

smartCHRO

EMEA Edition | Brought to you by Workday | Vol. 2

Find out how skills are changing in the age of AI



Also in this issue:

How people data empowers today's CHRO

How AI will transform the HR landscape

Leadership lessons from the Premier League

Editor's comment

Find out how skills are changing in the age of AI in our second smartCHRO magazine.

Welcome to the latest edition of smartCHRO magazine, where we provide you with insights from people leaders across the EMEA region.

In this edition, through conversations with Workday customers, partners and external thought leaders, we'll be exploring skills in the age of AI, and how capabilities such as data analytics, workforce risk management and coaching are becoming more important as CHROs and their teams look to add value to their organisations.

David Green, Director at Insight222, discusses how people data and improved data literacy can help CHROs and their teams to transform and grow their organisations.

We also speak to industry analysts, Workday partners and people leaders from Workday customers Mondelēz International and Sanofi about what the future holds for the HR function – and how CHROs can realise AI's transformative potential.

Elsewhere, David Wilson, Founder and CEO of the Fosway Group, shares his thoughts on how the HR function can prove its strategic value by enabling the business to be more responsive.

Agnès Le Guern, HR Transformation Project Director at Air Liquide, Volker Schrank, Senior Director of HR Technology and Employee Experience at Mondelēz International, and Julie Muggli, Head of Talent (HR) Operations, Technology and Analytics at On, share how they're using automation to make their organisations more efficient while also fostering a culture of learning.

Meanwhile, we're delighted to feature insights and thought leadership from Workday partner PwC on why retaining and upskilling existing employees could be the key to overcoming the digital skills crisis.

And finally, footballer-turned-psychologist Paul McVeigh shares what CHROs can learn about workplace culture from the Premier League.

We hope this issue of smartCHRO gives you the confidence to turn risk into opportunity and that it inspires all of you to become the people leader your organisation needs.



Angelique De Vries - Schipperijn
President, EMEA, Workday

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How people data empowers today's CHRO

There's no denying that the HR function looks very different today than it did 10 – or even five – years ago. Gone are the days of HR acting simply as a support function; today's CHRO is a strategic partner working alongside other C-suite leaders to shape the way organisations do business.





By **Patrick Evenden**,
EMEA Staff Writer

“I don’t think there’s ever been a more exciting time to work in HR,” says David Green, Director at Insight222 and co-author of the book ‘Excellence in People Analytics’. “HR is on a journey from being a support function in the business to being a strategic partner.”

The role of the CHRO will continue to evolve as drivers such as talent shortages and AI alter the way we work. According to the latest Future of Jobs report from the World Economic Forum, 23 percent of jobs will materially change over the next five years.

To evolve into genuine strategic partners, CHROs need to surface insights that inform both people practices and business operations decision-making – and they need the power of people data analytics to help them.

Strengthening an effective data foundation

Green doesn’t mince his words when describing today’s rapidly shifting business landscape: “It’s gone from periodical business transformation to continuous business transformation. That’s a real challenge for organisations – things are moving fast.

Across industries, common themes of transformation and people data emerge. For instance, many organisations are shifting from job-centric to skill-centric approaches, allowing for greater fluidity and mobility within their workforce. However, this shift also demands a shift within the CHRO role. “That changes the way we deliver our HR programmes – from recruiting to learning through to talent mobility,” Green says. “You need data for that. You can’t be a skills-based organisation if you don’t have skills data as the foundation.”

Another shift that requires a strong data foundation is changing employee expectations. “Employees want personalised experiences at work. We’re seeing lots of drive around inclusion, culture and purpose,” he says. “Again, you need good data to be able to do that. And companies need to listen to what their employees are saying if they’re going to deliver those personalised experiences and deliver the inclusive culture they want.”

Increased governance and regulation requirements are also driving the need for more and better data. Regulation is increasing in more areas than just governing AI. For instance, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) now requires most EU companies with over 250 employees to report more information related to human capital.

Establishing or improving their organisations’ people data analytics practice is clearly a top concern for CHROs in the near future. Indeed, companies that activate the growth combination of data, technology and people stand to gain a premium of up to 11 percent on top-line productivity, compared to only four percent when unlocking data and technology alone, according to a recent Accenture study.

The HR profession must upskill to scale up its data literacy.

