

FOR HR LEADERS

HR Trends Report 2024

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11 HR trends for 2024

1. Resolving the productivity paradox

While we feel busier than ever, productivity has stagnated. HR can use trusted HR tools and new tech to empower employees and get productivity back on track.

2. Tapping into the hidden workforce

The continued scarcity of crucial skills exerts extreme pressure on talent acquisition departments. HR can help organizations tap into a massive talent pool by driving changes to make work more accessible and accommodating for the hidden workforce.

3. The point of no return for DEIB

With growing discontent around DEIB, in 2024 we will see a move towards systemic DEIB from companies that want to live up to their promise, and public scrutiny for those who don't.

4. HR driving climate change adaptation

Climate change is becoming a threat to employee wellbeing and business continuity. HR will need to drive compliance and adaptation for the good of employees, the business, and society at large.

5. From silos to solutions

As organizations evolve to become more adaptable, so will HR. This means shifting to solution-focused multidisciplinary teams and rethinking what we consider fundamental HR skills.

6. HR leans in

The HR function continues to struggle with misconceptions about its value. By recognizing its own strategic value and giving the function the same support it offers other departments, HR will be able to change perceptions, empower its practitioners, and drive even more value for the business.

7. HR meets PR

As HR's work comes under increased public scrutiny, practitioners will need to take a page from Marketing and PR's book to not just drive value, but avoid doing damage.

8. AI-empowered workforce

Generative AI can help boost worker productivity and output quality, but not without risks. HR has a key role to play in empowering the workforce to make smart, innovative, and safe use of AI.

9. Shifting work-life balance to work-life fit

Employee needs are changing and diversifying. HR can help organizations adapt so that they can offer the freedom, flexibility, and fairness employees need to flourish at work.

10. The end of BS jobs

Technological advancements mean that millions of jobs will be lost, and millions of new ones created. This offers HR the opportunity to tackle flagging productivity and the lack of meaning in many jobs.

11. From talent acquisition to talent access

In the new era of talent management, it's less about acquiring the talent to fill gaps and more about creating access to existing talent by identifying, unlocking, and nurturing the potential from within.

INTRODUCTION

Elevating work

In the world of work, change is desperately needed.

Organizations face a labor shortage while millions of workers are unnecessarily sidelined. Productivity stagnates despite the democratization of powerful new technology. And as workers reexamine their relationship with work, it's clear that traditional career structures have reached their limit.

Work is at a crossroads. And HR can provide the breakthrough needed to get it back on track.

We think three major themes are going to dominate HR in 2024.

HR will realign priorities. External factors are driving a major transformation in HR, putting traditional HR frameworks and priorities under scrutiny.

HR operating models will change. To meet changing business needs, HR will change not just the way it operates, but the way it sees itself.

HR will act as a force for good. In 2024, HR has a unique opportunity to drive business results through better employee practices.

Change is never easy. But if HR has the courage to step up during the impending transformation of work, everyone stands to benefit.












Erik van Vulpen
Founder of AIHR



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Trend 1

Resolving the productivity paradox

Organizations continue to invest in employee engagement, experience, and wellbeing interventions. Technological advancements let us automate tasks and augment decision-making. And while we feel busier than ever, productivity has stagnated. It's time for HR to step in.

A global issue

2024 finds us at a crossroads. On the one hand we have historically low unemployment and the highest job satisfaction in 36 years. But companies are still struggling with a systemic lack of technical skills in the workforce, and stagnant productivity.

This problem is hitting both companies and countries. [Australia's productivity grew by just 1.1%](#) between 2010 and 2020, and we are seeing similar trends around the world, such as in the [GCC economies](#) and [Britain](#).

Effect on workers

This isn't just bad for business. Poor organizational performance directly affects employees too, causing insecure employment and lower wages.

[OECD data](#) shows that office worker productivity has flatlined since 2008. This is a problem that HR should own and overcome in the name of employee wellbeing.

What this means for HR

Holistic and analytic approach

Fifteen years of productivity stagnation cannot be solved with a single intervention. Instead, HR needs to take a holistic view of productivity and focus on removing bottlenecks, developing strategies to improve performance, and incentivizing productive behaviors.

Data analysis will be essential in identifying levers to boost productivity. This can be done with a large-scale analysis that forms the basis of a restructuring of the workday, as Microsoft did. But smaller projects can also be effective, such as Shopify's viral [Meeting Cost Calculator](#).

