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CHRO Quarterly

A Magazine for Chief Human Resources
Officers and Their Teams

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Evolutions in Workforce Coaching:
The Connector Manager Approach

Gartner Human Resources Practice

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CHRO Quarterly: Q4 2019

From the Editors: Benjamin Loring and Amanda Joseph-Little

As 2019 draws to a close and organizations prepare for 2020, we present the final issue of CHRO Quarterly for the year. Our theme of “HR evolutions” represents the best of Gartner research into the trends and changes in HR that are coming in the near future.

As organizations face growing challenges, the HR function’s role is evolving to support their adaptation. These evolutions will prompt HR to take on new roles and responsibilities in data ethics and information transparency. HR will continue to transform its operating model and functions to support organizational change. And it will catalyze new organizational designs and coaching methodologies to meet the demands of business and the workforce.

Our first article, “HR’s Role in Data Ethics,” comes from Gartner’s ReimagineHR keynote address by Brian Kropp, distinguished vice president in the HR research practice. It discusses HR’s emerging role in defining data and AI ethics strategy. Given its experience managing employee data and driving business outcomes while considering the implications, HR is well-placed to lead data ethics strategy in organizations. HR leaders can start today to integrate data ethics in their organizations through strategy, training and human capital development.

“HR Evolutions: New Expectations for Radical Transparency” discusses our prediction that demands for internal transparency will grow rapidly in organizations. HR will help organizations be mindful about how and when to make information accessible — and how much. The article explains what to look for and how to plan now to avoid employee dissatisfaction later.

Next, we discuss how HR structures will change with “Highlights From the HR Operating Model of the Future.” This article follows a popular webinar series and features our practical advice on the five imperatives that will help the HR function adapt to a changing business landscape.

We also discuss the “New Roles in the HR Function” — the top emerging HR roles that CHROs have already introduced or will introduce. These roles give insight into HR’s evolving capacities and the growing span of its responsibilities.

“Few HR Leaders Confident That Organization Design Will Support Agile Transformation” is based on a recent survey of senior HR leadership and shows the great disconnect between organizational designs for agile transformation and HR’s confidence in their implementation. The article examines the chief challenges in agile redesign that HR leaders point to, and it discusses some possible solutions.

Our final article examines the Connector manager in workforce coaching. It examines how the Connector manager approach fosters connections to employees, teams and the organization, and it offers practical advice on helping managers make these connections when coaching their team members.

Through this research, we continue to keep you, our members, informed of the latest trends and developments in the HR function. We hope this issue helps you prepare for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the new year.



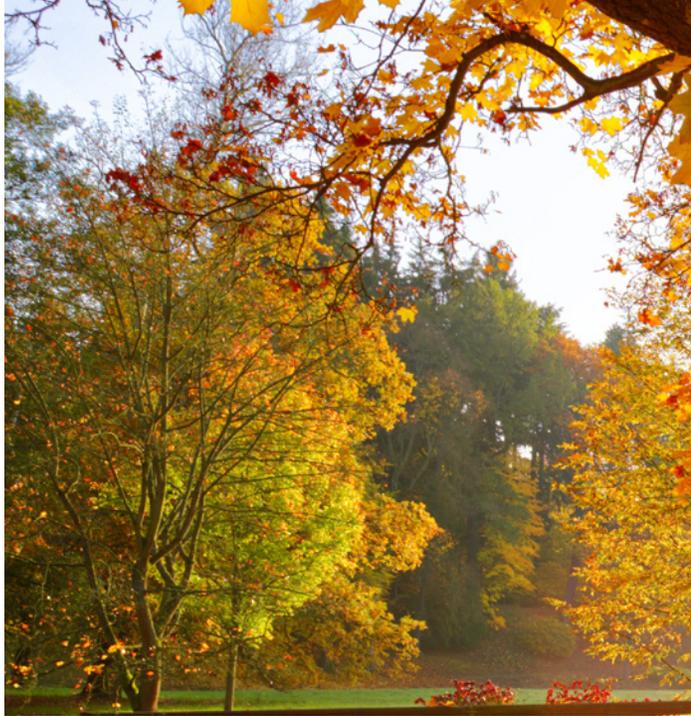
HR's Role in Data Ethics

By Brian Kropp

HR's role continues to evolve quickly. When discussing HR and the future of work, many point to reskilling, automation and management changes. However, Gartner Distinguished Vice President Brian Kropp predicts data ethics will be a core part of HR's role. In his keynote lecture at the 2019 ReimagineHR conference, he said that while HR leaders are in the early phases of thinking about data ethics, HR negotiates the relationship between ethical considerations and business goals and leads the collection and use of employee data. This report is based on his conference remarks.

Data is increasingly central to the HR function, as shown in HR's bottom line: Talent analytics is the fastest growing part of the typical HR budget. In the average company, the data analytics team has grown from less than four to almost eight between 2017 and 2019. Over 75% of talent analytics leaders report their organizations will increase resources dedicated to talent analytics over the next three years.¹ This is because organizations rely on data more and more when deciding how to acquire, utilize, support and develop talent.

