Beamery
SPARK LIVE

A New Playbook For Talent In Uncertain Times

Discover all the key insights from Spark Live 2023, the leading virtual HR event from Beamery.



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Introduction

The landscape for talent is incredibly challenging. Skills gaps are growing and the labor market is tight, following years of tumult and uncertainty. We know from our research that business leaders are increasingly concerned about retention, about meeting the challenge of huge skills shortages, and about 'getting talent to the point of need'.

65% of business leaders think that how they tackle talent challenges will impact how well they perform as a business during uncertain economic times – but just 40% say they are very satisfied that current talent approaches in their organization reflect changing market conditions and employee expectations.

> **65% of leaders think that how they tackle talent challenges will impact how well they perform as a business**

But there is room for optimism. Organizations are starting to realize that every business problem is a talent problem. They are open to listening more closely to their senior HR professionals; they are embracing a shift to skills-first talent strategies, and working with companies like Beamery to transform their approach to talent.

Spark Live from Beamery is the marquee event for HR leaders on the latest trends in Talent Acquisition, Talent Management and unlocking productivity from your greatest resource: People.

This year we hosted several fascinating sessions with leading experts to shed light on tackling the biggest talent challenges in 2023. We discussed topics such as the new laws of attracting talent, the need to reinvent "jobs" and reimagine the employee experience, and the role of new technologies like generative AI in the world of talent.

This book combines the insights from analysts, CHROs, senior talent professionals and other industry experts who spoke at Spark Live, to provide useful advice and inspiration for your emerging talent strategies. We hope it sparks conversation, debate and action – and helps you navigate the changing talent landscape.

CHAPTER 1

Fresh Ways To Attract Talent In An Ever-changing Market

KEY INSIGHTS:

- The role of Talent Acquisition (TA) is evolving. Consider upskilling your TA team to become strategic 'Talent Advisors'.
- Talent Acquisition is vital, but it can no longer sit in a silo. Focus on retention, redeployment and redevelopment, as well as recruitment.
- Technology will help free up Talent teams to do more meaningful work and build deeper relationships with candidates.
- Build and nurture talent communities with personalized communication. Stay in touch with your alumni community, too.
- For a more holistic approach to talent attraction, you need dynamic skills data – and AI can help you find the ideal match for every role.



Breaking the Boundaries of Recruitment: A Systemic Approach to Talent Lifecycle Management

Josh Bersin, CEO of The Josh Bersin Company, and his colleague, Janet Mertens, Senior Vice President of Research, held a fireside chat how today's organizations can truly take a holistic approach to recruitment and talent management.

THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION

Josh and Janet began by discussing "The Great Resignation", which has evolved into "The Great Transformation". 50 million people quit their jobs in the US in 2021. In 2022, a further 50 million Americans resigned. Fueled by the pandemic and baby boomer retirements, this has created a "perfect storm" in the world of talent.

Josh noted that two reasons people are quitting are for better pay and more flexibility. Skills have also fueled a lot of change. Employees are intentionally choosing the skills they develop – setting themselves up to earn more in the future.

> **One of the things that came up was this idea of salary increasing or salary decreasing skills. Am I developing skills that allow me to grow my career, or am I working on skills that are gonna force me to slow my career because I'm falling behind?**
>
> **Josh Bersin**
> The Josh Bersin Company

Many people have also opted to change jobs (or careers) to improve their work/life balance or overall wellbeing.

THE FOUR RS: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REDEPLOYMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

Josh mentioned that, in the current market, companies that focus on recruitment alone will struggle to find (and keep) the talent they need. Leading businesses are focusing on "The Four Rs": recruitment, retention, redeployment and redevelopment.

> **Pace setter companies, those that are really outperforming, are doing four things. They're doing recruiting, they're doing retention strategies, they're doing redeployment and redevelopment strategies or reskilling strategies, and they're doing job redesign.**
>
> **Josh Bersin**
> The Josh Bersin Company

Janet pointed out that organizations can't simply hire their way out of a skills shortage: companies must break out of the boundaries of recruitment. Recruiting has been a silo in the HR function, but that's no longer a sustainable model.

HR is interconnected now, and the TA function must play a role in every aspect – recruiting talent, retaining employees, redeploying talent across the organization, and redeveloping individuals to address skills gaps.

Josh noted that some companies are starting to think of recruiters as "talent advisors", meaning they have the ability to advise hiring managers and help them redesign a job opening to make sure it's actually what they want and need, before they try to fill it.AI will encourage upskilling of recruiters and will help sustain this kind of workflow.

To successfully use this "Four Rs Model", you must first have dynamic data and a common skills language across the HR function, in order to have those conversations.

> **We can't talk about the four R model without talking about the data and the common language and the intelligence that TA and the rest of HR and the business need to share to be able to have those conversations.**
>
> **Janet Mertens**
> The Josh Bersin Company

Josh spoke about how, although there is a lot of talk about "skills", really HR needs to learn how to eliminate irrelevant decision factors on who to hire, promote, or give a pay raise to, and instead focus on real skills and job performance.

While "performance" and "skills" seem qualitative in nature, Josh noted that AI looks at these as quantitative data, and makes statistically generated recommendations on who to hire, who to promote, or who to reskill based on inferences around their skills.

THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS AROUND SKILLS

The most common question they get at The Josh Bersin Company is: how can I become skills-first? There's a clear appetite for it amongst businesses, and AI plays a critical role here – especially when you think about "power skills", as Janet called them.

> **How do you assess for skills that are not technical in nature, but are incredibly durable in the organization? And I mean, things like empathy, flexibility, collaboration, curiosity, and those are really important skills to now be adding.**
>
> **Janet Mertens**
> The Josh Bersin Company

With the right AI-driven tool, Talent teams can effectively identify, track, and hire for those skills.

Another common question they get is: how do I know what skills I have internally? This is where a total Talent Lifecycle Management platform can help. With this type of integrated tool, businesses can easily identify the right candidates – internal or external – by assessing the skills they have, and their potential to learn new skills.

EXTERNAL HIRING VS. INTERNAL HIRING

Josh said that, when a company decides that a role will be hired for externally, they are automatically deciding that it will be a difficult hire. The candidates don't know the organization or the culture, and the Hiring Manager doesn't really know what they're getting. Plus, you will likely spend tons of money on advertising and onboarding.

While many external hires end up performing well in their roles, with internal hires, candidates already know the organization and the culture, and the company knows the candidates as well.

> **Of all of the companies I've talked to over the many, many years, the companies that are good in internal mobility are higher performing companies, period, for all sorts of cultural reasons, not just for skills and job reasons.**
>
> **Josh Bersin**
> The Josh Bersin Company

Research has found that around 70% of companies say they post jobs internally, but only 25% do anything beyond that.