Microsoft's triple peak day

After the sudden shift to remote work in 2020, Microsoft saw a new trend emerge among its employees.

[Data](#) showed Microsoft that in about 30% of its workforce productivity went up the most between 6 and 8 p.m. To make the most of this peak, the organization offered more support for after-hours work for employees who wanted it.

What this means for HR



Efficiency through GAI

It is impossible to write about productivity in 2024 without mentioning Generative Artificial Intelligence, or GAI. Using ChatGPT in business writing tasks increases productivity by 37% and quality by 20%. A Fortune 500 company slashed onboarding time for customer support agents from 10 months to just 2, while also increasing work quality by 30%.

While GAI is not the solution to every business problem, these cases demonstrate the productivity increases it enables when used correctly. It is not an understatement to say it can revolutionize the way we work.

Proactive workforce planning

There is another potential solution to the productivity paradox that sits closer to home.

Some of the biggest bottlenecks in productivity stem from talent supply issues. Skills shortages are estimated to cost employers up to \$8.5 trillion by 2030.

HR can help tackle this costly issue with proactive workforce planning and tapping into new talent pools to create desperately needed talent pipelines.

Key takeaway

Solving the productivity paradox is one of the most impactful things HR can do for the workforce. In order to achieve this, they can use an array of trusted HR tools and new technologies to empower employees and get productivity back on track.

Trend 2

Tapping into the hidden workforce

Historically low unemployment rates and the continued scarcity of crucial skills continue to exert pressure on talent acquisition departments, with no end in sight. This will push HR to rethink their approach to recruitment and tap into the potential of the hidden workforce.

Missing out on talent

The hidden workforce, also known as the forgotten workforce, includes retirees who want to work, caregivers, neurodiverse people, people with long-term health problems (including long Covid), ex-inmates, and people without degrees.

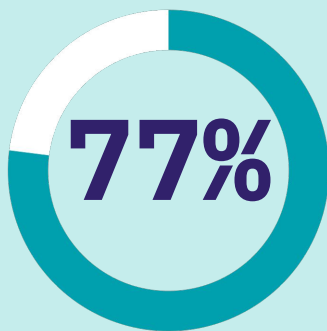
In total, the hidden workforce is estimated to make up between 14-17% of the total U.S. workforce. Which begs the question: why is so much talent being ignored during an ongoing labor shortage?

First-mover advantage

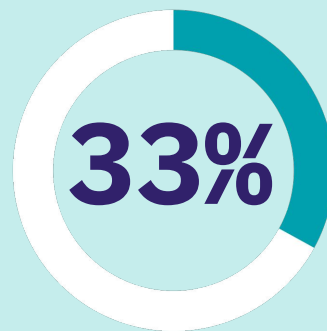
Some of the hidden workforce already work (often as hourly employees) but want to work more, while others want to work but have not found the right conditions to do so.

The conditions can be fixed. And companies that do will have a first-mover advantage: while 77% of employers report difficulty in filling roles – a 17-year high – only 33% of organizations are looking at new talent pools.

The key to overcoming the labor shortage?



of employers
report difficulty
filling roles



of organizations
are looking at
new talent pools

What this means for HR

Increasing access

The first step to tapping into the hidden workforce as a talent pool is actively seeking out these forgotten workers in talent acquisition practices. This could include writing more inclusive job descriptions, using skills-based hiring, and offering training and reskilling programs.

The key here is to critically evaluate your current talent acquisition practices to identify and address unnecessarily exclusionary criteria.

Offering accommodations

Organizations can keep the hidden workforce on board, engaged, and productive with the right employment practices.

This could take many shapes, from a less stringent retirement age for older workers who aren't ready to throw in the towel, to more flexible working arrangements for caregivers. But one crucial aspect will apply to all organizations seeking to tap into this overlooked talent pool: HR needs to promote a culture that understands and appreciates the value of a diverse workforce.

A necessary evolution

While we have included it in this report, we want to reiterate that the recognition and integration of the hidden workforce is not just a trend: it is a necessary evolution in the world of work. Organizations that remove obstacles to work for this vast talent pool will be better able to address critical staffing needs, while also paving the way for a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable corporate landscape for the future. That makes this a great example of systemic DEIB.

Key takeaway

Despite the ongoing labor shortage, organizations have long overlooked the hidden workforce. HR can help organizations tap into this massive talent pool by driving changes to make work more accessible and accommodating.

