

A snapshot of HR today

01

In 2014, Carnegie Mellon had some of the world's brightest robotics minds working on its campus. These scientists were focused on the bleeding edge of robotics, improving upon the capabilities of existing technology and leveraging research to design new systems. Their insights, developed within a university setting, could have created new breakthroughs and advancements in the use of robotic technology for the betterment of mankind.

But then, virtually overnight, they all left.

In a surprise move, Uber had lured the scientists away, hiring a significant portion of Carnegie Mellon's robotics talent in a single sweeping move. This hiring spree was a step forward in the firm's strategic pursuit of a self-driving fleet of automobiles, but it clearly caught Carnegie Mellon by surprise. Looking back, it's hard to blame the educational institution for not seeing this upstart technology firm as a threat. Logically, when Carnegie Mellon considered its peers in the marketplace, it evaluated other top-shelf universities and research think tanks as competitive threats. However, it didn't consider the possibility of a ride-sharing service snagging its highly prized robotics talent.

What this means for today's business leaders is that it's no longer enough to simply look at the two or three long-term competitors to keep a finger on the pulse of the industry. New competition can come from any direction. And company leaders are funny in that they always think that they are somehow shielded from the impact of these new technologies and business models. It's a great example of what happens when firms only consider their traditional competitors and markets instead of broadening their perspective. This is a small

example of disruption and how it impacts the workplace, but it signifies a larger change that leaders must take seriously in order to remain competitive.

This story offers a clear understanding of the concept of industry convergence, just one of the many trends shaking up the workplace today. In a recent global study of Chief Human Resources Officers (CHROs),¹ IBM found that the number one concern for these talent leaders was industry convergence. A good example of this comes from the competition between Carnegie Mellon and Uber,² but others exist as well. For example, in a discussion with a Canadian banking and financial services employer with tens of thousands of employees, one of the HR executives was quick to redirect the conversation when industry was mentioned. He claimed the firm was a technology company first and a financial services institution second. This convergence means that more employers are looking to hire technical engineering talent, even if they aren't in traditional technology industries, tightening the labour market for sought-after software engineers.

Look around you. Today's human resources practice is not the same as that of years past. More and more companies are looking for ways to leverage their people as a strategic differentiator, giving them an edge over the competition. New technologies and tools are shifting the conversation for HR and business leaders, enabling them to have greater insights into organizational functions, outcomes, and variables. Yet in spite of all of this, there are challenges that we simply can't seem to shake. Globalization is forcing employers to change how they have traditionally approached markets and talent. Disruption is affecting businesses in a wide spectrum of ways, from changes in consumer preferences to radical departures from traditional business models and methods. And greater demands for delivering memorable, engaging employee experiences continue to stress out HR leaders that are doing more with less. New technologies like artificial intelligence seem to offer some glimpse of hope, but many human resources and business executives find themselves asking how these tools work and what they actually do. Are they marketing hype? Are they actual solutions to everyday problems? What can help businesses survive and thrive in a competitive market full of disruption?

The age of disruption

The age of disruption is a blend of multiple competing priorities. Not only does this idea of industry convergence factor into the puzzle, but the way employers acquire talent is shifting as well. Employers are moving away from the traditional ‘buy and hold’ approach to a more flexible, nimble version based on project work and a variety of non-traditional worker types. Yes, for as long as there have been workers there have been side gigs, which can include freelancing, contracting, or other short-term assignments. However, while the concept of ‘gigs’ isn’t anything new, the platforms available today give workers more and more control over how their time can be exchanged for money. In economics terms, it reduces the *friction* of the labour market, making it easier to match up skills with those that want to pay for them. Fiverr allows designers and other workers to offer their skills in small projects with a range of compensation depending on their experience and quality. Taskrabbit allows users to hire someone for small tasks, such as a quick grocery store trip or coming into an office to file some paperwork. And the popular ride-sharing apps now give virtually any consumer the ability to push a button and have a vehicle appear within minutes to take them anywhere they want to go. From an employer perspective, applications like Wonolo and Shiftgig do the same thing – they essentially enable employers to push a button and have contract workers show up ready to work. While their workload is often around more labour-intensive or low-level tasks, it’s a foreshadowing of the future when more and more work can be handled by non-employee talent. Plus, this whole gig segment of the workforce is increasing rapidly. Research from Princeton University shows that the platform gig economy grew tenfold between 2012 and 2016.³ While this seems like a small piece of the overall economy, if these platform gig workers were aggregated together as a single employee population of 800,000 workers, the company would be larger than Target and General Electric combined.⁴

