

Evidence-Based Human Resource Management: Fundamental Ideas

*Jeffrey Pfeffer, Professor of Organizational Behavior,
Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, USA*



Abstract:

Many organizations implement management practices ranging from compensation systems to performance appraisals to training based on the past experience of senior leaders; casually benchmarking what other companies are doing; what vendors and consultants are pushing; what is in fashion; and ideology and belief - what people think is true. None of these, however, represent effective ways of making choices. Meanwhile, even though faced with turnover, employee disengagement and distrust, and the need to increase performance through people, leaders have ignored the vast amount of evidence that speaks to questions such as the effectiveness of different compensation systems including individual pay for performance and stock options, performance management systems that emphasize "stars", forced-curve performance rankings, and the effectiveness of downsizing and wage and benefit concessions. The fact that knowledge about "what works" and why is so infrequently implemented provides an opportunity for information arbitrage - achieving competitive advantage by implementing what others don't know or don't do. In this effort, Human Resources can and should play an important role. But in order to do so, HR needs to adopt an evidence-based management mind set. We will consider what evidence-based HR management is and how to implement it.

Speaker:

Jeffrey Pfeffer is the Thomas D. Dee II Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Graduate School of Business, Stanford University where he has taught since 1979. He is the author or co-author of thirteen books including *The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First*, *Managing with Power: Politics and Influence in Organizations*, *The Knowing-Doing Gap: How Smart Companies Turn Knowledge Into Action*, *Hidden Value: How Great Companies Achieve Extraordinary Results with Ordinary People*, *Hard Facts, Dangerous Half-Truths, and Total Nonsense: Profiting from Evidence-Based Management*, and *What Were They Thinking? Unconventional Wisdom About Management*, a collection of 27 essays about management topics, as well as more than 120 articles and book chapters. Pfeffer's latest book, tentatively entitled *Power Rules: An Organizational Survival Guide* will be published in early 2010 by HarperCollins.

Dr. Pfeffer received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Carnegie-Mellon University and his Ph.D. from Stanford. He began his career at the business school at the University of Illinois and then taught at the University of California, Berkeley. Pfeffer has been a visiting professor at the Harvard Business School, Singapore Management University, London Business School, and a frequent visitor at IESE in Barcelona.

From 2003-2007, Pfeffer wrote a monthly column, "The Human Factor," for the 600,000-person circulation business magazine, *Business 2.0*. Since 2007, he has written a monthly column providing career advice for *Capital*, a leading business and economics magazine in Turkey. Pfeffer has appeared in segments on *CBS Sunday Morning*, *60 Minutes*, and CNBC as well as television programs in Korea, and has been quoted and featured in news articles from countries around the globe.

Pfeffer currently serves on the board of directors of the for-profit company Audible Magic as well as nonprofits Quantum Leap Healthcare and The San Francisco Playhouse. In the past he has served on the boards of Resumix, Unicru, and Workstream, all human capital software companies, and SonoSite, a company designing and manufacturing portable ultrasound machines. Pfeffer has presented seminars in 34 countries throughout the world as well as doing consulting and providing executive education for numerous companies, associations, and universities in the United States.

Jeffrey Pfeffer has won the Richard I. Irwin Award presented by the Academy of Management for scholarly contributions to management and numerous awards for articles and books.