Leveraging people analytics to improve business outcomes

Organisations that harness the full potential of their people data understand that it serves a dual purpose: not only providing insights into their talent but also playing a pivotal role in driving business outcomes.

For instance, an organisation can combine engagement and other people data with customer and revenue data to understand whether and how effective leaders and engaged employees affect profitability. The company might start with a hypothesis, Green says: “Good leadership, high employee engagement and the right team all working together can drive higher customer satisfaction.”

But to test that hypothesis, leaders need to make use of robust people data – which is precisely what happened in a case study in Green’s book. What did that organisation find? “In company locations with the highest employee engagement, the customer satisfaction was twice as high,” Green says.

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If you replaced a bad leader with a good leader, you’d see engagement scores go up and attrition fall.

David Green, Director, Insight222

“That team found that, if you replaced a bad leader with a good leader, you’d start to see engagement scores go up and attrition fall,” Green says. “And then you would see a positive impact on customer satisfaction scores and profitability because they were selling more products to their customer base.” According to Green, the team learned the opposite was also true: when a good leader was replaced with an ineffective leader, it negatively affected customer satisfaction scores and profitability.

People analytics can quantify human capital’s impact on the bottom line. “People analytics is not just about solving HR problems. It’s very much about how we can help address some big business challenges and questions in the organisation too,” Green says.

The CHRO and the HR leadership team must serve as role models.



Creating a data-focused culture

As data becomes a more critical cornerstone in the decision-making process, the HR function will need to make it a larger priority. In a study conducted by Insight222 of 271 global organisations, 88 percent of CHROs saw data analytics as an essential part of HR strategy, but only 55 percent reported that their company has a data-driven culture for people data and analytics. Though the latter percentage has increased in the two years since the study was conducted, there's still a clear disconnect between expectations and reality when it comes to company culture and data.

As this research indicates, the HR profession must upskill to scale up its data literacy. The findings have pinpointed several best practices to achieve this:

- **The CHRO and the HR leadership team must serve as role models:** "It's not just a case of CHROs saying, 'We're going to build a data-driven HR function.' They and the HR leadership team actually need to model that and, if necessary, upskill themselves." Green says.

- **The people analytics leader must be at the helm of any upskilling initiative:** As Green notes, "We find that, when the people analytics leader is responsible for the upskilling effort of HR around data literacy, HR professionals are two and a half times more likely to be given training in this area. This isn't about people analytics leaders doing it themselves. It's very much about partnering with learning, with their expertise in delivering upskilling programs."
- **Training should focus on soft skills:** "These skills are more about behaviours: consulting stakeholders, being able to interpret data and being able to build recommendations from insights and storytelling." Green says.

And of course, like any training, upskilling for data literacy can't be a one-and-done endeavour. While upskilling will require an investment, it will likely be worth it – as your people data can tell you.

Upskilling for data literacy can't be a one-and-done endeavour.



How AI will transform the HR landscape

By 2030, the entire baby boomer generation will have reached the age of 65 or older, while Generation Z, born after 1997, will make up 30 percent of the workforce. Alongside this demographic shift, transformative technological advances – notably the rapid rise of AI – are already reshaping the world of work.

By **Patrick Evenden**, EMEA Staff Writer



AI can help create balance, meaning and satisfaction among employees.



In a discussion at Workday Rising EMEA in Barcelona, HR leaders explained how these changes will impact organisations' most valuable assets – their people.

They also explored the key challenges and opportunities ahead for HR, as well as how leaders can recognise AI's potential and prepare their employees for an AI-enabled future.

Here are six key insights from the discussion:

1. AI can elevate and simplify the employee experience to meet changing expectations:

"People are expecting the same experience in a company that they see in the broader world – they're expecting Uber and Amazon-like experiences," explains Cyril Zaidan, Head of Digital Employee Experience at Sanofi, a global healthcare and pharmaceutical company. "Big companies with heavy processes and a lot of tools for daily tasks need to simplify to deliver a great experience."

2. AI can drive better people decisions that create real results:

"We've seen the size of people analytics teams grow by 43 percent since 2020," notes David Green, Director of global professional services firm, Insight222. "And we're seeing organisations create value out of people analytics, whether that's commercial outcomes, workforce experiences, building an analytics culture across an organisation and even societal benefits."



HR has a role to play to make sure everyone understands the value AI can bring.

