

HR Leaders Monthly

May 2022

In This Issue

6 Future of Work Trends Reshaping the Employee Experience

Highlights From the 2022 HR Technology Employee Experience Bullseye

Drive Employee Engagement and Productivity Through a High-Quality Employee User Experience

Key Trends in the 2021 Hype Cycle for Human Capital Management Technology



Gartner®

HR Leaders Monthly

Contents

Editor's Note	3
6 Future of Work Trends Reshaping the Employee Experience	4
Highlights From the 2022 HR Technology Employee Experience Bullseye	10
Drive Employee Engagement and Productivity Through a High-Quality Employee User Experience	15
Key Trends in the 2021 Hype Cycle for Human Capital Management Technology	22
Managing Employees' AI Hopes and Fears: An Interview With Whit Andrews	28
Smoothing the Path to Innovation: An Interview With David Schonthal	32

Access to Gartner Content Caveat

Some content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

Legal Caveat

© 2022 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. Gartner is a registered trademark of Gartner, Inc. and its affiliates. This publication may not be reproduced or distributed in any form without Gartner's prior written permission. It consists of the opinions of Gartner's research organization, which should not be construed as statements of fact. While the information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, Gartner disclaims all warranties as to the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of such information. Although Gartner research may address legal and financial issues, Gartner does not provide legal or investment advice and its research should not be construed or used as such. Your access and use of this publication are governed by Gartner's Usage Policy. Gartner prides itself on its reputation for independence and objectivity. Its research is produced independently by its research organization without input or influence from any third party. For further information, see "Guiding Principles on Independence and Objectivity."

Any third-party link herein is provided for your convenience and is not an endorsement by Gartner. We have no control over third-party content and are not responsible for these websites, their content or their availability. By clicking on any third-party link herein, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this disclaimer.

767196

Executive Sponsor Brian Kropp

Editor in Chief Jonah Shepp

Managing Editor Sari Wilde

Associate Editor Samantha Lustig

Contributing Editors Charlie Beekman, Brent Cassell

Authors

Brent Cassell

Duncan Harris

Brian Minning

Ashley O'Brien

Caroline Ogawa

Jonah Shepp

Design

Walter Baumann

Caroline Holloway

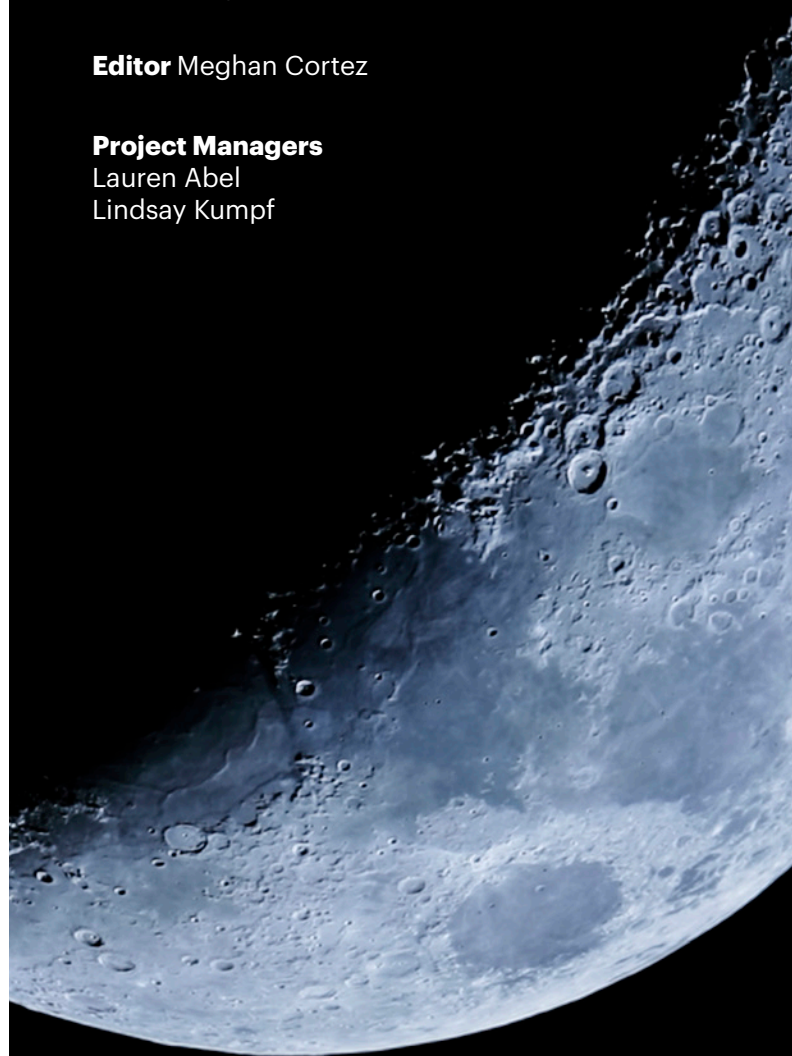
Camille Tagami

Editor Meghan Cortez

Project Managers

Lauren Abel

Lindsay Kumpf



Editor's Note

by Jonah Shepp and Sari Wilde



In the past two years, HR leaders have watched their jobs, organizations and business environments change at unprecedented speeds and magnitudes. Remote work transformed from an occasional perk or accommodation into a baseline expectation for employees in a wide variety of roles. The drive toward a more human employer-employee relationship is changing the role of managers and the way HR leaders think about employee well-being.

At the same time, in this digitally mediated work environment, technology has become a much larger component of the employee experience. New technologies will impact — positively or negatively — how fair, humane, stressful or fulfilling the workplace is, depending on how they are used. The future of work has never felt so present, and the need for HR leaders to focus on the future has never been so urgent.

This issue of HR Leaders Monthly addresses that need with a focus on technology and the future of work — in particular, how technological change and the evolution of the work environment stand to affect employees. We explore some of the future-of-work trends we expect to have the greatest impact on the employee experience in the months and years ahead and offer suggestions for how HR leaders can get ahead of these challenges. We also delve into the impact of technology on the employee experience, in terms


of HR technology and the technology employees use for everyday work.

For a more complete perspective, we invited experts from outside Gartner's HR research practice, drawing on our colleagues' expertise in technology to provide a wider range of insights. We highlight findings from the Hype Cycle for Human Capital Management Technology, 2021 that show which new tools will come into the mainstream in the near future. In an exclusive interview, Gartner analyst Whit Andrews walks us through his research into employees' perceptions of artificial intelligence and its applications in the workplace. We also present insights from a recent interview with professor David Schonthal about the types of friction that hinder innovation and how to overcome them.

Our goal for this future-focused journal is to present HR leaders with thought-provoking ideas they may not have encountered before and help them anticipate near-future challenges they may not have considered. In an unpredictable business environment, we seek to arm our clients with as much information as possible about the trends and innovations we know are most likely around the corner. By anticipating these developments, HR leaders will be better positioned to compete for talent and meet employees' expectations for the future of work.

6 Future of Work Trends Reshaping the Employee Experience

by Ashley O'Brien



Ongoing changes in the way people work have permanently transformed employees' relationship with and expectations of work. As they strive to understand the evolving employee experience and meet employees' needs in this new environment, CHROs should pay attention to these high-impact trends.

The last two years have propelled us into the future at an exponential rate. The COVID-19 pandemic led to unequally distributed spikes in unemployment while working virtually for extended periods during times of great uncertainty took a toll on employees' mental health. Hybrid work could be a great opportunity or a great risk, particularly for diverse talent. But as long as the future purpose of the office remains unclear and talent processes have not adjusted to support this new way of working, we won't know the ultimate impact.

The consequences of the pandemic changed the way organizations supported employees, which in turn forever changed the relationship between workers and their work. At the same time, many

workers reevaluated the role that work had in their lives altogether.

Chief HR officers (CHROs) are facing historic challenges from an exhausted workforce and a highly competitive labor market. At the same time, this environment creates an exciting opportunity for CHROs to lead talent into the future and differentiate their organizations as employers of choice.

The future of work trends outlined in this research, which we expect to have the greatest impact on the employee experience, underscore how the employee value proposition must change and respond to these shifts in employee expectations.

Well-Being Is the New Employee Metric

Employee experience has long been measured through lagging indicators such as annual engagement surveys and turnover metrics. However, these metrics exclusively focus on an employee's satisfaction with their workplace. It does not measure their current experience and overall well-being, which will impact their performance or intent to stay at the organization. While 70% of organizations made additional investments in well-being throughout the last two years,¹ most employees are still not taking advantage of the offerings available to them (see Figure 1).

CHROs will need to do three things to successfully navigate this trend:

- Reduce barriers to participation in well-being benefits.
- Evaluate current workflows that contribute to burnout.
- Measure employee health.

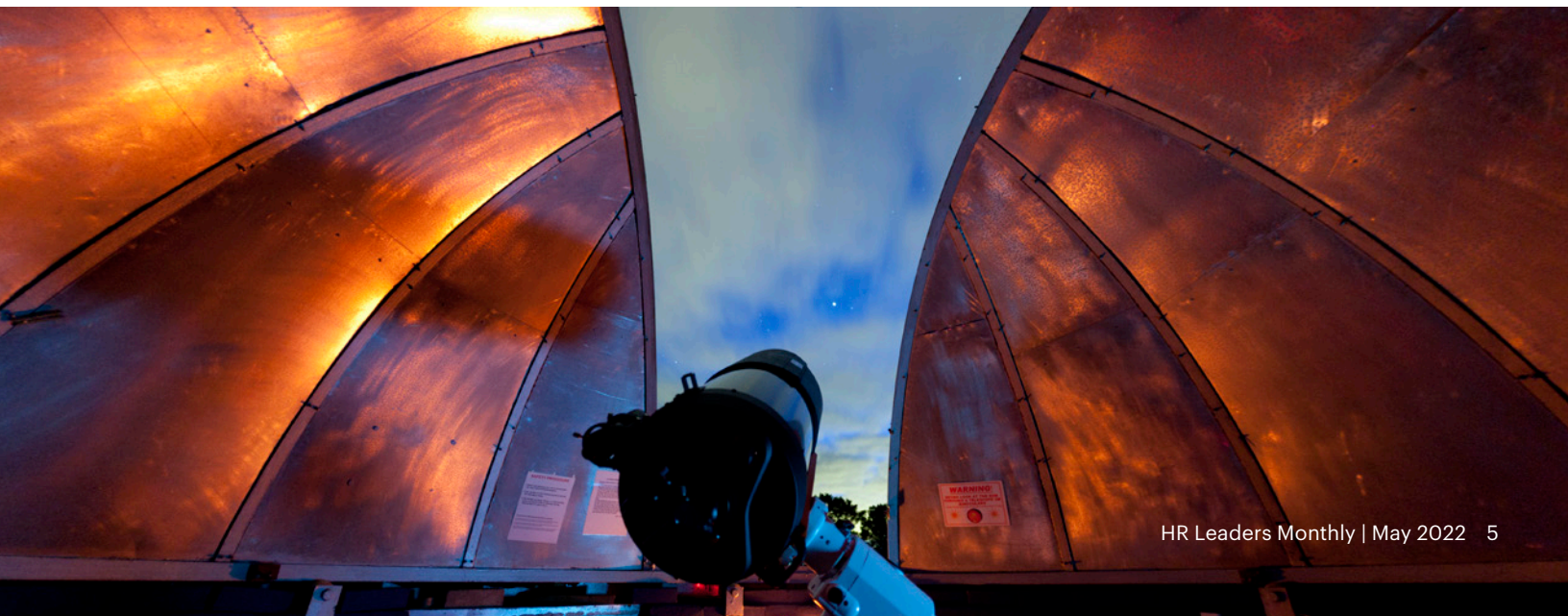
DEI Outcomes Will Worsen if Employers Don't Act

The increase of hybrid and remote work does not guarantee all employees will experience the benefits of this change equitably. In fact, hybrid work has the potential to significantly worsen diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) outcomes for

employees. For example, 76% of managers say on-site employees are more likely than remote workers to be promoted.² Considering that women and employees from underrepresented groups are more likely to want to leverage hybrid or flexible work, managers' proximity bias becomes a recipe for poor DEI outcomes. Gender pay gaps will be exacerbated. Those with work gaps from unemployment will be left behind (which, in the U.S., disproportionately impacts women of color), and leadership pipelines will remain homogeneous.

