

Reimagine HR for a New Reality

Technological shifts are opening up new ways of working. Let's take the example of the autonomous, self-driving cars that will eventually take away the jobs of drivers. Despite the obvious job displacement for human workers, there is a wider range of impact that is harder to fathom at present but that will be a reality eventually. The insurance industry will lose a massive amount of revenue that



comes from automobile insurance; the drop in the number of road accidents will dramatically reduce the number of organ donors; the tobacco industry in countries where gas stations drive the sale of tobacco will be affected; and when trucks go driverless, the business of motels will be hit. But this is just a fragment of what technological shifts can do. Let's get back to the workplace.

Gig workers are already 30-40 percent of the workforce. The rise of social media, visuals, and video has changed how people communicate, and how often. And as parts of jobs get automated, the CHRO is expected to leverage the organizational culture to drive the business outcomes, redefine the purpose of HR, and lead the reskilling process. This, in turn, necessitates the organizational processes to be reimagined and regenerated, especially of HR, and the role of the CHRO too.

Once upon a time, an organization was a closed ecosystem, insulated from the rest of the world, and as long as the employee played by the rules of the organization, the employer would guarantee lifetime employment. One set of rules governed everyone. The pedigree of the degrees was a predictor of performance. Hierarchy mattered. Communication was top-down. The leaders always had access to information that the employees did not.

Until one day the digital tsunami changed everything. Every second, 900,000 people hit Facebook; 452,000 tweets on Twitter; and 3.5 million searches for something on Google. Every element of the HR function can be reimagined with tech. So how can we use tech for HR?



Understand the individual: Finding the right person to hire is now being done by machines. Gen Z believes that their work is their resume. The code they write on GitHub describes their capabilities more than a degree. Talenya compiles information from Glassdoor, GitHub, StackOverflow and calculates the probability of the candidate switching. Companies like Directi, Practo, Snapdeal (belong) Voonik, Furlenco, Simplilearn, Zestmoney, Wazzeer (Skillate) are using Skillate to parse and match



resumes in large numbers. AI and ML can be used to find a better match between the individual and the role and the organization culture. This could significantly improve the engagement levels of the workforce.

Shareability and collaboration: The Optical Character Reader in Adobe Scan digitizes printed documents making any document searchable, shareable and reusable.

Shareability and collaboration is a necessary part of the way work gets done. Digital cameras made it easy for people to share their world in real time. It encourages collaboration. Creating people networks enabled by digital experiences can change the way people work. Being able to coach leaders to work in an open collaborative manner across functional silos can be a major strategic impact the CEO can make. Analog work models encourage working within the function. The digital world works in a boundaryless manner across functions, hierarchies and across ecosystems.

Trust on demand: TiiQu offers a blockchain based digital passport that the applicant can produce, which tracks verified credentials. Everything from identity, qualifications, certifications, memberships, work experience and education can be made available to an employer. The records are cross-authenticated with the issuing agency. This blockchain based model makes trust on-demand possible especially for gig workers spread across remote locations. The Wall Street Journal says that blockchains are, “well-suited to transactions that require trust and a permanent record.” In a world where gig workers already make up 40 percent of the workforce, blockchain tech like TiiQu will be important for HR to get paid through smart contracts. Getting the employees to partner with gig workers will be another culture shift the CEOs can facilitate.



Culture and leadership: The two biggest drivers of business success are culture and leadership. In redesigning the organization, building self-awareness in the leadership team is a good place to start the culture change. Chatbots like Zoom.ai and X.ai can write letters to candidates (or employees) and schedule appointments. That is like giving every employee a personal assistant. Glassdoor uses AI to suggest jobs where the candidate will succeed. EdCast is using AI to build skills for a million people on the World Economic Forum SkillSET portal. Nasscom is using EdCast to create learning pathways that can enable lakhs of IT professional to reskill and upgrade their capabilities.

When I work with organizations undertaking their digital HR transformation journeys, I ask them to identify what will make the function valuable for the employee (and the business), be feasible (keep the organization profitable), and also make it a desirable option for all models of employment. To be able to rethink assumptions that make HR valuable, feasible, and desirable is a good start.

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