



HR Predictions for 2024

Imperatives for the Year Ahead

Introduction

We have been publishing *HR Predictions* for more than two decades, and this year stands out. Not only are we entering one of the most challenging labor markets in years (we call it the Post-Industrial Era¹) but also we are facing converging industries, two major wars, shifting political winds, and AI technology—all of which are *shattering paradigms* in business. When paradigms change, businesses have to adapt.

The big shift is not AI; it's the way our organizations now work. Originally designed as functional hierarchies, companies have become dynamic networks of people, many working remotely, with a large percentage operating as contractors or contingent workers. Topics like internal mobility, skills-based hiring, contingent work, and agile careers are now mainstream, compelling every HR program to be redesigned. Initially seen as trends, these changes have now altered the traditional definition of a “job” and shifted our thinking (as described in *Irresistible*),² moving us from a focus on fixed jobs to a focus on “the work” that needs to be done.

While we saw these changes coming, they've now fully arrived. Our Dynamic Organization³ research finds that almost a quarter of companies now embrace these new ideas, and these organizations outperform their peers by orders of magnitude (7 times more likely to be market leaders, 31 times more likely to be best places to work, and 20 times more likely to be highly productive). Additionally, *productivity* may become the word of the year. If you rate companies by “revenue per employee” within an industry, you can instantly get a quick gauge of effective management. In 2024, as the economy slows and AI takes hold, we're all going to be in the “productivity business.” This marks a new way to define our role in HR.

We challenge each of you to lean into these ideas. Topics like organization design, job architecture, skills-based work, skills-based rewards, career pathways, strategic recruiting, internal mobility, agile performance management, pay equity, and AI (of course) will be paramount in the coming year. We encourage you to learn and develop expertise in these new domains, because HR will become more complex and more important in the year ahead.

The World, Economy, and Workforce Have Changed

As we discuss in *Welcome to the Post-Industrial Age*⁴, we awoke from the pandemic to a changed business environment. Employees are increasingly difficult to hire and retain. They feel burned out⁵ and are even willing to reduce their pay for a four-day week.⁶ And labor unions are back in vogue.⁷

Driven by the relentless march of technology, every company is transforming. The 2023 PwC CEO survey finds that 40% of CEOs believe “their business as it looks today will not exist in ten years,”⁸ and 61% want to spend “more time on transformation than execution.” And to reinforce this finding, our Leadership Development study finds that “change and transformation skills” have risen to the top as the defining capabilities of top leaders.⁹

Examples are everywhere. Disney, the most iconic brand in entertainment, faces dying wire-line revenue while they transform into a digital growth business. Ford, GM, and Stellantis are doing backflips to build an electric vehicle (EV) business while they face union pressure and a slowing EV market. The healthcare industry, the largest employer in the United States, is growing so fast that Walmart, CVS, and Amazon have jumped in. And Google and Apple, the two most

1 [Welcome to the Post-Industrial Age](#), Josh Bersin/The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.

2 [Irresistible: The Seven Secrets of the World's Most Enduring, Employee-Focused Organizations](#), Josh Bersin/IdeaPress, 2022.

3 [The Definitive Guide to Building a Dynamic Organization](#), Josh Bersin and Kathi Enderes, PhD/The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.

4 [Welcome to the Post-Industrial Age](#), Josh Bersin/The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.

5 [“Employee Burnout: The Causes and Cures,”](#) gallup.com, August 2, 2023.

6 [“81% of full-time workers want a 4-day work week - and they're willing to make sacrifices to get it,”](#) Lorie Konish/cnbc.com, August 23, 2023.

7 [“More in U.S. See Unions Strengthening and Want It That Way,”](#) Lydia Saad/Gallup, August 30, 2023.

8 [“73% of CEOs around the world believe global economic growth will decline over the next 12 months, the most pessimistic outlook in over a decade,”](#) PwC Global/pwc.com, January 16, 2023.

9 [“Companies Have Been Neglecting Their Leadership, And It Shows,”](#) Josh Bersin/joshbersin.com, November 6, 2023.

admired tech companies in the world, are seeing slower growth. While many such challenges are technology-based, *most are not*. As our Dynamic Organization research¹⁰ points out, the key to dealing with technological change is not “more technology.” Instead, it’s building a team that can adapt, learn, reorganize, and iterate. And that essentially means our companies’ transformation issues have landed in the laps of HR leaders.

As we like to put it, “every business problem is a people problem.” A decade ago, HR leaders wanted a seat at the table. That talk has ended, and now HR is expected to step up, take charge, and lead the organization’s strategy into the new world. That means the profession itself is being reinvented. This is why we launched our Systemic HR™ Initiative in 2023, which lays out a roadmap for change.

Paradigm Changes in the Workforce

Many of our traditional HR practices were built around a “prehire to retire” model of work. That paradigm is rapidly going away. To that point, here are a few surprising facts:

- We have entered a long-term, secular labor shortage. Despite longevity growth, the birth rate in developed countries is far below replacement.¹¹ In fact, within 15 years *all developed countries will see a peak in total working population*.¹² This means the “low unemployment rate” we see today will continue, leading to a new management mindset. The “hire to grow” philosophy must give way to the idea that every employee is important and companies grow by helping people reinvent themselves.
- The average young employee today will likely live into their 100s, so they will have a career that spans 70 years and multiple economic, technology, and industry cycles. Their careers will have starts, stops, restarts, and

reinventions, forcing companies to build career pathways in many directions. And as people age, companies are rerecruiting and reskilling retirees. (Global life expectancy is over 80 for men and 85 for women in most developed countries, and grows at one year every four years.¹³)

- Skills obsolescence is accelerating, which means people are learning new tools, technologies, and disciplines at light speed. And these new skills are cross-industry. During the pandemic, 45% of workers changed industries,¹⁴ showing that the barriers between industry and job families have broken down. Internal and external job mobility is growing rapidly. So don’t assume that an IT engineer can’t do sales, or vice versa.
- Contingent, part-time, and hybrid work have gone mainstream. McKinsey’s CEO research¹⁵ shows that 90% of employers now have hybrid work models, and more than 45% of U.S. workers are now in a contract work position, creating what we call a “pixelated workforce.” Organizations must industrialize and formalize the “non-full-time” workforce to grow. This brings workforce planning into a whole new light. (Think “skills planning” not “people planning.”)
- Every company is now global. Thanks to technology, we all have workers in multiple countries, jurisdictions, and cultures demanding new systems to understand pay, regulatory differences, and global compliance rules. Globalization of the workforce is now a best practice for everyone, leading to high-value new providers like Deel, Oyster, and others who specialize in this market.
- Millennial, Gen Z, and younger workers are flexing their “work-life balance” muscle, pushing for the four-day week, flexible hours, and more competitive pay. Surprisingly, even the UAW asked the big four

10 [The Definitive Guide to Building a Dynamic Organization](#), Josh Bersin and Kathi Enderes, PhD/The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.

11 [“U.S. Population Flatlining As Birth Rate Stagnates In 2022,”](#) Robert Hart/Forbes, June 1, 2023.

12 [“Population estimates and projections,”](#) Databank/The World Bank.

13 [“Key Insights on Life Expectancy,”](#) Key Insights/ourworldindata.org.

14 [“The Economy That Just Won’t Quit: Why Jobs Keep Getting Created,”](#) Josh Bersin/joshbersin.com, October 11, 2022.

15 [CEO Excellence](#), Carolyn Dewar, Scott Keller, and Vikram Malhotra/Scribner, March 15, 2022.

automakers for a four-day week. Topics like “quiet quitting,” “working your wage,” or “bore out” are simply symptoms of this new era of employee agency. So if you’re not actively listening to employees, you’re likely missing something big.

- Labor unions and collective bargaining are on the rise. It’s clear that people will no longer tolerate selfish leadership or a company that doesn’t listen and respond to employee needs. This means the disciplines in labor relations are creeping from the legal team into HR.
- Diversity issues remain important. The war in Israel, immigration, and continuous discussions about income inequality, LGBTQ+, gender, and personal agency make it harder than ever for CHROs and heads of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to maintain focus on equity, fairness, inclusion, and collaboration. Chief diversity officers have a tougher job than ever. Recent discussions with DEI leaders show their teams are shrinking yet their work remains urgent.

The simple message is that we must manage companies in a *dynamic way*. Investments in team-centric job models, cross-functional teams, career pathways, and apprenticeship must grow. We have to redesign how we evaluate performance and develop people. And we have to embrace a new mindset: *every employee can be a high performer*.

Fundamentals of Work Remain the Same

Amid these changes, the fundamental motivations for work have not changed. As discussed in *Irresistible*¹⁶, people come to work with a desire to learn, grow, contribute, and be fairly rewarded. Yes, employees want a flexible and changeable career, but the intrinsic motivations remain the same. Each individual wants respect, opportunity, equity, and growth. Therefore, our job is not to “reinvent everything” but rather understand these changes and go back to basics as we define new policies in the company.

Great companies invest in the “unquenchable power of the human spirit.” They empower, develop, and inspire people to do more. And in a world where reinvention takes place on a regular basis, it’s our people who realize our goals.

The fiasco at OpenAI was a global example of this issue. The employees of OpenAI overpowered the board and forced leadership to respond to their needs. While OpenAI is a young and small company, this was an example of employee power in force. Union negotiations at Ford, GM, Stellantis, and throughout Hollywood reinforce the trend.

In this new world, we can’t just “slot people” into jobs and wait for them to be promoted. Staff in line roles can move into professional roles; analysts in marketing can move into IT or HR; and HR professionals can rotate within HR and across the business to keep up. We, as HR leaders, need to invest in the tools and reward systems to facilitate this new model.

This trend is why skills-based management has been so important. In a world where people operate independently of their “job” or “position,” we have to run our companies on what we call a “skills meritocracy.” That means moving people around to help them build, use, and develop their skills. Today only 7% of organizations are very good at this (see Figure 1 on the next page).

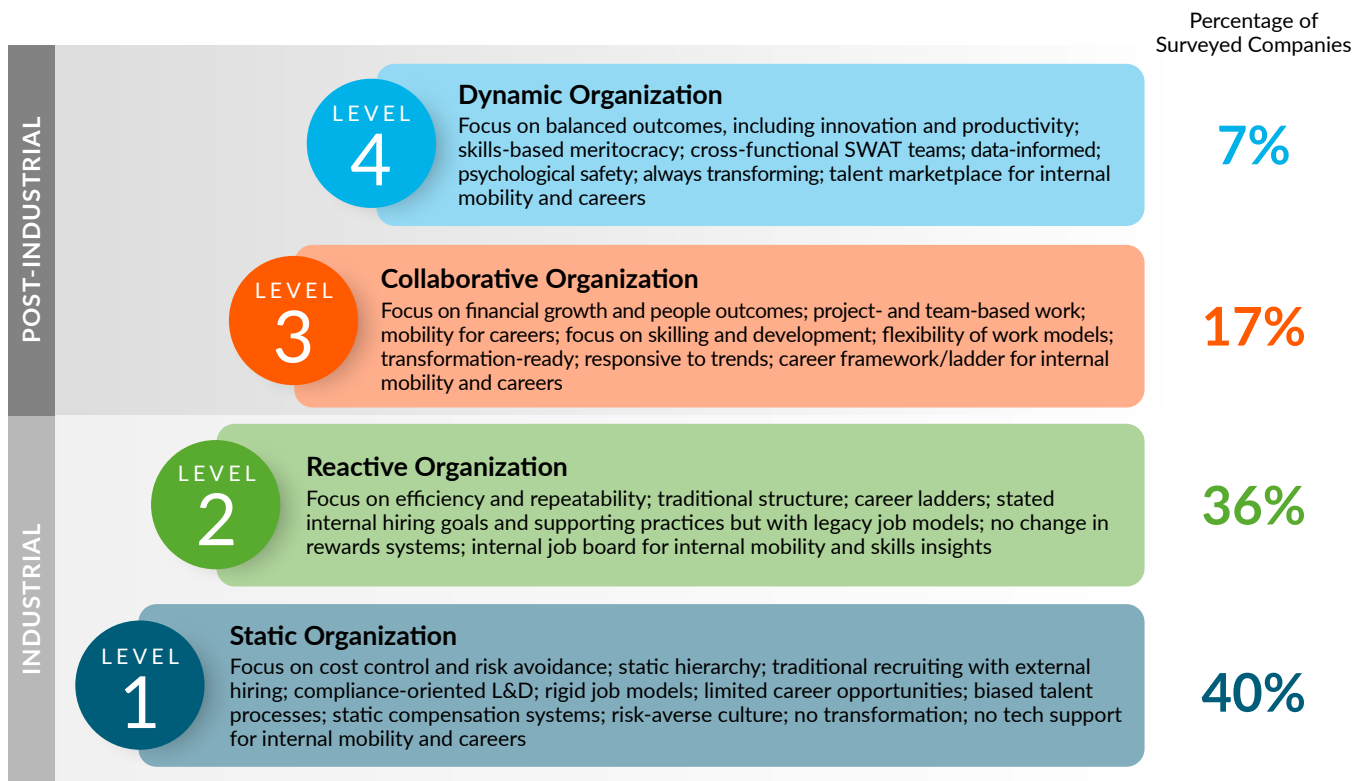
Where AI Fits: Fueling the Paradigm Change

Enter AI: the defining new technology of our age. AI is both the fuel and enabler of these changes. As businesses move faster and we morph into new industries and markets, AI will play a role in redefining jobs, operating models, and business intelligence.