WHAT'S CHANGING IN TALENT MANAGEMENT?

It was noted that the Talent Management function now encompasses mobility, learning and development, workforce planning, and more. And you have to have the right data and tools to enable this type of holistic approach.

> **The interconnected nature of Talent Acquisition cannot work in a silo anymore.**
>
> **Janet Mertens**
> The Josh Bersin Company

The data that is shared across the organization is what sets companies apart, and businesses that are still operating in silos will likely struggle to keep up. Josh mentioned that talent management was very different 10 years ago, referencing the old "pre-hire to retire" process that many companies relied on.

He said talent management is not a process anymore – it's a system. Instead of following a linear path from pre-hire to retirement, companies are embracing talent mobility, and they are upskilling and reskilling their employees.

Janet added that employees might stay with a company for a while and then leave, upskill, and then they may go back to a previous company as an alumni, or they come back as a gig worker. There are so many more options when you look at talent management as a dynamic system, instead of a rigid process.

Another challenge Josh spoke about is pay equity. If a business hires an external candidate for a role and offers them a 50% increase on their salary because they desperately need their skills, does that mean that, if an internal candidate is promoted into the same role, that they will be given the same increase? It's a complicated issue.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF TA LOOK LIKE?

Josh predicts that TA always comes out on top as the most important practice in HR, because if you don't bring the right people into the company, you can't easily fix that. It is soon going to be upgraded in terms of its capabilities.

> TA has long been in that back office silo, and it's breaking out of it. And I love that. And we have the tools now to allow it... The recruiting teams bring in great people, but now we're really equipping organizations with the data, the information, the guidance, the coaching, and the skills that TA needs to move into that very strategic role.

Josh Bersin
The Josh Bersin Company



Never Post Another Job Listing: The New Laws Of Talent Attraction

Beamery's Chief People Officer, Katie Obi, spoke to Charlotte Anderson, People Brand Community and Engagement Lead at Canva; Annie Crotone, Global Sourcing Technology Manager at Accenture; and Nigel Williams, Managing Director, Global Head of Talent Acquisition at BlackRock.

In today's hyper competitive business landscape, attracting and retaining top talent has become an increasingly challenging endeavor. The right tools can provide a critical advantage by helping organizations to streamline their recruitment processes, access a wider talent pool, and ultimately secure the best fit candidates for their teams.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "NEVER POST ANOTHER JOB LISTING"?

Charlotte from Canva shared that the idea of not having to post jobs was introduced to her by their Global Head of Talent Acquisition, Amy Schultz. The vision was to get to the point where talent comes to the business, instead of the business seeking out applicants.

Canva began this approach with a few key elements: a "globally adored" employer brand, recruiting talent based on skills, and the creation of a robust talent community where those skills could be tapped into.



While Canva stills post jobs ads presently, they are growing their talent community quickly. For companies who are on this journey to grow talent communities and rely less on job ads, the most common barriers are around acquiring the right technology, and ensuring that the adoption rates are healthy.

> **While 100% we still post job ads, we're continuing to scale awareness and drive consideration. We implemented Beamery late last year, to start building out that talent community. And it's become a popular sourcing tool for our TA team to discover those unknown skills.**
>
> **Charlotte Anderson**
> Canva

HOW CAN YOU CAPTURE THE ATTENTION OF TOP CANDIDATES WHO AREN'T LOOKING FOR A NEW ROLE?

In Talent Acquisition, it's well understood that only a small percentage of potential candidates are actively looking for a new job at any given time – meaning that most candidates are passive.

Annie shared that one of the most important keys to attracting passive talent and keeping them engaged is having the right technology to enable this kind of sourcing. At Accenture, they are going beyond building a database of candidates.

They are keeping candidates engaged by sending them relevant content that's personalized to their interests, inviting them to events, and including them in their growing talent community. And all of this is enabled by technology.

Nigel agreed that personalization is extremely powerful when it comes to attracting and engaging passive talent. Similarly to Canva and Accenture, BlackRock uses Beamery to help build these personalized communications to attract candidates – ensuring that the content each candidate receives is relevant to them.

> **I think, as technology evolves and we get sort of a better sense of what our particular talent is interested in, that is the whole joy of nurturing a talent community.**
>
> **Nigel Williams**
> BlackRock

BlackRock puts a strategic emphasis on driving candidate engagement and, with the right technology, they are able to do that at scale, in a way that feels deeply personal.

HOW CAN COMPANIES INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF JOB POSTINGS FOR NOW?

Nigel explained that at BlackRock, they use a CRM to create talent pipelines that allow them to proactively source and recruit, but there are still times when they are required to be a little more reactive, such as when there is an unexpected resignation.

He also said that, regardless of whether a candidate comes in through a job posting or their careers site, they are probably going to other sources to get a feel for the company.

Candidates will read reviews on Glassdoor, check out the Instagram feed, or speak to people they know who work there – the employer branding piece is crucial to attracting talent. And then, once the candidate is interested, the personal touch from the recruiter will be what really interests them in having continued conversations.

Annie agreed that, at least for now, job ads are still necessary. When technology helps free up Talent teams to do more meaningful work and build relationships with candidates, they are able to create deeper connections and better showcase the company culture.

> **“I think the meat of it is: how much do we have to source because of that posting? What is that posting reflecting to make that person successful? And what is the reflection of your company in that job posting? People want to know the culture, they want to know their impact, they want to feel… human.**
>
> **Annie Crotone**
> Accenture

Charlotte shared that Canva recently revamped their job listings, and intentionally scaled back the amount of information they share. Instead of focusing on details like extra perks, they are very transparent.

They tell the candidates what they really want to know about the job, such as what the role is focused on at the moment, and what makes a candidate a great fit. They have already received positive feedback from candidates who greatly value the transparency.

HOW CAN BUSINESSES DO MORE WITH LESS, IN THE TALENT FUNCTION?

While some countries are in a recession, and with the cost-of-living crisis growing, the labor market is still tight, and employee expectations are still high. What can talent leaders do, to do more with less?

Charlotte said that, during a season where perhaps a company issues a hiring freeze, it really is the perfect time to evaluate your talent pipeline. They can dig into what's working and what needs to change before the next season of active hiring.

> **If your hiring slows down, it really is the perfect time to look at your funnel and ask yourself: where are we losing people? What's not working? How can we make this better?**
>
> **Charlotte Anderson**
> Canva

Nigel said that BlackRock has done less hiring this year than last year, but that has made this the perfect time to implement Beamery. Their Talent team has the time to really learn the product, and so they've had a highly engaged rollout; they can now proactively build talent pipeline much more efficiently and effectively.

Annie agreed that this economic season has provided a lot of opportunity in the talent space at Accenture. Using Beamery, they are able to see skills gaps they have within the organization, and then really look at their data, and build out candidate profiles around key skills.

