



AI In HR In 2025

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AI is changing the rules – and HR has a critical role to play.

“ Almost all companies invest in AI, but just 1 percent believe they are at maturity. Our research finds the biggest barrier to scaling is not employees – who are ready – but leaders, who are not steering fast enough.

McKinsey, 2025

The AI boom isn't just about disruption, it's about reinvention. From how we define jobs, to how work gets done, to who does it — AI is reshaping the foundations of organizational success. And HR sits at the center of that change.

For years, HR has talked about aligning people strategies to business goals. Now, AI makes that ambition achievable — at scale and in real time. When deployed thoughtfully, it gives HR the visibility, speed and insight to drive better decisions about talent: what skills are needed, what work is changing, and how to adapt.

Business leaders are taking note. According to [Microsoft's 2025 Work Trend Index](#), 82% of leaders say this is a pivotal year to rethink key aspects of their strategy and operations, and 45% say expanding team capacity with digital labor is a top priority.



But while the appetite is there, many organizations are still stuck in pilot mode – or worse, taking a tech-first approach that bypasses People teams entirely.

That's a risk. As AI transforms the workforce, HR leaders are uniquely positioned to ensure that transformation benefits both the business and its people. They understand how work is structured, where the gaps are, and how to build cultures that support adoption. But they must act now.

There's a clear gap between intent and execution: 79% of business leaders say adopting AI is crucial to remain competitive — yet 60% admit they lack a clear strategy ([LinkedIn & Microsoft, 2024](#)).

This is HR's moment to lead. Not by managing AI in isolation, but by integrating it into the decisions, systems, and structures that shape business outcomes.

From skills to tasks: A new way to understand work

Much of the early AI conversation in HR has centered around skills — and for good reason. AI is accelerating the rate of skills change. By 2030, 70% of the skills used in most jobs will have shifted ([LinkedIn, 2025](#)). A skills-based approach allows you to more flexibly align people with tasks — widening your talent pool in the process.

But skills alone don't give you a complete picture of what work needs to get done.

To build a workforce that's truly agile, HR leaders need to understand work at the level of tasks: the day-to-day activities that create value for the business. This is where AI unlocks new possibilities.

By analyzing job postings and resumes, along with other workforce data, AI can help HR teams:

- Break down roles into their component tasks
- Spot overlaps and adjacencies across functions
- Identify tasks that could be augmented with AI, or fully automated
- Predict which skills will be needed for future work
- Make smarter calls on buy/build/borrow strategies



This kind of task-level visibility is what allows HR to move from reactive to proactive workforce planning. Instead of saying “We need more data analysts,” you can see that what you really need is help with, for example, data cleansing, visualization and stakeholder storytelling — some of which can be automated, some reassigned, and some upskilled internally.

This approach also enables faster, more personalized internal mobility. When roles are mapped by tasks — not just titles — it's easier to spot people who are already doing 60% of the work required and just need targeted development to step into the role.

The [World Economic Forum's latest Future of Jobs report](#) shows that nearly half of employers expect to redeploy staff into new roles as AI automates certain tasks — a powerful opportunity to reduce costs and close talent gaps at the same time. But doing this well requires a deep understanding of work. That's a capability AI can now deliver — and HR can now own.

The business case for HR-led AI adoption

AI within the HR function is not just a back-office upgrade. It's a competitive advantage.

Organizations that apply AI to improve how they hire, develop and deploy people are seeing real business outcomes: from faster hiring to improved retention, better decision-making, and more resilient operations.

Consider:

- Companies using AI effectively in HR are 1.3x more likely to be highly effective at recruiting, 1.2x more effective at data-driven people decisions, and 1.4x more effective at learning and development ([McLean & Company, 2025](#)).
- A recent McKinsey survey found that HR is the business function seeing the most meaningful cost reductions from GenAI ([McKinsey, 2025](#)).

