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Cases, slices of business life, focus on actual problems and decisions facing a company. Students are challenged to put themselves in the protagonist’s place and suggest business strategies, tactics, and solutions.

New Cases

**Amisha Gupta’s First Year at Work**
This case traces Amisha Gupta’s organizational journey as she transitions from student to employee at Xciting, one of India’s top IT services companies. She experiences organizational culture shock and location anxiety and must respond to difficult co-workers and canceled projects. With her first yearly review approaching, Gupta must decide what she wants to do with her career. **TN Ivey Publishing #W14030**

**Hindustan Unilever Ltd.: Meeting Employee Expectations**
The human resources director at Hindustan Unilever is concerned that the company may be losing its position as a “dream employer” for graduates from the top Indian business schools. The shifting demographic profile of employees and their changing expectations are resulting in changes in the company’s employment model. **TN Ivey Publishing #W13532**

**Juhudi Kilimo: Designing Microfinance Staff Incentive Plans (A)**
Juhudi Kilimo provides microloans to Kenya’s rural population. Young CEO Nat Robinson is faced with the challenge of how to best introduce and implement an incentive plan among the company’s 78 employees. **TN Haas School of Business #B5789**

**Larry Steffen: Valuing Stock Options in a Compensation Package**
New MBA Larry Steffen has accepted an attractive job offer but must now choose between 2 different compensation plans. The first includes salary plus a cash bonus and the second includes salary plus employee stock options. **TN Student and instructor spreadsheets available. Harvard Business School #914517**

**Maria Gonzalez**
Maria Gonzalez, a unionized employee of Global Communications, was arrested in an off-duty incident involving drugs and guns. When Gonzalez’s managers learn of the incident they must consider the appropriate course of action. **TN North American Case Research Association #NA0276**

**The Mike and Vicky Case (A): Confidential Instructions for Mike Campbell**
This case introduces a negotiation between a female manager and her male boss. Topics include difficult conversations with a gender element and promotion or salary negotiations. **TN INSEAD #INS384**

**A Note on Human Resources in Developing Economies**
Entrepreneurs seeking to start companies in developing economies face significant human resource challenges. Before embarking on their ventures, entrepreneurs should articulate a talent management strategy that describes how they will source, identify, screen, and manage employees as the company scales. **Stanford University #E497**
The Promotion Process at Chung and Dasgupta, LLP
Superstar litigator Mona Leung has been promoted early because she had an outside offer. Jordan Ramirez, an equally high-performing “team leader,” thinks that she deserves early promotion as well. This case explores the role of human capital in employee performance measurement, feedback, promotion, and compensation. This case comes with an optional role play. [Harvard Business School #914044](#)

Recruitment at China Sunwah Bank: Guanxi Versus Talent
In China, the system known as “guanxi” is based on a reciprocal exchange of favors that binds individuals together. China Sunwah Bank’s human resource managers need to select the most qualified and talented recruits to fill its 22 new positions, but they must also keep in mind the guanxi-based requests for favors from important stakeholders and friends. [Ivey Publishing #W14180](#)

Running a Tight Ship (A): Save the World Foundation Budget Negotiation - Maria Masa - Confidential Instructions
As a promising new hire, Maria has an ambitious mandate to develop an initiative from scratch. But her experienced boss, Milo, is focused on tightly controlling budgets. Disagreement about the budget puts Maria and Milo’s relationship on a collision course. This role play is set at a prestigious global NGO. [INSEAD #INS390](#)

Shree Cement Limited: Cementing the People First Agenda
Having always practiced a “people first” policy, Shree Cement Limited experienced significant growth in 2012 and was eager to reinforce the culture of employee happiness at the core of its human resource practices. [Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore #IMB449](#)

Silicon Valley Bank: The On-Call Associates Program
Realizing the company is losing talented women at the senior level, Silicon Valley Bank institutes its On-Call Associates Program with the goal of retaining high-potential employees who might otherwise leave the company. While in its early stages, the program offers promise, and the company must decide how much to grow it. [Stanford University #OB88](#)

Suicides at France Télécom
This case deals with a dramatic series of suicides at France Télécom between 2008 and 2009. After several workers left notes blaming work-related stress or management decisions, there was a public outcry and the French government intervened. Students explore topics related to responsible leadership, corporate culture, HR practices, change management, and/or business ethics. [European School of Management & Technology #ES1491](#)

YAAS’s Service Center
This case is about compensation change at an automotive service company in the Middle East. Students examine how team incentive plans differ from individual incentive plans, how perceptions of fairness affect performance and morale, and how bad incentive design leads to dysfunctional behavior. [Harvard Business School #914049](#)
Popular Cases

