

HR

INNOVATION & TECH FEST



COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

The biggest challenges, concerns and
topics of interest to the HR Innovation
& Tech Community

PRODUCED BY
eventful
people

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INTRODUCTION

Eventful People has specialised in developing communities of common interest for business and IT professionals for over a decade in South Africa. Each year, Eventful People embarks on a unique research project, including a series of round table discussions with customers from over 30 organisations, from which we establish what the common challenges, concerns and areas of interest are currently in the HR community

This snapshot is a summary of the discussion points that are most pressing to those working in HR in South Africa. The themes identified in this research inform the agenda for the HR Innovation & Tech Conference, taking place in August 2023.

THE EVENTFUL RESEARCH PROCESS

Our unique research process ensures pure and accurate information is generated through debate and discussion among the community. Themes that emerge from the research groups are used to build the agenda for the HR Innovation & Tech Fest conference 2023. HR Innovation & Tech will demonstrate how HR is being enabled by technology through a combination of case studies, thought-leader presentations, discussion groups, product demos and interactive panels, all based around the key topics in this report.



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01 Months of in-depth research

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EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT

In today's competitive business landscape, creating a positive employee experience has become a critical factor for companies looking to attract and retain top talent. By offering employees the tools and resources they need to perform their jobs effectively and improve their overall experience, businesses can foster a more engaged and motivated workforce. Moreover, leveraging HR analytics and data-driven decision-making can enable businesses to identify trends and areas for improvement in employee experience and engagement.

A people-first approach that prioritizes employee well-being and development can create a positive workplace culture, which supports innovation, productivity, and growth. When employees feel valued, supported, and invested in, they are more likely to contribute their best work and stay committed to their company's mission and goals. By placing people at the center of their operations, companies can not only improve employee satisfaction and retention but also drive business outcomes such as increased revenue, profitability, and customer satisfaction.

Key Focus Areas

- Providing employees with the right tools, technology, and work environment to support their work and maximize their potential.
- Leveraging AI and ML to enhance the employee experience by streamlining HR processes, automating routine tasks, and providing personalized recommendations.
- Treating the employee experience as a “bottom-up” concept and prioritizing the needs and well-being of employees at all levels.
- Building a comprehensive employee experience strategy that encompasses all aspects of the employee journey.
- Developing methods to understand employee needs better and address them proactively.
- Implementing methods to track employee engagement and using the data to elevate the overall employee experience.
- Ensuring that the workplace is adaptable to change, which guarantees employability and a positive employee experience.
- Collaboration between HR and L&D to build a better employee experience and provide opportunities for employee growth and development.

