

Preface

Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice reflects over 50 years of experience of teaching undergraduate and graduate courses on HRM. This book has been written specifically to fulfil the need of introductory undergraduate and graduate courses for an accessible but rigorous, comprehensive analysis of contemporary HRM.

Overview

Many undergraduate textbooks on the market tend to be more prescriptive than analytical. Academically rigorous and practically relevant, this fourth edition gives a comprehensive coverage of contemporary theories and concepts in key HR activities such as strategic human resource management and international HRM, recruitment and selection, appraisal, workplace learning and HR development, rewards management, union–management relations, employee relations, and employee safety and wellness, with a recurrent theme of gender and diversity running throughout the book.

Our aim is to give students aspiring to be managers and leaders in for-profit or non-profit organizations a solid working knowledge of HRM. The intent is to educate and not simply train students. As such, this book encourages students to think critically and evaluate the nature of HRM in order to develop a deeper understanding of employment relations. We do, however, acknowledge that, in an introductory text, there needs to be an opportunity for students to engage in HR-related skill development; therefore, it has a practical element – the ‘how to’ activities of HRM. For example, it discusses how to recruit and select and how to design training programmes.

Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice has been written for students looking to be managers in the local or increasingly global arena, and therefore draws examples of and literature on HRM from Europe, Canada, the USA, China, India, Japan, South Korea and other countries. This should help students to compare international developments in HRM and to develop a broader understanding of HRM issues and practices.

Approach

It is more than a decade since the first edition of *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice* was published, yet the management of people in the workplace continues to present challenges to managers and attract considerable research interest and funding from research and professional bodies. The world has, however, altered, and the context, the HR practices and the HRM discourse have changed since 1994.

In the first edition of *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice*, we made reference to the turbulent business climate caused by increased global price competitiveness, and explored developments in the European Community. A decade on, the processes of globalization have accelerated and continue to integrate markets at both regional and worldwide level. Since 1994, what was known as the European Community has been enlarged by the inclusion of northern states, such as Finland, and eastern states, such as Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic; the European Union currently comprises 25 states.

In addition, in 1994 in Britain, the Conservative government was in power, pursuing its neoliberalism ideology and policies. Since 1997, with the election of 'New Labour' and its 'Third Way', the management of people at work has been affected by New Labour initiatives in the areas of pay, the Social Charter and union recognition. During the 1980s and 90s, Japanese 'best' management practices were the very essence of avant-garde management theory. In the early 21st century, the Japanese model has been eclipsed by developments in the People's Republic of China and India, two of the world's fastest growing economies. The first edition made no reference to 'knowledge work', but with the mobility of capital and the shift towards more knowledge-based work, the case for 'better' HR policies and practices has been strengthened, both theoretically and empirically.

Two decades ago, scholars debated the meaning of the term 'human resource management' and produced analytical and polar models to contrast the fundamental traits of traditional personnel management and HRM. The debate focused around such questions as 'What is the difference between personnel management and human resource management?' and 'Is human resource management simply personnel management in a new fancy wrapping?', or, as Armstrong (1987) mused, is HRM 'old wine in new bottles?' And relatedly, the question arose of 'What distinguishes "soft" and "hard" versions of HRM?' The concept of 'best' HR practice or 'bundles' of best HR practices became an important part of the discourse on HRM's contribution to organizational performance. The context and the debate, which were largely initiated by John Storey's (1989) seminal book, *New Perspectives on Human Resource Management*, shaped previous editions of *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice*. In the light of unabated 'downsizing' and 'rightsizing' – euphemisms for layoffs – even in high-tech 'blue chip' companies, and the phenomenon of the 'jobless recovery' (cf Aronowitz, 2005), the theoretical debate is somewhat passé. Today, many of the people management practices seem to resemble 'old age' capitalism's priorities and values.

So, as we prepare this fourth edition of *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice*, what is the established consensus on the key HRM issues facing managers and academics in the first decade of the 21st century? As we discussed in the third edition, an important theoretical issue continues to be the integration of strategic management, organizational restructuring and adult learning in order to create a resource-based theory of competitive advantage.

A second major issue debated is the conceptualization and measurement of the impact of HRM on organizational performance, sometimes referred to as the 'holy grail' (Purcell, 2003). The third edition acknowledged this development and included a new chapter on Evaluating HRM. Measuring the HRM–performance link still remains problematic, especially methodological challenges related to the difficulty of proving causality and 'why' a relationship should exist between HR practices and performance outcomes, known as the 'black box' of workplace behaviour (Legge, 2005; Purcell, 2003).

