

Transforming the workplace

Seven keys to succeeding in a globally integrated world

As companies continue to face challenges to succeeding in a globally integrated world, they look to the workforce to help differentiate themselves from their competition. To do so, they must find ways of identifying, developing and connecting talent and expertise from around the globe. Based on our research and experience, we see that there are seven important capabilities that organizations need to have to effectively build a global workforce. In concert, these capabilities can help organizations increase productivity, improve responsiveness and develop resiliency to shifts in the marketplace.

A new form of organization

The spotlight is once again being thrust upon the workforce. Major business publications and conferences are now placing issues such as talent management and employee engagement at the forefront of the corporate agenda. We believe this attention is long overdue.

However, we do not believe that this focus on employees is merely another on the long list of corporate trends with a predictable shelf life. Instead, we see fundamental shifts in the way that

organizations will operate in the future. These changes will require organizations to think about their employees, and how they contribute to business results, in new and different ways.

Seven key capabilities

To successfully operate in a globally integrated world, the enterprise must build a set of core workforce capabilities. While many companies we have worked with have started to focus their attention on one or two of these areas, few have looked at these as an integrated set of workforce imperatives. These capabilities include:

- Understanding the demographics and capabilities of the workforce
- Predicting future labor supply and demand
- Utilizing social networks to increase the visibility and application of knowledge across the organization
- Enabling individuals to perform work regardless of location
- Facilitating collaboration across traditional organizational boundaries
- Driving the rapid development of skills and capabilities to meet changing business conditions
- Evaluating employee performance and providing appropriate feedback.

Implementing workforce transformation

It is not enough to focus on these seven key workforce capabilities individually. In fact, because these levers are complementary, they must be connected and aligned with the broader human capital agenda. Each organization must begin with a unifying strategy that addresses corporate goals and the supporting behaviors necessary to achieve those goals, and focus on how to manage the change process required to get there.



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IBM Global Services
Route 100
Somers, NY 10589
U.S.A.

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To develop a workforce that can adjust to the constant flow of change, our experience points us to three focus areas critical to effective change management strategy. First is employee engagement – finding ways of getting key stakeholders actively involved in the change process itself. Second, organizational incentives need to be aligned so that employees see a positive tangible outcome as the result of the change.

Finally, companies must establish communication channels that build trust and credibility among employees, engage key stakeholders who can amplify and reinforce key messages through their own personal spheres of influence, and solicit feedback on an ongoing basis.

Overall, competing in a globally integrated environment will require companies to rethink where, and how, the workforce adds value to the bottom line. By further developing the seven capabilities highlighted above, we believe that organizations will be better equipped to react more rapidly and more effectively to changes in the global environment and to exploit new opportunities. However, these capabilities need to be considered not as separate ventures, but as part of an integrated effort to increase workforce effectiveness.

To request a full version of this paper,
e-mail us at iibv@us.ibm.com

How can IBM help?

IBM's Human Capital Management practice can provide assistance in addressing a range of leadership development, collaboration and talent management issues:

- **Learning Solutions** – designing and implementing effective and efficient learning capabilities that are aligned with the organization's business objectives.
- **Knowledge and Collaboration** – connecting and supporting a global workforce to operate productively no matter where they are located.
- **Integrated Talent Management** – leveraging IBM's Lotus collaboration software and Cognos analytics with selected talent management software providers and drawing upon HCM's consulting capabilities to rapidly design and implement effective talent management solutions.

Key contacts:

Human Capital Management Practice:

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|--|---|
| Global and Americas | Tim Ringo, tim.ringo@uk.ibm.com |
| EMEA | Tom McCabe, tom.mccabe@uk.ibm.com Brian Comella, brian.comella@us.ibm.com |
| Japan | Yukiko Mitsumaki, mtmk@jp.ibm.com |
| Asia Pacific | Wayne Peat, waynep@sg.ibm.com |
| IBM Institute for Business Value: | Eric Lesser, elesser@us.ibm.com |