Gartner®

2027 CHRO Trends Playbook

Four trends shaping talent strategy, investment and leadership priorities



Focus your 2027 agenda where HR can have the greatest impact

CEOs are asking their organizations to achieve more with less, faster. In 2027, CHROs must focus on four critical priorities to meet these expectations while minimizing risks to organizational performance, trust and transformation.

Trends in four areas will shape where CHROs focus their priorities, make more intentional trade-offs and strengthen HR's contribution to business outcomes:

1. **HR transformation**
2. **Enterprise AI**
3. **Workforce capabilities and skills**
4. **Leader impact**

As you explore these trends, consider how they align with your organization's strategic ambitions and can fit into your 2027 planning to strengthen business performance and competitive advantage.



Mark Whittle
Vice President Analyst
Business and Technology Insights, Gartner



Jessie Knight
Vice President Analyst
Business and Technology Insights, Gartner



Critical insights: Top CHRO trends and priorities for 2027

CHRO trend	Gartner position
1 Business needs evolve faster than HR's delivery model	**HR excellence requires speed to value, not just efficiency**
2 Neglected AI accountability creates new organizational risk	**Human accountability is essential no matter what work AI takes on**
3 The workforce has become more load-bearing	**Fewer, differentiated skills carry most of the weight**
4 CEOs hit the gas, but the leadership engine stalls	**The leader role is not designed or supported for disruption**

1

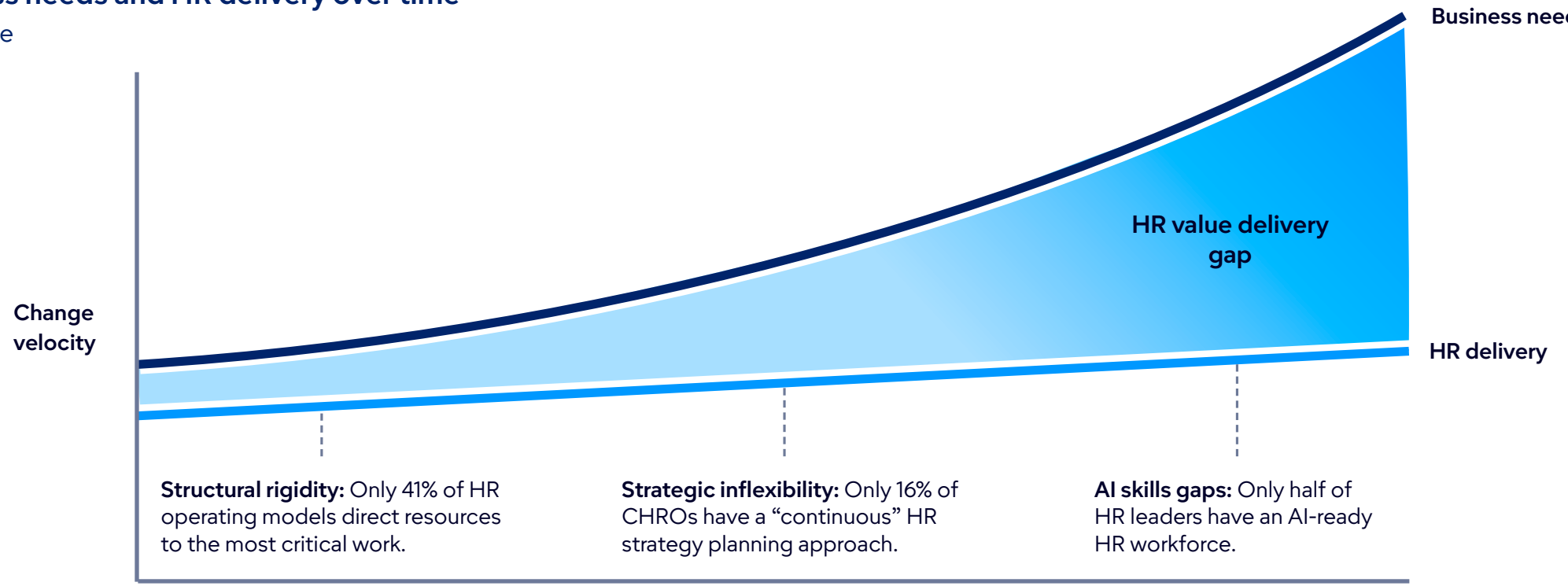
CHRO Trend

Business needs evolve faster than HR's delivery model

As business needs become broader and more complex, HR is struggling to keep up. If HR cannot close the value-delivery gap, the business will increasingly seek solutions outside the HR function.