The third major issue for academics and practitioners is the effect of globalization on the management of people across national boundaries. As the globalization of world markets continues apace, there has been growing interest in international and comparative HRM. The HRM strategies, policies and practices that global companies pursue in response to the globalization process have been keenly scrutinized by an increasing number of researchers. Furthermore, with the increased probability of managers having to manage people in a different national culture and within different business systems, there has been an increased awareness of the importance of comparative HRM research (Budhwar and Boyne, 2004).

A common theme in the literature is the 'convergence' and 'divergence' in HR policies and practices in different regions of the world that has resulted from globalization. The debate has a long antecedence in neoclassical economic theory, but, on balance, the established consensus on this issue is that there are no universal prescriptions for effective HRM: one size does not fit all. The 'societal effects' approach theorizes that global companies are socially constructed in the same way as national companies and organizations, and are thus not 'free agents' able to design their own HR practices unfettered by social institutions. Hence, the emerging favoured explanation for divergence in HR practices is that HR systems are embedded in wider 'sets' of interdependent social and political relations beyond the organization that influence the structure, strategy and HR policies and practices in global companies (Lane, 2000; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003)

In addition, there is growing interest among academics and practitioners in debates about the psychological contract, work–life balance, workplace wellness and the ethics of HRM, in the context of globalization, precarious employment and corporate governance. Running in tandem with the 'new' issues are enduring 'old' issues concerning work intensification, employment insecurity, skill change, emotional labour, job control and job-related stress (Gallie, 2005). 'McWork' is the symbolic term often used to capture these new realities of globalization that engulf young people in the 21st-century workplace.

We believe that this new edition of *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice* and its companion website, with a new chapter on International Human Resource Management, an increased emphasis on 'wellness', an increased focus on gender and diversity and of course reference to the most recent research and thinking throughout will help the student of HRM to make sense of these developments.

Content

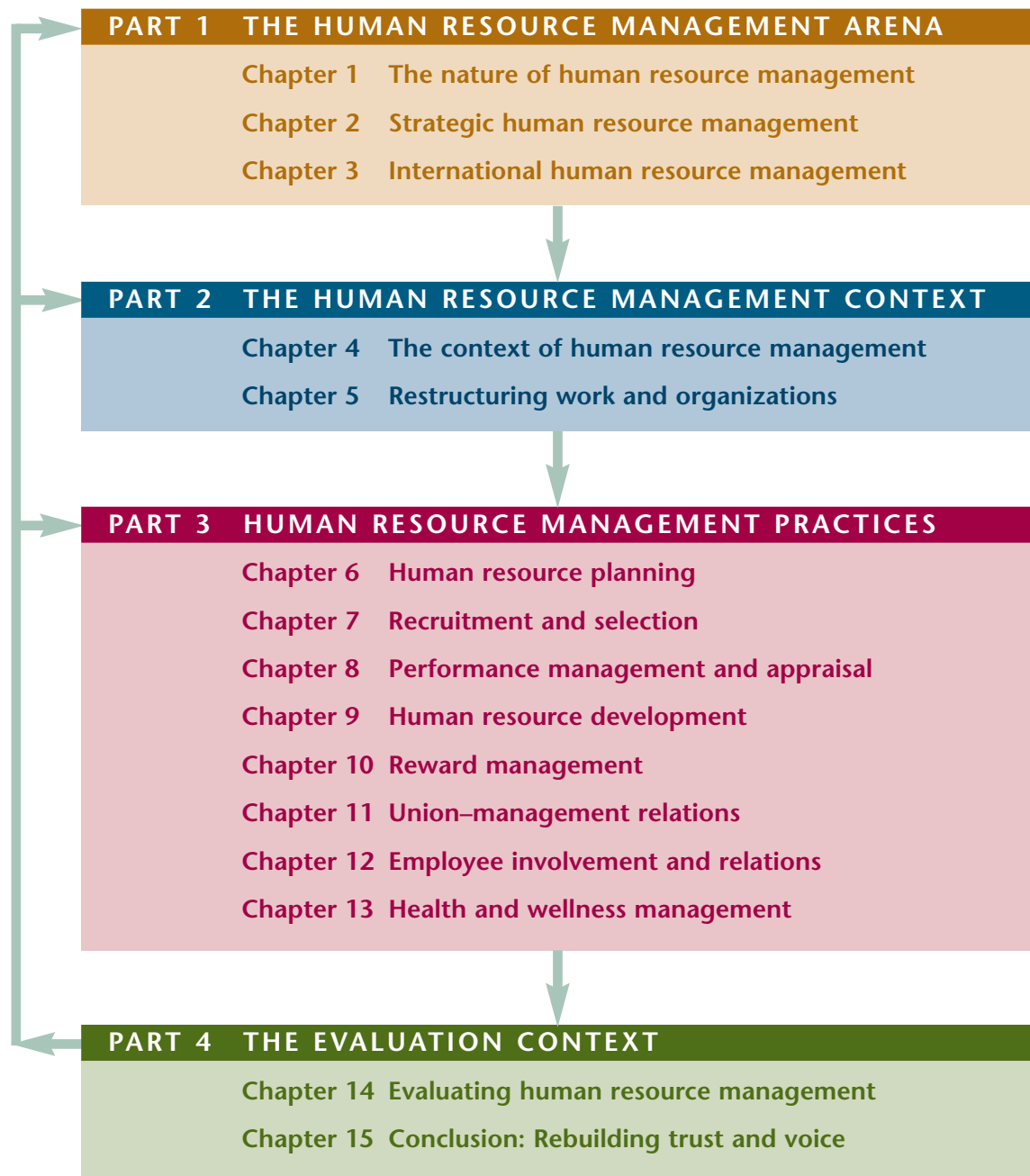
This book is divided into four major parts, which are summarized in the plan of the book opposite. These parts are, of course, interconnected, as shown by a feedback loop linking HRM practices with the external and internal contexts, but, at the same time, they reflect different focuses of study.

