The Next Decade of Work
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Executive Summary

Over the past 10 years, our working and personal lives have been at odds. While our consumer world has become more on-demand and tailored to our needs, our work world continues to be ruled by complexity and cumbersome processes.

As we enter a new decade, the new generation of workers will continue to demand instant access to the resources they need to do their jobs, plan their careers, and learn at their own pace. Employers are starting to recognize that the employee experience will underpin all facets of work—and that for a business to survive, they must adapt to this new reality (see Trend #1: Employee Experience Takes Over).

In this report, the employee experience is a prominent focus, appearing as its own trend and in other topic areas:

- **Trend #3: Reskilling Goes into Overdrive** covers how organizations should experiment with providing a “Netflix learning experience” for employees, leveraging Learning Experience Platform (LXPs), micro-learning systems, and adaptive learning systems.

- **Trend #5: Artificial Intelligence Reconfigures Human Roles** looks at how the rise of intelligent machines will provide employees with more opportunities to perform tasks requiring complex reasoning and socio-emotional intelligence.

- **Trend #8: Gig Work Enters the Hourly Work** examines the “side hustle” economy, and how the proliferation of gig work platforms will intensify as the need to quickly fill short-term and seasonal roles increases and more people look to supplement their existing incomes with gig work.

Now the question before HR professionals is whether you can adapt fast enough to keep pace with the needs of the business?

Complacency is no longer an option. To stake out a place as key strategists in the business, you must be prepared to take hold of the reins and steer into the future—or risk becoming increasingly marginalized.
In 2020, we will also see employee experience become a focus of people analytics projects. Leveraging people data will become even more important to the success of businesses, especially as the volume of workforce data will continue to grow at an unprecedented rate.

As such, expect people analytics to become so easy to use that anyone in the organization can interpret and utilize it for accurate and credible answers (see Trend #2: People Analytics Becomes Accessible to Everyone).

This will enable every employee to use their own data to take charge of their experiences, which will help organizations improve employee engagement and well-being—while also meeting productivity requirements and driving business outcomes.

Other trends that will have an impact in the near-future:

- Organizations will need to position themselves for agility, and the process that supports this—workforce planning—will happen in-the-moment and become more collaborative (see Trend #4: Workforce Planning Gets Agile).
- HR leaders will need a unique understanding of people, culture and ethics, combined with tech- and data-savviness to navigate the organization through relentless waves of change and innovation (see Trend #6: A New HR Organization Emerges).
- How organizations use people data to continually adapt will be a defining characteristic of successful change management (see Trend #7: Change Management Goes Digital).
- Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) will rapidly evolve from a stand-alone product to become a critical feature for HCM, ERP, communication, and other transactional systems (see Trend #9: Organizational Network Analysis Hits the Mainstream).
- The amount of human capital benchmarks will rise. The people data within the organization is no longer enough. Organizations must bring together all the right data from within and outside of their organization (see Trend #10: Benchmarking 3.0 Enters Flow of Work).

In compiling the trends for this report, we found that the innovations of the last decade have set the stage for the next ten years of work. Those that start to embrace these innovations now—whether through small steps or big leaps—will be the ones to win the future of work and beyond.
What happened from 2010 to 2020

Employers shifted from asking “How can we get the most out of our employees?” to “How can employees get the most out of us?” In 2015, Airbnb’s CHRO became the company’s Chief Experience Officer, and many other companies have pushed the employee experience to the top of the HR agenda. The reasons for this are compelling: MIT research shows that enterprises with a top-quartile employee experience achieve better financial outcomes.

Putting people first helps businesses thrive

No single definition for the employee experience exists, but it is essentially about making the talent journey as enriching as possible. It has its roots in employee engagement, which is typically managed through top-down surveys delivered via web apps. Many HR leaders have begun to instigate more regular touch points with employees through pulse surveys, while at the same time, organizations have embraced collaboration tools and started adopting nudge engines as a way of improving work lives.
What to expect in the next 10 years

Organizations will focus on the employee experience more holistically, encompassing everything from broad cultural shifts to helping employees take charge of their own well-being and mental health. This will require more data sources and analytics for everyone—not just top-level decision makers.

To support the employee experience, organizations will:

- Give employees the tools to interpret and analyze their own work data
  This will help workers—especially digital natives like Millennials and Gen Z, who demand and are engaged by transparent access to their data—take charge of their own financial planning, wellness, personal development, and career path.

- Promote social accountability
  The tactic that delivers the best results for diversity and inclusion is the creation of special task forces, according to sociologists Dobbin and Kalev. When these groups can access the right data in a way that respects the privacy of individual employees, they can develop customized solutions for the organization.

- Place a greater emphasis on mental resilience
  This helps boost focus, belonging, purpose, and happiness. Corporate well-being programs have covered gym memberships and smoking cessation for a long time. In the coming years, more organizations will embrace well-being technology that integrates seamlessly into the flow of work to help employees manage their internal states.

Leaders should expect the latest entrant into the workforce, Generation Z (those born 1995-2012), to have different expectations than Millennials. For example, research indicates Gen Z values the benefit of larger organizations and a willingness to stay longer and move through an organization rather than a job—which is similar to how Gen Xer’s tendencies have acted rather than Millennials.

Multiple generations in the workforce introduces new complexities to talent strategies. Leaders need a more detailed view of both the employee experience and the candidate experience, and how these tie into the customer experience and business results. There is an expectation, particularly among Millennials and Gen Z, that their experience will be bespoke, tailored to them and their needs.

For example, two individuals may both be shifting to the same job, and may both need the same training, but they come with different experiences and proficiencies, and additionally, they may learn in different ways. With the right insights, organizations can provide different people—with many different demands—what they need at the right time. Just as importantly it can be done cost effectively and it drives better results as well as higher levels of employee satisfaction.
The Next Decade of Work | Trend #1: Employee Experience Takes Over

How to move forward with this trend

The first steps

• **Focus on long-term development through the employee lens**
  Give employees a “Fitbit for their career.” Technology from Humanyze, for example, gives employees the ability to compare their behavior to team averages so they can see what they need to work on to achieve their career goals.

• **Empower diversity and inclusion task forces**
  Use people analytics to understand engagement among diverse employees and monitor the impact engagement has on turnover and exit patterns as well as with inclusion. Roll out people analytics broadly (while respecting and adhering to data privacy regulations) across the organization so that grassroots initiatives can be created.

• **Help employees manage their internal states to change the way they experience the work itself**
  Provide employees with a feedback loop for changing behaviors. For example, Humu provides a “nudge engine” that encourages employees to improve their happiness, productivity, and performance.

