



Business Book Review™

We Select and Review Only the
Best Business Books You Should Read.

Volume 20, Number 12 • Copyright ©2003 Business Book Review, LLC • All Rights Reserved

HR from the Heart

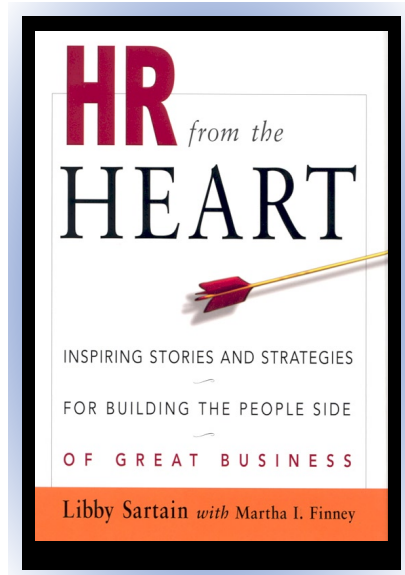
*Inspiring Stories and Strategies
for Building the People Side
of Great Business*

Libby Sartain with Martha I. Finney

©2003 Libby Sartain and Martha I. Finney

Adapted by permission of AMACOM

ISBN: 0-8144-0756-0



Reviewed by Lydia Morris Brown

Introduction

According to Sartain, talented human resource professionals can build rewarding careers that are consistent with their personal values while, simultaneously, growing world-class organizations and having a positive impact on the bottom line. In **HR from the Heart**, she shares her more than 25 years of human resources experience at companies known for being great places to work, as well as for their products/services, and provides a wealth of unique and timely advice and strategies. These strategies and guidelines show practicing HR professionals, students of the discipline, and top executives (who want to know how HR can help their companies gain a competitive edge) how the human resources role can add value to a business, and how it can (by helping individuals harness their own innate capabilities, passions, and skills) also support and nurture the careers of every employee.

PART I: THE ESSENTIALS OF EVERY GREAT FROM-THE-HEART HR CAREER

Because management depends on HR to ensure that it is in compliance with employment laws and company policy, HR professionals, who do their jobs, are often in the unenviable position of having to say, “No!” and, as a result, they are generally perceived as being cold, uninspired enemies of creativity and innovation. Sartain believes, however, that this is not the way things have to be—that HR can operate within the parameters of employment law and company policy/procedure and still find creative ways to build dynamic, exciting, and profitable workplaces, cultivating HR departments as places where great ideas come to life.

The first step in creating this kind of positive career experience is finding the absolute right environment in which to do the things one enjoys doing. If your passion is retail, seek out retail. Or, if your preference is project work and developing creative solutions, consider consulting. Every company in every industry needs the

HR function; thus, it is merely a matter of seeking out the environment where one can invest one’s passion.

The second step involves determining whether you are making the right employment choice. Before jumping at a job offer, you must determine fit, in terms of culture, passion, values, people, and purpose. The company culture should be one to which you do not have to adapt—either in terms of personality or skills. The culture must also be one that attracts people who are passionate, energetic, dedicated, and smart. These people must have healthy relationships with one another and the extended community. And, they

“Determining whether your relationship with your company is a positive or negative experience begins with the choices you make when you say yes to the employment opportunity.”

must also all have the same goal of making the business prosper. The company’s product/service must be something you are actually interested in, and values, mission, and business model cannot fly in the face of your closely held principles. Lastly, the CEO’s vision of HR’s purpose must match your own.

Another important element in creating an extraordinary HR career involves communing with other HR colleagues. Sartain notes that no professional can go it alone, but must have insight and input from other people in the field. Those in human resources are especially isolated—the higher up HR professionals go, the less people understand what they do, the secrets they must keep, and the decisions they make. Thus, the author advises becoming active in such organizations as the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) so as to have access to some of the best HR minds worldwide. She also recommends becoming involved in a “personal just-folks clutch of HR peers”—what she calls a *Hole-in-the-Wall Gang*. There are no rules for starting such a group—just get together with HR colleagues in a fun place that will quickly get everyone out of the business mode and “enjoy being yourself with some of the few people in town who can really understand.”