This doesn’t even take into account the changes in data and technology. Today, firms collect data on virtually everything. Every interaction. Every connection. All of this information, aptly termed ‘big data’, is being gathered, yet employers still struggle to make sense

of the information in ways that can add value to the organization. This is true even more so for employee-focused data, because while marketing and sales tools have been more insights-driven over time, HR and talent systems are just reaching this level of maturity. In the Lighthouse Research 2017 Business Value of HR Technology research study, my firm found a variety of interesting insights. For instance, business leaders working outside HR are twice as likely as HR leaders to see human resources technology as a *strategic* tool, not just an *administrative* one. Data takes a central position in the discussion in the following chapters due to its role in empowering the technologies that businesses leverage today.

On the worker side of the equation, employees also now have greater expectations of the technology they access and utilize in the workplace. Consumer technology preferences for intuitive software applications that are mobile friendly and available anytime, anywhere are now commonplace. This is intriguing because even as recently as five or ten years ago, the bulk of the workforce didn't have any real say-so in how companies adopted and leveraged HR technology. In fact, virtually all of the technology adopted was done so purely with the administrators in mind. The question asked when looking at technology solutions was, 'What makes it easier to do HR, learning, or recruiting work?' However, today employees often have access to self-service tools for a range of needs, from tracking competencies and performance to updating personal information. That means employees now have yet another lens through which to evaluate their employers. As we'll see in the coming chapters, some of those tools are powered by artificial intelligence technologies that can offload HR tasks and improve user satisfaction at the same time. And if it sounds like a relatively minor item, our research shows otherwise. This type of technology can actually influence the employee experience – our research shows that high-performing firms (see definition below) are *eight times less likely* to say their HR technology is troublesome, a simple but effective metric for evaluating software usability.⁵ And many studies in recent years put usability at or near the top of the list of requirements when evaluating vendor options, which means it's no longer a 'nice to have' but a 'must have' for enterprise HR software buyers.

Defining 'high-performing'

One of our standard research practices is to attempt to separate out high-performing companies from the rest by asking employers in our surveys to explain changes in key performance indicators over time. Those KPIs are then used to signify if an employer is a 'high performer' or not. The specific metrics we use are revenue, employee retention and employee engagement, as they are linked in a large body of research to each area of the business.

For instance, revenue is related to business health, but it also signifies a positive customer experience because satisfied customers spend more, are more likely to purchase again, and are likely to refer other customers. Employee retention signifies a positive employee experience across a range of areas, and retention directly impacts company profitability. Engagement not only signifies a positive workplace experience, but other business areas as well. Several studies correlate engagement with profit, innovation, customer satisfaction and more. The three elements of revenue, retention and engagement paint a picture of organizational health and give us a valuable measure by which to cut our research data.

It is common to see drastic differences in employer practices based on whether the firm is a high performer or not by our standards. Consider these three examples:

- 1 In our Business Value of HR Technology study, the research shows high-performing firms are eight times less likely to say their HR technology is troublesome.
- 2 Our Performance Management, Engagement and Business Results study pointed out these talent practices that high performers were more likely to implement: frequent goal-setting, recognition for performance, in-the-moment feedback, developmental coaching and peer feedback. Low performers were more likely to prioritize annual reviews and trying to develop employee weaknesses.
- 3 Our latest Learning Content Strategy study showed that high-performing firms were more than twice as likely to be using a cohesive strategy to guide learning content development and delivery, and they were also twice as likely to be measuring learning impact and outcomes.