If organizations do nothing, we will recover from the pandemic inequitably and leave behind crucial talent segments, contributing to future societal inequities. To support all employees in a hybrid future, CHROs must create equitable talent processes. To do this, they can:

- Mitigate bias in performance evaluation by measuring outcomes instead of activities.
- Mitigate bias in performance by creating agile goals and providing transparency into development opportunities.
- Create mentorship programs that support underrepresented talent.
- Mitigate bias throughout the recruiting pipeline, such as using inclusive language and focusing on skills instead of qualifications in job descriptions, prompting interviewers on potential biases before an interview, and targeting the interviewer's focus by recommending specific competencies and associated questions.



Turnover Will Continue to Increase in a Hybrid Environment

Hybrid work is the new paid time off. Rather than serving as a differentiated benefit to attract talent, it has become a baseline expectation for most employees. Fifty-two percent of employees say flexible work policies will affect the decision to stay at their organizations, and 45% say they would only consider remote roles if they were to look for a new job.³ Organizations are already seeing significantly increased turnover when employees are required to come back into the office full-time, but we predict turnover will increase even more in a hybrid environment for two reasons.

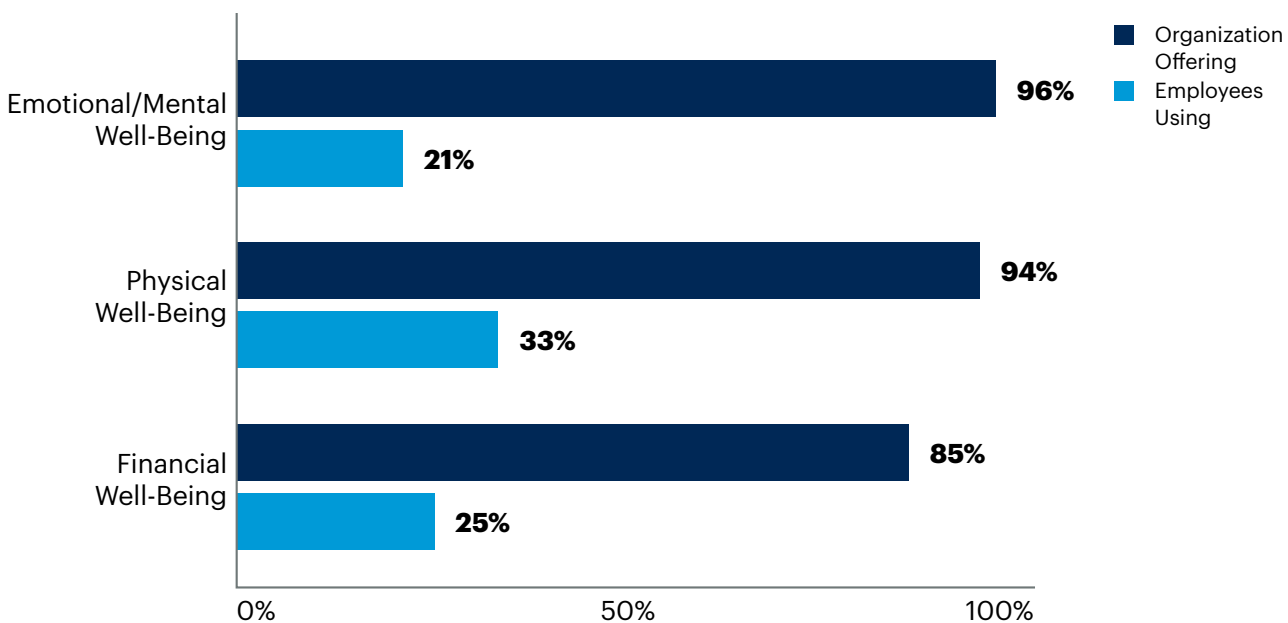
First, the social and emotional costs of leaving the organization are lower for hybrid and remote workers. These employees tend to have fewer, but deeper connections, within the

organization, which reduce the social pressure to stay in a job. At the same time, because their connections are deeper, their departures can have a greater impact on turnover, as the loss of a close friend at the organization can motivate other employees to quit.

Second, an individual has more choice in employers when location is no longer a limiting factor. Remote work options greatly expand the geographical range of potential employers for an individual employee. Even if a hybrid role requires them to work in person some of the time, an employee's commute tolerance tends to be higher if they need to go into the office one day a week instead of five.

This sustained turnover can lead to greater recruiting costs, loss of organizational knowledge and weaker leadership pipelines. To retain hybrid employees, CHROs will need to connect them more strongly to the organization's culture and values and invest in talent processes and programs to expand employee networks.

Figure 1. Employees Using Versus Organizations Offering Well-Being Programs



n = 53 organizations; 5,055 employees worldwide

Source: 2020 Gartner Well-Being Benchmarking Survey, 2020 Gartner Well-Being Employee Survey

Note: The data for employees using the program is calculated as follows: The assumption is that if the employees are not aware about programs, they're not using it.



Managers' Roles Are Changing

Many managers have found it hard to adapt to managing their teams from a distance in the hybrid environment. Building and maintaining connections, tracking performance and guiding employees' career development are all more challenging at a distance. With fewer opportunities for spontaneous encounters in the workplace, managers need to be more intentional in establishing and developing relationships with and among their team members.

Meanwhile, some parts of managers' roles are on the cusp of being automated through artificial intelligence (AI) and other new technologies. As AI becomes more advanced and develops the capability to provide performance and development feedback, help employees prioritize their work, and prepare them for meetings, managers will not become irrelevant. Instead, the manager-employee relationship will more critically influence the employee's experience and connection to the organization, especially for hybrid and remote employees. We've heard from many clients that they feel culture is at risk in a hybrid environment, and this also elevates the manager's role in shaping the employee experience.

To facilitate this transition to a more human manager-employee relationship, CHROs will need to be prepared to change managers' mindsets about their roles. They may also need to provide managers with more tools to manage employees'

career perceptions, well-being and connection to organizational culture.

For example, the digital marketing agency Goodway Group created a Team Health Monitor, which enables employees to rate the health of their teams along four dimensions: trust, cohesion, accountability and performance. This helps reinforce the expectation that managers are not only responsible for their teams' immediate output but also for safeguarding the conditions that drive performance in the long term. For more details, see [Case Study: Remote Team Dynamics \(Goodway Group\)](#).

Gen Z Will Want In-Person Work Experiences

CHROs might expect Gen Z to be more comfortable with hybrid work than their older colleagues. However, while many in this generation expect flexibility, they will not want to work remotely indefinitely. For those who finished their education and entered the workforce during the pandemic, virtual learning demonstrated the benefits of remote work and flexibility, but the experience has also left something to be desired. Gen Z will want the expanded personal connections that come from in-office work.

For this generation, remote work is about continuing the connections built in person and the flexibility to meet personal preferences in schedules. However, Gen Z employees may return to an office where their mid- to late-career mentors prefer working remotely and are

less available to provide in-person guidance. This mismatch in expectations may increase attrition in the short term and leave a talent development gap for future leaders in the long term.

Gen Z's expectations will impact many of the major decisions CHROs must make as their organizations prepare for the postpandemic world of work. They must pay special attention to the needs of entry-level hires when thinking about redesigning office spaces and ensure in-office onboarding support. They will also need to create specific development opportunities for early-career talent, as these opportunities become less likely to emerge organically.

Shorter Work Weeks Become an EVP Offering

Labor market competition and high inflation are putting upward pressure on compensation, and many organizations can't afford to increase pay as quickly as employees want or expect. Job-switching premiums have doubled from 4.7% in 2020 to 10% in 2021 as many employers are offering significant pay increases to attract new talent.⁴ In 2021, switching jobs was the only way many employees could secure a real raise in their wages (see Figure 2). For employees who stayed in their jobs, 3% to 4% annual pay increases are not matching the annual rate of inflation, which reached 7.5% in the U.S.⁵ in January 2022. If inflation continues to rise, compensation will be worth less, and not all employers will be able to attract and retain talent on the basis of compensation alone.

This is challenging organizations to rethink their employee value proposition (EVP) by offering reduced hours. In the past few years, companies including Microsoft Japan and Unilever New Zealand have made headlines as they began experimenting with a four-day (32-hour) work week, offering employees the same amount of compensation for fewer hours of work.^{6,7} Some countries have even begun piloting four-day work weeks as a matter of national policy.⁸

Of course, this may not be suitable or desirable for all employees, but in the years to come, we expect to see more employers embrace four-day work weeks as part of a new EVP approach. This will also enable them to compete for diverse talent in a crowded, competitive labor market.

To make such a substantial change in the way the organization works, CHROs will need to work with other C-suite leaders and hiring managers to review role design and work processes and identify roles in which a reduced work week is an option.

¹ 2020 Gartner Well-Being Benchmarking Survey. This survey was conducted online from 25 September 2020 to 18 November 2020 and contains responses from 53 total rewards executives from organizations across 19 industries and headquartered across 13 countries. The survey design and development, administration and data analysis was done by Gartner's HR practice research team.

² 2020 Gartner Improving Employee Engagement Survey. This survey was fielded online in November and December 2020 to 5,000 employees in APAC (Australia, China, India and New Zealand), EMEA (Germany, Spain, and the U.K.), Latin America (Argentina and Brazil) and North America (the U.S. and Canada). Respondents predominantly worked for organizations employing more than 1,000 people. All industries were eligible for participation.

³ 2021 Gartner Hybrid and Return to Workplace Sentiment Survey. This survey was distributed to over 3,500 employees globally during October and November 2021 to understand their preferences and challenges related to current and future work design.

⁴ 2Q19 through 3Q21 Gartner Global Labor Market Surveys

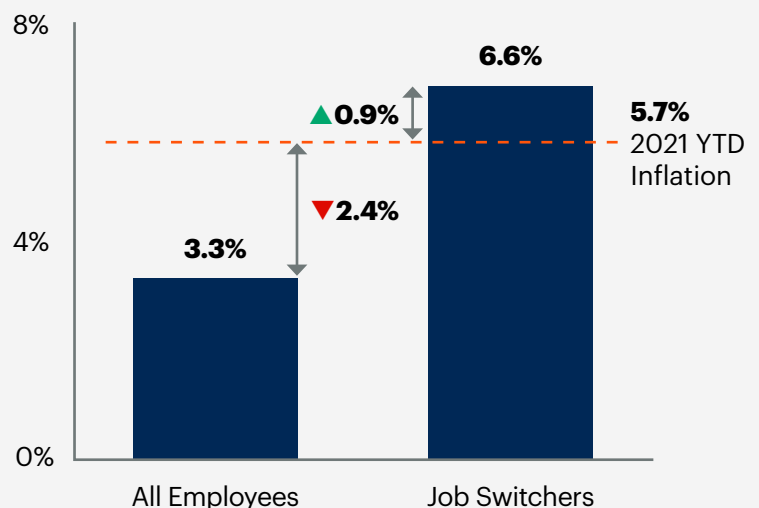
⁵ Consumer Price Index, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (downloadable pdf).

⁶ Microsoft Japan Tested a Four-Day Work Week and Productivity Jumped by 40%, The Guardian.

⁷ Unilever NZ to Trial Four-Day Work Week at Full Pay, Unilever.

⁸ Belgians Can Work 4-Day Week as Full-Time Staff in New Deal, Bloomberg.

Figure 2. Wage and Salary Growth, September 2020 Through September 2021



Source: ADP Research Institute

Note: "U.S. Wage Growth Increased by 3.3 Percent. Aligned with Pre-Pandemic Growth, White Wages for U.S. Job Switchers Increased 6.6 Percent Since September 2020 to Meet Demand for Workers." October 2021

The title is framed by two vertical yellow bars. The text is in a large, bold, white sans-serif font.

Gartner ReimagineHR Conference 2022

Brian Kropp, Distinguished VP,
Chief of HR Research and Conference Chair



Join the premier conference for CHROs and their HR executive teams

At ReimagineHR Conference 2022, you'll hear provocative ideas and pragmatic solutions from HR experts, learn from the successes and challenges of your CHRO peers and explore a robust landscape of technology and solutions providers — all in an environment built for dialogue.



Save the date

Transform the HR function and prepare your organization for the future of work.

15 – 16 September 2022 | London, U.K.

24 – 26 October 2022 | Orlando, FL

 [Learn More](#)



Highlights From the 2022 HR Technology Employee Experience Bullseye

by Duncan Harris

This article highlights how HR technology contributes to the employee experience and will allow HR leaders to confidently pursue their engagement, innovation and investment strategies supported by employee preferences.

