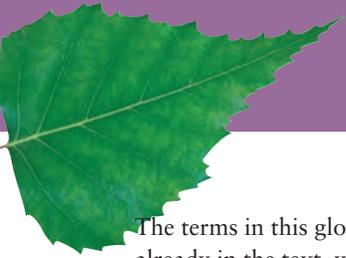The terms in this glossary have been taken selectively from the text. Rather than repeating definitions that are already in the text, we have selected those terms which are neologisms that may not appear in a dictionary, or are invented words, such as outsourcing, which do not yet appear in a dictionary. We also include terms, such as bureaucracy, which require more interpretation than we have provided in the text.

Emboldened words have their own entry in the glossary.

Aims. *See* **Mission**.

Benchmarking. Originally a benchmark was a mark on a work bench that could be used to measure off a standard size. This idea of comparative measurement is used in HRM to describe the process of checking some aspect of work in one's own business against an external standard, such as the average number of days lost through absence across the working population as a whole, or in a particular industry, by age, occupation, gender and so forth. It is slightly different from 'yardstick', which is literally a measuring stick a yard long (i.e. just under one metre). This is sometimes used as a rough and ready measure for some aspect of management effectiveness, but it lacks the dimension of external comparison.

Best fit/Fit. In many fields of human endeavour there is an aim to find and implement the one best way, or the right way of doing things. An alternative is to work out the best way of doing things in this or that situation. There is no single approach or method that is always right.

Bottom line. A term derived from accountancy, where it is the final total in a profit and loss statement or other financial document. In management generally it is used as the ultimate criterion or most important factor: financial viability.

Brand. A term taken from marketing to describe a company or product name that is very distinctive and powerful. Examples are Coca-Cola, Microsoft, Rolls Royce or Virgin. It was illustrated by the retail director of a fashion chain who said, 'If I buy a ready meal from X and I don't like it, I take it back. If I buy it from Marks & Spencer, either I haven't followed the instructions or there is something wrong with my cooker.' To HR people the company brand can be very important in matters of **commitment** and **recruitment.**

Bureaucracy has become almost a term of abuse, describing rigidity, lack of responsiveness by staff, lack of willingness to take responsibility and too much emphasis on the rules. It is, however, a time-honoured method of making any large organisation work. In current business usage it describes a type of centralised social order that makes things happen by having guidelines of policy, procedure and precedent to empower role holders to do their jobs, conferring appropriate authority for action as well as limiting the scope for individual whim or prejudice. It is therefore both more acceptable and more practical as a method of organisation for any large undertaking than relying on the autocratic alternative of everything being decided by a small number of people at the centre, while everyone else waits and grumbles. Human resource managers are occasionally derided by some of their colleagues in other functions for their apparent preoccupation with the 'rules' of procedure and employment law. These colleagues are, of course, wrong, but bureaucracy has a serious inherent

flaw in that it always grows, requiring frequent pruning and review.

Career. The whole issue of careers is explored in Chapter 19, but the idea of a career involving moving from job to job is relatively recent. For most people a career was an occupation, such as nursing or teaching or carpentry or bricklaying. It was only in **bureaucracies** that people looked for a promotional ladder. In most of the long-standing professions a career was a lifetime of doing the same job, although perhaps introducing a change of emphasis. A clergyman was a clergyman, even though a few might become deans or bishops. A writer was a writer, although there might be a move from writing poetry to writing novels. An architect is an architect, a dentist is a dentist, a driver is a driver. In some areas the idea of moving 'up' has been created artificially by inventing new pay grades and titles. Until the 1970s British nursing had three levels of nurse, sister and matron. In order to provide a career structure, new jobs were introduced, nursing officer, senior nursing officer and principal nursing officer. The flattening of hierarchies is changing the emphasis.

Casual work is where someone is employed on a temporary and probably irregular basis without any obligation of either party to further employment when a spell is complete.