While this isn't the only way to measure success, it provides a powerful lens through which to analyse practices and approaches that high-performing companies have in common. Within the context of this book, any mentions of high-performing practices are based on these criteria.

Researching and understanding HR today

The research practice our team leads has uncovered a wide variety of insights in the last few years, and they paint a picture of HR that requires more sophisticated practitioners and tools than those of yesterday. Across the spectrum of human capital management, from talent acquisition and employee development to talent mobility and engagement, greater demands are being placed on the human resources function to deliver tangible, actionable business results. Some examples of shifting trends are included below to help set the stage for discussions to come around specific human capital management functional areas.

Talent acquisition

Today's hiring climate is a candidate's market, which was confirmed in a recent research interview with the founder of a talent acquisition technology firm. In the discussion, the founder explained that he is seeing incredible pressures not just in normally challenging fields like software engineering or nursing but in other areas as well, such as sales or skilled trades. His belief is that candidates have more power than ever to demand what they might want in a role, and those demands change how the company recruits and interacts with the candidate population. The reason he founded his firm is because the entire online job search process is disappointing and frustrating for candidates. His team's research shows that nearly three-quarters of people would agree that online job search is a frustrating process. This is driving a change in technology and company behaviours to deliver a better candidate experience.

Candidates also want more interaction in the application process – our research tells us that when candidates apply for a job, they want a chance to really show what they're made of. While it's often been thought that elements of the hiring process like assessments were disliked by applicants, the data actually says that they *like* those aspects but only if they actually make them more competitive for the job. In other words, we don't want a generic psychometric test, we'd much prefer a job simulation that allows us to showcase relevant skills and knowledge.

At the end of the day, candidates are looking for a more personalized experience, and yet recruiters and employers are struggling to keep pace with hiring needs on a global scale. The Lighthouse Research 2017 Talent Acquisition Priorities⁶ study found that talent acquisition leaders were focused heavily on improving their relationship with the business and improving their practice, but the primary areas of hands-on recruiting that they wanted to fix were onboarding and sourcing. In virtually every research study on talent acquisition I've conducted or seen in the last few years, sourcing technical talent always rises to the top of the list. Another research project pointed out just how challenging it is to scale globally. While today's workplace is more globalized than ever before, employers still struggle with the leap to international operations. Seven out of ten employers with a global presence are not fully confident in their knowledge of foreign compliance requirements, and four in ten employers are spending more than four hours per month, per employee, to onboard, pay and manage global workers (Lighthouse Research, 2017).⁷ This hampers not only HR's productivity, but the ability to influence and impact performance across the enterprise.

Talent mobility

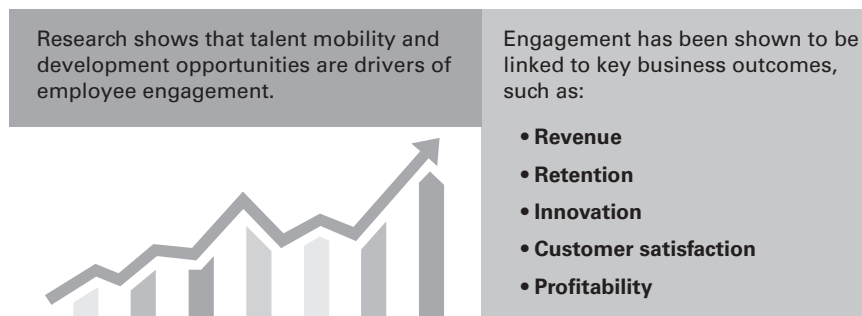
Employees want to own not just their jobs, but their careers as well. The first research project I ever completed focused on entry-level HR professionals and their primary needs, and one of those turned out to be a very clear career path. Fast-forward 10 years, and the data I'm seeing now from other sources validates those findings in that employees and job applicants are hoping not just for a job, but for a longer-term career track that they can plan for. The intriguing intersection of this, however, is that employees are perceived as staying at jobs for less time than in years past. This perception continues to drive decisions, spending, and resource investment, despite the fact that it has no basis in reality. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 1983⁸ that the average workplace tenure was 4.4 years. If we believe the current narrative, the current records should show a sharp decline in this tenure number because of job hopping and unrest in the employee population. Yet data from 2016⁹

