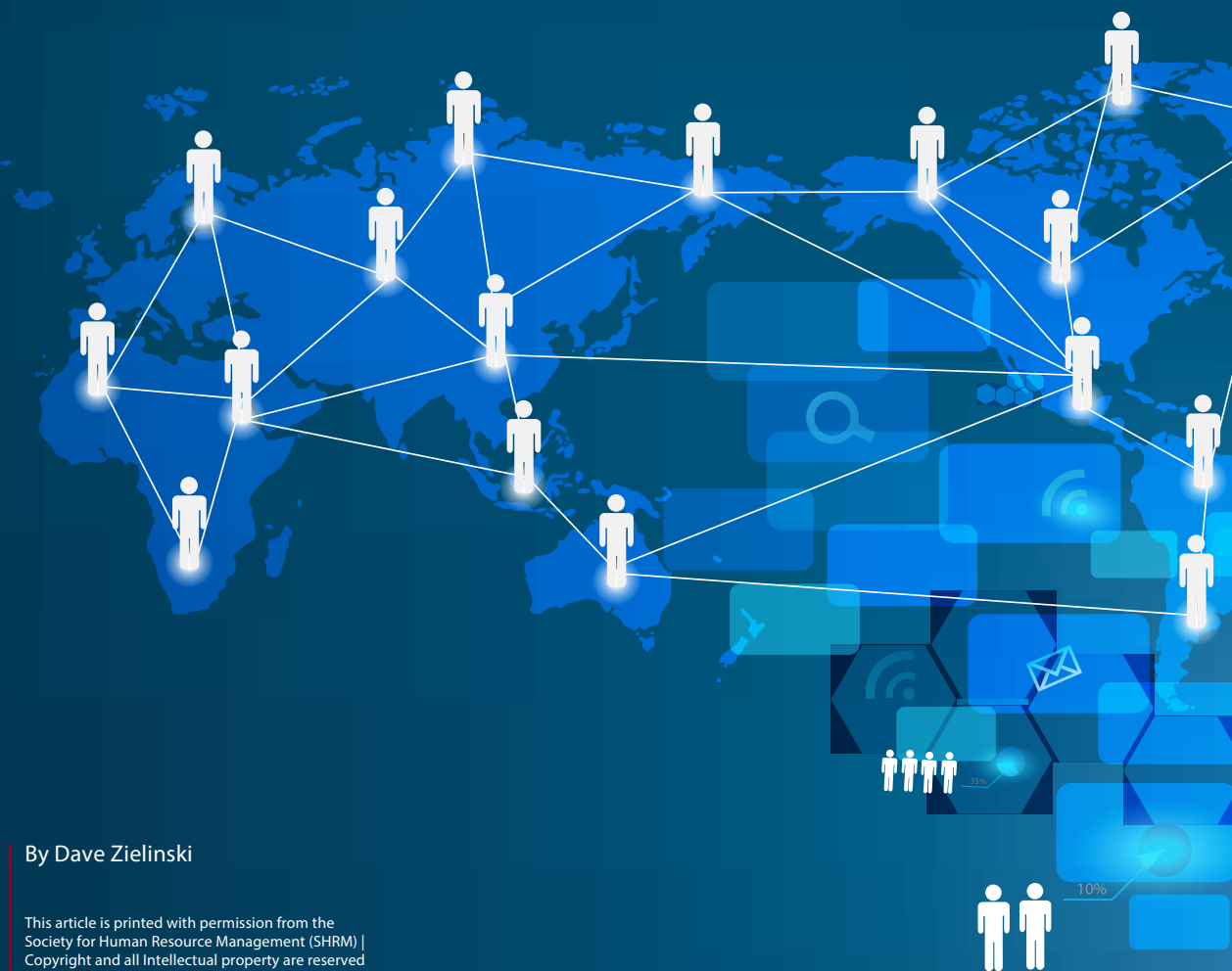


# MOBILE APPLICATIONS SUPPORT HR FUNCTIONS



By Dave Zielinski

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**The employees at Rackspace Hosting, a company specializing in cloud technologies, are tough customers when it comes to evaluating the internal technology systems they use every day—whether those systems are designed for business unit processes or human resource functions. They expect tools that are user-friendly, efficient and able to support their workflows. After all, the workers at the San Antonio-based company are highly tech-savvy.**



That's one reason Kelly Butler, Rackspace's senior director of global human resources, wants to ensure that more employees can conduct HR transactions on mobile devices. Another reason: The company has a «bring your own device» policy, which translates to high use of tablets and smartphones in the workplace, making Rackspace an ideal choice for mobile work systems.