Business needs and HR delivery over time

Illustrative



Source: Gartner
n = 297 CHROs. 2026 Gartner AI Implementation HR Leader Survey; n = 260 HR leaders.
A continuous HR strategy planning approach is defined as a flexible, iterative process in which HR regularly updates overall priorities and related resource allocation and solutions.

1

Gartner Position

Accelerate HR's speed to value by adopting product principles

Process efficiency alone does not create speed to value. Product principles help HR prioritize customer outcomes, segment solutions, assemble cross-functional teams and improve continuously as as business needs evolve, delivering real impact faster.

Product principles applied to HR

How We Approach	Product Principle	Example	Benefits
1 Strategy	**Customer focus**	HR prioritizes **AI-focused competency model updates** that drive faster skill development and clearer manager decisions, not legacy frameworks and annual cycles.	Clearer resource trade-offs based on customer priorities
2 Solution design	**Segmentation**	HR designs a **fast-lane recruiting path** for senior AI engineers that accelerates hiring, instead of relying on one-size-fits-all processes that don't prioritize critical talent segments.	Sharper precision on where variation and customization matter most
3 Collaboration	**Collective success**	HR delivers a **unified performance management product** by aligning analytics, learning and talent partners around one outcome, instead of each team producing its own piece.	Faster assembly of the right HR teams, regardless of COE
4 Impact assessment	**Continuous improvement**	HR measures whether a **redesigned onboarding experience** improves early productivity and retention, not by how efficiently the onboarding team delivers the process.	Less red tape when updating HR's solutions

1 Recommended actions for **CHROs**



Discover

- With your C-suite, **identify** critical moments where slow HR delivery creates business risk, missed value or operational drag.
- With your HR leadership team, **prioritize** one to three challenges where process efficiency no longer meets the business demand for faster execution.

Design

- Assess how product principles such as segmentation and continuous improvement can accelerate HR's value delivery.
- Identify a pilot initiative that addresses a previously defined challenge to apply these principles (e.g., a fast-lane recruiting path for AI talent).

Deliver

- Provide pilot teams the decision rights, access to data and authority to iterate without waiting for annual cycles or governance bottlenecks.
- **Measure** success by the value delivered to employees and the business, not by how efficiently the process is executed.

Resources

Insights: Build a Responsive HR Strategy With Strategy Review Sprints

Toolkit: Assess HR's Value Through Executive Inputs

2

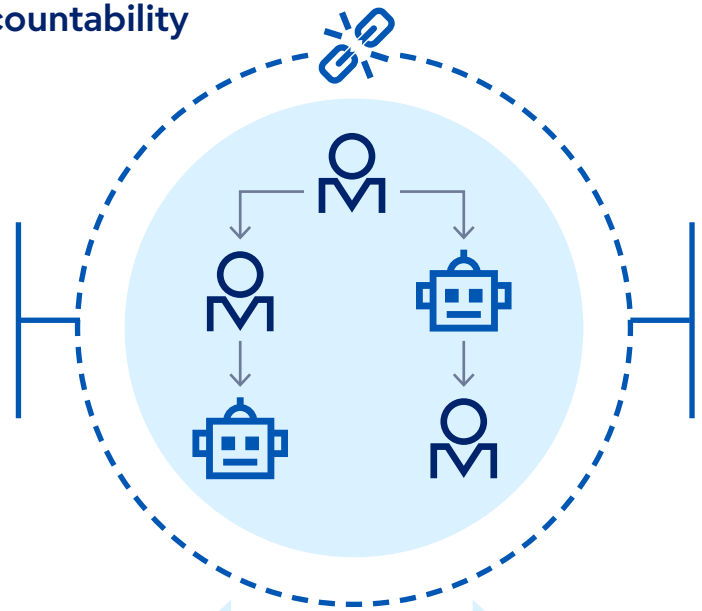
CHRO Trend

Neglected AI accountability creates organizational risk

AI is distributing decisions across people and systems faster than organizations are clarifying ownership. CHROs must close accountability gaps before they become financial, compliance, privacy or reputational risks.

Disconnect between AI ambition and AI accountability

52%
of **CEOs want to aggressively deploy AI agents** as employees.



76%
of CHROs say their leadership team is **not aligned on who should be accountable** for any errors or issues created by AI agents.

Who is responsible for **quality and outcomes** when AI oversees human work?

Who is liable for **mistakes** made by an AI agent?

Source: Gartner
n = 203 CEOs and senior business executives. 2026 Gartner CHRO Flagship Survey; n = 286 CHROs at organizations that have implemented AI initiatives

2

Gartner Position

Human accountability is essential no matter what work AI takes on

Human accountability must remain explicit at every level of AI agency. Tailor oversight to the decision: define ownership for support, require active judgment for augmentation and use exception-based controls for automation.