**Arck Systems**
Sales manager Bryan Maynor faces several dilemmas in determining a sales compensation plan at a recently acquired software company. The existing compensation plan is aggressive and rewards star performers. What changes can or should Maynor make to the incentive system? [Harvard Business School #911056](#)

**Cirque du Soleil**
Cirque du Soleil’s workforce of 2,100 employees includes 500 artists. Managing creative people is a distinct challenge, and this case follows the company’s casting director as she attempts to achieve the company’s growth strategy by attracting more business and talent. [Harvard Business School #403006](#)

“This is an exceptionally interesting case study...Students really enjoyed it, it was a fun class, I would recommend it highly.”
—Review on the HBP for Educators web site*

**Foxconn Technology Group (A)**
This case describes the challenges that Foxconn faced after a series of suicides took place at its plants. Students review the response of Foxconn’s management and implications for the company’s stock price. Topics include the relationships between human capital morale and engagement, firm profitability, capital market pressures, and supply chain responsibility. [Harvard Business School #112002](#)

**John Smithers**
This case describes an ill-fated effort to institute a total quality program. Students will identify many things that can undermine implementation of change, including lack of corporate commitment, overly formalized programs, inflated expectations, and lack of initial successes. [Harvard Business School #402041](#)

**People Management Fiasco in Honda Motorcycles and Scooters India Ltd.**
The management of Honda Motorcycles and Scooters India Ltd. was caught unawares when accumulated grievances led workers to turn hostile, form a union, and go on strike. The power struggle that ensued led to violent clashes between workers and police, negative media attention, and financial losses. What factors led to this breakdown of relations? [University of Hong Kong #HKU624](#)

**Recruitment of a Star**
This case details the power dynamics that unfold when one of a firm’s best and brightest threatens to leave. It focuses on the challenges of attracting, hiring, compensating, negotiating, and leveraging a star performer in a professional service firm. [Harvard Business School #407036](#)

“My students referred to this case study throughout the course. It was an excellent tool for teaching the recruitment and selection process. Students were excited to learn at the end, who was selected for the position.”
—Review on the HBP for Educators web site*
SG Cowen: New Recruits
Chip Rae, director of recruiting at SG Cowen, must decide which recruits to keep after a final interview process for new outside associate hires. He uses a hiring strategy that, after some initial resistance, meets the approval of his senior management. Through Chip’s story, students are introduced to the complexity of recruiting in professional services firms and are taught the basics of a recruiting process. *Reviews available to Premium Educators*

Two Tough Calls (A)
A young female manager must decide whether to terminate 2 poorly performing employees. The case illustrates the practical and ethical issues involved in firing decisions.

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Brief Cases
Rigorous and compact, Brief Cases from Harvard Business School present realistic management challenges for students to discuss. Audio versions are available for select Brief Cases to aid in student preparation.

ARISE: A Destination-for-a-Day Spa
A new Dallas-based day spa aims to use a highly distinctive human resource system as the foundation of its competitive strategy. By encouraging employees to act as “personal wellness coaches” with broad responsibilities, the leadership intended to provide a level of service that would justify premium rates. However, the system is not working.

Celeritas, Inc.: Leadership Challenges in a Fast-Growth Industry
Celeritas is a leading data communications company in a crowded and competitive market. With sales suddenly declining after years of record growth, Celeritas has begun to lose its status as a top player. The CEO calls for an off-site meeting to address problems he believes are causing the recent slide.

Performance Management at Vitality Health Enterprises, Inc.
In an effort to retain top performers, the company institutes a forced distribution model of performance rankings, moving from an absolute ranking system to a relative one. The VP of human resources and his team must assess the effectiveness of the new system.

“The case is engaging and generates significant discussion among students around how performance should be evaluated. Great case with a detailed teaching note!”
—Review on the HBP for Educators web site*

Raleigh & Rosse: Measures to Motivate Exceptional Service
In January 2010, U.S. luxury goods retailer Raleigh & Rosse is being sued by its employees for encouraging “off the clock” hours. At the center of the class action lawsuit is the famous Raleigh & Rosse performance measurement system, previously thought to be the core of the retailer’s success.
Southfield Packaging
Southfield Packaging provides materials and services to medical device manufacturers. The case examines the relationship between a corporate vice president, Mark Sanders, and one of his direct reports, Regional Manager Frank Belby. Sanders’ preparation for Belby’s annual performance review highlights the common challenges and difficulties associated with performance reviews. \[TN \#913562 \]

NEW! WeaveTech: High Performance Change
VP of Human Resources Frank Jennings must recommend how to reduce WeaveTech’s management workforce by 20%. The company has a new CEO, a new strategy, a changing market, a long history, and a deeply embedded high-performance culture. \[TN \#914553 \]

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ARTICLES

Articles from Harvard Business Review and other renowned journals provide up-to-the-minute ideas from the best business thinkers.