HR teams need to be leading the charge here. But to make the case, the conversation needs to shift:

- From efficiency to outcomes
- From tools to transformation
- From AI-as-a-service to AI-in-the-service-of-strategy

Traditional metrics of success might not always be appropriate. "As technology's role and potential impacts become more complex, so does the value case for it," as noted by [Deloitte](#).



Failing to invest in the right technology risks undermining outcomes across human performance, business results, innovation, and employee experience – leading to potential loss of trust from workers, customers, and investors.

Leaders must navigate the tension between prioritizing immediate, measurable gains from automation versus longer-term, harder-to-quantify value from AI-driven augmentation that enhances capabilities and drives innovation.

CHROs must integrate AI into everyday decision-making: workforce planning, headcount approvals, succession strategies, internal hiring, skills development. It means equipping managers to understand what tasks AI can handle, what skills their teams need next, and where to invest in talent. And it means giving the business a people function that's predictive, precise, and performance-driven.

AI won't replace HR. But HR teams that don't adapt risk being sidelined – not by AI itself, but by the functions that are already using it to solve business problems faster.

What AI readiness really looks like for HR teams

AI readiness isn't about buying the most advanced technology or hiring a squad of data scientists. At its core, it's about whether your HR function has the right foundations and capabilities to harness AI to make better decisions – faster, fairer, and at scale.

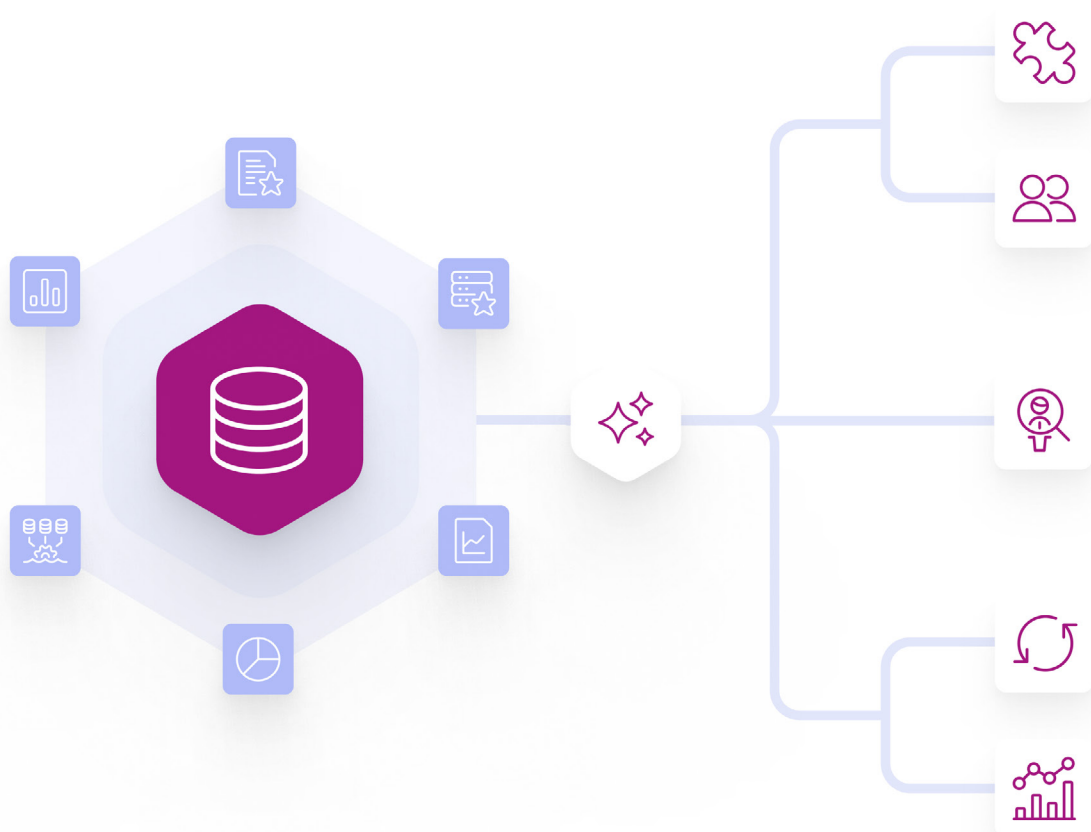
One of the most critical foundations is data readiness: having clean, connected, and reliable workforce data that AI can learn from and act upon. Without this unified, accurate data, even the best AI tools will struggle to provide trusted insights or deliver meaningful business outcomes.