Trend 3

The point of no return for DEIB

With the Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action, discontent around DEIB, and diversity leaders not being sufficiently supported, corporate DEIB has come to a turning point. The stakes and visibility have never been higher, and HR needs to act.

Pressure on DEIB

Three major shifts have brought DEIB to the brink.

First there is the Supreme Court ruling striking down affirmative action in college admissions – and attorney generals then reaching out to Fortune 100 CEOs to confirm that this ruling also applies to private companies.

Then there is the growing discontent with DEIB within organizations, which may well be a factor in DEIB roles being hit disproportionately hard by the recent layoffs.

This brings us to the third pressure point: the struggles faced by diversity officers. We see that leaders in DEIB struggle to find a sense of belonging themselves, or fail to see the impact of their work.

Organizations under scrutiny

Public debate surrounding diversity is also reshaping the field.

Companies run the risk of being called out in the public domain and boycotted by sections of their audience regardless of whether they take an outspoken stance or remain quiet on the topic of DEIB.

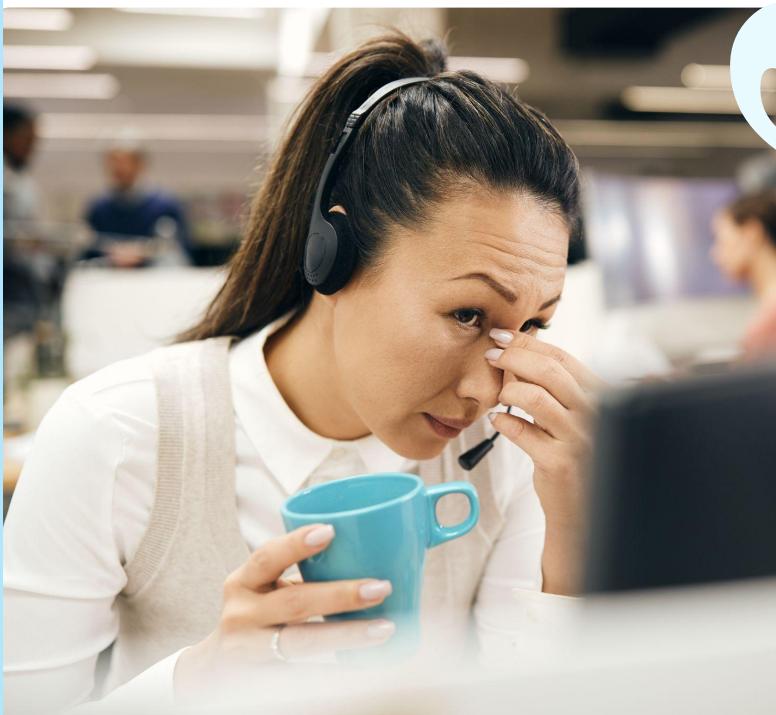
But it has become clear that when it comes to showing support for DEIB, speaking out is not enough for today's consumers, who are not satisfied with lip service.

Ticking boxes with interventions that don't resonate throughout the organization will not serve organizations in 2024 onwards. That's why we expect HR to take a different approach.

These paths are often **lonely, uphill battles**. Leaders in these positions need the **support, love and advocacy** while they are in the roles, not only when **their departures make headlines**.

Jeanell English

former VP of Impact & Diversity at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences



What this means for HR

Systemic DEIB

We propose systemic DEIB as a viable alternative.

This approach leaves behind high-visibility actions in favor of bringing DEIB back to its three core elements: HR voice, equitable practices, and targeted action.

HR voice

In systemic DEIB, the HR voice describes the organizational vision on what an equitable and inclusive workplace looks like.

Crucially, it also provides proof points that this vision is or will soon be part of the organizational identity. These proof points should hold up under scrutiny from employees, customers, and the wider public.

In order to make this happen, most HR departments will need to collaborate closely with Marketing to create an authentic way to speak about DEIB within and beyond the organization. Otherwise, companies will still run the risk of being dismissed as doing it for the optics.

Key takeaway

In 2024, we will see a stark divide between companies who live their DEIB promise, and those that are just going through the motions.

Equitable practices

With a clear vision in place, HR will be able to identify the organizational systems needed to make the vision a reality.

The goal of these practices is to democratize opportunities within the workforce — in other words, eliminating obstacles to growth and development that disproportionately affect different employee segments.