By employing key mobile applications from vendor Workday's human capital management platform, Rackspace employees and managers can use their devices to access pay stubs, check payments from a quarterly bonus program or approve timecards. They also have access to a company directory through a mobile application—a knowledge-sharing feature that enables them to easily connect with other Rackspace subject-matter experts when they have questions



«We've tried to ensure that our critical, timely HR functions are available through mobile so people can access them easily or when on the go and so we don't hold them up from tasks like approving timecards,» Butler says. «Our focus going forward is extending the capabilities of employee and manager self-service to enable simpler, faster and more timely access to those functions.»

It wasn't long ago that the only mobile-enabled HR processes were time and attendance or recruiting functions. But as use of mobile devices mushroomed, industry vendors scrambled to develop platforms to accommodate the changing nature of computing tools. As a result, more line and HR managers are now using tablets or smartphones to review or expedite transactions not only in recruiting but

also in performance management and record-keeping. In addition, more training departments are designing and delivering learning modules and performance support tools for use on mobile devices. And an increasing number of front-line employees can check work schedules, submit vacation requests or review benefits information when they are away from the office.

The growing adoption of mobile HR applications is highlighted in CedarCrestone's 20132014- HR Systems Survey, which features research on trends in more than 30 human resource technologies. The study found that mobile-enabled HR process adoption has increased by 67 percent since 2012. According to CedarCrestone's 20132014- HR Systems Survey, the most popular mobile-enabled HR processes are:

**a company's HR function cannot have true strategic influence or business impact if employees are disengaged and/or resistant to the change**

# HOW HR IS USING MOBILE AND WHY?

- Payroll services, such as viewing a paycheck or making changes to exemptions.
- Recruiting/talent acquisition.
- Performance management systems, in which employees view and respond to appraisals and managers participate in related workflow approvals.
- Learning and development.

The survey included responses from 1,266 organizations representing 20 million employees.

It also found that adoption of mobile-enabled HR processes will almost double in 2014, says Alexia Martin, CedarCrestone's