In many ways, employees have adapted admirably to the remote and virtual conditions of hybrid working, with 86% saying they have sustained or increased their productivity since changing working patterns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and with 76% of employees saying they have the technology they need to do their job now.^{1,2} However, this may have more to do with employees leaning on self-reliance than intelligent design from HR functions.

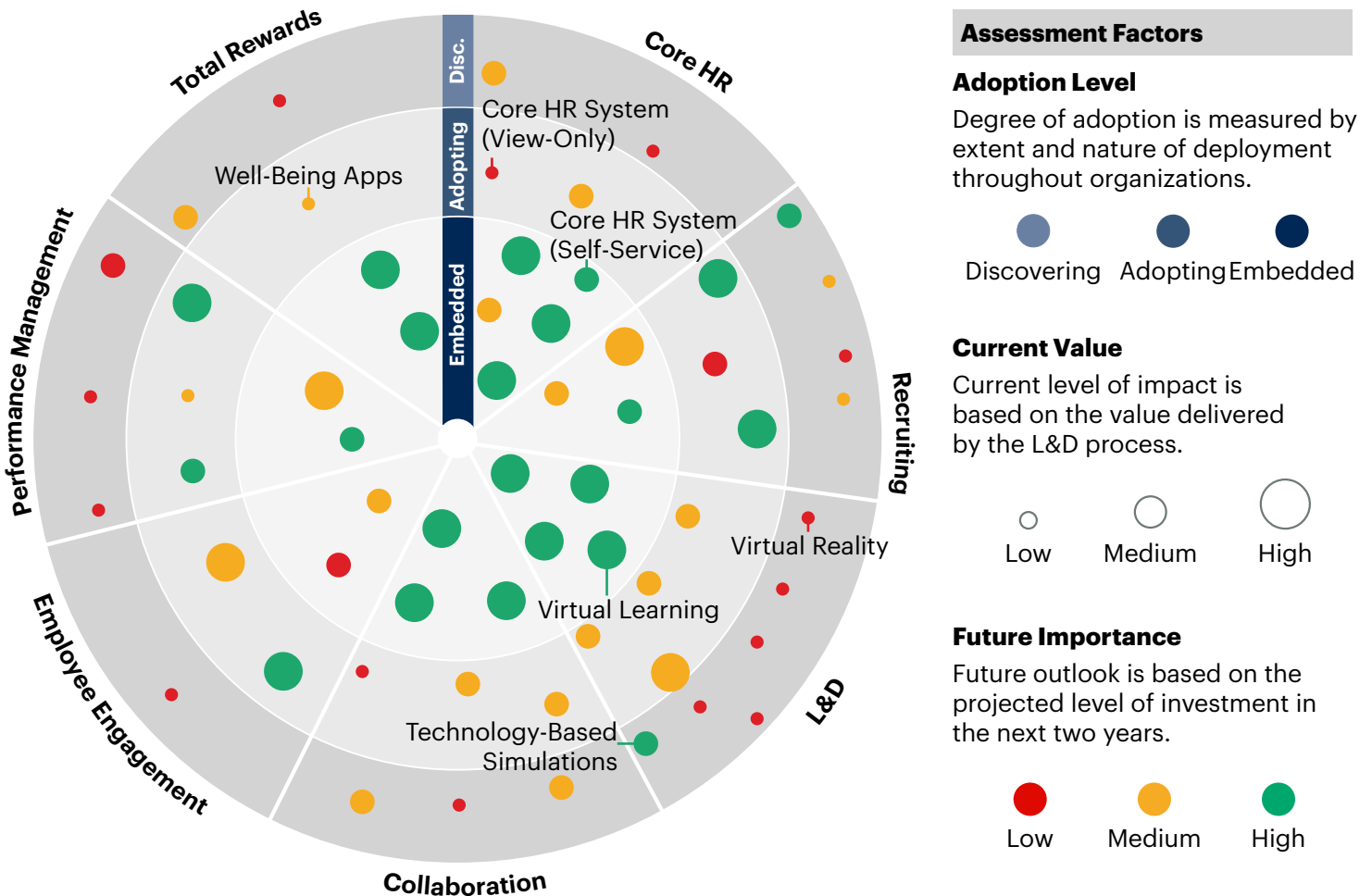
When we turn to HR's self-evaluation of their efforts to support employees in a hybrid environment, we start to see causes for concern. Seventy-one percent of HR leaders feel they need to increase the overall support they are offering; 45% believe the technology they currently have in place hinders, rather than aids, the employee experience. And a quarter of HR leaders struggle to understand the experiences that all their employees have.³

Although the mandate for remote work may have passed — hopefully without need for return — the appetite for remote working is only going to increase. By the end of 2022, the share of knowledge workers working remotely is forecast to increase to 47%, up from 27% in 2019.⁴ And with this shift comes a vastly increased reliance on HR and collaboration technology solutions. Throughout the entire employee life cycle, enabling a virtual experience is now an essential link between employees and their workplace. To aid HR leaders in this new and evolving landscape, the HR Technology Employee Experience Bullseye

provides insight into the adoption, current value and areas where employees would like to see future investment for a wide range of HR innovations throughout the entire employee life cycle, based on the aggregated responses of almost 3,500 employees globally (see Figure 1).

The bullseye maps 60 HR solutions and examines the current HR technology contribution to employee experience from an employee perspective. To look at our full report, please see HR Technology Employee Experience Bullseye Report, 2022. However, HR leaders can act on these three highlights now.

Figure 1. HR Technology Employee Experience Bullseye Overview



n = 3,477

Source: 2021 Gartner HR Technology Panel Survey

Employees Are Embracing Self-Service

In a hybrid environment, HR leaders have been weighing the choice between providing employees the ability to access more self-service options against the potential for this to overwhelm already stretched employees. An indicative example of this is whether it is better for core HR functions to be mediated through managers and HR to facilitate information or allow for more employee autonomy. From an employee perspective, self-service is a viable approach, outranking view-only modes of HR information throughout adoption, current value and future importance (see Figure 2).

To continue to improve the impact of self-service, HR leaders should:

- **Limit the number of channels.** Focus on using data from fewer channels as a virtuous learning loop to improve processes and HR support-related information for employees through digital self-service.
- **Use data to improve processes.** Site traffic data will allow HR leaders to uncover valuable insights into employee behavior and offer an easier, more

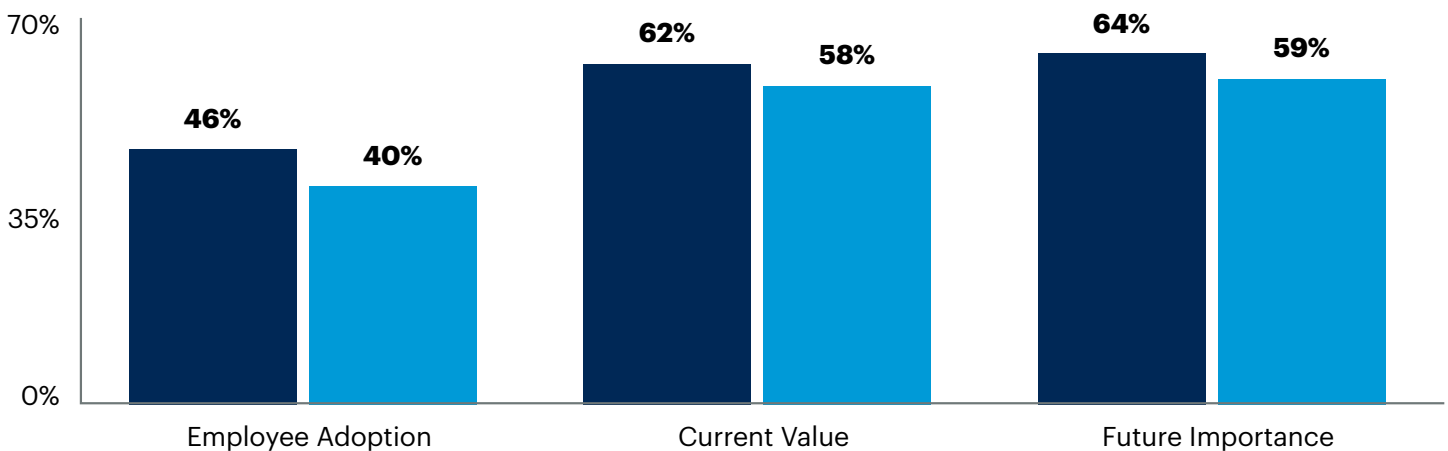
personalized service experience while delivering efficiency savings to the organization.

- **Reduce self-service abandonment.** To reduce self-service abandonment, HR leaders must assess their self-service against criteria such as clarity, credibility and confirmation to improve employee confidence in digital HR self-services.

Learners Have an Appetite for Virtual Learning

Virtual learning is a broad set of capabilities, which include remote-instructor-led, e-learning, online video platforms, access to curated organizational information and online training through a learning portal. All of these channels are widely appreciated by employees and readily adopted. Adding to this mix, we are starting to see a rise in interest for targeted employee learning simulations, which are emerging as a way of training employees in complex activities that may be hard to gain exposure to otherwise (or are best practiced in a neutral, repeatable environment). These can range from challenging customer service scenarios to sophisticated technical procedures including surgery and engineering.

Figure 2. Self-Service Versus View-Only Functionality for Core HR Offerings



n = 3,477

Q: (1) Please review the below list of core HR technology options and indicate how frequently you are using them. (2) How much value do you feel the selected options provide toward your performance in your day-to-day work? (3) Given the current core HR technology options you use now, how important do you believe these will be to your performance, day-to-day work and career in two years' time?

Source: 2021 Gartner HR Technology Panel Survey

Although employees expect all these channels to grow in importance, learners are not yet ready to make the leap into virtual worlds for development activities. As use cases and examples become more widely advertised, this may change but not within the next two years.

To guide employees using virtual learning, HR leaders should:

- **Align virtual learning with needs.**
Guide employees to use virtual learning channels and platforms selectively to avoid burnout or fatigue.
- **Deliver value in just-in-time microbursts.**
Lean into the advantage of virtual platforms by aligning learning to when it's required in the employees workflow.
- **Enable virtual peer connection building.**
Actively help employees connect to coaching and peer learning cohorts to supplement individual learning pathways.

Wellness Means More Than An App

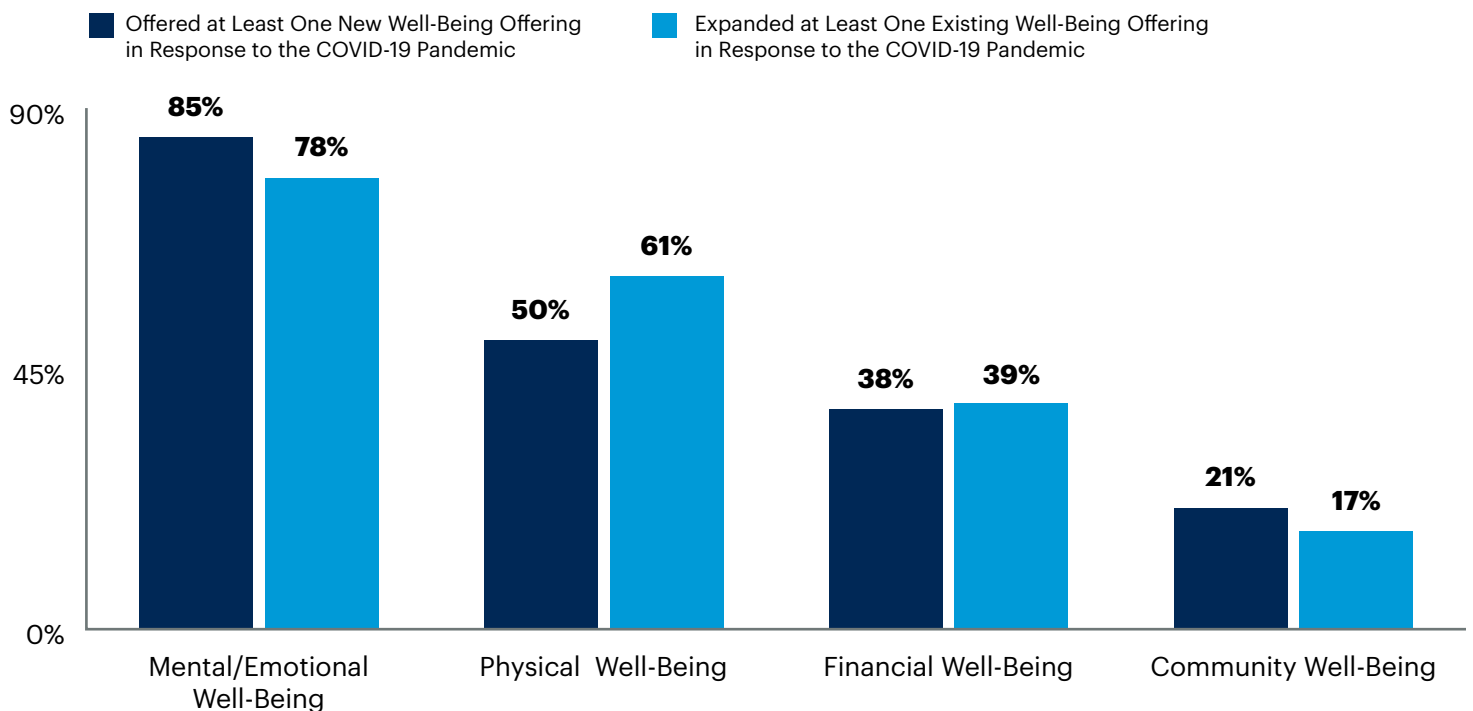
Throughout the past two years, organizations have laudably responded to the concern for physical and mental well-being by offering a range of solutions. In fact, 46% of HR leaders said their well-being budgets increased. Among organizations that added at least one new well-being offering, 85% added an offering in the mental and emotional well-being area (see Figure 3).⁵