As a result, vendors are pushing HR tech



solutions that collect greater and more varied kinds of data, from the ubiquitous engagement and pulse surveys to social media scrapes, employee location data and facial monitoring. A few organizations are even microchipping their employees. Organizations are also using data in new ways — for example, AI-driven software to create employees' skills profiles from project descriptions, educational course information and performance feedback.

More Data Brings Ethical Risks

But this greater focus on data has drawn scrutiny. According to our research, more than 53 countries will soon adopt or have already adopted a wide variety of regulations on the collection, use, storage and dissemination of personal data.² Combined with myriad regional and local regulations, this trend is forcing firms to operate in an increasingly complex regulatory environment. The legal and reputational risks of data collection and greater privacy concerns require HR to be mindful of the kinds of employee data it collects and how it uses it.

Two recent experiences highlight the new risks organizations now face:

- One company used advanced talent acquisition software to improve quality of hire by reducing the likelihood of employee attrition. The company learned applicants from certain postal codes closer to the company's location had lower attrition rates than those who lived farther away. Accordingly, it downgraded applications from the more distant postal codes. But since the distant postal codes were more ethnically diverse, the analytics intervention had the adverse effect of making the firm's hiring less diverse.



- The U.K. military used wearables to track special forces members' health during intensive training, but it faced a dilemma when the wearables picked up evidence of drug use outside of working hours.

Employers could also face the risk of legal challenges resulting from social media data scrapes to monitor employee sentiment: They could inadvertently discover complaints of fraud, mismanagement or harassment — knowledge that could be legally imputed to them.

As these cases demonstrate, corporate leaders now face a series of new questions: First, how can we collect data ethically? And more broadly, now that we can collect vastly greater amounts of employee data, how do we use it ethically?

HR is hardly alone in adjusting to a world of ethical data collection and use. For example, AI is now implemented throughout organizations — in finance to identify fraud, in production and supply chain to automate processes and in marketing to segment the customer base. But HR leaders are best positioned to lead on data and AI ethics in their organizations because they can simultaneously understand the business need for data and the protections that must exist for employees.

How HR Should Respond

HR leaders can start leading today in three main areas: strategy, training and human capital development.

First, HR can drive the creation of a comprehensive data ethics strategy. As we have discussed, HR's unique position astride ethics and business

strategy means it will appreciate the business urgency while remaining acutely mindful of ethical implications. Creating a data ethics strategy includes cross-functional input and commitment throughout the organization. The strategy should include when, how and for what business decisions data can be used. Any new plans for data and AI applications must include early stakeholder discussions to ensure they are used ethically.

Second, HR can train leaders on data and AI ethics. Specifically, HR-produced training programs can teach leaders how to evaluate the implications of using data and AI.

Finally, as new roles that are heavily dependent on data and AI emerge — for example, “robot managers” that direct and monitor new technologies — HR can design them with strong data ethics in mind. These roles will require critical training in ethical decision making and the establishment of ethical procedures governing data collection and use.

HR is best positioned to provide these necessary safeguards because the management of employee data in HR processes has provided experience analyzing the implications of data collection and use while driving the business forward. By staking out a position at the forefront of data and AI ethics, HR can guide organizations' mindful adoption of new technologies, thereby avoiding the myriad dangers and pitfalls they present.

¹ 2019 Gartner Future of Talent Analytics Survey; n=44

² Gartner

HR Evolutions: New Expectations for Radical Transparency

By Emily Rose McRae

In addition to new pressure to address data ethics, HR leaders will soon face greater employee demand for vastly greater internal transparency regarding the data organizations collect.

Employees have become used to some data collection methods, such as sensors, self-tracking mobile apps and visual analytics, to collect data on their own activities and to monitor their progress toward personal goals. At the same time, many have gained a sense of ownership over their data and taken steps to monitor how it is used (e.g., by controlling their privacy settings and checking data use information on social media platforms).

At work, employees can learn a lot from external

sources about an organization before they join it, but once hired, they can access very little of the voluminous data the organization collects about them. Organizations often collect this data without employees' knowledge (see Figure 1).

Moreover, employees cannot use the limited data they can access to inform decisions or improve performance. As a result, 71% of employees recently surveyed said their employers should increase their transparency.¹

Figure 1: Types of Employee Data Collected by Organizations

 Activity Monitoring	Login Attempts	Keystrokes	Location	Browsing History
 Personal Details	Home Address	Number of Dependents	Marital Status	Social Media Activity Hobbies
 Work Metrics	Performance Reviews	Productivity	Engagement Scores	Harassment Reports

Source: Gartner



Leading companies have already taken steps to demonstrate greater transparency, such as providing pay transparency and sharing engagement survey results at a granular level to all employees. For example, rather than providing experience improvement information primarily to managers and leaders, Salesforce uses its all-access experience dashboard to help employees better identify ways to improve their own day-to-day experience.

By 2025, we predict most organizations will have radically increased internal transparency for employees. Organizations will share aggregated information on manager performance ratings, salary bands and employee skill sets with them.