Take bigger leaps

• **Align employee purpose with that of the organization**
  Fulfilling a purpose and extracting meaning from work is the apex of the employee experience. Integrate nudge engines with people planning to align personal behavior change with broader organizational goals—this will help individuals align their personal development with a bigger purpose.

• **Develop a full Employee Value Proposition (EVP) for people analytics**
  One way you can do this is to align people analytics activities with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. If HR and people analytics leaders advocate for an EVP (in addition to exploring its ethical and legal dimensions), your people analytics activities will go more smoothly and deliver value for both the employee and employer. (Learn more in our paper, The Employee Value Proposition of People Analytics.)

• **Reduce your reliance on resumes for candidate selection**
  AI-based testing, when combined with effective learning programs, has been proven to help identify talented individuals and give them the opportunity to succeed—regardless of their gender, race, age, etc. This helps to prevent discrimination and promote career mobility.6

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6. Source: [Humu](https://www.humu.com)

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![Diagram showing Employee Value Proposition (EVP)](https://www.visierinc.com/employee-value-proposition/

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![Diagram showing Employee Value Proposition (EVP)](https://www.visierinc.com/employee-value-proposition/)
People analytics evolved from an obscure part of human resources to an established, high-profile discipline. An increasing number of CEOs and CHROs saw it as a top priority, with accurate people decisions becoming business-critical. According to the 2018 Deloitte Human Capital Trends report, the “people data revolution, predicted for years, has finally arrived.”

DDI’s Global Leadership Forecast 2018 wasn’t quite so rosy, however: It found that people analytics efforts were more likely to fail than not. However, those who did succeed with analytics experienced many advantages.

First West Credit Union, for example, achieved $2.5 million in annual revenue generated by roles retained as a result of using people analytics to investigate their employee turnover issues. After drilling into their workforce data, they discovered turnover was focused within four key sales roles on the retail banking side of the organization, specifically in one particular region. With this information, the company developed more effective recruitment, hiring, promotion, and training strategies that led to better retention of these important revenue-producing roles.

From a nice-to-have to a must-have

It became clear that effective people analytics are purpose-built on a foundation that marries deep analytical expertise with intimate knowledge of HR and HR data—all without embarking on a risky and expensive IT project.

Key terms

- **Business intelligence (BI)** refers to a technology-driven process for analyzing data and sharing actionable information. It is an umbrella term that includes basic reporting as well as the most advanced analytics.

- **Reporting** (within the domain of business intelligence) refers to the use of static documents, presentations, or dashboards to share data points and metrics related to a specific area of business interest.

- **Analytics** refers more broadly to the algorithmic sifting of large datasets for relevant correlations and patterns.
People analytics will spread—not just to more organizations, but to new types of people within them. Everyone within the organization, no matter their experience with data, will be able to leverage analytics to make better decisions thanks to technologies that make analytics increasingly easy to use, interpret, and take action on. At the same time, the pace at which organizations will need to deploy this capability will accelerate. Continual business model transformation will become the norm, creating an urgent need for people analytics solutions that surface meaningful and actionable answers to guide decisions rather than presenting data with little to no context.

People analytics will become ubiquitous. Over the next decade, adoption will:

- **Surge among companies with fewer than 3,000 employees**
  In the past, people analytics was only possible at the large enterprise level, focusing on organizations that had the capacity to hire data scientists and analysts. With recent advances in cloud and analytics technology, it is now possible for you to subscribe to a people analytics solution without a hefty upfront investment. More vendors will offer people analytics that support the goals of mid-size organizations.

- **Accelerate among line managers**
  Whether it’s deciding to accept or reject a counter offer or who to promote next, line managers make many important people decisions every day. Managers often make poor decisions based on gut feeling, while data-driven decisions are reserved for HR and senior leaders. Organizations will bust out of this model, and use people analytics to put data directly into the hands of all decisions-makers to support better in-the-moment talent decisions.

- **Become increasingly urgent**
  Organizations will continue to transform at an increasingly rapid pace. This means that when it comes to delivering people analytics as an enabler of business transformation, the main question for IT will be: how do we deliver the best time-to-value for people analytics? Because renting a people analytics platform delivers significantly better time-to-value at a fraction of the cost, building a people analytics solution in-house will become a thing of the past.

I've already seen this shift happen with several organizations, and it will only become more pervasive as analytics technology advances. For example, as an increasing amount of data gets fed into analytics platforms, and new tools make it easier for the general worker population to understand these insights, employees will be empowered to make decisions, come up with new ideas, and communicate their vision in a fact-based way. This will create a win-win situation for employees and the business: as workers become more empowered, they become more satisfied—and ultimately, more productive.

**What to expect in the next 10 years**

Ram Subramanian
Global Head, HCM

It will become increasingly rare to find businesses where strategic initiatives are set by the top level. To stay agile, more organizations will foster self-organizing teams that utilize data to create and experiment with all types of new ideas, whether it's related to cost-savings, safety improvements, or product innovation.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

**TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES**

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## How to move forward with this trend

### The first steps

- **Watch out for signs that reporting is masquerading as analytics**
  The term “analytics” is often used interchangeably with other terms like “reports” and “business intelligence.” But they are not the same thing. Your basic reports are run against the system where data was originally created, such as your HRMS, Learning Management System (LMS), or Accounts Payable system.
  Analytic solutions, however, connect data from different records, transform it, normalize it, and facilitate the exploration of data. Unlike transaction reports that simply display the data, analytics summarizes information and processes into metrics and measures to help you drive change. Can you seamlessly answer the next question that occurs to you, or do you need to run a whole new report? If the former, you’re likely on your way to doing analytics.

- **Don’t be afraid to start your journey with a single data source**
  No matter the size of your organization, if you have an HCM, you have enough data to start getting actionable answers from people analytics and drive better everyday decision-making.

- **Use your historical data to predict the future, then take action to change outcomes**
  “Turnover” is the single most prevalent HR metric. However, measuring your turnover rate does little to support strategic business plans. By predicting risk of exit, you can take action to prevent top talent from leaving before they are out the door.

### Take bigger leaps

- **Deploy your people analytics solution to all the relevant stakeholders within your organization**
  Once a core group of users has shown that making analytics-driven decisions delivers more value to the company, deploy analytics even more broadly. Take care to seek solutions that can scale without multiplying your costs.

- **Add more data sources to your people analytics solution**
  These sources not only include HR and talent management systems, but also data from workforce management, safety, financials, and operational systems unique to the industry, as well as employee engagement, marketing, sales, and external benchmark data. Sierra-Cedar research shows organizations that outperform are those that more frequently use a higher number of data sources and metrics. As a result, the scope of analytics in these organizations is broader and more impactful.

