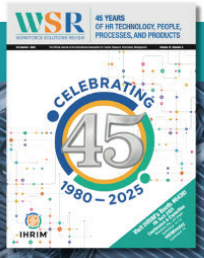
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The history of HR technology is sometimes told as though modern HRIS began with PeopleSoft. It did not. Long before PeopleSoft's founding in 1987, payroll processors, mainframe applications, dedicated personnel systems, minicomputer software, timekeeping platforms, and early enterprise applications were already automating the workforce. What distinguished the period before PeopleSoft was not the absence of technology, but its fragmentation. This article examines that largely forgotten ecosystem, the architectural changes that transformed it, and five lessons its history offers as HR technology enters another period of disruption driven by artificial intelligence, agents, data interoperability, and increasingly composable platforms.

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Technology is no longer a discrete support function; it increasingly shapes how organizations create value, deploy talent, design work, make decisions, and compete. Yet technology transformation often underperforms when strategy, people, processes, data, and leadership evolve separately. This article identifies five critical points of intersection for technology-driven impact: business strategy; human capital and talent strategy; internal processes and systems; data capability and digital fluency; and people and leadership talent. Drawing on examples from established companies and the authors' experience with organizations at different stages of transformation, it offers diagnostic questions for assessing alignment in each area. The central argument is that sustainable transformation requires more than deploying technology. Organizations must integrate technology into strategic choices, workforce planning, operating systems, data governance, leadership expectations, and organizational culture while preserving human judgment, accountability, and ethical decision-making.

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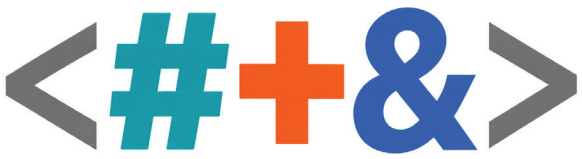
Artificial intelligence is often framed as a threat to human employment, but its more significant impact may be reorganizing work itself. This article examines AI through the alignment of people, technology, and economics, arguing that augmentation is neither automatic nor equally distributed. Sustainable gains require more than deploying intelligent tools; they depend on intentional job redesign, workforce development, leadership literacy, trust, and economic incentives that reinforce human capability. The central challenge for HR and workforce leaders is therefore not simply deciding what AI can automate, but determining how human and machine capabilities can combine to create enduring organizational value.

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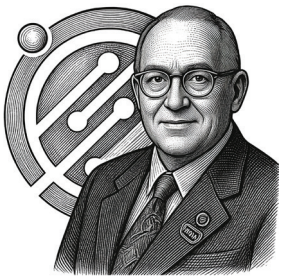




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From the Chair & Chief Editor

Remembering the Past–Imagining the Future



Dennis Hill, Ph.D., HRIP, SHRM-SCP, SPHR
Chairman, President & CEO, IHRIM | Chief Editor

The future of HR technology has never been less certain—or more exciting. And perhaps the best way to prepare for what we cannot yet see is to remember how many times our profession has successfully navigated the unknown before.

Mainframes, personal computers, client-server systems, the Internet, SaaS, and cloud computing each changed not only our technology, but how organizations manage people and how HR technology professionals practice their craft. Artificial intelligence promises to be even more consequential.

IHRIM is evolving with that profession. Earlier this year, we introduced the Intelligent HRTech SmartBrief, strengthening our SmartBrief partnership and providing our community with a curated stream of timely intelligence from across the HR technology landscape. We redesigned the IHRIM Career Center to serve the niche, multidisciplinary career needs of the technically fluent and highly experienced HR, IT, project and change management, data, systems, and related professionals connected through the IHRIM hub. And innovations in International Membership and Organization Membership are expanding participation while making the professional community increasingly accessible and affordable across organizations, countries, and economies.

Our Wins-days extend that commitment throughout the year, providing continuing exposure to the emerging technologies, practices, and professional capabilities employers increasingly demand from today's multidisciplinary HR squads. On the third Wins-day of each month, IHRIM Webinars bring practitioners and experts together for focused professional learning; on the fourth Wins-day, Wins-day CONVOS create a more conversational forum for exchanging experience, perspectives, and practical solutions. Quarterly, the first or second Wins-day expands the calendar with presentations exploring emerging technologies and their implications for HR and the workforce. Between those programs, IHRIM's public LinkedIn Company Page extends news, ideas, and announcements to the broader professional community, while our restricted LinkedIn Group provides another channel for member engagement. Together, they also give our esteemed authors an important outlet for extending their published work beyond the journal to a wider prosumer audience—professionals who both consume knowledge and contribute experience, insight, and expertise back to the community.

And when years of learning, experience, and applied expertise transform passion into professional capability, HRIP Certification provides the recognition. "We Certify Experts." HRIP is IHRIM's experience-based, vendor-neutral credential for the technically fluent HR professional—recognized as the premier global certification devoted specifically to HR technology. Unlike product certifications that validate proficiency in a particular platform, HRIP recognizes multidisciplinary expertise earned through years of experience across the technologies, processes, disciplines, and decisions that make modern HR work. IHRIM also partners with exceptional learning and knowledge resources for practitioners seeking deeper specialization and continuing development. Together, this ecosystem supports a professional journey from passion to practitioner to proven professional to strategic leader—professionals capable of helping organizations that truly value their people make better decisions about the technologies shaping their workforce.

Together, these initiatives share a common purpose: making it convenient for professionals everywhere to connect, collaborate, learn, contribute, develop professionally, access opportunity, earn recognition, exchange expertise, build relationships, and participate in a global professional community—regardless of geography or economic circumstance.

Now our professional journal evolves as well.

With this issue, *Workforce Solutions Review* becomes the *Workforce Intelligence & Technology Journal*.

The change is more than a new name. For decades, Workforce Solutions Review chronicled the technologies, practices, people, and ideas reshaping work. But our profession's boundaries are changing. HR technology is no longer simply about implementing systems and automating processes. Data has become intelligence, software is becoming increasingly autonomous, and systems of

record are evolving into systems of intelligence—and now systems of action. Our new name reflects that transformation while preserving the practitioner-centered, vendor-neutral perspective that has long distinguished IHRIM.

The Future Has a History

This inaugural issue under our new identity looks backward in order to look forward. Long before PeopleSoft, HR practitioners worked with payroll, mainframe, personnel, timekeeping, and early HRIS technologies. PeopleSoft's arrival in 1987 helped redefine that landscape around a new generation of enterprise architecture. Nearly two decades later, Dave Duffield and Aneel Bhusri challenged established assumptions again by building Workday for the cloud era.

The lesson is more important than the chronology: The technologies that made organizations successful yesterday can become the assumptions that constrain them tomorrow. Architectures change, but enduring principles—people, trust, professional judgment, learning, customer service, and innovation—do not.

Now Comes AI

We are approaching another architectural boundary. Generative AI is changing how people interact with information, while agentic AI is beginning to change how work itself is performed. Intelligent agents can increasingly retrieve and interpret information, initiate processes, communicate across systems, and participate in workflows once designed entirely around human interaction with applications.

This raises a fundamental question: If we were designing workforce technology today with a clean sheet of paper, would we build the HR systems we have now?

AI may alter more than the interfaces surrounding today's HCM platforms. It may change the relationship among people, applications, data, decisions, and work itself. The architecture is still emerging, and no definitive blueprint exists.

Why History Matters

History cannot tell us precisely what happens next, but it teaches us to recognize architectural change when it arrives. IHRIM itself was founded in 1980—before PeopleSoft, the commercial Internet, cloud computing, and today's generative AI. Through each transition, the professional responsibility has remained remarkably consistent: understand the systems, challenge assumptions, protect workforce information, and connect technology decisions to organizational strategy. AI adds a profound new responsibility: determining what machines should do, what people should decide, and how the two should work together.
That responsibility is bigger than HRIS. It is Workforce Intelligence and Technology.

A New Journal—and an Invitation

That is the purpose behind the *Workforce Intelligence & Technology Journal*. We will examine the convergence of HR, IT, artificial intelligence, data science, cybersecurity, governance, project and change management, organizational strategy, and the relationship between people and intelligent machines—all through the practitioner-centered, vendor-neutral lens that has defined IHRIM.

But this journal should not simply be something our community reads. It should be something our community helps create.

I invite practitioners, HRIP-certified professionals, researchers, educators, technology providers, consultants, students, and industry pioneers to bring us the questions worth asking, lessons learned in practice, research that challenges conventional thinking, and ideas worthy of examination. Share what worked—and what did not. Challenge assumptions. Revisit forgotten lessons. Introduce emerging technologies. Debate architectures. Document real-world results. Help us build a body of vendor-neutral knowledge that professionals can trust.

That same invitation extends across the evolving IHRIM community: connect with one another, learn from one another, teach what you know, challenge what you think you know, and contribute what you discover.

The future of workforce technology should not simply happen to our profession; our profession should help shape it.

Welcome to the *Workforce Intelligence & Technology Journal*—and consider this your invitation not only to read it, but to question, contribute, challenge, teach, learn, and help write the next chapter with us.

Our history gives perspective. Our community embodies knowledge. Our future invites us to lead.<#+&>

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Dave Duffield

The Visionary Who Reinvented HR Technology—Twice

IHRIM Staff

Executive Summary

Dave Duffield occupies a rare position in HR technology history: he helped redefine the industry's architecture twice. PeopleSoft, founded in 1987, helped move enterprise HR away from centralized mainframe-era computing toward relational, user-oriented client-server applications. After Oracle acquired PeopleSoft, Duffield and Aneel Bhusri founded Workday in 2005 rather than simply rebuilding what had already succeeded. Their clean-sheet approach anticipated cloud delivery, continuous innovation, and a new model for enterprise HCM and finance.

Duffield's published comments reveal something equally important about these two transformations. Although he was willing to discard technological assumptions that had become obsolete, he remained remarkably consistent about management principles: employees, customers, culture, innovation, and keeping one's promises. His career therefore illustrates a recurring principle of technological transformation: the architecture that creates one generation of market leaders can become the constraint that creates the next generation of challengers—but enduring management principles can transcend both.

As HR technology now moves from cloud HCM toward AI-driven systems of intelligence and action, Duffield's example raises a timely question: What should the industry be willing to reinvent—and what should it refuse to abandon?

More Than a Founder

People often remember founders for the companies they create. Dave Duffield deserves to be remembered for something rarer: helping to reinvent the architecture of HR technology twice. PeopleSoft became one of the defining enterprise software companies of the client-server era. Workday became one of the defining HCM and financial-management companies of the cloud era.

The more instructive story, however, is not simply that Duffield founded two successful companies. It is that he was willing to discard the technology architecture that had helped make him successful, but not the human principles that had helped make the technology company successful.