Those who choose human resources as a career are usually attracted by the *human* aspect of the role, and the stronger that attraction, the more of a calling to the profession they tend to have. Unfortunately, as Sartain observes, “The more *“called* you may feel, the less you’re going to like this news: You will make enemies. ... Not everyone will be president of your fan club.” Nonetheless, she also believes

About the Authors

Libby Sartain, Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Chief People Yahoo!, at Yahoo! Inc., is responsible for leading the company’s global human resources efforts in strengthening Yahoo!’s culture and brand. Previously, she was vice president, People, at Southwest Airlines, where she played a key role in developing an employment brand strategy and building the company’s reputation as a leading employer. Sartain is also a former chair of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and a fellow of the National Academy of Human Resources.

Martha I. Finney is an experienced business journalist, consultant, and speaker, specializing in leadership, human resource management, and career management. She is the author of several books, including *In the Face of Uncertainty: 25 Top Leaders Speak Out on Challenge, Change, and the Future of American Business*. Her work has been featured on CNN and National Public Radio.

For more information, please visit:

www.amacombooks.org

that the HR professionals who are most likely to make enemies are not necessarily the ones who displease and disappoint, but the ones who underestimate the extent of their power and influence. Her advice for getting the job done, and contributing to the healthy growth of the company and community, while maintaining relationships built on trust and respect, is to do the following: Underpromise and overdeliver. Avoid saying no whenever possible and go for a win/win solution. This requires identifying the real need behind an expressed request and filling the *need* instead of denying the request. Avoid getting personal,

“Stay true to your values and use your profession to help grow a company in which all the employees can thrive. You’ll still make enemies now and then. But you can control who they are and how many they are.”

taking negative experiences personally, taking sides, and/or seeking vengeance. Always take a stand and do the right thing according to your values and principles, despite the fact that some will take it personally, believing the stand to be *against* them. And, model forgiveness and, to a reasonable extent, forgetfulness.

Essentially, great relationships are more about what is given than what is received. Thus, it is important to discover what people want and give it to them. Sartain believes that when people fail in a job (whether it is the CEO or someone at the entry level) it is usually because they fail to build relationships. For this reason, it is absolutely critical to stop and discover what is in the hearts of people with whom you are doing business.

For example, by cooperating with the boss and serving his or her agenda and the agenda of the organization (your personal program is not more important than the boss’s), you can develop a great relationship that will provide new opportunities to grow and to lead in the future. And, because most CEOs do not really understand the value human resources can bring to their organizations, as an HR professional, you must find out what the CEO’s key burning issues are and then ask: “How can HR help the company address those issues?” “What capabilities does the organization need to execute its strategy?” The focus must be on what the CEO needs, not on what human resources can deliver or solve, and then a determination must be made about what creative and innovative initiatives HR can undertake to address those needs.

Sartain notes that this is the chance to rebrand the HR department as a valuable resource to one’s company. When you speak in terms of HR’s contributions to the CEO’s desired outcomes, rather than about employee records, handbooks, the interviewing process, performance evaluation forms, etc., you will be heard. However, she also warns that occasionally CEOs expect too much, and in your enthusiasm to promote HR, you may overmarket the department. Thus, she advises driving the HR agenda, while learning when to say no, so as to teach the CEO to have realistic expectations.

You must also understand that because everyone has a unique set of ambitions, drives, values, fears, work styles, and objectives, everyone may not be motivated by the same things. Getting what you want from coworkers is also about understanding what they want.