AI will automate many things. Customer service, manufacturing, logistics, science, and healthcare will all be improved, aided, and more automated with AI. But the people who operate, manage, and train these systems must also become “superworkers” as well. The more people understand how to use and manage AI, the faster our companies will grow.

¹⁶ *Irresistible: The Seven Secrets of the World’s Most Enduring, Employee-Focused Organizations*, Josh Bersin/IdeaPress, 2022.

Figure 1: The Dynamic Organization Maturity Model



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2023

We've been involved with AI in HR for more than a year, and in every case we find that AI helps people do more. The Microsoft Copilot¹⁷ has already helped people reduce email traffic, optimize meetings, and find information more easily (70% say it improved productivity right out of the box). HR professionals can now use products like Paradox to reduce time-to-hire by 500% or more. Platforms like Eightfold AI, SeekOut, or Beamery can quickly find candidates with needed skills, regardless of their job titles. And new systems like Gloat, Fuel50, and Neobrain can give people career advice and developmental projects with unprecedented precision. Everywhere you look, AI is making HR decisions more accurate and inclusive, superpowering the role of HR itself.

AI will also play a major role in employee experience. Walmart, which built their own internal employee chatbot powered by Generative AI, told us that a typical call center agent who answers questions about benefits answers completely about 70% of the

time. The AI agent answers complex questions correctly more than 95% of the time. Why? The AI can scan all elements of an employee's benefits options and see them as one large "corpus," while a human agent may only be familiar with a few benefits areas at a time.

This is why we built Galileo^{TM18}, our AI-powered expert assistant for HR. Every HR professional today is going to have to reinvent themselves with deeper levels of expertise. What better way to do this than to take all your expertise (in our case, 25+ years of research) and put it at the fingertips of the professional?

However, AI is just getting warmed up. In 2024, HR teams will be involved in team reorganization, organization redesign, and learning new things like prompt engineering, AI-enabled data management, and rich media management. So, just as we all learned how to use Excel, we will all learn to use AI, making us each "superpowered" in our work.

17 [What Can Copilot's Earliest Users Teach Us About Generative AI at Work?](#) Microsoft, November 15, 2023.

18 ["Introducing Galileo", The World's First AI-Powered Expert Assistant For HR,"](#) Josh Bersin/joshbersin.com, November 20, 2023.

As AI enters operational areas of business, staff levels will go down. An Amazon or Whole Foods store no longer needs to hire two dozen checkers to help customers; that headcount can be allocated instead to store management, customer support, or food preparation. This means the “hire to grow” model will be replaced by our Four R Framework™ (see Figure 2). We, as HR, have to help with reskilling, organization design, and the new pay and rewards models that result. (Our new Organization Design SuperClass¹⁹ is designed to teach you these practices.)

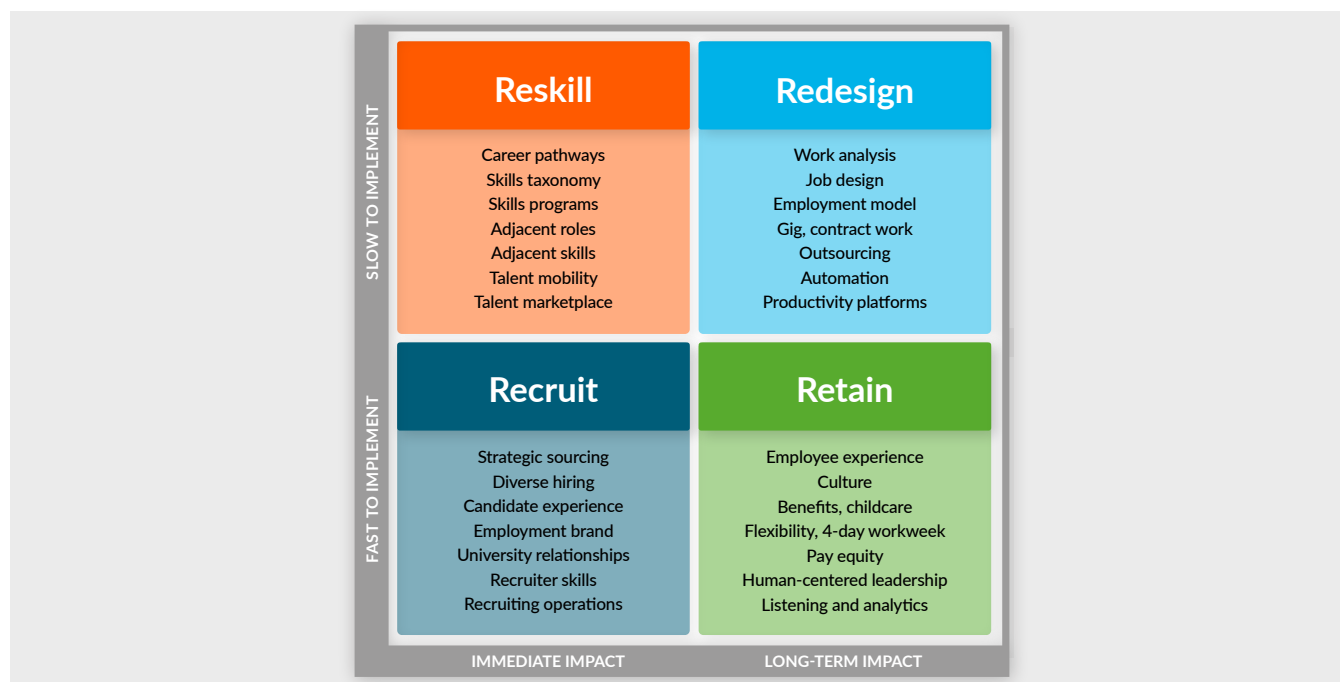
How will we manage AI? We, in HR, are going to see a massive technology replacement. Traditional enterprise resource planning (ERP) and transaction systems will be enhanced and new pioneers will replace many legacy applications.

Systemic HR™: From a Service Function to a Consulting Organization

In the middle of these technology changes, HR is changing as well to become what we call systemic HR²⁰. HR is no longer a “service delivery” organization, organized around 400 different specialties. Today we need to bring HR teams together, focusing on problem-solving and not simply delivering service and support (see Figure 3 on the next page). This means we have to become experts at business alignment, work and job design, new models of development and career, and whole new ways to hire, pay, promote, and evaluate people.

As our new Systemic HR™ research points out, the HR transformations occurring today are mostly attempts to

Figure 2: The Four R Framework™

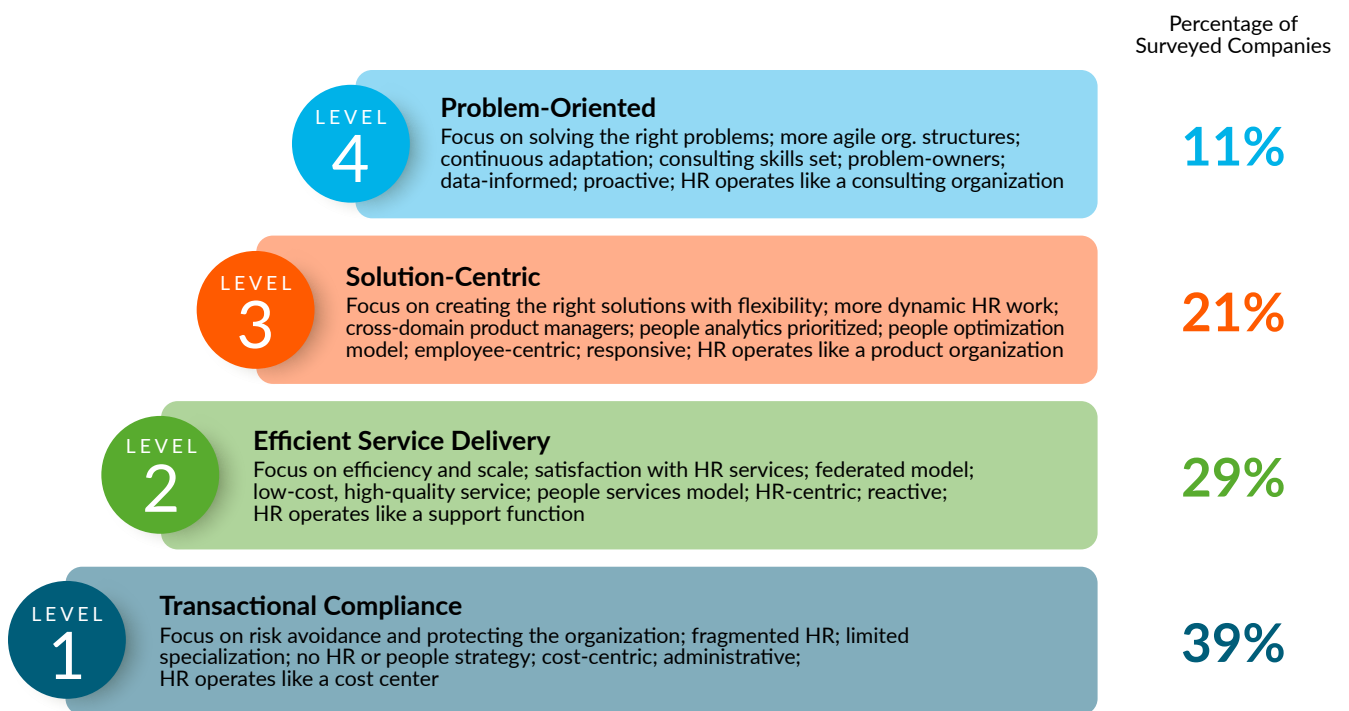


Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2023

19 [The Organization Design SuperClass](https://www.bersinacademy.com/), Josh Bersin Academy/bersinacademy.com.

20 [The Definitive Guide to Human Resources: Systemic HR™](#), Josh Bersin and Kathi Enderes, PhD/The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.

Figure 3: The Systemic HR™ Maturity Model



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2023

clean up the function and improve the service delivery model. But, in 2024, we have to go further, evolving into a systemic HR function.

What this essentially means is looking at HR as a set of full-stack experts, organized and aligned toward offerings, products, services, and consulting. It means redefining our

centers of excellence, cross-training HR professionals in multiple domains, and adding a heavy dose of consulting skills to the team. And, of course, it means investing in AI and a very strong architecture for HR technology, all focused on making work easier and eliminating friction caused by HR initiatives.

The Top 15 Predictions

With this inspiration in mind, let's dig into the top trends.



AI will change every part of HR—and every role in the company.

We have very little concern that AI is going to cause any damage to our organizations. Quite the opposite: we believe this is going to be one of the most transformational technologies you've ever seen. So let's briefly talk about what AI means to HR and a few of the immediate implications on HR strategy.

Talent Intelligence and Recruiting

Recruiting is difficult and most companies are trying to recruit in a more data-driven fashion, focusing on skills-based recruiting to attract a more diverse source of candidates. AI is critical to this process.

When we first started doing research on talent intelligence, we had no idea how important this topic was going to become. Our work with many companies over the last two years to address and implement this kind of solution provides the following examples:

- At Starbucks, the critical talent issue is not just hiring and retention but also building a pipeline of managers and district managers. They are using talent intelligence to do this.
- At Chevron, the company is transforming its engineering and technology teams to enter the markets for alternative energy sources, mining, and other forms of hydrocarbon energy generation. There are no job titles for these new kinds of engineers so they are sourcing people based on actual skills and actual scientific experiences, which would not have been possible without talent intelligence.
- Bayer and other pharma companies are expanding their research pipelines into new biologic and genomic disciplines faster than ever. They can't find people by

searching for job titles, they have to locate experts in specific scientific domains. AI tools like Eightfold AI and SeekOut let these companies locate these experts, even if they're not doing "pharma development" today.

- Lockheed and other defense contractors are always looking for critical skills in technology, engineering, security, and data science. AI-driven sourcing tools can not only find such people but also filter them by government clearance, certifications, and other industry criteria.
- Healthcare companies like Providence, Sutter, and others are desperately looking for clinical professionals. AI engines can not only find clinically certified nurses, they can look for discipline experts and specific surgical experiences to improve screening and sourcing by orders of magnitude.

Talent intelligent systems (Eightfold AI, SeekOut, Gloat, iCIMS, Phenom, Beamery, SkyHive, and others) are vastly different from tools you've used in the past. They don't just develop great analytics on candidates to match them against job descriptions; instead they look at billions of employee and worker records to build real models to determine who is going to be a good fit for a job or role in your company.