For many HR teams, building AI readiness means developing new muscles in four core areas:

1. WORKFORCE VISIBILITY

You can't optimize what you can't see. Readiness starts with a clear understanding of your current workforce: not just roles and org charts but skills, tasks, capabilities, and career paths. This requires consolidating fragmented data from across your HR systems – ATS, LMS, HCM – and enriching it with AI to create a dynamic, searchable picture of your people.

This step of data integration is critical: AI depends on a unified and accurate data foundation to identify skill gaps and redundancies, spot untapped internal talent, and model how work could be redistributed using automation, upskilling, or redeployment.



2. SKILLS-BASED INFRASTRUCTURE

Moving from a job-centric to a skills-centric approach doesn't happen overnight. It requires reworking your processes, policies, and systems to make skills the common language across the employee lifecycle.

This means creating a robust skills taxonomy (ideally aligned to industry frameworks and kept updated by AI), tagging roles, learning content, career paths, and job descriptions with the right skills, and updating hiring, performance, and development processes to focus on skills rather than tenure or titles.

All of this relies on accurate and well-maintained skills data. But AI doesn't just depend on that data: it can help generate and structure it. From inferring skills from candidate and employee profiles, job descriptions, and learning activity, to automatically tagging content and roles with the right skill attributes, AI can accelerate the shift to a skills-based approach.



3. GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBLE AI USE

AI can introduce risks as well as rewards. HR needs to set the guardrails for ethical, transparent, and inclusive AI use across the people function. This includes defining clear guidelines on where AI can and cannot be used, ensuring that AI model outputs can be explained and audited, and involving legal, compliance, and DE&I teams early in the rollout process.

Trusted governance depends on trustworthy data: garbage in, garbage out applies here. Without clean, audited data inputs, AI risks bias or errors that undermine fairness and employee trust.

4. REAL BUSINESS ALIGNMENT

The ultimate marker of AI readiness isn't a roadmap or shiny tech: it's whether your AI use moves the needle on your business goals.

Are you filling critical roles faster? Adapting to market shifts without costly restructures?
Unlocking productivity by reassigning or automating the right tasks?

AI outcomes only matter if they connect to measurable business results. This requires embedding AI into strategic decision-making – from workforce planning to leadership development to M&A – and having the data quality and measurement in place to prove impact.

Where leading teams are already seeing results

The promise of AI in HR is no longer theoretical. Leading teams are already applying it across the talent lifecycle — and seeing measurable gains in efficiency, agility, fairness, and workforce performance.

AI is helping HR teams:

1. TURN WORKFORCE DATA INTO ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

AI can unify and enrich scattered data from multiple systems, creating a real-time, skills-based view of your workforce, and a task-based view of work. That visibility powers smarter, faster decisions — from identifying skill gaps, to pinpointing opportunities for automation or redeployment.



“The difference now is that there is a tech enablement opportunity that we didn’t have before. We were all probably looking at spreadsheets and then they’d become obsolete... Now, having the ability to know what skills you have in your company... to then predict what skills you’re going to need in the future, and filling the gap, is really how your company is going to grow.”

Jacqui Canney

Chief People Officer, ServiceNow

2. BUILD AND MAINTAIN A SHARED SKILLS LANGUAGE

HR teams are using AI to create standardized, dynamic skills taxonomies — connecting roles, tasks, and talent profiles in a living framework. This shared skills infrastructure unlocks better hiring, internal mobility, and development decisions across the business.