Change/Initiatives. These are often regarded as invariably desirable, particularly by consultants trying to sell you something. Although constantly advocated in HRM,

change has to be balanced against other issues such as stability and security. Furthermore, few changes in HR practice can be made quickly and easily. The ideas are usually easy or obvious. Getting them accepted and making them work requires a great deal of hard work, which means that changes have to be worth the trouble and not just some transitory idea that will have been overtaken by something else in six months' time. 'Initiative fatigue' is a term used to describe the experience of some people who have scarcely got used to one new initiative before another is imposed that contradicts the first.

Clocking on (**or in**) is a term still in common usage, although the practice is not now widespread. In the heyday of large-scale production businesses, manual employees registered their arrival for work by operating an automatic time recording machine, usually by punching a hole in a personal card. Sometimes they clocked out as well as on. This gave a reliable record of hours worked and enabled pay calculations to be made. Although initially seen as a way to be fair, it eventually became a symbol of close, overbearing control – 'The tyranny of clocking on'. It has become less common although variants are used by, for example, security staff who clock their arrival at various parts of the premises at regular times during the night, or by managers of motorway service stations to demonstrate that they have recently checked the cleanliness of the toilets. A refinement and extension of clocking is the tachograph in road haulage vehicles.

Coach/Mentor/Protégé. A coach is someone who gives specialised training and guidance as well as general support and encouragement. This may be to an individual, for example a tennis player, or to a team, as in cricket. A mentor gives the same sort of service to an individual in what is often a very close personal relationship, requiring from the protégé a high degree of trust in the integrity and goodwill of the mentor. A protégé is someone who is guided by a mentor, acknowledging a need for that person's greater standing and expertise. Tiger Woods is the world's most successful golfer, but still needs a coach: he is not the coach's protégé. One of the most ghastly and needless bits of management jargon is the word 'mentee', presumably invented by someone who could not cope with three syllables, as an alternative to protégé.

Commitment is widely used in current HR practice to describe the quality of being dedicated to the cause, and various methods are used (*see* Chapter 10, for example) to develop this quality among the members of the workforce in their dedication to the cause of company success. Some may be committed to a career or to employment security that is associated with the success of the business, while others are committed to the success of their **career,** perhaps at the expense of the business, and others have no commitment at all. In these circumstances the value of the **brand** may be important.

Competitive advantage. Any business has to be competitive, no matter how much many of its

members may not like the idea. A school has to be seen by parents to be at least as good as other schools, otherwise parents will remove their children and the pupils will not have self-respect. Commercial organisations seek competitive advantage for more immediate reasons of survival, but schools, hospitals, charities and churches will all decline and may close if they do not meet the current needs and expectations of their 'clients', although they will quite rightly cavil at the terms 'customers' or 'clients'.

Consideration. *See* **Contract.**

Contingency is a word much used in sociology and organisation theory. Apart from its normal usage to describe a possible future event that cannot be predicted with certainty, in management it is used to differentiate from the absolute. Solutions to problems are seldom invariably right: it depends on the particular circumstances of the event.

Contract/Consideration. In this book the material about contracts is mainly about legal agreements, although there is also reference to psychological contracts. The fundamental principle of a legal contract is that there must be consideration. A contract is a spoken or written agreement that is intended to be enforceable at law, but the offer of agreement by one party only becomes legally enforceable when there is consideration from the other party, that is, an undertaking of some sort, to do something or to stop doing something or to abandon a claim. An offer of employment, for instance, is not legally binding on the employer

making the offer until and unless the prospective employee accepts the offer and agrees to provide the work (consideration) that the employer is offering. This same sense of reciprocity is equally fundamental to the psychological contract: there must be an agreed exchange. Contracting out (from a pension scheme, for instance) involves withdrawing from an agreement and thereby relinquishing the benefits that would otherwise have been received.

Culture/Organisational culture. In management circles interest in culture is an attempt to grasp the realities of collective life in a department or organisation that cannot be easily seen and described by means of such identifiers as job titles, departments and organisation charts. It is an aspect of the **hard/ soft** distinction. Recently culture has been especially important in explaining the differences in management practice in various countries, but organisational culture refers to the beliefs, conventions and general patterns of behaviour that characterise a particular organisation.