- **Prepare your organization for a data-driven culture**
  Once a core group of users has shown that making analytics-driven decisions delivers more value to the company, deploy analytics even more broadly. Take care to seek solutions that can scale without multiplying your costs.

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### PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

**Willis Towers Watson**

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Global Product Leader, HR Software

Employers will get serious about inclusion and diversity. Business leaders are eager to understand how much progress they are making towards becoming an inclusive and diverse organization, and that starts with gaining a clear picture of the organization’s baseline through data and analytics.

We’ll see organizations doing more to make equity—in terms of both pay and career opportunities—a top priority. We’ll also see organizations looking to better understand how employees experience their work day to day, and how that experience has an impact on business outcomes. This might include looks at macro trends like turnover, or evaluating specific initiatives, like retention programs and how they impact people from specific backgrounds.

HR is in a really exciting position right now to add value with data-driven decision-making, especially as organizations abandon the status quo and rethink the way work gets done.
What happened from 2010 to 2020

The pace of change accelerated and critical skills gaps loomed large. With business model disruptions, demographic shifts, and automation of rote tasks, organizations scrambled to adapt. Many business leaders opted to upgrade their existing workforces. As a result, billion-dollar retraining programs and on-site corporate colleges became a reality.

Learning gets ubiquitous

Learning content became more plentiful, cheap, and accessible with the rise of massive open online courses (MOOCs) such as Coursera, Udemy, and Udacity. Many organizations experimented with providing a personalized “Netflix learning experience” for employees, leveraging Learning Experience Platform (LXPs), micro-learning systems, and adaptive learning systems.

Even with a willingness to explore new avenues, many challenges remained for learning leaders. While employee skills data has become more accessible, few organizations have mastered the art of skills data maintenance. L&D departments often use the learning management system (LMS) to measure learning effectiveness, which did little to determine whether learning investments are contributing to business goals.
What to expect in the next 10 years

The sheer scale of reskilling requirements will force organizations to transform learning if they haven’t already: 62% of executives believe they will need to retrain or replace more than a quarter of their workforce between 2018 and 2023. Learning will no longer be a periodic one-and-done process, but a seamless part of work for everyone, managers included. Span of control will be broader because fewer managers will be needed with the rise of automation. As a result, critical manager skill sets will also change. Nobody will be immune from reskilling demands.

Over the next decade, organizations will proactively:

- **Hone in on learning’s business impact**
  The availability of tools on the market that facilitate “in-the-moment” learning will continue to increase, but HR leaders will still be under pressure to determine whether the business is getting the ROI it needs from learning initiatives. More learning leaders will turn to a unified analytics platform that connects learning to all aspects of the employee lifecycle and business data, which will enable the C-suite to instantly see the impact of learning programs on business results.

- **Evaluate immersive learning solutions**
  Exciting advances in virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) have provided organizations with a promising way to give hands-on training for scenarios that are either dangerous or difficult to replicate in the real world. Only a few visionaries have adopted VR/AR for corporate learning programs; Gartner predicts that mainstream adoption is up to 10 years away. In the nearer future, organizations will start to evaluate immersive learning solutions to determine whether they provide substantial business value.

- **Tackle the skills data challenge**
  Getting up-to-date information about skills is challenging at best, if not impossible. Employees typically only update their skills profile when they are looking for work (and even then, they are making the updates on LinkedIn or to their resumes—not the company skills repository). Finding ways to keep your skills data current and readily available will continue to be a challenge. However, with improvements in AI and machine-learning techniques, along with new nudge engine tools, technology leaders will come up with solutions to this problem.

How to move forward with this trend

The first steps

- **Forecast the new wave of jobs and identify their corresponding skills**
  Connect with your senior business leaders and line managers to determine which skills will be in demand. This process will have to be constant and flexible, as skills needs will likely change every 5-10 years.

- **Look for platforms that will encourage employees to share learning content**
  When employees become more active in directing their peers to useful training material, the process of reskilling is more agile, responsive, and relevant to your organization’s needs.

- **Determine how much of a learning investment is required to meet business goals using the time to productivity metric**
  Time to productivity is very important because it is an indicator of how much investment is required to reach your business goals. To get this metric, calculate the sum of days to productivity for the analysis group and divide that by the number of employees in the analysis group. The more aggressively you need to shorten time to productivity, the higher the learning investment.

Take bigger leaps

- **Start gaining a clear understanding of each employee’s skill set—not just their job title**
  Capture leadership experience and skills, levels of experience, and degrees and certifications. With this information, you can deploy teams to projects more rapidly and get a handle on where you are at risk of experiencing a skills shortage. Consider also how AI and automation can be introduced to supplement any needed skills.

- **Explore where immersive learning experiences may be useful for you**
  Identify areas where there is pre-built, out-of-the-box, high-quality content that meets your organization’s specific requirements. Run experiments and pilots, and determine whether the product or platform, such as VR/AR, is a good fit that provides additional value.

- **Monitor courses and compare learning outcomes so that they can drive the best business results**
  Dig into your people data to determine whether participants from a specific reskilling program are experiencing more internal movement, flowing from low-demand positions to high-demand.
By 2030, HR will be driven by processes and technology that bridge the gap between the real world and the work world experience.

By this I mean: In the real world, everything is on-demand, real-time, customized, and quick. On the other hand, currently, our work world is clumsy, slow, and ruled by processes and complexity. Moreover, in an effort to meet our digitalization goals, HR is bringing in more technology than ever, but instead of making jobs easier, it’s actually making it more confusing for employees to navigate and utilize.

Once we can get to a place where we can deliver experiences that are more similar to those outside the world of work—and even better, make it customizable to the individual—we’ll really see our workforce thrive.

At FIS, we’re already preparing to bridge this gap. To lead our organization through the next ten years, our group is working to adopt a digital, data-driven approach so we can spot the real world opportunities that will make any change feel more familiar, easier to use, and tailored to the individual.

When we set out on our transformation journey three years ago, our thinking was, “There are three skillsets that we need every single HR professional to have. They need to be change agents, because it’s a bigger world and we need to be able to manage through that change. They need to be coaches, because there’s so much change going on, they need to be able to coach people through that. And they need to be data analysts because they need to know what to do with the data.” We’re really focusing on building these skills out now.