Strategic Talent Management

The second role of AI is the massive impact of generative AI. Galileo, for example, enables HR professionals to find information on vendors, best practices, benchmarks, and hundreds of other topics in an instant. Generative AI can be used to generate content (job descriptions, checklists, training programs), answer questions and analyze documents (Galileo, other chat bots), analyze data (compare turnover between groups A and B), and even generate RFPs, meeting summaries, and much more.

Talent intelligence systems now let companies find successors, identify nonlinear career paths, and find skills adjacencies in any role or for any individual. Old tools like 9-box grids and traditional development plans will be transformed and informed by AI. Workday, for example, introduced an AI-driven "growth plan" that shows individuals and managers a series of AI-recommended development plans based on prior work. Our new HR Career Navigator (coming in mid-2024) will do this for all HR professionals.

Even performance management will be impacted. Vendors like SuccessFactors and BetterWorks are using AI to summarize one-on-one's, shoutouts, and provide suggestions to prevent bias in comments and feedback. Textio specializes in identifying biased language in job descriptions, performance reviews, and even email communication using AI.

Think about the process of conducting a pay-equity audit, which only 5% of companies do regularly. Soon we will see AI-powered pay recommendations that help compensation managers and line leaders better avoid pay bias based on age, gender, race, or other nonperformance factors.

Employee Experience

Think about the employee experience (EX) space where companies spend tens of millions of dollars on employee portals and custom apps. SAP's Joule provides conversational interfaces to hundreds of SAP transactions in a simple, personalized way.²¹ You can use ServiceNow, Microsoft, or Galileo to build various employee support agents of your own. And every EX vendor (Firstup, Applaud, Workvivo, Staffbase, and many more) is using generative AI to make employee interactions easy.

Many domain-specific examples come to mind. Paradox, the pioneer in conversational AI for recruiting, shatters the recruitment paradigm by giving job candidates the ability to apply for jobs, as well as automating applicant screening, interview scheduling, and background checks at *8 to 10 times higher speed* than any traditional applicant tracking system (ATS). This is possible because Paradox uses AI to deliver a refined set of conversational experiences with candidates to speed things up. FedEx and McDonald's have saved tens of millions of dollars in job ads and radically simplified their recruitment teams as a result.

Learning and Development

Products like Arist and new tools from Docebo, Section, Sana, 360 Learning, or Uplimit allow instructional designers to build content in minutes that might have taken them weeks. You can use platforms like Galileo to publish user guides, policies, and

various spreadsheets and immediately give people a teaching assistant or expert assistant on virtually any topic. We as HR will have to learn how to use these systems and make sure that the content is high quality and the data is protected, but that is typical IT work that we know how to do.²²

People Analytics

While some companies have an integrated data lake for employee data, most do not. And despite efforts of vendors like Workday, Oracle, and SAP, employee data does not live in one place. Generative AI tools can bring this together, in a form we call "systemic analytics."²³

Consider a generative AI product like Vee from Visier. Vee can bring together heterogeneous data sources in a period of weeks that would have taken years using traditional technologies. That is a paradigm-shattering technology that changes the way we manage HR data. Other platforms like OneModel and ChartHop are doing the same.

As AI hits people analytics teams, their jobs will be redefined as data curators, prompt engineering experts, and talent intelligence analysts. No more reporting dashboards, at long last.

Workforce Productivity

The spectacular improvements in meeting technology allow you to now record meetings, create summaries, and identify action items, even if you don't show up. New tools help teams schedule a workplace, optimize the schedule of a team, and manage and plan real estate investments. We can talk to our phones and computers, record messages, and transcribe them into documents. And all the dated "knowledge management" wikis are going to be replaced by large language models (LLMs).

Safety, Privacy, Ethics

As most of you know, AI systems are data dependent: if the data set is biased or incomplete, the system performs poorly. And if it's used for pay, promotion, or hiring, it opens the company to legal risk. Those of us who buy and build AI applications have to be rigorous about data quality, privacy, and sources. This is why most companies do not and probably

21 "A Peek Under The Covers Of SAP SuccessFactors' AI Strategy," Josh Bersin/joshbersin.com, December 21, 2021.

22 "AI Implementations Feel More Like Traditional IT Projects Every Day," Josh Bersin/joshbersin.com, December 7, 2023.

23 [People Analytics, Evolved: A Systemic Approach](#), Josh Bersin/The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.

will not use ChatGPT for many applications.

And More to Come

- AI-based tools for employee listening that not only capture feedback from employees but also give them direct advice on what to do, sharing trends with management.
- AI-based sourcing, interview scheduling, interviewing, and assessment are already coming to the recruitment space. These systems are colliding with talent marketplaces to source internal candidates automatically as well.
- Online coaching systems are starting to provide AI-driven coaching for managers in various scenarios. Our product Galileo, trained on years of leadership research, helps managers deal with employee issues.
- AI-based training systems are already hitting the market, and soon you'll be able to ask a question, get an answer, and immediately view a video or course further explaining the solution.

For vendors, AI is not a "get out of jail free" card. In other words, these are still complex, data-driven systems, and it's important for vendors to assure customers they deploy systems that are unbiased, trained, and security-protected. Just this month the *New York Times* sued OpenAI and Microsoft for intellectual property infringement. All vendors have to make sure they're implementing safe tools for their customers.

In 2024, we will be testing, building, and deploying these systems, and this will move many of us into the role of change enablers, planners, and systems implementers. We have to make sure the right content is being uploaded, we have to observe its behavior and understand where it's making mistakes, learn about prompt engineering, and integrate these systems into the security systems of our companies. (Work councils have opinions about this, too.)

Most of you will have lots of meetings with IT to discuss many use cases for AI and how to implement the right data, privacy, and security policies. It's going to be an exciting time, and a year from now we're going to look back and realize we're doing things very differently because of the integrative power of AI.

A year from now, we will look back and realize how differently things are done because of the integrative power of AI.



AI will transform the HR tech stack.

For many years companies assumed that the HCM platform was the system of record, and then we added learning, recruiting, rewards, scheduling, and other applications on top of it. We then built portals to give employees access to these systems, stacking tools from bottom to top. In many ways this architecture is now reversed, and AI will accelerate the shift.

Let's briefly discuss the layers (see Figure 4):

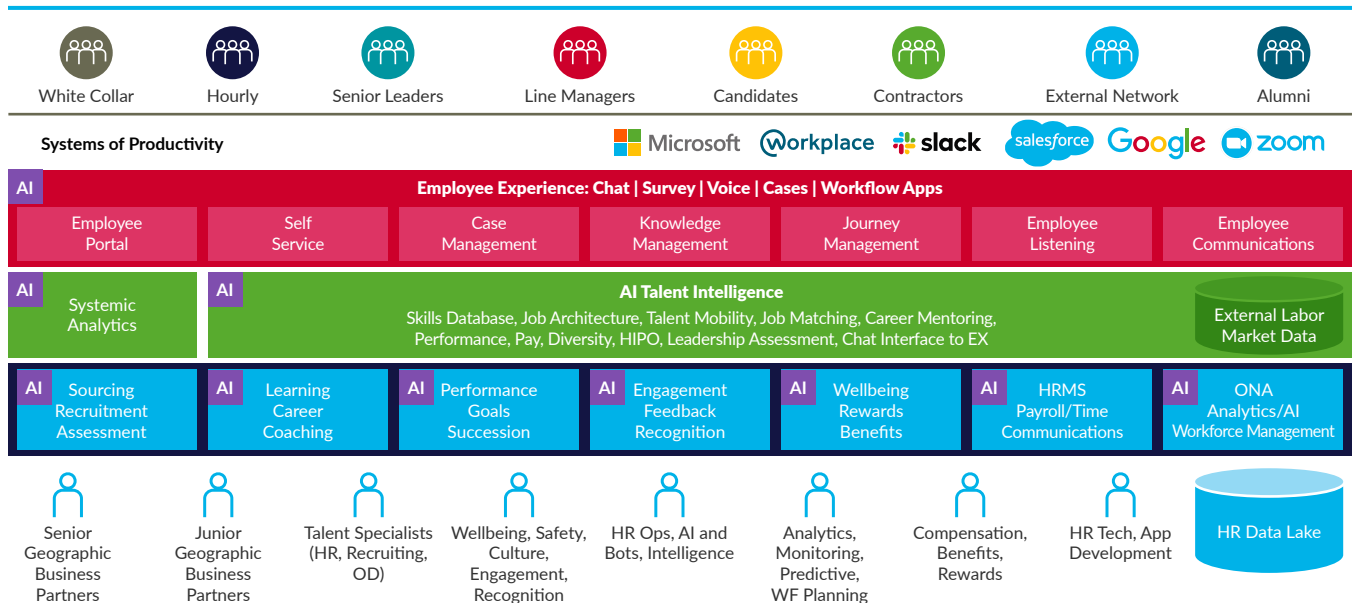
At the top, we have a wide variety of productivity systems, which are used for communications, meetings, document management, time and attendance scheduling, and hundreds of other daily applications. Each of these systems is now AI-enabled with voice recognition, recordings, summarizations, and more.

Most of these systems come from large vendors like Microsoft, Google, Zoom, or Salesforce. And for the most part, these vendors do not have a comprehensive focus on HR (Microsoft does). Beneath this layer we typically purchase more dedicated EX applications like ServiceNow (the ERP of EX), Workvivo, Firstup, Simpplr, Applaud, Staffbase, Leapsome, Unily, Microsoft Viva, and many others.

These EX systems (shown in red layer) tend to focus on application integration, employee communications, journeys, mobile access, and some tools for surveys, learning journeys, and case management. As the market grows they are becoming systems of record themselves. Firstup, for example, uses AI to understand each employee's pattern of communication so it can send messages in the form (mobile, message, email) and time of day that works best for each employee. And a new generation of these systems will help with office scheduling, desk assignment, and other hybrid work needs.

At the blue level are the talent intelligence systems. These are the core AI applications in HR today, and this market is growing very quickly. Vendors like Eightfold AI, Gloat, Fuel50, Phenom, SeekOut, SkyHive, and others hold vital data about employee skills, job history, and external data to serve as an intelligence system for internal mobility, job design, and analysis of skills and trending skills. Many of these applications started out as recruiting applications, but more and more they focus on skills intelligence, career development, internal mobility, and many analytic applications. Visier, OneModel, and Charthop are vendors that bring data together for analytics, delivering what we call "systemic analytics" to HR leaders, planners, and business partners.

Figure 4: AI Transforms the HR Technology Stack



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2024

Beneath this layer are the myriad transactional HR systems that manage applicant tracking, learning management, payroll, benefits, and hundreds of other needs. These vendors (Workday, SAP, Oracle, Lattice, HiBob, ADP, Ceridian, etc.) are payroll and transactional systems first, also reaching up to offer employee and manager applications as well. While small and midsize companies use these platforms for everything, as a company grows, it finds itself moving up the stack.

In 2024 we expect to see many things change. Many of these systems have AI-based analytics, but more of them will be using LLM-based modules for chatbot-like interfaces. SAP Joule, for example, is an end-to-end chatbot that uses generative AI and workflow management to give employees a single, easy-to-use interface to all SuccessFactors and other SAP systems. One can imagine that Oracle and Workday will do the same.

Many companies won't wait for vendors. Instead, they may buy intermediate products or build it themselves. Walmart has rolled out its generative AI application on top of its various HR systems, and the CHRO told us it is 30% more accurate at recommending benefits strategies than the company's call center agents. Our new system, Galileo, is essentially this kind of tool, offering expert advice and the ability for companies to develop their own employee leadership coach and HR intelligent assistant for the HR team as well as employees. ServiceNow and many other vendors will go in this direction.

The big issue for HR departments is how to "replace" or "supplement" existing systems as AI becomes loud, noisy, and too complicated to understand. Since the market is young, we'll be rethinking a lot of products and vendors as various providers implement AI in different ways. Read our article about the corporate implementation of AI to learn more.²⁴

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²⁴ ["AI Implementations Feel More Like Traditional IT Projects Every Day,"](#) Josh Bersin/ joshbersin.com, December 7, 2023.



Employee experience will be redefined—employees now in charge.

The concept of employee experience (EX) has rapidly evolved. Thinking back to the traditional ideas behind employee engagement, the concept developed in a very passive way. In the early 1900s, industrial engineers studied time and motion of workers, focusing on the opportunity to help steel workers carry more weight and improve the throughput of the plant.²⁵

In the 1950s and 1960s we started to survey workers, asking them (passively) what they liked and didn't like in their jobs. This approach, pioneered by psychologists, helped us understand why an employee felt disconnected and taught management to focus on culture and belonging to drive engagement and results.

Since then, employee experience has become more complex. Employees can now change employers easily, they work in a variety of modalities, and they have many more issues and needs. Rather than simply survey their employees, companies need to open up listening channels and enable what we call "employee activation."

Consider the issues employees want to talk about:

- Desire for different benefits, pay models, flexible work, or performance plans
- Feelings about belonging, inclusion, equity, and management behavior
- Frustrations with management practices, processes, or tools
- New ideas for products, features, and services that can make customers more satisfied
- Changes in work hours, flexible location, desire to work where it is best for them
- Career interests, growth plans, learning needs
- Feedback on C-level strategies and communications
- Ways to improve processes, shorten meetings, improve productivity
- Direct feedback on work processes and the work environment

It is impossible to capture this information through a survey. Instead, we need an active approach that includes listening, crowdsourcing of ideas, and direct management involvement in employee-driven programs.