Although perhaps convenient, when it comes to well-being offers, employees remain skeptical about the value of apps — with over half of those with access to an app using them infrequently or not at all.⁶

To aid wellness in a virtual environment, HR should:

- **Proactively sense and address stressors.**
Use virtual discussion forums, data mining and sentiment analysis to proactively understand

Figure 3. Well-Being Offerings Added or Expanded



n = 34 organizations that offered new offering(s); 18 organizations that expanded existing offering(s)

Source: 2020 Gartner Well-Being Benchmarking Survey

which aspects of well-being are most challenging for your employees.

- **Expand areas of support employees are already utilizing.** Identify existing mental well-being offerings that can be provided virtually without significant loss of quality, safety and outcomes. The increased affordability of technological tools, such as video technology, provide a good opportunity to continue to leverage technology to access services. For instance, videoconferencing tools can be used for consultations and virtual counseling.

HR technology is an essential element of the employee experience in the hybrid work environment, and accessing employees' preferences will allow HR leaders to confidently pursue their engagement, innovation and investment strategies. Understanding what employees really need to help them tackle the growing challenges of integrating work and life in a hybrid world will ultimately allow for more sustainable and connected relationships between employees and their organization.

¹ 2021 Gartner From Efficiency to Resilience Employee Survey (n = 3,690). This survey was conducted to measure workforce health in late 2019 and early 2020, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in January 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

² 2021 Hybrid Workforce AER (4Q21), (n = 3,049 knowledge workers).

³ 2022 Gartner HR Priorities Survey (n = 296 HR leaders). This survey was conducted from 7 July 2021 through 28 July 2021 and includes responses from a total of 572 HR leaders globally, representing all major industries.

⁴ Forecast Analysis: Remote and Hybrid Workers, Worldwide

⁵ 2020 Gartner Well-Being Benchmarking Survey. This survey was administered to a random group of Gartner client HR leaders between September and November 2020 (n = 53 organizations).

⁶ 2021 Gartner HR Technology Panel Survey (n= 3477). This survey was conducted online from April through June 2021 and included 3,477 employees at organizations in 23 industries, 13 countries and four categories of organization size. Respondents were asked to rate 60 technologies and innovations across seven HR subfunctions based on the level of adoption in their organizations, the impact on current performance and the future importance for employee performance.

Upcoming Virtual Events



Gartner regularly hosts virtual events across a variety of Human Resources topics. These webinars present an opportunity for you to gain insights from our research experts on making better decisions for your function and organization.

Sustain Workforce Resilience – The Managers' Role in Reducing Workforce Burdens

The Gartner 2022 HR Trends: Budget, Efficiency, and Functional Planning

Outpace Your Labor Market Competition With Talent Intelligence

3 Steps HR Leaders Must Take to Navigate Talent Attraction Risk in 2022

Ask the Experts: Trends Shaping Employee Equal Opportunity



Drive Employee Engagement and Productivity Through a High-Quality Employee User Experience

by Brian Minning

Organizations are increasingly recognizing how the user experience (UX) of work applications improves employee productivity and engagement. To drive key business outcomes, HR leaders should partner with IT to ensure employees have a high-quality UX.

While most organizations aspire to provide a high-quality user experience (UX) for their employees, a majority of employees have historically reported a subpar or inconsistent UX. Employee UX encompasses the experience that employees have when interacting with applications or tools to complete their work. While HR leaders invest heavily in strategies to improve the employee experience, few have prioritized employees' experience with technology and the UX of applications they use for work.

However, HR leaders are beginning to recognize the impact of employee UX on important outcomes such as ensuring remote worker productivity and competing for talent. With an estimated 40% of the workforce considering changing employers,¹ and employee retention becoming a particular concern for many

organizations, leaders are investing in employee UX as one way to improve employee engagement and satisfaction. Additionally, increased remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic has made UX even more critical to employee effectiveness. We estimate that 54% of the workforce is likely to work remotely some or all of the time after the pandemic ends, up from 31% before the pandemic.²

Organizations' increased focus on providing a high-quality UX has yielded significant improvements. We surveyed over 2,200 corporate employees on the UX quality of their work applications and found that 51% of employees rate their UX as high-quality.³ This marks a significant increase over only 31% of employees who reported a high-quality UX in 2019.

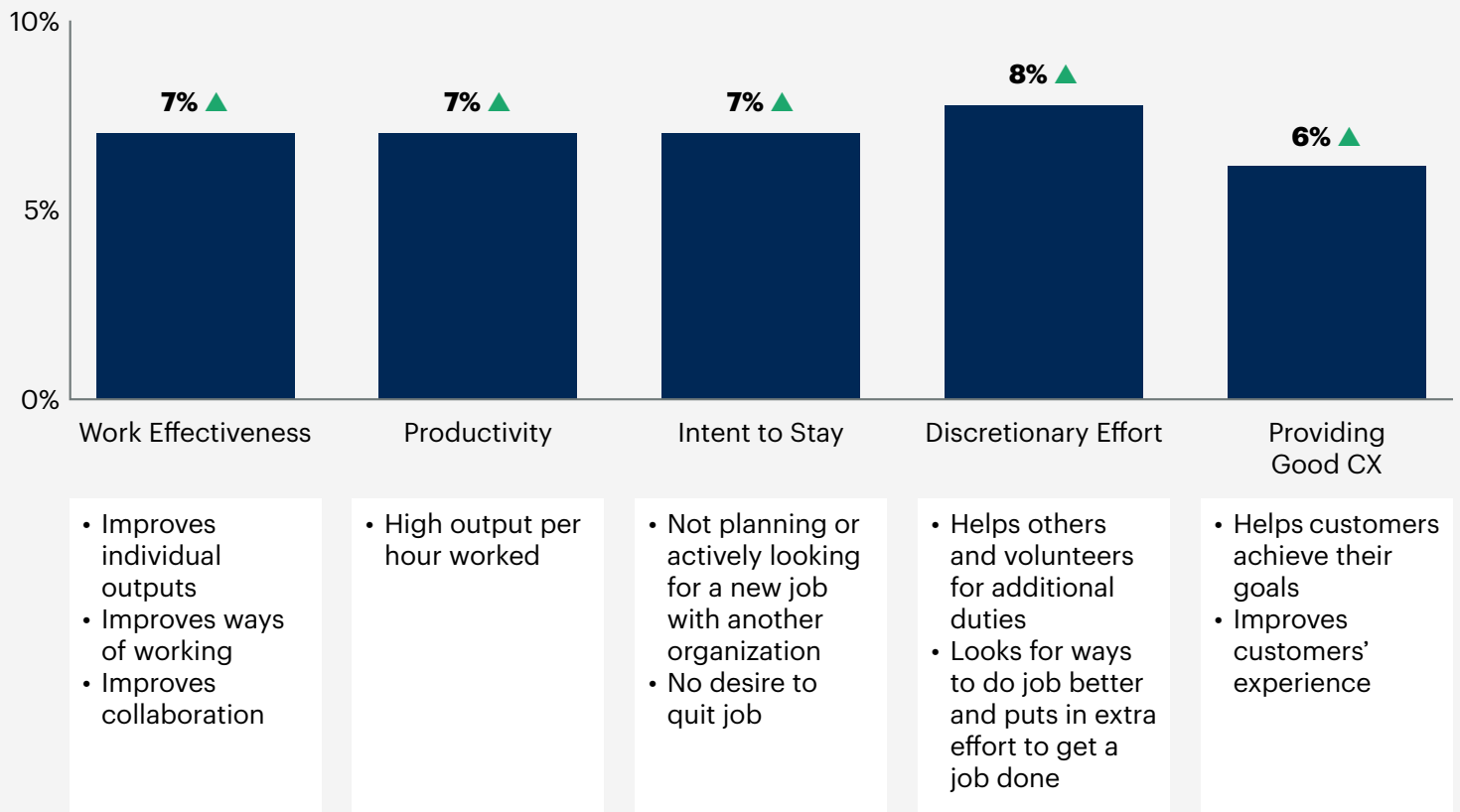
High-Quality Employee UX Drives Multiple Key Business Outcomes

Our analysis confirms the positive impact of employee UX on a range of key business outcomes. HR leaders should make the case for investments in employee UX by demonstrating its impact on the critical outcomes related to employee productivity, retention and engagement (see Figure 1).

We found employees with a high-quality UX are:

- 8% more likely to have high levels of discretionary effort, which includes helping others achieve their goals and working to improve the customer experience³
- 7% more likely to have high levels of productivity
- 7% more likely to have high levels of work effectiveness, which includes on-time task completion, work quality and effective collaboration
- 7% more likely to have a high intent to stay as indicated by a lack of interest in leaving their current employer and not actively searching for a new job
- 6% more likely to be able to deliver a good customer experience, which includes helping customers achieve their goals and working to improve the customer experience³

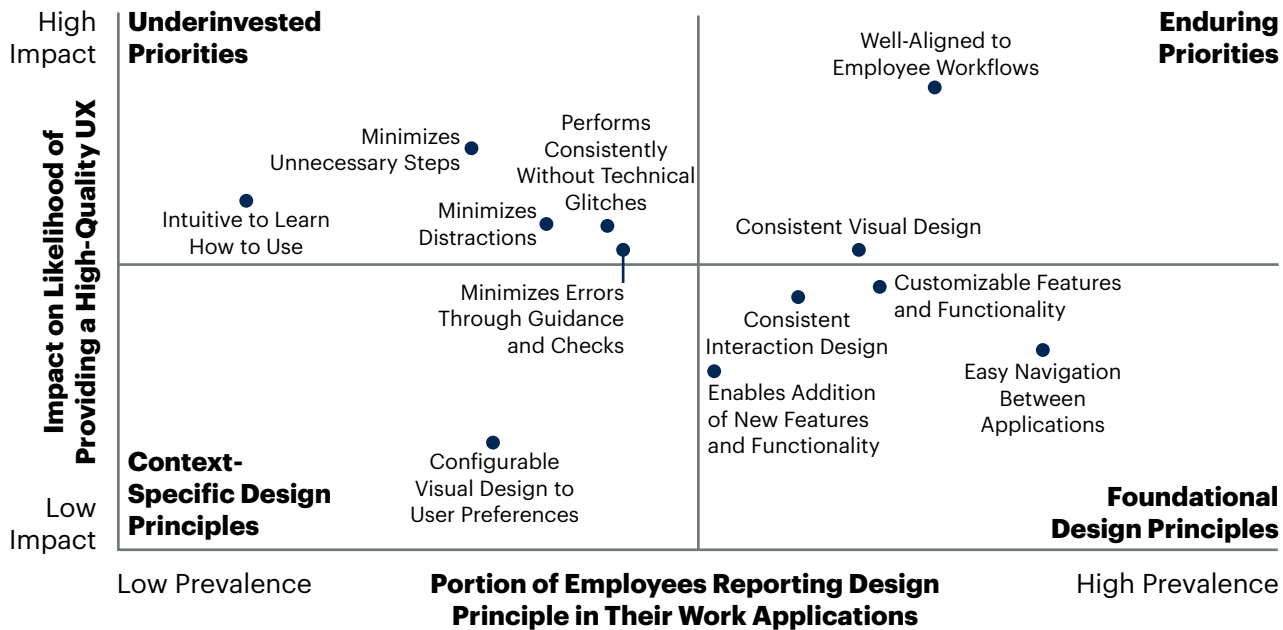
Figure 1. Impact of Employee UX on Key Business Outcomes



n = 2,244 employees

Source: 2021 Gartner Employee UX Survey

Figure 2. Prevalence of Application Design Principles and Their Impact on Overall UX Quality



n = 2,244 employees
 Source: 2021 Gartner Employee UX Survey

Design Principles for a High-Quality Employee UX

Many design principles contribute to the quality of employee UX. We examined 12 principles — such as visual consistency, alignment with workflows and navigability between applications — to determine their prevalence and impact on overall UX quality. Organizations can improve employee UX quality by prioritizing the design principles that are relatively less prevalent but have a high impact on UX quality (see Figure 2).

