

## HR automation: The trends you cannot ignore

**Author: Kudzai Derera . November 2020**

HR patterns will continue to drive change. As to which new *trends* will arise to shape the future of work, it is only fitting to look forward. There are more ways for HR managers to simplify processes than ever before. Routine work is taken over by software bots, and Chabot's are now growing recruiters' work. And their choices continue to expand, which in the year ahead will likely make *HR automation* a leading topic for organizations.

The big question is will *HR automation* lead to jobs being lost or will it make jobs all the more fascinating by discharging machines with boring work? Although there is proof that certain workers could be replaced by automation, the evidence is far from definitive. Technology is turning HR upside-down, and this paper-heavy department has been undermining it for a while. Employers predicted that 17% of work will be automated by 2020, compared to about 5% in 2014, according to [Willis Towers Watson](#), a global consulting company. For HR, automation is rapidly influencing the strategy of the workforce.

It significantly increases the capacity of HR analytics and aspirations for it. Technology is transforming typical HR roles such as recruiting, training and administration of benefits. And the implementation of all this transformation needs a strong HR position. According to Ravin Jesuthasan, a managing director at Willis Towers Watson and co-author of [Reinventing Jobs: A Four-Step Strategy to Apply Automation to Work](#), Automation drives change not by eliminating jobs but by eliminating unique job functions where humans are inefficient, unreliable or exposed to risk (Harvard Business Review Press, 2017).

A [KPMG study found](#) that it is possible to completely or partly automate virtually all HR functions. Of the 21 roles, only five were considered by KPMG to be comparatively less vulnerable to automation:

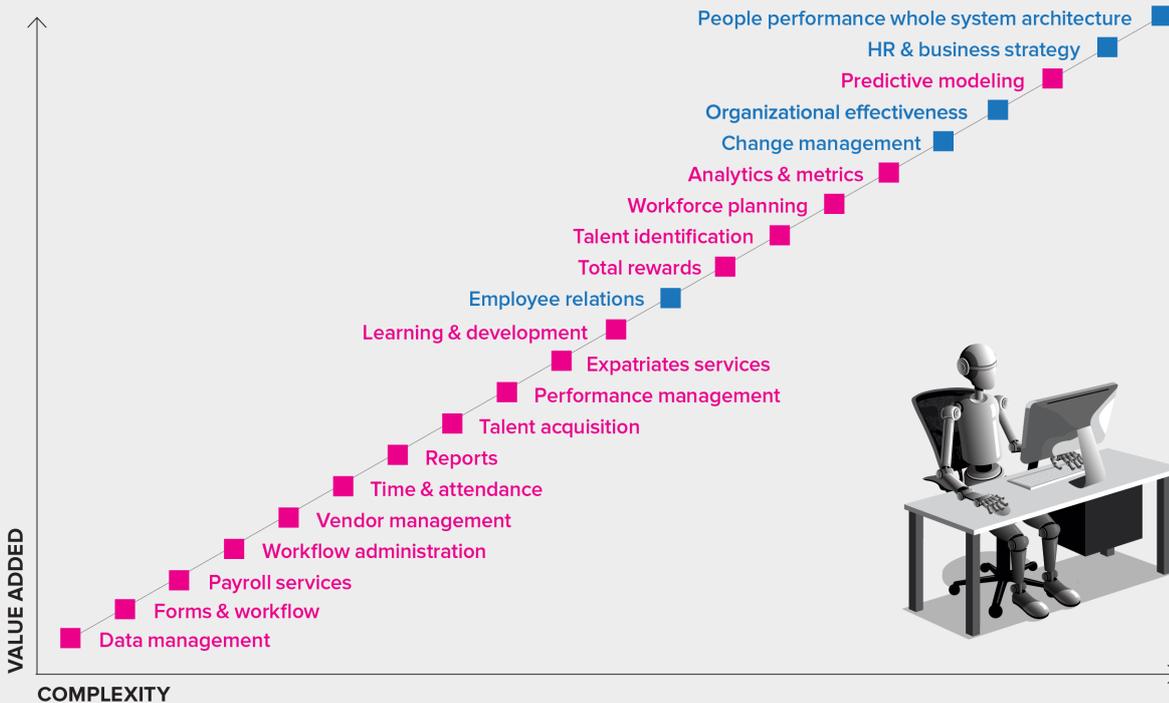
- Human efficiency of the entire device architecture (building a high-performance work system).
- Strategy for HR and company.
- Efficacy of an organization.
- Managing transition.
- Links with staff.

The following are some of the areas of HR that are most being impacted by automation.

## HR: IT'S AUTOMATIC

Virtually all HR services can be automated to some degree. Only five functions are relatively less susceptible to automation, according to KPMG International.

- Can be fully or partially automated
- Is less susceptible to automation



Source: KPMG International.

