

# Equipped to Compete? Making the Most of Today's

By Garry Priam

IT'S NO SECRET THAT IN ORDER TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL COMPANY, you need to commit a lot of resources to human capital management. This includes making sure you have not only the right people, but also the right technology to handle labour relations, health and wellness, payroll, benefits, and every other aspect of HR management.

With the available toolkits continuing to evolve and emerge, HR professionals need to be proactive, and not reactive, regarding their technology integration.

## HR Technological Shift is Growing

Companies should also be willing to continuously grow and remain open to embracing new ideas and new tools such as mobile technology. One way to do this is to capitalize on using new technologies geared specifically for HR. Managing people is like any other aspect of business—fiercely competitive—and if you're not doing your best, there are many other organizations that will dominate your industry. HR technology can separate the best employers from the rest of the pack.

Worldwide investment in corporate HR technology continues to grow at an exponential rate, according to the *2015 HR Service Delivery and Technology Survey* conducted by Towers Watson, a global professional services firm specializing in HR consulting and risk management. The survey also found that despite overwhelming satisfaction with HR technology, a surprisingly large number of companies are still using paper to perform various HR tasks.

The survey revealed that nearly nine in 10 respondents (88 per cent) said they plan to spend the same amount or more on HR technology and systems this year compared to last year. In addition, organizations are replacing their core HR management systems more frequently than ever before—every three to five years versus every five to seven years historically.

In another sign of the times, the survey also showed employer interest continuing to grow in the use of mobile and HR portal

technologies. More than six in 10 respondents (61 per cent) plan to use mobile technologies for HR transactions this year, a sharp increase from 46 per cent last year. The survey also indicated that two-thirds of respondents now have an HR portal in place, up from 60 per cent last year.

## Mobile HR Solutions Encourage Employee Interaction

Companies that are competing for talent in today's world strategically benefit from allowing their people seamless, convenient, and immediate access to their own data—such as payroll and benefits plan administration. Not long ago, HR departments communicated this information with employees through written communications like newsletters. However, times have changed and so have workforces and their expectations. Many workers want quick access to their data to be just as simple and immediate as their interactions with other companies as consumers via mobile apps.

While we know that mobile access with smartphones and tablets are changing the way we access information, it also changes the expectations of employees regarding the information and services organizations should—and can—provide. As such, mobile capabilities have become an important way to engage employees for HR departments and organizations.

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## HR Making More of Mobile Apps

HR decision-makers are increasingly including mobile HR applications as a necessary core feature in the next-generation HR systems they plan to purchase. According to a survey by ADP, which provides payroll services and HR management solutions, 65 per cent of HR decision-makers in large companies and 41 per cent in mid-sized firms, consider mobile access to be “critical” or “important” in next-generation HR systems and services.

Keep in mind that going mobile should not be seen as implementing a new strategy, but simply a new way to support the same strategies that you already follow—like moving from paper personnel files to HR information systems.



# Teams and Tech

## Six Tips For HR Making The Most of Mobile

So, how can HR make the transition to mobile in their respective organizations? Here are six tips to make the move to mobile more meaningful and successful:

**1. Keep it simple.** A lot of people want to be able to use their mobile devices at work, but that doesn't mean every single piece of information on the organizational network needs to be accessible on their phones. Since mobile interfaces are small, having too much information can make them unwieldy and difficult to use.

Target the information you want your staff to have access to based on how and when they use their devices for work. HR should discuss with employees how they use their devices for work, and what information they want to access. Once HR really understands how employees use mobile technology, they can more effectively choose the technologies and communication styles to support them.

**2. Be the enabler versus the enforcer.** Since your people already have mobile devices that allow them to move seamlessly in their personal lives, allow them to leverage that technology in the workplace. To do that, HR needs to take on the role of enabler rather than enforcer.

HR needs to set the tone for mobile use through bring-your-own-device policies, guidelines for communicating on social media, and rules for sharing and communicating company information. Establish codes of conduct around ethical behaviour, and make it part of their standards for performance.

**3. Include yourself in the process.** Mobile HR isn't just about giving employees the necessary tools to do their jobs, it includes what is needed for yourself. An HR professional should be able to use their mobile devices in meetings and have reliable data about the workforce at their fingertips. Being able to access that information will help you make more informed decisions as business leaders, and respected as one as a result.

**4. The interface is the key.** When deciding on mobile workforce apps, look for interfaces that permit users to move seamlessly

from one device to the next. You want it to feel like a continuous experience—even if you start a task on your smartphone and finish it on your tablet or laptop. End-user experience is the most important measure for the successful use of a mobile app. If a person can't get to what they want in two or three taps, they will not stick around.

**5. Share digital strategies and experiences across the company.** HR has the opportunity to learn from early digital adopters in the organization. By sharing the strategies throughout the company, HR and everyone can learn—and in turn help develop the company's digital mind-set and capabilities.

**6. Leverage an 'agile' approach—integrating HR, technology, employees, and business leaders in the process.** HR has the opportunity to use agile development—rapid development by integrated teams delivering prototypes and solutions in successive releases and waves—as a new way of operating in HR and supporting similar programs across the company. Unlike the traditional waterfall development process, agile development requires HR specialists, system and app developers, designers, employees, and business leaders to work together as a team.

## HR as Mobile Catalyst and Champion

HR professionals are in the ideal position to be the catalyst for the needed technological change. HR can be the champion in the drive to equip organizational teams moving towards using mobile technology—and better serve all parties in the process.

This effective transformation begins with a change of mindset within the HR-focused organization—prioritizing connectivity, real-time operations, platforms, automation, and mobile-first. For many organizations, this remains a revolutionary concept, but for greater numbers, it is proving an evolutionary advantage. 📱

Garry Priam, B.Sc., Adv. Project Mgmt. is a professional speaker, corporate trainer, project manager, Italian author and owner of Mossa International Incorporated ([mossa-intl.com](http://mossa-intl.com)) which specializes in business consulting and leadership and team development solutions.