



## Rod Jones

FAHRI

Advanced skills lecturer  
in human resource  
management

West Coast TAFE

### Education

I first completed a Bachelor of Business in Management Studies with Distinction at Curtin University, and some years later I did a Masters of Education in HR Studies by correspondence through the University of South Australia. The focus of my thesis was on HR development and the role of performance management systems.

### First job

I started out working as a clerk in the accounts department at the then Western Australian Institute of Technology. My lasting memories of that job involve endless photocopying for the chief accountant; running to and from the photocopier.

From there, I spent 10 years working in educational administration before taking a lecturing role at the then

Riverina CAE, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. I then taught at TAFEs in Queensland for five years, returning home to Western Australia 20 years ago to take up a regional HR role with the Department for Community Services. I subsequently took up a very challenging but rewarding HR position with the Health Department of WA.

### Why HR

It sounds a bit corny but whether in a management or lecturing role, I've always had a genuine interest and commitment to helping others develop their skills and careers. Doing this well has always provided me with a real sense of job satisfaction.

My early lecturing roles really sparked my passion for HR. I then decided to gain experience working in the HR field. From there, most of my more recent career has been in managing training delivery in WA's TAFE system, including four years in the Pilbara region, based in Port Hedland, and more recently at West Coast TAFE's Joondalup campus in Perth.

**"I think there's never been a better time to [come into the HR field]. There are so many HR roles these days; there's so much variety."**

### Current duties

I was given the opportunity to take up my current role last July and I grabbed it with both hands because I'd been involved with managing training delivery for seven years and I was keen to return to 'hands on' education and training. Since taking the role, I've been involved with developing new HR courses for the college to deliver and I really take pleasure in being able to promote the terrific opportunities HR offers students.

In many ways I'm very envious of people coming into the HR field now because I think there's never been a better time to do it. There are so many HR roles these days; there's so much variety. I look at the papers every weekend and, in WA in particular, there are usually quite a number of positions available from entry to executive levels, which wasn't the case 15–20 years ago.

### Challenges

I think there is sometimes a sense of frustration that not enough progress is being made in organisations. Many organisations still have unhealthy work cultures—usually involving an 'us and them' (management versus staff) mentality. Moving beyond this is a real challenge for some organisations. However, in recent years my contact with organisations and students has led me to conclude that there are a lot of reasons to be optimistic about the take-up of productive people management processes.

### Lessons

I've learnt that there are benefits in sticking to your values and beliefs and acting in ways that are consistent with them, even if there are difficulties or costs to bear. If you find yourself in an ethical dilemma it's important to hold your ground and present your arguments as persuasively as you can. I believe I've been consistent in that regard.

### Professional development

Most of my professional development over the last 10 years or so has been related to researching and writing HR management texts used in TAFE colleges across Australia. I've had eight books published and I have another under way for release later this year. This requires me to stay up-to-date with HR developments.

My lecturing role has allowed me to participate more actively in AHRI professional development, including last year's National Conference, from which I gained a tremendous amount of value. I plan to get involved in at least one SIG in the near future.

### 10-year plan

My future plan is relatively simple really—I want to continue developing teaching and learning resources for HRM; to be involved in HRM education and training in some way, and to continue fighting against the onset of dementia. The useful thing is, these are hopefully related—so one should help with the other.

Rod Jones spoke with Bridgett Cull.