shows the average tenure to be 4.2 years, a difference of approximately two months – hardly worth mentioning as a major trend in the employment landscape.

Employees want career guidance, but they also want skills growth. Our talent mobility research has uncovered a variety of companies that have somewhat radical approaches to growing and managing their workforce, from allowing employees to pick up and move across the organizational chart to a manager they feel is more likely to support their developmental needs, to firms that offer stretch assignments with very clear goals and outcomes as a way to create value for individuals, teams and the business. The challenge is that while many employers want to participate in these types of programmes, they are not sure how to make them a reality. The leap from theory to application can be considerably difficult because of potential conflicts with culture and organizational norms. The Lighthouse Research Talent Mobility Profit Chain in Figure 1.1 shows a high-level overview of how these talent practices relate to the results of the business.

This need for growth is partially driven by the widely recognized skills gap. Research from Udemy,¹⁰ a learning technology platform, shows that 80 per cent of Americans believe there is a skills gap, and this number is fairly consistent globally. Additionally, 35 per cent of American workers say that the skills gap affects them personally. Within the study, respondents said that they expected the responsibility for reskilling the workforce to fall on the shoulders not only of individuals and businesses, but of governments as well. The participants in the research also said that the skills areas they most need to

Figure 1.1 Lighthouse Research Talent Mobility Profit Chain



focus on (from most to least important) include technology skills, leadership and management, productivity skills, interpersonal work skills and soft skills.

Learning agility

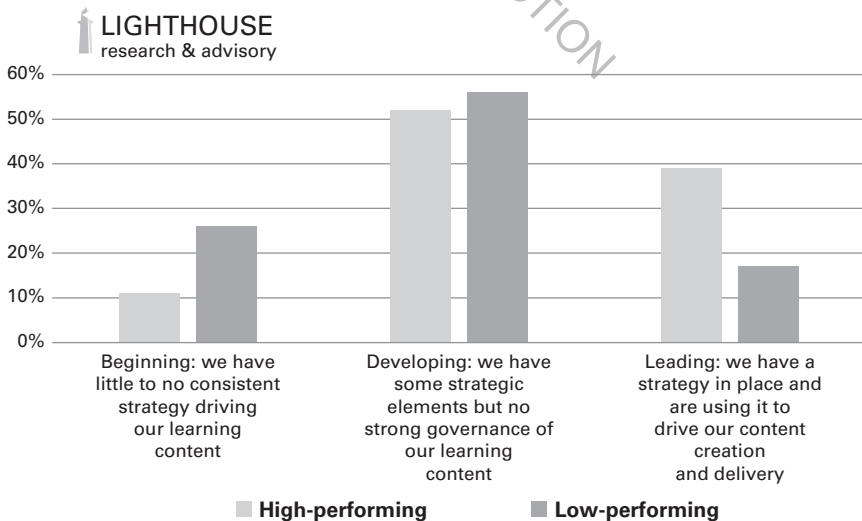
Taking the previous discussion into the employer's hands, businesses need to be looking at how to train and teach workers in a way that improves the firm's overall agility in the marketplace. Training is about more than just safety – it's a way to continuously invest in the success of the organization over time. One area we'll focus on shortly is the concept of the 'employee experience', which translates to the learner experience in this context. In the course of research for a project on informal learning tools and measurement, I spoke with a global learning and development leader about the idea of the learner experience. His response surprised me at the time, but in hindsight it is very appropriate. He said that the whole idea of creating a positive, friendly experience for learners was a complete waste of resources and time if the intent was only to create that type of experience. However, if creating that positive experience led to other benefits, such as increased learner engagement, retention of materials, or performance, then it was a valuable process in which he'd be more than happy to invest his training budget. In other words, the experience can't be the outcome; it has to lead to a worthwhile outcome.