Raimond Rovers, Partner, Deloitte Consulting

3. AI can save HR leaders time that can be redirected to higher-value work:

"You're going to see things like AI being able to create job descriptions: in the past, people spent hours and hours doing that, and now we have the ability to use large language models," says Rich Bye, Vice President of Workforce and Payroll Product Strategy at Workday.

4. AI can help create balance, meaning and satisfaction among employees:

"There's an opportunity for AI to be incredibly impactful not just for the business, but for the people, by giving them better day-to-day lives without the stress of so much manual effort," explains Pete Tiliakos, Principal Analyst, Advisor and Managing Partner at 3Sixty Insights, a research, advisory and consulting firm.

5. HR should have a seat at the table in balancing AI's potential positives with its potential risks:

"AI can come up with a lot of solutions but there are also a lot of downsides," says Raimond Rovers, Partner at Deloitte Consulting. "HR has a role to play to make sure everyone understands the value AI can bring and also make sure it's not used in the wrong way."

6. To manage through extraordinary change, leaders need to listen more than ever:

As the role of AI evolves, "HR will have to be very flexible and understand how to adapt in ways they probably haven't had to do before," says Stacey Harris, Chief Research Officer and Managing Partner at Sapient Insights Group, a research and advisory firm. "Make sure you're listening to your employees and building in change management. You need to be able to understand what change is taking place, manage it and then figure out how to be a part of it."

To explore these insights further, go to www.workday.co.uk to watch the full recording from the discussion at Workday Rising EMEA.

How responsible AI can reshape HR

By **Patrick Evenden**, EMEA Staff Writer

Utter the phrase ‘talent shortage’ in a room full of HR professionals, and you’ll likely see a collective shudder. Labour is a top-of-mind concern for CHROs – not just from an organisation-wide perspective but within their own function too. With many HR offices operating leaner than ever, leaders are keen to embrace efficiency measures that enable their colleagues to offload mindless tasks and instead focus on more value-added responsibilities.

That’s why HR leaders from companies like Air Liquide, On and Mondelēz International are embracing automation. And they aren’t alone: in a recent Workday survey of 1,124 HR technology decision-makers from around the world, 70 percent said AI will be a critical support to HR functions – from candidate matching to career and skills development – over the next five years.

However, reinventing efficiency within the HR function doesn’t happen overnight. Success hinges on thorough planning, collaboration and education. Below are some best practices to consider for your organisation’s transformational journey with automation.

Automating the right tasks

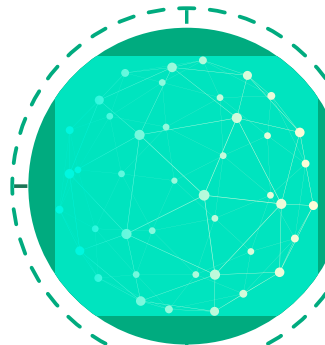
As automation becomes more integrated, HR leaders will need to foster an environment of learning.

To formulate an automation strategy, you must first gain a clear understanding of which tasks need a human touch – and which do not. For instance, employees may feel comfortable querying a chatbot to find out how many sick days they have left for the year, but it’s less likely they’ll want to use that same technology to file a complaint of workplace harassment.

“HR leaders must identify the appropriate avenues for automation before deploying it across their organisation,” says Volker Schrank, Senior Director of HR Technology and Employee Experience at Mondelēz International.

“We have to deal with sensitive topics. We have employees that come to us in the moments that matter where they need a person, a human, to talk to,” Schrank says. “The only way to do this is by automating all the mundane processes. Everything where it is not important to have a human-to-human connection and conversation, everything that is more administrative, we want to get out of the way of our HR colleagues.”

Automation frees up HR leaders for more high-touch tasks, ramping up both efficiency



and efficacy. It also may make traditionally error-prone processes more seamless and successful for employees. Before Mondelēz launched its onboarding automation, about three-quarters of employees' laptops and other devices did not arrive before their start date, resulting in lost productivity and, for employees, an unfortunate first impression of their new company. Now, with automation, over 90 percent of devices are delivered by employees' first day on the job.

"Most of the activities around onboarding are very standardised: you need a badge, an

email address, a company credit card and maybe a device," Schrank says. "If you take all of this away from the HR department and automate it, then HR can focus on the cultural onboarding into the company."

