Workforce Science Project   31 October 2014

Membership in ISO 260 HRM Standards Setting Group

We encourage all organizations interested in human resources to become involved in the efforts to create international standards for Human Resource Management (HRM). At present, HRM data is kept in a variety of non-standardized forms, often proprietary and complicated. The lack of standardized data greatly impedes the development of sophisticated HRM analytics. Interfirm benchmarks are virtually impossible to compute, and even internal analysis is difficult since most firms use products form a variety of vendors, each with its own data standards.

The development of high-quality standards requires the active involvement of the analytics community. Standards are currently in development under the auspices of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and have been designated ISO TC 260.Interested organizations should join the US Technical Advisory Group (US TAG) as an Expert (voting) member. This TAG represents the US interests in global standards development. Each organization has one primary member but may have multiple alternate members. Regular meetings are conducted by teleconference, and the primary member may sometimes wish to have alternate members participate for them.

In addition, organizations and individuals may wish to become involved in the development of individual standards. Currently there are five subcommittees, called Working Groups, that are developing international standards. These Working Groups are comprised of representatives from all members of the international Technical Committee. Always eager to welcome new participants and ideas for projects, the current Working Groups are developing standards for Metrics, Sustainable employability, Human governance, Workforce planning, and Recruitment.

Organizations that are interested in joining may either fill out the online form or contact Amanda Benedict Green, an administrative employee at the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), for forms. There is also a nominal administrative fee for participation that varies based on the size, organizational type, and revenue of the applying organization.

We also encourage applicants to discuss their interest in the US TAG ISO TC/260 with its Chair, Ron McKinley. Ron assumed this position in 2013 and his leadership has brought a new tone and increased vigor to standards efforts. Ron provides independent leadership and ensures that all points of view receive full and fair consideration His contact information is

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Organizational Details

The organizational structure of standards efforts is quite complex, and most participants will not need to learn all of its intricacies. However, some potential participants, especially those familiar with the history of HR standards, may find further detail useful in understanding the current state of standards efforts.

In February 2011, ISO created ISO Technical Committee 260 to develop international standards for Human Resource Management (HRM). As with all ISO standards, the members of the Technical Committee are countries, represented by their national standards bodies and local national subject matter experts (hopefully you!). The American representative to ISO 260 is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The Technical Committee (TC) has two leadership positions, both always held by a standards setting body of an ISO member nation, though not necessarily the nation's representative on the TC. The Secretariat has been held continuously by ANSI.

The substantive Technical Committee leadership role is the Chair, which was first held by employees of SHRM and is now held by Jim Lewis, VP of HR for the National Science Foundation (NSF). To provide expertise to the Technical Committee and Chair, each country creates a "mirror committee" that submits ideas for standards to the ISO Technical Committee and advises them on a vote. As Chair, Jim will oversee discussions concerning standards. His duty is to ensure that that any work product or resolution that goes to a committee vote represents the consensus view of the international experts involved in developing the standard.

The US mirror committee is called the US Technical Advisory Group (US TAG). The US TAG for ISO 260 consists of organizations with an interest in human resources, including firms, HR solution providers, academics, and government agencies. These organizational members develop the position of the United States toward any HRM standards under development at ISO. As at the international level, the US TAG has two leaders. The Administrator, in charge of procedural matters, is SHRM. The Chair, who convenes meetings and builds consensus over the technical content of the standard, is now Ronald B. McKinley, Chief Human Resources Officer of University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

The US TAG creates subcommittees and working groups to develop standards on particular topics. Standards currently under development are

ISO/TC260/WG1 Terminology
ISO/TC260/WG2 Metrics
ISO/TC260/WG3 Human Governance
ISO/TC260/WG4 Workforce planning
ISO/TC260/WG5 Recruitment

Although the TAG may seek advice and information from non-TAG members, any voting rights or authority to influence substantive changes to a standards project must come from individuals whose organizations are members of the US TAG. The various subcommittees, mirroring the ISO TC Working Groups, develop proposals and resolutions for the US TAG to vote on. The subcommittees also join their international counterpart in *ad hoc* meetings to further refine current international projects. For example, WG 3 (Metrics) has been meeting regularly to develop a standard approach for recruitment. To learn more about the structure of the ISO TC, please go to ISO TC 260 Information.

In addition to the international ISO standards, ANSI is developing American domestic standards. The organizational structure of the American standards effort is similar to that of the international effort, and SHRM is the Secretariat. Domestic standards are completely independent of ISO, and US TAG can use or ignore them as it chooses.