

The Gartner logo is displayed in white text on a dark blue background. The background features a network of glowing orange and blue dots connected by thin white lines, creating a starry, interconnected pattern.

Gartner®

HR Toolkit: 9 Future of Work Trends for 2025

Key insights and actionable
strategies for CHROs to increase
HR's influence and drive growth

Introduction

2025 presents fresh opportunities and challenges for the future of work. CHROs face unprecedented challenges, including preparing their workforces to meet ambitious growth targets, looming retirement risks and less-than-expected generative AI (GenAI) productivity gains. This toolkit provides CHROs with actionable insights to strategically navigate 2025's nine trends and achieve superior talent outcomes.

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Expertise gap intensifies as retirements surge and tech disrupts

Organizations are caught in an expertise supply crisis. In 2025, the largest-ever proportion of the workforce is reaching retirement age in multiple countries, draining organizations of their most experienced employees.



The problem

While retirements surge, technology has upended the relationship between expert and novice employees across industries. AI, rather than less experienced employees, has become experts' intern and support team, extending experts' skills farther and allowing them to complete tasks more quickly without the help of novices.



The impact

Organizations are simply not developing expertise at replacement levels. Six in 10 employees say they aren't getting the on-the-job coaching they need to support their core job skills. But organizations need expertise more than ever for resilience, even in the face of advancing technology.



The opportunity

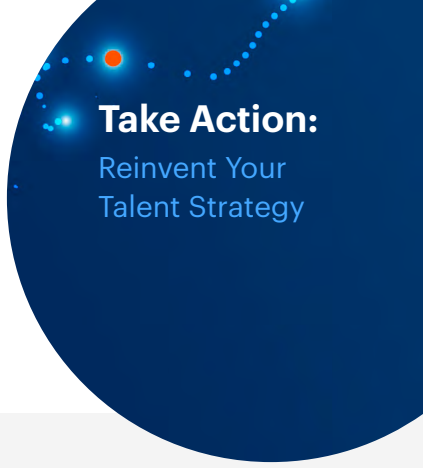
- ✓ Assess which teams at your organization have the highest retirement risk.
- ✓ Identify career paths where technology is reducing on-the-job learning opportunities.
- ✓ Pilot an apprenticeship program to transfer critical knowledge quickly.

Take Action:

Utilizing
Apprenticeships
to Combat
Retirement Risk



Organizations redesign to prepare for technological innovation



In 2025, organizations will undergo transformative restructuring to enhance operations. There is a broad anxiety that the potential impact of technological innovations will be hampered by current structures.



The problem

Executives are initiating significant transformations by creating flatter, more agile organizations, reducing redundant tasks and ensuring consistency through the centralization of corporate functions. They are also embracing skills-based talent management and fusion teams to drive innovation and efficiency.



The impact

GenAI has yet to fulfill its promised productivity boost. However, it has exposed the entrenched barriers within current organizational structures that hinder the full potential of new technological innovations. Ambiguities in decision making, multilayered approvals, complex hierarchies and inflexible role designs have obstructed AI's transformative impact in 2024 and will continue to limit the effectiveness of future innovations.



The opportunity

- ✓ Invest in strategic workforce planning to identify the risks threatening your mission-critical capabilities.
- ✓ Implement agile learning practices to accelerate skills development at the speed and scale of need.
- ✓ Shift leaders' approach to staffing key projects from a role-based focus to a project-based one.

3

Nudgetech experiments bridge the widening communication gap

Leading companies in 2025 and beyond will experiment with nudgetech, an emerging set of AI-powered tools, to bridge the professional communication gap and restore effective collaboration and cohesion.



The problem

Today's workforce comes with a wide array of cultural norms, disability accommodation needs and increasingly varied generational expectations around communication, many of which are not compatible. HR leaders are seeing a rise in employee conflict being escalated to HR, rather than dealt with by managers. Much of this conflict boils down to employees who agree with one another in principle, but have communication styles that are so different they misinterpret one another.



The impact

The workforce is further challenged by societal tensions and a pervasive loneliness epidemic, with Gartner surveys showing only 28% of employees feeling comfortable being vulnerable with their colleagues and very few employees experiencing high team cohesion (22% of Gen Zers, 29% of millennials, 19% of Gen Xers and 14% of baby boomers). This lack of cohesion is harming collaboration and performance.