Design principles fall into four categories when comparing their relative prevalence and impact on UX quality:

- **Underinvested priorities** — Design principles that are less prevalent but have a higher impact on UX quality are opportunities for greater emphasis in application design.
- **Enduring priorities** — Design principles that are highly prevalent and have a large impact on UX quality are priorities organizations should continue to emphasize.
- **Foundational design principles** — Design principles that are highly prevalent but have a lower impact on UX quality are foundational in application design. While these principles are essential parts of the experience employees expect, organizations should not overinvest in them, as increasing investment may not yield returns.
- **Context-specific design principles** — Due to their lower prevalence and lower impact on UX quality, organizations should only prioritize context-specific design principles to address particular user needs or provide value in specific circumstances.





HR leaders should advocate for employee UX improvements that address underinvested and enduring design priorities in particular. These design principles reduce employees' effort to do their work, such as being easy to learn to use, minimizing unnecessary steps, minimizing distractions, minimizing user errors and being well-aligned to employee workflows.

Our analysis also found the availability of accessibility features and assistive technologies is associated with positive perceptions of UX quality. Accessibility features and assistive technologies help employees with disabilities use technology to do their work, such as text-to-speech, text enlargement and assistive input devices. Fifty percent of survey respondents reported using one or more accessibility

features or assistive technologies, suggesting that employees with reported disabilities are not the only beneficiaries of these offerings.³ Sixty-nine percent of employees who use two or more accessibility features or assistive technologies reported having a high-quality employee UX, compared with only 39% of employees using one or no accessibility features.³

Instead of treating accessibility features and assistive technologies solely as compliance measures, HR leaders can promote them as a way to improve all employees' experience using technology for work. Ensuring the availability of accessibility features and assistive technologies will also help organizations achieve critical diversity, equity and inclusion outcomes.

UX Quality Varies Among Employee Groups

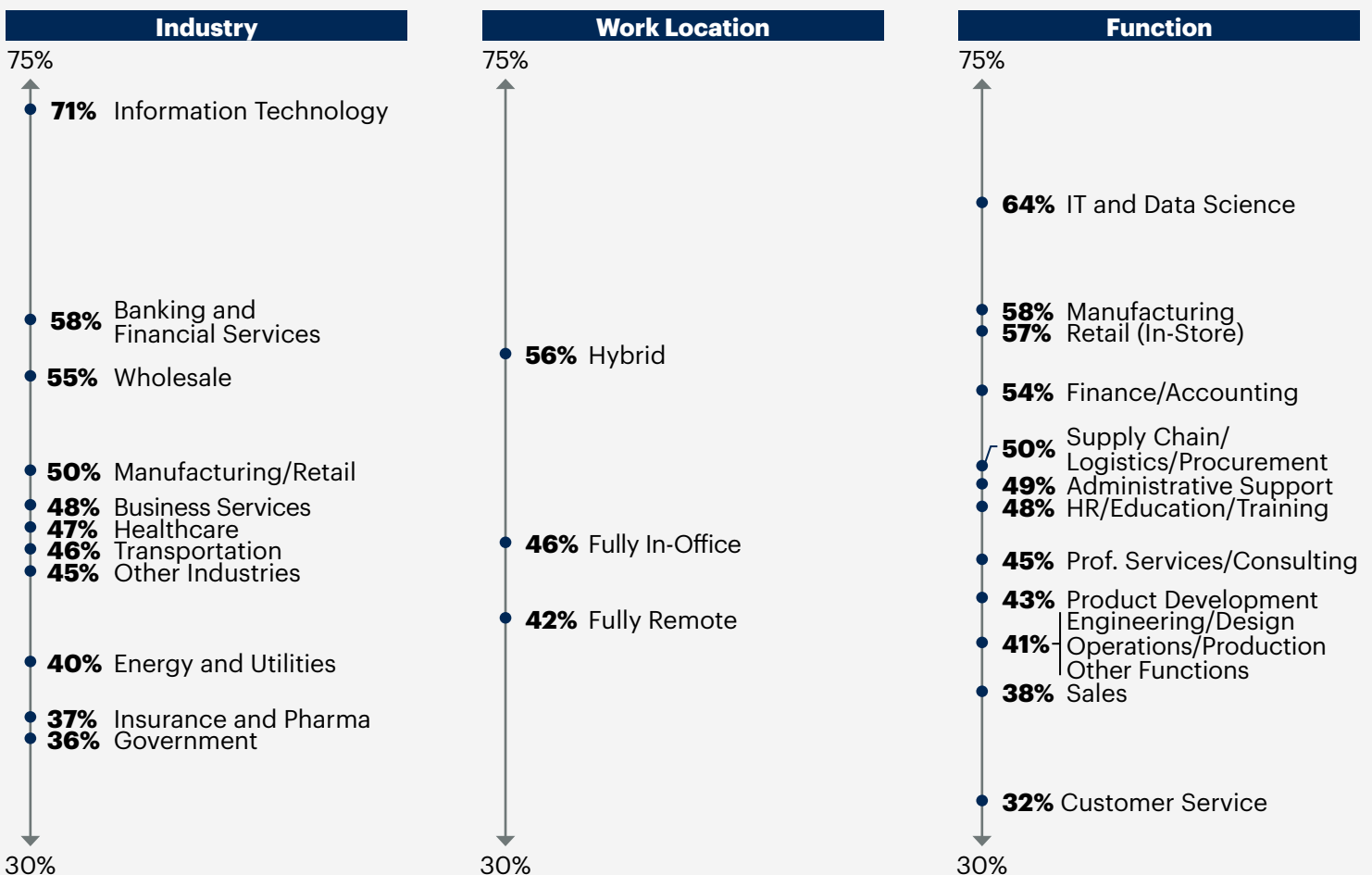
Although the overall quality of employee UX has improved significantly in recent years, UX quality still varies greatly for different segments of the workforce (see Figure 3).

The largest disparities in UX quality exist between industries. Employees in technology and finance industries are most likely to report a high-quality UX. At the lower end of the spectrum, 40% or fewer employees report a high-quality UX in the

energy/utilities, insurance and pharmaceutical, and government industries.

Large disparities in UX quality also exist between business functions, where the percentage of employees reporting a high-quality UX can range from 32% to 64%. Relatively technology-intensive functions such as IT and data science (64%), manufacturing (58%), and finance and accounting (54%) are more likely to report a high-quality UX. In contrast, customer-facing functions such as customer service (32%) and sales (38%) are least likely to report a high-quality UX.³

Figure 3. Perception of UX Quality, by Select Demographics and Firmographics



n = 2,244 employees

Source: 2021 Gartner Employee UX Survey

UX quality also varies based on where employees work, highlighting the importance of providing a high-quality UX for employees whether they work at home or in the office. Employees working in a hybrid model, which is a mix of in-office and remote work, are more likely to report high-quality employee UX (56%) than employees who work primarily at home (42%) or in the office (46%).³ Although hybrid workers typically use many of the same work applications as their fully in-office and fully remote counterparts, the greater flexibility these workers have regarding when and where they work could be one reason for more positive perceptions of UX quality.

Variations in UX quality within organizations mean that HR leaders need to first understand the largest gaps in UX quality for their employees. By recognizing that efforts to provide a high-quality employee UX will have different starting points throughout the organization, HR leaders can identify the highest-value areas in which to invest improvement efforts.

Partner With IT to Address Employee UX Gaps

While employee UX has a positive impact across multiple key outcomes related to employee productivity, engagement and retention, HR leaders cannot address most gaps in UX quality on their own. To improve employee UX, HR leaders need to partner with IT leaders to:

- Make the case to invest in employee UX by demonstrating its impact on key business outcomes, such as work effectiveness, employee engagement and enabling employees to deliver a good customer experience.
- Prioritize UX improvements that reduce employee effort to complete work, such as ensuring applications align to employee workflows, minimize unnecessary steps and are intuitive to learn how to use.
- Understand where the greatest gaps in employee UX are today by soliciting input from employees about how to improve the UX of their work applications.

¹The Next Great Disruption Is Hybrid Work — Are We Ready?, Microsoft.

²2021 Gartner Hybrid Work HR Leader Survey. This survey was fielded in January and February 2021 to 75 HR leaders globally.

³2021 Gartner Employee UX Survey. We surveyed over 2,200 corporate employees globally from all industries, functions, seniority levels and generations. Our objective was to understand the overall quality of employee UX across organizations and its impact on key business outcomes. We also aimed to identify the application design principles and practices that have the biggest impact on employee UX quality. We used descriptive analyses to compare overall UX quality across employee demographic segments. We used logistic regressions to understand the impact of employee UX on key business outcomes and to identify the application design principles and employee-centric practices that have the biggest impact on overall UX quality. We tested a total of approximately 20 design principles and employee-centric practices to understand the impact that each has on UX quality. We controlled for respondents' age, function, seniority level, geographical region, professional tenure and organizational characteristics when conducting the regression analysis.



Developing an Effective HR Transformation Strategy

Organizations are under continued pressure to manage a highly volatile business environment. HR leaders must adapt and evolve their own role, functional strategy, operating model and talent to drive business outcomes.

This toolkit provides actionable resources to support four goals of successful HR transformation:

 World-class leadership

 A modern HR operating model

 Future-proof HR team competencies

 HR technology enablement



 **Download Your HR Transformation Toolkit**



Key Trends in the 2021 Hype Cycle for Human Capital Management Technology

The 2021 Hype Cycle for Human Capital Management Technology shows several technologies approaching mainstream adoption that could benefit some of HR leaders' main priorities. HR leaders can use this research to better understand current and emerging options for technology solutions.

The Hype Cycle for Human Capital Management (HCM) Technology helps HR leaders understand where HCM technologies are on the journey from early innovation to maturity. The 2021 Hype Cycle illuminates several important trends in this field (see Figure 1) and shows that many technologies with high impact potential are on track for widespread adoption in the next two to five years.

Increasingly, designers of HCM applications aim to improve the candidate, worker, learner and manager experience, while acknowledging that most employees spend relatively little time using these applications. Many applications have a conversational UI or use insights from behavioral science disciplines to engage users, influence behaviors and contribute to improvements in organizational culture.