²⁵ [Frederick Winslow Taylor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Winslow_Taylor), wikipedia.org.

In 2023 we saw Howard Schultz, founder of Starbucks, testify in Congress about his direct efforts to prevent unions from spreading. Despite his efforts to give employees better benefits, the staff felt overworked, overmeasured, and underappreciated. In 2024 every company will face this type of backlash, further focusing HR on "employee activation." If you bring employees into the process of designing the work experience, they will tell you what to do.

Driven by this shift, the employee experience tools' market has exploded. Vendors like ServiceNow, Firstup, Workvivo, Microsoft, Applaud, Leapsome, Simpplr, and hundreds of others are offering integration platforms for employee communications, listening, and easy access to backend apps. These companies are growing significantly and are likely to disrupt the traditional survey players.

Consider two examples: Microsoft Viva and Firstup. Skills in Viva, which plugs a skills interface into Outlook, Calendar, Teams, and every daily interaction we have, will store and visualize employee skills in the flow of work. While we may want that data to be ultimately stored in Workday or SAP, the utilization and update of skills data will take place in Microsoft, making Viva a skills system of record.

Firstup, which started out as an employee communications and campaign management platform, now stores information about each employee's location, time schedule, platforms, and interests in consuming information. A single employee message or campaign can be personalized to thousands of workers, making sure each employee receives what they need at the time and location they choose. This information is nowhere to be found in the core HCM, also creating a system of record that matters.

ServiceNow, which has become a popular workflow platform for large companies, has the ability to store onboarding programs, conduct surveys, and manage skills information and employee career trajectories. Yes, we want that information to be used by the HCM system, the talent marketplace, and the learning systems, but if it's stored in ServiceNow, the EX platform now becomes the dominant system and these others take a back seat.

These platforms are growing rapidly because they focused on just simplifying the mess under the covers. In 2024, these platforms will continue to take over the HR landscape, enabling our teams to better understand employee needs.



Union and employee activism will increase.

Despite the benefits of automation, in 2024 we expect union activity to increase. According to the Economic Policy Institute, Americans' interest in unions grew by 53% in 2022 and more than 60 million workers wanted to join a union but couldn't. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) sees individual petitions at an all-time high.²⁶

While U.S. unionization remains low (around 10.1% overall and 6.1% of private workers and 33% of government workers)²⁷, the number of unfair labor practice filings increased by almost 11% last year, including illegal activities such as:

- Threatening workers with the loss of jobs or benefits if they unionize
- Questioning workers about their union activities
- Firing or discriminating against workers because of their union activity
- Making false statements to workers seeking to unionize
- Refusing to bargain collectively with the union
- Closing a plant or factory because it voted to unionize

In 2023, there were more than 350 strikes, impacting companies like Amazon, Starbucks, Apple, GM, Ford, Stellantis, UPS, Netflix, Google, and Disney²⁸. What this points out is how important it is to listen to every employee issue.

The message to HR leaders is clear. We need to listen to employees (“activate” them), ensure wages are fair, keep benefits competitive, and create a culture of trust and inclusion. When people feel their work is rewarding and they feel productive, they have no reason to push back.

Let's consider two areas of focus:

- **Culture, equity, and inclusion:** Do I feel I belong here? Am I getting the right training? Do people listen to me? Is it possible for me to be successful in this role and grow? Am I being paid fairly? Am I included in the appropriate meetings and decisions?
- **Work experience, feedback, and productivity:** Do I know what I'm responsible for? Do I have the tools and information to succeed? Is the performance process fair? Can I advance my career here? And who is going to help me advance, grow, and get promoted?

The latest research from McKinsey finds the top five factors in work satisfaction are flexibility, growth, fair pay, belonging, and a relationship with management.²⁹ In a world where workers are scarce and employees have more power than ever, we have to focus on these issues.

Also, remember over half the workforce is “deskless.” People who work in hospitals, stores, hotels, trucks, shipping docks, manufacturing plants, and other “nondesk” locations are the most in-demand workers today. Taking care of their needs is critical to growth and strong labor relations in 2024.

²⁶ [“NLRB Broadens Potential Remedies for Unfair Labor Practices,”](#) Leah Shepherd/SHRM, December 14, 2022.

²⁷ [U.S. Bureau of Statistics,](#) January 2023.

²⁸ [“For Labor Unions, 2023 Was the Year of the Strike—and Big Victories,”](#) Kate Bronfenbrenner/*The Wall Street Journal*, December 4, 2023.

²⁹ [“2023: The year in charts,”](#) McKinsey & Company, December 8, 2023.



Companies will accept and adopt hybrid work models.

Work is work, regardless of where and when you do it. In 2024, we need to stop thinking about hybrid work as a “policy” and instead as just an alternative way of working. People will come into the office when they need to come into the office, and the real issue is training leaders to formalize and design meetings such that work done in the office is useful. If the only reason an employee comes into the office is to join a meeting (that could have been done over video), that employee just wasted two hours of commute time. And nobody wants that to happen.

There are technology platforms in development by ServiceNow, Microsoft, and others that are going to locate office workers, and then design and schedule a conference room that makes it appear as if all workers are present, even if they are working remotely. And while most of us do not use 3D glasses or any form of VR quite yet, within a year or two these tools will become commonplace. Therefore, it would be better to drop the discussions about hybrid work and talk more about issues like who’s accountable for what, how goals will be accomplished, and how people can better communicate and help each other get things done on behalf of our customers.

To these points, here’s the data from McKinsey’s 2023 year-end summary³⁰:

- 73% of organizations understand employees want flexible work schedules and locations.
- 53% of organizations train managers to measure performance and output, not presence.
- 49% of organizations test new work environments on a regular basis.
- 32% of organizations have a playbook to define hybrid work policies.

In 2024, it will be up to organization leaders to define the policies, purchase and implement the best tools, and train managers to adapt to hybrid work schedules. While this may not mean everyone will work from home, it does mean flexibility is acceptable.

However, it is important to note new research by Gallup, which reinforces the finding that people who work from home feel far less connected to the company than those who come to an office³¹ (only 28% feel fully connected to the mission versus 35% for hybrid workers). This indicates how important it is for managers and leaders to bring people together on a regular basis, regardless of the daily work routine.

Incidentally, many companies will struggle to manage their leases and real estate holdings. Now that hybrid work is acceptable and we know employees prefer it, we have to think about our offices as “collaboration centers,” not full-time residents for staff. Not only will HR need to be involved in redesigning the “office space” but also we will all need to consider a massive industry of workplace scheduling, reservation, and space planning software. Microsoft and ServiceNow are in this market, and this segment will impact HR technology in general.

³⁰ [2023 Year in Review](#), McKinsey & Company, 2023.

³¹ [“6 Workplace Trends Leaders Should Watch in 2024,”](#) Ben Wigert/Gallup, December 18, 2023.



Human-centered leadership will take center stage.

As we discuss in our Leadership Development study³², top-performing companies consistently invest in leadership development. In fact, among all the HR disciplines we practice, leadership development scores highest in business impact (see Figure 5).

There are three prominent issues for leadership development in 2024.

1. Leadership development needs more investment.

Our research shows that leadership development budgets are down almost 40% from prior years, leading the lowest numbers we've seen in 25 years. The average investment in senior leadership is hovering around \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year versus over \$7,000 in the mid 2000s.³³ First-line leadership budgets are down to \$200 to \$300 per year versus \$450 or higher in our prior studies (2019, 2017, 2015). There's no good reason for this drop; money spent here creates teamwork, trust, and performance.

Figure 5: HR Capabilities That Matter Most

Individual HR Capability	High-Growth Companies	Low-Growth Companies	Impact	Impact Relative to All Capabilities
Developing Leaders and Managers	3.4	2.3	Extremely High	151%
Change Management and Communications	3.4	2.4	Extremely High	119%
Applying the Principles of Organization Design	3.1	2.2	Extremely High	115%
Coaching Individuals for Performance	3.9	2.8	Very High	93%
Operating as a Senior HR Business Partner	3.2	2.4	Very High	91%
Understanding Global Cultural Issues	3.1	2.4	Very High	67%
Terminating Senior Executives	2.9	2.2	Very High	67%
Working with C-Level Executives	3.3	2.6	High	60%
Gaining Senior Leadership Buy-In for DEI Efforts	2.9	2.2	High	60%
Implementing Strategies for Contingent and Gig Workers	2.3	1.8	Significant	54%
Supporting Employee Mental, Emotional, and Family Needs	3.2	2.5	Significant	41%
Leading the HR Function (as CHRO or VP)	1.9	1.5	Significant	40%
Consulting with Business Leaders on Workforce Data	3.2	2.5	Significant	36%
Implementing Targeted Employee Communications	3.6	2.9	Significant	31%
Designing the HR Operating Model	2.4	2.1	Less Significant	17%

Note: The numbers are average capabilities of all surveyed HR professionals on a 1 (novice) to 5 (expert) scale.

Source: *The Josh Bersin Company, 2023*

³² [The Definitive Guide to Leadership Development](#), Josh Bersin and Janet Mertens/The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.

³³ Ibid.

2. Leadership development should focus at all levels.

As organizations become flatter and more people direct projects and initiatives, everyone needs to understand how to lead. This means leadership development should apply to everyone. Marriott, for example, credits their new top-to-bottom leadership program as the pivotal investment that drove their spectacular growth coming out of the pandemic (revenue grew almost 50% since 2021 and 22% in the last year³⁴).

Many studies also find that middle managers and supervisors are “the most burned out” of all employee groups. Gallup found “managers were more likely than nonmanagers to be disengaged, burnt out, and job-hunting. They were also more likely to feel like their organization doesn’t care about their wellbeing and to say that they’re struggling with work-life balance.³⁵” Surprisingly, only 22% of managers believe the company cares about their wellbeing. Your investments in leadership development can fix this.

3. Leadership development must cover the human issues at work.

Midlevel and senior leaders must understand that the execution model of leadership has been inverted. Historic models of leadership (which came from Jack Welch and others) were focused on leadership as a performance sport. CEOs like Elon Musk (Tesla, SpaceX, Twitter) and Ray Dalio (Bridgewater) run their companies as meritocracies, with an “up or out” mentality. In other words, if you’re not hitting your numbers, you’re part of the problem.

This approach, which has some roots in “Theory X” philosophies of management, limits long-term performance. While we want executives to focus on operations and strategy, there is now an equal or greater weight on human issues. This means we have to teach leaders how to clarify goals, create alignment, listen, and inspire people.

We need to support leaders in their personal journeys. Based on our many CHRO interviews, we recommend that you take time to teach leaders how to take time for their own wellbeing, mental health, and physical health.

³⁴ [Marriott International Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2022](#), Marriott.

³⁵ [“6 Workplace Trends Leaders Should Watch in 2024,”](#) Ben Wigert/Gallup, December 18, 2023.

Our Service Economy Mandates Strong, Human-Centered Leadership

One more point to consider: human-centered leadership is important for economic reasons. We now operate in a *service economy*.³⁶ In fact, every company is in the service business.

Today, more than 65% of global GDP is made up of services (up from 45% in 1955), and U.S. numbers are even higher. In the United States today 77% of GDP is services, and four out of five Americans work in direct service jobs.³⁷ Service jobs include those in retail, hospitality, transportation, healthcare, consulting, accounting, sales, customer service, and many others. Even software engineers are “service” roles as they serve the needs of customers. And this percentage keeps going up: healthcare, the largest employer segment in the U.S., is expected to comprise half the new jobs created in the next decade.³⁸

This means that every business is dependent on the skills, energy, and alignment of people. Leaders no longer can lead just with their brains; instead, they must lead with their hearts. See Figure 6 on the next page.

Leadership Development Tools

The tools and techniques for leadership development are changing, but slowly. While we see no great breakthroughs in this area, new offerings like online coaching (BetterUp, Coachhub, others), AI-assisted experts (Galileo is a leadership coach), and AI-powered assessments show promise. Heidrick & Struggles recently introduced their AI-powered Navigator Digital Assessment, which applies Eightfold AI to leadership and succession management and brings soft skills into the age of AI.

We are impressed with the success of VR and immersive learning and offerings like Strivr that help put supervisors and leaders into real-world simulations, including angry or violent employees or workplace safety violations. These kinds of simulations provide leaders with new insights and help them develop skills for a wide range of leadership issues. However, they still only play a small role in the market.

³⁶ [“Nine facts about the service sector in the United States,”](#) Michelle Barnes, Lauren Bauer, and Wendy Edlberg/Brookings, September 8, 2022.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ [“Employment Projections: 2022-2032 Summary,”](#) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 6, 2023.