Early Indicators of the Shift Toward Radical Transparency

We have identified three early indicators that show the movement toward radical transparency is growing:

- **Transparency as an important part of employer branding** — Employers who are more transparent with their employees will be rewarded with lower attrition, higher volumes of applicants and higher rates of candidate conversion.

By 2025, we predict most organizations will have radically increased internal transparency for employees.

- **An increase in the number of external platforms offering employer data transparency** — More platforms will come to market that provide employees with analysis derived from the same information their employers are already collecting. Employee expectations for transparency will rise, and the discrepancy between the availability of data on external platforms and its unavailability on employers' internal ones will prompt employees to demand greater transparency.
- **Interoperability increasingly advertised as a feature of software that collects and analyzes employee data** — The inability to combine data from multiple sources prevents organizations from fully utilizing the data they collect. When vendors start promoting their capability of combining data from different sources and sharing it across platforms as a product feature, employer transparency will rapidly increase.

Transparency Expectations Vary

This shift toward radical transparency will not affect organizations equally. HR leaders are more likely to face employee demands for greater transparency in organizations that:

- Promote a culture of transparency and choice.
- Promote internal mobility as part of their employer brand.
- Already possess sophisticated data analytics capabilities in the relevant functions (HR, finance, IT, etc.).
- Maintain a high appetite for risk.
- Are part of the technology industry.

HR leaders are less likely to face these demands in organizations that:

- Encourage a culture of privacy and discretion.
- Prioritize cost optimization (due to the high capital investment needed).
- Lack analytics and data visualization capabilities in the relevant functions (HR, finance, IT, etc.).
- Struggle to work cross-functionally.
- Have experienced a high-profile data loss.

Implications

As organizations look to increase their internal transparency, data literacy will be more important than ever. Employees will be generating data from many of their activities; the more they understand about the importance of data quality and its impact on their goals, the faster organizations will be able to leverage the data they collect. Data-literate employees are more likely to produce high-quality data that can then be easily used by internal transparency tools and platforms. Organizations that struggle with data quality will not be able to produce reliable or meaningful reporting and will consequently be unable to meet expectations for internal transparency without significant investment.

Employees will push for transparency faster than organizations will provide it. Organizations that communicate their transparency efforts will see better retention rates. Organizations should expect to see internal transparency advertised in their competitors' employer branding, particularly at leading organizations and in the technology industry. Apps for comparing managers and "hacking" employees' own performance will be the free snacks and bean bag chairs of future employer branding.



Poor performance, mismanagement and inequity within an organization will be difficult to hide, and organizations will need to prepare for employee dissatisfaction. As organizations weigh whether to increase transparency, they should evaluate potential reputational and engagement risks of making their data accessible and proactively plan to address them. Organizations that do not prepare for the risks that come from exposing previously siloed data can anticipate high turnover and potential scandal.

Organizations that move more slowly toward internal transparency — or plan to avoid it — will nonetheless find insights about themselves on external platforms. External vendors will offer employees transparency regardless of their employers' preferences and will profit from doing so. These vendors will use web scraping, crowdsourcing and their own passive surveillance to report on a variety of topics, including engagement, compensation, manager performance and the employee experience. Regardless of their approach to internal transparency, employers will need to have a strategy for addressing what appears on external platforms. Some organizations will rush toward greater transparency faster than they planned in response to content posted on external platforms.