Before PeopleSoft

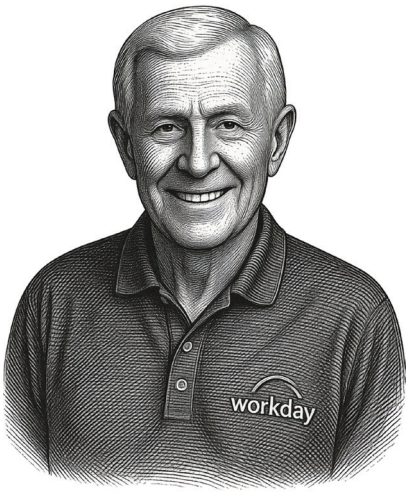
Duffield entered PeopleSoft with years of enterprise-software experience. His earlier ventures included Information Associates, Business Software, and Integral Systems. He had already seen the limitations and opportunities of enterprise applications before the combination of relational databases, graphical interfaces, and client-server computing opened a different path.

By the mid-1980s, HR computing was well established but fragmented. Mainframes, payroll systems, personnel applications, and specialized products performed essential work, but user interaction and integration were often constrained by the architectures on which they were built. PeopleSoft's opportunity was not to invent HR technology, but to reimagine how people could use it.

PeopleSoft: A Pivotal Vision

Founded in 1987, PeopleSoft placed human resources at the center of a new generation of enterprise applications. Relational databases, graphical interfaces, and client-server architecture made workforce information more accessible to business users and helped move HR systems beyond the mainframe-centric model.

As PeopleSoft expanded, so did its influence. HR became a strategic entry point into broader enterprise software, and the company ultimately grew into one of the world's largest



Dave Duffield
Founder & CEO Emeritus



enterprise application vendors. But technology alone does not explain that trajectory.

The Human Architecture

Duffield repeatedly described business success in human terms. In a 2007 interview, he summarized his priorities simply:

"I eat, sleep and breathe happy customers and happy employees."

The statement is striking because it is not a technology strategy. It is a management philosophy. Duffield also emphasized that culture depends on leaders behaving consistently with the values they communicate, hiring people who share the organization's "corporate DNA," and doing what they say they will do. His formulation was characteristically direct: "I keep my promises."

That emphasis was visible much earlier. A 1992 PeopleSoft management memo identified "Excellence in Customer Service" as a primary goal. The architecture mattered, but Duffield understood that enterprise customers experience a software company through far more than code: implementation, support, responsiveness, trust, and the behavior of the people representing it.

When Success Becomes Legacy Architecture

Every successful architecture eventually accumulates history. Features expand, customer requirements multiply, compatibility matters, and the cost of radical redesign rises. What once enabled innovation can become the structure that makes the next wave of innovation harder.

Years after PeopleSoft's rise, Duffield reflected critically on that problem. In a 2008 Forbes interview, he said, "We could have insisted more on innovating new products and technology," adding, "I fault myself for not insisting more." Those remarks matter more than retrospective regret. They reveal an executive recognizing that protecting an established product can gradually compete with reinventing it.

Starting with a Clean Slate

Oracle announced its agreement to acquire PeopleSoft in December 2004 and completed the acquisition in January 2005. That same year, Duffield and longtime PeopleSoft executive Aneel Bhusri founded Workday.

The critical decision was not to rebuild PeopleSoft in a new company. Workday started with a clean sheet. Internet delivery, Web services, multitenancy, object-oriented design, modern data infrastructure, and a cloud operating model offered a different foundation for enterprise HR and finance. The company could rethink assumptions that an installed client-server product had accumulated over nearly two decades.

This is the central architectural lesson of Duffield's career: the system that created yesterday's success should not automatically define tomorrow's design.

The Second Pivot: From Installed Software to Cloud HCM

Workday emerged as enterprise computing moved from installed software to software delivered as a service. The shift affected far more than hosting. It changed upgrade cycles, product delivery, customer expectations, configuration, data models, integration, and the economics of continuous innovation.

At Workday Rising in 2010, Duffield told customers, "You are part of a revolution." The language captured the moment. Cloud software was not simply a new distribution channel; it was becoming a different relationship among vendor, application, infrastructure, customer, and innovation cycle.

What Changed—and What Did Not

PeopleSoft and Workday were built for different technological generations. Their architectures, delivery models, interfaces, and development assumptions differed substantially. Yet Duffield's management vocabulary remained remarkably stable: employees, customers, values, trust, innovation, and promises.

That continuity may be as important as the technological discontinuity. What Duffield changed was the technology architecture. He deliberately preserved the management architecture.

Workday later summarized a related principle in Duffield's words: "Success doesn't matter unless it's rooted in good and considerate of people." In an industry fascinated by disruption, that sentence offers a useful counterweight. Reinvention does not require abandoning every principle associated with the past.

The PeopleSoft Diaspora

PeopleSoft's influence also survived through people. Executives, technologists, consultants, implementation specialists, customers, and partners carried experience from the company into Workday and throughout the enterprise-software industry. Architectural transitions are never purely technical; expertise migrates with people.

This helps explain why professional communities matter during disruption. Products can be acquired or retired. Knowledge, judgment, relationships, and lessons learned can cross architectural generations.

Culture Is Part of the Architecture

Technology companies often treat culture as separate from product architecture. Duffield's career suggests the separation is artificial. A company's willingness to listen

to customers affects what it builds. How it treats employees affects who stays to build it. Its tolerance for challenging assumptions affects whether a successful architecture can be questioned before the market questions it first.

PeopleSoft's reputation for customer service and employee-centered culture was therefore not merely adjacent to its technology strategy. Those qualities helped determine how the company competed. Workday carried much of the same philosophy into a radically different technical model.

Five Lessons from Duffield's Career

First, architectural courage matters. Successful leaders must sometimes question the very design assumptions that produced their success.

Second, customer experience is larger than software functionality. Enterprise systems create long relationships, making service, trust, and responsiveness strategic assets.

Third, culture can survive architectural change. Organizations can replace technologies without discarding the values that make them worth following.

Fourth, experience should inform reinvention rather than prevent it. Workday benefited from lessons learned at PeopleSoft without becoming a replica of PeopleSoft.

Fifth, innovation requires the humility to recognize when yesterday's architecture has become tomorrow's constraint.

From Cloud to Intelligence

HR technology is again approaching a boundary. Generative AI is changing the interface between people and information. Agentic AI is beginning to change the interface between people and work. Intelligent systems can increasingly interpret requests, retrieve data, invoke services, communicate across applications, and initiate actions.

That development raises a question remarkably similar to the one faced at earlier architectural transitions: if we were designing workforce technology today from a clean sheet, would we reproduce the applications, workflows, and boundaries we inherited from the cloud era?

AI-native workforce technology may eventually be organized less around screens and applications and more around data, services, policies, intelligent agents, and human decision rights. If so, today's dominant HCM architecture could become what earlier architectures became before it: indispensable history rather than the final design.

The Principle That Should Survive the Next Revolution

During every technology revolution, the temptation is to assume everything old must be discarded. Duffield's example suggests a more disciplined approach. Technology leadership is not about protecting the system that made us successful. It is about recognizing when the future requires us to build differently—without abandoning the principles that made success worth achieving.

As architectures change again, HR technology leaders should therefore ask two questions, not one: What should we be willing to abandon? And what principles should we refuse to abandon?

Twice Is Different

Building one transformational enterprise-software company can be attributed to timing, technology, leadership, execution, and opportunity. Helping define two successive architectural eras reveals something more enduring: the ability to recognize when the assumptions underneath a market are changing.

Dave Duffield's legacy in HR technology is therefore larger than PeopleSoft or Workday considered separately. One helped redefine HR technology for the client-server era. The other helped redefine it for the cloud era. The next reinvention will belong to another architectural generation—but the lesson remains available to anyone willing to learn it.

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PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

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The Lost Ecosystem

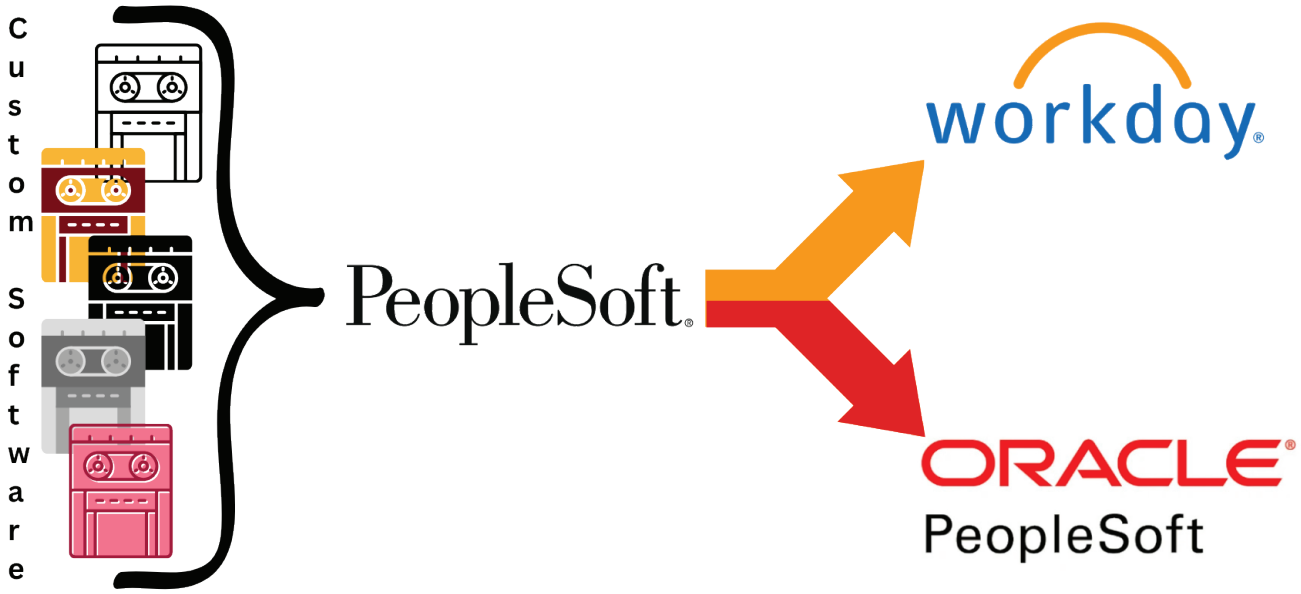
Before PeopleSoft, HR Technology Was Already an Industry

IHRIM Staff

Executive Summary

PeopleSoft became pivotal because it did more than add another HR application. It helped redefine how HR professionals interacted with workforce information as relational databases, graphical interfaces, and client-server computing transformed enterprise technology. Workday later produced another architectural pivot by moving HR and finance toward cloud-native delivery.

This history matters again. Today's proliferation of specialized HR applications and AI technologies resembles an industry on the verge of another architectural transition. The enduring lesson is that market leadership is temporary, while architectural change can redefine the market itself. As generative and agentic AI move HR technology from systems of record toward systems of intelligence and action, understanding the industry's forgotten beginnings may help practitioners recognize what comes next.



