IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

On December 4-6, 1985 the Human Research Planning Society research committee sponsored a symposium held at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. This symposium on "Strategic Human Resource Planning Applications" consisted of 30 papers with discussion sessions at appropriate points in the meeting. This paper provides an overview of the symposium and an introduction to individual papers included in this book.

Perhaps the overriding idea which came out of the meeting was the fact that practical implementable methods are emerging which allow managers to learn more about the basic issues of strategic human resource planning. Methods were presented on ways to view human resources strategies as they relate to global organizational structures. A number of systems based in the main on microcomputer applications were presented. They allow human resource managers to have more control over the preparation of analyses and to participate more directly in larger issues involving the viability of the organization. The issues of turnover and career life cycles were topics of a number of papers. Practical real life applications of flow models to strength planning were presented.

The final papers concentrated on ways to relate planning strategies to organizational practice. Particular emphasis was on employee responses to organizational strategies including new ways to measure the motivation of professionals from an adult human development perspective. It became clear that traditional personnel research methods can now be supplemented and in fact for many applications replaced by the more powerful tools emerging on the scene.

As the title implies, this introductory paper follows the theme of the symposium which emphasizes research applications which are near or in implementation. The book is organized to flow from the general to the specific. It also is designed to run from a general overview to specific management and technical issues. Overall, there are many case studies which should be of interest to those concerned with strategic human resource planning. The next sections will follow the subdivisions under which the individual papers are organized in this volume. There was some reorganization of the flow of presentation from the order they were given at the symposium so that the more management oriented papers would precede the
more technically oriented papers. The short summaries of the papers given below for the most part were taken from abstracts provided by the authors. The final summary section emphasizes the opportunities for implementation of the technology in the next few years.

GENERAL ISSUES OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

This first section discusses the issues of human resource planning from the standpoint of general strategic business planning. There were a number of papers which provided studies to illustrate different theories of strategic human resource planning. The usefulness of these papers is that they are based on actual comparative studies which were matched against a particular theoretical approach. Since the theoretical underpinnings of strategic human resource planning are still in the formative stage, the papers provide a baseline for developing an organized body of knowledge in this area.

As is indicated in the initial paper by Chakravarthy entitled "Human Resource Management and Strategic Change: Challenges In Two Deregulated Industries", human resource issues should be considered during strategy formulation. He indicates that human resource management is typically relegated to human resource specialists in an organization. This is due to the perception that human resource issues need attention only after a firm's strategies have been formulated. However, such activities like infusing a firm with new skills, transforming its culture, and modifying its management style often need longer lead times than that required to reconfigure a firm's product-market strategy. His paper discussed the consequences of failing to integrate human resource management with strategy formulation using examples from the recently deregulated telecommunications and financial services industries. These examples are discussed using eight major firms in these industries which have had to reformulate their strategies due to deregulation.

In the next paper by Dyer and Shafer entitled "Formulating Human Resource Strategies in a Professional Service Firm: A Systematic Approach", another concept is discussed. This paper documents the efforts being made by Touche Ross, a "Big Eight" public accounting firm, to adopt a more strategic approach to the management of human resources. It begins with brief descriptions of the firm, the extant concept of strategic human resource management (SHRM) and the role of human resource planning (HRP) in fostering SHRM. Three types of planning processes are identified: plan based, project based, and population based. Dyer and Shafer indicate that collectively these three planning processes constitute a comprehensive approach to HRP discussing the design and implementation of each.

As with the initial paper, Dyer and Shafer indicate that a strategic