At the same time, employers are faced with a decision about how and where to invest their learning budgets in a high-impact manner. Technology plays a part, and we'll dig into the AI applications for learning and development later in the book, but core components like training and learning content are also important to how learning gets accomplished within an organization. Our research shows that high-performing employers are more likely to look at learning content for the engagement value it creates. For those companies, value comes in the form of voluntary consumption and adoption rates, not just considering quantity of content development or course completions as the ultimate goal of the learning and development function. It's about quality more than quantity in this case. Low performers are seven times more likely to say their learning content does not engage

learners or is merely transactional in nature (Lighthouse Research, 2017).¹¹ This may be due to the starting and ending points: the strategy around creation and measurement. Many companies are not using a comprehensive strategy to guide their learning objectives, yet we all know that it's impossible to hit a target if we don't first aim at it. Employers that try to use learning as a differentiator for creating a more valuable workforce are doomed to fail if their approach is purely ad hoc. Filling skills gaps on a first-come, first-served basis means that L&D teams will always struggle to keep up with demand. Taking a more strategic approach and prioritizing content development and delivery based on business objectives is more likely to lead to high-impact learning programmes, which is why high performers are twice as likely to have a strategy leading their learning investments and activities.

And this overview could easily go on, delving into any number of areas from analytics and onboarding to workforce management and engagement. The world is becoming more complex, not less, and employers need to seize the current opportunity where there is more data and insight than ever before on hand to help solve the problems that exist. One area that offers promise in solving those problems is

Figure 1.2 Approach to learning content strategy



SOURCE 2017 Learning Content Strategy Study, Lighthouse Research & Advisory

the employee experience, because instead of trying to treat smaller segments of the population, employers can craft a more holistic strategy for improving the workplace.

The power of the employee experience

One of the most talked about topics in all of human capital management in recent years has been the concept of the employee experience. Books, articles and presentations all tie back to this idea of creating a series of workplace experiences that create immense value for our employees. Employee engagement is a similar topic, but it's commonly seen as a subset of the broader employee experience and engagement scores are used as one metric for determining the overall value of the employee experience. Any practitioner can tell you the statistics: employee engagement isn't improving and hasn't in years. Gallup's data says that about one in three employees are engaged and that number hasn't changed significantly in more than 10 years.¹² That's a key reason so many industry leaders have seen the employee experience as a potential solution to the perpetual engagement problem. Aptitude Research Partners' 2016 data shows that employers see these concepts as very similar, with 83 per cent of companies agreeing that *improving the employee experience and developing a formal engagement strategy* are their top priorities.¹³ Consider the following reasons why employee experience is a must-have item on the agenda for those HR and business leaders examining workplace issues and solutions.

- 1 *Congruent customer and employee experiences.* How can we expect our customers to deliver superior service and customer experiences when their own experience as an employee is lacklustre or even worse? I've long said that the customer experience will never exceed the employee experience. Well, what I've actually said is, 'Employees will never treat customers better than their management treats them', but it's one and the same. The experiences will be congruent, or similar. That means companies that live and die by customer satisfaction scores need to start not

with new customer bonuses or other gimmicks but with a positive employee experience in order to see the actual outcomes they are looking for.