Like Mondelēz, athletic shoe company On has been determining the optimal tasks



for automation, says Julie Muggli, Head of Talent (HR) Operations, Technology and Analytics. “We’re identifying those gaps where we think AI could really serve us,” Muggli says. “For example, we’ve launched scheduling and time tracking with Workday, which has machine learning (ML) for forecasting and AI for the generation of schedules. On the recruiting side, we have AI with a note taker in the interview process, which is also a coach that can give guidance to the interviewer.”

Securing buy-in

“Automation solutions can increase HR’s efficiency only if employees utilise them, so involving workers in the implementation process as early as possible is imperative,” says Schrank.

“It’s all in the way you do it. If you do something to someone, they will not feel integrated, they will not feel valued,” he says. “But if you implement it with your colleagues, they stay engaged and they understand what you’re doing, why you’re doing it and they bring their ideas too.”

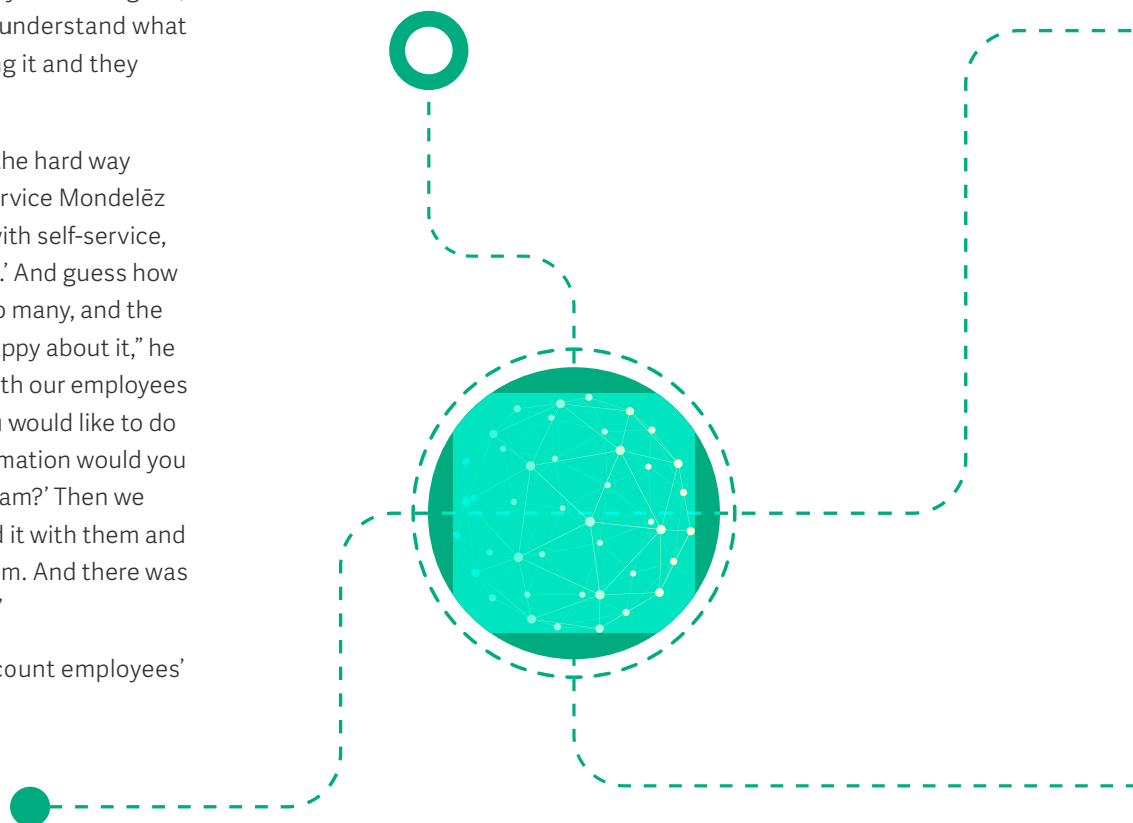
Schrank learned this lesson the hard way during the launch of a self-service Mondelēz product. “When we started with self-service, we just said, ‘Here it is. Use it.’ And guess how many people used it? Not too many, and the ones who did were very unhappy about it,” he says. “But then we worked with our employees to understand, ‘What is it you would like to do with self-service? What information would you like to see to manage your team?’ Then we designed it with them, tested it with them and brought it to market with them. And there was acceptance and excitement.”