Nonetheless, Sartain warns that being this kind of “from-the-heart HR professional doesn’t mean being a doormat HR professional.” If you are compromising your principles, or compromising the company’s potential, by protecting feelings or enabling people to stay in jobs that are a poor fit, you are not doing *your* job. HR leaders must be aggressive competitors—coaches who take the responsibility to train and develop the entire team and cultivate a winning spirit. They must understand that competition is a good thing—that it improves and develops an industry’s products/services, hones skills and improves processes, motivates, and drives change and progress. This is not about hurting anyone, or winning at all costs, but about capitalizing on the company’s differentiation.

Conventional wisdom believes that if HR is present at the executive table, it means that the organization is enlightened enough to realize that the success of the business is just as dependent on the human element as it is on financial or operational performance. But, says Sartain, there are both good and bad aspects of having a place at this table; however, most HR professionals do not have any solid idea of what these aspects are or what to do once they gain access.

On the positive side, because you are there when all the important business/strategic decisions are made, you will have the opportunity to address the people ramifications of a decision before it is solidified. This knowledge will

also allow you to protect the spirit of the company's HR philosophy, to demonstrate the true value of HR to the corporation, and to help create the company's future. Being present at the executive table also provides the opportunity to learn the entire business.

On the negative side, being at the table means being frustrated at a much higher level than before and spending more time on time-consuming work matters. It means bringing up issues no one wants to talk about, which will occasionally disturb the equilibrium, and may cause you to wear out your welcome. Moreover, your mistakes will be much more visible, which could threaten your career or job security. However, if you are able to hide hurt feelings, deal with conflict, take on tough issues, make good pro or con business arguments concerning proposed actions, find good diplomatic solutions to conflicts, and be patient enough to make an effort to fit into the group and gain credibility, then you are ready for the exposure and responsibility of sitting at the executive table. HR professionals who fall short of this ideal should not, however, view this shortfall as failure. The important

consideration is how to be in the best position to deliver to the customer (i.e., the company), which may mean making focused presentations to the executive team, on occasion, as a specifically invited expert.

Those HR professionals who do make it onto the executive committee are advised not to alienate the team with ill-advised comments and suggestions, delivered in the language of HR. Before doing anything, it is critical to first adapt, earn trust, gain credibility, and make a real difference for the business.

In the meantime, it is also important to "know your stuff and know that you know your stuff." Although openness to feedback and criticism is important, and though it is advisable to be receptive to suggestions on how to develop an HR career and the profession as a whole, Sartain warns against being too tolerant of "pushy, arrogant so-called experts telling us . . . that we don't know enough to be taken seriously."

As an HR professional, you should also question the authority of corporate attorneys, for when they give counsel, it is not to take care of HR, but to keep the company out of court and its leaders out of jail. Because of this responsibility, the attorney role and the role of HR

will often conflict. And, though it is usually little things—taking the "safe" approach or being "prudent"—HR and the workforce may suffer the consequences if you do not occasionally risk taking a stand for the right thing. "Doing the right thing for your employees is often more important than protecting the company against some vague potential for trouble."

The typical HR job life cycle is three years. The first year is spent building relationships, evaluating the staff, understanding the culture, figuring out the power system, learning the business, and identifying whom to keep and whom to help "move on." The second year is for setting the agenda and putting all the players in place to make the big changes that you have designed to help the company grow. By the third year, you are enjoying your accomplishments, fine-tuning the results, and designing new initiatives. At this point, it is time to ask: "Have I done everything, or is there more to do and learn?" If there is no longer any

"What we do with our position at the table, when we have the chance, can make a real difference in the success of our organization and the lives of our people."

growth and learning, and no prospect of there being any in the future, it is time to move on.

Sartain says that the key to finding the next best opportunity is finding a company that is truly HR-friendly. If you are interviewing for the top HR job, you should be interviewing with the chairman, CEO, CFO, COO, and/or operational leaders. If they do not think it is important to spend time with their prospective HR leader, it is a reflection of their attitude toward the HR function. Moreover, if you interview only with HR, it is difficult to form a complete picture of the executive team's expectations.