“AI is going to help us very, very much to merge the hundreds of taxonomies that we’re going to find in the market... artificial intelligence is going to be critical in order to make sure that we are going to be able to understand the different set of skills that a person has.”

Fernando Bellon

Head of Talent Acquisition, BBVA

3. MAKE FASTER, FAIRER HIRING DECISIONS

AI tools can match candidates to roles based on skills and inferred potential, rather than just titles or keyword matches. That helps recruiters find qualified talent faster — and reduce bias in the process. AI can supplement human intelligence in Talent Acquisition by offering up candidates that may have been overlooked by other methods.



“What we’ve done quite recently is looked at some of those high performers’ backgrounds and their skills that they possess. And it turns out a lot of them aren’t typically what the hiring manager would have set out to hire for, but they possess those skills.”

Olga Power

Global Director of Talent Acquisition at Just Eat Takeaway

4. IMPROVE THE TALENT EXPERIENCE

AI enables personalization at scale — tailoring the candidate and employee journey to individual needs and aspirations. From customized content and job suggestions to smarter communication and nudges, AI is helping HR teams deliver better, more relevant experiences that reflect the expectations of today’s workforce.



“We are able to customize the content that is being sent and shared with candidates. We’re able to provide custom job recommendations based on their skills and their job title. This component of AI is going to change how companies interact with candidates.”

Mike Rizzi

Senior Recruitment Marketing Manager, DraftKings

5. MATCH EMPLOYEES TO OPPORTUNITIES — AT SCALE

With AI, HR teams can go beyond static career paths and make talent mobility more dynamic. By understanding both the evolving needs of the business and the capabilities of the workforce, organizations can recommend roles, gigs, and learning tailored to each employee — helping them grow, stay, and perform.



“We are connecting skills to roles, skills to people, and leveraging HR tech to help open doors, to help hyper personalization, to help elevate where the employee comes into the conversation in how they even think about themselves and what they might want to pursue.”

Ash Walvoord

Associate Vice President of Talent Management at Verizon

6. REDUCE BIAS

When thoughtfully implemented, AI can help mitigate bias in hiring, mobility and promotion by focusing on objective, skills-based data rather than subjective assessments or resume pedigree. It's not a silver bullet — but when paired with strong governance, AI provides an opportunity to build fairer, more equitable processes that are less prone to human error or unconscious bias.

7. PLAN WITH GREATER AGILITY

AI gives HR the ability to model workforce scenarios in real time. Instead of relying on historical data or annual plans, teams can simulate different futures: What if we grow this function? Automate this task? Open a new market? This makes strategic workforce planning faster, more accurate, and more aligned with business priorities.

8. FREE UP HR TO BE MORE STRATEGIC

By automating routine tasks and surfacing insight on demand, AI allows HR professionals to focus on higher-value, strategic work — partnering with the business, coaching leaders, and shaping the future of work in the organization. It's not about replacing HR — it's about unleashing its full potential.



“We can actually open up capacity within the HR function to do what we've talked about for years, where we are strategic advisors, coaches, counselors across the business... and this is where I think AI is going to change it drastically for HR.”

Sam Hammock

EVP, Chief Human Resources Officer, Verizon

In short: AI is already reshaping how work gets done, and how people are managed. The HR teams embracing it aren't just getting faster or more efficient — they're helping their companies become more resilient, innovative, and future-ready.



Navigating ethical & practical challenges in AI adoption

As HR teams increasingly integrate AI into their workflows, the promise of improved efficiency and decision-making comes with equally significant challenges. It's critical for leaders to approach AI adoption thoughtfully, balancing innovation with responsibility to safeguard trust, fairness, and compliance.

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENCY AND EXPLAINABILITY

When AI models are opaque, it's difficult for HR professionals and employees to understand how recommendations are made – which really matters around things like recruitment or promotion. This opacity risks eroding trust in AI tools and the organizations that use them.

Leading companies are prioritizing explainable AI, where algorithms' decisions can be clearly articulated and audited. This transparency helps HR teams justify outcomes to candidates and employees, while ensuring compliance with regulations.

