

Special Issue Editors 4/2022

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The Role of HRM in Making Change Happen

Digitization, globalization, and demographic changes have created a context in which organizations undergo constant changes to maintain and build competitive advantage. The COVID-19 crisis, which Boston Consulting Group has called the “people-based crisis,” has clearly shown that companies need to be prepared to respond to unexpected events very quickly and adjust accordingly. With or without COVID-19, change is an inevitable phenomenon in organizational life. However, research indicates that many change initiatives fail (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Quinn, 2004). Specifically, change efforts often fail because organizations tend to underestimate the importance of employee attitudes and behaviors in the change process (Bormann & Rowold, 2016; Faupel & Süß, 2019; Oreg & Berson, 2011; Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011). Consequently, human resource management (HRM) practices, such as training in relevant skills, retention of key employees, and incentivizing change, may positively influence the employees’ readiness for change and, therefore, the success of organizational change initiatives. However, the effectiveness of HRM practices is likely to heavily depend on how they are designed by HRM professionals and top management, implemented by supervisors, and perceived by employees (Brown, Kulik, Cregan, & Metz, 2017).

This special issue provides a forum for original theories, methods, and approaches that contribute to a better understanding of the role of HRM practices and HR function in the organizational change processes. We invite qualitative, quantitative, analytical, data-science, conceptual, and design science-oriented submissions that leverage the multiple perspectives on the HRM–change link.

Topics of interest include

- The role of HRM practices in changing individual and organizational skills and capabilities
- The role of HRM practices in fostering organizational learning
- HRM practices as a buffer for negative employee responses to organizational change
- HRM practices as hindering factors in change processes
- HRM practices’ contribution to employee sense-making in the organizational change process
- Roles of supervisors and HRM specialists in accompanying change
- Competencies of HRM professionals needed for making change happen
- The role of context in HRM practices’ effectiveness in enabling change

We cordially invite contributions from all disciplines of management and related areas, e.g., psychology or sociology, that may advance our understanding of how HRM practices along with different actors may help organizations navigate through the change processes.

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Faupel, S., & Süß, S. (2019). The effect of transformational leadership on employees during organizational change—an empirical analysis. *Journal of Change Management*, 19(3), 145–166.

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Timeline

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