PeopleSoft Was a Pivot, Not the Beginning

When PeopleSoft was founded in 1987, organizations had already spent decades automating payroll and personnel administration. Payroll service bureaus such as ADP traced their origins to the postwar era. At the same time, large employers used mainframes during the 1960s and 1970s to process payroll, maintain employee records, and generate workforce reports. By the 1970s and early 1980s, commercial personnel and HR systems were expanding beyond payroll into benefits, compensation, organizational information, reporting, and other workforce functions.

The pre-PeopleSoft landscape included firms such as Cyborg Systems, Management Science America, Integral Systems, and McCormack & Dodge, alongside payroll, timekeeping, accounting, minicomputer, and enterprise-software vendors. SAP's R/2 era also included human-resources functionality, with its HR software reaching customers before PeopleSoft entered the market. The industry was therefore not waiting to be invented. It was already substantial—but technologically fragmented.

The Lost Ecosystem

That fragmentation is easy to underestimate from the perspective of today's integrated HCM suites. An employer might run payroll on one system, benefits on another, maintain personnel records in a proprietary application, and depend on internally written programs for reporting or specialized processes. Hardware platforms mattered enormously: IBM mainframes, DEC systems, Hewlett-Packard environments, and other architectures could dictate which applications were practical. Databases, programming languages, interfaces, and customization

strategies varied widely.

This does not mean the market lacked successful vendors or category leaders. It means it lacked the later degree of suite-level concentration and architectural standardization. Integration was frequently an organizational responsibility rather than a vendor feature. The practitioner had to understand not merely HR processes, but files, interfaces, data definitions, reporting logic, security, vendors, implementation constraints, and the underlying computing environment.

Fragmentation Helped Create the Profession

That complexity helps explain why the HRIS profession developed before the modern HCM suite. IHRIM was founded in 1980—seven years before PeopleSoft—because organizations already needed professionals capable of bridging human resources and information technology. The professional community did not arise after the technology problem was solved. It arose because the problem remained unsolved.

The early HRIS practitioner was an integrator by necessity: part HR professional, part technologist, part analyst, part project manager, and often translator between business leadership and technical specialists. The multidisciplinary nature of today's HR technology profession is not new. It is part of its origin.

PeopleSoft Changes the Center of Gravity

Dave Duffield brought substantial enterprise-software experience to PeopleSoft. Before founding the company, he worked at Information Associates, Business Software, and Integral Systems. PeopleSoft combined an HR-centered application strategy with emerging relational databases, graphical user interfaces, and client-server computing. That combination changed both the architecture and the user experience of enterprise HR.

The strategic question began to shift from "Can we automate this HR transaction?" toward "Can we create an integrated information system for managing the workforce?" PeopleSoft's growth helped make HR a central enterprise application category and contributed to the broader transition from specialized administrative systems toward integrated enterprise suites.

Competition intensified as SAP, Oracle, Lawson, JD Edwards, and others expanded enterprise application portfolios. Eventually, consolidation followed. Oracle announced its definitive agreement to acquire PeopleSoft in December 2004 for approximately $10.3 billion and completed the acquisition in January 2005. By then, PeopleSoft had become one of the world's largest enterprise application software companies.

Then the Architecture Changed Again

The PeopleSoft story did not end with consolidation. In 2005, Duffield and Aneel Bhusri founded Workday. Rather than reproducing the architecture that had made PeopleSoft successful, Workday was designed around a new technological environment: Internet delivery, Web services, multitenancy, modern data infrastructure, and a cloud operating model.

The significance was architectural. Client-server software had once challenged the assumptions of centralized mainframe computing; cloud delivery now challenged the assumptions of installed client-server enterprise software. The cycle was becoming visible: fragmentation, architectural innovation, rapid growth, consolidation, and then disruption by another architecture.

Five Lessons for the AI Era

1. Fragmentation Can Signal Transition

Today's HR technology landscape again contains extraordinary specialization: recruiting, skills, learning, workforce analytics, employee experience, payroll, benefits, scheduling, identity, communications, talent intelligence, and a rapidly expanding layer of AI products and agents. Fragmentation can be inefficient, but historically it can also indicate that a dominant architecture no longer answers every important problem.

2. Market Leadership Is Architectural, Not Permanent

Vendors can dominate a market while the assumptions beneath it change. Mainframe leaders did not automatically become client-server leaders, and client-server leaders did not automatically define the cloud. Market share describes the present; architecture can determine the future.

3. Best-of-Breed Versus Integrated Suite Is a Recurring Debate

The industry repeatedly oscillates between specialization and integration. Organizations want the innovation of focused applications and the simplicity of integrated platforms. AI may intensify rather than resolve this tension, particularly if intelligent agents can operate across applications and data sources without requiring every capability to reside inside one suite.

4. Vendor Neutrality Becomes More Important During Architectural Change

When technology is stable, product expertise can be enough for many operational roles. During architectural change, professionals need a broader view: data architecture, integration, governance, cybersecurity, process design, artificial intelligence, project and change management, compliance, and organizational strategy. The essential skill is understanding not merely how a product works, but why the architecture works, where it fails, and what should replace it.

5. We May Be Living Through Another 1987 Moment

Generative and agentic AI are beginning to change the unit of enterprise computing. The application may no longer be the only—or even primary—place where work begins. An intelligent agent can potentially retrieve data, reason across sources, invoke services, communicate with employees and managers, and initiate transactions across multiple systems. If that model matures, HR technology may move beyond systems of record and systems of intelligence toward systems of action.

The Profession Outlives the Platform

Vendors disappear, merge, and reinvent themselves faster than the profession they serve. The enduring questions remain: Who owns the data? How should systems exchange it? What should be automated? What requires human judgment? How do we protect privacy and security? How much dependence on one vendor is prudent? What architecture comes next?

Those questions explain why historical perspective matters. The pre-PeopleSoft ecosystem reminds us that today's market structure is not inevitable. PeopleSoft reminds us that a new architecture can reorganize an industry. Workday reminds us that even a successful architecture eventually encounters a successor. AI now asks the profession to recognize the pattern again.

HR technology history did more than produce software. It produced the HR technology profession.

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From HRIS Analyst to CEO

The HR Technology Career Continuum

By Brayan Aleman, MBA, HRIP & Dennis Hill, Ph.D., HRIP, SHRM-SCP, SPHR

Executive Summary

The modern HR Technology Professional is not merely a user of HR systems. The profession increasingly drives the convergence of STEM, business, and the human sciences. That convergence develops adaptability, systems thinking, data literacy, governance judgment, and the ability to translate across disciplines—capabilities that become more valuable as leadership itself becomes more technology-dependent. The career path can be understood as a growth in accountability. HRIP can mark demonstrated professional expertise along that journey, while enterprise leadership requires the additional expansion into operations, finance, strategy, customers, governance, and organizational outcomes.

A career in HR technology does not have to end in HR technology. That may be one of the profession's least appreciated advantages.

That creates a career continuum that can lead from entry-level HR technology work to recognized expertise, management, executive leadership, the CHRO or CIO role—and potentially even the CEO's office.

Growth Is Really Growth in Accountability

Titles are unreliable measures of professional maturity. An HRIS Analyst in one organization may perform work assigned to an HR Technology Manager somewhere else. People Systems, HRIT, HCM, Workforce Technology, and Digital HR often describe overlapping responsibilities.

A better measure is scope of accountability.

An emerging professional is accountable for tasks and activities such as transactions, data, reports, workflows, security, user support, and system fundamentals.

A practitioner begins owning processes. The questions become broader: Why does this process work this way? Where does the information originate? What happens downstream? Where can automation or redesign improve the outcome?

A senior practitioner or manager becomes responsible for systems and platforms—perhaps an HCM suite, payroll environment, talent platform, integration architecture, analytics capability, or implementation.

A director or functional leader moves from a single platform to a portfolio of systems, projects, vendors, budgets, teams, and business relationships.

At the executive level, responsibility shifts beyond technology to workforce strategy, investment, risk, transformation, governance, and enterprise performance.

The progression is therefore not simply a climb through job titles. It is a progression as shown in Figure 1.

HR Is Becoming a STEM-Dependent Profession

Human resources has traditionally been associated with the social sciences, employment law, organizational behavior, administration, and employee relations. Those disciplines remain important, but they no longer fully describe the work.

Modern HR increasingly depends upon capabilities associated with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics: quantitative analysis, information systems, modeling, experimentation, systems integration, artificial intelligence, data architecture, algorithms, and evidence-based decision-making.

Formally, Human Resources Management is still classified within business and management education rather than as a STEM discipline. Operationally, however, HR is



Figure 1.

becoming increasingly dependent on STEM.

A workforce analytics professional must understand data. A compensation professional increasingly works with statistical models. A recruiting leader may rely on skills ontologies, predictive analytics, and AI-assisted assessments. An HRIS professional works directly with databases, integrations, APIs, security, workflows, and enterprise architecture.

A CHRO making decisions about artificial intelligence must understand how algorithms, people, job design, governance, productivity, and organizational risk interact.

HR is increasingly a form of applied human systems science.

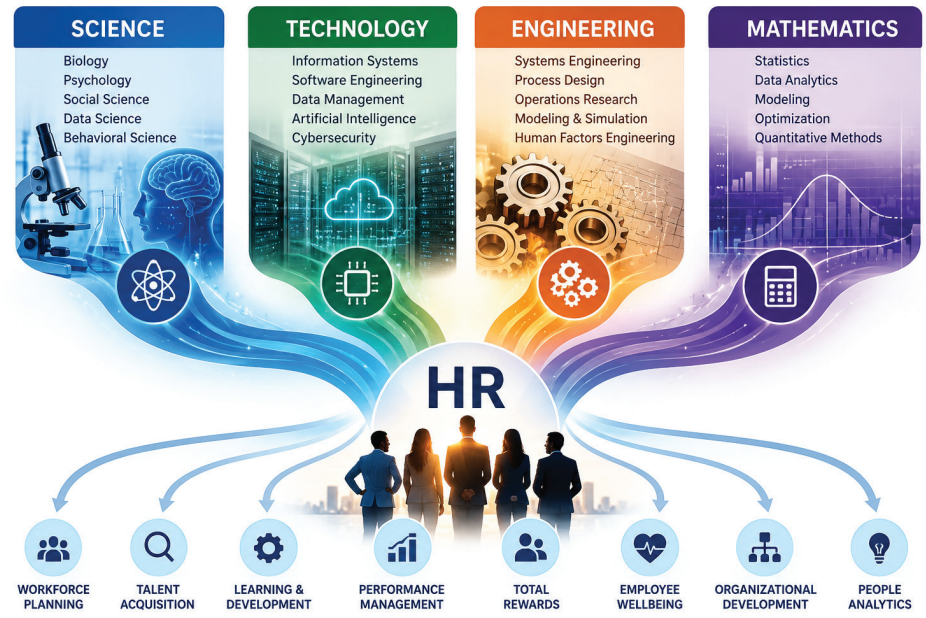


Figure 2.