My advice to others is this: start putting in place both the tools and skills your team will need for the future. Don’t try to do too many things at once. Be deliberate about picking a few areas of focus, like we’ve done at FIS, to help get you to the right place.
**What happened from 2010 to 2020**

Business model disruptions, competition from unicorn startups, demographic shifts, and political upheaval made it difficult to predict future operating environments. On the supply side, unemployment rates dropped to historic lows, presenting many hiring and retention challenges.

This made workforce planning—the process of ensuring you have the right people at the right time to meet business goals—more important than ever. In spite of this, workforce planning and modeling technology adoption did not reach the mainstream. Many organizations attempted workforce planning with spreadsheets, which proved to be unfit for the task.

**From data wrangling to talent strategizing**

One HR leader at a healthcare organization recalls trying to do workforce planning using spreadsheets. “But it was all for naught,” he says. Spreadsheets require a lot of data wrangling and cleanup to manage, and multiple loose files present a security risk.

It was only until his organization switched to cloud-based, continuous planning with data hosted by a third party that they started seeing results. With the right tool, they could perform scenario modeling, understand exactly how much money would be saved by turnover reduction, and distribute the task of planning to the people who knew what was needed.

Clearly, relegating the workforce planner’s job to that of spreadsheet wrangler is no longer necessary; with advances in analytics technology, planners can become truly strategic.
What to expect in the next 10 years

“Plans are useless; planning is essential” will be the business mantra for the next decade. The pace of disruption will only accelerate; M&A activity will increase, multiple generations—including the bot generation—will be active in the workforce, and as traditional firms continue to transform into “tech-driven companies,” jobs and the very nature of human work will change. In the next decade, organizations will need to position themselves for agility, and the process that supports this (workforce planning) will need to become more agile itself.

Ten years from now, having become comfortable with cloud-based HR technology solutions, more HR leaders will turn to SaaS planning solutions to:

- **Become more collaborative**
  When workforce planning is done in a vacuum, you often miss crucial feedback from line managers and other subject matter experts about requirements that are on the horizon.

- **Deliver in-the-moment talent plans**
  When workforce plans are refreshed on a shorter cycle, they are more accurate. More organizations will develop the agile capabilities to quickly realign resources to different projects as they become more critical.

- **Get predictive**
  HR leaders will be under pressure to accurately forecast how many employees are likely to leave so they can plan for the right number of new employees to hire and train. Analytics-driven planning will provide the foundation for future-proofing the business.

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Agile force planning in action

Celgene, an American biotechnology company operating in an extremely competitive and fast-paced industry, has already adopted an agile workforce planning methodology.

On a monthly basis, the company's talent acquisition analytics team conducts a turnover and growth analysis that is compiled into a scorecard report. In parallel, a workforce plan is created, along with predictive model overlays. The team pays special attention to anticipated headcount for the year, as well as month-over-month headcount changes.

This continuous process enables Celgene to plan for talent shortages by allocating the proper resourcing to support the gaps in the model, manage and source talent more effectively, and have more insightful conversations with stakeholders. This approach to planning will become the de facto standard over the next decade.
The Next Decade of Work  Trend #4: Workforce Planning Gets Agile

How to move forward with this trend

The first steps

• Engage a strong coalition of sponsors for continuous workforce planning
  Garner support across HR, Finance, and the central corporate planning function.

• Look to reduce the number of times your team manually pulls data from disparate systems
  When this process becomes automated and analytics-based, you can look ahead at how many open positions need to be filled, when they must be filled, and where in the organization they are needed the most.

• Look for workforce planning technology and tools that enable you to create and compare different workforce planning scenarios (each with different workforce movement and cost assumptions)
  With multiple scenarios, not only can you choose the best option for your organization, you can have contingency plans in place.

Take bigger leaps

• Focus on headcount costs to optimize workforce plans
  When the focus is on headcount costs, and not just headcount, HR has more flexibility. For example, if a senior person leaves, and their role has evolved into a more repeatable process, HR can consider replacing the individual with two junior people who may be twice as productive.

• Consider the big (and small) picture
  Unify data not only from sources within the business, but from external sources that provide benchmarks and critical environmental insight. Also take stock of which skills, not just roles, will be required on the horizon.

• Hold on to your historical data so you can make better predictions
  When you implement a new HRIS, your historical data often gets left behind—and the results of predictive analytics can only be considered reliable if the historical dataset is large enough to generate insights. Ensure you have a minimum of three years of historical data so you have accurate attrition forecasts to work with.

Workforce planning will become a broader platform for deliberate action—one that goes beyond identifying critical jobs and projecting headcounts. Three emerging topics are a) Creating a unique employee brand that is transparent and still customized to the needs of your workforce, b) Building more agility into your labor markets using smart technology, and c) Embedding diversity and inclusion in systems and culture to drive fair pay and opportunity for everyone.

Fact-driven workforce practice design through data and analytics—enabled by technology and a shared strategic mindset—will continue to drive success.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Aon

Stefan Gaertner
Partner, Global, Lead of People, Analytics

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As digital transformation moves more of our world from the physical to the virtual, industries will converge around technology—and the market for digital-ready talent with the skills, speed, and agility that businesses need will grow even more competitive and expensive. Organizations need to stay vigilant and creative to attract and retain this “workforce of the future.”
Artificial Intelligence Reconfigures Human Roles

What happened from 2010 to 2020

Innovations like self-driving vehicles, intelligent virtual assistants, and healthcare robots hit the scene, fueling both anxiety and optimism about jobs and automation. However, in terms of actual adoption, it wasn’t quite the stuff of science fiction: automation was primarily focused on simple computational tasks (such as credit scoring) and analysis of structured data.

Labor replacement or labor enhancement?

Automation is nothing new, but AI is propelling it into new types of work tasks—and at a rapid pace. Between 2018 and 2019, organizations that had deployed AI grew from 4% to 14%, according to Gartner’s 2019 CIO Agenda survey.

Projections vary widely in exactly how many jobs will be affected by AI and automation. But one thing is clear: AI and robots aren’t merely labor replacements. Amazon continued to add people to its workforce, for example, even as it rolled out more than 100,000 robots worldwide. In a Genpact study, senior leaders cited “improved ability to leverage data and analytics” as a top AI benefit, and placed reduced costs at the bottom of the list of nine benefits.

Key terms

**Automation** refers to hardware or software that is able to perform tasks without human intervention. Automation may or may not be based on Artificial Intelligence.

**Artificial intelligence (AI)** is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, particularly computer systems.

**Machine learning** is a type of artificial intelligence that continuously looks for patterns and correlations in past data and events to make predictions. The amount of data the machine learning system can access determines the accuracy of the calculations. The more data the system has, the more accurate the outputs.
Humans will continue to outperform AI in areas such as complex reasoning, socio-emotional intelligence, and sensory perception. Smart systems will excel at routine, repetitive tasks. (The day when smart machines exceed human performance is more than 40 years away, according to most AI researchers.)