She agreed that the silver lining of a slower hiring season is that recruiters have the time to take advantage of upskilling opportunities that they may not have had time for previously, which will help them stay ahead of the next busy hiring phase.



HOW CAN COMPANIES UTILIZE ALUMNI PROGRAMS?

Katie asked Nigel to share how BlackRock uses their alumni network. Nigel said there's a common misconception that when an employee leaves an organization (for one reason or another), they become "dead" to the company. That's not how BlackRock sees it. They focus on the valuable contributions each person made during their tenure.

> **These avenues of keeping the doors open and engaging with alumni, they've been so valuable to us. Not just from a recruitment side, which I love, but more about who we are as a firm and who we want to be.**
>
> **Nigel Williams**
> BlackRock

Nigel explained that BlackRock prioritizes showing alumni that they are always part of the BlackRock family. They do things like host social events and put on an educational speaker series to keep alumni engaged. And if that engagement happens to lead to a rehire, that's ideal – but it's not the only purpose of those programs.

Katie mentioned that companies who get alumni management right tend to see positive business results. Alumni hires are extremely valuable, because they already know the company, which means they are able to ramp up much quicker than a brand new hire.

> **The grass isn't always greener, but you leaving for an opportunity is something that we all want to encourage you to do; explore, maybe gain more skills, and then come bring them back to us. Being open about this alumni idea is always such a crucial piece.**
>
> **Annie Crotone**
> Accenture

CHAPTER 2

Skills: Reimagining The Talent Experience

KEY INSIGHTS:

- A skills-based approach to hiring and internal mobility can help you find quality talent, and unlock the full potential of your workforce.
- Data and AI can help you better understand the skills you have “in the building”, and match them to relevant opportunities.
- Managers need to be shown the value of internal hiring. Start with pilots and tell your success stories.
- Talent professionals need to upskill themselves, so they can move towards a more agile, skills-based approach to talent management.
- Technology will actually allow HR professionals, and the wider workforce, to focus on the more “human” elements of their roles.



Reinventing the Job: Why Skills Are the New Foundation for Talent Teams

Betsy Summers, principal analyst at Forrester Research, hosted a panel with Eric Miller, Vice President of Talent Discovery and Insights at Paramount, and Jenn Galbraith, Vice President of Digital HR Transformation & Internal Careers & Talent Marketplace at Salesforce.

A BATTLE ON TWO FRONTS

The labor market has had a tumultuous journey over the past three years, including massive layoffs and record-high unemployment rates during the pandemic. Betsy highlighted the subsequent struggle to rehire, and the rise of the "Great Resignation" phenomenon.

> **Organizations were caught fighting this battle on two fronts. You fiercely have to retain your employees, while also trying to navigate these talent shortages and make sure that you are getting great people with the right skills in the door.**
>
> **Betsy Summers**
> Forrester Research

Betsy emphasized the importance of data in understanding cyclical and structural market changes, and mentioned the difficulty employers experienced in filling roles and filtering out highly skilled candidates. She proposed that the convergence of skills, intelligence and technology could offer a solution to these challenges.

WHO TICKS ALL THE BOXES?

Jenn noted that she has been leading the digital HR transformation at Salesforce for the past four years, with a focus on improving the tools used by HR, making them more efficient, and improving the employee experience.

Recently, she was asked to take on the internal careers and talent marketplace team, despite not having a recruiting background, because her skills in digital transformation were highly seen as valuable for rethinking how employees find new opportunities within the company.

Eric said that his team aims to discover hidden talent, bridge the gap between internal hiring managers and external candidates, and use data to ensure they attract and engage the best talent available.

> **We're not leaving any stone unturned in terms of tapping into talent that's out there. We want to make sure that we're really canvassing everything that's out there and making sure we're starting to engage with the best talent.**
>
> **Eric Miller**
> Paramount

Eric commented that there are challenges around attracting and understanding candidates, beyond their resume or LinkedIn profiles, in the current confusing and uncertain world.

As Betsy also noted, there are people who feel like they have to check all the boxes or want to check all the boxes from the job description or the job criteria – and this could mean missing out on incredible hires, especially if you want to build diverse and inclusive companies.

Eric and Betsy agreed that technology was, paradoxically, helping us to understand people better, and build greater connections between humans.

SKILLS-BASED TRANSFORMATION: THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Eric's talent discovery and insights team brings in talent for job roles that are basically not getting enough applicants, and has done well. But previously it was a very decentralized model (and it was a lean team), making the activity of adding in that talent exponentially more difficult.

With the consolidated team they have now, they can see those talent pools together in one place. They have a persona-based model where they see all of the skills residing in one spot. (If a person looks like they may not be a good fit within the central team as a project manager, they could very well be a great project manager over in Streaming.)

> **"It gives us a larger degree of visibility, transparency, and… prospect opportunity, of bringing new people to the table that potentially would have been overlooked before.**
>
> **Eric Miller**
> Paramount

Eric argued that "persona-based hiring" simply means that you aggregate different skills and competencies into a single profile, such as "project manager". It allows for a more holistic approach to recruiting, he said, by clustering individuals based on their skills and desired roles rather than focusing on specific job requirements.

By using personas, organizations can explore non-traditional candidates and test different criteria for a better fit. It creates a "fluid environment" where candidates can be considered for multiple roles, and it helps you adapt to the changing landscape of technology and skill requirements.

SKILLS & TALENT MOBILITY

Jenn noted that at Salesforce they are still fine tuning their internal mobility strategy and they are in an "iterative state", testing some hypotheses and "pressure testing" themselves. ("One of my cardinal rules of transformation is you're never done.")

Salesforce is placing a "big bet" on data and AI to better understand their internal talent pool and the skills they have, and shift towards internal hiring.

Previously, their focus was on rapid hiring and the "bias" was to always go externally, but after growth slowed they realized the need to uncover and make use of the skills of their existing employees – including a large and growing remote workforce.

By using AI and data from their CRM, they are now working to change the mindset around job requirements and test the tolerance for candidates who may not meet every criterion but possess, for example, valuable internal knowledge.

This shift has already resulted in leaders opening requisitions internal-only, and in the first quarter they saw more internal hires than external ones (by a long way) for the first time in Salesforce's history.

> **We're actually saying that to our hiring leaders: the talent's in the building, we just need to find it and bring it to the surface and actually match it to the right opportunity.**
>
> **Jenn Galbraith**
> Salesforce



THE POWER OF SKILLS INTELLIGENCE

Betsy commented that it's ironic when you think how people power your business, and the economy has really moved towards skills and services and relying on the power of human capital "versus the widgets"... But it's the thing we know the least about.