During the interview itself, pay attention to whether the interviewers are aware of pressing HR issues in the company; if the senior leadership can describe what has been accomplished by HR, what is still left to do, and why; if there are any big discrepancies in opinions; and how they treat each other. And, if everyone is asking about administrative issues and not giving you a chance to discuss strategic aspects of HR, it is a sign that prospects at this particular company may be limited.

Sartain warns that no matter where you decide to work, however, you get only one chance to make a good first impression, so "Watch your step!" She suggests the

following guidelines for performing up to expectations and smoothing the way to good relationships with coworkers: Start cultural assimilation by knowing what the key issues are and who the key players are, before the interview process begins. Ask the hiring committee to describe the culture, especially in terms of what is expected of you in the first three, six, and twelve months. Use the buddy system; ask for an administrative assistant who knows everyone and knows how to get things done. If the company has multiple locations, get out and meet everyone right away, before your workload starts piling up. If the company culture allows it, make the tough decisions immediately. Also, seek out some quick wins by asking your constituents, “If I could

“As careful as you are about interviewing job candidates, you must be equally discerning when you are investigating the possibility of changing jobs yourself. You know better than to buy the ‘people are our best assets’ line without seeing evidence that backs that up.”

fix one thing, so that after my first six months here you would think I’m just the greatest, what would that thing be?” However, if you want to bring in an entirely new team, build trust within the organization by making the replacements in small doses (perhaps every six months). And, finally, inform your family that you will be extremely busy for the next six months to a year.

PART II: THE ESSENTIALS OF CREATING A FROM-THE-HEART HR FUNCTION AND A WORLD-CLASS ORGANIZATION

Sartain believes that building a from-the-heart HR function is about cultivating people, not stamping out cookie-cutter widgets. Thus, she proposes the following processes for identifying, hiring, and growing extraordinary talent: Make hiring great people a top business objective—one of the four or five things the company consistently does well. Use the same system for selecting the best candidates, putting them through the same interview process, and delivering the same basic kinds of training, consistently, at all the company’s locations. When interviewing, avoid focusing on the skills and accomplishments detailed in the resume and, instead, concentrate on the whole person and how he or she works with others. Although you cannot and should not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, disability, or veteran status, you can and should

discriminate on the basis of attitude and ability to fit into the team—cultural fit is the Number One nonnegotiable. And, cut down on your workload by giving candidates the chance to self-select. If the corporate culture is made known publicly, people will have a good idea of whether they want to work for the firm *before* they send their résumés.

Creating a smoothly functioning process of talent acquisition and development, with “just-in-time” delivery, requires a significant culture shift. Because employee referrals are the most valuable source of talent, begin by turning every employee into a recruiter. Employees who love their work and the company will recruit naturally, but you can pump up the process by offering cash rewards or contests. The company should also have a plan that delineates the level of talent that will be required at specific points during upcoming months, the number of people needed, and known variables (such as the predictable pattern of growth), as well as those variables that are difficult to forecast. For example, when Southwest orders a new plane, HR knows that a certain number of additional pilots, flight attendants, and ground crew will be required. However, it cannot always ascertain in advance at which terminal this talent will be needed.

If you hire primarily at the entry level and promote from within, the company’s culture is perpetuated, people are encouraged to constantly learn and grow, loyalty is cultivated, and knowledge is kept inside the enterprise. This is also a great way to build the organization from the ground up and to prevent any *severe* talent shortages.

It is also important to seek visionary mavericks, from the outside, who will drive innovation and leadership. However, it is just as critical to remember to nurture the stars that are already aboard, using high-touch executive attention, career development opportunities, more frequent compensation reviews, more stock options, and/or anything else that will keep stellar talent engaged. In fact, overall talent acquisition and talent management should always be “attached at the hip.” The greatest organizations invest in career development, leadership development, and internal career paths as a matter of course.