From Personnel Administration to Human Systems Engineering

Modern HR manages a complex system composed of people, technology, information, structures, incentives, processes, and culture. Change one component and others respond.

Introduce AI and jobs change. Change compensation and behavior change. Alter a recruiting algorithm and workforce outcomes may change. Replace an HCM platform and dozens of workflows, integrations, controls, and downstream decisions may be affected.

That is fundamentally a systems problem. This is where HR Technology Professionals develop an unusual advantage: they learn to work across boundaries.

Engineering is not simply knowing how a component works. It is understanding how components interact, recognizing constraints, anticipating failure, measuring performance, and improving outcomes. Modern HR technology increasingly requires the same discipline.

Data Changes the Nature of HR Judgment

Organizations now possess enormous volumes of workforce information involving skills, compensation, engagement, productivity, mobility, learning, recruiting, performance, and retention.

Research from McKinsey and SHRM increasingly identifies data, analytics, and AI as central capabilities for the future of HR.

Tomorrow's HR leader does not need to become a data scientist. But that leader must be sufficiently data-literate to ask the right questions and understand the implications of the answers.

AI Accelerates the Convergence

Artificial intelligence makes the convergence of HR and technology even clearer.

Research from Gartner, McKinsey, SHRM, and others increasingly describes the CHRO as an enterprise transformation leader whose responsibilities extend into AI adoption, workforce redesign, organizational capability, operating models, and the changing relationship between people and technology.

That makes technical fluency increasingly difficult to delegate. Future HR leaders must understand technology well enough to participate intelligently in decisions about automation, digital labor, analytics, governance, privacy, skills, productivity, and organizational design.

The boundary separating people issues from technology issues is becoming less meaningful.

Why This Can Create Better Leaders

This convergence also explains why HR technology can prepare leaders well for enterprise leadership.

The future will reward something beyond accumulated expertise: adaptability.

Technology changes too quickly for leaders to depend only on what they already know. They must learn, unlearn, integrate new information, question assumptions, work across disciplines, and adapt as the environment changes. In other words, future leadership increasingly requires teachability.

HR Technology Professionals practice those behaviors constantly. Every major implementation requires learning. Every integration requires systems thinking. Each new generation of technology makes some earlier knowledge obsolete. Every workforce technology creates consequences for people, process, governance, cost, and organizational design.

That experience builds executive capability.

The CEO Path Is Possible–But Not Automatic

The traditional CEO pipeline still strongly favors executives with broad operating responsibility.

Spencer Stuart's analysis of first-time S&P 500 CEOs appointed in 2025 found that 48 percent came directly from president or COO positions, 32 percent from divisional CEO roles, and 12 percent from CFO positions. Only a small percentage came directly from other functional leadership roles.

That sends an important message to aspiring CHROs, CIOs, CTOs, and HR technology executives: Functional expertise may get someone into the C-suite. Enterprise accountability gets someone considered for CEO.

The critical career move is therefore not abandoning HR or technology. It is expanding beyond the function's boundaries into operations, finance, customers, strategy, governance, boards, capital allocation, and enterprise outcomes.



Why HR Technology Is an Unusually Broad Foundation

Few disciplines expose professionals to so many organizational languages.

HR Technology Professionals encounter people, because systems ultimately affect employees; process, because automation requires understanding how work flows; technology, because systems, integrations, data, architecture, and security must operate; analytics, because decisions increasingly depend on evidence; finance, because technology requires investment and measurable return; law and governance, because workforce information is highly sensitive; vendors, because modern enterprises depend upon complex commercial ecosystems; change management, because technology fails when people will not adopt it; and strategy, because technology increasingly determines what an organization can do next.

That is an unusually broad education.

HR Technology Professionals increasingly drive the convergence of STEM, business, and the human sciences. And that may become one of the profession's greatest advantages.

From Specialist to Enterprise Leader

The professional continuum can therefore be depicted in Figure 1.

HRIP fits naturally within that journey. It does not represent the beginning of the career ladder, nor does certification automatically make someone an executive. It recognizes when experience, knowledge, and professional judgment have matured into demonstrable HR technology expertise.

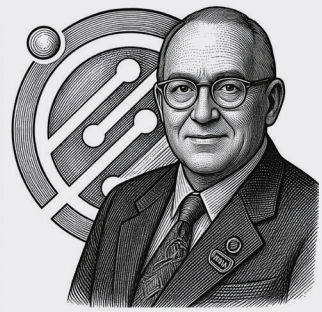
Beyond that point comes broader leadership.

Not every HR Technology Professional will want to become a CHRO. Not every CHRO, CIO, or CTO will want to become a CEO. Nor should they.

But the profession should recognize what its foundation makes possible. Someone can begin by understanding an employee transaction and eventually understand the enterprise.

The journey begins with a task. It grows through systems. It matures through people, data, technology, and strategy. And at its highest level, it becomes something larger: the ability to understand how the enterprise works—and how to help it change.





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"We Certify Experts."SM

Why HR Technologists and Practitioners Need the Human Resource Information Professional Certification

By IHRIM Select Council on HRIP Content & Examination

Executive Summary

HRIP is best understood not as another training certificate, but as a professional recognition of breadth, experience, and judgment across HR technology. Its value rests on three ideas: expertise must be earned, certification must remain expert-driven and vendor-neutral, and recognized professionals must continue learning as the field changes. As HR technology moves from systems of record toward systems of intelligence, organizations increasingly need a credible way to identify the professionals capable of governing that transition. IHRIM's message is therefore direct: We Certify Experts.



There was a time when working in HR technology meant knowing how to operate a personnel system. That time is long gone.

Today's HR Technology Professional operates at the intersection of people, systems, data, business processes, artificial intelligence, privacy, cybersecurity, analytics, project management, and organizational strategy. We have moved from maintaining systems of record to designing and governing increasingly intelligent systems that influence people-related decisions.

That transformation raises an important question: How do we recognize the people who have truly mastered this profession?

For IHRIM, the answer is the Human Resource Information Professional — HRIP — Certification. Our message is simple: We Certify Experts.

A Certification Built for HR Technology

Since IHRIM's founding in 1980, HR technology has progressed through multiple generations: mainframes, client/server systems, web applications, cloud platforms, mobile technologies, analytics, machine learning, and now generative and agentic artificial intelligence.

Technology changed. The need for people capable of understanding both HR and technology did not.

That is where HRIP is distinctive. Many professional credentials validate general HR knowledge. Others demonstrate proficiency with one vendor's software. HRIP instead recognizes expertise across the broader HR technology discipline.

It is deliberately vendor-neutral. A professional's expertise should not disappear when an organization replaces its software.

HRIP recognizes the knowledge and judgment required to understand how technology supports HR processes, how systems are selected and implemented, how information is governed, how solutions are maintained, and how technology contributes to organizational performance.

Experience Is the Difference

HR technology is learned partly through study, but much of its deepest knowledge is experiential.

An implementation plan can describe testing. Experience teaches what happens when testing discovers a defect three days before launch. A textbook can explain integrations. Experience teaches what happens when two systems interpret the same employee data differently. A vendor can describe functionality. Experience teaches you the questions you should have asked before signing the contract.

Those experiences create professional judgment.

That is why HRIP is experience-based. IHRIM describes the clearly qualified candidate as typically possessing at least five years of relevant HR technology experience. A candidate developing under the guidance of an HRIP-certified mentor may qualify with three years.

HRIP therefore asks more than, 'What do you know?' The more important question is: 'Do you understand this profession well enough to recognize what matters?'

Five Domains of Expertise

The current HRIP examination consists of 90 multiple-choice questions, is completed within 120 minutes, and covers five knowledge domains.

Technology Strategy and Solutions Assessment addresses how HR technology supports organizational goals and how investments, solutions, business cases, and delivery models are evaluated.

HR Technology and Business Processes examines how technology

supports the actual work performed by HR and the enterprise.

Systems Selection, Implementations and Upgrades addresses requirements, vendors, project planning, testing, conversion, change, deployment, and the realities of moving organizations from one technological state to another.

HR Systems Operations and Management recognizes that implementation is only the beginning. Security, privacy, integrations, data integrity, maintenance, governance, and ongoing system performance remain critical throughout the technology lifecycle.

Learning and Development Systems recognizes technology's role in developing workforce capability.

The examination weighting reflects the field's practical nature: strategy accounts for 15 percent, three major operational domains each represent 25 percent, and learning systems account for 10 percent.

Expertise Cannot Stand Still

Certification should never mean, 'I knew this once.' Technology changes too quickly.

Artificial intelligence alone is transforming workforce analytics, recruiting, employee services, knowledge management, cybersecurity, automation, and decision support.

Today's HR Technology Professional must continuously evaluate new capabilities while asking familiar but increasingly consequential questions: Where did this data originate? Who owns it? Which system is authoritative? What assumptions are embedded in this algorithm? How is employee information protected? Who is accountable when an automated recommendation is wrong?

That is why recertification and continuing professional development matter. The philosophy behind those requirements is simple: Experts continue learning.

What Certification Communicates

For the professional, HRIP validates broad HR technology expertise and distinguishes experience from simple exposure to technology.

For the employer, it provides evidence that a candidate or employee has demonstrated knowledge across a defined professional body of knowledge.

For clients, HRIP can signal that an advisor's understanding extends beyond one product or vendor ecosystem.

For the profession, certification helps establish standards. Professions mature when they define what practitioners should know, recognize people who achieve that level of competence, and require continued development as the field changes.

The letters following a professional's name are not the accomplishment. The expertise behind them is.

Earned. Expert-Driven. Esteemed.

Earned, because meaningful professional recognition should require demonstrated accomplishment.

Expert-driven, because experienced HR technology professionals maintain the examination content and blueprint as the profession evolves.

Esteemed, because professional credentials gain value when employers, colleagues, clients, and practitioners understand what someone had to demonstrate to earn them.

That distinction matters in a world filled with certificates of attendance, digital badges, short courses, vendor training, and rapidly created technology credentials. Those resources can be valuable. But they do not all represent the same thing.

HRIP addresses a different question: Has this professional demonstrated the knowledge and experience expected of an HR technology expert?

Recognizing the Experts Among Us

Every organization contains people whose real expertise exceeds their titles. They are the professionals colleagues call when an implementation begins to fail. They identify the integration problem nobody else noticed. They recognize the weakness in a requirement before it becomes an expensive change order. They can speak with an HR executive, an IT architect, a vendor, and a project manager and translate among all four.

Those professionals deserve recognition.

As artificial intelligence, workforce analytics, privacy, cybersecurity, automation, digital identity, and intelligent HR platforms become more important, the profession will need experienced professionals more than ever.

HR technology needs a meaningful way to distinguish mastery from familiarity, experience from exposure, and expertise from enthusiasm.