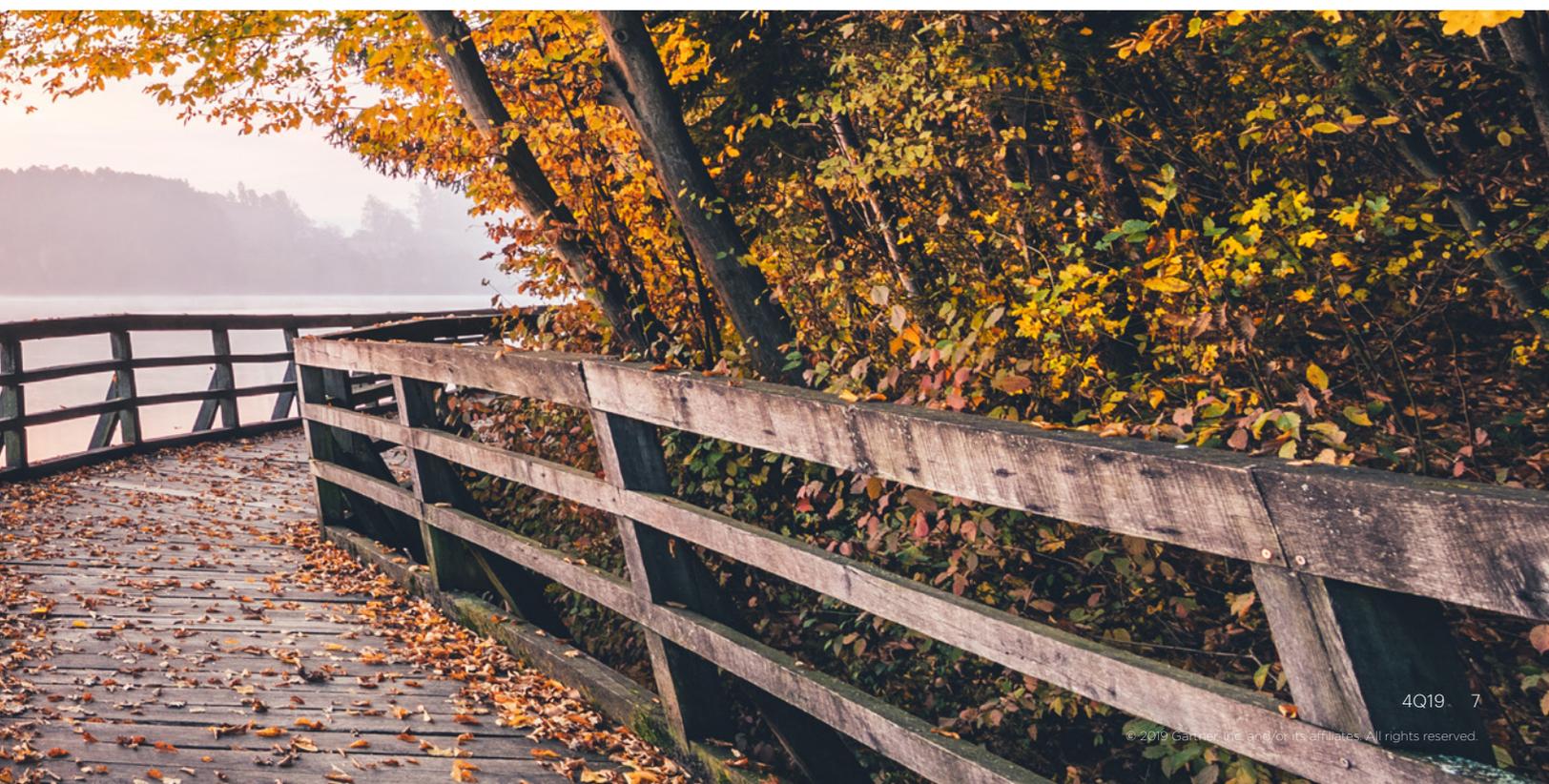
Recommendations for HR

To get ahead of this hidden trend, HR leaders should:

- Develop a transparency strategy that allows for collaboration across functions on data access and interoperability.
- Improve talent analytics capabilities and reporting so HR can offer transparency and data-driven insights even if other functions cannot.
- Set managers' expectations to operate within a shifting informational balance of power.

¹ 2019 Gartner Future of Work Employee Panel Survey.

Organizations that move more slowly toward internal transparency — or plan to avoid it — will nonetheless find insights about themselves on external platforms.



Highlights From the HR Operating Model of the Future

By Zachary Friedman

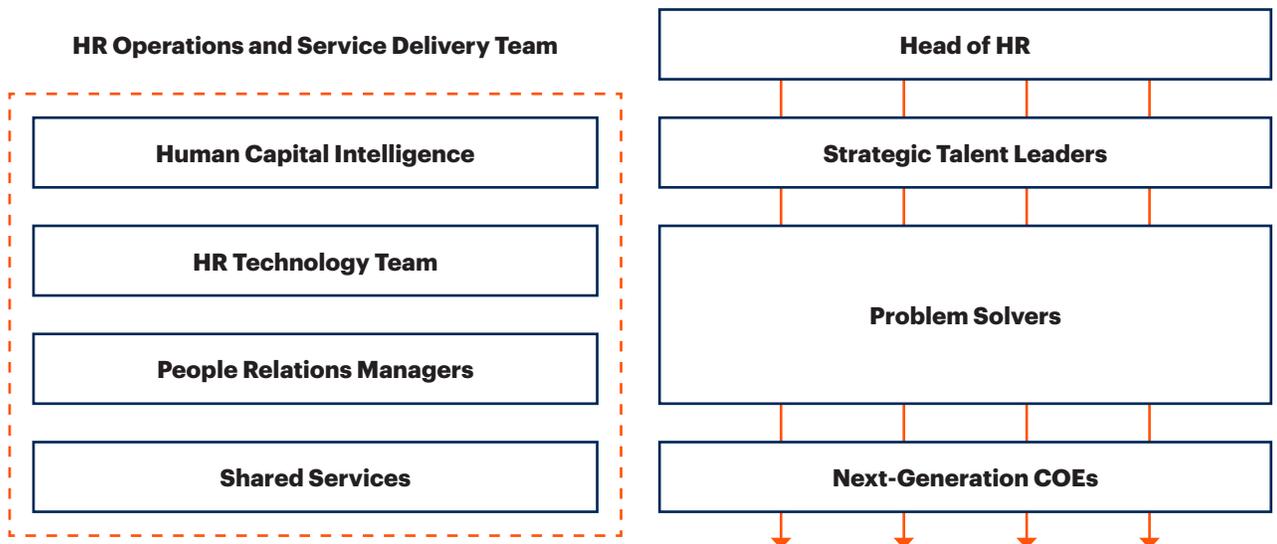
The HR Operating Model Challenge

The global business environment is changing: Its fast pace, increasing technology use, rising employee expectations and increasing cost pressures have shifted organizational priorities. As such, HR leaders are questioning whether their current ways of working will serve organizations in the coming years. Many are exploring new ways to organize the function to be agile, strategically aligned with the business and customer-centric about employee needs.