For example, organizations could conduct an analysis to see which prerequisites are valid to screen for during the talent acquisition process.

Targeted action

Finally, targeted action is about bridging the gap between the organization's current systems and the equitable practices needed to realize the vision.

This could look like taking a skills-based approach to recruitment instead of focusing on degrees, and exploring alternative talent pools. Here again, data can grant insight into where talent is sourced from and help HR evaluate whether these talent pools are unbiased towards specific socioeconomic backgrounds, industry experiences, or schools.

We believe that DEIB will remain an important drive for business growth. But moving forward, companies need to ensure that their DEIB efforts align with the company's purpose, values, and culture to enact real change and avoid backlash.

Trend 4

HR driving climate change adaptation

With [July 2023 being the hottest month on record](#), and [El Niño expected to make 2024 the world's hottest year](#), climate change is rapidly becoming a threat to business continuity. It's up to HR to ensure organizations and employees are prepared.

From mitigation to adaptation

For many organizations, sustainability has primarily been an issue of (employer) branding — or not an issue at all. But in the face of changing legislation and increasingly disruptive weather, that is set to change.

The increasing impact of climate change on daily life and public discourse is already changing HR. For instance, more ESG metrics are being added to the HR scorecard, the Chief Sustainability Officer and CHRO roles are increasingly being integrated.

While this is a good start, it will not be enough.

So far, HR has focused primarily on driving initiatives focused on mitigating climate change, such as green commuting and reducing the organizational carbon footprint. But in the face of growing urgency, HR needs to accept that climate change is a reality, and needs to help organizations adapt.

In Texas last year, **at least 306 people died of heat-related causes**, according to the state health department — **the highest annual total in more than two decades**.

[The New York Times](#)



What this means for HR

Auditing and planning

A strong first step in driving adaptation is conducting climate risk audits that review current work sites, practices, and processes to identify risks.

HR can then use the audit outcomes to create a roadmap for organizational climate adaptation. This could include forming a council on business continuity and disaster recovery. But depending on your business, this might not be enough.

Protecting the workforce

The [heat deaths in the U.S. and Europe in the summer of 2023](#) show that a lack of climate adaptation can hurt workers — or worse.

When creating your adaptation roadmap, consider if your business needs to implement labor practices that accommodate extreme weather in order to keep your workforce safe and maintain business operations.

Changing legislation

The increasing impact of extreme climate events is also driving legislative change around the world.

The SEC is working on [climate change disclosure rules](#). The EU has already introduced the [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive](#), requiring companies — including EU subsidiaries of non-EU parent companies — to disclose information about how climate change and other sustainability-related factors affect their operations.

Whether it's operational or administrative, HR needs to take action to drive climate adaptation — or the business will feel the consequences.

Key takeaway

Changing and extreme weather is a threat to employee wellbeing and business continuity. HR will need to step up and drive compliance and adaptation for the good of employees, the business, and society at large.

Trend 5

From silos to solutions

Adaptability is a key success factor for today's organizations. This shift will trigger a similar shift in HR, which will move away from traditional siloed operating models to better deliver cross-functional and integrated business solutions.

Aligned and impactful

Design thinking and customer-first principles have grown influential in people practices over the past years. As HR adopts these principles, we will see siloed Centers of Excellence broken down into solution areas focused on delivering a specific outcome for internal customers.

These new solution areas will still work closely with the in-business HR teams. However, they should be more actively involved in implementing solutions in collaboration with business HR.

Functional areas will converge into solution-driven groups

Today's functional areas

Business Partnering
HR Strategy
Org. Development

Change Management
Organizational Design
Workforce Planning

Employer Brand
Talent Acquisition
Onboarding

Employee Experience
Talent Insights
Employee Comms & Marketing

Business Partnering
Performance
Total Rewards

Wellbeing and Health
DEIB
Employee Experience
Analytics

Talent Management
Leadership Development

Learning & Development
Career Management

New solution area & focus

Strategy, Advisory and Transformation
Focus on business transformation and strategic initiatives to realize the people strategy.

Awareness and Attraction
Focus on an integrated awareness and attraction experience based on employer brand, candidate experience, and onboarding experiences.

People Experience and Culture
Focus on designing and implementing positive work experiences that appeal to all employees and create a productive and inclusive work environment.