Source: [SHRM](#)

Digital innovation and disruption is nothing new. But maybe what's fresh is the focus that businesses put on digitally transforming HR. When talking about the biggest obstacle facing HR executives, [Gartner's Brian Kropp](#) points to this urgency:

“In a recent survey, two-thirds of business leaders told us that if their company does not digitalize more by 2020, it will no longer be competitive... We found that 88% of chief HR officers say they need to invest in three or more technologies over the next two years.”

Companies that do not transform will be left behind by those that do, sooner or later. Although this refers to creating a plan for digital transformation that can stick, it also goes beyond technology to solve people-centric problems. To keep pace with the rapid changes taking place, knowing market shifts is essential. To that end, to learn the top HR *trends* for 2020, we have consulted business leaders and experts so that you can make educated decisions for your company.

HR will likely continue to enhance HR technologies as we move to post COVID-19 to further facilitate

online learning and career growth, input and interaction, recruiting and onboarding and several other main functions. As HR leaders concentrate on the optimization of the combination of human and automated jobs, the future of HR is both digital and human. A new priority for HR is motivated by this: one that needs leaders and teams to build fluency in artificial intelligence while re-imagining HR as more intimate, human and intuitive. According to experts from research, this article details some of the biggest *HR automation trends* you cannot ignore and these are:

## 1. Artificial intelligence

To automate operations, almost every industry uses artificial intelligence (AI). Human capital is no different from that. One of the *HR trends* of 2020 is to integrate more AI instruments for improved productivity and workflow into daily operations. Artificial intelligence's influence should come as no surprise. For many years now, it has been a hot subject, making frequent appearances in forecasts about future developments in HR. We still expect it to play a significant role in HR going into 2020, however. Their first implementation of AI-based HR tools is in talent acquisition for most businesses, explains [Adaface co-founder Deepti Chopra](#). Companies who adopt AI would see a substantial reduction in time-to-hire and a noticeable increase in candidate experience. For example, it would free up hours of your time each week by using chatbots to correspond with candidates.

HR professionals may also [use AI for](#):

- Verifying the experience and education listed on the resumes of candidates
- Spot acts that suggest that an employee wishes to leave the organization
- Managing the success of workers
- Respond to HR questions from employees
- Customize career path ideas, professional development options for each employee, etc.
- Detect behavioural abnormalities that may suggest time stealing, corruption or other wrongdoing

## 2 Remote employees

In the US, [4.7 million people operate remotely](#), and that figure has grown exponentially due to the COVID-19 outbreak. HR departments face a specific set of challenges, with so many people working from home. For example, how do you:

- Make workers feel a sense of community in the business?
- Manage efficiency and morale for employees?
  
- Do they work in various time zones where workers are located?
- If you don't see the individuals in person, investigate questions and complaints?

There are some upsides to remote work. [Stephanie Lane, HR manager](#) says it, allows employee scheduling flexibility, and it also expands the talent pool from which a business can hire. Workers with no travel and more flexible hours are often more efficient. Moreover, with a remote workforce, [employers save cash](#). Fewer workers in the workplace means:

- Fewer benefits (e.g. snack closet, coffee machine, parking spots)
- Smaller departments that have fewer costs
- Fewer materials for office to buy

### 3. Virtual team building

You can't rely on conventional team bonding exercises with employees located in various cities, states and countries. To help teams connect, HR practitioners have to get innovative, giving managers virtual team building ideas. Team Building CEO [Michael Alexis](#) says that if more teams operate from home, some companies will find out how. How to make a long-term strategy for [virtual team building]. His business provides video-call-based events where, while they are not physically together, far-flung teammates can have fun together. These include official Olympics virtual versions and a campfire complete with s'mores.

The other suggestions from Alexis include:

- [Tea vs. Coffee](#): Each member of the team receives a package of samples of tea and coffee to taste during a virtual hangout together.
- [Museum Hack](#): In a friendly, directed environment, remote teams learn story-telling skills.

### 4. Automation

Over the past several years, I have seen a huge upswing in the technology that people in HR use to become more efficient and effective, says [Ralph Chapman](#), CEO of HR Search Pros. As 2020 continues, I am confident we will continue to see the use of software to automate more and more HR tasks. There is a lot to be done by HR practitioners and sometimes not enough time or staff to achieve it all. [Reduce the workload](#) by automating the tasks below:

- Payroll
- Billable time management
- Recruitment and onboarding
- Records management
- Employee benefits management
- Employee evaluations
- Tax documentation

Using a case management system is another way to streamline the processes. To improve processes, spot patterns and mitigate risk, HR case management software makes it easy to easily monitor, manage and address workplace accidents and misconduct.