For HR leaders, the focus will be on shaping a workforce where humans are augmented by technology. For example, as nurses use intelligent systems to manage paperwork, more of their time will be freed up for patient care.

Humans will also be required to adapt by gaining new skills or moving into new roles (see Trend #3: Reskilling Goes into Overdrive). At least two years in advance of any major AI initiatives, communicate to employees which skills will generally increase in demand and which will decline.

As intelligent automation starts to impact all businesses more broadly, the following trends will emerge:

- **Worker acceptance of automation will be spotty**
  People will have varying attitudes towards reskilling or changing roles. Automation will impact different populations depending on their educational background, position, role, and age. This may even result in a major polarization of attitudes towards AI within organizations.

- **More fields will become quantitative and fact-based**
  As more organizations adopt AI for its analytics benefits, more workers will be equipped to make data-driven decisions. However, this does not mean that you will need to ensure every employee has advanced knowledge of mathematics and statistics. Software that comes with pre-built metrics and analytics best practices can enable non-technical employees to make better decisions with data.

- **HR leaders will become job constructivists**
  Beyond ensuring employees have the skills to use advanced technology, your main area of focus will be deconstructing jobs to determine which tasks can be automated, which can be augmented by AI, and where there are gaps that humans need to fill.
How to move forward with this trend

The first steps

- Connect with other leaders within the organization to determine what your business vision is and how AI will play a role
  Some organizations will simply be adopting AI to improve process efficiencies, others will be adopting it to reinvent the organization from the ground up. The nature of your organization’s investment will have a significant impact on your hiring, training, and change management activities.
- Implement regular pulse surveys to measure worker attitudes towards automation
  The results of surveys conducted externally with general worker populations are not likely to reflect real attitudes within your company. By assessing how open people are to retraining or moving into new roles, you will be in a better position to plan ahead and communicate any changes to specific groups.
- Help all workers understand how they can take a more scientific approach to decision-making
  Nurture curiosity and data storytelling so that workers can embrace the analytics generated from AI systems and make better decisions.

Take bigger leaps

- Consider using AI tools that tell people which percentage of their job is likely to be lost to—or augmented by—automation so they know which training they should take
  With this information, employees can have better career conversations with line managers. They will understand the full range of options available: stay in their position and reskill, move to a different role with training, or move to a similar role in a different department (if applicable).
- Use data-driven career pathing to help employees put growth mindsets into practice and propel the business forward
  To get an accurate understanding of how long it typically takes for someone from a non-technical background to move into a more technical position, for example, determine what the average time is for someone to get into that role. Managers and employees can use this information to gain a realistic understanding of how much work is involved in acquiring a new skill.
- Participate in reskilling programs with educational institutions
  Educational institutions are often separated from employers by an information gap that creates a mismatch between the training workers receive and the skills employers seek. By ensuring educational institutions have up-to-date knowledge about in-demand skills, industry, government, and educational institutions can work together to close the gap.
TREND #6

A New HR Organization Emerges

What happened from 2010 to 2020

The past decade ushered in a wealth of technological advancement that gave HR professionals a long-awaited makeover. Over the past two years, 32% of HR teams adopted cloud-based systems, which brought operational efficiency to HR in the form of a more integrated suite of tools, improved data management, better user experience, and faster innovation.

These capabilities, combined with the automation of rote HR activities, have given HR more time to pursue more strategic initiatives such as improving the employee experience, the connection between productivity and profitability, and many other objectives that were more business-focused rather than compliance-driven.

Learning the language of the business

Despite this newfound strategic mindset, HR struggled to show its value. KPMG noted that only 24% of CEOs viewed their workforce/HR capabilities as highly effective. While HR has the best knowledge of human dynamics in the organization, there’s still room to grow in building the skills and capabilities needed to understand and influence the business.

Part of the challenge was in shifting HR’s thinking from workforce outcomes to better connecting their people decisions to business outcomes. In order to accomplish this, HR organizations turned to data and specifically, analytics.

HR leaders at a professional services corporation used answers gained from their people analytics solution to drive the business to change the composition of project teams for multi-year, multi-million-dollar contracts—the result was an improvement in margins by $1-$3M per contract.

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HR leaders at a professional services corporation used answers gained from their people analytics solution to drive the business to change the composition of project teams for multi-year, multi-million-dollar contracts—the result was an improvement in margins by $1-$3M per contract.
Now that companies have the ability to harness all their data into one platform, they can access information regarding their people, business, and objectives to make the most efficient decisions around their organizations. With people analytics as the catalyst for business decisions, the next phase of HR’s evolution will be empowering the entire organization to effectively use people data, making it more accessible to those that need it.

A relentless desire for fact-based answers required to reach new ground

This paradigm shift will have major implications on the types of HR roles organizations should expect to develop and hire. The new business ethos will require HR professionals, especially HR business partners (HRBP), who are skilled in finding actionable answers in data, savvy with technology, and who understand how to leverage both to boost business goals.

What to expect in the next 10 years

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HR owns the Future of Work

With a stronger grasp of data and technology, HR will be able to confidently guide the business through the major shifts redefining both work and the workplace, such as AI and automation, multi-generational workforces, the gig economy, and the Internet of Things.

Over the next decade, HR must:

- Seek data-backed workforce answers and translate these into meaningful information for business leaders
  Analytics is part of the language of business and making it part of HR’s standard mode of operating is essential to not only HR’s future success, but the organization’s. Analytics technology helps speed up this learning curve by surfacing actionable answers for you and contextualizing them as simple data visualizations that can be woven into narratives that not only engages, but persuades—a key driver of inciting action.

- Become digital champions
  When you rethink your use of technology—not simply as a way to digitize a process, but rather to drive real business value—you can better see the opportunities to embed technology into the flow of work for employees, resulting in a more seamless, productive experience.

- Act as Future of Work guides
  HR’s unique understanding of people, culture and ethics, combined with tech and data savviness, will enable you to navigate the organization through relentless waves of change and innovation.
How to move forward with this trend

**The first steps**

- **Master the language of the business.** When speaking to the rest of the business about your people decisions and/or analytic findings, it’s important to frame the information in terms of the things that matter most to non-HR and non-analyst folks. Focus on the impact these data points will have on the company’s financial performance and business outcomes.