We have developed a vision of the future HR operating model to address this reorientation (see Figure 1). The goal is to help CHROs identify how their functions can operate differently in the future as well as highlight the steps they should take to get there.

The most effective problem solvers are comfortable with experimentation.

Figure 1: The HR Operating Model of the Future



Source: Gartner



Five Imperatives

The HR operating model of the future is driven by five imperatives, which are outlined below along with recommended staff allocation.

1 Replace the HRBP Role With Strategic Talent Leaders

Allocation: About 10% of HR staff

Many HRBPs today aspire to be more strategic. However, the breadth of work, time-consuming employee-relations tasks and capability gaps limit their strategic impact.

Strategic talent leaders are an evolved form of the VP-level HRBP who tackle the most pressing talent opportunities and challenges throughout the organization. They are aligned with a specific business unit or function and they own the talent management strategy for that group. Success in this role requires strong partnership skills and the ability to influence the aligned business unit or function leader. They have distinctive problem-solving skills and are adept at collaboration, business acumen and data analytics.

2 Create a Dynamic Pool of Problem Solvers

Allocation: About 40% of HR staff

Critical to the success of the future HR operating model is a dynamic pool of problem solvers who work on a variety of projects. This pool will be the heart of the HR function, creating and upgrading most resources, practices and policies used by HR and the workforce.

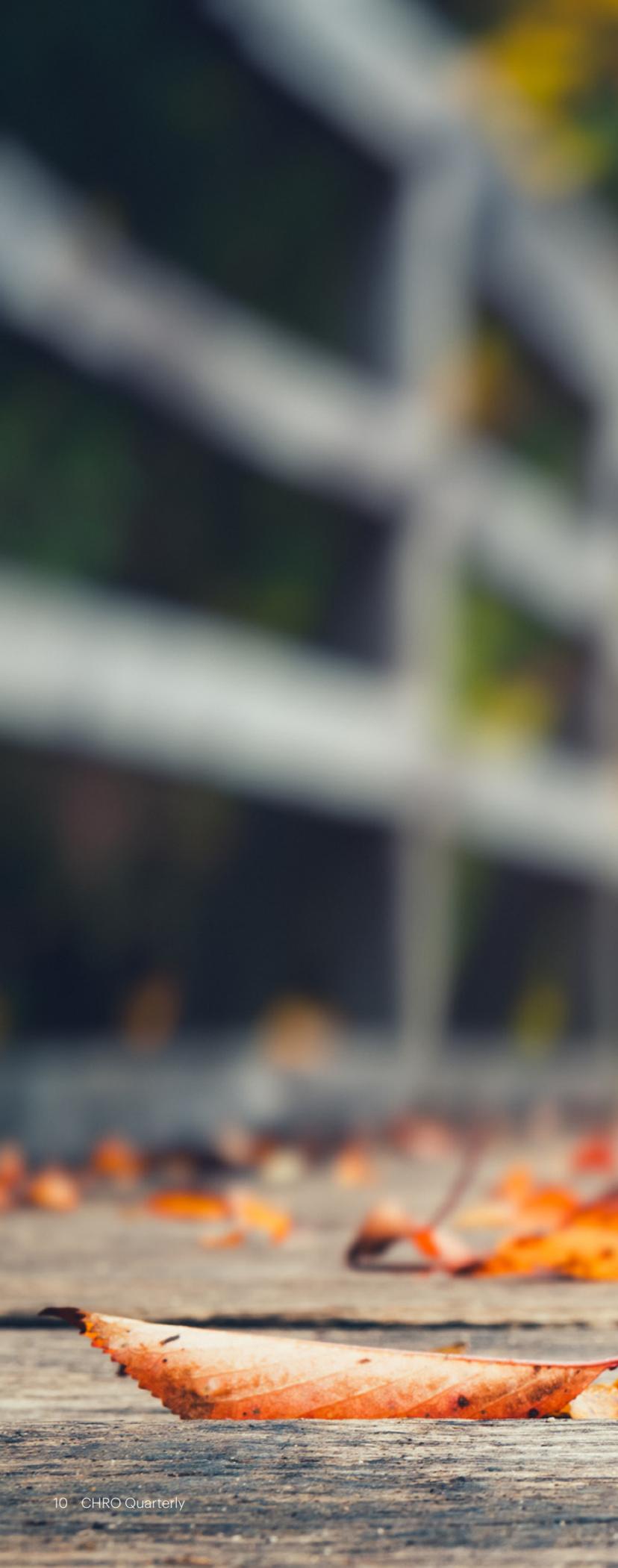
As the name suggests, the problem solver's primary job is to define talent problems and hypothesize, test and build solutions. Problem solvers work agilely on more temporary project assignments and can be redeployed based on need. Problem solvers work closely with their end users — employees and managers — and with the center of excellence (COE) team, which provides them with deep HR expertise to help them with their project assignments.