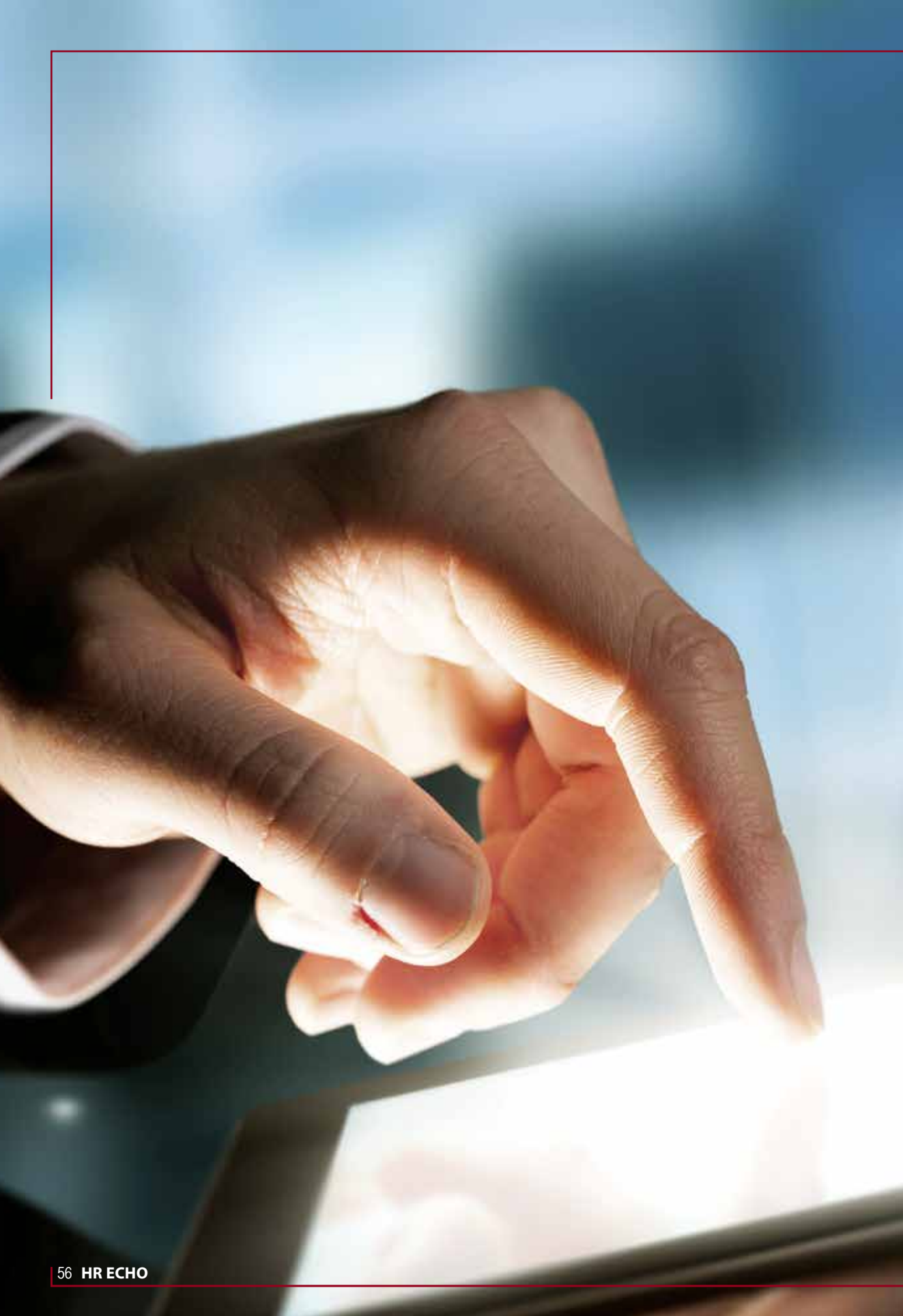




vice president of research and analytics, with much of the growth coming in new business uses such as succession planning, compensation and workforce analytics. Statistical analysis showed that greater access to mobile-enabled processes within organizations correlated with:

- Improved employee engagement.
- Higher levels of managers with direct access to data for decision-making.
- An ability to attract top talent through mobile recruiting strategies.

«Mobile technologies expand employee and manager access to HR services, and more user adoption of HR





# KEY BUYING CRITERIA

technology leads to higher value from those investments,» Martin says.

Mobile functionality has emerged as a crucial buying criterion for HR leaders looking to replace or upgrade existing human capital management or talent management systems.

Although software vendors have been busy in recent years building or refining software-as-a-service applications, the mobile trend arrived hard on the cloud's heels, forcing vendors to develop new mobile platforms as well.

«HR buyers started saying, 'It's nice that your software runs in the cloud, but what about your mobile applications?' « says Josh Bersin, principal and founder of Bersin by Deloitte, a human resource research and advisory firm in Oakland, Calif.

«Buyers now are starting to select HR vendors based on their mobile applications, in some cases before those vendors have had a chance to invest in them.»

Bersin says HR should ask the following questions when assessing mobile applications:



Does the app complete the entire HR transaction in user-friendly fashion? At times, an app will end in a website where users have to pinch the screen to make the text large enough so they can fill out forms. «Some of these mobile apps were designed as the beginning of a solution, not the end, so you'll want to know if you can complete transactions fully on the device,» Bersin says.

Do the apps satisfy most users' needs? «Will employees or job candidates have access to versions created not just for iOS but also for Android devices?» Bersin asks. «Vendors also have different development platforms to choose from in mobile, and buyers should know the differences.»

Is the vendor investing in mobile development at a rate satisfactory to your future needs? Try to talk with other customers who've used the vendor's mobile apps. «In larger companies, the rollout of a mobile app is more complex than just whether the app works,» Bersin says. «Are you able to administer it, and does it fit into your company's security infrastructure and standards?»

At Rackspace, data security issues connected to use of mobile HR apps are addressed with the use of soft tokens, security devices that

give only authorized users access to secure computer networks from their smartphones or tablets. «Employees access a soft token on their device, receive a code and paste it into the Workday login to ensure stringent data protection,» Butler says.

While most uses of mobile HR apps today are transactional in nature, some are potentially transformational, as well—including knowledge-sharing tools such as the staff directory used at Rackspace, Bersin says. «If you're traveling and need to get someone's contact information for an important question, you don't want to have to track it down in an Outlook system,» he says. «The more connected you are to the experts in your company, the more productive you can be.»

At B/E Aerospace Inc., a supplier for the aircraft industry in Wellington, Fla., Director of Global Talent Management Jonathan Turner considers another of those transformational tools to be a mobile application he uses from vendor SuccessFactors to simulate reorganizations. The app allows HR leaders and company executives to use drag-and-drop tools to simulate changes in organizational design charts before adopting them. «You no longer have to be in an office with a projector to do this

**One recent study suggests that organizations still have a way to go on the mobile recruiting front"**

kind of planning," Turner says. «You can pull up organizational charts or succession plans on your tablet, create different scenarios, and gauge their effects, even if you're in an airport.»

## **I MOBILE SHAKE-UP**

When it comes to HR tech innovations, recruiting has traditionally led the pack. As a result, more hiring managers today can routinely approve requisitions, monitor incoming applications, or provide feedback on candidates from smartphones and tablets. These real-time responses help to avoid bottlenecks in the recruiting process.