- 2** *The employee experience is not the employee lifecycle.* One of the issues with the initial attempt to grasp the concept of the employee experience is to put it in the context of the employee life cycle. Don't think that understanding the mechanics of onboarding and performance management means that you have a great employee experience. The experience, or how someone feels, is part of the life cycle, but it's not quite the same thing. Instead, look at the candidate or employee-centric nature of your processes and see to what extent they support, encourage and engage your workforce. That's how you can get a true sense of the value you are creating through your own employee experience.
- 3** *Tell me about your employees first.* If I walked up to you right now and asked about your company, how would you begin the conversation? What would you start with? Your products? Your mission? Your customers? What about your employees – would they even make it into the discussion? I once asked this question of several dozen business leaders as an experiment and not a single one of them responded to me with a description of their employees or the kinds of people they hire. It's so common to think about this question in the context of customers or services when in reality it's our employees that make us successful. Start the discussion with employees as your central topic and go from there. It will change the perspective of those around you.
- 4** *Expectations rule the day.* A big part of why employees have bad experiences in the workplace is expectations. Have you ever had high expectations for a raise, performance discussion or meeting, only to walk away feeling disappointed? Or maybe your first few days on the job are a complete waste of time, sitting around waiting for resources, despite being treated very positively in the hiring process? The theory of expectancy plays into motivations and how we feel about choices we make. If you want to deliver a positive experience, make sure you give people a warning ahead of time so

their expectation gap (what they expect and what you ultimately deliver) isn't as large.

- 5 *Companies don't really exist, people do.* The trouble with leaders in many organizations is that they view the company as 'The Company', an autonomous entity that doesn't need to be understood or afforded respect. In this worldview, decisions are made as if employees are replacement parts, and we don't have to worry about the feelings of replaceable parts. This is exemplified by the way one company manages its workforce. A popular ride-sharing company actually uses an algorithm to assign shifts and communicate with workers, which has led to drivers cheating the system in order to improve their own financial outcomes. This story is highlighted more fully later in the book, but the key element to remember is that companies can't assume that people are emotionless automations, because they aren't. People get stuff done, not 'the company'. People are the face of the firm, not a logo, billboard, or slogan. Remember that.
- 6 *Success results from design thinking.* The concept of design thinking centres on this; efforts are spent not just on solving problems, but on creating solutions with the end result in mind. In this case, how can we create solutions that focus not on the organization or solely on the customer, but on the employee experience. Instead of thinking about how to fix a problem specifically, the focus is on becoming something radically different. For many of us, that's the direction we need to go to rectify design flaws in our processes and policies that can actually hamper our efforts to engage our workers. For instance, in a recent interview with an HR executive, she explained that the company had done away with the normal 'doctor's note for sick leave' requirement. She said that when someone gets a cold, they would respond in one of a few ways; sending them to the doctor to get a piece of paper even when the doctor could not improve their condition often made them angry or upset, and other workers would continue coming to work even with a cold because they didn't want the hassle of scheduling a doctor's appointment in the middle of their

illness. This is a small example of how HR leaders can look for ways to design processes and approaches that support employee needs first and business needs second, because in reality taking care of employees is how you take care of the business.

The new normal: doing more with less

These and other talent-specific challenges are facing HR leaders around the world every day, and that's not all. On top of this we have the constant barrage from the business to 'do more with less'. This is a reality and has been for some time for many companies. Of the various areas of the business, this concept seems to hit human resources harder than many others. For example, a 1–100 ratio is commonly seen as the 'standard' ratio of HR staff to employees, yet if that ratio shifts to 1–1,000, there is virtually no time for that HR staff member to participate in anything even remotely strategic. All efforts are spent on day-to-day activities, shuffling paper, and other administrative work. Even if none of these other shifts and challenges were present, this one would still remain as an incredible barrier to HR leaders being able to deliver high-value service to both the employer and the employee population.