New Articles

21st-Century Talent Spotting
For decades, organizations have based their hiring decisions on competencies. But employers need to stop focusing on skills and start looking at potential: a prospective employee’s ability to adapt and grow into increasingly complex roles and environments. Harvard Business Review \#R1406B

Building a Game-Changing Talent Strategy
Game-changing organizations like BlackRock, the Tata Group, and Envision are purpose-driven, performance-oriented, and principles-led. They all also share another important commonality: a superior talent strategy that guides and even drives their business strategies. Harvard Business Review \#R1401D

The CEO of Automattic on Holding “Auditions” to Build a Strong Team
Automattic, the company behind WordPress, has a unique approach to recruitment. After an initial screening, promising candidates are asked to work with the company for 3 to 8 weeks, with pay, to “audition” for a permanent role. Harvard Business Review \#R1404A

Communication Essentials for Female Executives to Develop Leadership Presence: Getting Beyond the Barriers of Understating Accomplishment
Statistics about women in executive roles show relative stagnation over the past few years. This article proposes that changing the way women talk about accomplishments can improve leadership presence. The authors analyzed video interviews with leaders at Fortune 50 companies and identified significant differences in the way men and women talked about accomplishment. Business Horizons \#BH584

The Crisis in Retirement Planning
In this article, Nobel Laureate Robert C. Merton argues that the current approach to retirement planning is not sustainable. Savers need to start thinking in terms of monthly income rather than net worth. Harvard Business Review \#R1407B
Engaging Doctors in the Health Care Revolution
A health care revolution is underway, and doctors must be part of it. But many doctors are anxious and upset about the transformation, fearing loss of autonomy, respect, and income. This article outlines 4 motivational levers that can be used to encourage buy-in from doctors. *Harvard Business Review #R1406H*

Hacking Tech's Diversity Problem
The technology industry has a big problem with diversity, and it seems to be getting worse: in 1991 women held 37% of computing jobs, yet today they hold only 26%. If tech firms want to get serious about hiring and retaining more women, they need to design "bias interrupters"—changes to essential talent management systems that stop patterns of bias in their tracks. *Harvard Business Review #R1410H*

How Netflix Reinvented HR
When Netflix executives created a PowerPoint presentation about the organization's talent management strategies, it went viral and was viewed more than 5 million times on the web. In this article, the company’s longtime chief talent officer describes how Netflix attracts, retains, and manages stellar employees. *Harvard Business Review #R1401E*

How Not to Cut Health Care Costs
Many health care cost-cutting initiatives actually lead to higher costs and lower-quality care. Instead of looking for short-term financial gains, administrators should examine all costs incurred over the care cycle for a medical condition. This will uncover opportunities to benchmark, improve, and standardize processes in ways that lower total costs and deliver better care. *Harvard Business Review #R1411G*

Manage Your Work, Manage Your Life
Many senior executives feel that work-life balance is at best an elusive ideal, and at worst a complete myth. But by making deliberate choices about which opportunities to pursue and which to decline—rather than simply reacting to emergencies—leaders can engage meaningfully with work, family, and community. *Harvard Business Review #R1403C*

Shedding Gender Stigmas: Work-Life Balance Equity in the 21st Century
When leaders embrace and participate in stigma-free work-life balance policies, they can help pave the way for occupational equity. Through workplace culture re-creation, organizations can offer flexible work options to all employees regardless of gender, marital status, or company position. *Business Horizons #BH586*

Who Can You Trust?
Success in business unquestionably requires some willingness to cooperate with and have faith in others. But do you know who you can trust? This article explains how trustworthiness works and offers 4 guidelines to use when deciding whether or not to do business with a new partner. *Harvard Business Review #R1403K*

Work + Home + Community + Self
The concept of work-life balance assumes that people must always make trade-offs among the 4 main aspects of their lives: work, home, community, and self. A better goal is better integration between work and the rest of life through “4-way wins,” which improve performance in all 4 dimensions. *Harvard Business Review #R1409K*
**Cultural Intelligence**

Cultural intelligence, or CQ, is the ability to make sense of unfamiliar cultural contexts and is composed of 3 components—cognitive, physical, and emotional or motivational. The authors provide tools to identify one’s CQ strengths and training techniques to help people overcome CQ weaknesses. *Harvard Business Review #R0410J*

“This is a very nice article. I use it for my undergraduate International Marketing class.”