The opportunity

- ✓ Review your current HR technology suite for potential nudgetech offerings.
- ✓ Establish a working group for monitoring the AI for inclusiveness and adaptability.
- ✓ Train leaders on current workplace communication norms, and to expect those norms to change over time.

Take Action:

Market Guide for
Voice of the
Employee Solutions



Employees embrace bots over bosses in the pursuit of fairness



Take Action:

How to Ensure a Successful Performance Management Technology Implementation

Employees are embracing the idea that AI tools can increase, rather than erode, fairness in the workplace and highlight contributions that their managers may miss in more traditional performance management processes.



The problem

Performance management has traditionally been a contentious area for AI application, with organizations facing backlash and reputational harm for using algorithms to evaluate employee performance. However, the landscape is shifting, and attitudes are beginning to change.



The impact

When it comes to making compensation decisions, 57% of employees believe humans are more biased than AI. Only 14% of employees think that algorithms couldn't give fairer feedback than their managers right now. Nearly 1 in 4 (23%) employees are more comfortable owning a mistake if it's being reported to a machine rather than a human.



The opportunity

- ✓ Evaluate algorithmic performance management offered by your HCM suite before considering new vendors.
- ✓ Combine performance management bots with microlearnings for more seamless skill development.
- ✓ Establish mechanisms for employees to report feedback related to bot or manager performance management.



Organizations must define fraud vs. fair play when it comes to AI

Organizations will need to figure out new ways to assess and reward performance to differentiate between employees whose work quality stems from their own effort and talent from those who are overly reliant on AI.



The problem

Business leaders want their employees to use AI in ways that enhance productivity, reduce busy work, and free up their time and energy for more creative and strategic tasks. But how can organizations distinguish between mediocre performers bolstered by AI and actual high performers? And what does it mean for their retention of high performers and their internal critical talent pipelines if they don't choose to do so?



The impact

Organizations will be called to build clear guidelines on what kind of AI-generated work is and is not acceptable, as well as training managers to recognize overreliance on AI and how to intervene appropriately. In the bigger picture, it might mean a more fundamental shift in performance management, including new mechanisms to recognize and reward employee contributions that can't be faked or inflated with AI.



The opportunity

- ✓ Work with your executive peers to establish a vision for how AI may impact performance ratings.
- ✓ Incorporate questions about GenAI's perceived impact on performance into employee listening strategies.
- ✓ Get HIPO perspectives by bringing them into your piloting of different performance evaluation strategies.

Take Action:

HR Leaders
Monthly —
Generative AI
for the Workplace



Organizations shift focus to inclusion and belonging with unexpected benefits

Take Action:

Integrating Diversity and Belonging in the Organization for Scaled and Sustainable Results

In 2025, most organizations will not drop their DEI ambitions. However, they will shift their investments toward fostering greater inclusion and belonging for all employees, not just specific groups.



The problem

Throughout 2024, DEI initiatives faced increasing politicization and legal scrutiny, creating considerable anxiety for executives — 40% of executives view DEI initiatives as polarizing. But the innovation, growth and talent imperatives for 2025 make moving away from DEI ambitions risky. So executives find themselves in a tricky position — preserving the business benefits of DEI in 2025 while navigating complex and rapidly shifting external dynamics.



The impact

By refocusing on core values and culture, organizations seek to define and embody the type of organization they aspire to become in order to achieve their mission, while leveraging inclusion and belonging as a competitive edge to get there faster. This shift does not mean workforce diversity becomes unimportant. But, instead of being the center of attention, it becomes a key consequence of successful inclusion and belonging programs.



The opportunity

- ✓ Reprioritize key metrics to focus on inclusion and belonging as leading indicators of progress.
- ✓ Train leaders to integrate differences in their teams and build a healthy workplace culture.
- ✓ Partner with legal to monitor and scenario plan for potential changes to the regulatory landscape.



AI-first organizations will destroy productivity in their search for it

Executive anxiety about falling behind in AI has led many organizations to adopt an AI-first strategy. This top-down approach to AI investment is frequently increasing work friction and hurting productivity.



