Chapter 39
eHR Cloud Transformation:
Implementation Approach and Success Factors

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ABSTRACT

The article covers process models for HR IT projects and in particular for HR transformation projects. Based on the authors' experience, an applied process model for HR transformation projects in a cloud-based environment is derived. The article identifies findings applicable to the fields of organisation, business, and IT as well as decisions and critical success factors in the specific context of cloud-based HR solutions.

1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The research on electronic human resources management (e-HRM) covers two distinct and widely separated fields of academia and practical management: information technologies (IT) and human resources management (HRM). This article will aim at analysing both of them from a holistic and a practice point of view, contributing to the research gap. Therefore, it will analyse fields such as IT and HRM, and how much more effort is needed to bring and integrate them together. There are three focal fields in HR digitalisation: digital employees, work content and digital employee management (Strohmeier and Parry 2014). "Digital employees" refers to the upcoming generations with a high affinity to IT entering the labour market (Prensky 2001). The "work content" defines how to work in a digital working environment while the "digital employee management" refers to applications that "support and network the HR profession". This article focuses on the latter and especially on how to transform HR processes into the digital world with the help of cloud technology. This article is organised in the following way. The article opens with an overview of the evolution of e-HRM including the varying definitions of the terms itself. Subsequent, the impact on the academic research is depicted as well as the implications on the industry using e-HRM solutions. Challenges that arise when transforming HR into the digital world are discussed next. Based on this, a brief overview of project management approaches is depicted and a process model that matches the peculiar requirements of HR transformation projects into a cloud environment is derived. Next, a case study based on experiences from several transformation projects follows. The article finishes by discussing the implications of this article for researchers and practitioners.

2. STATE OF ART

2.1. IT Supporting HR

Following we discuss the steady evolution of IT supporting the HR digitalisation and the definition of the term electronic HRM. This is followed by a brief overview on the research in the academic and the impact of e-HRM on the industry, closing with challenges that are faced by HR transformation projects.

2.1.1. Evolution and Definition of Electronic Human Resources Management

Already in 1940 with the advent of computers, personnel record keeping and payroll are one of the first cases of "mechanical" HR. During the next 20 years, some skill inventory and screen testing applications are developed by the aerospace and defence industry (DeSanctis 1986). In 1960 employee data is automated, followed by payroll and benefit administration (Martinsons 1997). Tetz (1974) claims that by the late 1960s one must base effective HR decision on a wider range of personnel information. This requirement is met in the '70s when more than half of the largest US banks and insurance companies already use computer systems for HR and during that decade, companies with a few thousand employees implement new HR systems (DeSanctis 1986). With the acceptance of the competitive advantages of computers in the 1980s (McFarlane 1984), interest for digital HR rises, resulting in about 40% of companies having a system and according management for it in place.

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