In addition to taking into account employees’

wants and needs, new technologies need to be accessible to employees and meet them where they are. For industrial gases company Air Liquide, which has a mix of white-collar and blue-collar employees, placing self-service within reach of all employees was crucial, says Agnès Le Guern, HR Transformation Project Director, Air Liquide. “We offer all of our employees the same level of self-service, regardless if you are in the manufacturing environment or if you are office-based,” Le Guern says.

In Europe, Air Liquide provides self-service tablets that proved so popular that about 90 percent of the manufacturing workforce uses them. And the organisation ensures the remaining 10 percent can always reach an HR team member by phone or by chat on one of the computers available in the manufacturing facilities.

Reinventing efficiency within the HR function doesn’t happen overnight.



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HR leaders must identify the appropriate avenues for automation before deploying it.

Volker Schrank, Senior Director of HR Technology and Employee Experience, Mondelēz International



Deepening the HR function

As HR offices increasingly leverage automation and become more efficient, leaders will need to reassess not only HR colleagues' daily tasks but also their organisational function and roles.

“A lot of times, people come into the conversation with the headline that automation and AI are going to be taking jobs. But I think AI is going to be a tool we lean on to be able to focus on those moments that matter, that human touch,” says Muggli. “That means we'll become more and more specialised.”

Le Guern agrees: “I think we will move to a more focused role. One of the key elements of transformation is to better define the role of each member of our HR community and go deeper into an area of HR expertise. I'm convinced this will be a great evolution for HR: more focus and more rigour.”

As automation becomes more integrated, HR leaders will need to foster an environment of learning among their HR colleagues, so that utilising technologies that harness AI and ML becomes second nature.

“We need to make sure that we take our colleagues with us and educate them on the technology angle, because this is something I've seen in HR not being very developed,” says Schrank. According to a Workday survey, 42 percent of HR leaders reported that their team is not fully prepared for AI – the highest percentage of unpreparedness among all functions surveyed.

In a recent Workday survey, 70 percent said AI will be a critical support to HR functions.

Where HR is and where it's going: Four things we learned from Fosway Group CEO David Wilson

By **Patrick Evenden**, EMEA Staff Writer



Persistent talent gaps, shifting post-pandemic workplace norms and the need to foster business agility are driving rapid change within the HR realm. According to David Wilson, Founder and CEO of Fosway Group, who joined us on the Workday podcast, the overarching theme for this year is the need for the HR function to prove its strategic value. Instead of remaining solely transaction-focused, HR must evolve to enable greater responsiveness and drive greater success.

The strategic transformation of the HR function is now a “non-negotiable requirement” for businesses, Wilson says. His UK-based HR industry research and consulting organisation has been conducting independent research on the HR and talent landscape for more than 25 years, offering insights on what the future likely holds.

Here are four key takeaways from this episode:

1. Technology is driving strategic transformation

Investments in technology to support HR’s transformation remain as important as ever, Wilson says. “The reality is that HR and human capital management (HCM) suites are anchor solutions around which things get built.”

Businesses are using technology to automate processes, enabling HR to be “less about transactions, and more about value,” he says. Instead of only being concerned with “hiring and firing, operations and compliance,” the function is becoming more sophisticated and multidimensional, with every aspect of the talent lifecycle affected.

The HR skills of the future, Wilson says, add value to the organisation. Capabilities such as data analytics, workforce risk management and coaching skills become “more important as you focus more on development and less on transactions.” The new goal for HR departments is to be a strategic enabler for the business, helping it become more agile and responsive by backing up strategies with the right tactics to align the workforce to current and future needs.

Right now, uncertainty around the strategic value of HR is fuelling “a high level of executive dissatisfaction with HR analytics,” he notes. “That will change.”

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HR must evolve to enable greater responsiveness.

David Wilson, Founder and CEO, Fosway Group



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AI is really starting to disrupt how HR is done.

David Wilson, Founder and CEO, Fosway Group



2. AI will mature, impacting both the workforce and the HR processes supporting it

“The horse has bolted, and everyone is pretty much tied onto it.” Wilson is talking about AI – especially generative AI, whose power “blindsided a lot of people.” Many companies didn’t have an AI strategy, but they do now, or they know that they need one.