Figure 6: Business-Centered vs. Human-Centered Leadership

BUSINESS-CENTERED LEADERSHIP	HUMAN-CENTERED LEADERSHIP
Mindsets and Attitudes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident, knowledgeable, decisive • Driven by personal growth, financial success, job title, and promotion • Highly aligned, coordinated, compliant, and linked • Context: structured, organized, stable, with clear goals and targets • See relationships as a means to an end, transactional in nature • Focus on the inside, managing the company • Focus on problem-solving, accountability, solutions • Focus on goals, rewards, incentives, and alignment, hitting the numbers • Focus on organizational structure, execution, and functional and business goals • Believe complexity is a problem and always tries to simplify • Believe energy, passion, and execution must take place every day • Worries about errors, mistakes, failures • Believe leaders must set a good example through strength, execution, and focus • Believe in scarcity of talent and that people will work hard if they're paid well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humble, empathetic, listener, growth mindset • Driven by purpose, mission, grit, and passion • Highly aligned, but loosely coupled—enabling growth and innovation anywhere • Context: Sees people, culture, and growth as enduring and critical for success • Sees relationships as essential to growth, innovation, wellbeing, customer success • Focus on the outside, listening to customers and the market • Focus on systems thinking, understanding why problems occur • Focus on inspiration, skills, empowerment, connections, culture • Focus on cross-functional teams, bringing people together and creating mobility and relationships • Tolerant of complexity, see patterns for growth in every customer and idea • Understand that people operate in cycles, focus on wellbeing/ sustainability • Create a sense of safety for new ideas • Understand that leaders need sustainability, rest, and resilience • Believe in abundance of talent and try to align peoples' needs to company goals

Source: *The Josh Bersin Company, 2021*

Leadership development must cover the human issues at work.



HR will get pragmatic about the skills-based organization.

While most HR leaders understand the idea of skills-based hiring, skills-based promotion and pay, skills-based career management, and skills-based workforce planning, we're kind of stuck in the weeds on the "how." This year we've entered a new phase.

Consider the history chart below (see Figure 7).

This whole space grew from decades-old ideas of "competency management," where we attached competencies to jobs. In the mid 2010s, vendors like Pathgather, Degreed, and EdCast started to attach "skills" to learning. At that point in time, a "skill" was a word (e.g., Java), used to tag a course, a search term, or a person's credentials. The technology was fairly simple, primarily using indexing and search technology to help people find content.

Soon after, recruiting vendors like Eightfold AI and then Beamery, SeekOut, and others realized we could infer and identify skills through employee profiles. Thus, these companies built advanced AI models to identify and predict skills of people, based on the many characteristics of their career.

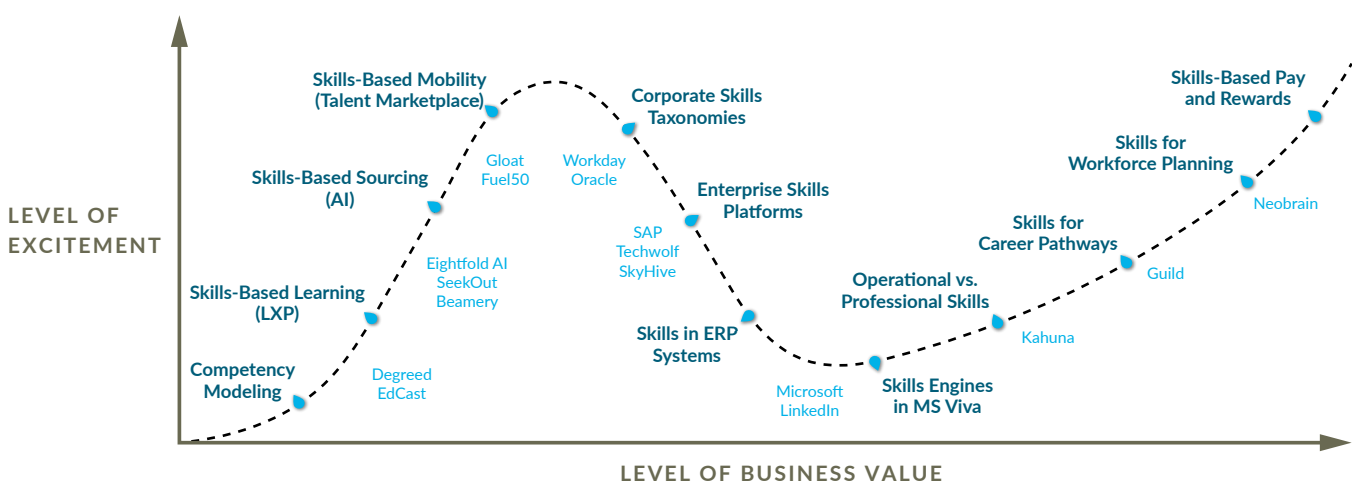
This technology, which worked well to source hard-to-find candidates, was suddenly used for internal mobility. Vendors like Gloat, Fuel50, and Hitch (now owned by ServiceNow) used this AI technology to help people find gigs, projects, and internal positions, radically improving the problem of hiring and career growth.

All these steps were positive, and in each case the vendor solutions added value, creating important innovations in HR and giving companies better learning experiences, stronger recruiting tools, and new ways to manage opportunities and careers. Many companies used this approach to build capability academies, very specific hiring strategies, and programs to identify high performers who may have been lost in the organization.

But suddenly, the industry took a move sideways. Someone started talking about building the "corporate skills taxonomy" and everyone decided to turn on the Workday Skills Cloud. Workday had promised that the skills cloud would solve every talent problem, but companies realized it wasn't as useful as they thought. Therefore, we entered a period of disappointment, where many companies became frustrated with their taxonomy projects and realized that the "ERP-centric" skills solution wasn't adding enough value.

Along comes a little more maturity, and suddenly the market starts to tip up again. Vendors like Lightcast and others

Figure 7: Evolution of Skills-Based HR



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2024

(Kahuna, Guild, Neobrain, TechWolf, SkyHive, and many more) built more “purposeful” products for this area, and companies realized that the “skills problem” was not an infrastructure project but rather a new way of thinking about talent processes. And now, entering 2024, companies are finding that the purpose-driven systems are the fuel and data sources for important new systems for the future.

In other words, as we tell our clients all the time, we’re starting to “fall in love with the problem” instead of “falling in love with the solution.” And the more pragmatic and problem-oriented we can be, the faster the infrastructure investments can pay off.

In 2024, we believe most companies will be using (or implementing) skills-based systems for learning, sourcing, talent mobility, and career development. If they focus on pragmatic problems they will start to see their skills taxonomy through the use of these systems and import skills data from industry groups or Lightcast. They will start looking at platforms like Microsoft Viva to surface these skills to users, and they will advance up the value curve again by using skills

technologies for operational jobs, advanced career pathways, workforce planning (tools like Neobrain are designed for this), and eventually skills-based pay.

The role of human capital management (HCM) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) for skills remains to be seen. As Workday describes their strategy, “all we ask is that companies put their skills data into Workday so the system can use it for various applications.” We think we’re at a point where “importing skills data” into the ERP provides value, but the real action (i.e., direct financial return) comes from these other applications.

The reason we see this as a journey toward pragmatic solutions is simple: without a clear “problem” to solve, a skills strategy spins out of control. We have seen many dozens of great skills solutions for high-value recruiting, operational quality improvements, sales and service performance, and assessing high-potential leaders. When we look at the project as an IT/HR tech project it falls short, so we’ve moved toward the world where pragmatic solutions exist.

We believe most companies will be using skills-based systems for learning, sourcing, talent mobility, and career development.



Recruitment will become more difficult than ever.

Recruitment is the most important thing we do. If companies can't hire the right people, no process of performance management or development will move the needle. So, talent acquisition leaders, recruitment specialists, and recruiters are critical roles in a company.

As you can read in our Post-Industrial Age research³⁹, it's going to get harder and harder to recruit over time. Not only is the workforce shrinking but the rate of change in skills and technologies is accelerating. And as we move to skills-based recruiting, more and more of the process will have to be based on AI-inference, culture fit, experiences, learning agility, and soft skills. Job history and academic credentials are still useful but no longer sufficient or even strategic in hiring.

While you're investing in AI to help with sourcing, selection, and hiring, the candidates are arming up, too. New AI tools like LazyApply and Simplify let people automatically apply to hundreds of jobs en masse. AI tools like Pyjama Jobs and Talentprise are providing skills-matching for candidates, leaving employers out of the process. So while you arm up with selection tools, the number of applicants per job is up by 15%, making it harder than ever to sort them out.⁴⁰

And to make things even more complex, the pace of R&D in recruiting technology has accelerated. We have AI systems that can infer the skills of people who have not necessarily held the job we are searching for; AI that can handle the candidate experience with a minimum of disruption and scheduling; new assessment technology that is making it easier and easier to assess skills in operational roles; and massive amounts of transparency in pay and data to decide what cities, what colleges, and locations to source people from.

This all adds up to the importance of modernizing your talent acquisition technology stack. New platforms like Eightfold AI,

Paradox, Phenom, iCIMS, Beamery, SeekOut, Avature, and others are replacing the ERP-embedded systems from Oracle, Workday, and SAP. While the HCM platforms have robust solutions, none has implemented big data AI solutions with talent intelligence yet. Therefore, in 2024, the shift to these important new platforms will continue. We advise companies to get a review of their talent acquisition strategy from leading consultants like AMS and others.

And it's getting even more complex. As AI-powered sourcing intelligence systems build market share, they all want to become talent management platforms. Most talent acquisition vendors now offer skills engines, internal mobility tools, and a variety of apps to help with job architecture, career pathing, and even performance management. Of all the AI market segments in HR, recruiting is the most advanced, and these companies may represent the future of talent management.

It is also important to invest in the fast-growing area of talent marketplace platforms. These systems (Gloat, Fuel50, Hitch, Neobrain, etc.) are becoming essential to talent acquisition functions as internal hiring and redeployment grows. LinkedIn and other companies have now merged the TA and L&D teams so that recruiters can become true talent advisors, helping hiring managers find internal and external candidates in an integrated way.

One more important point: our Talent Acquisition research reveals that the *recruiter* is *still* crucial. Even if you are hiring hourly workers whom you may consider to be high turnover, if recruiters don't talk to them, interview them, and assess them well, they will not stay or may not even show up. While recruiters have one of the most interesting and difficult jobs in HR, most of them get very little training and are often outsourced or laid off during downturns. We encourage you not to do this, because recruiters are some of the most savvy HR professionals in the market.

While the economy may slow down, hiring challenges will continue. Whether you outsource certain roles or not, in this age of AI, it's an important year to revisit your process, tech stack, and team. And don't forget to get advice from strategic advisors like AMS and other specialists to help with the roles, geographies, and technology issues you face.

³⁹ [Welcome to the Post-Industrial Age](#), Josh Bersin/The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.

⁴⁰ ["Armed With AI, Workers Are Applying To More Jobs. It's Upping The Competition,"](#) Emmy Lucas/Forbes, December 11, 2023.



Talent marketplaces, internal mobility, and career pathways will become essential to business growth.

In 2024, the stories of talent marketplaces and internal mobility tools will be everywhere. Why? Because this technology works, drives value, and deeply engages employees. We interviewed companies like Seagate, Mastercard, HSBC, Unilever, Providence, NY-Presbyterian, and hundreds of others, and they all tell us the same thing: our talent marketplace is unlocking the power of our own team to find new opportunities, gig projects, and project work.

The big vendors here are Gloat, Fuel50, Eightfold AI, and Hitch (ServiceNow), but this technology stack is becoming

available through HCM platforms as well. Seagate told us their marketplace has already saved them \$20 million to \$30 million in reduced contractor costs, paying for itself many times over.

Another important innovation is what we call “career pathways.” This idea means taking someone in a given job family or role and training them to move to an entirely new career. We do this by assessing an employee’s skills and finding them new, higher-paid jobs that leverage their existing skills and interests. In the healthcare industry, this is a huge initiative, enabling hourly assistants to embrace multiyear credential programs to become licensed clinicians. The leading solution provider in this area is Guild, which continues to provide credentialized education benefits for these strategic programs.⁴¹

In a year with unprecedented job changes due to AI and a continued tight labor market, these programs are even more important than ever.

In the healthcare industry, career pathways is a huge initiative, enabling hourly assistants to embrace multiyear credential programs to become licensed clinicians.

⁴¹ [Career Pathways: Building Tomorrow's Workforce Today](#), Josh Bersin and Nehal Nangia/The Josh Bersin Company, 2022.



Autonomous learning platforms will disrupt corporate L&D.

Corporate learning and development is a \$340 billion business, filled with tools, platforms, content, and assessments. Since the early days of the internet, training providers and L&D teams have been trying to make the process more personalized, relevant, interesting, and useful.

This year, we can see the future in AI-powered “autonomous learning platforms,” which is analogous to autonomous driving in a car. In this new world, AI-powered content systems (and platforms) will be able to generate content, personalize the experience, monitor and measure activity, and dynamically improve the experience over time (see Figure 8).