When we combine the leanness of today's HR teams with the need to create more personalized experiences for workers, we have a perfect storm of demands that simply can't be met in the traditional manner. All this is not meant to show that HR can't overcome these challenges. With the right tools, we absolutely can. Consider the consumer examples of how technology enables highly personalized experiences at scale. ESPN relaunched its website properties, allowing users to specify which sports or teams they are interested in. This gives each individual a highly customized experience from the exact moment they visit the website. Our mobile devices allow us to set up specific applications and options in ways that make us more productive, and no two people have the same exact settings and preferences because no two people are exactly the same. While simple, these examples provide a hint at the value that technology can provide in the workplace as well, by creating highly personalized experiences

regardless of whether the audience is a candidate, a line-level employee or a business leader. For instance, one example we'll explore in a coming chapter shows how a recruiting technology provider created an interface that allows candidates to have conversations with a humanized chatbot, focusing in on their most relevant experience and interests just as a human interviewer might in the screening process. This isn't just about automating that workload, which has its own inherent value – it's also about creating that personalized feeling for those who interact with these sorts of systems so that they feel appreciated and understood.

Leveraging new technologies can bring about myriad improvements in employer operations, and the core of many new technologies is some variety of artificial intelligence. While AI may conjure up images of robots and movie plots, the type of AI discussed here is more benign. It's less physical and more technical. It's less about general-purpose AI, which doesn't exist outside of a science fiction movie, and more about leveraging automation and other capabilities of AI for highly specialized data sets, predictions and outcomes. The discussion of artificial intelligence today often centres around two key areas that we'll explore more deeply in the coming chapters: automation and augmentation. The intent is to truly do more with less, freeing up our high-value HR talent to pursue more strategic activities and letting the algorithms do the repetitive heavy lifting and analysis.

Exercise: thinking beyond today

If you're like most business leaders, today has been busy. It's been challenging. You've spent some time on things that may or may not have been on your formal 'to do' list, which might mean you're farther behind today than you were when you started. It's important occasionally to rise above this general busyness and think beyond the day. For the moment, put yourself in the place of an entrepreneur running your own organization or department. Think about the resources at your disposal, the tasks you have to get done, and the value of your time. Oftentimes employees, even executives, have trouble thinking about the specific value of their time, but entrepreneurs are often better at realizing what is a core focus area and

what needs to be outsourced or delegated. With that in mind, if you had an additional hour in your day, how would you spend it? What would you *spend it on*, or more importantly, what would you *invest it in*? Take a moment and write down two or three things you would do with that extra time. Would you brush up on professional development needs? Would you refine some of your processes around gathering and reporting metrics? Maybe you'd do personal phone calls to more candidates instead of sending mass e-mails? Whatever the case, each of us has different priorities, so consider yours for a moment.

A more personal example of this is a personal budget for someone with irregular income. It's challenging to budget month-to-month with an irregular income, so financial planners often recommend an irregular income planning process that lists priorities from most to least important. As money comes into the household, individuals start applying it to the top of the list and moving down the priorities. At the top of the list might be groceries or utilities, and near the bottom would be discretionary spending on areas you care about. This concept is the same as our discussion on how you'd spend additional time but helps to make it more concrete because there is a prioritized list that governs how additional resources are applied as they become available.

This exercise is important because the promise of artificial intelligence tools is, at its core, more time. By automating a part of HR and having an algorithm or machine handle the work, it frees us up to do other things. The problem with this is Parkinson's Law. Parkinson's Law states that our work task will expand to fill the time available. In reality, when we have a new innovation that 'adds' time to our day by reducing some administrative requirement, the rest of our work creeps into that available time in an unobtrusive way, eliminating that saving if we're not careful. The problem is that time creep happens based on urgency or some other criteria instead of coming from a strategic look at the high-value actions that generate the most value for the person, the team or the company. One final example of this: if an HR leader earns \$50 an hour and a new tool saves that person an hour a week, the benefit to the company isn't just the \$50 per week in saved time – it should also include the new, higher-value activity the HR leader is pursuing with that freed-up time.