Although HR is one of the most customer service-driven departments in a company, the human resources profession cannot seem to agree on whom the customer

is. However, Sartain believes that when HR regards *everyone*, including the CEO, shareholders, the board, the point-of-purchase customers, the employees, vendors, consultants, and any outside group the company partners with as customers of the company (and therefore of the human resources department), a service-related philosophy emerges that embraces everyone without emphasizing one group over another. When HR assumes this mind-set, it cannot help but align its goals with those of the company.

This perspective naturally leads to a consideration of how to make one's organization a great customer service enterprise. If employees are expected to provide external customers with stellar service, they must first know what it means to be treated with the utmost respect and consideration. The company must demonstrate its customer service philosophy with all employees, no matter where they are in the firm. This means: ensuring the right people are hired to begin with, including a customer service message in every training class, starting high-potential employees in customer relations or other positions that require customer contact, encouraging back office staff and management to work face to face with customers occasionally, educating customers about the company's product/service and what they can expect, and turning all employees into customer service heroes. These responsibilities make the HR department the most influential customer service department in the company.

The author notes, however, that a company does not have to be on the *Fortune* 100 Best Employers list to be a best employer. For example, the best companies always *demonstrate* that each and every employee is highly and equally valued (which, by the way, is one of the keys to preventing serious diversity problems). And, the best HR culture emphasizes ethical business practices, corporate caring, open work environments, strong leaders, and an atmosphere of trust, and meaningful work. However, Sartain warns that if the CEO says, "Fix our culture," do not take on the assignment alone. Culture is everyone's responsibility; HR merely supports that role through recruitment, learning, and development, and compensation programs that drive, reinforce, and reward certain behaviors.

Sartain believes that the increase of mergers and

acquisitions provides HR with a real opportunity to create innovative new processes that add real value to both companies. If human resources does not step in and get involved with the acquisition team from the very beginning, or if it does not do its job well, none of the important people issues will be addressed until the deal has been made and the issues become critical.

Thus, in the due-diligence phase, you should be looking for essential make-or-break issues (in the same manner as the finance and legal departments) and should make honest

"Unless you're utterly and thoroughly committed to customer service as a way of life, it's a very heavy burden to be hoisting on a daily basis. When you are utterly and thoroughly committed ... your business takes off."

reports to the M&A team. In addition to discovering and comparing the acquisition objectives and expectations of the two companies, you should compare the cultures and audit the other company's HR program. During this discovery phase, you are essentially looking for two things. First, you need to know if there is any reason why the company should not be bought. Often, there are unforeseen financial situations involving HR that the financial and legal departments might not think to look for (e.g., improperly administered 401(k)/ pension plans or outstanding claims, lawsuits, or charges of discrimination). Second, you want to determine what kind of talent the company has and who is most or least valuable. At this point, you need to work with your HR counterpart in the other company to create powerful retention and severance programs that send the lasting message that people are important. Once the deal is made, the way HR participates in the integration process (HR had better take a central role) could be the single most important factor in improving the odds that the merger/acquisition will work. Throughout this process, communication with employees (almost to the point of obsessiveness) is the essential ingredient for success.

The events of September 11 have taught employers that disaster can strike no matter who they are, where they are, or what industry they are in. Whether it is a product-related disaster, terrorism, or a disgruntled employee wielding an automatic weapon, how HR prepares for such eventualities, and how it copes with them if they occur, is critical. It is an extraordinary opportunity for human resources to "take the lead and reinforce in the hearts

and minds of our constituencies the idea that we really are committed to being employers who care deeply about our customers, our employees, and our community.” Thus, Sartain suggests: (1) assembling an emergency-response task force that includes the heads of security, PR, operations, and facilities; a union official (if the company is unionized); someone from government affairs, if the firm is regulated by local, state, or federal agencies; and law enforcement, if the company is a significant employer in the region; (2) designing a master plan for handling disasters that includes designating an emergency command center and assigning protocols for every general type of emergency/disaster; (3) planning to communicate with employees more frequently and comprehensively than with the general public; and (4) being prepared to lead the leader (i.e., make sure the CEO stays connected with the people while he or she is handling the emergency).