Vendors have been trying to reach this point for years. In the early days of e-learning, we used learning management systems (LMSs) to dynamically recommend courses and

curriculum based on roles. Then, as learning experience platforms (LXPs) were introduced, we offered users the ability to search for content and view learning by skills or popularity. In the last five years, tools like Axonify, Fuse, YouTube, and 360 Learning started to recommend pathways and specific content based on individual activity, pedagogy, and time. We are now seeing AI-generated content coming to all platforms, leading us to a fifth generation where advanced platforms like Docebo and Sana can not only generate content dynamically but also feed information back to the system, change the experience, and even change content on the fly.

Here are several examples of companies that have already launched this new approach to learning:

- Section, a company founded by Scott Galloway, the U.S. thought leader and NYU business school professor, has built an AI tutor (called ProfAI) that helps students learn, practice, and immediately apply what they’ve learned. ProfAI allows students to ask questions about course material, test their knowledge of what they’ve learned, and get feedback on completed assignments.

Figure 8: The Journey toward Autonomous Learning Platforms

Level 1 Role-Based	Level 2 Content-Based	Level 3 Adaptive Learning	Level 4 AI-Generated	Level 5 Fully Autonomous
User views courses and curricular based on job role, family, and experience level.	User views content based on topic, popularity, interest, and past consumption.	Content is dynamically assembled based on user’s activity and needs.	Content is generated by AI and dynamically published to users.	System (platform) watches consumption by learner and personalizes content and experience.
Saba, SumTotal	Degreed, EdCast, MS Viva, Workday, Cornerstone	Axonify, Fuse Universal, YouTube, 360 Learning	Arist, Docebo, Sana, Absorb, WorkRamp, LearnUpon	Docebo, Sana
Totally manual	Statistical recommendations	Statistics, history, and pedagogic rules (spaced learning)	Content generated by designer, user, documents, assets	System learns from behavior, dynamically updates content and experience

Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2024

- Uplimit, an early-stage company developed by some of the founders of Coursera, has also built an AI-based tutor that supports their courses in machine learning and AI engineering.
- Docebo Shape is an AI-based education tool that lets companies build dynamic content that can provide adaptive learning at scale.
- Arist, a company we partner with on our Academy, can take technical or other documentation and create mobile-ready microlearning programs in minutes, with almost no interaction from a designer.

Additionally, Sana, the company we partner with for Galileo, has launched a whole learning platform (including LMS) that offers this service. (This, by the way, is our vision for Galileo. HR professionals should be able to ask questions, get personalized answers, and then learn more about a topic through our Academy in a single workflow experience. We think of it as the Bloomberg Terminal for HR.)

We are now seeing AI-generated platforms not only generate content dynamically but also feed information back to the system and change content on the fly when necessary.



Pay equity and new models of performance management will go mainstream.

We are currently navigating a period of rapid inflation, and although it is not entirely behind us, employees have adapted to the expectation of increasing prices, costs, and wages. The average wage and salary increase in 2023 was around 4.6%, marking it as one of the highest increases in recent years,⁴² following a 5.3% increase in 2022.⁴³ We anticipate these upward trends will persist.

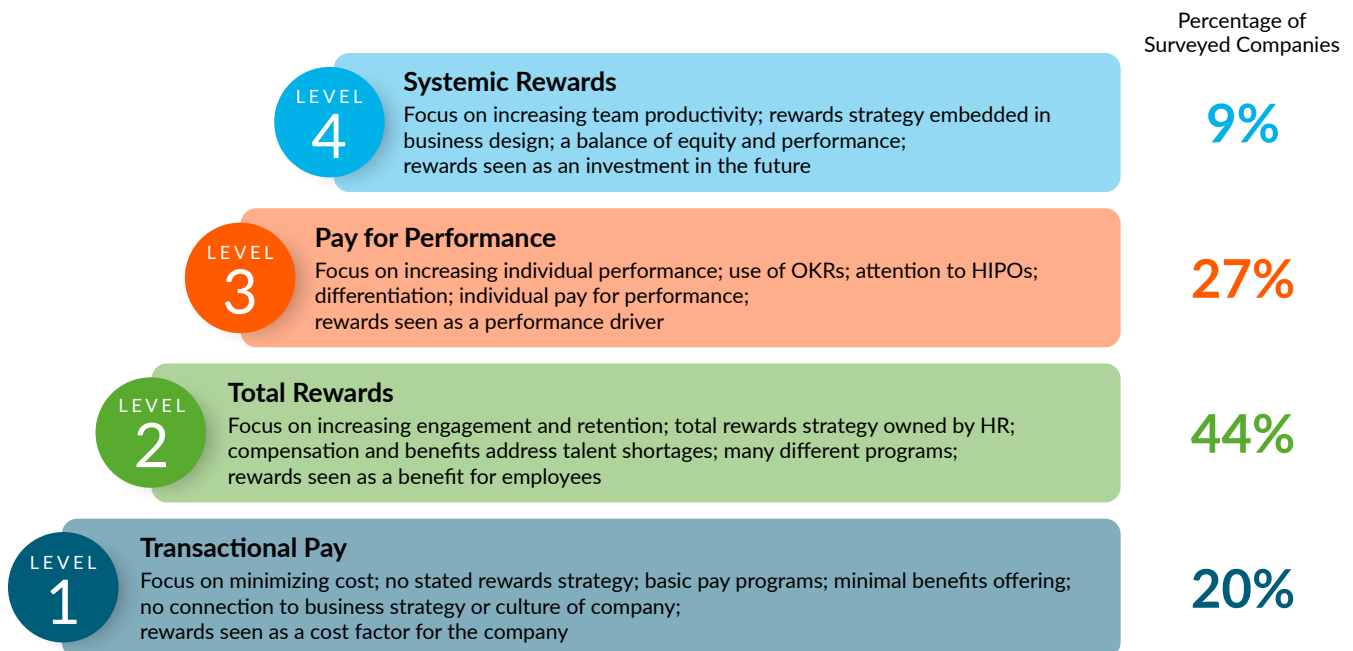
However, the complexity of the situation extends beyond the cost of living. We are also competing for a scarcity of workers. In 2023, job-switchers experienced almost double the wage increase compared to existing employees, prompting staff to

explore other opportunities. Among lower-wage workers (with an average pay of \$58,500), November 2023 data from ADP shows a 5.6% increase for job-stayers and an 8.3% increase for job-switchers.⁴⁴ This indicates that employers in retail, hospitality, transportation, healthcare, and other lower-wage sectors should pay attention. Embracing this new reality is essential.

Consider the impact on your company when people start leaving for higher-paying opportunities elsewhere. Are you prepared to pay, reward, and motivate everyone to stay? A holistic approach to rewards is now crucial to navigate these challenges effectively.

In *The Definitive Guide to Pay and Rewards*, we explain an approach called “systemic rewards,” which moves beyond total rewards and brings together the concepts of pay equity, pay for performance, total rewards, and team productivity.⁴⁵ It’s rooted in the idea that pay bands are not sufficient. As the research points out, *only 9% of surveyed companies* are at this point of maturity (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: The Rewards Maturity Model



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2023

42 [Employment Cost Index](#), News Release/U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, October 31, 2023.

43 [National Average Wage Index](#), Social Security.

44 [Pay growth continued its slowdown in November](#), ADP Pay Insights, November 2023.

45 [The Definitive Guide to Pay and Benefits: Systemic Rewards](#), Josh Bersin and Kathi Enderes, PhD/ The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.

The reason for the immaturity is that companies evolve their pay programs over time. About two-thirds of businesses focus on a fair total rewards package by pay band or job level. These strategies date back to the 1920s when companies categorized jobs as “management” or “labor,” creating dozens of job levels. As an employee progressed, their pay band increased, enabling their annual raise to increase if they performed well.

While pay for performance makes perfect sense, in most companies it’s filled with discretionary practices. Managers propose raises, calibration meetings help socialize pay increases, and then the compensation team administers pay adjustments. While this tends to work in pockets, it sets in place long-term inequities that grow over time.

Advanced companies treat pay differently. They have more standard pay levels and increases by role and level (to prevent long-term bias), and pay for performance in bonuses, stock

options, or other rewards. Using various statistical tools, they ensure pay variations are not correlated to gender, race, and other nonperformance-related characteristics. It’s important to clarify that pay equity does not imply identical pay for all; rather, it acknowledges the fairness in compensating high performers generously. As highlighted in “The Myth of The Bell Curve,⁴⁶” top performers may rightfully receive significantly higher rewards than the average.

The bottom line is this: 2024 will be a year of inflationary pressures amid a decelerating economy. To navigate this landscape, you should conduct at least one comprehensive pay equity audit, a process that identifies potential issues and helps address any disparities. Remember that employees now openly share compensation information, making any inequities widely well known. For a more in-depth understanding of pay equity, read our Definitive Guide.⁴⁷

Pay equity does not imply identical pay for all; rather, it acknowledges the fairness in compensating high performers generously.

46 [“The Myth Of The Bell Curve: Look For The Hyper-Performers,”](#) Josh Bersin/Forbes, February 19, 2014.

47 [The Definitive Guide to Pay Equity: Balanced Pay Strategies,](#) Josh Bersin and Kathi Enderes, PhD/The Josh Bersin Company, 2023.



The chief diversity officer role will get a major overhaul.

Diversity programs are about to get a new life. Traditionally viewed as compliance, regulatory, and training initiatives within HR, the landscape has shifted dramatically. Following tragic events such as the George Floyd incident as well as the Black Lives Matter movement, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has risen to the C-suite agenda. Today, amid the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and various global tensions, companies grapple with diversity and inclusion (D&I) issues from multiple angles. In fact, the scope of D&I has broadened considerably, encompassing every characteristic of individuals within a company—spanning age, gender, race, nationality, cognitive abilities, education, and more. Notably, more than three-quarters of S&P 500 companies had appointed chief diversity officers (CDOs) by 2022.⁴⁸

However, amid these cultural debates, a right wing backlash has emerged in several countries. The U.S. Supreme Court's 2023 ruling against affirmative action in colleges has paved the way for legal challenges against firms implementing categorically diverse programs for hiring or promotion. Even influential figures like Elon Musk have voiced opposition, with Musk famously stating, "DEI must DIE."

The ensuing lawsuits and political debates have cast a chilling effect on broad diversity initiatives, forcing DEI leaders to exercise caution. This shift is reflected in the

declining average tenure of a CDO to less than two years, a 19% decrease in job postings, and a notable 60% of these executives changing roles.⁴⁹

Our discussions with several DEI leaders all told a similar story: the work they do is more important than ever, but the CEO and management team want to slow down and integrate it into the business. We've now seen "chief operations and inclusion officers" and other similar roles start to appear.

In some ways this is a good thing. Rather than build big DEI teams in HR, companies are better off integrating DEI into every operational unit. As we learned in our DEI research,⁵⁰ the most successful DEI initiatives are business-driven and are not created to drive representation. Instead, they are designed to promote inclusion for business reasons: improving the candidate pipeline, deepening the leadership bench, developing closer relationships with a diverse customer base, and diversifying the supply chain. When framed from these perspectives and aligned with the business, the DEI strategy makes total business sense. Consider the declining role of chief digital officer. Everyone is now responsible for digital strategies so these C-level roles are disappearing. To the same point, every company has a business reason to be more inclusive, so this strategy may no longer belong solely in HR.⁵¹

There are many business reasons to be diverse and inclusive: it expands your hiring pool, grows the leadership pipeline, increases the strength of your supply chain, and helps you to attract and serve a more diverse customer base. Every company must stay vigilant about these issues. Let's just make sure the DEI team is pragmatic, business-oriented, and constantly relevant with the political and social issues at play.

48 ["The Rise and Fall of the Chief Diversity Officer,"](#) Te-Ping Chen and Lauren Weber/*The Wall Street Journal*, July 21, 2023.

49 ["The mass exodus of tech's DEI leaders is now underway,"](#) Pavithra Mohan/*Fast Company*, July 12, 2023.

50 ["Elevating Equity: The Real Story of Diversity and Inclusion,"](#) Josh Bersin and Kathi Enderes, PhD/*The Josh Bersin Company*, 2021.

51 ["Are Diversity And Inclusion Programs Going Away?"](#) Josh Bersin/*joshbersin.com*, January 12, 2024.



The HR operating model will be reimagined via systemic HR™.

The HR organization itself is overdue for change. Over the last decade, HR issues have become enormously complex, compelling the HR function and profession to expand. Once viewed as a set of specialty roles, many dedicated to compliance and administration, HR is now a highly valued, multidisciplinary, consultative profession.

Here are a few startling statistics, all from our Systemic HR research and LinkedIn:

- In the last five years, the number of “skills” requested in HR has grown by 33% to more than 400
- In the last five years, the number of “roles” in HR has grown by 25% to 250
- The HR profession has 92 independent capabilities in our global capability model
- New technologies like data science, analytics, and AI now define HR’s success

Unfortunately our operating models and professional development programs have not kept up. Consider the following data from our study (see Figure 10).

It’s time for a new approach: systemic HR.

What Is Systemic HR?

Systemic HR is the evolved model of the function, where we move from disparate specialty groups to integrated service delivery, then to products and offerings, and finally to integrated consulting and an agile operating model.