Delayering is a method of **downsizing** that reduces the number of people in a **hierarchy** by removing a tier in the organisational structure.

Demographics describes statistical data relating to the age and gender structure of the population. This is an important element of the labour market.

Diversity is subtly different from equality and refers principally to the value to management of making the most of employees from two distinct groups, women

and those from ethnic minorities, rather than assuming that core employees are white and male. Theoretically diversity could also apply to people who are older than average, but thus far that aspect of diversity has received little attention.

Downsizing describes an approach to increasing organisational efficiency by reducing the number of people employed in the business and therefore reducing the costs associated with their employment. The main methods are **delayering** and **outplacement/outsourcing.**

Employee relations/Industrial relations are not simply different terms for the same activities; they denote a significant change of emphasis. Concern with industrial relations developed when the emphasis was on collective relationships within an industry, such as engineering, agriculture or teaching. Each business within the ambit of that industry observed the terms and conditions agreed between employers' representatives and unions, which bound every employer. Employee relations have little regard for industry criteria and focus on collective arrangements within an individual business.

Environment. We typically think nowadays of elements of the physical environment in which we live: pollution, greenhouse gases, GM crops, vulnerable species and so forth. In HRM it is more likely to refer to the social, political and legal environment of the business.

Fit. *See* **Best fit.**

Flexibility is something managers try hard to achieve and trade unions and the legal system try

to limit. The flexible workforce makes managerial life easier by giving more scope to managers to manipulate the labour supply, as do flexible hours arrangements. Flexibility agreements with unions reduce rigidity in work practices. All these practices reduce the problems of **bureaucracy** but the advantages for employees may be more mixed. Flexible hours are probably the most attractive, but there are always disadvantages for employees with flexibility initiatives that at least slightly erode their personal security.

Gender. *See* **Sex**.

Hard/Soft. Hard data are precise and can be accurately measured by numbers and statistical calculation. Soft data are less precise but may be more important in planning. They include judgement, assessment and informed guesswork.

Hierarchy is the system of organisation which ranks all the people according to their status or authority. This is used for all manner of purposes, ranging from the trivial, such as who has the biggest office and who is allowed to travel first class, to the identification of who is empowered to do what, as the hierarchical system includes titles or labels to make sense of the jobs that people do. In Britain the growth of hierarchy received a boost when an early management theorist, E.F.L. Brech, advanced his theory of the span of control, saying that no manager should supervise directly the work of four or five subordinates, *whose work interlocks*. Many people accepted the theory but conveniently forgot the last three words.

Human capital. Economists, rather reluctantly, conceded that any economic analysis of an organisation or an economy needed to include the concept of a value or cost assigned to skills, knowledge or experience of the population. It has proved a more acceptable and useful concept than the sterile accountancy technique of human asset accounting. Its main value to HR practitioners is the idea that human capital requires investment.

Human Relations School, The. A school of thought that developed in the 1930s as a reaction against the perceived mechanical thinking of **Scientific Management**. It aimed to develop high productivity by concentrating on the well-being of the individual worker and the surrounding social relationships in the workplace, with an emphasis on adapting the task to the worker rather than adapting the worker to the task.

Industrial relations. *See* **Employee relations**.

Initiatives. *See* **Change**.

Labour market. *See* **Marketplace**.

Marketplace/Labour market. The importance of both these concepts (taken from economics) in HRM is to emphasise that people management can never be entirely inward in focus. The business has to operate in a context in which there is a market for its products or service, and the business has to survive in that market no matter how inconvenient it may be for the people inside the business. Equally there is an external market for labour and skills, which cannot be ignored. Even employees totally

loyal to the business will be aware of prevailing conditions elsewhere, not only how much people are paid but also conditions of work, hours and fringe benefits.