That is the role of HRIP. And that is why IHRIM's message is not merely that we administer another certification examination. It is much more important than that: ***We Certify Experts.*** **<#+&>**

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More Than Membership

Building the Global Community of HR Technology Professionals

By Michelle Galla, HRIP

Executive Summary

Membership has value when it creates access to trusted people, knowledge, and opportunities that would be difficult to obtain alone. IHRIM's five primary membership pathways serve different constituencies while preserving a common professional identity. Professional Membership anchors the practitioner community; International Membership broadens global participation; Organization Membership develops teams; Academic Membership builds the next generation; and Affiliate Membership connects solution providers without compromising vendor neutrality. The unifying proposition is simple: Connect. Learn. Advance.



No one practices HR technology alone.

Even the most experienced professional eventually needs another perspective, a colleague who has solved a similar problem, an expert in an unfamiliar discipline, or someone willing to challenge an assumption before it becomes an expensive mistake.

That is the enduring purpose of a professional association.

Since 1980, IHRIM has brought together people working at the intersection of human resources and technology. The profession has changed enormously, but its professionals still need opportunities to connect, exchange experience, learn, contribute, and develop.

IHRIM's membership structure reflects that community's diversity. Its principal membership pathways—Professional, International, Organization, Academic, and Affiliate—serve different audiences while connecting them within one HR technology ecosystem.

Professional Membership: The Practitioner Community

Professional Membership is the foundation of IHRIM. It is designed for practitioners, managers, analysts, consultants, project leaders, executives, administrators, and other professionals whose responsibilities include HR technology.

Its central benefit is access to people who understand the profession. HR technology problems frequently fall between traditional disciplines. They may be too technical for a general HR network and too dependent on business process for a purely IT community.

Professional Members participate in webinars, Convos, networking activities, committees, publications, and other professional-development opportunities. They can exchange ideas with colleagues, contribute expertise, explore emerging technology, and build professional visibility.

Just as important, IHRIM provides a vendor-neutral environment. A professional community should be a place where the first question is not, 'What can we sell you?' It should be: 'What are you trying to solve?'

Professional Membership can therefore be summarized through three benefits: Connect. Learn. Advance.

International Membership: Removing Geographic Barriers

HR technology is global. Cloud systems operate across borders. Multinational employers manage workers in different regulatory, economic, cultural, and technological environments. Solutions built in one country may be implemented on several continents.

IHRIM's International Membership extends most Professional Membership benefits while adjusting dues according to the economic conditions of the member's country of residence.

That structure is not simply about affordability. It broadens the profession's collective intelligence.

International participation contributes perspectives shaped by different infrastructure, privacy regimes, labor practices, cultures, languages, economic environments, and approaches to technology adoption. Geographic diversity becomes professional knowledge.

Organization Membership: Building Capability Across Teams

Some organizations need more than one highly capable HR technology professional. They need an entire team.

Organization Membership

lets employers extend IHRIM participation across multiple HR technology stakeholders instead of purchasing isolated individual memberships.

A practical advantage is the ability to transfer membership seats as employees change roles or leave the organization. People move, but the organization's need for expertise remains.

Organization Membership also creates opportunities for group pricing in professional development, certification, and related programs. More importantly, it helps teams develop common language and broader understanding across analysts, managers, HR leaders, IT partners, and project professionals.

The result can become more than better-trained individuals. It can become a more capable HR technology team.

Academic Membership: Preparing Who Comes Next

Every profession eventually confronts a succession question: Who will lead it next?

Academic Membership connects students, faculty, researchers, administrators, and educational institutions with the practicing HR technology profession.

Students encounter working professionals before entering the field. Faculty remain closer to current industry concerns. Researchers gain access to practical questions and potential collaborators. Experienced professionals gain opportunities to mentor, teach, write, and help develop future colleagues.

Universities teach theory and



technical skills. Professional communities help connect those lessons to practice. Academic Membership builds that bridge.

Affiliate Membership: Engaging the Solution Community

HR technology could not advance without software developers, consultants, system integrators, solution architects, product leaders, and vendors. They are essential to the ecosystem.

Affiliate Membership gives those professionals a place to participate while preserving IHRIM's vendor-neutral mission.

The governing principle is important: Participation is not endorsement.

Practitioners learn what technologies are becoming possible. Vendors hear directly from users. Developers gain insight into unmet needs. Consultants share implementation experience. Researchers encounter new questions.

Affiliate Membership works best when solution providers contribute useful expertise rather than merely promotion.

Five Memberships, One Profession

Professional. International. Organization. Academic. Affiliate.

These are not five isolated communities. They are five entry points into one ecosystem.

Practitioners need researchers. Students need practitioners. Employers need developing talent. Vendors need informed customers. Researchers need real-world questions. Everyone benefits when the profession has somewhere independent to bring those perspectives together.

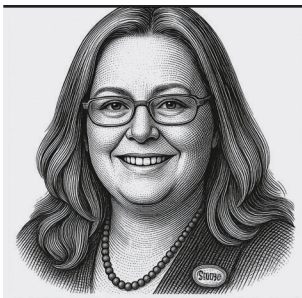
Artificial intelligence can deliver information instantly. What it cannot replace is the accumulated judgment of a professional community.

Information is becoming abundant. Trusted experience is becoming more valuable.

That is why professional membership still matters. Its greatest value may emerge in an unexpected conversation, a new relationship, a webinar that changes someone's thinking, a mentor who opens a door, or a colleague who prevents a costly mistake.

Different people. Different organizations. Different countries. Different stages of a career. But one profession, connected by the continuing transformation of people through technology.

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About the Author

Michelle Galla, MS, HRIP — Director of HR Data & Technology at Erie Insurance Group and IHRIM Membership Commissioner, Michelle Galla brings more than three decades of HR technology leadership spanning systems strategy, implementation, integration, analytics, continuous performance management, and professional mentoring.

The Right Talent in the Right Place

The Value of IHRIM's Dedicated HR Technology Career Center

By Deanna Fortson, HRIP & Brayan Aleman, MBA, HRIP

Executive Summary

IHRIM's Career Center should not compete with general employment platforms on volume; its advantage is precision. Candidates gain a focused environment for HR technology opportunities, while employers gain access to a community already engaged with the profession. When connected to IHRIM membership, HRIP certification, mentoring, and education, the Career Center becomes more than a transactional jobs page—it becomes part of a professional mobility ecosystem. The guiding distinction is simple: a general job board searches the labor market; a professional Career Center searches the profession.



The employment marketplace does not suffer from a shortage of job postings. It suffers from a shortage of relevance.

Search a major employment website for HR positions and thousands of results may appear. Recruiters, compensation specialists, HR generalists, benefits professionals, payroll administrators, talent specialists, and employee-relations roles compete for attention.

Somewhere among them may be the HRIS analyst, HCM architect, People Technology leader, HR systems manager, implementation specialist, or workforce technology executive someone is actually trying to find.

For HR Technology Professionals, more listings do not necessarily mean better opportunities. Employers face the opposite problem: they may receive hundreds of applications but still struggle to locate candidates who combine HR knowledge, technical fluency, implementation experience, business understanding, and professional judgment.

That is why IHRIM maintains a Career Center dedicated to this profession.

The distinction is simple: A general job board searches the labor market. A professional Career Center searches the profession.

Why Specialization Matters

HR technology has become a distinct career discipline encompassing HCM platforms, integrations, workforce analytics, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, privacy, data governance, payroll technology, talent systems, employee experience, system architecture, and organizational transformation.

Yet the language used to describe those jobs remains inconsistent. One employer seeks an HRIS Manager. Another advertises for a People Technology Leader. Another needs an HCM Product Owner. Others use HRIT Director, Workforce Systems Manager, HR Technology Architect, Digital HR Leader, HR Systems Analyst, or People Systems Director.

The titles differ. The underlying competencies frequently overlap.

Large recruiting platforms can search keywords. A specialized professional marketplace provides context. It starts with the profession, not the title.

Value for the Candidate: Less Noise, More Relevance

For candidates, specialization saves time. An experienced HR systems professional should not have to search through hundreds of unrelated HR postings simply because the word 'HR' appears in the job title.

A dedicated Career Center offers a more focused starting point. It also increases professional visibility because it sits within a broader ecosystem that includes membership, HRIP certification, mentoring, education, publications, and professional relationships.

That creates opportunities for candidates to present themselves not simply as applicants but as members of a profession. Their experience matters. Their continuing education matters. Their professional participation matters. Their HRIP credential can matter.

The Career Center is therefore not merely a place to locate vacancies. It

can become part of a professional identity.

Value for the Employer: Better Targeting

Employers do not necessarily need more applicants. They need more appropriate applicants.

Digital recruiting has made applying to jobs extraordinarily easy, and generative AI can now assist candidates with resumes and cover letters in seconds. The result is greater application volume, while the cost of determining who is actually qualified shifts back to recruiters and hiring managers.

A niche professional Career Center changes the starting population. Employers advertising through IHRIM reach people who have already shown interest in HR technology through their connection to the professional community.

That provides a powerful recruiting principle: Go where the professionals already are.

Connecting Employment With Expertise

The relationship between the Career Center and HRIP Certification adds another level of value.

A vendor-specific credential can demonstrate proficiency in a particular platform. HRIP signals broader HR technology knowledge across strategy, business processes, implementation, system operations, and learning technologies.

For employers recruiting people who must work across technologies and business functions, that distinction may be meaningful. The Career Center gives employers a place to see that professional distinction.

The result connects two important functions: recognizing expertise and creating opportunity for experts.

A Career Tool Before You Need a Job

Professionals should not wait until they are unemployed to examine the job market. A specialized Career Center can also provide career intelligence.

Job descriptions reveal where the profession is moving. What skills are appearing more frequently? Which technologies are employers requesting? What titles are emerging? How often is artificial intelligence appearing in HR technology roles? Are data governance and cybersecurity becoming expected competencies?

Regularly reviewing those signals lets a professional compare current capabilities with future opportunities. That gap becomes a development plan.

Career development begins long before the job application.

Helping the Next Generation Enter

The Career Center also matters to developing professionals. Every specialized field encounters the same paradox: Employers want experience. Professionals need opportunities to gain experience.

IHRIM's broader ecosystem can help narrow that gap through education, academic participation, mentoring, networking, and HRIP preparation.

An emerging professional can learn from experienced practitioners, develop a portfolio of work, build relationships, and eventually present a stronger professional profile to employers.

That is how an association can contribute not only to filling today's vacancies but also to preparing tomorrow's workforce.

The Advantage Is Not Size

IHRIM's Career Center does not need to compete with the world's largest employment websites on the number of listings. That is not the objective. The advantage is precision.

For candidates, that means relevance, visibility, and efficiency. For employers, it means targeting, differentiation, and recruiting resources directed toward an appropriate professional audience.

HR technology has matured. Its professionals manage systems that affect nearly everyone in an organization and increasingly influence artificial intelligence, workforce intelligence, privacy, automation, and digital decision-making.

Those responsibilities deserve a professional marketplace built around them.

