Proposed topics to be considered:

1) <u>Absence management</u>: Increasing productivity and reducing costs prompt them to seek effective ways to monitor and reduce the rate of employee absences. In the summer of 2001, Watson Wyatt Worldwide, in cooperation with the Washington Business Group on Health, conducted its sixth annual Staying@Work survey of integrated absence management. The survey explored the prevalence and effectiveness of a number of techniques that employers are using to manage and coordinate disability and sick leave programs. Watson Wyatt and The Washington Business Group on Health first began tracking integrated disability management in 1996. A major benefit of creating an absence management program is reduced disability claims cost (according to Mullaney a return of from $3 to $10 on each $1 invested). Another advantage for an organization is that such a program allows fewer opportunities for malingerers or repeaters. Absence trends:
   a. Absences go up during periods of downsizing, productivity demands and economic downturns.
   b. Absence is more prevalent among young workers than older workers.
   c. Absences are higher on Mondays and Fridays.

Managers can curb unscheduled absences, but "Draconian policies" are the least effective method for doing it, said Michael Scofield, the senior vice president of Nucleus Technologies. "At the most basic, high absence rates are an organizational issue," Scofield said. Managers need to ask: "What is it about the workplace that pushes people away?" Often the answer lies in the company's failure to give workers a sense of their "importance and value to the organization," he said. Some employers have turned to absence control programs to deal with the problem of unscheduled days off. Benefits such as flexible scheduling or paid time-off banks where employees use allotted hours for whatever purpose they want -- sick days, personal time or vacation -- can help reduce unscheduled days off, human resource experts contend.

Tools to manage absenteeism: **transitional/modified duty return-to-work, case management, behavioral health interventions** and **safety training**. These programs are regarded as the first major "fix" as they are believed to be quite effective in managing costs.

Resources

   1. **2001 Watson Wyatt and The Washington Business Group on Health Survey**
   2. **University of California Absence Management Manual**
   3. Creating an Absence Management Program - ***Absence Doesn't Make HR Hearts Grow Fonder: ErgoNext***

Minnesota Department of Employee Relations: **Total Absence and Risk Management Risk Unit**

2) <u>Competency Based Assessment</u>: Competencies are the knowledge, skills, abilities personal characteristics and other people based attributes that help distinguish superior attributes to discern superior performance from average performance under specific circumstances. Competencies help facilitate performance but they do not ensure it. They are enablers - no more, no less. Prime HR functions for actions for a competency-based approach are:

   • Selection and placement
   • Training and development
   • Performance management and compensation

With well-constructed "menus" of validated competency models, an organization can quickly mix, match and assess competencies to:

   • Identify requirements for and possession of competencies on individual, team, unit and other bases;
   • Close any competency gaps through effective selection and/or just-in-time training; and

- Reward and reinforce laudable performance through its compensation system

Key Employer Benefits of Competency Based Assessment

1. Employees are assessed and developed against industry recognized standards;
2. Training costs can be reduced because learning and development can occur on the job;
3. Assessment data helps determine the best employees to fill internal positions or for putting together teams for particular projects;
4. It is a highly effective way of providing employees with portable qualifications; and
5. It is an important part of determining organizational productivity and profitability.

Key Employee Benefits of Competency Based Assessment

1. The process is at the individuals' own pace;
2. Existing skills and knowledge are recognized;
3. Less time to achieve required qualifications compared to other systems; and
4. The employee gains nationally recognized portable skills.

Competency Process Steps

- Self Assessment: Assessment by individual against the competency standard
- Workplace Assessment: Assessment of employees self assessment and portfolio of material reflecting competence
- Identify Development Needs: Assessor provides feedback to employee and identifies areas that need development. A development plan is developed
- On and Off the job Learning & Development: Employee finds different methods of development using both on and off the job methods
- Re-assessment/Award Qualification: With the new skill and development the employee will expect reassessment based on development plan. Employee is then rewarded based on the reassessment of the employees new skills and development

3) <u>Competency-Based Pay:</u> Traditionally, employees have been rewarded with increased base pay, promotions and titles. Employers have found it is no longer prudent. Organizations are recognizing the need to change their pay philosophies, from paying for position and title, to paying for the accomplishments of people. With competency-based pay, an employee is paid for the range, depth and types of skills and knowledge he/she is capable of using in the job rather than for the position they hold. The "new pay" approach to compensation attempts to address organizational needs to motivate employees and support organizational strategies. Samples of competencies:

     a. skill sets (operating equipment)
     b. knowledge sets (understanding statistics)
     c. insightful selling ability
     d. ability to be direct, yet sensitive
     e. ability to keep the larger objective/goal active
     f. ability to stay calm under pressure
     g. ability to be an effective mentor
     h. creative solutions to difficult challenges
     i. effective negotiating abilities
     j. consistently demonstrates selfless team spirit
     k. empathetic customer service style positive mindset that makes opportunities from problems.

Many variations of competency-based pay exists, including:

1. Career ladders/promotions

2. Skill/knowledge based pay
3. Tuition reimbursement/scholarships
4. Certification awards (e.g. SPHR or IPMA-CP bonus)
5. Leadership pay (e.g., project management differentials or team leader premiums)

4) <u>Competency Training:</u> One comprehensive definition of "Competency" is: "A cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects a major part of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development." Before training can be conducted, an assessment of the knowledge and skills of candidates must be evaluated. Knowledge Assessment is conducted to:

- Determine participant knowledge of the subject at the beginning of the training
- Motivate the participant to acquire new knowledge
- Determine whether progress has been made toward achieving the training objectives

The key features of a CBT system are that it: (a) Is based directly on the skills and abilities required to do a job; (b) Takes account of learners existing level of competency, irrespective of how it was acquired; (c) Allows learners to enter and exit training programs at various stages; (d) Goes at the learner's pace and style of learning; (e) Allows training to take place in a variety of settings, including workplaces, simulated work environments, and training rooms; (f) Allows learners to be assessed when they are ready; and (g) Provides learners with a record of the competencies they have achieved.