> **We don't know a lot about our people, or at least in a structured data way where we can scale it, we can track it, we can use that data. It's usually locked in our brains and informally through our networks and relationships.**
>
> **Betsy Summers**
> Forrester Research

With skills technology, and talent intelligence, you can also understand the aspirations and interests of your workforce. And you can align that with what the business needs – as that is clearly vital.

Jenn added that as well as business outcomes, you need to factor in what employees expect based on their experience as consumers: the expectation that technology understands them deeply, and they don't need to start at square one with every new conversation about their career.

> **Employees get frustrated when they're like, I told you all about me when I applied. How come you forgot about all that? How can you only focus on what I did in my job here? Why are you asking me again?**
>
> **Jenn Galbraith**
> Salesforce

OVERCOMING THE COMMON BARRIERS

The panel discussed some of the barriers organizations face when it comes to skills-based approaches. Internal mobility initiatives can fail due to talent hoarding, Betsy pointed out, as managers don't want to let go of great people.

As discussed, there is often a mindset that the "perfect fit" needs to be found for each role – or there's simply some organizational inertia that leads teams to external hiring as the first port of call.

Eric said that any big change is scary for people, and they will be asking why it's necessary.
His suggestion was to reinforce and personalize the "why" for managers and show them the additive value of enhancing the talent pool with internals and referrals and "non-traditionals".

> **That's the beauty of the persona... You can hyper personalize it because you have the ability now; your aperture is that much wider now that you have to look at people. So now you have a wider pool and you could serve up talent to those leaders or those hiring managers.**
>
> **Eric Miller**
> Paramount

As they get started with Talent Marketplace initiatives, Salesforce is using pilots and small tests to show the value of internal mobility, and remind people of the "greater good". As they run the pilots they are gathering use cases and examples – people that benefited who can say "I'm a success story".

> **You're going to put this person out into the system, but you're also going to get really great talent back.**
>
> **Jenn Galbraith**
> Salesforce

The CHRO Of The Future: Strategies To Navigate The New Talent Landscape

This panel comprised of Katy George, Senior Partner and Chief People Officer at McKinsey & Company; Tanuj Kapilashrami, Group Head Human Resources at Standard Chartered Bank; Trent Henry, Global Vice Chair of Talent at EY, and moderator Larry Emond, Senior Partner at Modern Executive Solutions.

HOW IS HR CHANGING?

Larry asked how the world of HR will change in the coming months and years. Tanuj said that the COVID-19 pandemic was a catalyst for change within Standard Chartered Bank, but also in HR in general. It made HR leaders stop and think about what HR is actually in service of.

She said that, during the pandemic, the HR department shifted to becoming highly focused on serving the broader workforce (not just leadership), and – with the right tools – HR professionals can team up with IT to deliver great talent experiences. She pointed out that you can't deliver excellent customer experiences, until you deliver excellent employee experiences.

> **How do we think about employees as a stakeholder group in the same way that we think about shareholders, customers, regulators? And how do we think about employee advocacy being a real force for good? And the role of HR in bridging that gap between what businesses want and employees want?**
>
> **Tanuj Kapilashrami**
> Standard Chartered Bank

Another shift Tanuj is seeing is that HR is now being viewed as a "product organization" within many businesses – and their product is employment. This means that when the HR department is making decisions, they must always do so with their client in mind: the employees.

A MORE AGILE HR FUNCTION

Trent said that the next few years will be a "golden era" for talent professionals, but they will have to make some changes. He is currently challenging his talent professionals at EY to upskill themselves, so they can move away from legacy mindsets and processes, and move towards a more agile, skills-based approach to talent management.

Trent shared that, with the rise of generative AI, there's a lot of hesitation in HR departments, but he encourages these professionals to be open-minded and to embrace new technologies.

> **"I think a data strategy, a digital strategy, together with an experience and AI layer, are going to be critical to bring these things to life. Therefore, talent leaders are going to have to adapt much faster than the rest of the organization, I believe.**
>
> **Trent Henry**
> EY

Katy then discussed two main shifts that need to happen in every HR department: pulling all the levers of talent – upskilling, reskilling, hiring, apprenticing, mentoring – and creating personalized talent experiences.

The old ways of approaching "workforce planning" are no longer effective, she said, and companies must now look at all the different ways they can fill a role – not just through external hiring, but through learning and development and internal mobility as well.

A crucial part of creating unique employee experiences is being able to provide each individual with personalized recommendations for development opportunities or open roles they can apply for.

A lot of what these experts said underscored the importance of a skills-first approach, smart applications of AI, internal mobility, and proper workforce planning.

HOW CAN CHROS FULLY EMBRACE NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Since AI and automation have taken on new importance, how can HR can effectively balance the adoption and use of new technologies, while still prioritizing the human aspect of HR?

Trent said many organizations are investing in some kind of HR tech, but where they often struggle is with adoption and compliance. When the data and privacy piece is taken care of, organizations can move into some of the most exciting innovations that he's seen in HR – particularly, generative AI – which, when done right, can help talent professionals do their jobs better, while also providing better user and employee experiences.

Katy pointed out that, with the rise of generative AI, we will see businesses focus on having the right data in place to enable this technology. Ensuring that you have the data first is much more important than adding another "bell or whistle" to your tech stack.

> **Formalizing and digitally enabling processes in order to create the data that we need to take us to the next level will be an incredibly important part of our journeys over the next couple of years.**
>
> **Katy George**
> McKinsey & Company

One way that McKinsey is using generative AI in their HR processes is through skill certifications and assessments. AI allows them to do this with greater efficiency, while reducing bias.

Tanuj said that this generation of the workforce is the first generation that typically has access to better technology in their personal lives than in their workplace. Today, employees expect employers to offer excellent experiences, not only by providing top of the line technology to work with, but also in how communication is tailored and personalized.

Tanuj believes you can't achieve this level of personalization without AI. And, even though technology is crucial, you must bring technology and humans together, at scale, in order to achieve a superlative experience.

Katy and Trent echoed the importance of keeping the 'human' in HR, and Katy noted that utilizing technology helps to free up people to do the more important and more meaningful work. Most business leaders can agree that this is a much better use of employee time, and it helps provide better experiences and boosts productivity across the entire organization.

HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS MOVE FROM A "JOBS" MODEL TO A "SKILLS" MODEL?

Tanuj shared that when Standard Chartered Bank first started the conversation about skills-based talent strategies a few years ago, they looked at which jobs would no longer be needed a few years from now – "sunset jobs" – and which jobs would emerge in the next few years that they would need to fill – "sunrise jobs". This opened the door to looking at jobs through the lens of skills.

Through these discussions, Standard Chartered discovered (for example), that they had a higher percentage of women in sunset jobs than sunrise jobs, so if they didn't take action to upskill and reskill workers, they would be losing a lot of women from their workforce.

That eventually led to them offering reskilling opportunities to every employee who was in a sunset job, and they set targets for how many of those individuals would eventually need to redeploy into new roles internally. Those predictions allowed them to forecast the amount of money saved, compared to filling all the sunrise jobs with external talent.

Standard Chartered Bank has since launched an AI-driven Talent Marketplace as part of their culture of learning, development, and talent mobility. They started with the language of "sunset and sunrise jobs", because that was a language that the leadership spoke. Then, they were able to more easily make the shift to a skills-based strategy.

> **We launched Talent Marketplace at scale. We moved away from recruitment to thinking about experience, to thinking about skills... But then we did the big move, to move away from talent assessment or potential assessment being around past performance, to it being about skills and motivation.**
>
> **Tanuj Kapilashrami**
> Standard Chartered Bank

WHAT ARE THE MOST EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES AROUND GENERATIVE AI?

To close out the panel discussion, Larry pointed out that while many people are worried about the problems that generative AI could cause, many others are excited about the opportunities it brings.

Trent noted that generative AI can take on some of the more mundane tasks that need to be done, but don't necessarily need to be done by a human.

> **We have a very curious organization. So we're just going to have to be able to equip them with leading technologies so they can do more meaningful work and I think have more fun.**
>
> **Trent Henry**
> EY

He also shared that generative AI brings a lot of reskilling opportunities. Some of the skills that organizations need in order to effectively use generative AI have only existed for a few months (i.e. prompt engineers).

Trent said that, at EY, they looked at these skills and realized that many of their employees were already 70% of the way there and, with a little more training, they could develop the key skills that are needed. So there are excellent opportunities for both employers and employees to grow together, while embracing these new tools.

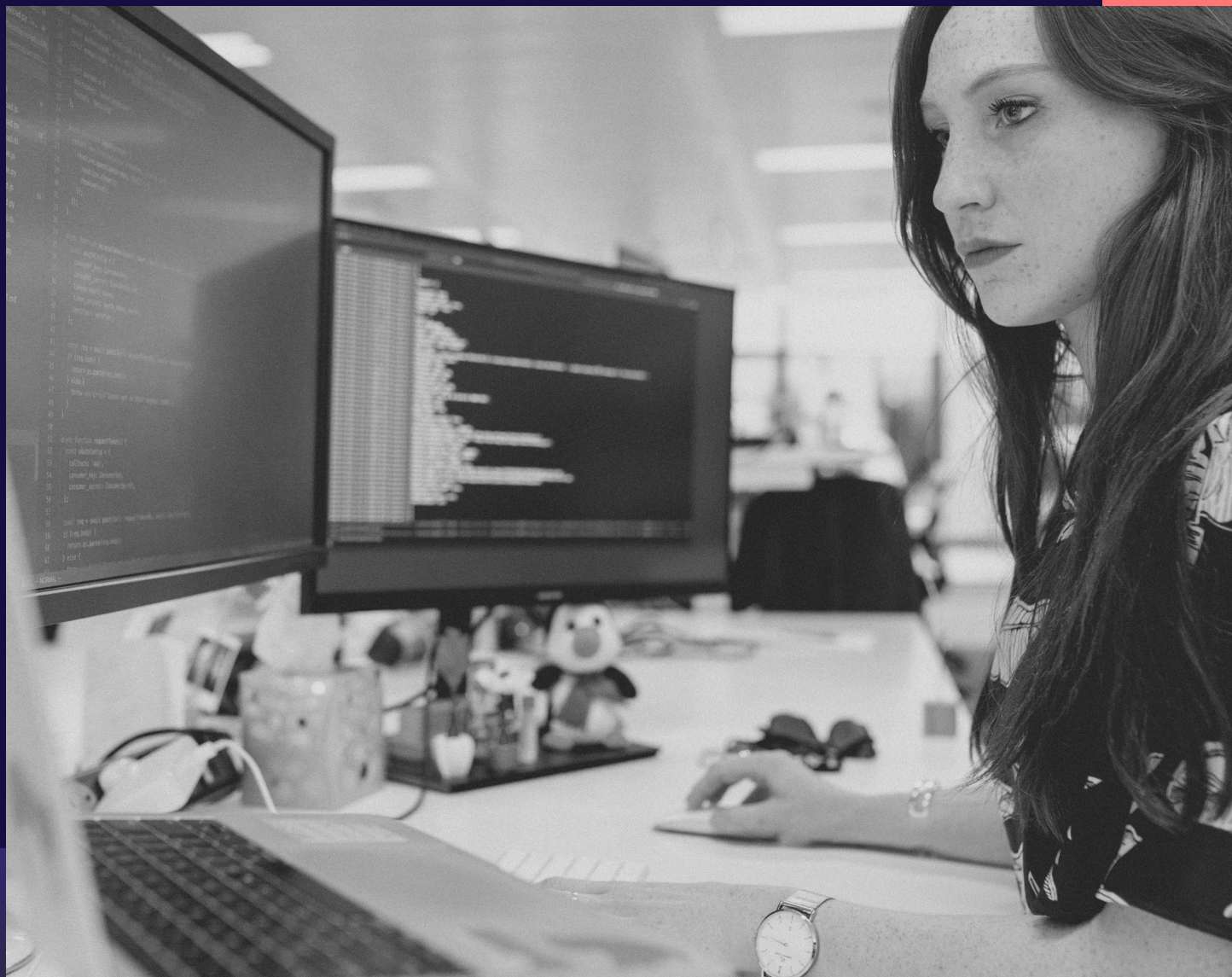


CHAPTER 3

Embracing the Power of Generative AI

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) can actually assist human decision-making, help employers avoid biases, and promote transparency.
- AI can improve the talent experience, and make the role of recruiter more enjoyable and strategic.
- Both the predictive and generative aspects of AI are useful to employers, in helping them attract and retain quality talent.
- We should explore and unlock new types of work, rather than assuming automation will eliminate jobs.
- The need to learn new skills is growing. Treating AI with curiosity, as a resource rather than a threat, is the smart approach.



Creating A Positive Impact With AI In HR

The panel was hosted by Beamery co-founder Sultan Saidov, and featured Keith Sonderling, Commissioner at the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Adam Glassman, who leads the employment brand and recruitment marketing team at Cox Enterprises; and Yoav Schlesinger, an architect of ethical AI practice at Salesforce.

AI & THE REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

There have been plenty of developments in the global discussion on AI, but many HR teams are still uncertain about how to consider the risks, legalities and opportunities with AI technologies. Keith believes this uncertainty has been a "roadblock" for a lot of enterprises integrating AI-powered software.

> **"I've really been an advocate for how technologies and AI-based human resources technology can really help prevent discrimination and further equal opportunity in the workplace.**
>
> **Keith Sonderling**
> EEOC

He noted that the existing civil rights laws that regulate employment decisions (in place in the US since the 1960s) still apply to AI-powered decisions, and that the focus on proposed laws around AI licensing and auditing requirements is a "huge distraction".

Regardless of whether AI or humans are making decisions about hiring, firing, promoting or paying somebody, Keith argued, the results should be the primary concern. He noted that employers can already take proactive measures, such as conducting audits and making disclosures, without waiting for specific regulations.

Keith advocated for treating AI as a tool to assist human decision-making, and to help employers ensure that decisions are made based on merit and skills while avoiding biases: to protect both companies implementing AI, and the employees.

He added that using AI in the hiring process has the potential to actually promote transparency: it can be used to create job descriptions, find candidates, and review resumes based on skills – rather than subjective factors, that could lead to bias.

AI: CREATING BETTER TALENT EXPERIENCES AT SCALE

Adam Glassman commented that AI can currently assist with logical tasks, automating manual activities, and – increasingly – allowing recruiters to focus more on human interactions with candidates and evaluating whether they are a good fit.

Looking ahead, Adam felt that advanced AI tools like ChatGPT, generative AI, and BART will fundamentally change how consumers interact with brands and businesses on a daily basis.

As consumer expectations influence candidate expectations, he noted, there will be a demand for similar positive and seamless experiences in the recruitment process.

He felt AI tools would likely play a significant role in helping candidates learn about organizations, and explore job opportunities – and also improve the experience for recruiters.

> **They don't care if you're selling them a product or a job. The expectation is that you're going to have a positive experience. You're going to have an easy experience.**
>
> **Adam Glassman**
> Cox Enterprises



AI AND TALENT MOBILITY

Adam pointed out that AI can be used to better engage internal talent within organizations as well. Predictive data and AI algorithms can help identify when employees might be ready for a change.

Instead of losing talented employees, AI can prompt managers to have conversations with employees at the right time, fostering growth and development within the organization.

Yoav discussed the exciting development of generative AI, and noted that the shift from "prediction" to "content generation" has transformative potential in the realm of employee engagement.

> **Not only can we now use AI to predict who might be at risk of attrition, but we can also generate personalized content... that is most likely to engage them in a unique and individualized way.**
>
> **Yoav Schlesinger**
> Salesforce

Adam pointed out that you can also engage people's managers, with prompts relating to development conversations or other ways to help them engage their employees. "That way, it's still people-first, and the people are having the conversation."

Yoav agreed, noting that AI ought to be "empowering" and help enhance uniquely human qualities like emotion and empathy – not automate them away.

AI & THE FUTURE OF WORK

Yoav acknowledged that disruption caused by AI is inevitable, with certain industries and workers likely to experience job loss, and that ethical considerations are crucial in managing this societal disruption.

He advises looking at where AI can empower people, and mitigating the more negative consequences of AI with tools and techniques that breed trust.

He emphasized the need to explore and unlock new types of work, rather than assuming automation will eliminate jobs. The development of a social safety net, including considerations of unions, laws, regulations, and potential initiatives like guaranteed income, will also be essential to ensure a positive trajectory of progress.

Keith said that while some workers may be "replaced", there will also be new opportunities for more fulfilling jobs. He did share his concern around who will have access to reskilling opportunities within organizations, noting that AI can help to identify individuals' adjacent skills, which could lead to job prospects – and help ensure equal opportunities for all employees.

AI AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Keith commented that AI can help organizations eliminate bias and improve diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility programs. He pointed out that technology can help companies to reach a broader and more diverse pool of candidates, by sourcing profiles from publicly available information, social media, and resume databases.

AI can also be used to modify job descriptions, removing unnecessary requirements, gender-specific terms or inflated experience expectations, allowing companies to attract a more diverse workforce.

Companies can use AI, he commented, to promote equal opportunity at a mass scale – especially as many of them are moving away from degree requirements and looking to the actual skills of the job.

Keith also pointed out that the use of AI can help provide equal opportunities inside an organization by eliminating favoritism based on personal connections, or "tap-on-the-shoulder" recruiting policies.

> **When these programs are properly designed and properly used, it can really take away a lot of the longstanding ways that individuals of certain groups were prohibited from moving forward. And I think that's a really great use of the technology.**
>
> **Keith Sonderling**
> EEOC

Adam suggested that AI can also help candidates identify the best-fit opportunities based on their skills, preferences, and values, streamlining the application process and saving time for both parties. "Why couldn't the technology help the candidate just like it's helping the company?"

CREATING CONFIDENCE IN AI

Yoav spoke about the importance of understanding which tasks are suitable for AI – and which are not. He advocated for a clear comprehension of AI's strengths and limitations, as well as recognizing the unique capabilities of humans.

He also stressed the need for explainable and interpretable AI systems, highlighting the significance of transparency and trust-building in enabling the successful integration of AI in HR processes.

> **I am a techno-optimist, but I am not a techno-solutionist. Technology does not solve every problem. There are some problems that we just need to solve as human beings.**
>
> **Yoav Schlesinger**
> Salesforce

Yoav noted that if the AI provides a recommendation of three companies you might be the best fit for, for example, it should be able to explain how that conclusion was reached. That will help create the "virtuous trust cycle" to enable AI in HR to flourish.

Adam recommended that the industry "lean in and learn" rather than bury their heads in the sand. It's no longer a question of whether you are going to use AI in HR, noted Keith, but how and why you are going to use it.