Accountability actions by decision type



	Decision support	Decision augmentation	Decision automation
	"This customer may qualify for a refund."	"I recommend issuing a refund."	"I issued the refund."
Accountability actions	• Document enforceable policies for AI use. • Assign clear ownership for decision outcomes.	• Formalize intervention triggers and escalation paths. • Design review steps that require active human judgment.	• Apply exception-based review to high-volume processes. • Leverage guardian agents to support human oversight.

Source: Gartner

2 Recommended actions for **CHROs**

Discover

- **Identify** a business unit where AI is creating gaps in in ownership, decision authority or liability.
- **Assess** current accountability in that unit by reviewing its existing guidelines, governance structures and escalation paths.

Design

- With leaders in this critical area, **implement** accountability actions, such as enforceable policies and intervention triggers, for high-impact AI-enabled decisions.
- **Redesign** roles and team structures in this area to clarify expectations for leaders, managers and employees overseeing AI systems.

Deliver

- With your head of learning and development (L&D), **train** relevant talent on the judgment and adaptability skills required for responsible AI oversight.
- **Document** lessons and continuously rebalance accountability as work shifts between people and AI.

Resources

Insights: Determine the Right Mix of Human and AI Capabilities in Job Redesign

Insights: Dynamic Redesign — The Next Evolution of Work Transformation

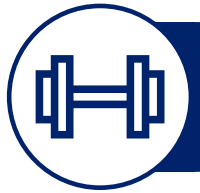
3

CHRO Trend

The workforce has become more load-bearing

Rising productivity expectations, management de-layering and reduced entry-level hiring are concentrating performance risk in fewer people. CHROs must protect the capabilities the organization cannot afford to lose.

Indicators of rising pressure on the workforce



Heavier load

67% of CHROs report **increased expectations for employee productivity.**[a]



Less slack

78% of CEOs expect AI to drive the **elimination of some middle management** roles by 2028.[b]
Job postings for S&P **entry-level positions have dropped 9 percentage points** since 2023.[c]



Performance risks

Organizational performance depends **on a smaller group of key people delivering more value.**

Source: [a] 2026 Gartner CHRO Flagship Survey; n = 297 CHROs. [b] 2027 Gartner CEO Survey; n = 203. [c] Gartner analysis of Coresignal Data (LinkedIn job postings from approximately 350 S&P 500 companies in the United States from January 2012 to March 2026)

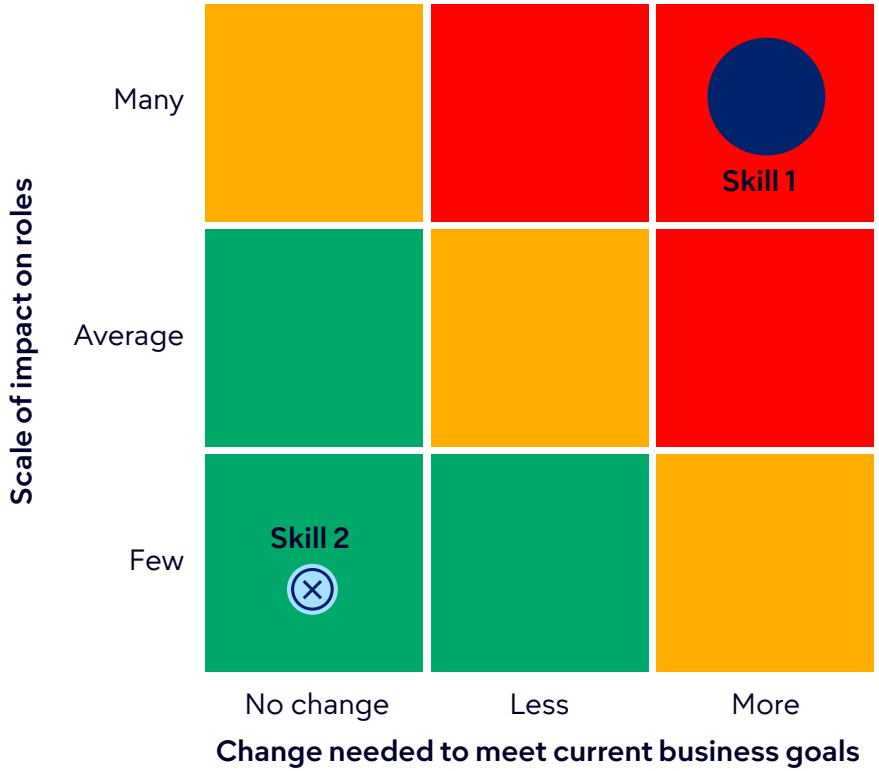
3

Gartner Position

Target investments toward differentiated skills that drive performance

Sort skills investments by scale of impact on roles and change intensity to prioritize efforts. These investments may involve either developing existing employees or acquiring new talent — the common denominator is a disciplined focus on the skills that matter most.