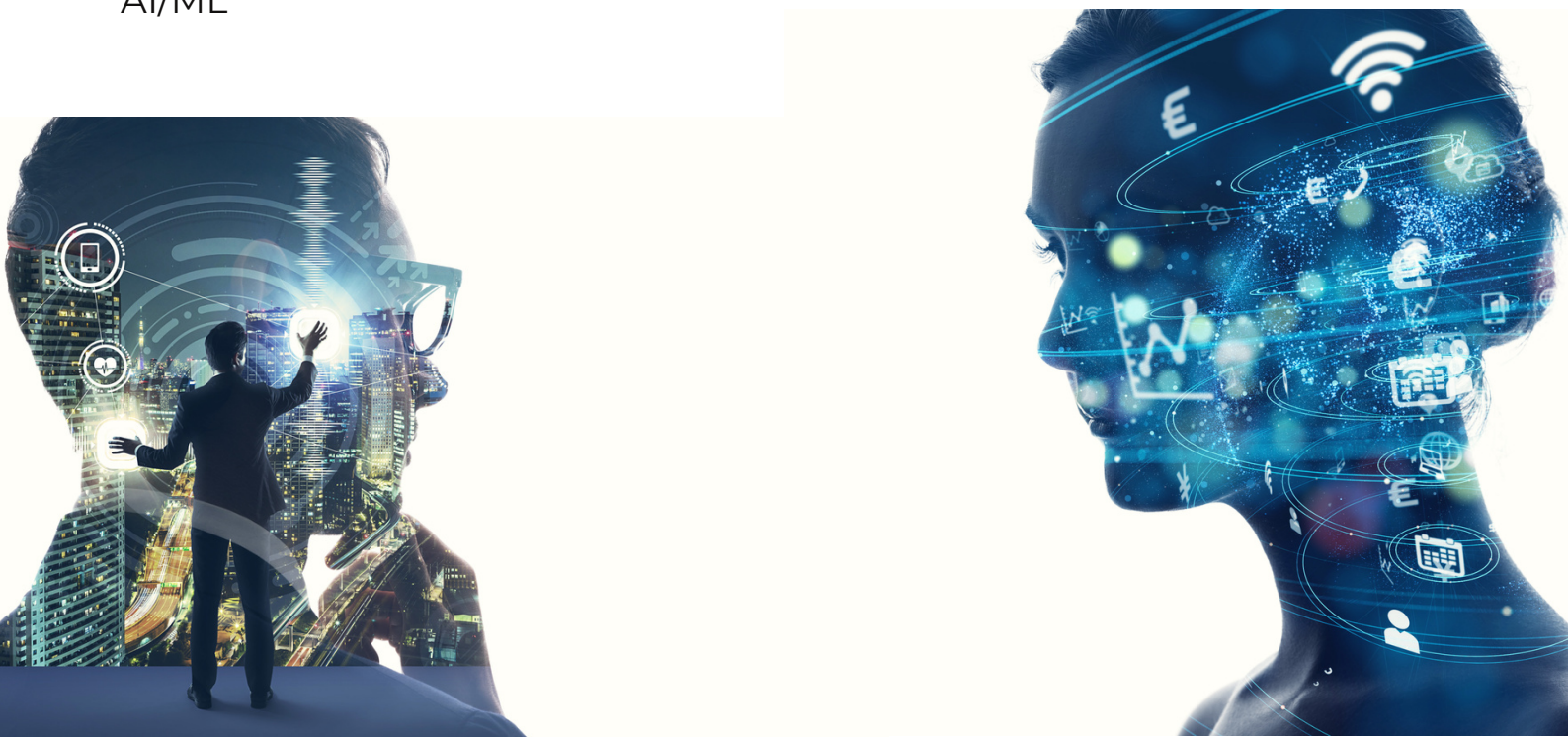


ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND MACHINE LEARNING (ML) IN HR TECHNOLOGY

Using AI and ML to fast-track processes for employees is an important aspect of HR innovation and technology happening in South Africa. By automating routine tasks such as leave requests, expense claims, and onboarding, companies can free up HR staff to focus on more strategic activities. However, one of the challenges associated with this is ensuring that employee data is accurate and up to date. With employees entering and leaving the organization all the time, it can be difficult to maintain an accurate and comprehensive record of employee information. Companies should also be aware of the potential ethical considerations associated with the use of AI and ML in HR. For example, there is a risk that these technologies could perpetuate biases and discrimination if not designed and implemented carefully. It is therefore important for companies to take a proactive approach to addressing these issues.

Key Focus Areas

- Ensuring that humans remain at the center of HR
- How to ensure accurate employee data in AI/ML-driven HR?
- Risks and mitigation strategies for automating HR processes
- Using AI/ML for personalized employee development
- How to ensure accurate employee data in AI/ML-driven HR?
- Role of chatbots and AI in employee self-service
- Accessibility of HR technology for employees with disabilities or low digital literacy
- Identifying and addressing employee retention and turnover issues with AI/ML



HR ANALYTICS AND DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

HR analytics and data-driven decision-making are essential components of modern HR practices. With advanced analytics tools, HR professionals can gain valuable insights into employee behaviour, recruitment, workforce planning, talent management strategies, and more. These insights help inform data-driven decisions that enhance employee engagement, productivity, and retention, ultimately driving business success. However, effective data management and governance are crucial to the success of HR analytics initiatives, and ethical considerations and privacy concerns must be addressed when collecting and using employee data. By leveraging HR analytics, organizations can make informed decisions about their workforce, optimize their talent management strategies, and stay ahead of the competition.