While most agree in theory that performance management and performance improvement are core practices at the best-run organizations, most people dread

“If you take the initiative to create [a contingency plan for when the unthinkable happens], you can guarantee that the corporate response will be based on caring, authenticity, employee well-being, and communication.”

the actual performance review. Sartain believes, however, that performance management can be transformed into a positive process that supports a high-performance culture all year if on-the-spot feedback is given on an ongoing basis. In other words, “the best annual performance review is the daily performance review.” This not only keeps performance and productivity high, but also fosters trust and confidence, for it allows those being reviewed to focus on the work at hand rather than worry about where they stand. In a culture of ongoing feedback, individuals cannot claim they have been blindsided when they have been consistently informed about what they are doing well and where they need improvement. This approach also protects leaders and the organization from employees who are in total denial about their performance.

Terminations, whether they are voluntary or involuntary, are another duty most prefer not to have to handle. But if HR truly regards the company as a customer service enterprise, and if it considers the termination process to be another phase in the relationship between the company

and the employee (i.e., the customer), this is the chance to deliver extraordinary service to a customer who needs it now more than ever and is also the opportunity to save the company-employee relationship over the long term.

The involuntary separation process gives HR one last opportunity to ensure that the seemingly recalcitrant employee is beyond saving. It is also the chance to reclaim worthy employees who are in fact dedicated but just need to be given one last break. Nonetheless, if the company’s managers have been implementing an ongoing performance management culture, they will have made it clear, well in advance, that the consequences of below par performance or objectionable behavior would be firing. And, on an even more positive note, with consistent feedback, poor performers will be just as dissatisfied as their managers and are likely to resign before they must be terminated.

When good employees decide to leave voluntarily, HR needs to investigate why and whether there is anything that can be done to persuade them to stay. Thus, the exit interview is one of the company’s best opportunities to save hundreds of thousands of dollars in turnover costs, for it can open the door for an accommodating win/win solution for all parties.

When termination is inevitable (in either a voluntary or involuntary situation), use the exit interview to ask: “If you had the last three months to live over again, what do you think you would do differently?” “What have you learned that you can take with you to your next job?” “What are you proud of from your time here?” “What goals did you meet?” “What accomplishments will you be able to take with you?” With this approach, the termination process becomes an opportunity to connect with employees on a deeper, more human level. You will learn more about the culture of the company and whether the reality matches expectations, which is an opportunity for the organization to build a new kind of relationship with its employees. And, the manager and the departing employee will both gain greater self-knowledge.

Layoffs present another opportunity for HR to engender trust. Although human resources professionals complain about the “binge/purge” nature of the employment cycle, Sartain believes that HR is part of the problem. In boom times, it recruits voraciously, despite the fact that it knows it is overhiring. Succumbing to the fear that “if we

don't hire them, someone else will," the department neglects to consider any alternatives.

"The time to plan for layoffs is *before* you do the hiring," so as to avoid layoffs altogether. Link the talent plan to the business plan and cost-justify any and all hires. In addition, consider alternatives, such as contingent workers; outsourcing; parttime, flexible schedules, and/or telecommuting; innovative ways to retool and retrain existing workers; technological solutions; and other cost-cutting solutions, including reducing travel expenses and office equipment/supplies, renegotiating vendor relationships, eliminating consultants, and/or delaying capital expenditures. But, if layoffs are inevitable, it may be possible to include voluntary reductions, sabbaticals, or early retirement in the mix. It is HR's job to present these various options to executive teams—many of whom are so accustomed to up-and-down employment cycles that they fail to consider any alternative.

It is also HR's responsibility to keep employee feelings at heart. Trust them as much as possible on their way out so that they can leave with dignity. And, help them go on to their next opportunities by employing outplacement firms, sponsoring job fairs, and/or giving companies that are hiring an opportunity to recruit them.

* * *

A recommended reading list and a subject index are provided.

