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HR
News

HR50 Group Tackles Tough Issues

A new peer-to-peer HR advisory group is now in full operation.

“They say it’s lonely at the top,” says Richard Smith, brainchild of the group. “For executives at this level, there are not many places they can turn when they want to say, ‘Here’s what I’m having trouble with’ And not only are the answers to those questions valuable, it’s also informative to hear what questions the other CHROs are asking.”

The Human Resource 50 was founded last year as a way for a select group of noncompetitive, top-level HR executives to privately share insights and collaborate on strategic issues.

Membership in the group is limited to 50 chief HR officers in noncompetitive sectors, and participation is by invitation

only. There is now a waiting list to join.

The group had its first summit last fall, in an off-the-record environment that attendees say allowed them to freely exchange ideas and experiences. Since then the group has met twice more in smaller gatherings and a full meeting will take place this month in New York.

One member, Ian Ziskin, corporate vice president and chief human resources and administrative officer of Los Angeles-based Northrop Grumman Corp., says the first group summit offered “discussion and interaction ... as opposed to speakers delivering information in a one-way mode.”

Another member, Sandy Ogg, chief human resource officer

for Unilever N.V., which has headquarters in London and Rotterdam, says HR50 has been worth his while. “I don’t have time for anything. So I don’t get involved in something like this if I don’t think it’s going to add value.”

Smith, author of *The 5 Patterns of Extraordinary Careers* and founder of Atlanta-based World 50 Inc., earlier launched a similar effort with the Marketing 50, a group of top marketing executives.

The companies in HR50 include American Express, Avon, Best Buy, BellSouth, Cisco, The Gap, Home Depot, Marriott, Merck, Pepsi, Sara Lee, Disney, Time Warner and Yahoo!. Each company contributes \$40,000 to help run the group.

—Christopher Cornell