Matrix is a term that has recently come into popular currency because of film and television programmes using it in a very specialised way. In management it has long been used to describe a particular form of organisation in which levels of specialisation, accountability and responsibility are set out in vertical columns crossed by horizontal lines, with points of intersection identifying individual people who have a line of communication in one direction (line management) as well as a distinct accountability to someone else. An office manager, for instance, might be responsible for most things to the immediate superior, but accountable to the HR manager for health and safety issues. 'The line' is often mentioned in this book and refers to the vertical line of accountability.

Mentor. *See* **Coach**.

Meta-analysis. Meta is a scientific term indicating a change in condition, such as metamorphosis. In social sciences it denotes something beyond, of a higher order kind.

Mission/Aims/Objectives/Targets. These are all terms used quite loosely in management jargon and are in a rough hierarchy from the broad to the specific. Mission comes from religion and is used in a business to describe what the organisation is for, what its purpose is. It is fashionably set in a mission statement and is

typically vague and general, but can be useful in developing **commitment**. Aims and objectives describe the more specific purposes of individual functions, departments, teams or individuals within the mission framework. Targets are very specific and usually short term as stages on the way for teams and individuals to achieve longer-term objectives.

Objectives. *See* **Mission**.

Occupational health. Many businesses describe their medical departments as 'Occupational Health', regardless of the skills possessed by the people who work in them, but it is worth bearing in mind that occupational medicine is a defined specialism, not general practice in an occupational setting. Both doctors and nurses can acquire qualifications in occupational medicine, but they are most likely to be needed in a business with specific hazards, such as radiation or toxic materials.

Organisational culture. *See* **Culture**.

Outplacement/Outsourcing. There is a small difference between these two terms. Outplacement describes taking a complete activity and shifting it to a supplier, while outsourcing describes looking outside the business for human resources.

Peers is an equivocal term in Britain because it has two meanings. One is to describe members of the aristocracy: earls, baronets, dukes, marquesses and viscounts. In this book, and in more general usage, it describes people of the same age, status, ability or qualification as oneself.

A peer group is therefore a group of one's equals, not one's superiors.

Performance. Everyone wants effective performance. The individual wants the satisfaction of achievement and results, managers want individuals to be effectively coordinated and productive, customers want a good product and good service at the right price, governments want efficient businesses in a growing economy. Achieving performance is complicated. It is not simply paying people lots of money, although not paying people enough money may well inhibit performance. It is not simply being nice to people and releasing them from supervision, as they may then do the wrong things. Achieving effective performance also varies according to the work done. A symphony orchestra requires members with great expertise playing different instruments, yet all must work to an identical score under the strict leadership of the conductor, with very little scope for individual flair. The jazz quartet is more loosely coordinated with many individual riffs. Those working for a courier firm or in the operating theatre of a hospital can only perform well by following a tight schedule arranged by someone else. Those working in an advertising agency have a much looser rein in order to encourage their creativity.

Portfolio is a collection of items that represent a person's work. Very familiar for people whose work can best be demonstrated by examples, such as painters or cartoonists, it is also now much used by all classes of worker to demonstrate their skills and

accomplishments, thereby justifying a qualification to practise.

Pluralist. *See* **Unitarist**.

Proactive. *See* **Reactive**.

Protégé. *See* **Coach**.

Reactive/Proactive. This distinction is important in HRM because there is a natural emphasis in people matters to await developments and deal with them (reactive). Many HR people report that they spend much of their time putting right problems created by the impetuosity or thoughtlessness of their colleagues in other functions. There is also a need, however, to create opportunities for growth and change and to think ahead of issues so that problems can be averted. A well-rounded HR/personnel function is able to maintain a balance between both types of approach, vigorously and calmly sorting out problems or disasters but also taking matters forward in a creative way when the problems are all under control.

Recruitment/Selection. Recruitment is the process whereby a business seeks applicants either generally or for particular vacancies. Potential applicants are interested but there is no mutual obligation. Selection is the process whereby not only does the employer choose between two or more interested applicants, but applicants also select, deciding how much further they wish to pursue their original enquiry. The end of the process is a legally binding agreement.

