

## The top 10 trends in HR going to 2022

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While 2021 was a year of rethinking HR and establishing its new function, 2022 will be all about pushing the limits of what HR can do. In this post, we will look at HR trends that impact how we manage human resources.

The way we work and how businesses operate has evolved dramatically in the last two years. The disruption to our economies and organizations has been ongoing rather than episodic, ranging from the initial shift toward complete remote working, frequent lockdowns, and health concerns, to the Great Reopening (only to be quickly followed by the Great Resignation and talent shortages). And that no other company function has been under more pressure than Human Resources to keep up with the rapid pace of change. That is why, in 2022 and beyond, it is even more critical to be aware of these HR trends and understand how to use them to create transformation and add more business value.

The year 2021 was marked by change, as organizations worldwide struggled to respond to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which afflicted large and small businesses in every industry. If 2020 has taught us anything, companies that do not transform will fall behind those that do. This pertains to creating a sustainable digital transformation strategy, but it extends beyond technology to address people-centric concerns.

Understanding industry transitions is critical for keeping up with the fast-paced advances, particularly in light of the pandemic. To that end, we consulted industry leaders and experts to understand the top HR trends for 2021, so you can make informed business decisions.

### Virtual work is here to stay

The rise of the new way to work, a change away from the old work model toward one that is more flexible and worker-centric, as seen by the growing acceptability of working from home and the rise of the gig economy, was one of the trends we forecasted for 2022.

The way work is done changed dramatically, from government-mandated lockdowns to corporations migrating to a full-time work-from-home model wherever practicable. For some, the transformation is

irreversible. Twitter has decided that any employee who does not need to be in the office (for example, to maintain servers) can work from home at any time. In a similar vein, Microsoft said that working from home would become a permanent part of its culture, emphasizing allowing employees to tailor their work schedules to meet their lifestyles.

Other large firms, such as Facebook, Shopify, and Slack, have embraced the new reality of working from home, which has normalized and elevated it.

When the world reopens, it's evident that the working environment will not be the same as before. According to Gallup polling, 65 percent of workers would want to continue working from home after COVID.

Similarly, IBM discovered that approximately 85% of respondents polled in the middle of 2020 planned to work from home in some capacity when the lockdowns were removed, with 58 percent saying they wanted remote work to be their primary mode of operation.

Salesforce research provides the most in-depth perspective. According to a survey conducted in May 2020, 69 percent of respondents thought that "the epidemic will permanently disrupt the nature of work." In a June survey, 37 percent of respondents said that working from home full-time would be the most tempting option, while another 32 percent said a combination of home and office would be their preference.

Once the pandemic is over, it's apparent that a more remote, digital work environment will persist. The methods by which businesses adapt to this reality will significantly impact the future, especially on the next four trends on our list.

## **Companies Double Down on Digital**

Another trend we expect to see is an emphasis on what's been dubbed "digital-first work," given the shift to a workplace that's increasingly virtual and more isolated from an office. As businesses try to figure out how this new age will affect their culture and values, this has far-reaching repercussions.

According to KPMG, 77 percent of CEOs polled want to "expand their usage of collaboration and communication technologies," with 67 percent preferring to invest in technology, with 33 percent choosing to spend on worker skills.

Similarly, according to the Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends Study for 2021, the most critical aspect in sustaining this new working model is "introducing digital collaboration platforms."

Josh Bersin, a famous HR thought leader and analyst, took this concept a step further in his research. One of the responsibilities of the return to work, according to his report *The Big Reset Playbook*, is balancing a hybrid work environment. Countries that are not subject to COVID-19 regulations have adopted a hybrid model, with workers visiting an actual workplace less frequently.

## **Teams Play an Essential Role**

"Superteams," according to Deloitte, are the way of the future. A superteam combines people and technology to generate results faster and on a larger scale than would be achievable otherwise.

Factors that contribute to successful superteams, according to their survey data, include:

- Creating a "culture that celebrates growth, adaptability and resilience" (45% of executives surveyed).
- Enabling a capable workforce "through upskilling, reskilling and mobility" (41% of executives surveyed).
- "Implementing new technologies" (35% of executives surveyed).

## **HR Design is a Strategic Focus**

The concept of design, according to Millner, should be a significant priority in the coming years. What are your thoughts on this? HR design, according to Millner, helps strategy in three ways:

- Shaping to shape the future design of a new organization.
- Designing the new and reshaped employment that will be required due to new working patterns and automation.

- Regarding behavioral and technical demands, identifying the new competencies and expectations that the new world of work will impose on the workforce, its managers, and its leaders.

"This means that some of the older techniques that don't appear to be part of the standard HR toolset (such as organizational design, job design, scenario planning, and so on) need to be examined, and HR practitioners reskilled as needed" Millner stated.

According to Gartner's research, "organizational design and change management" was also the second-most critical issue for HR leaders in 2021. Managers who aren't suited to lead change (37 percent) and staff tiredness due to the quantity of change occurring are among the issues mentioned (36 percent).

## Employee experience is redefined

According to Gartner, the third most significant major project among HR directors in 2019 was employee experience (EX). While employee experience is ranked sixth on Gartner's list of HR leader objectives for 2021, it's evident that this trend will continue to be relevant and significant in the future.