The Career Center does not need to be the biggest job board. It needs to be the right place for HR technology talent. <#+&>





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Every Company is a Tech Company at Heart:

The Keys to Success are in the Points of Intersection

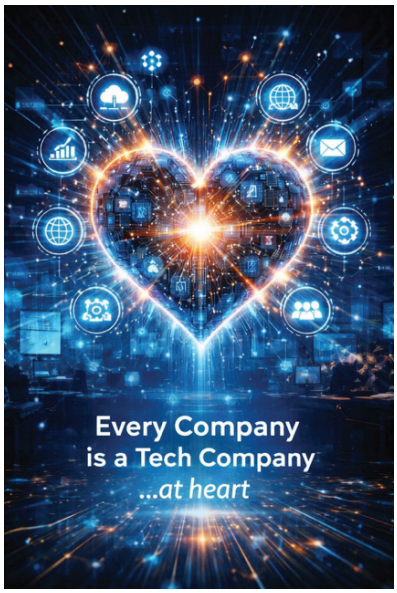
By Allan H. Church, Ph.D. & Ruchi Modi, MBA

Executive Summary

Every company is becoming a technology company in practice, whether or not it describes itself that way. The challenge is not simply adopting new tools; it is aligning the organization around what technology makes possible. The article concentrates on five intersections where that alignment is most consequential:

- **Business Strategy:** Technology should help determine which strategies are viable, how the organization differentiates, and where it creates long-term value.
- **Human Capital and Talent Strategy:** Automation, AI, and digital platforms should directly inform workforce planning, role design, capability development, and buy-versus-build talent decisions.
- **Internal Processes and Systems:** Technology platforms, HR systems and policies, and informal social systems must evolve together or transformation will stall after implementation.
- **Data Capability and Digital Fluency:** Leaders need practical data literacy, responsible governance, and sufficient fluency to question data quality, bias, analytics, and AI-enabled recommendations.
- **People and Leadership Talent:** Leadership models should combine digital fluency and adaptability with human judgment, ethical reasoning, collaboration, resilience, and accountability.

The article's conclusion is straightforward: organizations should treat AI and technology as amplifiers of leadership and strategy, not substitutes for them. Sustainable advantage comes from embedding technology into how strategy is set, work is designed, talent is developed, and decisions are made.



Source: Image generated using Gemini



Every company is effectively a tech company at heart. However, transforming from traditional business models, where technology was relegated to a single function or process, to more complex, technology-driven architectures is one of the biggest challenges organizations and their C-suites face today. Research from McKinsey, for example, shows that 70% of digital transformations fail, often due to unclear vision or leadership gaps. Although an early adopter, Nike, for example, once wrote off a $100 million tech upgrade due to poor integration and change management (see links under additional readings).

How are you doing on your transformation journey? Ask yourself these questions: Have you clearly defined the role that technology plays in your business strategy? Have you embedded the right technology and digital mindset as part of your mission, values, capabilities, or leadership frameworks? Do you know who your best and brightest leaders are that will drive the future of your business in these areas? Technology is no longer the domain of just IT departments or digital-first startups – it's a required capability for all leaders. Today, even the most traditional industries are being redefined by data, automation, and digital capabilities.

Organizations are Embracing Technology as an Imperative:

Capital One, for example, made a splash in the business world several years ago with a mindset of being "a technology company that does banking instead of a bank that just uses technology." Since embracing a tech-first identity, Capital One has become one of the most digitally advanced financial institutions, experiencing notable gains in customer experience, operational efficiency, and shareholder value. Visa's focus is equally strategic and reflects an arguably even broader mindset in their simple statement, "we help bring everyone in the digital economy." Comcast has echoed similar thinking with new branding that talks about their evolution to becoming a "global technology solutions partner" rather than an entertainment, content, or cable provider. PepsiCo's Athina

Kanioura, Chief Executive Officer, Latin America Foods and Executive Vice President, Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer, described how AI-powered drones are growing potatoes more sustainably as an example of technology being leveraged across the value chain in CPG (see suggested readings for details).

These examples, and many others, show legacy firms, not just start-ups, are leaning into technology to redefine how they deliver services and stay competitive. From logistics to healthcare to consumer goods, technology is embedded everywhere. In some cases, it has been for decades, yet many HR and business leaders still treat technology as an "add-on" to their existing capability set. The result? Misaligned investments, missed opportunities, and a disconnect between strategy and the talent needed to deliver for the future. Articles and case studies abound that highlight these challenges.

To truly unlock the value of a technology transformation, companies must stop treating tech as a trend and start seeing it as central to how they operate. Based on our collective experience working with and for organizations in various stages of transition, below are five critical focus areas where organizations must align, along with a simple set of diagnostic questions to help leaders assess where they stand today and for the future.

Five Key Areas to Focus on for Tech-Driven Impact

1. Business Strategy

This is where most companies start, and often where they are strongest. Technology investments are typically tied to operational efficiency, supply chain modernization, or customer experience. But intentional alignment is often missing. Technology is no longer an operational enabler; it is a strategic determinant. Business strategy defines how an organization creates value, and today digital capabilities, data, automation, AI, and scalable platforms increasingly shape value.

Many organizations equate alignment with funding digital initiatives or modernizing infrastructure. While necessary, these actions fall short if technology remains positioned as a support function. When organizations develop technology strategy in parallel, rather than embedding it within business strategy, investments become fragmented and disconnected from competitive advantage. True alignment requires leaders to explicitly define technology's role in differentiation, growth, and resilience. Strategic decisions about markets, products, and customer experience must be informed by what technology makes possible. In tech-forward organizations, technology does not follow strategy; it helps determine which strategies are viable.

Finally, organizations must measure success through a strategic lens. Evaluate technology investments not only on efficiency or cost reduction, but on their ability to create long-term value, accelerate innovation, and strengthen competitive positioning.

Diagnostic Questions:

- Is our technology roadmap directly tied to core business goals? *Example: A global retailer integrated AI into its inventory management system to directly improve fulfillment speed, boosting both customer satisfaction and sales margins.*
- Do we evaluate tech investments based on both operational and strategic outcomes? *Example: A logistics firm tied its cloud migration to specific KPIs like reduced downtime and new market access, leading to measurable revenue growth.*

2. Human Capital and Talent Strategy

Although this linkage seems obvious, it remains one of the most fragmented areas. Too often, talent strategy in the context of a technology transformation is limited to headcount or cost. Organizations need to rethink how tech influences visibility and access to talent, capability development, talent management, and workforce planning. Integration between talent and technology strategies is essential - not just for synergy, but for sustainability. If we truly believe that every company is already a technology company at the core (or soon will be), then this siloed approach is no longer sufficient. Technology fundamentally reshapes how organizations access talent, develop capabilities, design roles, and plan for the future workforce.

Highly effective organizations treat talent and technology strategies as interdependent. Decisions about automation, AI, and digital platforms must directly inform workforce planning, role design, and capability priorities. When these strategies are disconnected, organizations invest in technology that outpaces their ability to use it (e.g., trying to automate or use AI-powered solutions with bad data) or build talent models misaligned with how work is actually done.

As with any large-scale organization development (OD) effort, mission, vision, and values play a critical role in this alignment; when digital fluency, adaptability, and continuous learning are not explicitly reflected in enterprise values, they are rarely reinforced through hiring, development, or advancement. Clear signals from leadership ensure that technology-enabled capability building is viewed as a core expectation rather than a specialized skill.

Organizations must also be deliberate about how they acquire capabilities. Some skills can be developed internally over time, while others must be sourced externally to accelerate transformation. A thoughtful buy-versus-build approach allows organizations to balance speed, sustainability, and cultural continuity as they evolve (see "The Great Talent Dilemma…").

Diagnostic Questions:

- Are we integrating technology considerations into workforce planning and development?

Example: A major pharmaceutical company redesigned its talent model to include automation and AI skill tracks for roles in R&D and compliance.

- Do we have a clear approach to building tech-enabled and future-ready roles?
  Example: A leading insurance provider embedded data literacy into leadership development programs to future-proof its talent bench, using a deliberate "weave" approach by developing core capabilities internally (build for the future) while selectively acquiring digital leadership from the market (buy now) to accelerate transformation.

3. Internal Processes and Systems

Technology transformation extends far beyond digital tools or HRIS platforms. At an enterprise level, it requires alignment across three interconnected systems: core technology platforms, HR systems and policies that govern how work is organized, and the "social systems" that shape behavior, performance, and decision-making (see "Systems theory…").

HR systems and policies play a critical role in enabling or constraining digital agility. This includes how roles are defined, how work is structured, how performance is measured, and how decisions are governed. Policies related to workforce flexibility, job architecture, performance cycles, incentives, and risk tolerance send powerful signals about whether innovation and adaptation are truly encouraged or merely discussed. When these systems remain anchored in static, more traditional hierarchical models, they often conflict with the speed and experimentation required in digital environments.

Equally important are social systems, the informal norms that determine how work actually gets done. These include how feedback is given, how failure is treated, how collaboration occurs across boundaries, and how quickly decisions are made. In many organizations, formal systems promote agility while social systems reinforce caution, hierarchy, and risk avoidance. This misalignment often stalls technology-enabled change after initial implementation.

Real transformation occurs only when all three systems evolve together. Technology investments create possibilities, HR systems provide structure, and social systems determine cultural and behavioral adoption. When aligned, they reinforce one another and enable sustained, enterprise-wide change.

Diagnostic Questions:

- Are our HR systems and business processes aligned to support digital agility?
  Example: A manufacturing company integrated its ERP and HCM platforms to enable real-time workforce planning and rapid shift reallocation.
- Do our policies and social systems reinforce innovation and change?
  Example: A healthcare network adopted flexible remote work and hackathons to drive a culture of innovation post-pandemic.

4. Data Capability and Digital Fluency

Data capability is no longer a specialist function. Leaders across the enterprise are increasingly expected to interpret data, ask better questions, and use insights to inform decisions in real time. Do leaders know how to use data well? Can they differentiate between descriptive and predictive analytics? Are they equipped to navigate issues like data ethics, governance, quality, and usability? Can they evaluate the underlying algorithms behind AI-powered data applications? This requires more than access to dashboards or analytics tools. It requires a shared baseline of digital fluency.

At a minimum, leaders must understand how to distinguish between descriptive, diagnostic, predictive, and prescriptive analytics, and when each is appropriate. They must also be equipped to evaluate data quality, understand limitations and bias, and navigate issues related to ethics, privacy, and responsible AI use. Without this foundation, data-driven initiatives often fail to translate into better decisions or sustained performance. Developing data capability requires intentional, practical exposure rather than abstract training.

Organizations that make progress embed data into everyday workflows, decision forums, and performance conversations. This includes using real business problems to build fluency, reinforcing expectations that decisions are evidence-based, and establishing governance mechanisms that clarify accountability for data integrity and ethical use.

Critically, data literacy must extend beyond data science or analytics teams. When only a small segment of the organization speaks the language of data, insights remain siloed, and impact is limited. Broad-based digital fluency enables faster decisions, better cross-functional alignment, and greater return on technology investments.