ADDRESSING BIAS & ENSURING FAIRNESS

Algorithmic bias remains a top concern. Despite advances in AI, if training data reflects historical inequalities or unbalanced samples, AI tools risk perpetuating or amplifying bias in hiring, promotion, or pay decisions.

It's essential to implement ongoing bias audits, involve diverse stakeholders in model design, and combine AI insights with human judgment to counteract unfair outcomes. Many organizations have adopted bias mitigation frameworks and regularly monitor AI outputs for fairness.



MANAGING PRIVACY & DATA SECURITY

HR AI solutions often process sensitive personal data, including skills, performance, and behavioral analytics. Protecting this data against breaches or misuse is paramount.

Compliance with regulations like GDPR and CCPA requires robust data governance policies, clear employee communication, and secure AI systems with privacy-by-design principles. HR leaders must collaborate with legal and IT teams to maintain data integrity and confidentiality.

DEFINING CLEAR USAGE POLICIES & GOVERNANCE

A striking number of companies lack formal policies guiding AI's use in HR. Without clear governance, AI adoption can lead to inconsistent application, ethical lapses, or legal risk.

Progressive organizations establish cross-functional AI ethics committees involving HR, legal, IT, and business leaders to oversee AI deployment, set boundaries, and ensure alignment with corporate values. These frameworks should define acceptable use cases, escalation protocols, and accountability mechanisms.



While 72% HR and business leaders said their organization's HR professionals use AI to perform at least one of their job functions, just 29% of respondents said they currently have AI usage policies, and half don't have any parameters in place.

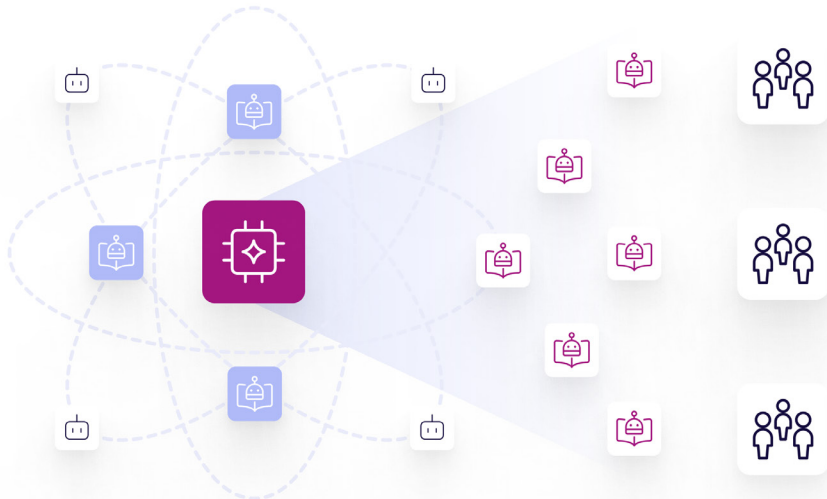
Little, 2024



EQUIPPING HR TEAMS WITH AI LITERACY

A key barrier to realizing AI's potential is insufficient knowledge among HR professionals.

Investing in targeted upskilling programs for HR teams enables them to interpret AI outputs critically, blend human and machine insights effectively, and confidently guide AI-driven initiatives. This preparedness fosters both better decision-making and employee buy-in.



HR specialists with AI skills make \$35,000 more a year on average than those without them, and demand for talent acquisition and recruiting managers with AI skills grew almost 60% (38% for more general HR roles) in the past two years.

Lightcast, 2024

BALANCING AUTOMATION WITH HUMAN-CENTERED HR

Though AI can automate many administrative and analytical tasks, it cannot replace the empathy, strategic thinking, and contextual judgment humans bring.

The most successful HR functions use AI to augment (not replace) the workforce, freeing HR professionals to focus on high-value activities like coaching, culture-building, and complex problem-solving. This balanced approach mitigates fears around job displacement and promotes a positive organizational culture.

