

Management for Professionals

Nicolas A. Valcik
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Teodoro J. Benavides

Human Resources Information Systems

A Guide for Public Administrators

 Springer

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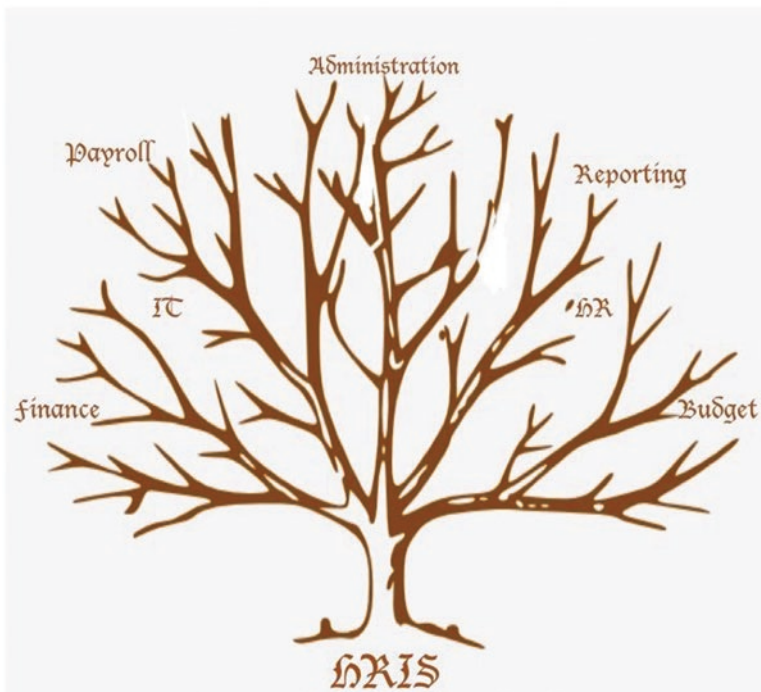
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Information Systems



Artwork: Andrea D. Stigdon

Nicolas Valcik: I would like to dedicate this book to Paul E. Tracy, a person who was gone way too early, and to Keith N. Haley, who believed in me to go to graduate school.

Teodoro J. Benavides: I would like to dedicate this book to my mother and father, Maria M. Benavides and Manuel T. Benavides

Meghna Sabharwal: I would like to dedicate this book to my mentor and eminent scholar in public human resources management, Dr. N. Joseph Cayer

Foreword

Having been in public administration for over 30 years, one of the resounding truths I have discovered is that the complexity of data management in a public institution is substantive, and negligent management poses tangible risk to an organization. Because of the quagmire of regulations, coupled with social pressure, human resources data management is arguably the most challenging data source to effectively manage for public administrators. Proficient human resource data management in public administration requires knowledge, collaboration, and detail dedication. Dr. Nicolas Valcik has over 20 years of experience navigating the data management in public administration waters, and I have watched him traverse the complexities of human resource data management and reporting. His mastery of quantitative aspects of human resource data is only surpassed by his understanding of the culture of public administration, the intricacies of the external regulatory requirements. His insights are practical, and will help any public organization navigating the tumultuous waters of human resources data management and reporting.

The present collection of applied chapters aids public administrators in understanding the challenges of the human resource data, including the challenges present in the public administration environment. For instance, many public organizations operate with human resources siloed from data reporting and data management for the organization. In my experience at multiple public institutions, the human resource function typically lacks the information technology, advanced statistical, and reporting expertise resources required for proper data governance and management. Further, the federal and state human resource authorities lack a mature, standardized, and comprehensive data standard for reporting. Although the sector has made strides with the CUPA standards, the industry is a far cry from the other industry sector standardizations, such as IPEDS and the Common Data Set. For example, the notion of “institutional salary” has multiple definitions, and is further complicated by the various information systems used at public organizations. The lack of standardized data elements in the human resource information systems, in the face of ambiguity in reporting against often vague data standards, leads to an infinite, recursive loop of problems, each blaming the other. While many consultation firms have attempted to create human resource data standards by with public institutions can compare human resource data, to date I have not found a true comparative and robust methodology. The institutional cost and ramifications of this

scenario are well articulated and discussed in this book, and provide tactical strategies to mitigate the problems.