Key Focus Areas

- The benefits of HR analytics in improving workforce management practices
- Different types of HR analytics tools available and their uses
- The importance of data governance and effective data management practices
- Ethical considerations and privacy concerns related to employee data
- How HR analytics can support diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives
- The role of artificial intelligence in HR analytics
- Best practices for implementing HR analytics in an organization
- The future of HR analytics and its potential impact on the HR profession.
- Improving your Diversity and Inclusion efforts



THE FUTURE OF WORK: TECHNOLOGY, DEMOGRAPHICS, AND SOCIETAL CHANGES

The future of work will be shaped by technology, changing demographics, and evolving societal norms. Automation and AI are expected to transform many industries and change the types of jobs available. Flexible work arrangements, such as remote and hybrid work, will become more common as workers seek work-life balance, and advances in technology make it easier to collaborate and communicate from anywhere. To remain competitive, businesses need to consider the risks and opportunities that come with these changes and HR must play a role in preparing organizations and individuals for a future where technology enables unforeseeable changes. The next generation of workers, including Gen Z and younger Millennials, are comfortable with technology and have different expectations for work arrangements, with an emphasis on work-life balance, flexibility, autonomy, diversity, social justice, and sustainability. Businesses need to adapt to these preferences to create supportive work environments.

Key Focus Areas

- Understanding the impact of technology on the future of work
- Preparing for the adoption of automation and AI to enhance productivity and efficiency.
- Embracing flexible work arrangements such as remote and hybrid work to attract and retain top talent.
- Adapting to changing demographics and evolving societal norms to create supportive work environments.
- Catering to the expectations and preferences of the next generation of workers
- Incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives into HR strategies to attract and retain a diverse workforce.
- Creating a culture of continuous learning and development to upskill and reskill employees for the jobs of the future.
- Fostering innovation and creativity by encouraging knowledge sharing and collaboration across departments and teams.
- Ensuring data privacy and security as technology becomes more integrated into work processes.



ATTRACTING, RETAINING, AND DEVELOPING TALENT

Talent development has become a critical focus for businesses in South Africa, particularly in the context of the changing nature of work and the need to build a high-performing, agile workforce. With the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating this need, HR leaders are adopting new strategies to attract and retain top talent. These strategies include leveraging talent intelligence to identify and target high-potential candidates, using recruitment automation to streamline the hiring process, and upskilling/reskilling programs to develop existing employees. By embracing these approaches, organizations can identify and cultivate the skills and abilities essential for future success. The next generation of workers presents both opportunities and challenges for businesses. To attract and retain top talent, companies must embrace their preferences and values, while also addressing risks and challenges. By doing so, businesses can succeed in a rapidly evolving landscape and build a workforce that is prepared to meet future challenges.

Key Focus Areas

- Redefining job profiles, mapping skills, and aligning recruitment practices.
- Developing effective recruitment strategies to attract and retain top talent.
- Identifying and targeting high-potential candidates through talent intelligence and analytics.
- Streamlining the hiring process with recruitment automation to save time and resources.
- Developing upskilling and reskilling programs to cultivate the necessary skills for future success.
- Embracing the preferences and values of the next generation of workers to attract and retain top talent.
- Cultivating a culture of continuous learning & innovation
- Tech-enabled learning platforms for scalable training & development.
- Encouraging knowledge sharing and collaboration for cross-functional learning.
- Measuring & evaluating talent development program effectiveness with data insights



THE EVOLVING ROLES OF HR LEADERSHIP

The HR function has undergone significant transformation in recent years, and with the advent of new technologies and the changing nature of work, HR leaders must continually adapt to stay relevant and effective. This topic is of utmost importance as it directly impacts the success of organizations and their ability to attract, retain, and develop talent in a highly competitive global marketplace. However, as organizations continue to evolve and transform, so do the roles and responsibilities of HR leaders. It is essential for HR leaders to adapt to these changes and align their strategies with organizational goals to stay relevant and effective.

Key Focus Areas

- Developing and supporting managers to lead with empathy in the workplace.
- Creating accountability for DEI initiatives within leadership and driving positive change.
- Supporting the development of a hybrid work model that offers flexibility, intentional collaboration, and empathy-based management.
- Using human-centric design to offer flexible experiences, enable intentional collaboration, and drive empathy-based management.
- How to employ dynamic approaches to manage shifting skills needs and adapt to changing business conditions.
- Reevaluating workforce support offerings to drive productivity, health, and long-term resilience.
- Optimizing the HR function for agility, customer centricity, and organizational efficiency to stay relevant and effective.
- The Importance of building leaders with an inclusive and diverse mindset

