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## Executive Appointments

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# Technology creates new roles for the HR department

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### Head to head

NIC SCOTT

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*Nic Scott is chief executive of Fairsail, an HR software and cloud recruitment firm*

#### How has software changed the role of the human resources team?

HR is where senior management and employees all come together for the good of the business and so it was one of the first areas to benefit from software. Today's self-service HR software means employees can volunteer information, measure themselves against their objectives and their colleagues, as well as be mentored. This frees up HR professionals to help the business rather than administer processes.

#### So how does HR help the business?

One way is to assess what the organisation's "human capital" is worth in a particular geography. Measuring its value looks at total salary costs and the competition for talent. But beyond that there is a new metric of "fully loaded cost per available work days". This is how many days of availability does someone bring for a particular investment in that individual. For instance, does a US employee bring more value than a French one? The answer is not straightforward and needs to be weighed up against the company's need for local staff, the local competition it faces and, of course, prior career performance and loyalty to the business. Software can do this.

#### What about making people redundant?

It is important to have a plan before a crisis hits. We recommend continuous

talent profiling to identify the best contributors and their likely career value to the business.

If needed, this can be weighed against forward employer costs – which are ongoing salary and their potential redundancy costs.

#### How important are employee benefits in attracting recruits?

In the US, benefits are often the main deciding factor. Employers provide a complex range of benefits and employees use them to discriminate between employers. Packages for mid and upper level executives in Asia and Europe are catching up. In future, the key will be to attract a range of talent, from young superstars who expect iPhones and weekend working, to senior employees looking for generous pension contributions and healthcare

– but also to manage the cost according to what the business can afford.

#### What is HR's role in mergers and acquisitions?

HR software is central to M&A activity. Ideally, the acquiring company needs to be able to upload employee data instantly and review it against the needs of the business. Only then can it identify the key contributors and ensure they do not leave.

Sadly, the technology needed might be in the control of a disenfranchised IT department, which often hinders, rather than helps. HR professionals should see these moments as a chance to review HR processes and reduce the number of management systems they inherit during an acquisition.