Contemporary HRM Issues in the 21st Century

Praise for *Contemporary HRM Issues in the 21st Century*

'This succinct, tightly written book moves beyond the 'usual' (and much covered) issues of standard HRM texts to address some of the livelier current debates on the subject. It includes talent management, career management, crisis management, mental health and well-being, drug testing, employee vetting and sustainable HRM. By updating knowledge on these contemporary issues, this book is a valuable addition to any scholar's bookshelf.'

Chris Brewster, Professor of International HRM,
Henley Business School, University of Reading, UK

'This excellent book makes a valuable contribution to the broadly based HRM discipline in Australia. The author is clearly at the cutting edge of the development of HRM in Australia in the context of a growing Asia-Pacific economic area. I highly recommend this book for students, academics and HR practitioners.'

Peter J. Dowling, Emeritus Professor of International Management & Strategy,
La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

Contemporary HRM Issues in the 21st Century

Edited By

Peter Holland

Swinburne Business School, Australia

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About the Contributors

Timothy Bartram
Timothy Bartram is a Professor of Management at RMIT University, Australia. His expertise covers human resource management (HRM) and high-performance work systems, employment relations, nursing management, workers with disability, Men's Sheds and Indigenous communities. Much of Tim's research is multidisciplinary and promotes the innovative use of HRM especially in the healthcare sector inclusive of hospitals and healthcare industry.

Jillian Cavanagh
Jillian Cavanagh is a Senior Lecturer at RMIT. Her commitment to research is predominantly in the area of human resource management, employer support and the employment of workers with disabilities, men's groups and sheds, community development and engagement, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's health, and participation in men's sheds.

Ross Donohue
Ross Donohue is an Associate Professor in the Department of Management at Monash University. He has published in leading international journals such as the *Journal of Vocational Behavior, Human Resource Development International* and the *Journal of Employment Counseling*. He has also authored book chapters on careers and employment.

Kirsteen Grant
Kirsteen Grant is an Associate Professor of HRM at Edinburgh Napier University, UK. She draws on complementary backgrounds in organisational practice and academia. Her research interests centre on professional, responsible and precarious work; (changing) nature and expectations of work; talent management; workplace skills utilisation; and high-performance working.

Peter Holland
Peter Holland is a Professor of Human Resource Management and Director of the Executive MBA at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne. His current research interests include employee voice and silence, workplace electronic monitoring and surveillance and simulation-based learning. He has authored/co-authored 12 books and over 120 journal articles, monographs and book chapters on a variety of human resource management and employee relations issues.

Debora Jeske
Debora Jeske is a Work and Organisational Psychologist in Berlin, Germany. Prior to that, she worked as a lecturer at University College Cork in the Republic of Ireland. In her research, she combines her interest and knowledge of technology to understand which solutions work for individuals, teams and organisations.

Xiaoyan (Christiana) Liang
Xiaoyan (Christiana) Liang is a Lecturer at Central Queensland University, Melbourne Campus. Her research interests include business ethics, leadership and voice. She has experience working in industry as a Consultant in Shanghai before moving to Australia.

Hannah Meacham
Hannah Meacham is a Lecturer in the Department of Management at Monash University. She holds a PhD in the creation of meaningful and inclusive work for people with intellectual disabilities. She previously worked within the HR industry both in Australia and the UK specialising in strategic HR management and workplace relations.

Renee Paulet
Renee Paulet has worked for Federation University since its inception in 2014. Prior to this, she had been a Lecturer with Monash University. She has a research and teaching focus on human resource management (HRM), exploring topics such as sustainable HRM, the impact of place on HRM, HRM in call centres, and managing HR in small businesses.

Cathy Sheehan
Cathy Sheehan has 25 years of research experience in strategic human resource practice. She has successfully led an Australian Research Council-funded project, completed research with the Australian Human Resource Institute, Australian Senior HR Roundtable and the Victorian Workcover Authority as well as extensively publishing in leading internationally refereed journals.

Katharina Spaeth
Katharina Spaeth is a PhD candidate at Monash University. Her research focuses on human resource management and employment relations studies particularly employee engagement, employee voice and well-being. She received the Joe & Golda Isaac Scholarship for her research. Before commencing her studies, she worked for five years as an HR manager focussing on talent management and recruitment in Germany.

Tse Leng Tham
Tse Leng Tham is a Lecturer of Human Resource Management at the School of Management, RMIT University, Australia. She has published in the *Journal of Manpower* and *International Journal of Nursing Practice*. Her research interests include workplace well-being, workplace climate and voice.