Why is this important? The profession follows trends in business and the economy, and that’s where the world is going. Here’s some historic context (see Figure 11 on the next page).

In the 1800s and early 1900s, companies were fairly simple, often run by a few owners, so HR took responsibility for hiring, payroll, benefits, and labor relations. In the 1920s, as factories and automation emerged, HR adapted to focus on employee training, industrial engineering, and psychology. As the industrial business models grew and companies became conglomerates (GE, ITT, others), in the 1950s and 1960s, HR focused on organizational hierarchies, succession, goal-setting systems, and functional specialization. This led to the 1970s and 1980s, when we modeled our HR teams around GE or American Express, building corporate universities and developing strategic leadership and more robust benefits and career programs.

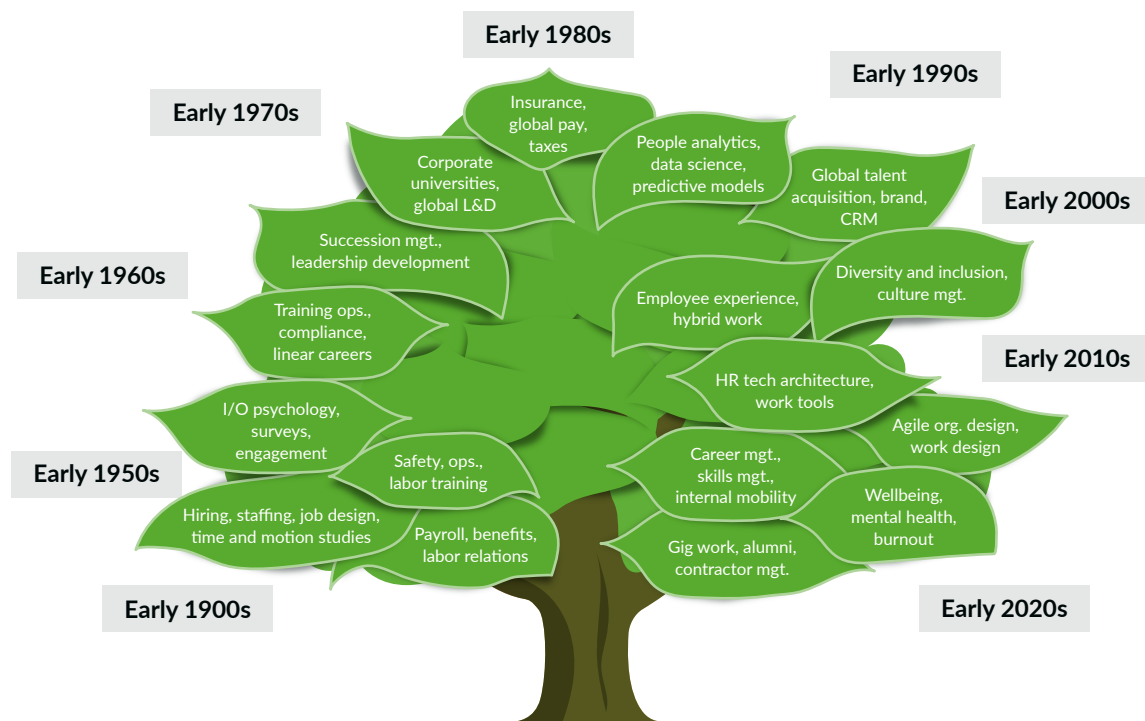
In the 1990s, driven by the digital revolution, we entered a war for talent, focusing on integrated talent management,

Figure 10: The Depth of the Problem in HR

HR Skills and Professional Development	Only 7% have formal, professional development for the HR teams	Only 8% have career paths defined for HR professionals	Only 8% rotate HR staff across HR and only 3% outside of HR
HR Operating Model and Solutions	Only 17% have a process to prioritize resources to problems	Only 14% have solution owners for offerings and products	Only 18% have solution centers to align COEs to solve problems
HR Solution Design Capabilities	Only 11% practice design thinking to build and deploy solutions	Only 17% measure user satisfaction for HR solutions	Only 11% have long-term road maps for HR solutions
HR Business Partners	Only 24% partner with business leaders on solution design	Only 12% train HR business partners on offerings and issues	Only 15% believe HRBPs can redesign work or organizations
HR Tech and Data Capabilities	Only 17% have high-quality employee data and talent info	Only 18% believe HR tech is focused on employee experience	Only 10% have full 2- to 3-year roadmaps for all areas of HR tech

Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2023

Figure 11: The History of the HR Profession



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2023

strategic talent acquisition, employee retention, and the need to deal with diversity, inclusion, and employee experience.

Today, living in the shadow of the pandemic, we're dealing with employee burnout, management overload, massive skills challenges, and a flattened organization empowered by AI, constrained by labor shortages and the need to drive productivity in a world of too much technology.

How does HR deal with these never-ending challenges? It's not by creating dozens of new centers of excellence. Rather we need to build cross-functional solution teams, sometimes organized around problems, sometimes organized around employee groups. This demands a more agile HR function, cross-trained professionals, and a strong skills set in business and organizational consulting.

Our Systemic HR™ Initiative, which we invite you to join, was titled to reinforce the idea that today HR is not a set of centers of excellence or service centers to answer employee questions. We now have to think of HR as an integrated set of services, offerings, and capabilities to help leaders, managers, and employees perform. So the tree, which grows new branches every year, has to operate and function like a single integrated unit.

In *The Hidden Life Of Trees*, author Peter Wohlleben describes how trees are integrated, vibrant, communicating beings. Each leaf, branch, and root is always growing, listening, and communicating with its peers and family members. This, in a sense, is what we want HR organizations to do.

Learn more about systemic HR [here](#).



Building HR skills and capabilities will become top priority.

Companies cannot expect to stay ahead of these pressing human capital issues without a highly skilled HR team. In 2019, we launched our Global HR Capability Project, which details 92 different business capabilities in HR. Each of these complex skillsets is important in different domains, and since then the list has expanded.

Today we have more than 98 such capabilities, each important in its own right. (You can assess your skills and your team's

skills in the Josh Bersin Academy or as part of our corporate membership). Today more than 11,000 professionals have joined, so you can see where you stack up by tenure, level, geography, and company size.⁵² See Figure 12.

In 2023, as part of the Systemic HR™ Initiative, we asked LinkedIn to look at 7.5 million HR roles around the world and work with us to study trending HR job titles, skills, and careers. Here's what we found: in the last five years, the number of HR roles has *increased by 25%* (250+ roles) and the number of in-depth *skills has grown by 33%* (400+ skills). The new roles are more strategic, more cross-functional, and more complex (see Figure 13 on the next page).

This implies that HR and business leaders are being asked to step up their game. Not only do you have to understand

Figure 12: The HR Capabilities Framework

Rewards & Recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay and recognition systems Recognition vendors/tools Reward strategies 	Labor Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor/union relationships Harassment and discrimination Senior-level terminations 	Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee communications Crisis communications 	HR Solution Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design thinking Agile methods User experience Product management 	Change & Transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change management Mergers and acquisitions Layoffs and divestiture
Compensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation models Compensation benchmarking Internal pay equity Executive compensation Total rewards strategy 	Leadership Succession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership models Identifying potential leaders Developing early leaders Developing senior leaders Succession management Board management 	Org Design and Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing organizational culture Global cultural issues Organization design High-performance organizations 	HR Tech, Service Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core HR systems Employee portals Chatbot design and implement AI architecture Prompt engineering Case management Service center design 	Working w/Sr. Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulting with C-level executives Selecting and assessing senior leaders Leadership development Board governance
Benefits & Wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing benefits programs Employee wellbeing programs CSR and volunteer programs 	Learning & Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L&D needs assessment Competency models Video, other content design L&D tools and technology Leading L&D function 	Employee Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring engagement Acting on survey results Survey vendors and tools Employee experience strategy Digital employee experience 	Facilities & Workspace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable workspaces Moving to new facilities Health and safety Flexible workspace policies 	Leadership of HR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading HR Leading functional areas within HR Senior business partnership HR operating models
Talent Acquisition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment brand Mobile and social media Sourcing Recruiting AI Job descriptions Onboarding Interviewing Recruitment tools Talent acquisition leadership 	Performance & Career <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance management design Engaging leaders in development Career progression models Global mobility programs Performance management tools 	People Analytics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of people data Statistical analysis Using analysis tools Data visualization Data quality Data privacy and ethics Network analysis (ONA) Text analysis (NLP) AI implementation 	Diversity & Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D&I strategy D&I management Improving workforce representation Driving cultural D&I improvements Board diversity 	Workforce Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global economic trends Budgeting Sales and marketing Customer support Manufacturing and operations Talent intelligence

Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2024

52 "Accelerating HR Capabilities," Josh Bersin/joshbersin.com.

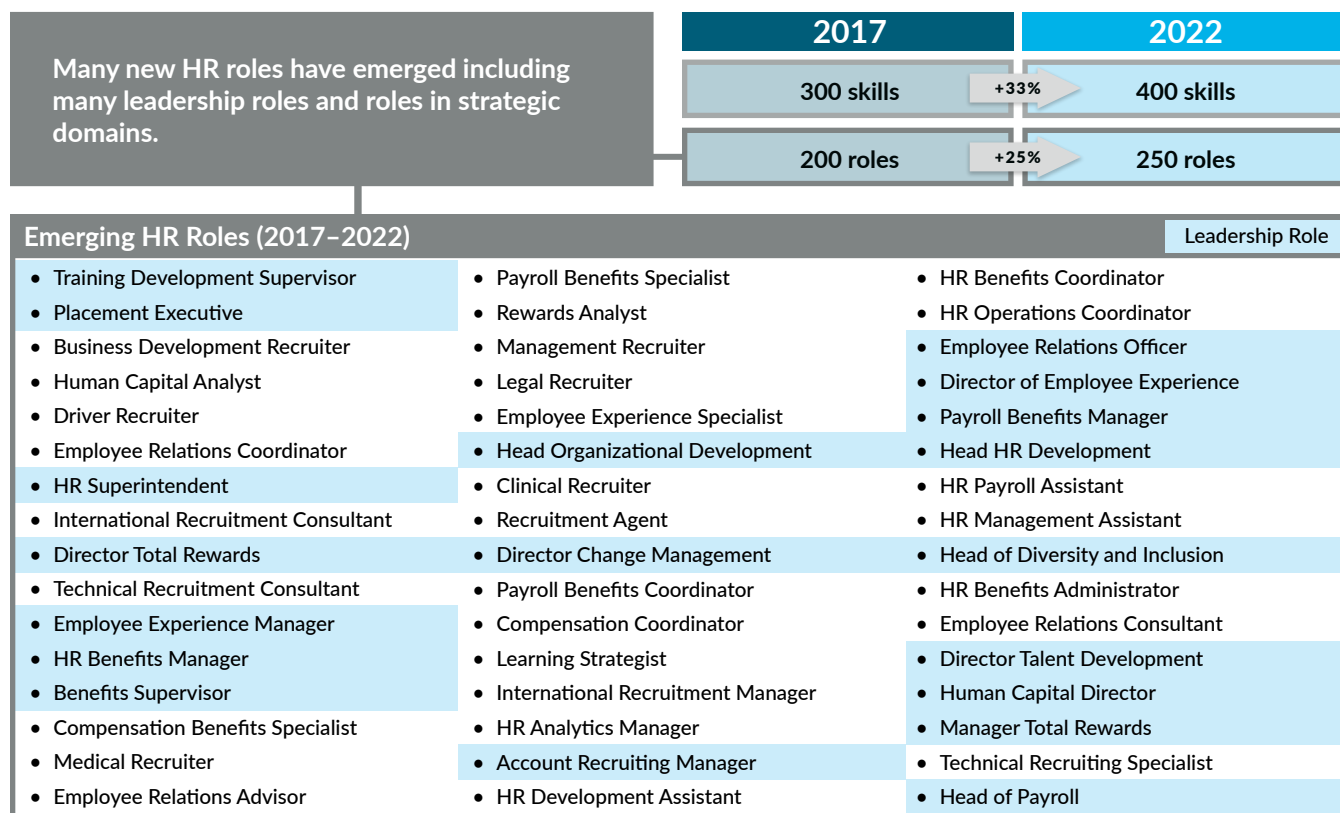
the basics of hiring, pay, performance management, and promotion but now also need to understand hybrid work, wellbeing, organization design, and the use of AI. How? Just as most companies have development academies for engineers, salespeople, management, and other roles, we need to also invest time and money into capability academies for HR, as the Josh Bersin Academy is designed to do.

In 2024, you should consider the following:

- The average spending on L&D across all roles is around \$1,500 per person per year. Allocate this sum to HR as well.
- Ask your HR team to rotate across disciplines: move recruiters into L&D and vice versa.

- Start a proactive HR career program that encourages HR professionals to move into the business, specialist roles, and business partner roles.
- Enroll your HR team in the company's leadership development and industry education.
- Strongly suggest every HR professional attend at least one external conference in their domain.
- Partner with another peer organization to compare your HR strategic plans and challenges.
- Call us to do a review of the systemic HR model with your leadership team.
- Bring your leadership team to our Irresistible conference in May.