- **Upskill for data- and technology-savvy.** Prepare HR to lead the workplace into the future by providing training on the necessary skill sets to ensure success in a future where the speed and quality of decisions is what matters, and fact-based decision makers are how businesses gain advantage. These skills include: learning agility, creativity, storytelling, and business and data acumen.

- **Hire for analytics acumen.** Make knowledge and experience in analytics a requirement for all future roles in HR.

**Take bigger leaps**

- **Democratize people analytics.** When everyone—not just HR, your leadership, or people managers—capitalizes on the information contained within your data, both the business and its employees can make better decisions every day that lead to stronger people and financial results.

- **Learn new technologies by bringing them into HR.** Applying new technologies to HR itself is the opportunity to learn and lead by tackling the tough questions. For example, AI in HR is already choosing recruiting sources, selecting among job applicants, allocating incentive pay among workers, choosing learning and coaching offerings, and more.

- **Lead conversations on how your workplace will operate over the next decade.** Guide your organization in articulating the right questions around the Future of Work, develop frameworks to help answer them, and take an active role in mapping out how digital and technological shifts will influence your organization.

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**PARTNER SPOTLIGHT**

**Jill Silman Chapman**
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As companies adopt AI, cognitive tech, process automation, and robotics, etc., virtually every job will change to become more digital, more data-driven. Embracing technology will not mean removing humans from the equation. Instead, it increases the need for employers to provide greater relevance in the work people are pursuing. Awareness of the need for a new approach is already occurring. Companies are:

- Creating combined responsibilities for HR and IT.
- Leveraging machine learning and algorithms to automate work and create employee experiences that rival consumer experiences.
- Using data and analytics to proactively understand how to better attract, onboard, and retain talent.
- Providing continuous feedback to understand worker sentiments, motivations and pain points.

Specifically for HR professionals, it means their roles will become more focused on coaching and management issues, recruiting, and retention. In order to be effective, it will be imperative that HR and corporate leadership take into account critical new competencies—among them change management and digital/cognitive/AI-driven technologies—when pursuing traditional business goals.
The Fourth Industrial Revolution developed in earnest over the last ten years. From workplace robots to mobile systems, health-monitoring wearables to connected devices controlling the office environment, and virtual reality recruiting to predictive analytics for managing turnover, both organizations and employees were overwhelmed by the pace of disruption and change needed to succeed. The 2018 and 2019 PwC Global CEO Survey showed that ‘speed of technological change’ was one of the top 10 threats to organizational growth.

But it wasn’t just technology keeping everyone up at night. For the first time, there were four different generations in the workforce. Globalization led to the rise of remote work and virtual teams. Gig work exploded. (In 2016, McKinsey sized the freelance population at over 150 million individuals worldwide.)

Adapting to constant change

Whether it was related to technology or humans, the last decade showed that change is the new normal. In response, both the organization and HR underwent different digital transformations, but success has been spotty. This new fast-paced environment meant most organizations needed to deliver rapid results on new workforce initiatives and technology implementations, but without the luxury of time to test, roll out, and iterate over a period of years as they would’ve done in the past. The traditional model for change management no longer works in a digital world, which is why 70% of change management efforts fail.
The Next Decade of Work | Trend #7: Change Management Goes Digital

What to expect in the next 10 years

The new world demands more agile organizations, leaders, teams, and employees that can quickly adapt to and embrace change. A modern change management model will embrace digital tools, center on the employee experience, and be data-driven at its core. HR, with your understanding of human and social dynamics and equipped with analytics that surface long-hidden workforce answers, is uniquely positioned to helm the new tide of change management.⁴⁰

The following trends will emerge from this new model:

- **Digital becomes key to adoption and communication**
  HR must not only champion new technologies that will advance your organizations, but also leverage these tools in the communication, implementation, and enablement of changes organization-wide.

- **Evangelists from all levels of the organization will be empowered to support change**
  Support for change will no longer just come from the top down. The more people that share your vision for change and are empowered to spread the word, the quicker your organization can move through disruption. Find these champions at all levels of the business—not just at the very top.

- **A culture of change management**
  According to Sierra-Cedar, organizations with a “Culture of Continuous Change Management” are 4x as likely to be viewed by all levels of management as contributing strategic value, versus organizations that never use change management. Change management projects shouldn’t be planned with an end date in mind. Rather, the organizations that will succeed are those that build a culture continually ready to adapt to a dynamic environment and implement a continuous listening and feedback loop that enables them to iterate quickly on plans.

How to move forward with this trend

The first steps

- **Implement a change management strategy based on data**
  Start on your change management strategy today so you’re prepared for the next major disruption. Data on both your organization and your workforce will reveal what’s worked and what hasn’t with past change efforts. By using these data points, build a framework tailored to your organization’s unique needs, but also ensure it still has the flexibility and nimbleness needed to adapt to any scenario.

- **Find the evangelists for your next project**
  Find the people who have the savvy and skills to quickly embrace your next change initiative and learn what it takes to empower them to help others do the same.

- **Deploy technologies that enhance your change management strategies**
  Now is the time to find the technologies that will remove your roadblocks to smoother communication, implementation, and enablement. For example, when Bosch deployed people analytics, they used an internal social media platform to provide HRBPs with easy access to the tools and information they needed to learn the ins and outs of applying data analytics in business. Bosch also leveraged gamification to ensure what they learned was put into practice and created value.⁴²

Take bigger leaps

- **Use people analytics to actively identify trends and problem areas**
  As you go through your next change management project, leverage people analytics to see where hot spots are occurring. Is employee turnover increasing or decreasing? Dig deeper into the data to find where the issues are most prevalent, apply the appropriate interventions, and then use the learning to adapt your change management strategy.

- **Develop a continuous listening and feedback model**
  Implement a strong communication system that makes it easy for employees to give you feedback on how changes are impacting their work. Leverage a mix of tech—online feedback forms, mobile pulse surveys, and digital hubs—and regular in-person meetings to stay on top of both positive and negative sentiments. Then, once you know what’s working—and what’s not—make adjustments to show your company they’re truly being heard.

- **Build a culture of change management**
  Make it a priority that every person in your organization receives training on change management skills and strategies. Whether they’re leading a project or on the receiving end of one, developing these skill sets early will be critical to your organization’s future success.
In October 2019, the U.S. unemployment rate fell to its lowest rates since the late-60s. This was a steady trend over the last ten years, where every labor-based industry—from healthcare to retail to manufacturing—faced the pain of trying to hire workers in a tight talent market. Recruitment strategies evolved to become more digital and social-focused, while talent managers sought out online and offline ways to develop more attractive employee value propositions that made workers stay.