Preface

As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century a reflection of the changes we have experienced in the context of work and employment this century can be encapsulated in the phrase 'accelerated disruption'. The concept of the global internet which was in its infancy at the start of the twenty-first century has facilitated the rise of social media and the gig economy. Both these phenomena have had a significant influence on new and traditional forms of work and employment. Combined with the increasing interconnectivity of the global economy and further economic deregulation in many advanced market economies (AMEs), these changes have been the catalyst for further transformation and disruption.

With this disruption which in and of itself is progress, the pace and change have created fundamental adjustments in work and employment and facilitated new and emerging issues to deal within the workplace. Indeed, at the cusp of the fourth industrial revolution the focus is increasing becoming how or will we retain employment as we know it, or will artificial intelligence do it for us? Whilst a subject for a future edition of this book, the point is that change is unstoppable and accelerating. It would be fair to say that such change has not been seen in living memory.

As we grapple with these changes and attempt to understand them and how in the context of work and employment we can manage them, this is where this book attempts to make a small contribution by providing an insight into these new and emerging issues and challenges. In the field of human resource management, the complexity of the issues has come thick and fast, to the extent that human resources managers, academics and students cannot rely on the case law which does not exist or is still emerging, as such there are limited benchmarks. Whilst this book is not an attempt to address the fundamental changes we have seen – its focus is on helping HRM professional and scholars navigate some of the rapidly changing aspect from a human resource management and employee relations perspective.

Section I provides an overview of the changes we have and are experiencing. Despite the accelerated deregulation of work, employment and economies, the issues of fair and equitable treatment remains a key aspect of the employment relationship. This is emphasised in the second chapter on managing talent. Talent in and of itself can be seen to reflect the nature of the contemporary work environment in that it is highly mobile and demanding. As such organisations need to spend increasing time and resources managing this critical resource.

Building on the issue of the changing nature of work and employment and talent management from Section I, Section II of this book looks at the heart of the employment relationship. In the chapter on psychological contracts, as well as looking at the formation and development of the contract, the chapter explores the types of contracts and

how they can be managed. This leads into the chapter on career management and some of the fundamental changes we have and are seeing in the nature of contemporary careers, and aspect of managing these new relationships in the twenty-first century. The final chapter in this section reflects on the emergence of the service sector as part of the changing profile of the workforce of most AMEs. The chapter explores how this change has fundamentally reshaped the nature of work and the implication for human resource managers.

The next section focuses on issues which have emerged as key aspects of the contemporary workplace. Whilst risk and crisis management have been characteristics of most organisations policies and practices, the globalisation of many organisations workforces means they need to manage issues such as terrorism threats, kidnappings and pandemics as well as the threat of natural disasters. In an era of global news and the internet, organisations require quick and effective responses as they are often under immense public scrutiny. This chapter explores the various aspects of risk and crisis management and the role of HRM. The following chapter focuses on the increasingly important issue of mental health and well-being in the workplace. The chapter outlines the issues and approaches to deal with this important subject and provides a detail case study of the nursing profession and the multifaceted nature of these issues in action. The final chapter in this section explores what is termed the dark side of workplace behaviour or dysfunctional behaviour. The chapter examines issues of violence in the workplace and the emergence of what is known as the corporate psychopath. The chapter concludes with strategies for dealing with these issues.

Section IV of this book picks up on issues which could be seen as of this century. These chapters are designed to reflect the debates on these emerging or challenging issues. The first of these issues is the increasing availability of biological testing in particular drug testing and genetic testing. The implication of what this information can provide an employer raises many issues around the boundaries of employment, privacy and ethics. This is followed by the twenty-first century phenomena of cyber-vetting and the pro and cons of such strategies in a cyber-linked society. The chapter on sustainable HRM explores this emerging issue and HRMs role in an increasing focus on sustainability within organisations. The following chapter looks at the impact of technology on work design in the context of what we have learned from these relationships in the past and whether in fact we have forgotten these lessons. A case study on airline pilots explores how the technology is advancing at the potential detriment to the skills of the pilot. The final chapter explore the role of code of conduct. Whilst not considered a contemporary issue in itself, the nature of the twenty-first century internet connected workplace and society means that issue can become high profile and common knowledge very quickly. As such management under intense scrutiny need guiding principle often in the glare of the public and media. The chapter explores these issues through three high profile case studies.

In addressing these issues, exploring case studies which map out and examine these changes and approach, it is anticipated that the book will help the reader in addressing the challengers in their changing workplace underpinned by accelerating change and disruption.

Peter Holland