That said, Wilson sees many organisations proceeding cautiously, aware of risks and unsure of potential workforce impacts. The hype is high, but reality is catching up. “AI is really starting to disrupt how HR is done and how HR systems work,” he says.

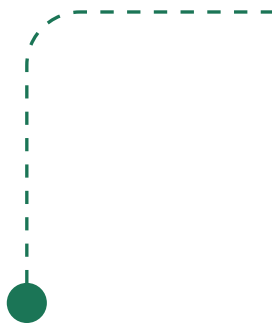
“There’s a huge opportunity for us to replace a lot of transactional activity with AI-supported, value-adding processes. From a solution point of view, AI is going to be embedded in many things.”

3. Payroll will become a source of disruption

Until now, payroll has “typically not been an area of disruption,” Wilson says. People had to get paid on time and accurately, full stop.

But technology-driven payroll disruption is one of Wilson’s big HR predictions for 2024. Real-time pay will become more common, along with cloud-based solutions providing organisations with a global view of payroll.

“We’re at a point now where some of that disruption is starting to materialise,” Wilson says. “That will grow more. And the role that pay plays in the employee value proposition will also grow in importance, particularly with frontline employees.”

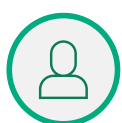


4. Talent crunches are reshaping workforce management and development

For many organisations across many industries, the talent gaps that cropped up with the COVID-19 pandemic haven't gone away. "There's still a lack of talent and skills," Wilson says. "There's a paucity of that in the market."

That reality amps up the pressure on organisations to understand and augment the workforce they have today, rather than waiting for the right fresh talent to knock on the door. Strategic training and workforce development will become a growing focus of HR teams, complementing traditional recruiting and hiring activities.

HR leaders are now paying closer attention to "how they develop the workforce, reskill it and upskill it," Wilson says. A skills-based approach to training – as opposed to focusing on roles – is now a "dominant factor."



The new goal for HR departments is to be a strategic enabler for the business.

Retain, retrain, transform

Is the answer to the skills crisis staring businesses in the face?
This guest post from PwC first appeared on the PwC website.

By PwC



The workforce will be very different by the end of the decade as the pace of innovation and technological disruption accelerates. To deliver transformation and growth, business leaders must reappraise the skills they need and their approach to retaining and developing their existing workforce, and create a culture of innovation to embrace the potential of AI.

It's an approach that requires a careful balance and the Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey conducted by PwC reveals a growing paradox. Organisations intent on recruiting digital skills risk missing out on the huge potential of upskilling their existing workforce. These employees already possess the human skills required to fully unlock the productivity that technology can bring.

As technologies such as AI become more powerful and intuitive, the value of skills such as applied judgement, creativity, critical thinking, subject matter expertise and leadership will be in greater demand to ensure technologies are used effectively to solve business problems and deliver better outcomes. But to realise the potential of a 'human-led, tech-powered' approach, many organisations need to instigate a mindset shift and upskill and empower their workforce to embrace the potential of technology.

Many organisations need to instigate a mindset shift.

AI and the need for a transformation mindset

Employees in the UK are considerably more doubtful than their global counterparts that AI will improve their productivity or efficiency at work. To encourage employees to seek and deploy AI solutions in the workplace, businesses must first position it as a tool that can support and augment what they do.

Empowering experienced employees – who understand their business and boast critical human skills – by giving them technological know-how and permission to increase their productivity through innovation may present a lifeline for organisations worried they lack the talent to keep pace in a digital world.

The data suggests that many employees recognise their business must change, yet companies are discouraging employees from challenging the status quo or risking the small-scale failures that are an essential part of innovation.

- **24 percent think their business will not be economically viable within 10 years**
- **72 percent say that their manager doesn't encourage debate**
- **64 percent report that their manager doesn't tolerate small-scale failures**

To bring ideas, creativity and energy into the workplace, employees must feel safe to test, learn and, sometimes, fail.

Fostering curiosity and openness toward adopting technology with the proven ability to unlock capacity and improve productivity could also help organisations mitigate burnout. Over the past 12 months, over a fifth of employees reported that their workload was frequently unmanageable, primarily due to a lack of resources.

AI is here to help us

AI is rapidly breaking new ground and permeating almost every industry and workplace. The 26th annual CEO survey by PwC found that 77 percent of leaders plan to invest in technologies such as AI this year. Yet many employees are oblivious to whether it will impact them.