Figure 13: HR Skills and Roles (2017–2022)



Source: LinkedIn Thought Leadership Insights and The Josh Bersin Company, 2023



Developing the HR leadership team will be critical to business success.

One concluding message: 2024 is the time to invest in the HR leadership team. This year you're going to be dealing with paradigm-shattering changes: the challenging labor market, AI disrupting every role, and a likely slowdown in the economy. And the ongoing projects to build a flatter organization, modernize recruiting, implement skills technology, revisit pay and rewards, and simplify the employee experience will continue.

These challenges, coupled with your company's focus on productivity and automation, will impel you to implement many aspects of systemic HR. And this means the HR leadership team (talent and learning, recruiting, operations, technology, business partners, labor relations, DEI, etc.) will need to discuss priorities.

A global HR function is dauntingly complex. Large companies have global issues, local issues, and myriad technology, regulatory, and business units to consider. In 2024, we urge you to regularly bring your leadership team together and

map out a multiyear roadmap for top-priority programs. These will include topics like:

- How to leverage AI for employee experience and HR operations
- How to improve our recruitment, retention, and internal mobility and career strategy
- How we want to address pay equity, performance management, and rewards
- What to do about the long-term scarcity of labor
- Model for contingent work, gig work, and alternative work arrangements
- Hybrid work strategy and continued efforts to improve wellbeing and inclusion
- What to do next about DEI around the world, evaluate where you are
- Continued efforts to simplify and modernize HR tech stack and implement talent intelligence
- Plans to modernize and AI-enable our L&D function and TA function
- Upskill and further professionalize our HR team around the world
- Upgrading and redefining the role of business partners
- Integrating, merging, or coordinating COEs
- Implementing the systemic HR model

There is also the issue of developing the HR team. Who are your high potentials? What job rotations and external assignments should you consider? Is it time to implement an HR Academy? What other professional development opportunities should you offer to HR?

2024 Is a Time to Be Bold

You have to lean in to new ideas. The best HR organizations are always experimenting: new technologies, new operating models, and refreshed approaches to performance management, development, assessment, and hybrid work. While you could wait for every new idea to be vetted and well understood, you take the risk that your employees (and HR team) drift to another company where “life is just better.” And, only by experimenting do you learn what’s best for your organization.

All of today’s big ideas, whether they are talent marketplaces, talent intelligence platforms, four-day weeks, or highly flexible work, all came from pioneering HR leaders who knew, in their heart, that these new strategies could play out. They took a little risk, tried something new, and let their teams iterate, learn, and adapt these programs until they succeeded.

By pushing your HR function to innovate and adapt you create muscle in the organization to bring new solutions to your company. Some new ideas will come from us, some will come from vendors, but most will come from your own team. When an HR manager or recruiter complains about something going on in HR, you can bet the employees have been talking about it for many months. Consider your HR team a “problem-seeking” group, and let them cross boundaries, iterate, and experiment.

You also play a vital role in partnership with your CEO and senior management. If you build a strong team of HR operators, you’ll have the time and freedom to listen to their needs and adapt the HR investments toward their issues.

Great HR leaders are just as bold as they are good listeners. They spend their time learning and listening, then bring the team together to define a bold agenda. Most of the things in this report are both “interesting” and “bold” at the same time. We encourage you to remember this as you make decisions and evolve this coming year.

Finally, don’t let the AI craze get to you. As you and your team become familiar with this new set of technologies, it’s important to focus on business problems, not technology solutions. For example, a vendor product may look amazing and productive, but make sure it fits the agenda for the growth and problem areas you want to solve.

Conclusion

We are excited about the upcoming year and anticipate witnessing remarkable, real-world applications from AI. The global economy is expected to remain robust, despite challenges in the labor market. And investments in employees and strategic HR programs are on the rise.

However, regardless of what we say in this report, *unpredictable* events will occur, as evidenced by past occurrences such as the 2008 financial crisis, the pandemic, or even the emergence of AI. This underscores the importance of being “architected for change.”

We are here to help you. Through the Josh Bersin Academy, Galileo, our corporate membership, the Big Reset Program, our Irresistible Conference, and the Systemic HR Initiative, you can work with us in many valuable ways. I hope to meet each one of you this year (hopefully at Irresistible in May) and look forward to an exciting year ahead.

Imperatives for 2024: Planning Checklist

As you plan for this important year, we encourage you to look at these checklist items. We will work with your teams directly on any or all of these areas. The Josh Bersin Academy has resources and in-depth courses to help with all these topics, and Galileo has hundreds of resources to help team members become intimately familiar with these strategies, case studies, benchmarks, and vendors.

Figure 14: 2024 Planning Checklist

Prediction	Imperatives	Guiding Questions
1. AI will change every part of HR—and every role in the company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategy for AI, including applications in talent acquisition, talent intelligence, performance and talent management, HR service delivery, and internal HR professional development. Consider platforms like Galileo as tools to help all HR team members become comfortable with AI. Work with IT to look at AI projects throughout the company so you can help with job redesign, skills development, and changes in pay models. Consider building a corporate AI capability academy for the entire company. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who owns the AI strategy for various parts of the company? Who in IT can you work with on data issues, vendor evaluation, and tools? Which of your HR priorities feels most urgent for an AI solution? How will you compare experiences among your different HR teams?
2. AI will transform the HR tech stack.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit your HR tech stack to ensure you have a two- to three-year roadmap. Ask each of your vendors to give you a briefing on their AI strategy and look at how these vary or conflict with your own long-term needs. Talk with us about which vendors are the trailblazers in AI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which are the most critical areas of your tech stack to modernize? Do you have a governance model including local business leaders, HR leaders, and IT to evolve the roadmap? Are you possibly expecting too much from your HCM/ERP? Among your vendor partners, which do you trust the most and which can you lean into for their strategies?
3. Employee experience will be redefined—employees now in charge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an integrated strategy for employee experience, well beyond surveys and feedback. Embark on a pay-equity audit. Work with IT on productivity tools integration. Make sure you have an employee activation strategy to embrace employee ideas for growth in the year ahead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the top issues you face in engagement, retention, and turnover? How mature is the employee survey strategy, and can you build a COE to move to a more activated model? Are EX issues clearly a part of your leadership culture and strategy?
4. Union and employee activism will increase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's time to consider the role of unions and employee activism in your company. Move beyond engagement and retention and try to understand where employees are most at risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a clear strategy to evolve the work experience, pay, and benefits of deskless workers? Is it time to evaluate more flexibility, a four-day week, advanced childcare, or other benefits? How well do you understand the detailed operational work issues on the minds of labor leaders? Can you reassure your workforce that AI will be to their benefit?
5. Companies will accept and adopt hybrid work models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure your hybrid work policies, real estate plans, and deskless employee offerings are clear, updated, and flexible. Evaluate your own company's employment brand relative to flexibility, hybrid work, belonging, and fair pay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your hybrid policy relevant to your employees' desires? Do you have a clear perspective on productivity, regardless of work modality? How are contract and contingent workers managed, and is it time to build a "total workforce" model for recruiting, comms, and training?

Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2024

Figure 14: 2024 Planning Checklist (continued)

Prediction	Imperatives	Guiding Questions
6. Human-centered leadership will take center stage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's time to refresh and relook at your leadership model. Ensure your leadership model adequately reflects your employees' productivity, wellbeing, growth, and development needs. Consider what "human-centered" means in the context of your company's business and market strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your leadership development programs adequately funded? Has your leadership model been updated? Are you focusing on first-line and midlevel leaders? Do you have a way for leaders to collaborate with each other? Are senior leaders involved? What is your "human-centered" leadership model?
7. HR will get pragmatic about the skills-based organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get pragmatic and clear about the top use cases and solution areas for skills. Rather than focus on skills architecture and technology, can you finish 2024 with a few huge wins with skills-based hiring, skills-based learning, and skills-based pay? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you clear on the most important use cases for your various skills strategies? Is there a non-HR governance process for evolution of your skills models? What is the business ROI of the skills projects you're implementing, and can you refocus efforts in those areas? How are you evaluating leadership and management effectiveness?
8. Recruiting will become more difficult than ever.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a roadmap to modernize your talent acquisition process, including a focus on high volume, high value, and the Four R Framework™. Look at your tech stack and see how it moves you toward talent intelligence, internal mobility, and a simplified candidate experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What areas of your TA stack are unproductive? Are you adequately training recruiters and getting them involved in talent strategies? What is your sourcing intelligence and talent intelligence strategy? What is your tool set or strategy for skills-based assessment and skills-based hiring?
9. Talent marketplaces, internal mobility, and career pathways will become essential to business growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly decide your strategy for internal mobility, talent marketplace, and career pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should you focus on critical roles and transformation areas or open the market up to gig work, job-sharing, and more? Where should you start and how will you measure success?
10. Autonomous learning platforms will disrupt corporate L&D.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk with the company's knowledge management team to decide how AI can bring knowledge management and L&D together. Experiment with all the new tools entering the market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have an adequate focus on critical capability academies, generative AI tools, and collaborative learning? What is the state of your L&D and LXP/LMS architecture? Is it time to refresh the systems environment to build a more modern solution? Have you asked L&D teams to experiment with gen AI tools for content, knowledge management, and employee assistance? What are other companies in your industry doing in these areas?

Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2024

Figure 14: 2024 Planning Checklist (continued)

Prediction	Imperatives	Guiding Questions
11. Pay equity and new models of performance management will go mainstream.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit your performance process. Given the new focus on pay equity, skills-based work, internal mobility, and employee experience, make sure you are rewarding the right things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are projects, teams, and culture reflected in the process? How can you make the process simpler and more transparent? Is this process well represented in your leadership development programs?
12. The chief diversity officer role will get a major overhaul.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEI programs are under attack from many sources. Despite this threat, the focus remains as important as ever. This year it's important to put a business context into DEI and decide how to institutionalize your strategy into the company's operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should you continue to focus on HR-driven programs, or should these programs be fully delegated into the business? What employee programs are working, and which are creating problems? Are your top leaders and employees happy with your progress and if not, why not?
13. The HR operating model will be reimaged via systemic HR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your HR strategy and measurement approach and align to the business strategy. Evaluate where you are on the maturity journey toward systemic HR. Determine how to align the HR work against the most important business problems. Define new HRBP roles and responsibilities. Identify opportunities to break down COE silos and work across the HR organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where does your HR function fit in evolving toward systemic HR, and what steps can you take to improve cross-functional problem-solving, product and offering management, and agile teamwork within HR? How does this impact the role of recruiters, L&D teams, HR business partners, and other specialists?
14. Building HR skills and capabilities will become top priority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in the professional development of your HR team. Implement your own HR academy, invest in research and external events, and make sure all your HR professionals have development plans, job rotations, and other external exposure to AI's impact on their role and the future issues in the workforce, economy, and culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have an academy like the JBA? Is there a high-potential and succession process for HR leaders? Are you actively promoting job rotation and developmental assignment? How well does your HR team stack up in the Global HR Capability Project? How can you enhance your HR employment brand?
15. Developing the HR leadership team will be critical to business success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HR leadership team will change, grow, and become more integrated in 2024. It's important to bring the team together and use IT to assist with priorities, feedback, and key cross-company strategies (including AI). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your HR team clear on what they know, don't know, and want to know about HR in 2024? Are you bringing your team together regularly and attending conferences as a group? How do you share wins/losses and project learnings among team leaders?

Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2024

About the Author



Josh Bersin

Josh founded Bersin & Associates in 2001 to provide research and advisory services focused on corporate learning. He expanded the company's coverage to encompass HR, talent management, talent acquisition, and leadership and became a recognized expert in the talent market. Josh sold the company to Deloitte in 2012 and was a partner in Bersin by Deloitte up until 2018.

In 2019, Josh founded the Josh Bersin Academy, a professional development academy that has become the “home for HR.” In 2020, he put together a team of analysts and advisors who are now working with him to support and guide HR organizations from around the world under the umbrella of The Josh Bersin Company. He is frequently featured in publications such as *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *HR Executive*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *CLO Magazine*. He is a popular blogger and has more than 800,000 followers on LinkedIn.

The Josh Bersin Company Membership

The Josh Bersin Company provides a wide range of research and advisory services to help HR leaders and professionals tackle the ever-evolving challenges and needs of today's workforce. We cover all topics in HR, talent, and L&D. The Josh Bersin Academy—built on our research and powered by Nomadic Learning—helps HR practitioners grow key foundational skills. Our corporate membership program provides HR teams and senior leaders with the skills, strategies, and insights to build cutting-edge HR and people strategies through a combination of research, assessments, professional development, exclusive events, and community. In 2022, The Josh Bersin Company introduced the Global Workforce Intelligence (GWI) Project to guide market-leading businesses and their leaders through the challenges of industry convergence while remaining future-focused.

For more details, contact us at info@bersinpartners.com.

Additional Resources

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