Part One introduces the whole arena of HRM. *Chapter 1* discusses the nature and role of HRM and addresses some of the controversial theoretical issues surrounding the contemporary debate on HRM. *Chapter 2* examines the notion of strategic HRM and explores various strategic issues such as leadership, workplace learning and union–management relations. *Chapter 3* examines the impact of globalization on HRM and reviews debates and issues about international and comparative HRM.

Part Two reviews the external contexts that affect HRM policies and actions inside

Plan of the book

This book is divided into four major parts. These parts are of course interconnected, as shown by a feedback loop that links HRM practices with the external and internal contexts, but at the same time they reflect different focuses of study (see below).



Preface

the organization. The economic, social, political and technology contexts are outlined in *Chapter 4*, with further discussion of globalization and new material on the effects of non-standard employment practices, while *Chapter 5* discusses changes in job design and organizational structures.

The discussion in Parts One and Two provides the context of HRM and prepares the groundwork for Part Three.

Part Three examines the key HR practices, including HR planning, recruitment and selection, appraisal, learning and HR development, rewards, union–management relations, employee involvement and relations, and employee safety and wellness. The content of each chapter reflects the latest developments in HR practice. In particular, *Chapter 6*, which covers the principles of HR planning, now includes a much extended section on flexible working, with a discussion of teleworking, outsourcing and offshoring, and a completely new section on diversity management.

Chapter 7 highlights the increased use of assessment centres and psychological tests to measure personality and looks at diversity issues including discrimination on the grounds of age, disability and religion, highlighting the most recent legislation in the UK to counter such discrimination. *Chapter 8* discusses the international growth of organizational performance appraisal systems for both non-manual and manual workers, and *Chapter 9* examines the favoured theories of adult learning and HR development practices.

In the area of reward or compensation management, *Chapter 10* shows that employers have been moving towards a more individualist approach to the wage–effort bargain, with merit pay increasingly replacing traditional wage rates, and that these new pay practices go hand in hand with a more uncertain business environment and new organizational and work configurations, which demand more flexibility.

Within union and employee relations, *Chapter 11* highlights the major changes that are taking place at worksite and national levels, including collective bargaining and partnership strategies. *Chapter 12* provides evidence that organizations are devoting more resources to employee communication programmes and employee involvement, and looks at why managing diversity is important. It also considers ethical concerns in employee involvement. *Chapter 13* examines employee safety and health issues, for example workplace stress, violence and workplace wellness, including smoking in the workplace, one of several wellness issues that has jumped in importance in recent years. It considers the moral responsibilities of employers in this regard.