By approaching AI adoption with a clear-eyed understanding of these ethical and practical challenges, HR leaders can harness AI's transformative potential while maintaining trust, fairness, and compliance — essential foundations for sustainable business impact.

Practical steps to implement AI in HR

There's no one-size-fits-all roadmap for adopting AI. But the HR teams making real progress tend to share the same foundational approach – one grounded in strategic clarity, business alignment, and cultural readiness.

START WITH THE PROBLEM, NOT THE TOOL.

Don't chase the most advanced feature set or the flashiest demo. The best AI initiatives begin with clear challenges: What are you struggling to solve today? Where are the gaps – in talent pipelines, visibility, agility, equity? That's where AI can have the biggest impact.

THINK IN USE CASES.

You don't have to reinvent your tech stack overnight. Look for concrete use cases tied to real value: faster hiring for niche roles, better internal mobility, more dynamic workforce planning. Many teams start small – automating repeatable tasks, unlocking skills insights – and build momentum from there.

INVEST IN INTERNAL CHAMPIONS.

Tech adoption is a human process. Change is more effective when led by peers, not pushed top-down. Recruit early adopters, curious experimenters, and business stakeholders who can help you test, learn, and scale.



BALANCE QUICK WINS WITH LONG-TERM BETS.

Small wins build belief ... but lasting impact comes from aligning AI with your workforce strategy. Think in layers: task automation now, skills-based infrastructure next, strategic workforce transformation over time.

VET YOUR PARTNERS LIKE IMPORTANT HIRES.

AI is a crowded market, and the tools you choose will shape your future capabilities. Don't just compare features. Look for providers who truly understand your goals, who integrate into your ecosystem, and who can evolve with you.

BUILD TRUST AND GUARDRAILS FROM DAY ONE.

Ethical, transparent, and explainable AI is non-negotiable. HR has a critical role to play in setting governance policies, defining what "responsible" looks like in your organization, and ensuring every rollout centers people, not just process.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS.

Adoption is not the same as impact. Track real outcomes: time saved, quality improved, bias reduced, retention lifted. When HR can link AI to better business decisions and workforce outcomes, it earns a strategic seat at the table.

AI readiness checklist for HR leaders

Use this checklist to assess whether your team is set up to use AI effectively and responsibly to drive real business results.

Problem-first, not tech-first

- ☐ Have we clearly defined the workforce challenges we're trying to solve with AI?
- ☐ Are our AI use cases aligned with strategic business goals such as workforce agility, improved hiring, or stronger retention?

Connected and trusted data

- ☐ Do we have reliable visibility into our workforce's skills, tasks, and capabilities?
- ☐ Are we consolidating and enriching data from across our HR systems (ATS, HCM, LMS) to support AI-driven insights?

Skills-first foundations

- ☐ Are we transitioning from job-based to skills-based approaches across the employee lifecycle?
- ☐ Do we have, or are we building, a consistent and AI-supported skills taxonomy?

Responsible and explainable AI

- ☐ Have we established clear guidelines for ethical and transparent use of AI in HR?
- ☐ Are legal, compliance, DEI, and employee stakeholders involved in shaping our AI governance?

Strategic use and adoption

- ☐ Are we piloting AI tools in real-world workflows with measurable impact?
- ☐ Do we have internal champions or "power users" supporting adoption and experimentation?
- ☐ Can we demonstrate where AI is improving efficiency, fairness, or strategic decision-making?

The right partner, not just the right platform

- ☐ Are we selecting AI providers who align with our long-term goals and values?
- ☐ Do our platforms offer the flexibility, integrations, and support needed to scale?

[Download checklist](#)



Preparing HR for the AI-driven workforce

As AI continues to evolve, HR leaders must anticipate shifts that will completely redefine workforce management and organizational success. Understanding these emerging trends will help HR teams prepare proactively and maintain a competitive edge.