—Review on the HBP for Educators web site*

**Data Scientist: The Sexiest Job of the 21st Century**

Data scientists are the key to realizing the opportunities presented by big data. They bring structure to data, find compelling patterns in it, and advise executives on the implications for products, processes, and decisions. This article examines what organizations need to know about data scientists: where to look for them, how to attract and develop them, and how to spot a great one. *Harvard Business Review #R1210D*

**The Definitive Guide to Recruiting in Good Times and Bad**

Recessions present an unexpected opportunity for companies to snap up the top-level talent needed to drive growth. But most firms squander this opportunity because their recruitment practices are scattershot. This article explains how to develop a rigorous recruitment process that will allow firms to capture the best talent now and retain it over time. *Harvard Business Review #R0905F*

**Employee Motivation: A Powerful New Model**

Based on extensive research, authors Nitin Nohria, Boris Groysberg, and Linda-Eling Lee establish that an environment that meets an employee’s basic emotional drivers to acquire, bond, comprehend, and defend is vital to the employee’s motivation. They present a model to dramatically increase workplace motivation. *Harvard Business Review #R0807G*

**Fear of Feedback**

This article explores why so many employees feel fear at the prospect of performance feedback. The authors outline a 4-step process employees can use to acknowledge negative emotions, constructively reframe fear and criticism, develop realistic goals, create support systems, and reward themselves for achievements along the way. *Harvard Business Review #R0304H*

**Health Care’s Service Fanatics**

Despite its reputation for medical excellence, the Cleveland Clinic received dismal service scores from patients. In 2009, the CEO decided to act, and the Clinic leapt to the top of patient-satisfaction surveys. The Clinic’s new practices hold lessons for executives in any industry who must compete by creating a superior customer experience. *Harvard Business Review #R1305J*

**How to Play to Your Strengths**

Employees may have more to gain by developing their existing skills and natural talents than by trying to repair their weaknesses. This article introduces the Reflected Best Self exercise, a tool to help employees understand and leverage their strengths. *Harvard Business Review #R0501G*
One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?
Frederick Herzberg’s influential research demonstrates that people are truly motivated to work harder and smarter not by extrinsic incentives—compensation, perks, improved office conditions—but by motivations intrinsic to their jobs, such as achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and growth or advancement.

Harvard Business Review #R0301F

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Books

The Alliance: Managing Talent in the Networked Age
The old model of guaranteed long-term employment no longer works, but neither does a system in which every employee acts like a free agent. Employers must create a new alliance, a relationship based on trust and openness that is beneficial for both company and employee. By putting this new alliance at the heart of their talent management strategy, firms can recruit and retain the entrepreneurial individuals they need to succeed.
Available as an eBook. Harvard Business Review Press #14046

The First 90 Days, Updated and Expanded: Proven Strategies for Getting Up to Speed Faster and Smarter
Whether starting a new job, being promoted from within, embarking on an overseas assignment, or being tapped as CEO, how leaders manage transitions will determine whether they succeed or fail. The First 90 Days is the world’s most trusted guide for leaders in transition.
Available as an eBook. Harvard Business Review Press #11323

Giving Effective Feedback (20-Minute Manager Series)
Managers must be able to communicate in a way that promotes positive change in others. This guide outlines best practices for delivering effective feedback, covering topics such as selecting the right time to talk, engaging in productive dialogue, helping both star and struggling performers, and developing effective plans for follow-up.
Available as an eBook. Harvard Business Review Press #13999

HBR Guide to Coaching Employees
Coaching is an important part of being an effective manager. This guide gives students the tools they need to agree on goals and growth, motivate people to achieve them, support employee efforts, and measure their progress.
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It’s Not the How or the What but the Who: Succeed by Surrounding Yourself With the Best
This series of short essays outlines the obstacles to great people decisions and offers solutions to address them in a systematic way. Author Claudio Fernandez-Araoz provides practical advice to improve the choices managers make about employees and mentors, business partners, friends, top corporate leaders, and even elected officials.
Available as an eBook. Harvard Business Review Press #16921
Retaining Employees

Retaining Employees prepares students to stay competitive in the war for talent by using creative and effective retention strategies. This guide provides strategies for managing or removing common obstacles to retention, such as burnout and work-life imbalance; developing programs to better meet employees’ diverse needs and interests; and hiring the right employees in order to improve retention.