Remarks

It is obvious, on every page, that Sartain *loves* the human resources profession, and that this love has been the driving force in her professional success and, consequently the success of such stellar companies as Southwest Airlines and Yahoo! Of course, when one tries to envision the linkage between love and HR compliance and administrative responsibilities (responsibilities that have a tendency to characterize human resources as the "enemy"), one naturally wonders, "What's love got to do with it?" For, after all, who can forget the inimitable Grammy-winning words of Diva Tina Turner, who warned that "love is just a second-hand emotion. ... who needs a heart when a heart can be broken?" In the case of the HR professional, who needs a heart when a heart can be *policied*

and *procedured* to death? Besides, the new and increasingly popular vision of HR is as a "business" that must hold itself accountable for the ROI of essential corporate assets, people and processes—a business that must abandon those people processes that don't add strategic value.

From Sartain's point of view, the "heart" required is one that must be fashioned out of "the seamless integration of emotional intelligence and business acumen." This is not fly-by-night pop psychology, but a valid perspective, formed and borne out by experience, which says when HR professionals bring their authentic selves into their careers, they can successfully help employees do the same, and this is what contributes to the strategic goals of the company and the bottom line. The basic premise is that if an individual does not have a passionate *calling* for human resources work, and does not know how to find the perfect position that fits this passion, he or she cannot make HR an organization's best business asset. First, and foremost, human resources work must be a quest for meaning in one's own life, if it is to have any meaning at all for the organization.

This work is also different from other HR books in that it is written by a human resources *practitioner* for other human resources practitioners *and* it holds significant personal and professional lessons and insights for anyone in the workforce. Sartain has walked the talked, and with extraordinary success, if anything at all can be believed about the unique "people" culture of Southwest Airlines, where she spent 13 years.

Beyond the heart thing, the book also sports an iconoclastic, counterintuitive serendipity that delivers practical advice: Don't worry about forging a path to the executive table, worry about being in a position to offer strategic support. Don't listen to Greek-chorus consultants, if they don't have anything positive to say about your HR efforts. Don't talk HR, ask and listen instead. Don't wear out your welcome and your usefulness, get out after three years if you have nothing more of value to contribute. Don't think of human resources or human capital, think of "Hollywood talent." Don't rely on policy and procedure manuals, build strong managers instead. Don't view diversity as black or white, view it as green. And, don't go to work for a company whose HR department is not in or near the lobby.

Thus, **HR from the Heart** is a must-have, must-read primer for HR practitioners who mistakenly believe that the profession is about being a policy maker or a power broker. It

is for those who want to be “corporate cruise directors” and make everyone happy, rather than understand the business so as to further corporate objectives. It is for those who have the passion for HR, but don’t express it for fear of losing their professional business image. Not only does Sartain demonstrate that passion and professionalism are mutually inclusive, but that they are also mutually dependent. It is for general managers who need to understand how HR can support them in effectively leveraging their people. It is for executive teams that don’t have a clue as to how HR can be their best asset. And, it is for anyone seeking to capture the *promise* of a fulfilling career in any endeavor.

Reading Suggestions

Reading time: 9-11 hours, 271 Pages in Book

As you can see from the table of contents, the book is divided into two distinct parts, HR from the standpoint of your career and professional growth, and the nuts and bolts of the HR function. We suggest reading the first part in its entirety, for one guideline forms the foundation for the next. The result is a comprehensive picture of how you can successfully take charge of your career and make a difference in the field. This section also forms the philosophical and practical foundation for the nuts-and-bolts-day-to-day details of running of an HR function. In this section, the chapters pretty much stand on their own, allowing you to pick and choose according to your particular needs. However, if you follow this skip-and-skim approach, you will get the most value if you’ve already read the first part of the book in its entirety.

With that said, we suspect that once you start, you won’t be able to put the book down, and you will end up reading every insightful, witty, and right-on-the-money word. Sartain and Finney are truly amazing in their ability to make HR material emotionally, as well as intellectually, stimulating, and relevant to the widest possible business audience.