Resourcing. This term has only recently come into common usage

and means simply providing the needed resources. For HR people this is providing the human resources that are needed, although some pedantic academics (such as at least one of your authors) dislike the term 'employee resourcing' as it is the employing organisation that is being provided with resources; not the employees. Also employees are not the only source of human resources for the business. Consultants or subcontractors are alternative sources.

Ritual is a series of actions or a type of behaviour invariably followed in accordance with a convention. Developed originally to help people feel secure in the mysteries of religious practices, they are widespread in present-day society (the ritual of going to the pub on Friday after work, the ritual of the pre-match huddle, the ritual of Prime Minister's Question Time). All provide the benefit of enabling people to feel comfortable and accepted in a social situation, and are therefore important in many employment situations where there is a felt need to conform to existing conventions. The selection interview is the most obvious. Others examples are the 'leaving do', collections before a marriage, negotiations, and the office party.

Scenario. A method of envisaging the future is to bring together various bits of evidence, both hard and soft, and fit them together in a way that describes a reliable version of the future in X years' time.

Scientific Management. The first modern theory of management, formulated by F.W. Taylor and using the principles of industrial engineering to raise productivity by adapting the worker to the machine or the process. It relied heavily on adjusting the worker's earnings to the level of individual output. The basic ideas remain in place and are at the root of many payment systems, but most management academics and commentators throughout the last three-quarters of the twentieth century disparaged and deplored the 'mechanistic and inhuman' practices spawned by scientific management. (*See also* **Human Relations School** for a reaction to this.)

Selection. *See* **Recruitment**.

Sex/Gender. The word sex is pretty clear in its meaning as describing either a range of interesting activities, or to describe the biological distinction between male and female. Until recently gender was a grammatical term to distinguish between classes of noun or pronoun in some languages, loosely based on natural distinctions of sex: masculine, feminine or neuter. It is now also used to refer to social and cultural differences between the sexes.

Statutory rights. Rights of the individual citizen or citizens that derive explicitly from a statute or Act of Parliament.

Stress presents managers with two problems. An employee may be absent from work suffering from stress, but this is a condition that is easy to fake and not easy to diagnose. How does a manager detect malingering and take appropriate action? More significantly a manager may exacerbate or cause stress in someone. How can this be avoided and what remedies are available to employees? A further complication is that stress is not necessarily undesirable. Any football fan will suffer periods of intense stress when the wrong team is winning a match, but this only makes sweeter the euphoria when the right team wins. Stress can be stimulating as well as harmful and some jobs are best done and most enjoyed where there is frequent stress followed by achievement (two examples being journalists, who have to meet tight deadlines, and surgeons, who have to deal with crises).

Targets. *See* **Mission**.

Tells. 'I love you' is a statement by one person to another that is normally accompanied by certain actions and behaviours that demonstrate to the recipient how sincere the feeling is. Sometimes, however, we say things that we do not believe, or of which we are unsure. Then the listener may try to guess what we really mean, not just what the words say. We give clues to our uncertainty or our truthfulness by what we do, especially what we cannot help doing. These are tells. Blushing shows we are embarrassed, many people put their hands to their mouths when they feel guilty. HR managers need to learn what tells to look for in situations such as selection, where not all candidates are strictly accurate in what they say, or in appraisal, where people may be very guarded in what they say.

Tribunal here refers almost only to the three-person panel that makes up the Employment Tribunal deciding matters of

employment law, although it can be any sort of body used to settle disputes. Not always made up of three people, it is normal to have an odd number to avoid deadlock.

Unitarist/Pluralist. For HRM these terms come from industrial relations analysis. A unitarist thinker believes that all authority and all responsibility is centred in one place or person, so that senior management can, and must, decide on all key issues, while other people involved simply have to accept the consequences. The pluralist says that is both unacceptable and impractical. Employees have a legitimate interest in the business that cannot be disregarded and the local community is another important stakeholder.