### 5. Data-driven strategies

Every day, HR professionals have to make hundreds of choices, each one a choice that could potentially

alter the company's course. With no direction but your intuition, you have to approve or reject applicants, select incentive programs and job benefits, arrange activities and assess employees. The use of metrics and analytics reduce guesswork, which is why today it is one of the major HR phenomena. There is a wealth of information that can be tracked and measured, says [Ellen Mullarkey, Messina Staffing Group's Vice President of Business Growth](#). Those who figure out how to use this information most effectively will be the most successful companies in the coming decade.

Using HR methods that are guided by data to:

- Select applicants based on their ability to succeed, skillset and the ability to work for you in the long term.
- Determine and remove risk factors for leaving for enhanced retention
- Gather insight into how staff can be more involved and inspired
- Build training modules that relate to the learning style and speed of employees.
- In your company, identify areas of risk and incorporate training to resolve them.

## 6. Employee learning

HR departments should concentrate in 2020 on helping workers meet their learning objectives. Whether it's personal or professional advancement, according to [Clodagh Beaty](#), co-creator of the Emotional Salary Barometer, workers who believe their growth is encouraged by their employer would be more committed, inspired and efficient. Beaty states that while professional growth and development will continue to be significant, we expect personal growth initiatives to increase." The value of personal growth in the development of leadership and the concentration on intent and sense at work will continue [emphasis original].

How do you inspire workers to take ownership of their personal and professional avenues of learning? Try these suggestions:

- Give yearly stipends for education
- Require (and pay for each employee and/or manager for at least one annual professional development course
- Add paid time off to employee leave allotments for volunteering and educational programs
- Ask workers in their annual self-assessment to express their professional and personal priorities

## 7. Better onboarding

Companies are finally beginning to recognize that they need to find, train and maintain their staff adequately because unemployment is at a low level, says [Brett Holubeck](#), lawyer and editor of the Texas Labor Law Blog. In short, given the lack of qualified and available staff, companies will want to find the right people, train them well and try to maintain them. Although it is the intention of every HR professional to recruit the perfect candidate for every position, when you are in a rush to fill a job, you can have to "make do". That's why it is important to modern onboarding processes to upgrade old training programs or build new ones. When they first start working, successful training modules will fill

in the skill gaps that candidates have.

Onboarding also takes on greater importance as certain jobs are eliminated, new technologies are introduced into an organization, and employees change positions, Holubeck says. Don't just depend on a day-one orientation about the history of your business. Add elements to the onboarding system, such as:

- Core values of your business
- The direction in which your business is heading
- Annual targets for the company
- The vision of the company, as reported by your CEO or other senior executives

## 8. Workplace experience

HR practitioners should strive for a [positive employee experience](#) rather than concentrating on employee engagement, Beaty says. This pattern in HR shifts from the paternalistic to a more human-centred relationship, empowering staff and encouraging accountability. Beaty recommends concentrating on the following aspects to create improved employee experience:

- **Aim:** Enable staff in their job to find purpose and meaning
- **Autonomy:** Consider providing more detail to workers about how, when and where they work.
- **Belonging:** Find ways to include remote and freelance jobs, as well as those of various generations, ethnicities, gender identities, etc.

## 9. Health advocacy programs

[Teri Dreher, RN and President of NShore Patient Advocates](#), says: As the high cost of health insurance continues to challenge employers, more firms shift to community high-deductible health plans (HDHPs) to contain costs. Since employers also need higher out-of-pocket expenses for these forms of insurance programs, they can need help navigating their healthcare choices. That's why it's possible to enhance employee experience by incorporating a health advocacy initiative in your compensation package. Through their healthcare choices, advocates direct patients, acting as liaisons with medical professionals, financial counsellors, and tools for medical questions and guidance.

These services will also save the organization money, according to Dreher, by may health insurance costs as employees become more knowledgeable about healthcare. HR practitioners can also save time as they can redirect concerns about health insurance to a lawyer.

## 10. Caregiving benefits

As the world's population ages, [one out of six working](#) Americans has to juggle their work with caring for an elderly or disabled family member. Many caregivers have said that their roles have significantly affected their jobs. In 2020, elder care services for workers should be introduced by HR agencies. What would you do to support staff with caregiving obligations? EverythingBenefits CEO and Co-Founder

---

[Rachel Lyubovitzky](#) suggest:

- Flexible Hours of Work
- Remote opportunities for job
- A care support package to cover costs of caregiving
- Respite treatment to give time off from caregiving to staff
- Paying family leaves

When workers are not as emotionally and physically drained out with their caregiving duties, at work they will be happier, more involved and more efficient.

## 11. Inclusion

Focusing on the inclusion component of diversity and inclusion initiatives would be one of the 2020 HR *trends*. As described above a sense of belonging to the community is a crucial part of the enhanced employee experience. For a more and more diverse workforce, HR teams must find ways to create inclusion in company culture. Fostering a culture of the workplace that empowers employees to feel that they can show up to work and be themselves will become more important as the line between work and life continues to blend, says [Stacey Engle, president of Fierce](#), a workplace communication training business.