Part Four discusses whether HR practices can be evaluated in terms of organizational effectiveness and the effectiveness of HR. *Chapter 14* discusses statistical and financial approaches to evaluating HR policies and practices, and highlights the methodological challenges in measuring HRM–organizational and individual effectiveness. The final chapter (*Chapter 15*) considers the standing of HR professionals and their profession and the general moral responsibility of HR practitioners and managers.

See below for details of the new material for this fourth edition.

The plan of the book does not assign values to the relationships between HRM contexts, practices and outcomes, and therefore does not claim to be predictive. The model is, however, a useful learning tool that allows the different dimensions of HRM to be studied within a consistent, general framework, upon which this text builds.

Teaching aids

The textual material is complemented by a number of features to help student learning. These include:

Chapter outlines and **chapter objectives** guide the student through the material that follows and allow them to check their progress.



HRM in Practice examples illustrate current developments or practices in HRM. These are taken from a range of companies and regions to reflect the breadth of application of HR theory.



Reflective questions challenge the student to think analytically and critically, and to consider the broader relationships and interactions of the topics under discussion.



Study tips encourage students to challenge mainstream thinking on HRM by formulating critical thinking questions, and identifying and evaluating alternative information and perspectives.



HRM web links enable students to download statistical information, follow current international developments in HRM practice and even monitor the job market in HRM.

Chapter summaries provide an abbreviated version of the main concepts and theories, which students may find useful for revision and also for checking their understanding of the key points.

Key concepts at the end of each chapter are referenced back to their introduction in the text. Students can use these to check that they understand all the key terms and recap if necessary.

Discussion questions test students' understanding of core concepts and can be used to promote classroom or group discussion of different perspectives.

Further reading references provide elaboration of key topics discussed in the text.

Chapter case studies demonstrate the application of theoretical material from the text and help the student to appreciate the challenges of managing people at work.

Practising human resource management assignments provide individual and group learning activities that focus on skill development so that students can use the HRM theories and concepts they learn to improve their personal and professional lives.

Glossary. A comprehensive glossary (containing more than 200 terms) is provided at the end of the book and on the accompanying website to help the student review and define key terms used in the text.

Bibliography. A bibliography provides the student with a comprehensive list of sources/works cited in the text.

Indexes. At the end of the book, we provide an author index and a general index to help readers search easily for relevant information or references.

New to the fourth edition

Users of previous editions of *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice* will find that we have retained the overall aims of the previous versions. However, all the material retained from the third edition has been updated and has also been carefully edited to enhance readability. In Part One, we include a new chapter (Chapter 3), which reflects the growing interest in how globalization impacts on the management of people across national boundaries, and the increased probability of business graduates having to manage in an international context and in other cultures. The new chapter examines typologies of global business strategies, international HRM and comparative HRM in Europe and Asia.

In Part Two, Chapter 4 has been renamed and rewritten to provide a more thorough discussion of global trends, the labour market and employment flexibility. Chapter 5 has been renamed and provides a new section on emotional labour.

In Part Three, employment flexibility is covered again in Chapter 7, along with a new discussion on e-HR. Equality and diversity and equal opportunities in European workplaces are also new in Chapter 7. Chapter 9 has an expanded discussion on adult learning, including knowledge management and e-learning, and also includes new material on skills. Chapter 12 now includes material on managing diversity and workplace sexual harassment. We have also updated relevant legislation, particularly in Chapters 7 and 11. Chapter 13 has been renamed and rewritten to introduce new developments about workplace wellness.

In addition, we have increased the interactive nature of the book, with more opportunities for students to check or reinforce their learning and to expand their knowledge outside the printed text. The reflective questions, study tips, HRM web links and practising HRM features described above have all been extended to enhance the learning experience.

Companion website

Lecturers who adopt this textbook for student purchase have access to Palgrave's password-protected website. Log on to find out more at www.palgrave.com/business/brattonandgold4. The website offers downloadable teaching support and other resources, including:

- suggested course outlines to demonstrate how to incorporate the text in your teaching
- lecture notes for each chapter that expand the content in the book and provide advice for teaching each topic. This includes lecture enhancement notes, providing new ideas for adding further dimensions to lectures
- PowerPoint lecture slides for each chapter, including key points and definitions, learning objectives and relevant figures and tables, which you can edit for your own use
- lecture notes to accompany skill development exercises
- quick reference grids to locate readily both HRM in Practice articles and case studies in terms of context and topic coverage.

Students also have free access to: