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### HR & TECHNOLOGY IN 2020 | Aparna Sharma | Senior HR Professional & Certified Corporate Director | Editor's Collection

We live and work in an increasingly digital world. Digital transformation that we've been experiencing has impacted every business and person to one extent or another across the globe. Human Resources—perhaps more appropriately called Human Capital Resources—is no exception. Long-held HR practices are being replaced by digitally-forward strategies, initiatives and tools that can offer significant, tangible payoffs to both businesses and the individuals they employ.



Here are some HR Trends we expect we will be seeing a lot more of this year and through the coming years:

#### Human Resources Technology is Now Mainstream (and Expanding)

Technology is rapidly advancing and has been revolutionizing the entire human resources experience and every employee's continuing journey. Digitally-empowered HR services now include: quickly and easily onboarding of new employees; automating the entire employee documentation, payroll and benefits administration process; moving periodic employee

evaluations/promotions/relocations onto easy to implement and interact with platforms; offering easy-to-access discounted employee-only vendor products and services; offering multiple internal and external educational programs that allow employees to learn and build new skills; enabling fully mobile-first and omni-channel access to HR platforms/programs; and even efficient offboarding of departing employees. The result is a win-win—a much more pleasant, less cumbersome experience for employees and greatly increased efficiencies for employers.

We can expect the breadth of HR-based technology solutions to increase in both importance and usage.

### **HR Analytics and AI are Becoming More Commonplace (and More Valuable Tools)**

Data Science tools have increased and matured. Predictive Analytics, Artificial Intelligence and Robotic Process Automation have become valuable resources for businesses to leverage, both for HR functions and within certain job tasks. Data science-led predictive analytics can offer a host of benefits for HR managers including predicting when employees are preparing to leave their jobs, thereby allowing the employer to quickly intervene, if desired. In addition, artificial intelligence tools deployed can enable the quick and easy extraction of data, information and details that employees would have previously had to input (sometimes multiple times) as they start work with a new employer. AI tools can also allow employees to nix the continuous handling of certain data as part of their everyday job functions. Moreover, Robotic Process Automation can greatly automate voluminous, manually intensive tasks. This frees up employees for other revenue-generating tasks, and only step in where a human-based judgement call is necessary or when a problem (such as disgruntled customer) requires personal intervention. Such automation has shown to greatly increase business efficiencies and reduce human errors, while increasing employee job satisfaction.

We can expect a variety of AI tools to be further deployed across the HR process as well as other critical business functions and jobs.

### **The Global Workforce/Workplace is Changing (and Must be Accommodated)**

The global workforce is changing at a rapid pace. The cultural transformation is continuing, with millennials—included in the Generation X and Generation Y sectors—making up nearly three-quarters of the global workforce in 2020, according to data from [openaccessgovernment.org](https://openaccessgovernment.org). These digital natives who grew up with and are fluent across numerous technologies, expect digital products and services to continue, even as they are immersed in their work. Consequently, businesses across most industries are seeking ways to incorporate technology into their everyday operations and processes. Not only has the push for

diversity and inclusion increased in recent years causing the global workforce and employers to embrace and welcome employees across many cultures, languages, lifestyle representations, and worldwide geographies, but to also consider a variety of alternate work situations including part time, flex time, remote/telecommuting work, shared jobs and more. The availability of new and digitally-forward technology means that employers can enable their workforce to work from anywhere, anytime across the world. This has also allowed business leaders to tap and incentivize extremely talented individuals, and those with highly sought-after niche skills, to work for them even if they live on the other side of the world. The rise of agile workspaces has led companies to purposefully invest in change management and reconsider physical spaces for their new generation of employees.

Technology will facilitate enhanced flexibility in working arrangements across the globe, allowing smart firms to win in the talent acquisition war.

### **Reskilling and Upskilling Picks Up Steam (and Empowers Employees and Businesses)**

Over the past decade-plus, the advancement and, in some cases, revolution of newly available technology has shown that employee skills can become outdated and require refreshing. As new operating systems, technology, architecture, infrastructure and applications across multiple industries' lines of businesses become the norm, employees across an organization will need to be upskilled. Some skills, including many all-important soft skills, are also very important and can be learned. Consequently, employers have been ramping up efforts to provide employees with internal or external classes, educational modules and/or access to a variety of no-cost learning management systems across hundreds/thousands of capabilities/skills. In this way, businesses can benefit from re-skilling, upskilling and cross-skilling employees. This not only helps enterprises ensure their workers are capable of handling new systems and technology demands but allows businesses to make promotions and redeploy human resources as desired or build their own distinctive and niche specialized Centers of Excellence that can further help distinguish their company brand. Perhaps equally as important, learning/upskilling programs often result in increased employee engagement, retention and job satisfaction.

We can expect most large employers to provide, and the majority of employees to expect, continuous learning as a common employer-provided perk.

### **Talent Acquisition, Engagement and Retention Improves (by Leveraging Technology)**

Technological advances, including the development and prevalence of social media such as LinkedIn, have allowed HR professionals to more quickly and easily identify, source, connect with, attract and acquire great employees who will add value. At the same time, companies have dedicated time and money to social media in showcasing their company's positive traits, programs, benefits, culture, advantages and brand value to a world of potential workers and

would-be Brand Ambassadors. In addition, today's more advanced technologies allow for candidate push platforms, such as Indeed, to be pushed out to potential qualified job candidates, while job-seekers can use collective "insider" current/former employee comment platforms, like Glassdoor, to determine if they would enjoy working for a company or should run the other way. As previously mentioned, a variety of cool, technology-forward employee-directed programs, incentives, and offerings can inspire and motivate employees to become more fully engaged resulting in outstanding work output. Moreover, innovative, tech-based programs that companies can deploy can keep employees not only engaged but happy. And happy employees reduce employers' retention stresses and replacement costs.

Watch out for companies to increasingly rely on technology-led programs to aid in employee acquisition, boost engagement levels and increase retention.



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