The survey of 2,003 UK employees found that less than half (46 percent) believe AI will impact their jobs in any way over the next five years, compared to 68 percent globally.

Sarah Moore, People and Organisation Leader at PwC UK, says: “The opportunities presented by technology are immense, such as deploying AI solutions to gain efficiencies, unlock productivity and create business opportunities. The businesses that succeed will be the ones that create a culture that embraces and enables transformation. But right now our data suggests that there is a two-tier workforce where a significant proportion are unaware of the changes taking place and are therefore ill-equipped to capitalise on them. Organisations must think through whether they are creating an inclusive and inspiring vision for the future and an active response to change.”

Prasun Shah, Workforce Intelligence Partner at PwC, says: “The disparity between how leaders and employees view AI underscores the need for organisations to communicate what AI means to their workforce. Investing in technology is one aspect, but creating a tech-powered workforce requires cultural change. Leaders must empower employees to explore how AI could enhance their productivity and efficiency, freeing them to focus on more challenging and rewarding tasks.”

Creating a human-led, tech-powered organisation

Digital skills are in high demand, but organisations need to cultivate the right balance of human and tech skills. Applying critical thinking and creativity, interpreting complex data sets, making decisions and communicating change are all critical skills in any transformation.

Employees ranked human skills – such as adaptability, critical thinking and collaboration – as more important to their future careers than technical skills, such as analytical or digital skills. And awareness of the importance of human skills is higher in more skilled roles.


However, employees feel that employers are overlooking the skills that enable them to get the most from technology. Many employees (63 percent) report having skills outside of their qualifications and professional experience, yet almost half (46 percent) believe employers are overly focused on the narrow confines of job history.

Businesses need to rethink their approach to development and hiring to ensure they're creating a workforce with robust human skills. A renewed approach must include getting better at identifying and deploying skills effectively across the workplace, starting with implementing a skills-based approach to hiring and operating. Whenever appropriate, hiring managers should look beyond formal qualifications and focus on the attitude and broader skills each candidate has to offer in areas such as judgement, team-building and leadership.

Employees must feel safe to test,
learn and, sometimes, fail.







Harriet Newlyn, Workforce and HR Transformation Partner at PwC UK, says: “We should be thinking about jobs and skills differently. Many organisations are embracing technology to understand the current supply of skills and future demand – and the gaps between them – and using this to create a more agile, skills-based organisation where it is easier to quickly tap into the right skills. It has consequences for job and talent architecture, for performance and for pay – but it is the direction of travel.”

Retaining the right talent

Investing more in the existing workforce puts a great emphasis on retention and addressing unwanted churn.

Despite economic uncertainty, 23 percent of UK employees say they plan to switch jobs in the next 12 months – up from 18 percent last year. While this inevitably brings pay and reward into focus, there are other factors such as ways of working, culture and opportunities for progression. Workers seeking a new employer were less likely to report having autonomy and feeling their work has meaning. They were also more likely to feel that their manager didn't consider their viewpoint. Providing employees with the right culture, resources and incentives will help businesses keep hold of their most in-demand talent.

Business leaders must recognise the value of their existing workforce's human skills.

Identifying future high-performers is the first step. Julia Howes, Workforce Intelligence Director at PwC UK, says: “Leaders need to look internally and identify the individuals who have the mindset and aptitude to succeed, and then invest in developing their skills. Using data-driven insights can find out what these employees need to feel valued and inspired, and what might cause them to leave – this is often more nuanced than pay alone.”

“Our research indicates that training and development opportunities, leadership, compensation and autonomy are all factors that may influence turnover. But looking at general trends isn't enough. Advancements in people analytics using behavioural science and inferential analytics now allow businesses to pinpoint and address the unique factors.”

Unlocking the full value of disruptive technologies requires a transformation-ready workforce, equipped with the right skills and mindset to identify, design and deliver change where it is most needed.

Business leaders must recognise the value of their existing workforce's human skills and the potential that can be realised by empowering employees with the knowledge and permission to innovate. This can be done using increasingly powerful yet intuitive technologies and then working hard to retain those people by creating a rewarding, enriching career path.

Leadership lessons from the Premier League: Six things we learned from Paul McVeigh

When it comes to building a high-performance culture, there's a lot that people leaders can learn from the world of professional football. As one of the most competitive environments in the world, the difference between those who thrive in the Premier League and those who don't, often comes down to mindset.