Continuous learning, listening, feedback and performance management are becoming necessary to support hybrid and agile ways of

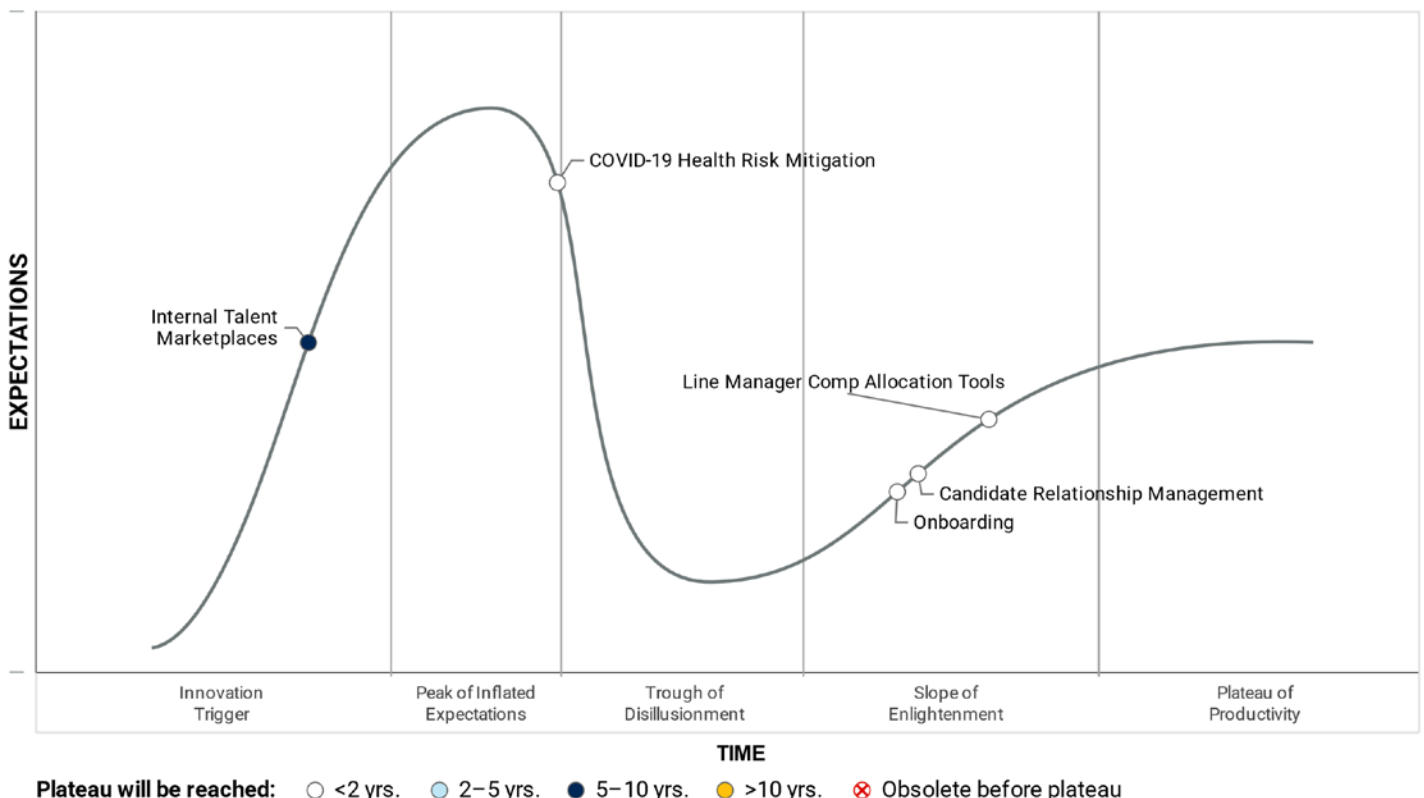
working. Employers are also looking to technology to support ongoing COVID-19 pandemic responses and prepare for subsequent economic uncertainty.

This article highlights some of the key HCM technologies that we expect to have the greatest impact on organizations in the near future. Four of these technologies are likely to reach mainstream adoption within the next two years and have a moderate or high potential benefit for organizations:

- Candidate Relationship Management (CRM)
- COVID-19 Health Risk Mitigation
- Onboarding
- Line Manager Compensation Allocation Tools

The fifth technology highlighted below, internal talent marketplaces, is at an earlier stage of adoption but is worth watching as it will likely have a transformational impact on organizations as it enters the mainstream.

Figure 1. Highlights From the 2021 Hype Cycle for Human Capital Management Technology



Source: Gartner (July 2021)

Candidate Relationship Management

CRM software includes marketing and intelligence tools for building talent pools, nurturing prospects, employing social marketing and attracting passive candidates. These tools deploy employer messaging, job distribution, sourcing and assessments and can be used to extend the reach of the talent acquisition (TA) function. These tools improve the candidate experience by streamlining data collection and targeting audience personas.

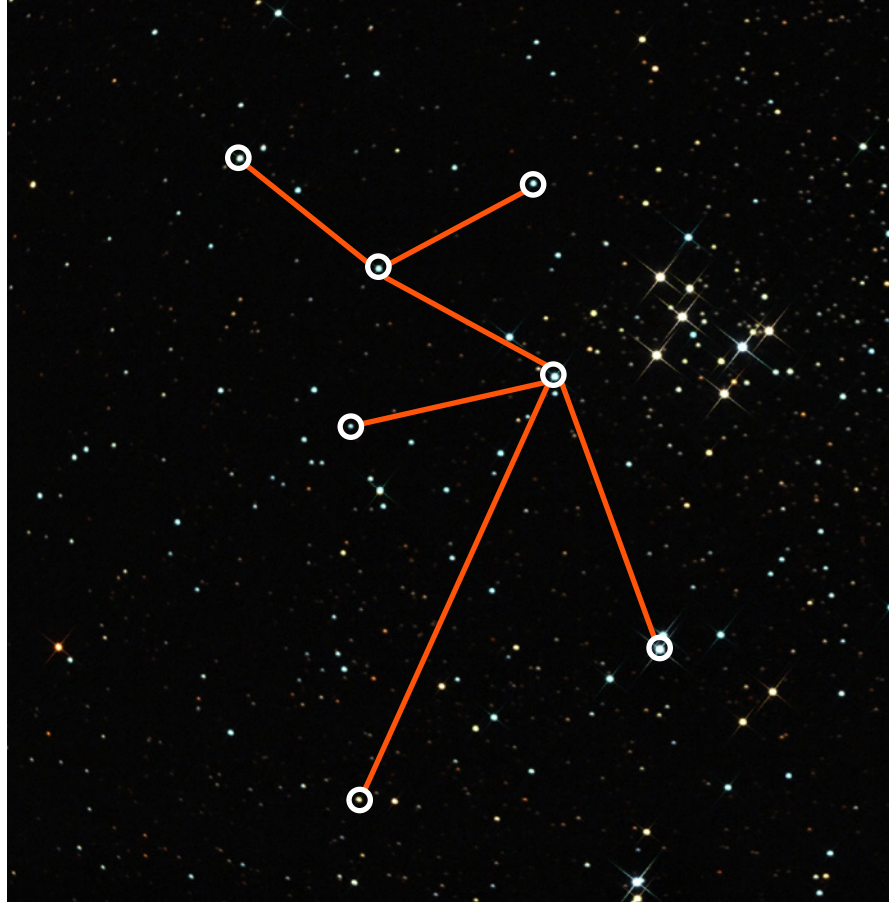
CRM solutions for TA have expanded beyond tools for recruitment marketing. CRM tools increasingly deliver intelligent search and machine learning to find “hidden prospects.” The data gathered from all these activities provides powerful insights related to recruiting and the deployment of employment branding. The incorporation of AI is adding personalization and customization capabilities, allowing for a level of automation that increases engagement and relevance.

Recommendations

Offerings in the CRM market are expanding to add functionality, cover more ground in the TA workflow and incorporate a variety of experience and automation capabilities. HR leaders should build vendor selection requirements from the inside out, as the goals of increased automation and personalization rely on strong integrations with underlying HR data. CRM solutions need strong access to foundational data in core systems to successfully deliver enhanced automation and personalization.

COVID-19 Health Risk Mitigation

COVID-19 health risk mitigation aims to deliver a safer working environment for employees and their families, customers, partners, and the wider community. This typically includes health screening, contact tracing, office booking, test data management and vaccine tracking. Additional functions such as corporate communications and a knowledge base may also be delivered.



COVID-19 health risk mitigation can make it safer for remote employees to return to the office, which many employees wish to do at least some of the time. This may be a compliance requirement (depending on country/state regulations), but it also provides employees with the comfort and reassurance that their employer is acting with proper caution and responsibility.

For employees unable to work remotely, processes must be developed and maintained to ensure they experience no unnecessary risk of infection while at work. Even when COVID-19 infections subside, as we have seen repeatedly, the infection rate can rise again very quickly. Furthermore, as the virus mutates, the nature of the risk changes. As such, the provision of COVID-19 health risk mitigation technology for frontline and key workers not able to work from home must be continually monitored and adjusted when necessary to ensure safe working conditions for these employees.

Recommendations

A “set it and forget it” mindset will prevent employers from adapting processes as the risks COVID-19 poses change. HR leaders should adapt processes and tools to ensure employees are safeguarded and that an appropriate response to the health risks is maintained as COVID-19 mutates and as infection rates rise

and fall. Manual processes initially deployed as a response to COVID-19 (tracking data through Microsoft Excel, for example) should be vetted for utility and compliance with data privacy regulations. Consider replacing these processes with an off-the-shelf solution if the utility is low or the compliance risk is moderate to high.

Onboarding

Onboarding technology includes:

- Forms management to support administration
- Task management to ensure activities are completed
- Provisioning and workspace readiness
- A new-hire portal to support orientation, training and communications
- Social software to improve employee assimilation and encourage engagement

Onboarding products are being rapidly adopted, driven by increases in operational efficiency and a focus on continuing the candidate-into-employee experience. Furthermore, the scope of onboarding now often includes related tasks undertaken by procurement, security, facilities, finance and IT departments to provide a holistic, enterprise integration approach to onboarding. Onboarding has an opportunity to improve experience, support retention and increase speed to productivity.

Increasingly, onboarding software is being used for additional employee transitions including promotions, transfers, acquisitions and terminations. Leveraging efficiency and tracking, employee experience has also become a key focus for using onboarding technologies for organizational moves, including offboarding as well.

Recommendations

Assess your onboarding needs and your organizational and process maturity carefully before committing to a technology or vendor. In this case, one-size does not fit all. Start small by improving HR efficiency; deploying traditional, single-use onboarding technology can relatively quickly provide tangible improvements to efficiency and the new-hire experience.

Move beyond baseline automation of administrative forms and evaluate onboarding solutions that address learning, cultural orientation and social collaboration.

Onboarding is an ideal starting place for applying social software concepts to accelerate activities in the onboarding process and extend networking interactions.

Line Manager Compensation Allocation Tools

Line managers use compensation allocation tools to recommend salary changes, assess and award employee annual merit increases, and allocate bonuses and equity based on policies and guidelines. These applications are exclusively used by line managers and do not include other forms of compensation tools with functionalities such as job-grade-based pay scheme development, complex incentive program management and employee total rewards and benefits management.

Compensation allocation tools for line managers are deployed to enable more equitable and better-informed compensation decisions and outcomes. Most offer mature functionality, and many include analytics and recommendations based on worker performance combined with progression through the role's designated pay range, and other factors. This helps line managers allocate direct compensation more fairly and equitably.

Recommendations

We anticipate a continued shift from homegrown to packaged applications by midsize and larger enterprises, driven by motives such as the need to demonstrate a tighter linkage of pay and performance, ensure fairer compensation processes and report and mitigate pay gaps. For some organizations, the need for cost optimization in the pandemic and its aftermath will also drive strong adoption in the short to medium term. HR technology leaders should compare the functionality offered by the incumbent HCM or talent management (TM) suite providers to point solutions and choose the option that best fits their requirements. The benefits of providing this function via an existing HCM or TM suite include tighter integration and common user experience, but point solutions may deliver more advanced functionality.



Internal Talent Marketplaces

The gig economy relies on marketplace platforms to match customer demand to workers who are offering products, services or solutions. An internal talent marketplace (ITM) uses similar principles to match internal employees and, in some cases, a pool of contingent workers to short-term project and work opportunities, without the involvement of a recruiter. It includes marketing features, matching algorithms and feedback functionality, and it aligns with principles of adaptive organizational design.

This technology is emerging, with only 1% to 5% of the target audience already using ITM platforms. Early adopters have been using this capability to:

- Understand their workforces through a different lens — focusing on the work, rather than the role.
- Gather data and support their talent through new and more agile methods.
- Address rapidly changing business priorities or delivery models, and redeploy existing employees in order to improve organizational sustainability.
- Encourage and track employee development and collaboration in new ways, with a focus on skills.

HR and other organizational leaders benefit from the data and insights from internal talent marketplaces to support workforce planning and other talent processes. Team, project and product leaders within organizations benefit from more flexible staffing and improved visibility into

Move forward with caution, given the emerging state of these technologies, and anticipate significant investments of resources into co-developing products with application providers.

talent. When deployed correctly, employees and contingent workers have better visibility into work opportunities and can stretch and build up their skills and experiences to grow their portfolio of work and career.

Recommendations

Pilot ITMs within business units or lines of business that use adaptive or agile organization models, or work with progressive talent management leaders who want to deliver agile skills development. Move forward with caution, given the emerging state of these technologies, and anticipate significant investments of resources into co-developing products with application providers.

Use AI along with multiple data sources to generate initial skills and experience data. Ensure workflows exist that allow employees to correct, add and refine this data over time. Invest in design thinking, work design and workplace ethnography. Deconstructing jobs into deliverables, skills and capabilities, and then allowing employees to bid for these jobs, represents a significant change to management practices.