5) <u>Human Capital Management:</u> Conceptually, human capital management (HCM) - the strategy of attracting, retaining, and leveraging the skills and knowledge of the workforce - is now more than ever in the spotlight of many organizations' agendas.

The role of HR professionals should focus on:

- Developing, implementing, and continually assessing human capital policies and practices that will help the agency achieve its mission.
- Leading or assisting in the agency's workforce planning efforts.
- Participating as partners with line managers.
- Reaching out to other organizational functions and components through facilitation, coordination, and counseling.
- Providing integrated mission support.

HCM indices should include:

- The effectiveness of HR-related activities (such as recruitment)
- Employee satisfaction
- Customer satisfaction (in relation to employee or departmental performance)
- Employee attrition analysis
- Employee and departmental performance measurement
- Employee competency assessment

6) <u>Knowledge Management:</u> Knowledge management (KM) is the acquisition and sharing of information and experiences; it's the application of that knowledge to fulfill the organization's mission. KM focuses on organizing information and data, combined with the potential of people's skills, competencies and ideas that help organizations adapt to change and achieve desired strategies and objectives.

KM is a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identify, manage, share and leverage an organization's knowledge and information assets through policies, organizational structures, procedures, applications and technologies. Knowledge needs to be shared; employees need to be ready, willing and able to share it and the organization needs a culture that promotes knowledge-sharing in a climate of trust and openness.

The technologies employed may use some or all of the following components:

- Databases to store and link disparate clusters if information.
- Workflow software to describe and monitor processes in action.
- Collaborative technologies connecting one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many conversations via email and threaded newsgroups.
- Searching tools for efficient, powerful, and themed inquiry.
- Online learning to support just-in-time, just-enough skill acquisition.
- Embedded security architecture mapping information to people and communities.
- Links to foreign systems to bring information from the external environment.
- A World Wide Web browser that creates a personal an manageable view of the information landscape to bind it all together.

7) <u>Progressive Discipline:</u> The term "progressive discipline", signifies an approach to modifying undesirable employee behavior through the use of a range of disciplinary consequences, that are applied depending upon the nature and history of the particular employee's misconduct.

Steps in Progressive Discipline

- Informal meetings and oral reprimands
- Written deficiency notices
- Formal evaluation conferences documented by written records
- Unsatisfactory performance evaluations
- Suspension without pay
- Termination

8) <u>Workforce Planning:</u> Any organization's strategic plan has to deal with resource requirements to ensure that the appropriate workforce mix will be available when needed to accomplish organizational goals and objectives.

<u>Other aspects:</u>

Executive coaching: Partnership between a coach and a person willing to undergo coaching, thus establishing a deep connection in terms of values, principles and vision. It helps having significant outcomes due to discovering and planning one objective through specific stages. Coaching relies both on the person receiving coaching and on the coach. Difference between coaching and training: during a training session, group issues are approached, during a coaching session – individual issues, monitoring day-to-day progress. Process: starting an evaluation of the situation, materialized in an action plan designed with the coach. As a manager, in terms of coaching, one's job is to:

- maximize performances within the context of change and fierce competition
- creating a personal and team learning style in order to develop the organization
- talented staff retention
- leadership development, performance raise, improving problem solving abilities.

When is a company ready for coaching?
When:

- there is desire for innovation and fast results
- increased recruitment efficiency
- creating a stronger organizational culture
- improving communication in organization
- sharing success within organization.

Coaching conversation:

- establishing one topic for the coaching session
- revealing potential
- action planning
- barrier removal

Skills required for coaching:

- active context listening
- using questions leading to revealing potential
- message and information
- awareness and celebration of progress.

9) <u>Outplacement:</u> Facilitating the transition of the employees leaving the organization, enabling them to find their own professional path. Outplacement provides support to employees and to employers for career decisions. Executive employees: accurate assessment for personal skills and support in identifying best option. Basic employees: CV drawing up, job database access, identifying and evaluating personal skills. Common element for all outplacement programmes: evaluation, where people consider abilities and the situation as a whole, along with opportunities. Consultants help managers close a business and reallocate resources effectively. Outplacement is required in case of major transitions leading to massive layoffs or when senior executives leave the organization (they need special help, considering their high demands).

10) <u>How to handle client relationship effectively:</u>

- Clients and employees should spend more time face to face (in many organizations, clients and employees do not spend much time face to face).
- Top management and clients spend more time together
- Poll performance among clients
- Implement a program able to maintain relationship with clients (talking to the most important clients)
- Talk to the clients who have ceased using your services
- Perform polls among new clients (when they use the services of your company, ask them why they did this)
- Perform a buyer survey
- Perform buyer satisfaction survey (in order to be more effective, develop a survey among the department of one organization in order to see what one dept believes about another one, so you can have an image about the type of services and image for clients).

11) <u>Employee concern:</u>

a) fear for job security: sale of non core assets and cutting other expenses; retrain employees or sell their services to other companies
b) distrust management: management breaks the vicious circle – listen to the employees and be honest with them
c) overwork: check employee qualification, streamline work procedures, perform staffing audit in order to get a clear perception
d) the pay is too low: eliminate inequities in the pay structure and conduct salary surveys so that decisions about pay are not made in a total vacuum.
e) Communication is poor: encourage employees on focusing on what they can do to improve the situation.
f) Not enough balance in life: give employees the opportunity for more flexible work schedules.
g) Feeling of unappreciation: supervisors should be trained on providing positive feedback to employees.