Skills investment assessment



Source: Gartner

Criticality of skill investments

Critical: High risk to operational success and competitive edge.

Less critical: Threatening to success. Monitor for change and similar trends across business units.

Not critical: Skill under control, managed by skills-sensing network.

Criticality of skill investments



Criticality of skill investments



3 Recommended actions for **CHROs**



Discover

- With business leaders, **identify** and validate your differentiated capabilities and the priority skills that underpin them.
- **Determine** where gaps in those priority skills pose the greatest risk to near-term business performance.

Design

- With your heads of talent management and total rewards, **prioritize** potential skills investments based on criticality, time to impact and the reward signals needed to reinforce them.
- **Select** the right investment approach for each priority skill, including where to build, buy or redeploy talent to close gaps at pace.

Deliver

- With your heads of recruiting, L&D and talent management, **launch** targeted development, hiring or internal mobility interventions to close priority skills gaps.
- **Reassess** priority skills as business needs evolve, ensuring investments stay aligned with shifting demand and emerging capability requirements.

Resources

Webinar: Develop a Skills Strategy That Accelerates Organizational Performance

Tool: Skills Strategy Roadmap

4

CHRO Trend

CEOs hit the gas, but the leadership engine stalls

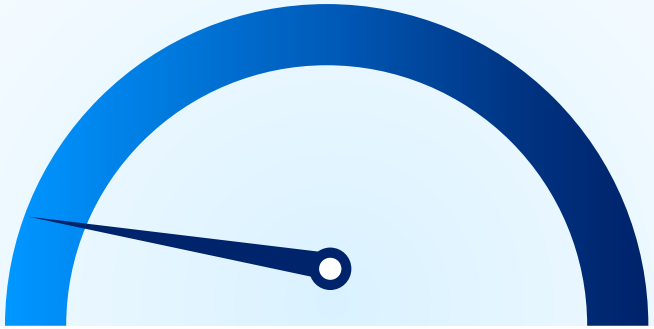
CEO transformation ambitions are colliding with entrenched ways of working, uneven team performance and overstated AI literacy. The constraint is not aspiration; it is a leader role that was not designed for disruption.

Leadership stall points on CEO ambitions

Illustrative

63% of CEOs are **radically** redesigning the operating model to accelerate financial returns from AI.[a]

Lagging performance:
Less than half of CHROs agree their leaders are effective at improving team performance at the speed required. [b]



Entrenched ways of working:
Only 17% of CHROs agree their organization is effective at managing legacy leaders who struggle with new ways of working. [b]

Critical knowledge gaps:
91% of executives overstate their AI understanding. [c]

Source: [a] 2027 Gartner CEO Survey; n = 203 CEOs and senior business executives. [b] 2026 Gartner CHRO Flagship Survey; n = 297 CHROs.
[c] Pluralsight Research Finds That 79% of Tech Workers Pretend to Know More About AI Than They Actually Do, Pluralsight.

4

Gartner Position

Embed disruption into the leader role

Leadership development programs are ineffective when leaders' goals, incentives and role design reward stability. Embed disruption into the leader role through explicit expectations, shared goals, consequences, rewards and practical support.

Levers to embed disruption in leader role design and support

Support levers (coaching, networking, AI tools)



Ultimately, if organizations want leaders to take calculated risks in pursuit of transformation, the consequences of inaction must outweigh the consequences of failure. Before leaders can disrupt the organization, HR must redesign the leader role to make disruption part of the job.

Source: [a] 2027 Gartner CEO Survey; n = 203 CEOs and senior business executives. [b] 2026 Gartner CHRO Flagship Survey; n = 297 CHROs. [c] Pluralsight Research Finds that 79% of Tech Workers Pretend to Know More About AI Than They Actually Do, Pluralsight.

4 Recommended actions for **CHROs**

Discover

- With your C-suite, **identify** leadership friction points to determine when entrenched behaviors and legacy governance slow transformation.
- With your head of L&D, **surface** leadership capability gaps by assessing overstated AI literacy, risk-avoidance patterns and lagging team performance.

Design

- With your HR leadership team, **redesign** leadership roles to embed disruption, defining explicit expectations, shared goals, consequences and rewards.
- **Define** structural interventions (e.g., restructure teams, redraw reporting lines, reset performance metrics) and pair them with coaching, peer networks and AI tools.