People Growth and Enablement
Focus on motivating, developing and empowering employees to achieve their potential and capitalize on internal opportunities.

What this means for HR

Putting value first

The evolution from siloed CoEs to new solution areas reflects HR's increased focus on delivering business value. That's why it is essential for all HR practitioners to understand not just how to excel in their domain, but how their specific role adds value to the business.

Business partnering is no longer reserved for HRBPs. Instead, it is becoming relevant to everyone in HR.

Fundamental data skills

Another competency that will only grow in importance for all HR practitioners is data literacy.

Developing hypotheses, setting KPIs, reading and interpreting data, and persuasive storytelling using data: these skills were once limited to people analytics functions. However, these skills are fundamental to driving impactful decisions and strategic contributions, and so will become more widespread among HR practitioners.

By adopting these capabilities across all HR roles, organizations take a first step toward a new, multi-skilled HR professional as they break the traditional barriers between generalists and specialists.

Experimental HR

These two shifts are the first steps toward new HR Operating Models built on new organizational design principles that encourage agility, fluidity, and adaptability.

This isn't the only shift we expect to see in this area. As HR teams drive more project-based delivery methods, HR teams will combine different skills and experiment to find better solutions to the business' ever-changing people priorities.

Key takeaway

As organizations evolve to become more adaptable, so will HR. This will mean letting go of the traditional silos and instead shifting to solution-focused multidisciplinary teams. This shift will also mean a rethinking of what we consider fundamental HR skills, with data literacy becoming a key enabler for business impact.

Trend 6

HR leans in

The HR function continues to struggle with misconceptions about its value across all layers of the organization. If HR wants to get the recognition due in 2024, it needs to accept that this situation is a result of its own choices — and in its own hands to resolve.

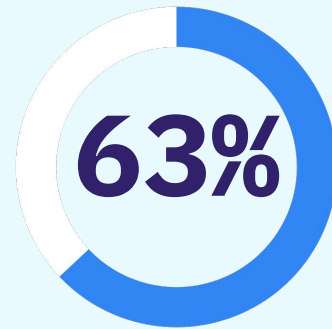
Reframing HR

The core of the issue is that HR has not given itself the same support, guidance, and development opportunities they offer to other departments. This has left HR with lagging skills development, digital adoption, and (perhaps most crucially) confidence in its ability to contribute to the organization.

This is reflected in organizational perceptions of HR as a function focused on processes and paperwork. Little wonder then that recent layoffs have hit the people function disproportionately hard.

It is only HR who can change this perception of the function. And in order to do this, it's time for HR to focus its gaze inward.

Perception of HR



of C-suite leaders still see HR's role as administrative

Source: Sage

What this means for HR

Confidence in HR's strategic vision

The key to effectively repositioning HR in the business is clarity on and confidence in its strategic vision. This encompasses HR's purpose, role, and contribution to collective success.

Because let's be clear: HR has become a profession backed by data and robust science, practiced by knowledgeable specialists who wholeheartedly chose a career in HR, and deserving of respect. It

absolutely does contribute to collective success, which is why this is the year that HR will claim its identity as a profession with standards, a robust body of knowledge, and recognized impact.

And it's time for HR to see itself as the profession it has become.

What this means for HR

Strategy & boundaries

Repositioning HR has to start with HR professionals seeing themselves as integral to organizational success. HR is no longer just a support function, but a profession in its own right.

This, paired with a well-defined strategy, will help HR set boundaries based on its own priorities.

Today, we often see HR attending to the career paths, learning interventions, and wellbeing of its stakeholders, and then failing to do the same for itself. HR shouldn't have to be apologetic about focusing on its own priorities and taking time to develop the profession with the same rigor and investment we apply for others.

Recognizing HR's value

The next step for HR is recognizing its own value as a strategic pillar within the organization in its own right, with the same needs as other departments.

We have seen that failing to act accordingly results in misconceptions about the function and an epidemic of HR burnout, a lack of skills to contribute to the business, and limited HR talent succession pipelines.

This is a mistake that the HR department will rectify in 2024.

Key takeaway

HR has an image problem, and the means to solve it. By recognizing its own strategic value and giving the function the same support it offers other departments, HR will be able to change perceptions, empower its practitioners, and drive even more value for the business.



Trend 7

HR meets PR

Amidst changes in employee expectations and how we engage with our work, HR's work is under increased scrutiny. In order to navigate this complexity, HR needs to take a page from PR to ensure they don't hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons.

