

Human systems management critical for businesses during COVID-19

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This word cloud encapsulates the three key concepts underlying the articles included in this special thematic issue of Human Systems Management: The pandemic challenges (increased responsibility on health and safety problems, local vs. global, importance of micro-knowledge etc.); new organizational experiences related to learning, education, knowledge management; and exploration of the human side of the enterprise in the new conditions of work

processes development. Word cloud created using Wordclouds.com software.
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The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted all types of organizations, leading human resources managers to reconsider their roles to support the implementation of social distancing practices, safety measures, and new ways of working. A special issue of *Human Systems Management* looks at the behavioral challenges posed by new ways of working and presents new models and tools to help organizations manage the transition.

"The most significant challenges organizations must overcome during the pandemic relate to human systems change management," explained Guest Editor Prof. Anca Draghici, Ph.D., Faculty of Management in Production and Transportation, Politehnica University of Timisoara, Romania; and President of the Ergonomics and Workplace Management Society in Romania. "Most organizations do not know how to manage the transition to a 'new normal,' or indeed may not even believe change is necessary."

The papers in this issue take a critical look at the challenges posed directly by the pandemic and explore new working models in new working environments, such as increased organizational responsibility and new paradigms for health and safety; new organizational experiences related to learning, education and knowledge management; and the human side of the enterprise under new conditions using new tools that require specific employees' skilling, re-skilling, and up-skilling.

Contributions explore:

- Virtual working and teams dealing with crises and catastrophes.

How to convert the COVID-19 and similar crises into opportunities for keeping businesses on track for growth.

- A learning by doing framework for micro-knowledge management. This framework can ensure that knowledge learned by individuals working on projects is shared and integrated into project management tools and resources.
- A digital service approach to foster team autonomy, distant collaboration, and knowledge sharing. A self-service kit for [distance learning](#) and team coaching.
- The impact of employee engagement on organizational performance during COVID-19. Knowledge sharing has a mediating effect and [human resource](#) managers must think about how to direct this opportunity in the virtual setting.
- How the National Human Capital Index influences productivity in research and development firms. It influences firm productivity in the long run, but larger and more financially stable firms record higher total factor productivity.
- An easier and more comprehensive structural framework to identify risks in a 4.0 working environment. Companies that offshored their production and operate in the international business environment are studied to identify risk factors related to the [work environment](#) and human resources.
- The challenges educators face during emergency remote learning. A comparison of education continuity measures concludes that a hybrid approach, combining face-to-face with online learning is the way forward in the new normal.
- The importance of learning organizations during times of risk and disruption. Cooperation and collaboration inside and outside of school boundaries and continuous learning opportunities for staff support the "school as learning organization" model.
- A debate about implementing immersive technology for higher education. Participants in virtual reality training applications rate the experience much higher than common learning methods.

- A global study of youth perception about their post-pandemic future. They see hope in the future and provide insights on areas of strength and weakness in programs, schemes, and curriculum in their communities.
- A novel approach for improving stakeholders' commitment and responsibility for occupational health and safety (OHS) practices in an organization. An OHS Responsibility Multilevel Model for the implementation of the OHSAS 18001: 2007 standard.
- Preventing and controlling back pain in computer workers. Treatment by an interdisciplinary team that includes an occupational physician, an ergonomist, and a physiotherapist can improve the health status of these workers.

"During the last eight months we have all recognized rapid progress in the implementation and use of technology, particularly web and cloud technologies, digitization, and also, intelligent automation. This change of culture makes human resources and work management key issues in this adaptation process," commented Prof. Draghici.

More information: Anca Draghici et al, Changes and challenges of human systems management during and after the pandemic, *Human Systems Management* (2020). [DOI: 10.3233/HSM-209001](https://doi.org/10.3233/HSM-209001)

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