Top 5 Priorities for HR in 2022

Gartner surveyed more than 500 HR leaders across all major industries to assess their priorities and expected challenges in 2022.

This report highlights key findings from the survey, detailing:



The 5 initiatives CHROs and HR leadership are prioritizing in 2022



Common challenges HR leaders are facing in each priority



Actions HR leadership should take to address each priority in the year ahead

View the key findings and assess your top priorities for 2022.

[Download Report](#)



Interview

Managing Employees' AI Hopes and Fears: An Interview With Whit Andrews

by Jonah Shepp and Brent Cassell

In this interview, Gartner analyst Whit Andrews explores the findings of a recent survey about attitudes toward AI, sheds light on employees' expectations and anxieties with regard to this technology, and discusses what CHROs can do to address them.



Whit Andrews

Vice President and Distinguished Analyst, Gartner

Whit Andrews is a vice president and distinguished analyst in Gartner's applications and software engineering group, as well as chairman of the U.S. Gartner IT Symposium. His research addresses, in particular, organizational impacts, use cases and business opportunities for AI. He also manages and maintains the Digital Workplace Survey, which examines digital workers' attitudes toward technology and establishes segments of worker type and style.

To start off, what do we mean when we talk about artificial intelligence (AI)? Everyone has their own idea of what this means, what's currently possible and what's going to be possible, but what are we talking about when we talk about this technology, particularly in the context of the workplace?

Gartner says artificial intelligence applies advanced analysis and logic-based techniques including machine learning to interpret events, support and automate decisions, and take actions.

How about the people we gave this survey to? Do they agree with that? To find out, we showed them nine different modern intersections with digital technology. By our standards, six of them are probably AI, and three of them are almost certainly not AI. And we asked them: Which of these do you think are AI? And we used a very narrow, logic-based heuristic to determine whether we put them in the category of "AI-naive" or "AI-savvy."

Somewhere between three and four out of 10 people fit into our category of AI-naive. A very substantial number of people in the U.S. and in China indicated that using a keypad to get into a door involves the use of AI. We don't think that's true, but we understand that from a worker's perspective that might feel that way. But one of the things that was amazing was how little difference there was in terms of how people felt about this idea of artificial intelligence based on whether or not they actually knew what it was.

You found that most workers would prefer to use AI at work. What does that mean? What do employees think they're going to be using it for? What are they excited about using it for, and is that actually congruent with its actual applications?

We saw that seven out of 10 workers in the U.S. would prefer to use AI. That included five out of 10 workers who believe they're using artificial intelligence today and like it, and two out of 10 of those people who don't currently think they're using AI but would like to.

The most significant portion of employees would like to use AI by having it assist them. For example, let's look at a category where the use of AI was quite popular: data processing. When we asked employees how they wanted to use AI

for this task, 36% said, "I would like AI to do all of the data processing work for me." About 50% say, "I want AI to help me with data processing." And then the remaining 14% say, "I don't want AI to do anything. I want to do all the data processing myself."

So in that category, you've got roughly 85% of people who want AI to do something, but out of that group of people, the majority only want it to help. They don't want to give up everything. That proportion is fairly consistent across most of the tasks that we asked about; what they really want in most cases is AI's help.

What about the anxieties people have about AI in the workplace? It could be a short walk from "AI helping me" to "AI replacing me, or fundamentally transforming my job." Tell us a little bit about what you found in terms of those anxieties.

So, we asked people their opinion about six potential disruptions to their work: government regulation, artificial intelligence, automation, jobs changing location, global economy worsening and global warming.

Artificial intelligence and automation were the least significant issues of concern for the employee base that we talked to. They were, in general, more worried about government regulation and about the global economy worsening. AI and automation didn't really strike them as being that fearsome.

Having said that, I'm gonna add one more nuance: People who were AI-naive were more worried about almost everything. It wasn't that they were more worried about automation and AI in particular. They actually were more anxious about all of the potential disruptions in the workplace.

So, I think it's important to call that out because if you're an HR executive, you might go into this saying to yourself: I need to alleviate the concerns that my workers have around artificial intelligence and automation. That would make perfect sense, but the truth is, there are multiple



disruptions that the people who are concerned about AI or automation are concerned about. It isn't about the robots; it's about everything.

So what can HR leaders do to address those anxieties?

As an HR executive, you need to take to heart that you're not just managing their response to the rise of the robots. You're also managing their concerns about the fact that their job may move somewhere else or about global climate change.

Now with regard to AI and automation, specifically, they're not worried about losing their jobs. In fact, only one in five people said the reason they would not use AI was that they were afraid of being laid off. Much more common were privacy concerns and security concerns, which were two separate questions. About half of the respondents selected each of those.

The next one down after privacy and security, at about 40%, was: "I would rather have human interaction." So two out of five of your workers are quite likely to shun AI, at least some of the time, if they feel like it's taking away from them the fellowship and the sense of shared endeavor that is a big part of why we like coming to work in the first place.

So first, you need to promise that workers can still expect human interaction as part of their shared endeavor. Second, you need to invest in messaging and demonstration about how privacy and security are not impacted. Talk about how security is not impacted. And you have to speak from a place of credibility about this.

How do you get that credibility? Who do HR leaders need to work with in the organization to secure those promises, make them believable

for employees and then actually follow through on them?

Chances are whoever is serving as the organization's chief ethics officer is going to know how to tell that story, and in some cases that's the same person as the CHRO. If it's a separate role, they have to align closely to that person. They're also going to want to have a relationship of real emotional and cognitive proximity to the chief data officer, the chief information officer and anyone in a similar role, such as the chief data scientist, if there is one in the organization. Some organizations have chief AI officers.

The authority to be able to demonstrate manifest trustworthiness comes from many different sources. I think that the HR executive is going to derive the greatest ability to demonstrate that authority first through a history of supporting the people in the organization and second through those relationships with people like the CIO or CDO.

Speaking of ethics and trust, there's been a lot of concern in the HR community about the potential impact of AI (positive or negative) on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Recognizing that AI still relies on human data and inputs and can be influenced by human biases, how can AI help remove bias in processes and support organizations' DEI efforts?

There is no question in my mind that artificial intelligence can be employed in a way that is beneficial to the organization's goal of diversity, equity and inclusion. The most important thing about the effective use of artificial intelligence is to recognize that it's different from the way humans think.

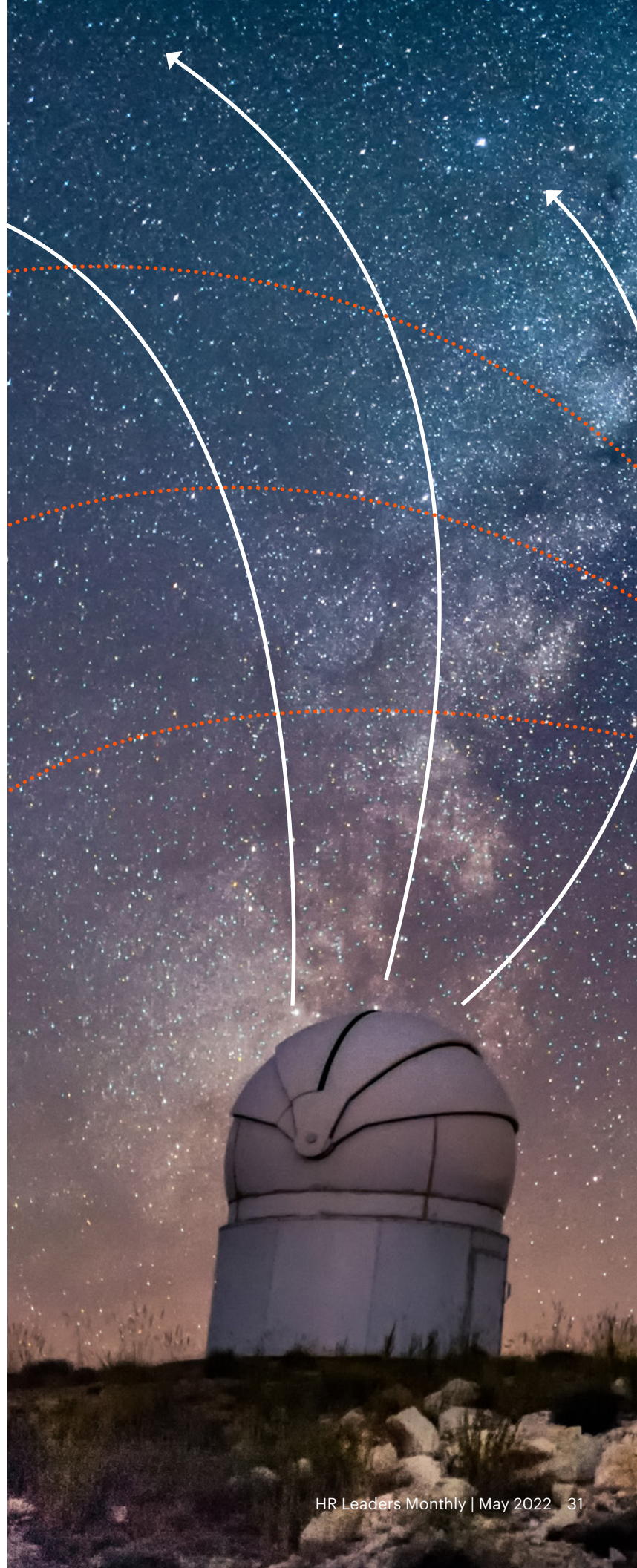
Let's say you need to identify a person. How do many humans handle this? They typically handle it by looking at the person's face. If someone has a beard, for example, I'm going to make assumptions about that person. I'm betting they're male, and they've been through puberty, and I might make other assumptions and value judgments based on that information. But I could be wrong! Humans do these kinds of things. Here's the thing: Why are we still looking at the face?

People tend to react to facial recognition technology with revulsion: It's like a reverse uncanny valley. It creates all kinds of vulnerabilities. What's essential is to employ AI in novel ways that don't recapitulate the vulnerabilities and frailties of human judgment. Let's build on that.

The second thing we can do with AI is modularize intelligence in a way that has never been possible before. One of the vulnerabilities of human reasoning is that we carry all of our prejudices with us all the time. We make all kinds of bad decisions because we've carried a prejudice from one part of our lives into a different part of our lives. If we use artificial intelligence, we can begin to modularize. AI can "forget" information it's collected in the past and stop using it to make decisions when it's no longer relevant.

For example, in order to fulfill the organization's DEI goals, your applicant tracking system is probably going to know things about people's origins, so you know whether or not you have a suitably diverse applicant pool for a given position.

But what if I don't want that knowledge to influence the next phase of the process? Can I look away from those key aspects, or can I incorporate what key aspects I need to know while abandoning the key aspects that I don't need to know? What we can do with AI is handle information in a more effective assembly line in a way that we can't when we're dealing with purely human intelligence.



Interview

Smoothing the Path to Innovation: An Interview With David Schonthal

by Caroline Ogawa


David Schonthal, author and Kellogg School of Management professor, shares why ideas and execution alone can't guarantee successful adoption. He discusses the four frictions that motivate change resistance and offers ways HR leaders can anticipate, understand and counter the opposition.



David Schonthal

Clinical Professor, Northwestern University

David Schonthal is a clinical professor of innovation and entrepreneurship at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, where he teaches courses in new venture creation, design thinking, business acquisition, corporate innovation and creativity. He also serves as the faculty director of Kellogg's Zell Fellows Program. Outside of the Kellogg School of Management, David is a senior director of business design at IDEO, where he focuses on helping organizations build and launch new ventures, design transformational new business models and establish novel go-to-market strategies for products and services.



David Schonthal recently joined the Gartner Talent Angle podcast to discuss the four frictions that impede innovation, outlined in his book, “The Human Element: Overcoming the Resistance That Awaits New Ideas.” The following insights are excerpted from that conversation. To hear the full interview, listen to this episode on our Talent Angle podcast (see [Talent Angle Podcast: Disarming Change Resistance With David Schonthal](#)).

What Really Motivates Change Resistance?

When it comes to innovation and change, the default mindset of innovators and change agents is that if somebody isn’t adopting an idea or a strategy or a new product or service, there’s something wrong with the idea, the strategy or the product or service. Either we haven’t created it the right way, we haven’t designed it the right way, or we’re not speaking about it clearly enough. There’s something that we should be doing differently to get people to buy into what we’re selling. We think we need to sell it harder, play up its value proposition, or drop the price. But we often ignore the other side of the equation: the resistance and human factors that play into somebody’s willingness to adopt a new idea.