Internal becomes external

The employee experience is increasingly public.

This can benefit companies, with new hires happily sharing their onboarding package with the world or posting enviable day-in-the-life videos. But it can also be a PR nightmare.

2023 saw plenty of examples of this, such as [internal communications being discussed in high-profile media outlets](#) and [viral TikTok videos of people getting laid off](#). Now in every difficult conversation, HR needs to not just take the employee into account, but a potential worldwide audience listening in via social media.

Google prides itself on **solving difficult problems**. How to notify people gracefully and with respect that they're getting **laid off** is a difficult problem and **I think they could have done a better job** solving it.

[Jeremy Joslin](#)

Ex-Google employee



What this means for HR

Marketing-proof messaging

In order to avoid having sensitive situations becoming public discourse, HR will need to take a page from PR and Marketing's book.

This means understanding the public's perception of internal policies, practices and decisions, and adjusting approaches where necessary. It also means actively monitoring employer brand perceptions online, and preparing responses for potential PR issues to avoid being caught off-guard by controversy.

Here it is crucial that any messaging aligns with core company values. This will ensure it resonates with employees and is suitable for both internal and external channels.

Culture & policies

In a media landscape where company policy changes can make headlines, transparent and fair HR policies are a strategic asset.

For maximum effect, companies need to go beyond regulatory compliance and actively manage (public) expectations, communicate clearly and intentionally, and deliver on their employee promise.

And, because disagreements are inevitable, it is vital that companies build a culture in which disagreements can be expressed and swiftly resolved inside the organization — before it can boil over into public discourse.

Key takeaway

The boundary between branding and employer branding is blurring. Internal communication and people decisions can influence public perception of the organization as a whole — and business performance. As HR becomes an increasingly public function, practitioners will need to take a page from Marketing and PR's book to not just drive value, but avoid doing damage.

Trend 8

AI-empowered workforce

It was impossible to ignore the meteoric rise of Generative Artificial Intelligences (GAI) such as ChatGPT and Google Bard in 2023. In 2024, HR will play a key role in ensuring employees are empowered to make optimal use of AI without opening the organization up to risk.

Leveling the playing field

Research shows that GAI decreases the difference between high-performing and low-performing workers, with low performers converging towards their better performing peers.

This makes sense: struggling performers benefit more from using GAI, which is essentially a highly intelligent peer supporting them in their tasks. AI has the potential to equalize the playing field in many professions.

