directors at Smart Balance Inc., multiple trade association boards and Atlantic General Hospital Corporation and Foundation boards.

**Jim Link** oversees Randstad’s human capital strategy and manages the company’s human resource initiatives for 125,000 employees. Over the past year, Jim has enhanced recruiter efficiency, tripled the number of leadership programs and significantly grown employee participation in professional development programs. Most recently, he was named HR Executive of the Year in the 2013 American Business Awards. He serves as one of Randstad’s primary media spokespersons, with coverage spanning *Atlanta Business Chronicle, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Forbes, NPR* and FOX Business, among others.

**Nereida (Neddy) Perez** is vice president and chief diversity officer at Ingersoll Rand. An internationally known HR and diversity practitioner, Neddy has more than 20 years of experience working with Fortune 500 corporations in developing and implementing business strategies designed to remove organizational and cultural barriers to spur talent and business growth. Neddy has been a speaker at a number of national conferences and events in HR, diversity, supplier diversity and STEM. She has served as an advisor on diversity initiatives at an array of Fortune 500 companies and government agencies. Ms. Perez has been on the board of several national nonprofit organizations focusing on manufacturing, energy, leadership development and workforce management. In 2014 she was named the Top Hispanic Executive in the U.S. by the National Hispanic Business Group and more recently was named one of the top 10 Latina in the U.S. by *Latina Style Magazine*. A strong advocate for MWBE’s and supplier diversity, she has created and implemented supplier diversity programs at KPMG, National Grid and established the initial structure at Ingersoll Rand.

**Eva Sage-Gavin** is vice chair of the Aspen Institute’s Skills for America’s Future Advisory Board, working directly with senior White House leaders, community colleges and corporations to build skilled workforces. In 2013, she became the ninth member and first woman elected to the board of directors of Sapient, a technology marketing firm based in Boston. Previously, she was executive vice president of global human resources and corporate affairs at Gap Inc. In her role as chief people officer, she set the strategy for the company’s internal and external communications, government and public affairs, social and environmental responsibility, foundation, and human resource operations for 136,000 employees worldwide. Gap Inc.’s fiscal year 2013 net sales were $16.15 billion, with products available for purchase in more than 90 countries worldwide. Ms. Sage-Gavin was an executive leadership team member at Gap Inc. for more than 10 years. Previously, she worked at Sun Microsystems and Disney Consumer Products. In addition, she has served in various senior HR leadership positions for PepsiCo and for Xerox Corporation. In 2005, *Human Resource Executive* magazine recognized Ms. Sage-Gavin as one of the 25 most influential and prominent women leading HR organizations. In 2006, she was elected as a Fellow of the National Academy of Human Resources in recognition of her lifelong professional achievements in the field of HR. She is author of a chapter in *The Chief HR Officer: Defining the New Role of Human Resource Leaders* (Jossey-Bass, 2011). In 2012, Cornell University honored her with the prestigious Groat Award for her professional accomplishments and outstanding service to the College of Industrial and Labor Relations. Ms. Sage-Gavin served on the Cornell Center for Advanced Human Resources Studies Board, the President’s Council of Cornell Women, and the University of Southern California’s Center for Effective Organizations.
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The annual event brings together a select group of leading-edge thinkers and practitioners in the HR field. Participants explore critical human capital issues from a new perspective.

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This summary was prepared by Bullseye Resources for the SHRM Foundation.