By **Patrick Evenden**, EMEA Staff Writer

Premier League footballer-turned-psychologist Paul McVeigh joined us on the Workday podcast to discuss this further. Paul spent nearly 20 years playing top-flight football in the UK for teams including Tottenham Hotspur, Norwich City and Luton Town, as well as playing internationally for Northern Ireland. Following his playing career, he became the first Premier League footballer to qualify with a master's degree in psychology.

Here are six things we learned from Paul:

1. Psychological wellbeing is the most important ingredient when it comes to creating high-performing teams

"I think it's everything," Paul says. However, when he started his football career, the concept of psychological wellbeing was almost unheard of.

"It was the complete opposite of what it is today. There was none. You pretty much needed to go in and try to be the alpha male. You'd have to be the kind of old-fashioned leader, the one who was shouting the loudest, beating their chest the loudest, beating their head against walls."





There's a lot that people-leaders can learn from the world of professional football.



2. A data-driven approach transformed the world of professional football during Paul’s playing career

When Paul signed his first contract with Tottenham Hotspur in 1994, football was a very different profession to the one he left in 2010, when his career ended. And he thinks a lot of businesses are still stuck in the 90s.

“There are still so many people, so many companies and industries – that’s the way they do it. They push as hard as they can to try and squeeze every drop of productivity out of that person. And they go, ‘Right, thanks very much’ as soon as they can’t do it anymore. And that was exactly what professional football was like in the 1990s.”

In 1994, Tottenham became one of the first teams in the league to hire a sports scientist. Fast-forward 30 years and football has changed a lot.

“I actually left my role a couple of years ago as the sports psychologist at Crystal Palace. And just in the youth academy, there were two sports scientists, two strength and conditioning coaches, two physios, a masseur, a doctor, a nutritionist, a yoga teacher and me as the psychologist. You’re just thinking, ‘It’s miles away, miles apart.’”

The best leaders give people the space to learn from their mistakes.

3. The best leaders give people the space to learn from their mistakes

And when it comes to learning from the best in the business, Paul looks no further than treble-winning Manchester City Manager, Pep Guardiola.

“In the footballing world today, there’s probably no one better than Pep Guardiola when it comes to telling his players time after time, ‘Do it this way, and if you make mistakes, I’ll keep backing you. And I’ll keep rewarding you by putting you on the team even if you’re making mistakes.’”

4. One book changed Paul’s life

Early on in Paul’s career, a friend gave him a copy of ‘Awaken the Giant Within’ by Anthony Robbins, which sparked his interest in psychology.

“It just completely challenged every single thing that I ever thought, all the way down to being an Irish Catholic and just growing up in that world and going, ‘Just because I’ve been told that, is that something I need to believe?’”

“That was such a game-changer for me. I’m a 17-year-old kid. I’m not doing particularly well in the youth team. I’m not keeping up. What a surprise. I’m not keeping up athletically with these guys, because I just wasn’t living the lifestyle. So my challenge was, ‘How do I change my life so that I can achieve what I want to achieve, so I can be what I want to be, do what I want to do and have what I want to have in my life?’”

“And Anthony Robbins had it in his book where, essentially, your mindset will dictate what your life looks like.”

The concept of psychological wellbeing was almost unheard of.



5. Culture is what separates high-performing teams from under-achievers

During his football career, Paul has been part of both successful and unsuccessful teams. For him, the key thing that set them apart from one another was culture.

“And that’s because the standards that are set every single day will dictate whether you can be part of that high-performance environment or if actually, it’s not for you.”

He gives the example of Champions League winner Paul Lambert, who managed Norwich City during Paul’s time at the club, as someone who always maintained high standards and cultivated a strong winning culture.

“He just wouldn’t miss a beat. His observation skills across everything, he wouldn’t let the standards slip for one second.”

6. As well as a footballer and a psychologist, Paul is a published author

To counter the misconception that footballers are stupid, Paul got himself a publishing deal.

“It was when I finished playing in 2010 that, a year later, I went to Bloomsbury and I was like, ‘I’ve got an idea for a book called ‘The Stupid Footballer Is Dead’, and this is what it’s going to be about.’ And they ended up giving me a publishing deal.”

Culture is what separates high-performing teams from under-achievers.



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