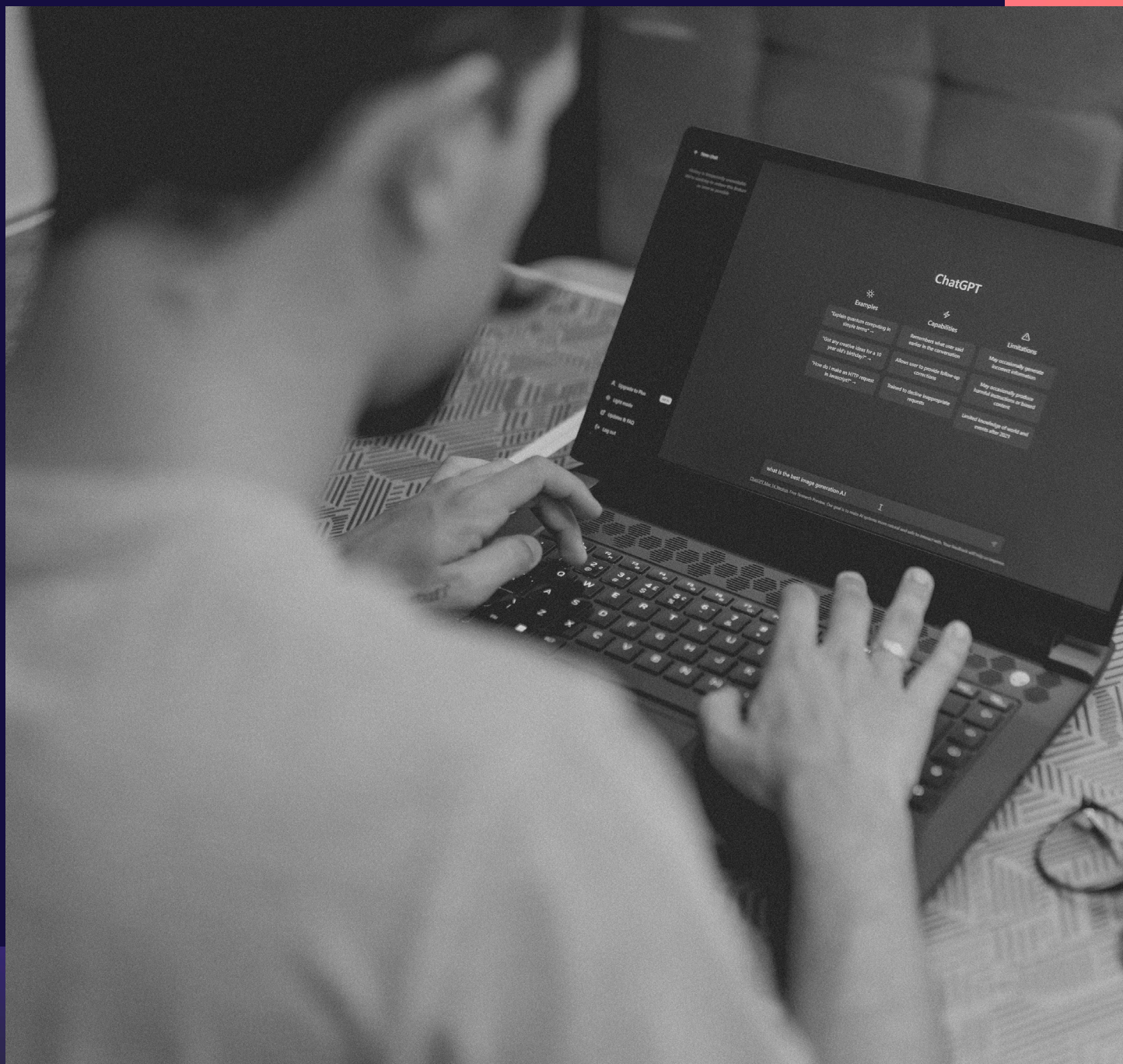
Nobody's closer to people than HR and talent teams. And it's people that are the most impacted by developments in AI, both positively and in terms of risks. As Sultan noted in his closing remarks, it is a really important moment in time to lean in, and for this industry to come together and help identify the best path to our next chapter.

How Is AI Really Impacting Jobs?

In the keynote speech at Spark Live, co-founder Sultan Saidov discussed the future of work, and the transformative nature of generative AI. Here are some more insights on this topic.

There have been massive advancements in Artificial Intelligence recently, and naturally people are asking what it means for them. More and more headlines claim that robots are “taking our jobs” – and, of course, the incredibly fast rise of generative AI tools like ChatGPT have amplified this conversation.

ChatGPT recently became the fastest-growing consumer application in history – outpacing Instagram and even TikTok – and raising a host of interesting questions about the possibilities and risks opening up to the whole world.



THE FUTURE OF WORK

The combination of innovation (that is, what is now possible) and accessibility (more and more people can use AI, free or cheaply, and quite easily) means that the game really has changed: in this new era, AI can and will do far more than ever before. As a result, workers across pretty much every industry are feeling anxious about their job security.

Last year, the annual global workforce survey from PwC found that almost a third of respondents were worried about the prospect of their role being replaced by technology in three years. Pew Research found that 37% of Americans were "more concerned than excited" about the prospect of AI.

And these fears are not totally unfounded. Goldman Sachs reported in March 2023 that AI could replace the equivalent of 300 million full-time jobs. The World Economic Forum recently proclaimed that a quarter of jobs will be impacted over the next five years, predicting a "new era of turbulence," as many workers won't have the skills needed to keep up.

1/3

worried about their role being replaced by tech

37%

of Americans more concerned than excited about AI

300M

full-time jobs could be replaced by AI?

> **I am a techno-optimist, but I am not a techno-solutionist. Technology does not solve every problem. There are some problems that we just need to solve as human beings.**

Yoav Schlesinger
Salesforce

AUGMENTING RATHER THAN REPLACING

Jobs that are highly repetitive, or follow very specific instructions or rules, are (and have been for some time) the easiest for a robot to perform.

Conversely, jobs involving a bunch of different, ever-changing tasks (and require adaptability) are harder for technology to replace. Roles with a strong human element — such as a therapist — are pretty unlikely to be 'taken over' by technology.

But this language of replacing (or removing) entire jobs is perhaps over the top. What we are seeing so far is that AI isn't so much removing jobs, as it is changing them. While some more manual components may be removed, creative aspects remain.

AI is creating jobs that are more interesting, more fulfilling, and more full of joy. Many commentators believe that developments in AI mean new jobs, better jobs, and a productivity boom.

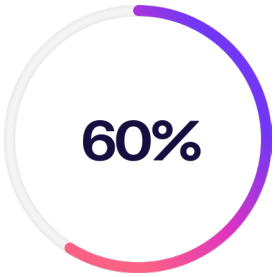
> **AI developments could eventually increase the total annual value of goods and services produced globally by 7%.**
>
> Goldman Sachs

EMBRACE THE REVOLUTION

Similar disruptions have happened before: for example, the spread of computers, or more advanced machinery in factories. The Industrial Revolution saw 'technology' completely transform the way farming was carried out.

These changed the way people work and what type of work they do — and they did make some jobs redundant — but today, we tend to be grateful for those important, labor-saving developments.

History shows that, if jobs are lost to new technology, other roles are created in their place. In the Goldman Sachs report, it was noted that 60% of workers are in occupations that did not exist in 1940. We are already seeing new jobs being created, such as AI prompt writers. And these are attracting and being filled by the very creatives who were most fearful that AI would wipe them out.



of workers are in occupations that did not exist in 1940.

Perhaps it doesn't matter if AI is "smarter" than people. The tools are here, they are useful, and they're already being widely used. What we need to focus on – and businesses can play a key role here – is how we can improve ourselves by using them.

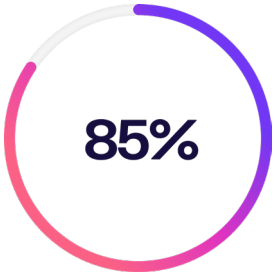
As soon as employees treat AI as a resource and not a threat, they'll make themselves more valuable to potential employers (and hopefully reduce their anxiety levels).