Deliver

- With your head of L&D, **equip** leaders to act at pace by training them on the judgment and adaptability skills required to deliver the redesigned role.
- **Measure** transformation outcomes, tracking disruption of entrenched structures, faster team performance and closed AI-literacy gaps.

Resources

Insights: Leaders Must Learn to Let Go to Effectively Lead

Guide: 5 Steps to Align Leadership Assessments With Organizational Priorities

Team Alignment

Mobilize your team to address the 2027 trends

2027 Trend	Business Needs Evolve Faster Than HR's Delivery Model	Neglected AI Accountability Creates New Organizational Risk	The Workforce Has Become More Load-bearing	CEOs Hit the Gas, but the Leadership Engine Stalls
CHRO actions	**Build products, not processes, to close HR's execution gap**	**Stop equating human presence with human oversight**	**Create capacity through fewer, differentiated skills**	**Overinvest in high-stakes moments for effective leadership**
Talent management leader imperatives	• Prioritize the talent risks that demand faster value delivery • **Tool: Talent Risk Assessment Framework**	• Realign job responsibilities to reinforce human accountability as AI reshapes work • **Insights: Dynamic Redesign: The Next Evolution of Work Transformation**	• Update talent strategy to attract and retain talent in a slack-free workforce • **Accelerator: Creating an Enterprise Talent Strategy**	• Assess current and future leader readiness to disrupt the organization • **Guide: 5 Steps to Align Leadership Assessments With Organizational Priorities**
L&D leader imperatives	• Accelerate the identification and delivery of a few, differentiated skills • **Tool: Skills Strategy Roadmap**	• Build employee capabilities needed for human oversight of AI work • **Schedule an Analyst Consultation**	• Deliver a dynamic skills strategy • **Webinar: Develop a Skills Strategy That Accelerates Organizational Performance**	• Equip leaders to disrupt work that they are increasingly removed from • **Insights: Equip Leaders to Perform Amid Growing Complexity**
Recruiting leader imperatives	• Accelerate the acquisition of growth-critical talent • **Insights: The Impact of AI on the Talent Acquisition Operating Model**	• Assess candidates for AI oversight and judgment • **Schedule an Analyst Consultation**	• Redesign attraction strategy to focus on differentiated skills • **Insights: Recruiting's New Talent Strategy Mandate**	• Overhaul hiring and assessment criteria to reflect new leader responsibilities • **Insights: Close Executive Recruiting Gaps to Improve Leadership Performance**

AskGartner

Your AI-Powered Thought Partner, Backed by Trusted Gartner Insights

AskGartner prompts to address your 2027 HR priorities:

How do we shift our HR strategy from process standardization to product-oriented delivery aligned to current business requirements?

How should CHROs determine which AI workloads require human oversight and how should accountability be structured across those scenarios?

Get curated, analyst-vetted intelligence with AskGartner.

Learn More About AskGartner ↗

Gartner client? Log in for complete access.

Get more than just an answer

Strategic collaboration
Engage in active dialogue and get context-aware outputs based on your role and priorities.

Faster execution
Instantly build presentations, executive talk tracks, decision frameworks and structured execution plans to shorten your time to impact.

Human expertise
Identify the right moments to connect with Gartner analysts who can pressure-test assumptions and validate your thinking.

Trusted insights
Support high-stakes decisions and strategies with rigorously developed, analyst-verified outputs.

Actionable, objective insights

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools:

Webinar

The Top CHRO Trends and Priorities Shaping 2027

Explore analyst insights and recommendations for the 2027 CHRO trends and priorities.

Watch Now

Template

HR Strategy on a Page Template

A customizable template for CHROs to create and communicate their HR strategy to the C-suite.

Get Started

Tool

HR Score

Measure the importance and maturity of critical activities across the entire HR organization.

Learn More

Webinar

Strategic Roadmap: Redesigning HR for an AI-Infused Operating Model

Explore analyst insights for prioritizing AI initiatives that balance enterprise impact with functional efficiency.

Watch Now

Already a client? Get access to even more resources in your client portal. Log In ↗

Connect with us

Get actionable, objective business and technology insights that drive smarter decisions and stronger performance on your mission-critical priorities.

U.S.: 1 855 322 5484
International: +44 (0) 3300 296 946

Become a Client

Leaders who know, choose Gartner. See how.
gartner.com/en/what-we-do

Learn more about Gartner for CHROs
gartner.com/en/human-resources

Stay connected to the latest insights

Attend a Gartner conference
View Conferences

© 2026 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. 5500805

Gartner®