CONTENTS

PART 1: YOUR OWN CAREER IS YOUR BEST HR ASSET

Chapter 1: What’s Love Got to Do with It?

Chapter 2: The Sacred Trust That Is HR
 Chapter 3: Six Essential Ingredients of Every Great HR Career
 Chapter 4: Sure It Looks Great, But Does It Fit?
 Chapter 5: Not Everyone Will Be President of Your Fan Club
 Chapter 6: Great Relationships Are More about What You Give Than What You Get
 Chapter 7: How to Know You’re Really Ready for a Seat at the Table
 Chapter 8: What to Do Once You Finally Get There!
 Chapter 9: From the Heart Doesn’t Mean from the *Bleeding* Heart
 Chapter 10: Know Your Stuff and Know That You Know Your Stuff
 Chapter 11: Just Because They’re the Experts Doesn’t Make Them More Right Than You
 Chapter 12: Question Authority
 Chapter 13: Start Your Own Hole-in-the-Wall Gang
 Chapter 14: The Dais of Our Lives
 Chapter 15: Can This Marriage Be Saved?
 Chapter 16: How to Know When It’s Time to Leave
 Chapter 17: How to Get a Job That Is Far Better Than the One You Wanted
 Chapter 18: Is That New Job You’re Considering in an HR-Friendly Company?
 Chapter 19: Welcome Aboard! (And Watch Your Step!)
PART 2: HR IS YOUR COMPANY’S BEST ASSET
 Chapter 20: It’s About *People*, Not Widgets
 Chapter 21: The Nuts and Bolts of the Talent Machine
 Chapter 22: HR Does *Not* Create Culture
 Chapter 23: Internal Branding: The Enchanting Power of the People Promise
 Chapter 24: The Power of *People* to Make Your HR Branding Work
 Chapter 25: Who Is Really HR’s Customer?
 Chapter 26: How to Make Your Company a Great Customer Service Company
 Chapter 27: Eight Ways to Sell the Value of Your Department
 Chapter 28: The Truth Behind Those Best Employers Lists
 Chapter 29: Congratulations! You Have Already Won!
 Chapter 30: Show Them the Money!
 Chapter 31: Using Benefits to Build Relationships
 Chapter 32: Recognition, Rewards, Fun
 Chapter 33: Managing Expectations
 Chapter 34: Soothing the Savage Skeptic
 Chapter 35: The Most Important HR Policy

- Chapter 36: Diversity Should be from the Heart—Not Just by the Book
- Chapter 37: Use Your People Expertise to Create Successful Mergers and Acquisitions
- Chapter 38: “In the Unlikely Event of an Emergency”
- Chapter 39: Judgment Day Made Simple and Painless
- Chapter 40: Parting Company
- Chapter 41: The Time to Plan for Layoffs Is *Before* You Do the Hiring
- Chapter 42: “No Good Deed Goes Unpunished”
- Chapter 43: You Are the Keeper of the HR Ethics
- Chapter 44: Conclusion: How Do We Get There from Here?

Continue to Enjoy Business Book Review.

Remain current with best practices in business, and learn from the biographies of the people and companies shaping business today.

[Subscribe Today!](#)

A Note to Our Readers

We at BBR encourage our readers to purchase the business books we review. BBR Reviews are intended as a service to busy professionals, as we recommend only those books that are worth your time to read in their entirety. We apply stringent criteria in selecting only the best business books, and in that selection process, strive to help you make informed book-purchasing decisions.

[Click to Buy
this Book](#)

This book is available at bookstores and online booksellers.

Business Book Review™ is a service of Business Book Review, LLC
For more information about BBR, past library of book reviews,
or to provide us feedback, visit our Web site.

www.businessbookreview.com

Business Book Review, LLC
1549 Clairmont Road, Suite 203
Decatur, GA 30033

Copyright © 2003 Business Book Review, LLC • All Rights Reserved
No copies may be made of this review unless appropriate license has been granted.
ISSN 0741-8132