Diagnostic Questions:

- Are teams equipped to use data effectively in everyday decisions?
  Example: A regional bank trained all frontline managers on Tableau to drive more localized, real-time decision-making.
- Do we have governance in place to ensure responsible and ethical data use?
  Example: A tech firm created a cross-functional AI ethics committee to review how predictive algorithms impact hiring decisions.

5. People and Leadership Talent

Are organizations factoring tech and data fluency into how they hire, develop, and promote talent? Whether it is building high-potential models, leadership pipelines, or external searches, companies need to evolve their definitions of leadership readiness to include tech-enabled decision-making, agility,

learning, and experimentation. As technology becomes embedded across the enterprise, organizations must fundamentally rethink what leadership readiness looks like. Technical expertise alone is not the goal (nor is it realistic for everyone). The real challenge is developing leaders who can effectively combine human judgment with data, automation, and AI-enabled insight. They also need to be proactive, agile learners as the landscape is constantly evolving.

AI can improve decision quality by increasing speed, pattern recognition, and scenario analysis. It can support leaders with better forecasts, recommendations, and operational signals. However, AI cannot replace accountability, values-based judgment, or the ability to navigate ambiguity, trade-offs, and human impact. Nor will AI always be right about the business's future needs or free of underlying biases when modeling talent data (see "Threading the needle…").

The most effective leaders understand where AI should inform decisions and where human discernment must prevail. This requires an expanded definition of leadership capability. Organizations must explicitly value digital fluency, comfort with experimentation, and the ability to work alongside intelligent systems, while simultaneously reinforcing core leadership behaviors such as ethical reasoning (integrity), learning agility, collaboration, resilience, inspiring others, developing people, and ownership. When leadership models emphasize only technical sophistication or only generic interpersonal skills, they fail to reflect the reality of modern work.

The best approach is to build a custom leadership model focused on the future capabilities needed to drive business growth, and to clearly outline expectations for leadership and technology together in your organization. Then use this model to hire, develop, and advance talent internally to build the pipeline of leaders needed for the future (see "Unleashing the power of assessments…").

Ultimately, successful organizations treat AI as a leadership amplifier, not a substitute. They are deliberate about defining which decisions should be automated, which should be augmented, and which must remain firmly human.

Diagnostic Questions:

- Are we hiring and developing leaders with tech fluency and adaptability?
  Example: A retail brand shifted its executive hiring criteria to prioritize digital maturity and data-first thinking.
- Do our leadership models reflect the digital behaviors we want to scale?
  Example: A global CPG firm redesigned its leadership framework to include co-creation, experimentation, and digital acumen.

Conclusion

The future belongs to organizations that stop treating technology as something to manage at a distance and start engaging with it deliberately and directly. Technology is not a passing trend to avoid, fear, or resist. When leaders step away, the result is rarely neutrality. More often, it is stalled progress, missed opportunity, and a gradual loss of relevance.

The organizations that succeed are not those that chase every "bright shiny" new tool or adopt technology for its own sake. They confront it thoughtfully, make intentional choices about its role, and embed it in how strategy is set, work is designed, and leadership capabilities and decisions are made. They recognize that technology amplifies intent, and they build the capability to engage with it, shape it, and use it responsibly. At the end of the day, every company today is a Tech company. <#+&>



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Reframing the Future of Work:

AI, Human Capital, and the Economics of Augmentation

By Frank P. Ginac

Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence (AI) is often characterized as a labor-displacing technology. However, a growing body of evidence suggests that its dominant effect is the recomposition of work, not the wholesale replacement of human roles. Nitin Seth (2020) advances this view by arguing that the future of work is human-with-machine, not human-versus-machine. In this framing, narrow AI systems automate bounded tasks while elevating the relative value of uniquely human capabilities such as judgment, creativity, empathy, and complex problem-solving.

While compelling, this narrative raises a critical strategic question: under what conditions does AI adoption strengthen human capital rather than erode it? This article examines that question using Dr. David Pistrui's Innovation Triangle, which positions innovation as the dynamic alignment of People, Technology, and Economics (Pistrui, 2025a). Viewed through this lens, AI adoption failures are less about technical limitations and more about systemic misalignment across these three domains.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is often characterized as a labor-displacing technology. However, a growing body of evidence suggests that its dominant effect is the recomposition of work, not the wholesale replacement of human roles. Nitin Seth (2020) advances this view by arguing that the future of work is human-with-machine, not human-versus-machine. In this framing, narrow AI systems automate bounded tasks while elevating the relative value of uniquely human capabilities such as judgment, creativity, empathy, and complex problem-solving.

While compelling, this narrative raises a critical strategic question: under what conditions does AI adoption strengthen human capital rather than erode it? This article examines that question using Dr. David Pistrui's Innovation Triangle, which positions innovation as the dynamic alignment of People, Technology, and Economics (Pistrui, 2025a). Viewed through this lens, AI adoption failures are less about technical limitations and more about systemic misalignment across these three domains.

Conceptual Framework: The Innovation Triangle

Pistrui's Innovation Triangle emphasizes that technological advancement alone does not generate innovation. Innovation emerges only when advances in technology are matched by human capability development and supported by viable economic models (Pistrui, 2025a). Applied to AI adoption, this framework clarifies why many organizations experience efficiency gains without corresponding improvements in engagement, adaptability, or long-term competitiveness.

Seth's (2020) augmentation thesis implicitly depends on such alignment. When AI is deployed without redesigning work, reskilling employees, or recalibrating incentives, organizations may achieve automation without innovation—reducing labor costs while weakening human capital.

People-Technology Intersection: Why Augmentation Is Conditional

Seth (2020) argues that AI frees workers from routine tasks, letting them focus on higher-value activities that require human judgment and relational skills. While conceptually sound, this claim assumes that individuals displaced by automation can transition effectively into augmented roles.

Empirical evidence complicates this assumption. Gallup's State of the Global Workplace report documents persistent disengagement across industries, suggesting that many organizations struggle with learning, adaptability, and trust even before AI is introduced (Gallup, 2025). Augmentation potential is therefore unevenly distributed, not universal.

Research by Loaiza and Rigobon (2024) provides a more granular view through the EPOCH methodology, which evaluates work across five human capability dimensions: Empathy, Presence, Opinion, Creativity, and Hope. Their findings demonstrate that many occupations face high automation exposure while retaining substantial augmentation potential. Realizing this potential requires intentional job redesign, not passive reliance on workforce adaptability.

Technology-Economics Intersection: Productivity Without Parity

Economic modeling from Anthropic projects substantial global productivity gains from AI adoption but cautions that these gains are likely to concentrate in high-adoption, already-wealthy economies (Anthropic, 2025). This creates a structural paradox: AI expands productive capacity while simultaneously increasing inequality across regions, firms, and workforce segments.

At the organizational level,

this imbalance manifests as a strategic fork. Firms may pursue economically direct paths, such as task automation and headcount reduction, or economically complex paths, including reskilling, workflow redesign, and human–AI collaboration management. Without explicit alignment between productivity gains and workforce investment, augmentation narratives risk remaining rhetorical rather than operational.

People-Economics Intersection: Capability as a Strategic Asset

Seth places primary responsibility for reskilling on individuals, emphasizing lifelong learning as a prerequisite for relevance in an AI-driven economy (Seth, 2020). While individual agency is necessary, this framing underestimates organizational responsibility.

Makarius et al. (2020) demonstrate that AI adoption succeeds only when employees actively embrace and integrate AI into their work. They introduce the concept of AI socialization, arguing that organizations must introduce AI systems much like new employees, through trust-building, role clarity, and behavioral integration. This reframes AI adoption as an organizational development challenge rather than merely a technical deployment.

Risk Analysis: Where Augmentation Narratives Break Down

Several risks undermine augmentation-led strategies:

1. **Capability Distribution Risk**
   Not all workers can acquire higher-order skills at the same pace. Assuming universal adaptability is a logical inference, not an empirical certainty (Gallup, 2025).
2. **Incentive Misalignment**
   Short-term financial pressures frequently favor automation-led cost optimization over longer-term workforce investment (Anthropic, 2025).
3. **Surveillance Externalities**
   AI systems introduced to enhance productivity or well-being may create perceptions of intrusive monitoring, eroding trust and engagement (Seth, 2020).
4. **Leadership Literacy Gaps**
   Executives lacking foundational AI literacy struggle to distinguish feasible augmentation from speculative claims, weakening governance and strategic coherence (Pistrui, 2025b).

Implications for Workforce and HR Leaders

Several practical implications follow:

- Shift analysis from jobs to tasks. AI strategy must operate at the activity level, distinguishing displacement-driven from augmentation-led opportunities (Loaiza & Rigobon, 2024).
- Treat AI adoption as organizational development. Successful integration requires reskilling pathways, trust-building, and redesigned incentives (Makarius et al., 2020).
- Link efficiency gains to human development. Organizations that reinvest AI-enabled productivity gains into workforce capabilities gain a durable competitive advantage (Anthropic, 2025).
- Raise leadership AI literacy. Effective digital leadership requires understanding what AI can and cannot do (Pistrui, 2025c).

Conclusion

AI's transformative potential lies not in replacing humans but in redefining what counts as valuable human work. Seth's vision of the future of work is achievable only when technology deployment, workforce development, and economic incentives are architected as a coherent socio-technical system (Seth, 2020; Pistrui, 2025a). Organizations that align these forces will unlock AI's full value; those that do not risk achieving automation without innovation. <#+&>



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10 Keys to Include in a Workforce Plan

An Outline of Strategic Workforce Planning and People Analytics Integration

By Jeff Higgins

Executive Summary

AI disruption, shifting demographics, talent shortages, and global uncertainty are making reactive workforce decisions increasingly costly. Strategic workforce planning (SWP) replaces reaction with foresight by using people analytics and scenario modeling to anticipate talent needs, risks, and opportunities.

This article presents 10 essential elements of an effective workforce plan, showing how organizations can align people strategy with business strategy, improve agility, quantify workforce decisions, and build the talent needed for multiple possible futures. Workforce planning is no longer simply an HR exercise—it is a business imperative.

CEOs and organizations frequently state, "Our people are our most valuable asset," even as many of those same companies later announce layoffs. Yet organizations struggle to find and develop the talent they need. How can organizations mitigate these opposing challenges?

In today's rapidly shifting business landscape, uncertainty is the new normal. Technology disruption from AI, shifting workforce demographics, evolving skill demands, and unexpected global events have made the future more uncertain than ever, which makes having a plan for different potential future scenarios (i.e., workforce planning) more critical than ever. To keep up, organizations cannot freeze in decision-making and, most critically, must move beyond reactive short-term changes without serious planning. The best and only way out of the many possible futures trap is to build an informed workforce strategy and plan that can adapt to most or all possible future scenarios, focusing on what can be managed and controlled when destabilizing external events happen.

Workforce planning illuminates and quantifies the impact of any future scenario, showing how small near-term internal changes can yield significant impact over time and guiding the organization toward a better path with stronger, more resilient talent in the future.