Yet with more candidates than ever conducting job searches via mobile devices, there are growing expectations for company careers sites to be mobile-optimized.

One recent study suggests that organizations still have a way to go on the mobile recruiting front.

Based on a survey conducted in the third quarter of 2013, the Corporate Mobile Readiness report from mobile research and consulting firm iMomentous of Horsham, Pa., surveyed Fortune 500 companies about their mobile recruiting practices. «One of the

biggest takeaways from the study is that there is still a fairly substantial disconnect inside organizations between mobile strategies for the company as a whole and mobile strategies for HR and recruiting," says Ed Newman, vice president of strategy for iMomentous.

Of the 200 mobile-optimized corporate websites reported in the study, only 71 included a link to a careers page. Of those 71 links, more than half (41) led to a careers site that was not optimized for mobile devices. «That's like hitting a brick wall for job candidates who've become accustomed to seeing optimized content on their mobile screens at sites like major job boards," Newman says. «A big part of successful recruiting is promoting your corporate brand; when the corporate side and the careers side are disconnected, it's hard to create a unified experience for job seekers.»

The study also found limited functionality among mobile careers sites. Of the 180 such sites reported, 45 percent provided no content other than job listings, and only 26 allowed candidates to apply for jobs via a tablet or smartphone.

The lack of a user-friendly application process on mobile devices may not be an issue for companies in industries with large

## mobile careers site has exceeded expectations in attracting job applications

numbers of qualified candidates, but it can hurt employers in tighter labor markets where top candidates can view such an absence—or the prospect of filling out lengthy application forms and taking assessment tests that haven't been configured for mobile devices—as a turnoff, Newman says.

Creating a robust application process on mobile devices is a chief goal this year at PepsiCo, says Chris Hoyt, the company's director of global talent engagement and marketing. In 2012, the company launched a new, mobile-optimized careers site, redirecting incoming mobile traffic to it from its U.S. careers site. The new site supplemented a 2-year-old native recruiting application called Possibilities, which candidates could download from the iTunes Store or Google Play.

Hoyt says the mobile careers site has exceeded expectations in attracting job applications. In the first year of using the recruiting app, the company reported 150 application «starts»—job candidates

who started an application form—per month. When PepsiCo launched its mobile careers site, «we saw an 800 percent increase the first month in mobile job application starts,» Hoyt says. «We now have about 1,000 mobile apply starts per month overall by adding the mobile site to our own recruiting app.»

Changes to the PepsiCo careers portal this year will include 34 sites tailored to various cultures and languages, Hoyt says. The modifications will eventually result in a «100 percent mobile job application process around the world,» he says.

«We are anticipating that will lead to a lower drop-off rate in completed applications, because fewer people will be starting the application process on a mobile device and then moving to a desktop to finish it.»

Major vendors offering video-based interviewing platforms have also added mobile apps to their services. At the University of Pennsylvania, recorded video interviews are

used in filling both high-volume jobs, such as patient service representatives, and harder-to-fill positions in a fellowship program, says David Schaaf, talent acquisition manager for clinical practices.

The university uses a technology platform from vendor Montage of Delafield, Wis. «We download the mobile application for free, and our managers can put in their earphones and view candidate interviews from iPads on the train on the way into work if they want,» Schaaf says.

Candidates for nursing jobs at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., increasingly record video interviews on their smartphones or tablets, says Molly Weaver, director of talent acquisition at the hospital. Using free iOS or Android mobile apps from Utah-based vendor HireVue, job seekers must answer about 10 questions. They're given 30 seconds to read each question and three minutes to record their responses. About 15 percent of all candidates now use the mobile recording option.

**learning and development ranked fourth among the most popular mobile-enabled HR processes.**

## | LEARNING CURVE

Mobile technology also continues to make inroads into training. In the CedarCrestone survey, learning and development ranked fourth among the most popular mobile-enabled HR processes.

Mobile learning plays a large role in educating the global commercial sales force at Biogen Idec, a biotech company in Weston, Mass. Salespeople can access more than 40 e-learning modules on company-issued tablets.

Among other things, the modules cover sales skills and product information for newly approved drugs, says James Lindsay, an instructional designer at Biogen. They are delivered through a hosted learning management system from vendor SumTotal Systems of Gainesville, Fla.

The modules run on desktops and mobile devices. Given how often salespeople are in the field, Lindsay says it's no surprise how frequently they access the content on their tablets. «Our tracking shows that, by almost 2 to 1, people choose the mobile version of learning over the desktop version,» he says.

Whether they are used for training, recruitment or admin work, mobile technologies are becoming increasingly integrated into the modern workplace—leading more and more HR managers to join the 21st-century chorus in saying, «Yes, there's an app for that.»