

# **Christian Scholz (1952–2019) Professor of Human Resource Management and Founding Editor of the *German Journal of Human Resource Management***

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With Christian Scholz's sudden, unexpected and cruelly early death in October 2019, the scientific human resource management (HRM) community, which he decisively influenced in German-speaking countries and beyond, has lost a courageous visionary, a creative pioneer, an open-minded thinker, and a committed protagonist of a strategic and professional HRM. Many of those who have been fortunate enough to work with him have lost an inspiring and challenging academic colleague and companion.

His retirement in September 2018 marked the end of an extremely active professional life at the University of Saarland in Saarbrücken, Germany, where Christian Scholz – after completing his doctorate and habilitation at the University of Regensburg, Germany – held the chair for organization, HRM, and information management from 1986 onwards.

A broad range of research is associated with his name: among others, his system-theoretical dissertation '*Betriebskybernetische Hierarchiemethodik*' [Cybernetic methodology on hierarchies for companies], his habilitation '*Strategisches Management – ein integrativer Ansatz*' [Integrative strategic management] as a holistic approach to strategic corporate leadership, or the German standard reference on HRM '*Personalmanagement*' [Human Resource Management], published in six editions. In 1987, Christian Scholz was one of the founding editors of the *German Journal of Human Resource Management*.

His multi-perspective organizational approach 'Strategic Organization', his innovative framework 'Darwiportunism' for decoding leadership dynamics, the 'virt.cube' for analysing organizational virtualization, the 'Saarbrücken Formula' for human capital evaluation, and 'HCR10' as a standard setting for human capital reporting, the 'Five Seconds Model' for creating high-performance teams, the 'Competitive Acceptance Framework' in international management, and his field-opening analyses on the 'Generation Z', to select only a few, met with a wide response and led to some thought-provoking discussions. In his areas of research, covering HRM, international management, organizational studies, and media management, Christian Scholz was persuasive in the clarity of his arguments and in his plain speaking at many national and international scientific conferences. Many colleagues contributed to his commemorative publication '*Aufbruch des strategischen Personalmanagements in die Dynamisierung. Ein Gedanke für Christian Scholz*' [The departure of strategic HRM towards dynamization. A thought for Christian Scholz] to mark his 60th birthday.

Anyone who reads his entertaining ‘travel guide with tips for students, politicians and other normal people’ entitled ‘*Per Anhalter durch die Arbeitswelt*’ [The hitchhiker’s guide to the world of work] will find out the small and large logics and illogicalities of corporate management and HRM that lie dormant under the surface and await detection. It was not far from there to the transfer of theory into practice: Christian Scholz did not only contribute to discussions in professional associations and companies and put his knowledge at the service of business and society, he also initiated and organized for many years the non-commercial ‘BestPersAward’ competition in order to award small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for best-of-class HRM.

He saw himself primarily as an enthusiastic scientist and teacher for his students and his academic staff. As a critical mind, Christian Scholz always wanted to shake up things when he spotted undesirable developments. While the book ‘*Die Schizo-Wirtschaft*’ [The schizophrenic economy] is a call for radical rethinking self-destructive economic system characteristics, the book ‘*Mogelpackung Work-Life-Blending*’ [Deception package work life blending] warns against a too euphoric and uncritical welcome of the working models of the future that could, in the long run, work out at the expense of employees. ‘*Das Bologna-Schwarzbuch*’ [Black book Bologna] criticized right from its beginning the German implementation of the Bologna process, seeing many of his early predictions having unfortunately come true, at the expense of the affected student generations.

If looking for an all-encompassing core attribute for Christian Scholz, one could say he spanned boundaries. In his thinking and work, he had the great talent to combine disciplines, countries and cultures, science and practice, rigour and relevance. Family, friends, students and colleagues: we all had a wonderful time with Christian Scholz and we greatly miss him.

### Notable works

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