At the same time, a segment of the workforce seeking out short-term work began to grow. A 2017 study by Upwork found that 48% of departments used one or more of freelancers, temporary or agency workers. While contract work is nothing new to the corporate world, the number of “non-employees” performing hourly work is expanding.

Gig work finds traction in hourly labor

Despite historic unemployment rates, wages hardly moved up in the last decade, prompting workers to seek side hustles to fill out their incomes. Coupled with the economic downturn in 2008, the ground became ripe for a gig-based economy.

Gig work has technically always been part of the labor force (“on-call” or “casual” are the most common statuses for hourly workers). An on-call nurse or welder has no set hours or guaranteed pay—they simply work when asked and get paid for the hours they deliver. However, the success of startups like Uber and TaskRabbit prompted the growth of gig-focused platforms, which connect employers to skilled workers looking for short-term work.
What to expect in the next 10 years

The proliferation of gig work platforms in the hourly space will intensify as the need to quickly fill short-term and seasonal roles increases. Jyve, a gig-based app that recently raised $35 million in venture capital, enables grocers and retailers to find workers to perform hourly tasks like stocking products on shelves, inputting product orders, packing online orders and delivering them curbside, building in-store displays, and auditing shelving.¹⁵

What about unions?

Classifying gig workers has been a complex challenge—what benefits and rights do employers owe to independent contractors hired for a one-off task? The answer to this may or may not surface over the next decade, but HR should be prepared to adjust their labor policies as gig workers explore the possibility of unionizing. In 2019, gig workers for food delivery apps Foodora and Uber Eats made history by forming the first unions at food delivery platforms in Norway and Japan, respectively.⁷ Whether or not your organization makes gig workers part of its hourly labor force, pragmatic HR professionals would be wise to keep an eye on the unionization of the gig economy.

With unemployment expected to remain low, we’ll see labor-focused organizations embrace trends like the:

- **Redefinition of roles**
  The staying power of the gig economy means it’s time to rethink how work gets done. Freelancers may not fit precisely into the whole job of a caregiver or retail sales associate, but the opportunities to find talent become clearer when you see work as a series of tasks that can be shared, rather than a single job completed by one person.

- **Evaluation of gig worker impact**
  Unlike traditional employees, systems that track a freelancer’s employee lifecycle are relatively new. In order to measure the impact these kinds of workers have on the business, it’s essential to connect this data to your other workforce systems, so you can spot issues, trends, and opportunities.

- **Updating of traditional labor policies to incorporate freelancers**
  As gig work becomes more deeply rooted in hourly labor, HR will need to lead the change in creating policies that provide proper benefits, rights, and protections to these workers.
How to move forward with this trend

The first steps

• Deconstruct jobs in your organization
  To see where you can tap freelance platforms to alleviate work shortages, start by deconstructing the job into its tasks, advises Dr. John Boudreau, professor and research director at the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business and Center for Effective Organizations.66 This exercise will lead you to re-evaluate not just the nature of that job and the kind of talent needed to accomplish it, but the different types of arrangements—including contracts, gigs, alliances, volunteers, automation, etc.—that can be used to create a more fulfilling career path for all involved.

• Make your employment system more fluid
  On this topic, Boudreau says: “Your organization may not yet be ready to throw open its labor market to include all kinds of workers, but you can adopt elements of the fluid workforce for your own employees. New work and technology models include on-demand artificial intelligence, extreme personalization, and secure and accessible cloud-based work repositories. These repositories can provide a searchable location where work and workers can be identified and matched using a common lexicon.”63

• Be flexible if your employees decide to go gig
  One study found that German workers with more control over their work hours actually worked more, not less64. If you learn that employees are taking on side hustles, don’t let it dishearten you. Gig work may actually help them to keep their regular job instead of leaving it.

Take bigger leaps

• Pilot a test program
  If you’re ready to try incorporating gig work into your labor force, it’s important to conduct your due diligence. Once you know the scope of your test project, involve your partners in Legal, Compliance, IT, and Finance to find out what infrastructure and policies should be in place for gig workers to come in and accomplish the necessary tasks.

• Leverage Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) to set gig workers up for success
  Research shows non-employees are sometimes even more engaged than employees when they have emotional support from co-workers.60 ONA can be a vital tool to getting non-employee workers better connected with their employee team members and ensuring they don’t suffer from collaboration overload.61 (See Trend #9: Organizational Network Analysis Hits the Mainstream for more.)

• Build in measurement systems to better analyze gig work
  When gig work data is combined with multi-dimensional analysis that combines information from several systems, you gain powerful and actionable answers that will help you design the best programs for all your employees—and make a better impact on business goals.
Organizational Network Analysis Hits the Mainstream

**What happened from 2010 to 2020**

An entirely new type of organizational structure—one that relies on strong interpersonal relationships to thrive—emerged. With more organizations placing a premium on innovation, networks of teams started to eclipse hierarchical command-and-control structures.

**Organic team structures: The new gold**

The rise of teams and remote work prompted organizations to embrace collaboration tools. The revenues for collaboration software reached an all-time high in 2019, with rapid growth in spending on apps like Slack and Microsoft Teams. At the same time, demand for team chat and virtual meeting technology also increased. This enabled virtual relationships to form in more spontaneous, organic ways.

**From facilitation to optimization**

A few organizations went one step further, analyzing the by-product data from these collaboration platforms to perform what’s called organizational network analysis (ONA). By providing what expert Rob Cross describes as an “x-ray into the inner workings of an organization,” ONA helps leaders see the informal networks that do not get captured on the traditional org chart. It has not, however, been widely adopted. Many leaders expect HR leaders to have ONA capabilities, when in fact they do not—yet.
The Next Decade of Work | Trend #9: Organizational Network Analysis Hits the Mainstream

What to expect in the next 10 years

ONA will finally hit the mainstream—but it will look and feel very different. The majority of organizations have been reluctant to invest in ONA as a standalone platform, even though companies are very vulnerable when communication flows are not aligned with the overall business direction. The next decade will see a profound shift in ONA's user base, how it is sold, and what kind of insights are available.

In the future, ONA will rapidly evolve to become:

- **A feature, not a product**
  ONA enthusiasts won’t have to struggle to gain buy-in for the capability as a separate platform. Instead, ONA will become a critical feature for HCM, ERP, communication, and other transactional systems. Each system will provide a different lens on how work really gets done within the organization. Robust people analytics platforms will have the capacity to bring all these different perspectives together into one picture.

- **Personal and in-the-moment**
  As the volume of network data grows, new kinds of machine learning models will emerge that better predict what makes individual employees and teams successful. These insights can then be fed to rank and file workers as real-time suggestions through nudge engines.