1. INCREASING COLLABORATION BETWEEN HUMANS AND AI AGENTS

The future workplace will feature hybrid teams where human employees work alongside AI agents handling repetitive or data-intensive tasks. HR must adapt roles and workflows to optimize this collaboration, ensuring humans focus on strategic, creative, and interpersonal responsibilities.

Tip: Start mapping tasks, not just roles — and identify where AI can complement human strengths.



82% of leaders say they're confident that they'll use digital labor to expand workforce capacity in the next 12–18 months.

Microsoft 2025 Work Trend Index

2. EXPANSION OF AI-POWERED TALENT MARKETPLACES

AI will increasingly power internal and external talent marketplaces, dynamically matching skills, experience, and aspirations to opportunities. This will enable more fluid workforce mobility, personalized career paths, and smarter resource allocation aligned with business needs.

Tip: Invest in connected skills and tasks data to power dynamic matching and career pathing across the enterprise.

3. GREATER EMPHASIS ON ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE AI USE

As AI decisions become more influential, organizations will face heightened scrutiny on fairness, transparency, and privacy. HR will play a pivotal role in implementing rigorous governance, monitoring bias, and fostering employee trust in AI-powered processes.

Tip: Make AI explainability a core requirement — and ensure candidates and employees understand how AI feeds into decisions about them.

4. AI-DRIVEN CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

AI will tailor learning journeys by analyzing real-time skills gaps and performance data, delivering personalized upskilling recommendations. This continuous, data-driven approach will support agility in reskilling efforts, helping employees and organizations stay future-ready.

Tip: Shift from static training programs to agile, AI-informed learning pathways that evolve with business needs.

5. EMERGENCE OF NEW HR ROLES AND CAPABILITIES

New roles such as AI Workforce Managers, AI Ethics Officers, and Data Analysts specialized in HR will emerge. HR leaders must plan workforce strategies that include hiring and developing these capabilities to successfully integrate AI.

Tip: Cultivate curiosity and digital literacy across your HR team to prepare for new responsibilities and evolving roles.

6. INTEGRATION OF AI WITH BROADER ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS

AI in HR will become more tightly integrated with enterprise-wide systems like ERP, CRM, and finance platforms, enabling holistic decision-making that connects talent strategies with overall business performance.

Tip: Choose flexible, interoperable HR tools that can plug into your broader tech ecosystem and evolve with it.

7. INCREASED USE OF PREDICTIVE AND PRESCRIPTIVE ANALYTICS

Advanced AI models are moving beyond descriptive insights, offering predictive forecasts and prescriptive recommendations for workforce planning, engagement, and productivity, enabling HR to be more proactive and strategic.

Tip: Build scenario modeling into your planning cycle to stress-test strategies and prepare for multiple futures.





Navigating the AI-powered future of HR with confidence and clarity

AI is no longer a distant possibility: it is reshaping the very fabric of work and talent management in 2025 and beyond. For HR leaders, the challenge is clear: harness AI thoughtfully and strategically to unlock better business outcomes, enhance employee experience, and build a workforce that thrives in an era of rapid change.

By focusing on the effective integration of AI tools that augment human decision-making, automating routine tasks to free up capacity, and prioritizing continuous skills development aligned with evolving business needs, HR teams can drive sizeable improvements in productivity, talent acquisition, and employee engagement.

Yet, success will require more than technology. It demands a balanced approach that combines ethical governance, transparency, and a commitment to upskilling and putting humans first.



While organizations believe that technology can help to automate HR work – whether core HR, talent acquisition, or talent management – they expect tools to support rather than replace HR workers.

UNLEASH & Talent Tech Labs, 2025

Leaders who invest in developing AI fluency within their teams, foster collaboration between humans and machines, and anticipate future trends will position their organizations as future-ready and resilient.

The potential for AI in HR is vast, but it is the human insight, wisdom, and leadership that will ultimately determine how well organizations navigate this transformation. Now is the time for CHROs and CEOs to lead with clarity, confidence, and care – shaping a workforce powered by both people and AI.



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