The problem

Many new AI tools not only incur higher out-of-pocket expenses but also introduce indirect costs through increased work friction. This includes extra tasks like reviewing for errors and accuracy, navigating access steps, iterating with the tools to master their use, undergoing additional approval rounds, and participating in new training sessions and ongoing meetings as part of the change management process.



The impact

47% of CIOs reported that AI has fallen short of their ROI expectations. Despite the much-publicized productivity and business advantages, AI often fails to deliver as promised and can introduce significant risks, unforeseen costs and detrimental behaviors that may negatively impact your organization.



The opportunity

- ✓ Align with other executives at your organization on your vision for AI investments.
- ✓ Ensure all AI projects are set up with clear criteria for evaluating their success.
- ✓ Add employee seats on your central AI committee to bring in wider perspectives.

Take Action:

How to Evaluate Use Cases for Generative AI in HR



Loneliness becomes a business risk, not just a well-being challenge

A lonely workforce will hold organizations back from the growth their CEOs want to achieve in the coming year. As a result, organizations will take steps to mitigate loneliness as seriously as any other business risk.



The problem

When employees are lonely — when they don't feel camaraderie or belonging — their performance suffers. Perhaps unsurprisingly, their engagement levels also lag behind their peers who feel a stronger sense of belonging. Proximity alone (i.e., return-to-office mandates) will not cure loneliness: Gartner research finds that on-site workers have been even less satisfied with their interactions at work than hybrid or remote workers every year since 2021.



The impact

Many will begin by targeting interactions within the workforce — actively guiding how employees collaborate with one another by identifying key collaboration needs and reinforcing a new, more human-centric set of collaboration norms. Gartner research finds that organizations that adopt this type of guided collaboration meet their profit goals 10% more often than peers that don't.



The opportunity

- ✓ Monitor employee loneliness and tailor interventions to the severity of the problem on each team.
- ✓ Build support for socialization and camaraderie-building into your total rewards strategy.
- ✓ Add a collaboration audit to your planning processes to identify opportunities to increase collaboration.

Take Action:

How to Drive Learning in a Lonely Work Environment



Employee activism drives adoption and norms for responsible AI

Employee activism will be the driving force in 2025 for defining what the human-AI partnership should look like. Employees are collectively advocating for a principled approach to AI that reflects their values.



The problem

The norms of human-technology collaboration are being shaped increasingly not by government regulation, technology firms' strategies or vendor agreements, but by organized labor and employee actions. This is where debate has become most public, when it comes to creating boundaries and expectations for how AI adoption will change the way we work.



The impact

Vendors and organizations won't do this on their own — In the 2024 Gartner AI Survey, only 21% of CIOs said they focus on mitigating the potential negative impacts of AI on employee work, and only 20% said they focus on mitigating the potential negative impacts of AI on employee well-being. In the absence of organizational, government or vendor action, employees are stepping up to shape the norms of human-technology collaboration.



The opportunity

- ✓ When developing or updating your AI strategy, co-create your AI values and vision with employees.
- ✓ Crowdsource AI use cases to assess for piloting directly from employees.
- ✓ Incorporate multiple avenues for collecting and evaluating employee feedback into all AI pilots.

Take Action:

Shift Your Organizational Culture to Embrace Generative AI

Actionable, objective insight

Explore these additional
complimentary resources and
tools for HR leaders:

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in your client portal. [Log In](#)

Toolkit

AI in HR Toolkit

Navigate GenAI's impact on your talent strategy, evaluate use cases and make smart choices when deploying AI.

[Learn More](#)



eBook

2025 Leadership Vision for CHROs

Discover the top 3 strategic priorities for CHROs in 2025 and the actions you can take to successfully lead your teams and HR in the coming year.

[Download Now](#)



Webinar

The Gartner Top 9 Future of Work Trends for 2025 and Beyond

Discover expert insights for navigating trends shaping the workforce for superior talent outcomes.

[Watch Now](#)



Template

HR Strategic Planning Template

Download this five-step template for CHROs to craft an effective HR strategy that aligns with your organization's overall strategy and goals.

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U.S.: 1 855 811 7593

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