Moreover, she says, the US election year could lead to strong opinions and short tempers. Ensure that workers feel confident, valued and free to express their beliefs. Crackdown on harassment to improve your inclusion efforts, ensure that you implement policies consistently.

## 12. Open workforce

A lot of HR departments are turning to the open workforce to find the best talent. That is, on an as-needed basis, recruiting freelancers and independent contractors. In in-house teams, these non-traditional workers can fill skill holes, as well as pick up the slack when you're short-handed. In their recruiting and retention efforts, HR must be innovative, says [Michael Morris, CEO of Topcoder](#), the tech talent network. He says, Doesn't work for this new employee age, a mobile, multitasking, gig economy workforce, more conventional recruiting techniques.

Independent jobs constitute [over 4 million Americans](#). You could be losing out on top talent if you do not tap into the open workforce.

## 13. Candidate experience

According to [Malte Scholz, CEO and Co-Founder of Airfocus](#), one of the main HR *trends* for 2020 is improving applicant experience during the recruitment process. With more open vacancies, businesses must compete for the brightest, most eligible applicants. One way to do that is to make the method of the application smoother. Scholz urges No more resumes and cover letters Using applications[that] take

only a few minutes to fill out or pull relevant details from the LinkedIn profiles of the applicants instead. You might lose out on great candidates who are too busy to finish it if your application process is too long or comprehensive.

He also recommends an increased focus on social media ads promoting open positions to make it easier for applicants to find work posts. Instead of depending on them to find you, go where the applicants are.

## 14. Pre-employment assessments

It is becoming a thing of the past to rely on resumes and cover letters to assess the suitability of an applicant for a job. In 2020, HR practitioners can develop pre-employment tests to assess the skills of candidates. Before you recruit them, screen the applicants, suggests [Dmytro Okunyev, founder of Chanty](#). That way, based on the ability of the candidates to get the job done and not the words on their resume, you can hire them. Candidates can lie or get help writing their resume about the experience, but they should not flub an in-person and/or timed [evaluation](#). Work with executives to build evaluations for open positions, including:

- **Skills assessment:** testing the applicant for particular skills and tasks needed for the role
- **Personality tests:** reveal personality characteristics to see if the applicant, the team and the organization will fit well in the role.
- **Aptitude tests:** test the candidate on skills that apply to every position (e.g. problem-solving, critical thinking, ability to learn)

## 15. Recruitment marketing

Hiring the right people in 2020 needs a reflection as an employer of who the company is. HR divisions are now strategically thinking about their brand as an employer, says [Cass Bailey, CEO of Slice Communications](#). Utilize recruitment marketing to do this. Recruitment marketing is close to the conventional marketing method, except you're recruiting candidates instead of trying to recruit clients. Recruitment marketing is proactive and continuous, unlike normal recruitment. Even if there are no open positions in your company, through your social media and blog, you want to communicate what it is like to work there. Share videos of workers sharing their experience as an employee, for example, or behind-the-scenes images of employees at work.

Departments of HR and marketing should work together to develop a communications plan to communicate what it means to work for your company.

## 15. Mobile-friendly recruitment

Tech-savvy jobseekers will expect to be able to find jobs on their mobile devices in 2020 and apply for them on the go, rather than waiting to do so, says [Dane Amyot, bountiXP's Managing Director](#). Many adults have mobile devices, and it's their main means of accessing the internet for others. Consequently, one of the most important HR *trends* to pursue is a mobile-friendly website. You risk missing out on

eligible applicants who leave the process if it is long, difficult to read or difficult to use on the mobile phone. A mobile-friendly recruiting system also makes the work of HR professionals simpler. You can also screen and connect with candidates if you need to drive for work or have a long ride on public transit.

As technology progresses and best practices evolve, the face of human resources shifts as well. You need to keep up with the latest developments if you want to work effectively when hiring successful applicants and retaining good employees. In reality, artificial intelligence augmented reality, biometric tracking and other developments in HR technology are becoming less futuristic and more grounded. In addition to these technological advancements, an increased emphasis is put on the human aspect of HR: the experience an employee has with a company, better ways of performing performance reviews and new work habits.

Kudzai Derera is a Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a management and human resources consulting firm.

LinkedIn: <https://zw.linkedin.com/in/kudzaiderera>

Phone: +263 242 481946-48/481950

Email: [kudzai@ipccconsultants.com](mailto:kudzai@ipccconsultants.com)

Main Website: [www.ipccconsultants.com](http://www.ipccconsultants.com)

<https://thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/HR-Automation-The-Trends-You-Cannot-Ignore>