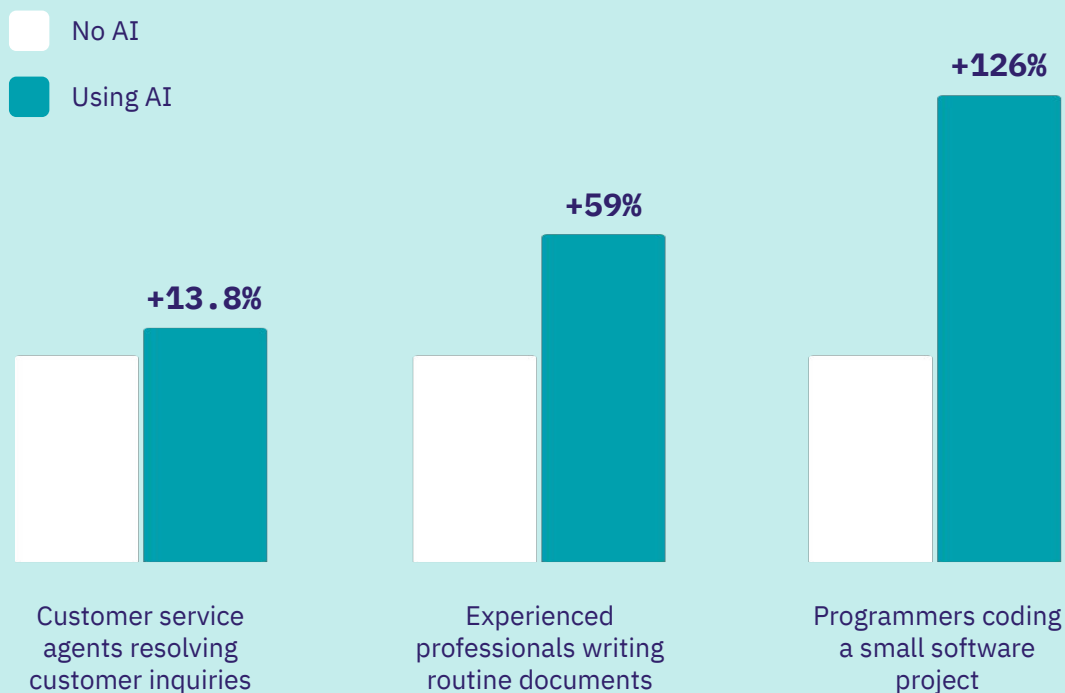
Risk mitigation

The potential GAI offers is not without risk. Many organizations are bringing ChatGPT and similar GAIs in-house to guarantee data protection, and educating employees on how to safely and ethically use the tool.

These steps help reduce the risks associated with the use of GAI in the workplace, but this puts the onus on safely using the tool on the employee.

And this is why HR will play a critical role in ensuring organizations are helped, not harmed by AI.

AI tools are proven to enhance worker performance



Source: Nielsen Norman Group

What this means for HR

Building confidence & abilities

HR must build technology self-efficacy among employees. This means promoting a positive mindset and perception around GAI, encouraging experimentation, and removing the barriers to use within the organization.

It is not enough that the tool is available. Without the right confidence and abilities, employees will not be able to use GAI to its full potential and close the performance gap. HR can prevent this by providing clarity, education, and setting a strong example in its own work.

Crucial safeguards

Accelerating use of GAI in the workforce is not enough: HR also needs to set up safeguards that keep use of this emerging technology safely on track.

Providing safeguards is essential, and it requires technical expertise that is desperately needed in HR. That is why we expect a continued push for digital agility for HR professionals as part of recent years' broader technological transformation.

Better work within reach

When done well, AI will add impact and much-needed meaning to work by increasing work efficiency and quality, and also allowing the automation of mundane and repetitive tasks. This allows employees to focus on the creative, strategic, and interpersonal aspects of their work.

It is a bright future, but the path there is not straightforward. It is up to the HR department to guide the organization and strike a balance between innovation and integrity.

Key takeaway

Generative AI can help organizations boost worker productivity and output quality, but not without risks. HR has a key role to play in empowering the workforce to make smart, innovative, and safe use of this new technology.

Trend 9

Shifting work-life balance to work-life fit

Employee expectations aren't just changing – they're diversifying. And visibility on worker dissatisfaction is high. HR needs to help organizations navigate these narrowly intertwined challenges and strike the balance between flexibility and fairness.



Changing attitudes to work

The major shifts in work since 2020 have prompted both employees and organizations to re-evaluate their preferences and relationships with work, and this will continue into 2024.

Four-day work week pilots have received a lot of attention, with 15% of pilot participants saying that "no amount of money" could get them to switch back to a five-day work week. However, this won't be true for employees who prioritize rapid upward career progression and pay increases.

The heart of this issue is not how much people want to work: it is what people want to prioritize in their life and where work factors in.

Leaving the balancing act behind

Everyone has their own definition of success, and has different trade-offs they are willing to make to achieve their goals. Accommodating these very different wants and needs is one of the biggest challenges today's organizations face.

That's why in 2024, we will see the shift from work-life balance to work-life fit.

This means moving beyond the constant balancing act and integrating work and life in a way that leads to mutual benefit and success in both.

What this means for HR

Clarity on expectations

The solution lies in giving employees the flexibility needed to achieve work-life fit – within the boundaries of what the organization is willing to accept. This means that organizations need to be much more transparent about what it really takes to be successful, and employees need to be clear on what they want from work.

HR will need to facilitate a process with leaders on what the true expectations of people are, and equip managers to lead employees in these new work arrangements.

Focus on compliance

There are also legal ramifications for HR to consider.

When assessing what type and level of flexibility to offer, consider the potential effects on contracts, policies, and processes. How does a policy about the right to disconnect over the weekend affect colleagues who choose to fast-track their career progression by working extra hours?

Renewed relationship with work

If managed well, enabling work-life fit lets HR create a renewed relationship between employees and their work. This will shift the perception of work from something that has to be done to get by, to a valuable contributor towards a fulfilling and flourishing life.

But if work-life fit is fumbled, growing discontent among employees will drive them to seek a perfect-fit employer, leaving organizations struggling to manage their day-to-day people practices.