Ideal skills for a strong problem-solver pool include project management, critical thinking, experimentation and an ability to empathize with the end user. The most effective problem solvers also have an entrepreneurial mindset and are comfortable with experimentation.

Heads of HR can source their problem solvers from a variety of backgrounds and experiences:

- Internally from traditional COEs or as strategic HRBPs
- Externally as contractors, change managers and lean experts
- Outside of HR with backgrounds in marketing, customer experience of product development

The problem-solver pool comprises a flatter network of interconnected teams instead of a more traditional, top-down hierarchy. Moving in and out of project teams gives the problem solvers a broad appreciation of the business and opportunities to build a wide range of HR and business-advisory skills.



3 Provide Agile Support With Next-Generation COEs

Allocation: About 10% of HR staff

COEs today face an uneven demand challenge: While dominating a significant portion of the HR agenda and resourcing, COE utilization fluctuates greatly throughout the year. To address this, we suggest an evolution of the COE role.

COEs' goal remains the same: Focus on delivering skilled expertise throughout specialist domains. How they execute this, however, will change in production and delivery. Instead of being the sole producer of policy, practices and procedures, COEs should work with the problem-solver pool to develop policy, practices and procedures throughout HR. COEs will rely less on full-time, static teams and rely more on external, contract workers. This allows them to flex as talent needs change.

4 Evolve Talent Analytics Into Human Capital Intelligence

Allocation: About 10% of HR staff

The human capital intelligence (HCI) team is a deeply embedded analytics function to serve employee and manager needs, providing robust talent data to help leaders make better talent decisions. Projects for HCI may include discretionary effort and intent to stay trends, predictive models forecasting attrition or analyses of new benefits' impact on employee satisfaction.

HCI is consumer-centric, flexing its offerings as leader needs change. Success for HCI includes generating strategic insight to help HR partner with the business to achieve its objectives.

5 Build a Robust HR Operations and Service Delivery Team

Allocation: About 40% of HR staff

The HR operations and service delivery team is led by an HR chief operating officer (COO) and is responsible for the function's operational support. It includes HCI, an HR technology team, people relations managers and shared services.

Create an HR Chief Operating Officer Role for Strategic Oversight.

An HR COO specializes in the day-to-day administration and operation of the function and, in particular, how the function supports the business. With HR focused on breaking down silos, the HR COO is responsible for tying together different roles to maximize functional effectiveness.

Build an HR Technology Team to Own Technical Infrastructure. To take advantage of increasingly necessary automation and analytics, HR should develop a dedicated and sophisticated HR technology team.

While this team will be essential to administer technical maintenance, the most innovative HR technology teams will use emerging and proven technologies to strategically evolve the function. The team will be responsible not only for providing and managing the technology itself but also for supporting employee experience and efficiency outcomes.

Add People Relations Managers to Provide Necessary Functional Support. Finally, to address employees and managers' most urgent needs, HR should add a centralized pool of people relations managers to the HR operations and service delivery team. People relations managers own much of the work that was previously owned by the HRBP role. Their tasks include compliance and employee relations issues as well as people manager support responsibilities, such as mediating workplace disputes, harassment claims or other legal matters and people-management coaching.

By handling much of the work originally done by HRBPs, people relations managers are critical for ensuring the strategic talent leaders thrive.

While the HR operating model of the future can be tailored to suit a particular organization, the underlying trends that inform each imperative reflect major shifts in today's business landscape. Addressing these trends will help your organization become more agile, strategically aligned with the business and responsive to employee needs.



New Roles in the HR Function

By Caitlin Dutkiewicz



As HR addresses new business challenges, its structure has changed in many organizations. We recently conducted a survey of 104 HR leaders that asked whether they had or planned to establish a variety of emerging roles in the function. The results — broken down by those already created and those that are planned — indicate important trends (see Figure 1).

The top five “already emerged” HR roles — the newest roles that organizations have created — are:

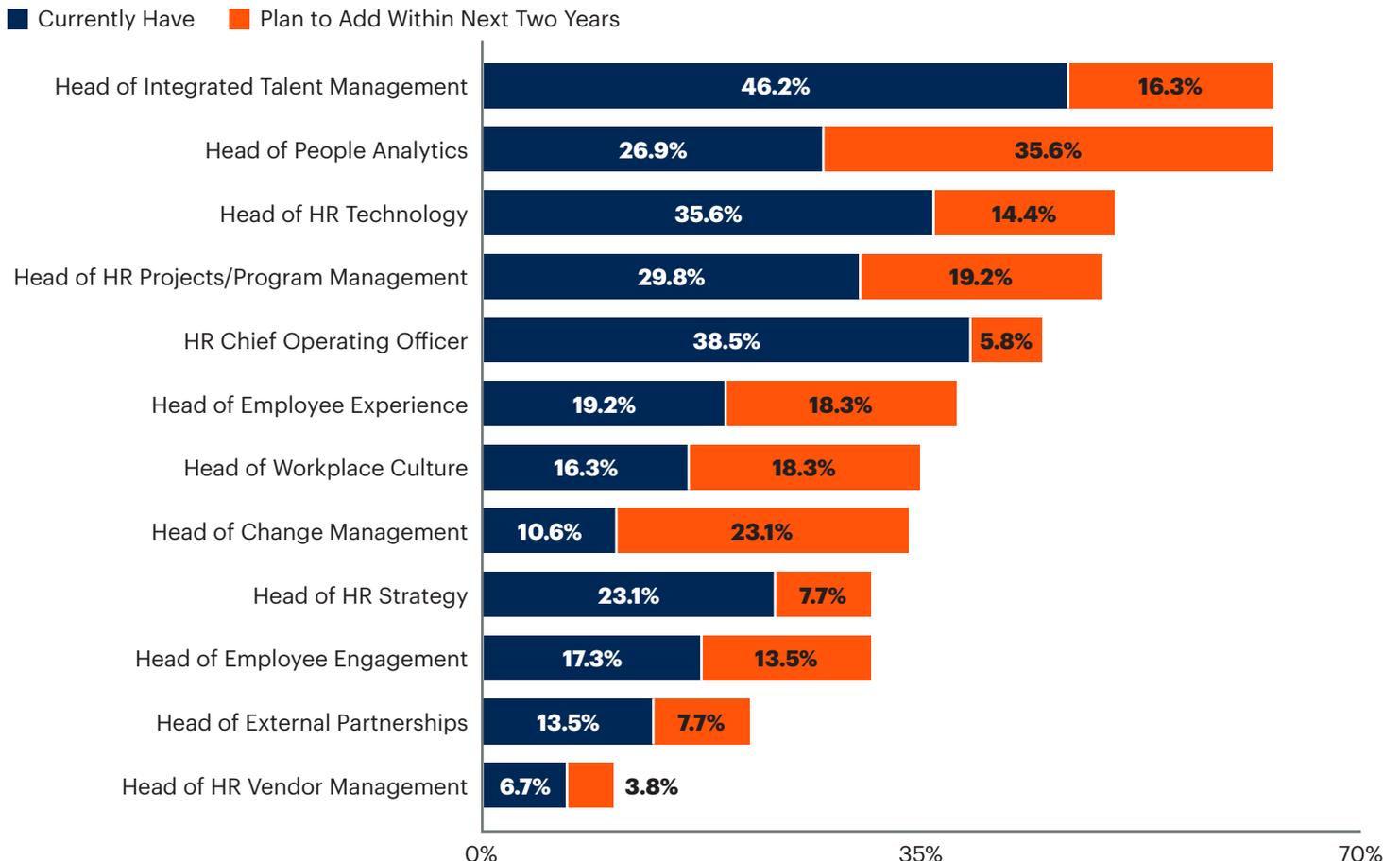
- Head of integrated talent management
- HR chief operating officer
- Head of HR technology
- Head of HR projects/program management
- Head of people analytics

Though many of these roles have existed for a decade or longer, less than half of organizations have added them.

Analyzing the scope of these roles offers helpful insights into the ways HR has evolved to meet the challenges of today’s business environment. For example, the head of integrated talent management role offers a structural solution to the inefficiencies of siloed HR operating models.

Figure 1: Current and Planned Prevalence of HR Roles

Percentage of HR Functions Surveyed



n = 104

Source: 2019 Gartner HR Operating Model Survey

Heads of integrated talent management ensure the efforts of subfunctions — from recruiting to learning and development, succession planning and beyond — are aligned.

The HR chief operating officer position establishes a dedicated resource distinctly focused on HR operations and improvements. This position can help counter perceptions of HR as a slow, change-resistant function by continuously pursuing process changes necessary to build a faster, better HR function.

The increased use of the head of people analytics and the head of HR technology roles reflect the extent that HR now relies on technology and data in its operations. These capacities have shifted from “nice to have” to “must have” in a few short years. Interestingly, the rise of the HR projects/program management role suggests a growing

number of organizations are shifting to project-based work and investing in “agile HR” as a faster, more collaborative way to meet employee and business leader needs.

Five roles emerge as the fastest-growing. Looking specifically at the roles most organizations plan to add in the next two years, this list includes, in rank order:

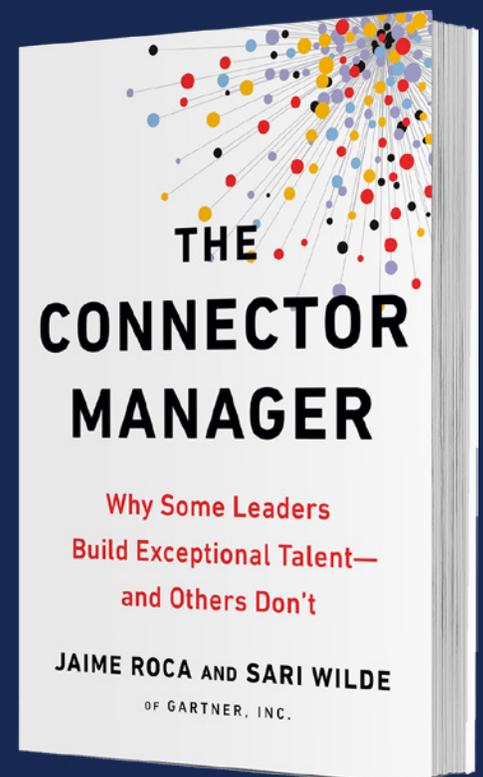
- Head of people analytics (35.6%)
- Head of change management (23.1%)
- Head of HR projects/program management (19.2%)
- Head of employee experience (18.3%)
- Head of workplace culture (18.3%)