The coming chapters will include case studies that show greater automation and time savings. They will tell about revolutionary technologies and tools that promise to improve the workplace. But if we don't think

critically about how we'll use that additional time saved from automation, then we're leaving a large portion of the value on the table. As you proceed through the book, be thinking very clearly about how these advancements might apply to your own organization and how you might use those additional hours to improve your own standing, credibility, and value.

Using this book

If it hasn't happened already, one day a business leader at your company will come to you and ask about the impact that artificial intelligence will have on the HR function. It's my hope that this book will help you to answer that question both on a macro scale (how artificial intelligence impacts the HR profession and the competencies necessary for success) and the micro scale (how this impacts your company and your HR team).

What good is a tool if it's presented in theory only? This book will help you not only understand the concept of AI as a technology, but more importantly, you will understand the use cases and opportunities for HR to adopt these tools and systems to support our ever-present quest for improving business outcomes through better people practices.

The best way to accomplish this is not by looking at HR as a giant mishmash of practices and processes. That sort of viewpoint is exactly why general-purpose AI is more of a buzzword than an actual application of practical value today. Instead, we will examine HR through discrete practice areas such as recruiting and talent acquisition, learning and development, talent management, and more. This book is designed to help you become a better professional, pure and simple. If you're hoping to get a more general idea of how AI works and how it is penetrating every part of our lives, Chapter 2 will be beneficial to you. If you are more interested in a specific use case, there are chapters dedicated to answering your questions around items such as payroll (Chapter 3), recruiting (Chapter 5) or learning (Chapter 6).

In addition, there are challenges with these types of technology, just like any other. With that in mind, this analysis will also examine some of the more common challenges with using artificial intelligence, such as system bias. We will also focus on the competencies that matter most for an HR leader in a digital world, requiring a mixture of human ingenuity and creativity with the scalability and insight that machines can provide. This balance has always been a challenge since the earliest days of automation, but in a world where knowledge work rules and computers are doing an increasing amount of knowledge work, the discussion is more pertinent than ever.

Key points

- Today's world of HR is more complex than ever before, and a disruptive environment requires companies to be more agile in order to respond to market demands.
- Talent acquisition, learning, workforce management, and other core HR practice areas are all affected by changes in candidate and employee preferences, which places even greater demand on today's HR function.
- Employee experience is more than a buzzword – it's a way to encapsulate the entire sum of experiences that employees perceive from the first application through to the last touch of offboarding. Employers must ask themselves if those moments, either in whole or in part, are generating positive experiences for their candidates and employees.
- New artificial intelligence technologies that automate and augment the workforce could be the key to solving some of the thorny issues and increased demands for HR to accomplish more with fewer resources.

Notes

- 1 <http://www-935.ibm.com/services/c-suite/study/studies/chro-study/>
- 2 <http://www.wsj.com/articles/is-uber-a-friend-or-foe-of-carnegie-mellon-in-robotics-1433084582>
- 3 <http://money.cnn.com/2016/05/06/news/economy/gig-economy-princeton-krueger-tiny/>

- 4 <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2013/08/22/ten-largest-employers/2680249/>
- 5 <http://lhra.io/blog/business-value-hr-technology-research-preview/>
- 6 <http://lhra.io/blog/todays-top-talent-acquisition-priorities-free-ebook/>
- 7 <http://lhra.io/blog/global-hr-practices-compliance-growth-productivity-new-research/>
- 8 <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1984/10/art2full.pdf>
- 9 <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/tenure.nr0.htm>
- 10 https://research.udemy.com/research_report/2017-skills-gap-report/
- 11 <http://lhra.io/blog/new-research-radically-rethinking-learning-content-strategy-free-report/>
- 12 <http://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/188033/worldwide-employee-engagement-crisis.aspx>
- 13 <http://lhra.io/blog/value-employee-experience-free-ebook/>

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