Why Workforce Planning Matters

We begin by explaining the strategic value of workforce planning and its powerful partnership with people analytics, enabling organizational benefits from data-driven workforce modeling and decision-making through comprehensive Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP).

Workforce planning is not just a human resources (HR) activity — it is a business-critical function that integrates and informs the budgeting and strategic planning processes. Workforce planning helps organizations answer questions including:

By proactively addressing these questions as part of strategic workforce planning, HR and the business can align talent strategy with business strategy, mitigate risk, and increase agility through proactive actions that help the organization better navigate rapid change and uncertainty.

Category	Question
Business - Finance	What is the potential impact of AI on our workforce with slow vs. fast adoption?
Business - Finance	Can we improve workforce productivity while keeping costs flat or even down?
Business - Finance	Can we find, develop, and retain talent that is more productive and costs less?
Talent - Workforce	Is it better to build, buy, borrow, or bot key talent?
Talent - Workforce	Are we hiring, promoting, training the right people for the right future roles?
Talent - Workforce	What is our quality of hire? Is it improving?
Talent - Workforce	What is the impact and ROI of our Training Investment?
Talent - Workforce	What skills are we missing, and how can we close talent gaps?
Talent - Workforce	Do leaders link to engagement, retention, and performance?

How Workforce Planning Fits with People Analytics

While closely related, people analytics and workforce planning play distinct roles; however, either process creates natural synergies with the other (see graphic 1a below).

- **People analytics** focuses on analyzing historical and current workforce data to reveal patterns, trends, and insights that can be used to make predictions. It answers questions such as:
  - "What's driving employee turnover?"
  - "Is mobility a source of value or turnover?"
- **Workforce planning** takes analytic insights and forecasts a specific future scenario. Workforce planning uses analytic insights to project future workforce outcomes across multiple KPI metrics, including talent demand, turnover, hiring, mobility, headcount, labor costs, and more. All forecast metrics are integrated into a single model to drive a given scenario.

Once all data and metrics are together, the plan can model a wide variety of scenarios with different outcomes, which management can use to learn and optimize positive metrics while minimizing negative risk factors. Scenarios are then saved and used for decision-making as a roadmap to navigate complex challenges.

Together, the synergistic loop of analytics and workforce planning show a highly practical and innovative use for analytics in the form of an actionable workforce plan. Organizations that integrate both functions can make smarter, faster, and more future-ready talent decisions with quantifiable business impact and ROI.

The 10 Keys:

A workforce plan is only as strong as the elements it contains. These ten keys ensure your plan is comprehensive, strategic, and grounded in measurable outcomes.

1. Define Workforce Questions and Pain Points - Start with clear business and talent challenges your organization is or will soon be facing, whether it is rising turnover, managing AI impact, or aging leadership. Questions should be business-oriented (avoid HR speak) and workforce-driven or related. (see Lytiqs 25 key Human Capital Questions) Your workforce plan must include or answer these questions.

2. Develop a Workforce Strategy (aka Talent Strategy)

A workforce strategy, which can be very involved, can be boiled down to a core set of short workforce statements (i.e., attract/retain top talent, low-cost workforce), which succinctly describe how the workforce directly drives or enables the organizational business strategy. The strategy is a future workforce vision for how your workforce strategy supports growth, innovation, customer service, profitability, or efficiency.

3. Build a Strong Business Case with Risk Analysis

Without a strong business case, the best analytics or workforce plan may never be used simply because business leaders did not fully appreciate the context, value, and ROI. A business case must include the following six elements:

I. Compelling Questions (i.e., see #1 above, ask the right questions)
II. Objective Measures and Data (Historical data, key metric indicators, segmented data)
III. Powerful Visuals/Charts (ideally a key chart that tells a story and drives action)
IV. Use Qualitative Storytelling: "Two of our top 3 salespeople are from other industries."
V. Direct link to Business Impact (ROI/Cost/Profit) showing a range of $1.0M - $3.0M ROI.
VI. A Risk Analysis which clearly answers (via forecast or trend) "What if we do nothing."

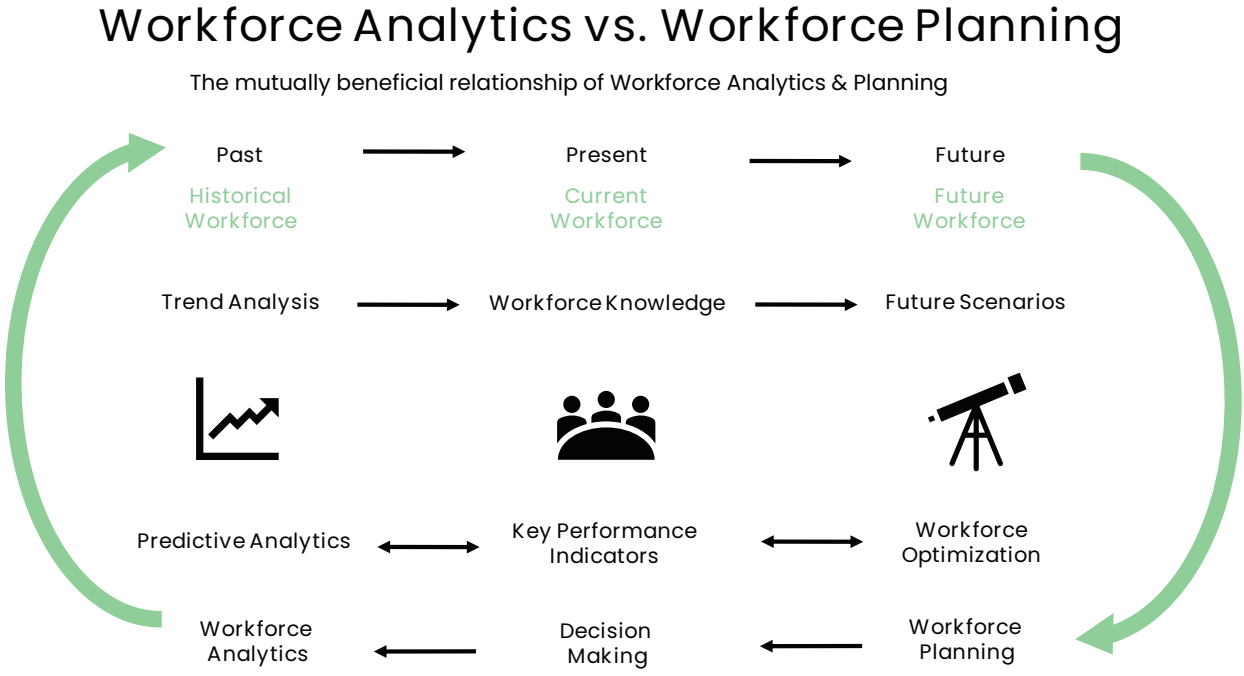
Most importantly, explain the risk of doing nothing — such as declining productivity, skill shortages, or missed growth opportunities. *See article Building a Business Case: A How-To Guide -by Jeff Higgins.*

4. Identify and Focus on Critical Job Roles

Not all roles are equal. Highlight which positions are most strategic, hard-to-fill, or vital to your operations. This includes leadership pipelines, feeder roles, and technical specialists. Knowing where to focus your attention helps allocate resources effectively.

5. Create Scenario-Based Workforce Models

Develop flexible workforce models for various future states. Consider economic downturns, market expansion, or AI-driven technological shifts. Each scenario should show how workforce



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structure, talent focus, cost, and performance would shift.

6. Establish KPI Metrics with Clear Targets

Define what success looks like in the future. Select metrics that link to and help quantify your workforce questions and pain points from #1 above. Examples include employee engagement, promotion rate, turnover rate, labor cost per FTE, or internal hire rate. Set realistic goals and use them to track progress over time and across multiple years.

7. Automate Demand Forecasting

Stop asking managers what they need in the future when, in most cases, they don't know. Instead, use technology to create an automated workforce forecast. Excel can forecast one or two variables like headcount and total labor cost but fails when you add more talent dimensions. Automated workforce planning tools include LYTIQS, Anaplan, and others. Fully integrate talent details like skills, mobility, and training, and enable rapid scenario modeling and complex strategic change forecasting, such as the impact of AI on specific jobs and the organization.

8. Quantify Internal Talent Supply

Use internal workforce data to quantify internal talent pipelines. How many employees are promotable? What is the average tenure in key roles? Should we build, buy, borrow, or bot core job roles? Without internal supply models, the workforce plan is incomplete.

9. Develop Talent Gap Intervention Strategies

For each workforce plan scenario, identify targeted actions to address the impact of external market changes to minimize talent issues/gaps. This includes recruitment initiatives, training, restructuring, outsourcing, or process redesign. Use "what-if" analysis to assess potential outcomes and prioritize high-impact strategies.

10. Link the Plan to Business Outcomes

Your workforce plan must drive business value and clearly show how the plan improves future business outcomes like revenue, cost savings, innovation, automation, and customer success. If you cannot measure the business impact, stakeholders cannot see the value or impact of the workforce plan.

The Benefits of Strategic Workforce Planning, as a data-intensive, multi-faceted process, can take many iterations to achieve the most advanced levels of maturity. The LYTIQS SWP Maturity model shows five levels of workforce planning maturity, with very few organizations having reached expert level five. At this stage, workforce planning is no longer reactive or isolated — it is a strategic, fully integrated business function.

Key benefits include:

- **Integrated Scenario Planning**

Demand, internal supply, and external supply are modeled together in real time using macro and micro scenarios.

- **KPI-Driven Decisions**

Workforce decisions are made using clearly defined metrics that align with the business strategic plan and workforce strategy.

- **Talent Arbitrage Capabilities**

Organizations can model where to source talent for the best value, whether by location, channel, or contract type.

- **Career Path and Internal Mobility Modeling**

Internal pipelines are built using dynamic career path analysis, reducing reliance on external hiring and improving retention.

- **Quantified ROI and Business Impact**

Workforce plans are evaluated by financial outcomes, making them powerful tools for C-suite decision-making.

- **Strategic Influence**

SWP actively shapes strategic planning processes rather than reacting to them, increasing HR's influence and value across the enterprise.

Strategic workforce planning is no longer optional — especially in the age of AI, it is a business imperative. Organizations that master this discipline will be better prepared for the future, more resilient, and able to outperform via superior talent management in attracting, developing, and retaining better talent.

By including ten key elements in your workforce plan, organizations create a powerful roadmap aligning people strategy with organizational success. As organizations mature through the LYTIQS maturity levels, the benefits only grow—from cost optimization and agility to quantified ROI, strategic alignment, and optimal talent performance.

The future belongs to those who plan for it — and that planning starts with your people. <#+&>



About the Author

Jeff Higgins, MBA — Founder and CEO of Human Capital Management Institute, Jeff Higgins is a workforce analytics and strategic workforce planning authority whose distinctive background spans human resources, finance, predictive analytics, ISO human-capital reporting, and executive decision support.



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