- **Invisible**
  ONA will become as prevalent as the Google search engine. Employees will use the technology behind ONA every day without realizing it. With more vendors offering the capability as part of a pre-packaged solution, organizations won’t have to hire or nurture staff with advanced knowledge of machine learning or statistics to deploy it successfully.

**PARTNER SPOTLIGHT**

**Manish Goel**
CEO

To be successful, we will need to understand not just how an organization is structured, but also how work actually gets done through the relationships between people. In addition to having strong IQ and EQ, effective leaders increasingly need strong connectivity—or RQ (Relationship Quotient). ONA and people analytics platforms will be crucial in making it easier to measure an individual’s relationship network in an unbiased, evidence-based way.

ONA platforms analyze dynamic behavioral data, measuring how individuals collaborate whilst protecting individual privacy. People analytics platforms bring together the big picture data alongside relationship data to enable a more comprehensive analysis.

These complementary technologies work together to help leaders understand current gaps and unconscious biases in their networks and allow them to nurture more productive relationships, which are vital for any high-performing and more inclusive company operating in a fast-paced environment.
How to move forward with this trend

The first steps

- Connect with senior business leaders to gain an understanding of where the organization is headed five years in the future and how collaboration will play a role in supporting business goals. For example, your organization may need to engage more external stakeholders if it will be expanding its gig network. This will require your employees to nurture different kinds of relationships.

- Initiate more regular touch points (through pulse surveys) around whether peers and work networks are net contributors to or detractors from success in the business. This information can eventually be combined with ONA scores to gain insight into both the quality and quantity of team interactions. If an employee has very few connections and it's likely to impact their productivity or turn them into a flight risk, HR can make changes to ensure they increase the number of connections they have.

- Be clear in advising individuals on why you are collecting their personal data. Even if your future ONA capabilities will eventually become so seamless that they will be invisible to employees, you will still need a sound data privacy policy in place. When combined with data security measures and clear internal communications, this can help maintain employee trust.

Take bigger leaps

- Start experimenting with ONA tools and techniques. Measure the results of pilot projects to determine where this capability provides the most value to your organization. As ONA becomes increasingly embedded in various transactional systems, you will be in a better position to evaluate which systems are a must-have for your organization.

- Analyze social interactions and classify people in terms of their network role. To foster innovation, organizations need people who perform different types of roles within their network, such as people who have relationships across many groups and act as gateways for new ideas, and those who have relationships within their core group and can get ideas adopted locally. HR can use this information when considering who should be placed on a team.

- Identify how women and minorities are developing working relationships in correlation with promotion data. A trillion-dollar asset management firm, for example, used ONA to understand why there were fewer women receiving promotions, despite the company hiring an equal number of entry-level male and female employees. By determining whether employees are building networks that foster inclusion, HR can enable diverse employees to reach their full potential.
What happened from 2010 to 2020

Benchmarking became HR’s core tool for measuring processes, practices, and results against competitors. HR went beyond cost and headcount to seeking out comparison data that informed decisions around compensation, employee performance, overtime and absenteeism, diversity and inclusion, and more. The biggest challenge was ensuring the validity of the data—often based on voluntary surveys directed by third-party organizations—and getting to that data quickly.

Fast tracking benchmarking

Typically, HR was provided with static comparison data that was typically 24 months old. This was sufficient at a time when commercial markets were more predictable and industries evolved more slowly. But the last ten years have shown disruption is the new norm. To meet the demand for more timely data, some vendors directly embedded aggregated benchmarks from both within customer’s organizations and outside it. This access has opened HR to a new wave of benchmarking best practices.
By 2025, it’s estimated that 463 exabytes of data will be created each day globally—the equivalent of 212,765,957 DVDs per day. Consequently, this means the amount of human capital benchmarks will also rise. HR will have to rely on technology that ensures the right benchmarks are available at the right time, but that this data can also be relied on for its accuracy—or challenged if need be.

Finding the right standards for each organization

With people analytics expected to be even more accessible this decade (see Trend#2: People Analytics Becomes Accessible to Everyone), it will become easier for anyone in the organization to test benchmarks against internal workforce data and find the right standards for them. Companies like Merck KGaA are already doing this. They used people analytics to challenge the global span of control benchmark of 8-10 reports per manager. Merck’s analysis revealed their sales teams perform higher having a smaller team size than the global benchmark.

With the availability and accessibility of benchmark data increasing, HR will be expected to:

• **Challenge standards**
  Your data is unique to your organization and should be leveraged to improve overall objectives. Seek out ways to test external numbers against your own internal data so you can find the right standards to measure your organization by.

• **Make benchmarks available in real-time**
  Gone are the days when benchmarks are only available in PDF and refreshed on an annual basis. Instead, this data will keep up to be more reflective of the current work environment, while people analytics technology will aggregate and anonymize this information, making it easily available—in real-time—to everyone who needs it.

• **Benchmark everything**
  More data types mean HR will have the ability to compare and measure the performance of more workforce programs, such as employee skills or diversity and inclusion. Additionally, benchmarks will become more granular. For example, instead of looking at the overall balance of male and female employees, organizations can go deeper into exploring benchmark representation of women in leadership positions.

How to move forward with this trend

The first steps

• **Train HR and people leaders not to accept benchmarks at face-value**
  Critical thinking is a key skill for HR’s future and it’s imperative that anyone relying on benchmarks understands how to correctly use this data to make positive people decisions. Teach your leaders to always look for the “why” behind the data and know whether it’s the right standard to compare against.

• **Go beyond what you typically measure**
  While knowing how you stack up on employee turnover and salary is important, the pace of change and employee expectations mean HR needs to stay on top of standards in every area of the business.

• **Make continuous improvement a priority**
  Even if you’re beating the market average in one area, that doesn’t mean you should stop trying to improve. Performance is all relative. Seek to understand how your organization is really doing compared to your unique business goals.

Take bigger leaps

• **Integrate real-time benchmarks into your workflows**
  The businesses that succeed in the future are those that can react quickly to disruption. By having access to the most current benchmarks possible, you can pivot on plans or proactively make changes.

• **Use analytics to test standards**
  Measure your organization against industry and market data—then, use these findings to see how they stack against your organization’s goals. Strive for continuous improvement by being better than the average, and setting new goals that are informed by data.

• **Consider making benchmark data accessible and self-serve**
  When everyone has the facts and insights to support their decision-making process, you can create a culture of better decisions that contribute to more strategic outcomes.
The Next Decade of Work

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