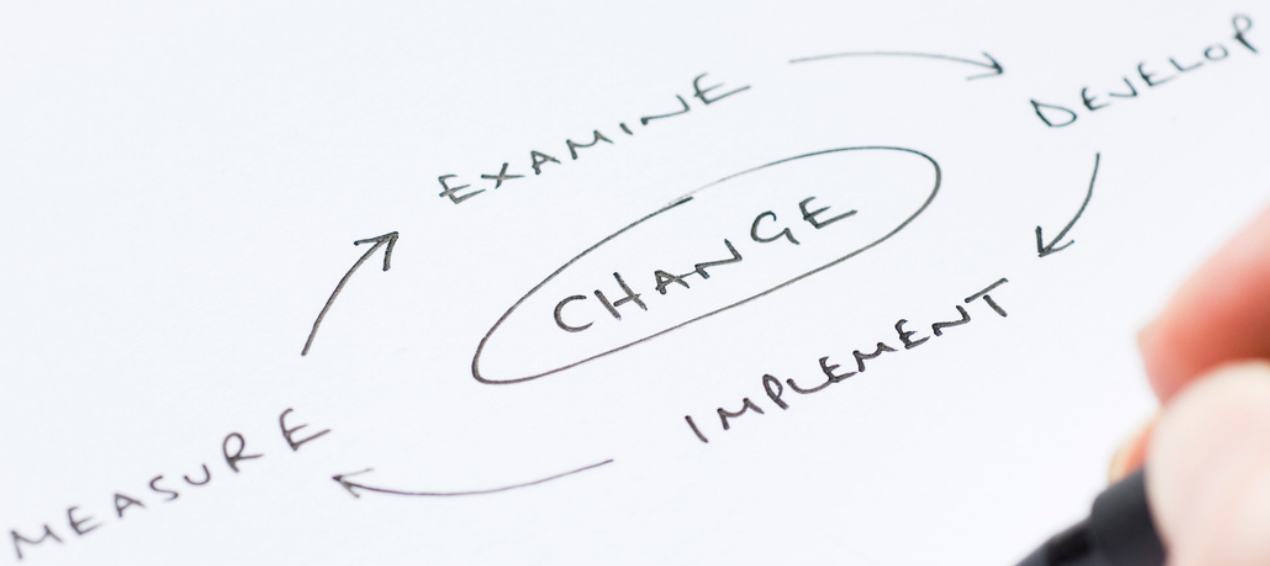


HR CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The relevance and importance of HR Change Management lies in its ability to ensure that organizational change is implemented effectively, and employees are adequately prepared to adapt to new systems and processes. By managing change effectively, organizations can avoid resistance from employees, minimize the negative impact on productivity and morale, and ensure a smooth transition to new systems and processes. Additionally, effective HR Change Management can build employee trust, increase engagement, and reduce turnover, resulting in improved business outcomes.

Key Focus Areas

- Communication and Engagement: Engage and communicate to achieve successful change.
- Training and Development: Equip employees with skills and knowledge to adapt to change.
- Leadership and Culture: Build innovative and flexible culture with strong leadership for successful change.
- Performance Management: Align performance management with new systems for increased productivity.
- Resistance Management: Overcoming resistance to change for a smoother transition.
- Technology Rollouts in HR: Minimize disruption and maximize adoption for successful technology rollouts.
- Data Analytics and Technology: Leverage data analytics and technology for informed decision-making and improvement.
- Increasing Collaboration: Foster collaboration to drive innovation and improve performance across departments.



EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

In today's world, businesses must prioritize employee wellness alongside technology solutions to ensure a healthy and engaged workforce. This involves providing a supportive work environment, offering work-life balance, competitive benefits and compensation, and mental health resources and support. HR technology solutions such as wellness apps, mental health platforms, and employee assistance programs are becoming increasingly popular for supporting employee well-being. By utilizing HR innovation and technology solutions while prioritizing employee well-being, organizations can create a culture of well-being and resilience that leads to higher engagement, satisfaction, and productivity. However, it is important to note that things like excessive screen time, digital overload, and constant notifications can lead to burnout, stress, and poor mental health. Proper use of technology can help employees achieve work-life balance, form healthy habits, and access resources and support when needed. Striking a balance between technology and employee well-being is crucial for organizations to promote long-term success.

Key Focus Areas

- Encouraging employees to take ownership of their well-being.
- The benefits of offering flexible work arrangements and well-being programs.
- Building networks that promote employee well-being.
- Training managers to recognize and respond to employee stress and burnout.
- Investing in well-being programs through L&D
- Gathering feedback to drive improvements in HR policies.
- Creating positive workplace cultures that support employee well-being.
- Encouraging cross-functional collaboration and communication to break down silos and foster a sense of connection.





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Connecting the ideas community

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