Even though you might create a great product, service or strategy, that doesn’t mean people will change their habits or overcome their anxiety in order to adopt it. In the book I co-authored with Loran Nordgren, “The Human Element: Overcoming the Resistance That Awaits New Ideas,” we highlight how you can make sure that the people you are trying to help are receptive to your idea. Anytime you’re trying to get somebody to change from what they’re doing today to what you hope they will do differently tomorrow, there are four forces standing in their way.

Defining the Four Frictions

There are four headwinds standing in the way of any new idea, and unless those headwinds are overcome or mitigated, a new idea will not get traction in the market, no matter how good or compelling that idea is. The four frictions that we’ve identified in this book are as follows.

- The first friction is inertia, which is a human being’s desire to stick with the status quo, despite how imperfect the status quo might be. We might know there’s a better way to do things, but often the familiarity of what we do today is so compelling that it’s really hard for us to overcome that bit of inertia.
- The second friction is effort. This doesn’t just mean physical effort required to adopt a change, but it can also be the cognitive effort. How ambiguous is the change? How much economic exertion does it require to implement the change?
- The third is emotion. Anytime we’re trying to get somebody to do something new, there is always going to be a bit of emotion at play. There might be some anxiety, fear, trepidation or intimidation. How do we overcome the emotional friction that stands in the way of a change?
- And the fourth friction is something we refer to as reactance, or a human being’s aversion to being changed by others. It doesn’t matter how good or compelling a new idea or movement might be, if we feel that change is being imposed upon us, we will resist with equal, if not greater, force.

Identify Which Frictions Are Present

It’s all about how to spot and remove the friction standing in the way of adoption. I think companies and organizations spend way more time than they need to on amplifying the messaging of the product or repackaging the job posting or adding tweaks to salaries and benefits. Having a good product is essential, but it needs to be table stakes. You can’t remove friction for somebody to adopt a bad idea. We’re assuming that the job is a good job; the idea is a good idea. But assuming that’s true, we’ve started to focus much more on how you get organizations to think about removing friction that stands in the way.

The most important part is figuring out which of the frictions are present, because if somebody's not saying yes to a new job, is it inertia? Is it the unfamiliarity of that new job that's an issue? And if it's the unfamiliarity or the ambiguity, how do you add some familiarity to an unfamiliar idea? If it's effort, how are they going to commute all that distance or how are they going to skill themselves up to do the job effectively? Or if it's emotion, maybe they're anxious about whether or not they'll be successful, or they're anxious about who they're going to be working with. All of these things present differently and have different remedies.

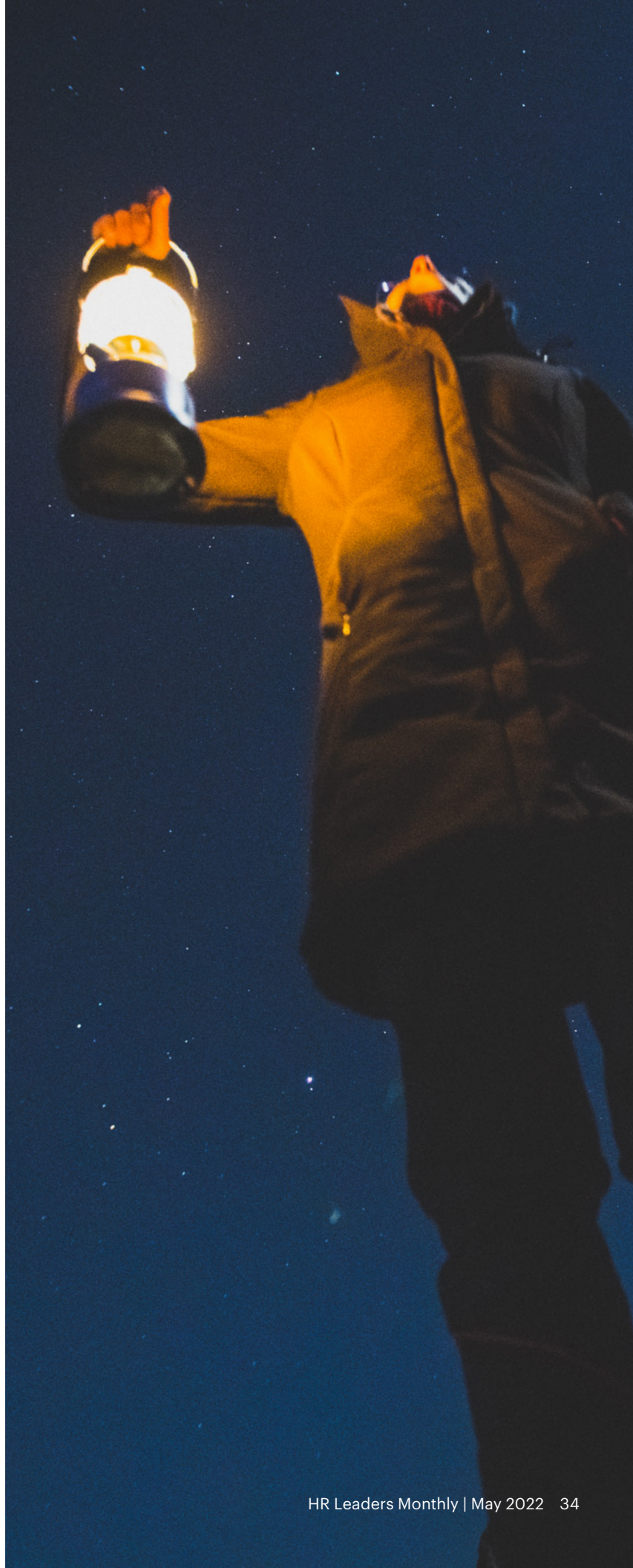
You need to spend time with these employees and understand which of these frictions might be standing in the way and, more importantly, understand why. I think we often make inferences about why people say, "No," to our offers or our ideas. But I don't know how often we actually ask people that we've recently hired why exactly they said, "Yes," to us.

Use Successful Adoption Stories to Model Solutions

When you're doing research, it's difficult to ask people to predict the future. If you're talking to a potential employee and asking them about what they would like to see in a future job or position, people will give you their best answer in the context of where they sit at that moment. But what people say they will do in the future is usually pretty different from what they actually do.

What you can do instead is interview people that have recently changed — people that have recently joined your company or recently taken a new position. Spend an hour interviewing them about what had to happen — what were all the dominoes that had to fall exactly the way that they did to get people to say, "Yes." And when you hear these stories, you should listen for the moments of hesitation, where somebody said, "I was unsure about this, but then this happened, and I decided to take the job."

It's those little moments of uncertainty that are clear signals that friction is present. And once you start having a few of these conversations, I'm certain that you will see a pattern and that those patterns will help you point to how you might remove friction from the hiring process to make it easier for people in the future.



Anticipate Friction Before Facing It

I think most people find out [frictions are] present too late, after they've already stifled the effort, the change initiative or the hiring process. In our book, we're trying to encourage people to anticipate the friction. Just like when you're modeling a business or talent planning, you should have a conversation with your teammates and ask, "What frictions might be present in this initiative? Do we think that there's going to be a problem with inertia? With effort or emotion or reactance? What might those be? Let's hypothesize."

Just by having that conversation upfront, you can design experiments to find out if those frictions are present and plan ways of mitigating them. This would be a huge step in the right direction — talking about frictions in the planning process, keeping an eye out for them and determining how you might mitigate them going forward.

Co-Design to Build Ownership

People will resist an idea from the outside just because it comes from the outside. One way to make people more comfortable with an idea is to include them in the design process. Bring people in and let their voices be heard. Let them get involved in the brainstorming and the prototyping. Even if their ideas aren't ultimately adopted in the solution or the final strategy, just having their voices heard gives them a sense of ownership. When they see ideas

implemented, it's not just being imposed upon them, triggering reactance. Instead, they feel a little bit of an inventorship for having participated in the process.

Make the Unfamiliar Familiar

One of the interesting paradoxes of change, particularly as it relates to status quo and familiarity, is that we tend to amplify the newness of an idea as a way of making it seem better. We say, "adopt this new software because it has all these cool features and benefits and a new reporting function." And sometimes we fail to remember that all this new stuff is another reason for somebody to be intimidated or resistant.

One of the most elegant things that we can do as managers is to make unfamiliar ideas feel more familiar. Even though something is new, how do I make it easier to adopt and meet people where they are versus expecting people to change to adopt the idea? That will help people overcome the resistance of inertia.

Frame Change as an Experiment

The other way to smooth friction is to frame change as an experiment. "Let's try doing it this way for seven days and see what happens. Let's prototype this and see whether or not this works." Sometimes just signaling the impermanence of a new idea can get people bought in because it isn't an edict or a new way of doing things. It's just an experiment we're doing together, and we'll see how it goes. Even the framing of an idea can soften resistance.





Quant Corner

Do Employees Trust Organizations to Handle Their Personal Data Ethically?

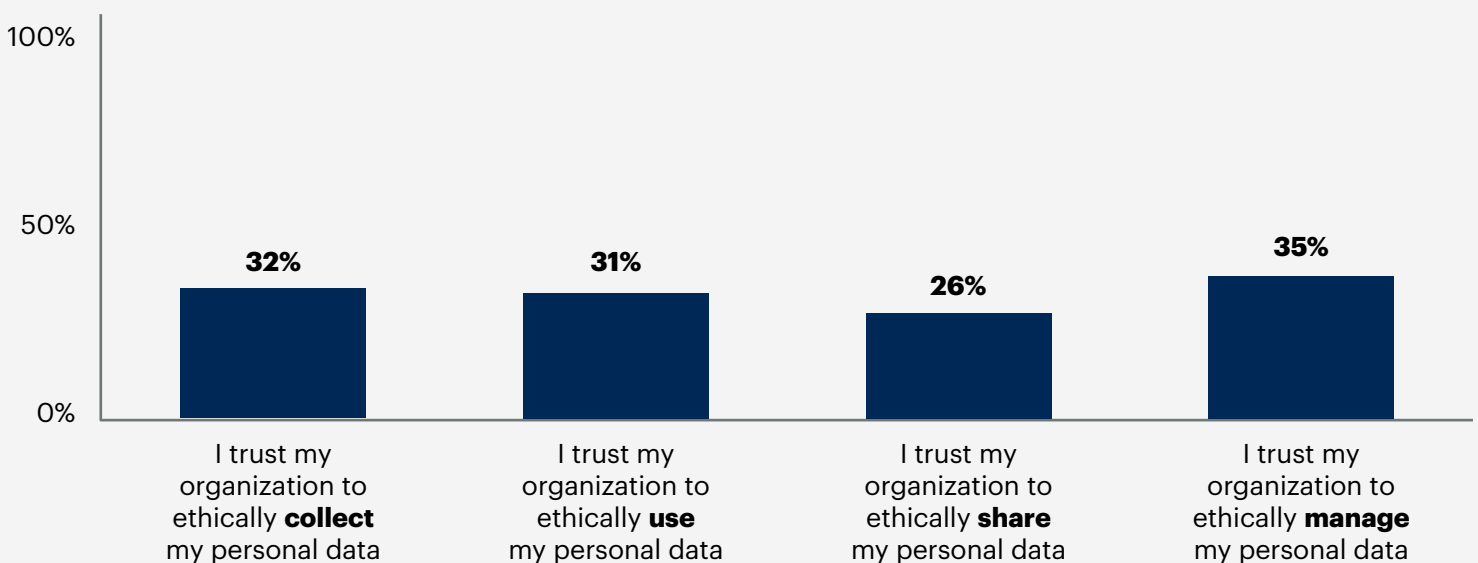
by Charlie Beekman

There are many powerful ways that organizations can leverage their employees' personal data: for example, to better tailor their benefits offerings, match them with customized skills training or even build more cohesive teams. However, for organizations to use this valuable resource in the workplace, employees need to trust their employers enough to give them access.

Unfortunately, employees' levels of trust in whether their organizations can use their personal data ethically are extremely low. The 2021 Gartner Talent Analytics Survey finds that

only around one-third of employees trust their organizations to ethically collect, use, share or manage their personal data. In addition, employee trust levels are extremely highly correlated: Employees who do not trust their organization to ethically collect their personal data are also much less likely to trust their organization to use, share or manage it. To reap the benefits of employees' personal data, organizations should work to inspire confidence in their personal data usage processes from beginning to end.

Figure 1. Trust in Organizational Handling Employee Data Ethically



n = 3,506 employees

Source: 2021 Gartner Talent Analytics Survey