Giving employees a voice is another approach for organizations to improve the employee experience amid uncertain times. According to a Qualtrics survey, the greatest approach to enhance EX is to collect feedback from employees and then act on it. Sixty-five percent of employees stated it's very or extremely important for their firm to listen to feedback. The following are some of the advantages of "converting feedback into action," according to the study:

- Employees in companies that do not have a listening program are twice as engaged.
- Almost 70% are very or extremely likely to stay with a company for a longer period.
- In the face of change, more than 90% will be more resilient.

According to Dave Ulrich, a professor, author, speaker, and HR thought leader, stopping at EX improvement isn't enough. He feels that for businesses to profit from the employee experience fully, it needs to be taken a step further. In an article, he noted, "Building employee experience is not enough, HR must link employee experience to customer experience and investor confidence."

## **Mental Health Gets the Attention it deserves**

The pandemic's influence on mental health has been one of the most noticeable. According to an SHRM analysis from the first half of 2020, up to 35% of employees surveyed reported experiencing depression symptoms regularly, while 41% indicated work burnout and 45% stated they felt "emotionally drained from their work."

Furthermore, according to a Hibob poll, the epidemic reduced mental health by 27% among workers in the United States and the United Kingdom. We are living in historic times. It should come as no surprise that the stress and anxiety that broad swaths of the public are experiencing has taken its toll. As businesses hurried to respond to a crisis beyond their control, well-being became a factor that couldn't be overlooked.

Chevron, EY, Verizon Media, and TIAA assisted their employees' mental health in many ways, including access to qualified counselors, a recognition program, a daily newsletter with resources, monthly mental health challenges, and more.

## **Data Becomes the New Currency**

Millner believes that an emphasis on data will be a top strategic focus of HR in the next years. As a result of the pandemic's shift to remote work, he continued, businesses had to rely more on tools to determine how engaged and productive their employees were. As a result, they turned to data insights for guidance.

According to a recent Mercer analysis, data is crucial in terms of measurable impact. According to the study, more than 60% of executives believe that employing personnel analytics to make data-driven choices is the most critical HR trend.

## **DEI Receives Major Focus**

Companies have faced increased pressure to support DEI projects throughout time, particularly from younger generations (diversity, equality, and inclusion). As HR professionals work to address racism, unfair salaries, and other issues, diversity and inclusion have become part of the discourse.

A Rolodex of news items in 2020 highlighted new concerns, actions, and activities that have pushed DEI to the forefront even more. As a result, companies ranging from Google to Nielsen and beyond are putting a greater emphasis on these issues than ever before. According to KPMG, 81 percent of CEOs say their company has or will "publicly declare new anti-black racism actions."

Another result of the pandemic in 2020 is a decline in the number of women in the workforce. According to a McKinsey study, women are roughly 1.5 times more likely than males to leave employment, with the United States possibly losing over 2 million women. New home life responsibilities resulting from school closures and other circumstances played a significant impact. According to McKinsey, 15% of mothers spend five or more hours in their household than they did before the epidemic, compared to 7% of males.

## **Workers are Equipped with the Skills and Tools They Need to Navigate Uncertainty**

The battle for talent has been a recurring theme in recent years. Companies have to compete for top personnel due to record low unemployment rates and a candidate-favored market. COVID-19 redefined that trend, as well as many others, in the past year.

Instead of just luring top talent from outside the business to fill vacancies, the new frontier of the talent war, triggered by the pandemic, will empower people with the tools they need to obtain the skills they need.

According to a KPMG survey, CEOs see the pandemic as the top danger to growth, and "developing skills and critical competencies" is the top goal for 68 percent of HR leaders in 2021, according to Gartner. Furthermore, according to Deloitte data, more than half of respondents believe that between 50% and 100% of employees will need to update their abilities in the next three years.

The ongoing emergence of AI and robotics is a significant driver of the need for personnel to be suitably equipped in the face of this change. According to a McKinsey report, 68 percent of executives expect employment to expand in automation and technology roles, with 35 percent citing AI, automation, and robotics as areas where more qualified personnel will be needed.

## HR Offers Guidance to Drive Success

Ulrich projected that HR guidance supplied through an organization guidance system (OGS) would be a big trend in 2020 and would play a significant role in the future. In a LinkedIn blog post, he argued that such a system "shifts thinking about and actions in businesses from descriptive to prescriptive."

"By starting with desired outcomes from key stakeholders inside (e.g. employees' competence, well-being, and productivity, and business strategic clarity, positioning, and delivery) and outside (e.g. customer net promoter scores or customer share, investor profitability today and confidence for tomorrow, and community reputation for social responsibility)," he explained.

An OGS, in essence, specifies desired objectives in four essential areas for corporate success: talent, organization, leadership, and human resources. "Once intended goals are specified, an OGS guides choices about how to best achieve the outcomes," Ulrich explained. "Guidance is more about what should be done than what is done."

According to Ulrich, notable situations from 2020, such as pandemic demands, economic problems, and social upheaval, have prompted the need for innovation. "Using empirical facts, guidance assists in identifying the optimal answer."

"Technology has enabled digital information to progress beyond descriptive dashboards and scorecards to insights based on big data to recommendations to decide which activities deliver specified outcomes," he added.

"HR's chance to create value through targeted organization effectiveness initiatives in talent, leadership, organization, and HR may now be fulfilled," Ulrich stated in another LinkedIn article. These efforts will benefit from a portfolio strategy, which will better allocate resources (time, energy, and money) to critical organizational effectiveness targets."

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