Available as an eBook. Harvard Business Review Press #12591

Chapters

Developing the Talent You Have: Strategies for Training and Development
While many companies consider employee training a good investment, others question how the organization benefits if employees move on and take that training elsewhere. This chapter describes several cost-effective ways to offer employee training and development while retaining the most competent individuals.

From Harvard Business Essentials: Hiring and Keeping the Best People #7089BC

Formal Performance Appraisal: Improving Results Through Feedback
Performance appraisal sessions can be uncomfortable, especially when an employee is not doing well. But a manager’s fundamental responsibility is to get results through people, and this method of assessing human assets is vital. This chapter explains how to manage the performance appraisal process, thus increasing productivity and protecting the organization.

From Harvard Business Essentials: Performance Management #7454BC

Link Strategic Capabilities to Workforce Strategy: Differentiating Your Workforce Strategy
Workforce or talent strategies don’t matter strategically in their own right. They matter only when they make a difference in strategy execution. This chapter provides the business case for the importance of linking workforce strategy to strategic capabilities.

From The Differentiated Workforce: Transforming Talent into Strategic Impact #3244BC

Motivation: The Not-So-Secret Ingredient of High Performance
Motivation can be self-generating or the product of good management. Either way, motivation is an important part of performance management because simply having a common goal is not enough. A person may understand the goal at hand but may not have the motivation to pursue it. This chapter outlines several theories of motivation.

From Harvard Business Essentials: Performance Management #7386BC

Offering Training Where It Is Valued Most: How Training Programs for Low-Level Employees Can Increase Your Firm’s Productivity and Profits
By implementing successful training programs for low-level employees, firms can increase their productivity, minimize turnover, improve work ethic, ease a transition to mechanization, and even recruit from communities formerly unable to join their labor force.

From Profit at the Bottom of the Ladder: Creating Value by Investing in Your Workforce #6031BC

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Online simulations present real-world management challenges for students and encourage classroom interaction and discussion. Results are available immediately for a comprehensive debrief session. All simulations include a detailed Teaching Note.

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“This simulation was a very useful exercise to not only try out different types of influence “levers”, but also to explore how to effectively time and sequence those efforts as well—all in the context of a major organizational change initiative.”
—Review on the HBP for Educators web site*

**Leadership and Team Simulation: Everest V2**
Winner of the 16th Annual MITX Interactive Award in eLearning. In the second release of this best-selling simulation, students learn group dynamics and leadership through the dramatic setting of a Mount Everest expedition. Students are assigned 1 of 5 roles on a team of hikers; as they attempt a climb to the summit, they must reach individual goals while also sharing information to maximize group achievement. **Seat Time: 120 minutes**

“Excellent tool to observe the leadership and team work in action. Participants get really involved in the simulation and they behave like in a real life experience.”
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**Project Management Simulation: Scope, Resources, Schedule V2**
Students make qualitative and quantitative decisions as they manage a critical new product development project. Human resource issues include project staffing, managing schedules, deadlines, team morale, coaching and training priorities, and setting appropriate team and management expectations. **Seat Time: 90 minutes**

“I used this simulation in a project management class for non-business students and they loved it. It is a very good tool to expose them to trade-offs project managers face in practice, with a lot of flexibility to set how difficult one wants to make their lives. It is easy to run, monitor and debrief.”
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The Case Startup Kit recommends cases ideal for teaching as a “first case” for aspiring case teachers, with cases selected for their brevity, ease of use, and teachability. Each case comes with a Teaching Note. Cases for Human Resource Management include:

- Barbara Norris: Leading Change in the General Surgery Unit #409090
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- Infosys (A): Strategic Human Resource Management #406010
- Performance Management at Vitality Health Enterprises, Inc. #913501
- Raleigh & Rosse: Measures to Motivate Exceptional Service #4353
- Sonoco Products Company (A): Building a World-Class HR Organization (Abridged) #410082
- Treadway Tire Company: Job Dissatisfaction and High Turnover at the Lima Plant #2189
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Course Modules offer a road map to the best teaching materials, with recommendations on how to organize them. Each module suggests 4-6 items plus alternate suggestions. Popular modules in Human Resource Management include:

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- Baron & Kreps: Strategic Human Resources (Wiley)
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- Werner & DeSimone: Human Resource Development (Thomson/South-Western)

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These free, short videos are all under 10 minutes long and illustrate a case’s central learning objective. The streaming video is available to registered Premium Educators at hbsp.harvard.edu. Cases with Video Shorts include:

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