The present book aids the reader in better understanding the complexities of the human resource climate, warns of the known problems associated with human resource data, and offers a theoretical and applied approaches to raise the success of a public administrator managing human resource data. Experience and knowledge provide a means of success as public administrators face these challenges in the operations of their organization. As a veteran of public administration data management, I am honored to provide an overview of this excellent, applied handbook. The authors provide insightful observations, discussion, and suggestions in an effective, organized, and comprehensive manner. The need for such a handbook has been great, and this reference will not disappoint. The present book is an effective description of the problems, outline of the issues, and delineation of the strategies for human resource and organization data managers in public administration. In our quest to discover a methodical approach to the challenge of human resource data management, the present work delivers a resource useful in the workplace, as well as graduate education. To quote my late father, Dr. Larry M. Austin, a management science guru, managers make decisions, models don't (Austin 1993). [Austin, L.M. & Ghandforoush, P. Management Science for Decision Makers, West Publishing Co., 1993].} This handbook helps managers understand human resource data, and master data supported decision-making for the public organization.

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Preface

Personnel data are critical to many public organizations for hiring and recruitment, strategic planning and analysis, as well as reporting data to various local, state, and federal bodies in order to remain compliant with myriad legal requirements. Despite its importance to an organization, having access to accurate data is often not given sufficient attention in the public sector literature. There is a dearth of studies examining the reasons for poor quality data in public organizations. However, public organizations often have several obstacles to overcome before they are able to provide accurate data that complies with legislative requirements. These challenges range from information systems, human resources, an organizational culture resistant to change, data ownership, and reporting issues. Studies often discuss the challenges of poor data, but are amiss to discuss what occurs from the time the data are input to receiving an output. Through this study, the authors unravel the various reasons that might lead to inaccurate personnel data and offer solutions for circumventing the challenges of poor quality human resources data.

This book has been designed to provide public administrators, both practitioners and students, with the definition of what a human resources information system (HRIS) is, what the functionality of such a system should be theoretically, and the practical aspects of an HRIS. The book discusses the different aspects of human resources between public, non-profit organizations (NPO) and private corporations, which must be managed in an HRIS database. Throughout the book, topics are brought forth to discuss the pitfalls and advantages to organizations using an HRIS enterprise system and it will discuss how HRIS impacts an entity on an organizational level. Within the text, there is discussion on what public administrators will need to be concerned with in the aspect of data quality in the HRIS enterprise system. Additionally, there is an organizational theory component to the book, which will frame how an HRIS enterprise system and the organization interact both from a functional standpoint and a reporting standpoint. This book uses theoretical approaches and ties in practitioner knowledge to provide a complete overview on HRIS for the public administrator. To achieve this aim, there will be several real case studies of public and/or NPOs throughout the book to illustrate how the theoretical aspects at times may sound ideal, but in reality are not practical for implementation.

From a technical standpoint, this book will explore the issues that public administrators face when HRIS is migrated to newer versions or completely migrated to a

different vendor-supported HRIS database. HRIS migrations have several pitfalls that public administrators will need to watch for and to prepare solutions. Since there are so many critical data components for a public organization or NPO, it is essential that all steps are taken to alleviate any type of problems that may arise. If problems do arise, it can impact everything from payroll to retirement benefits, a nightmare scenario for any public administrator who depends upon the information for operational or decision-making purposes.

For small public organizations that employ staff with limited knowledge of HRIS, it only takes one individual to introduce errors through faulty data entry, thus causing work for the rest of the staff as they correct errors in the personnel records. Public organizations connected to larger parent organizations (i.e. an institution connected to a system) can have data integrity issues ripple through the institution and potentially lead to issues with medical benefits, retirement benefits, and so on. For every one individual performing incorrect data entry, it will take additional staff members to correct those issues. This excludes staff required to correct any data issues transmitted to a parent organization.

The purpose of this book is to help practitioners and students understand and contend with these types of data issues with HRIS. In the last decade or so, of greater concern are issues of data security and cyber threat. The book discusses these aspects as it relates to HRIS. Furthermore, the complexity of human resource data and HRIS will be discussed throughout the book along with real life case studies to assist the readers with connecting the theoretical with the realities of HRIS issues. The case studies in particular have been compiled by the authors' own experiences and expertise in interacting with HRIS. To disguise the organizations where these case studies took place, generic names have been used to maintain anonymity.

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I would like to thank my mom and dad, Maria M. Benavides and Manuel T. Benavides, who taught me the love and virtue of public service. My mom, who worked at a nonprofit hospital, and my dad, who worked at the Fire Department of the City of Corpus Christi, lived lives of public service, which enriched the lives of my two sisters and me.

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