IT'S TIME TO FOCUS ON LEARNING

Most of us have been reskilling and upskilling over the past decade: we have seen that the usefulness of certain skills is changing faster than ever, with or without AI.

The need to develop ourselves is accelerating. So is the opportunity to focus on the work and skills we most enjoy and value; the opportunity to drive creativity and focus on human connection. (Things that technology cannot replace, but can enable.)

Dell Technologies predicts that 85% of the jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't been invented yet. This is why it is more important than ever that businesses shift to a skills-based approach, and to put in place the processes to ensure your teams can learn new skills as they are needed – such as the ability to command new technology like AI.



of the jobs of 2030 haven't been invented yet

It will be the combination of humans and machines that makes us all stronger. Unlocking the wider benefits of AI (on society) means removing tedium (research shows that as many as 90% of employees today are engaged in recurring and often boring tasks), and freeing up time.

AI can make us more creative and more efficient – and have a huge positive impact on society.

As you add to your skillset, on an ongoing basis, so the work you can contribute to changes. It is possible to envisage a world without job titles. A "job" might have felt like a fixed thing in the past; tomorrow, it is more likely to change and expand over time, and involve continuous learning.

MANAGING THE RISKS

We cannot avoid the wave of emerging AI technology. What we have to consider is how we embrace what these new experiences can offer, while being mindful of the risks.

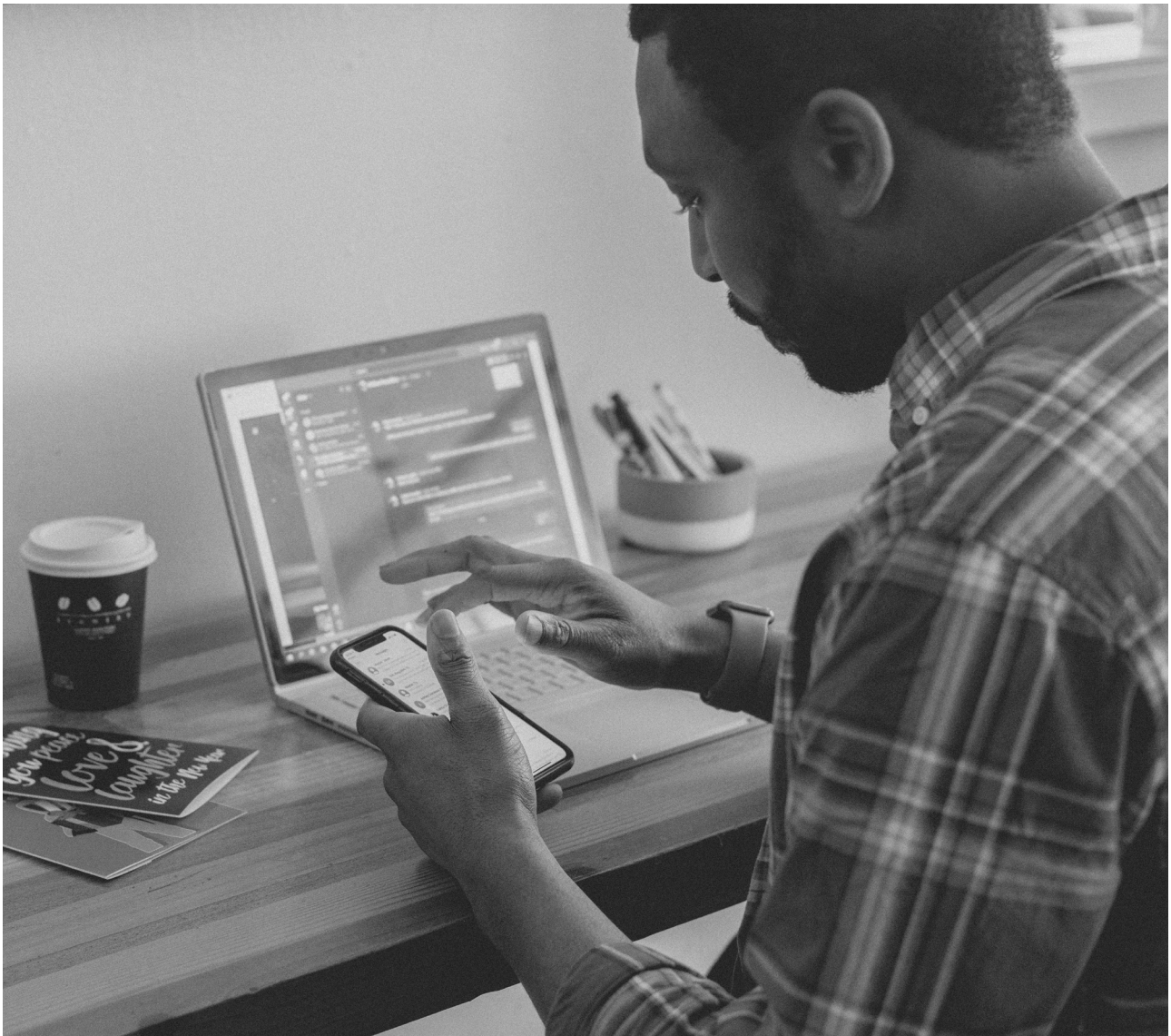
At Beamery, we were testing TalentGPT for almost 5 years before we announced it.

ChatGPT uses Large Language Models trained on billions of data points from across the whole internet, which can essentially understand and replicate human conversations.

With TalentGPT, our goal was not to create a model of human language, but to help people discover career paths and to enable companies to hire for potential. We built our 'fine tuned' Large Language Model to understand jobs and companies – more specifically, to ensure that the insights generated by AI could be as useful as possible, and easily explained.

Our AI helps identify people's skills and uses this data to guide people to opportunities, and to help talent teams make better decisions.

It is more important than ever to be careful, and compliant, and to focus on equitable outcomes, particularly when it comes to people's data and the careers and opportunities they have. All recommendations powered by TalentGPT have been independently audited, and shown to not generate bias.



At Beamery, we believe AI can enable positive social benefits, including equal access to meaningful work, skills, and careers for people of all backgrounds (the Beamery mission). Our AI systems identify underlying skills to create equal access to meaningful work and decouple career progression from other traditionally limiting factors. Our AI is supercharging everyday tasks in the talent lifecycle, not replacing them, and it will never make decisions without a human or replace them

BEAMERY TECHNOLOGY IS BUILT AROUND 5 CORE PRINCIPLES



Conclusion

It was clear from our Spark Live event that organizations are rethinking talent strategies in a pretty big way: from shifting to a skills-first approach, to embracing innovative new technologies, to completely reimagining the experience for talent across the entire lifecycle. The fundamental nature of HR is in the spotlight – and now is the time to lean in to change, rather than run from it.

Watch every session from Spark Live.

Speak with a Beamery specialist to see how you can implement the new talent playbook in your business.





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