Key takeaway

Employee needs aren't just changing; they're diversifying. HR can help organizations adapt to this wide array of employee demands, so that they can offer the freedom, flexibility and fairness employees need to flourish at work.

Trend 10

The end of BS jobs

A decade ago, David Graeber introduced the concept of socially useless and thus – in his words – bullshit jobs. Now, against the backdrop of flatlining productivity and the meteoric rise of GAI, HR has the opportunity to make bullshit jobs a thing of the past.

Morale and productivity

In the U.S. 19% of workers find their jobs to be socially useless. In the UK, this number shoots up to 37%.

Feeling that your work is meaningless has a dire impact on employee wellbeing. It also has a proven negative effect on productivity: research indicates that when employees find their work meaningful, performance improves by 33%, among other things.

It's in everyone's best interest to make bullshit jobs a thing of the past. And 2024 is the year that HR can make this happen.

Key takeaway

Technological advancements mean that millions of jobs will be lost, and millions of new ones created. This offers HR the opportunity to tackle not only flagging productivity, but the lack of meaning in many jobs. If handled well, this could make 2024 the year we say goodbye to BS jobs.

What this means for HR

Rethinking job design

HR needs to cast a critical eye on how we design jobs.

Traditional job design prioritizes the clustering of tasks, activities, and skills required to deliver specific outputs. Meaningful work comes secondary.

This needs to change. And thanks to modern technology, it can.

83 million jobs are projected to be lost, and 69 million new jobs created thanks to technological advancements. This is a prime opportunity for HR to redesign jobs to be more meaningful, and better aligned with employees' strengths.

Middle management practices

How work is done is also a crucial factor.

Some employees have goals and ambitions that make them deeply invested in work that others would see as meaningless. And some employees see their job as a way to make money while they achieve their personal ambitions in other areas of life.

What may drive meaning for one employee can achieve the opposite for another. In order to help the organization effectively manage this complexity, HR can support the development of high-quality middle management practices and set the stage for work-life fit.

Trend 11

From talent acquisition to talent access

Solving the talent gap by competing in talent acquisition leaves organizations at the mercy of the historically tight labor market. We propose a more proactive and sustainable approach that invests in access as well as acquisition.

Making the most of internal talent

Today's organizations are facing a historically tight labor market. The shortage of urgently needed digital talent remains unchanged.

What is changing, however, is what employees want. And by adapting to these changing demands, organizations can retain key talent and fill critical vacancies.

While suitable candidates for these vacancies remain rare in the labor market, organizations will turn their focus to in-house talent.

One part of this will be using talent pools, traditionally a tool used for external talent, internally as well. However, while unifying the approach to internal and external talent is a great first step, HR will need to do more to unlock the full potential that internal mobility has to offer.

Employees need growth opportunities

Gallup reports that Millennials are prioritizing chances to learn and grow, interest in the type of work, and advancement opportunities when applying for jobs.

Organizations are already responding to this changing need, with 48% identifying improving talent progression and promotion processes as key practices to increase talent availability.



What this means for HR

Creating access to talent

Organizations have a goldmine of talent at their fingertips, and HR can help the organization capitalize on this.

However, for internal mobility to truly help bridge the talent gap, more is needed than simply moving employees through the organization. If not handled well, this could result in low performers being shuttled from one department to another, which has historically spread inefficiency and negatively affected employee morale.

Instead, HR needs to remain laser focused on creating access to skills that the organization needs.

Rethinking career paths

To encourage talent mobility, HR needs to change the perception of career progression, broadening employees' horizons beyond traditional upwards progression to also include horizontal and diagonal moves.

But simply setting the stage isn't enough. HR also needs to empower employees, promoting self-directed and democratized career management. This allows employees to manage their own careers based on the skills they've built in the past and the skills they are looking to develop in the future.

Driving change with technology

Technology will also play a key role in supporting access to internal talent.

From identifying transferable skills to the creation of internal talent marketplaces, digital platforms can now match candidates to roles based on skill sets, aspirations, and potential, thereby democratizing access to opportunities.

Data and tools can also help organizations link mobility practices to workforce planning, proactively pool and access talent, and deploy skills where they add the most value.

Key takeaway

In the new era of talent management, it's less about acquiring the talent to fill gaps and more about identifying, unlocking, and nurturing the potential from within.

HR teams are only as successful as their skills are relevant. With engaging in-depth training and resources, AIHR helps HR teams become better at what they do and drive more business value.

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