With more than one-third of HR functions planning to add a head of people analytics,

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this role is quickly becoming critical to every large organization. By dedicating someone to manage talent data and pursue talent insights, HR functions can keep pace with their more data-driven peers and reaffirm their strategic relevance.

The growth of positions such as head of employee experience and head of workplace culture reflects the increasing importance of these topics to organizations' employee value propositions. The digital age fundamentally changes the relationship between employers and employees. Dedicating explicit resources to managing employee experience and workplace culture can create a common sense of purpose and community as organizational boundaries blur and talent moves more freely within and between organizations.

As the business environment continues to change, these new and emerging roles may become fixed features of the HR function or may evolve further into other new roles. In any case, HR leaders must routinely ask if their function structure is setting them up for success by considering questions such as:

- Are we meeting our goals and keeping up with business and employee needs? If not, what has changed in the business environment that has disrupted our current approach?
- To what extent does our leadership structure prohibit us from meeting current needs? What specific capabilities do we need to add or remove to respond?
- Do we need to create new-to-world roles, or can we reallocate existing resources to new roles?

These questions and the roles discussed here can help start a conversation and prompt reflections on your current structure. These new roles have emerged in direct response to changes throughout the business world that likely affect your organization as well.

The digital age
fundamentally changes
the relationship between
employers and employees.



Few HR Leaders Confident That Organization Design Will Support Agile Transformation

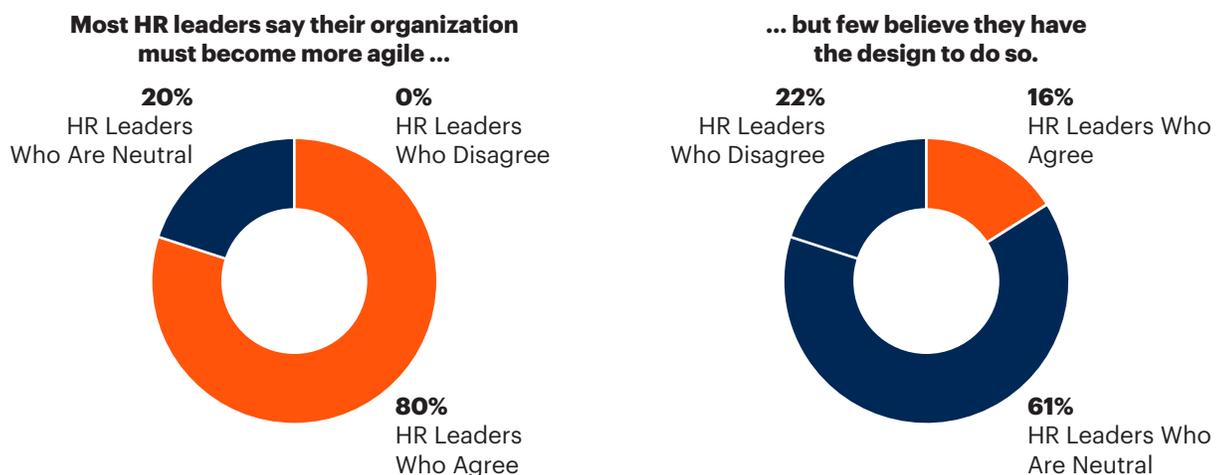
By KaJaiyai Hopkins

Organizations must continuously adapt to meet their strategic goals in an environment where work is fast-paced, new technologies are increasingly disruptive and customer expectations are evolving. Ensuring the organization's environment supports new ways of working is a critical part of HR's evolving role. Questions about how to keep pace and more specifically, how best to design organizations for faster and more flexible ways of working, are frequent topics during our conversations with HR leaders.

According to a 2019 survey of HR leaders, 80% agree their organizations must become more agile to meet strategic priorities in the

digital era (see Figure 1). "Agile" refers to a collaborative way of working that embraces change, drives efficiency through iteration and

Figure 1: Impact of Current Organization on Agile Transformation



n = 141, n = 140
Source: 2019 Gartner Modern Employee Experience HR Leader Survey
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.



Eighty-four percent of organizations have redesigned to increase agility in the past two years or are planning to do so.

customer testing, and measures success through outcomes rather than inputs. However, only 11% of HR leaders say their organizations are currently agile.

HR leaders prioritize agile transformations to meet future business demands. Yet outdated organizational design — which consists of structures, workflows/role designs and networks — often impedes these efforts.¹

In fact, only 16% of HR leaders believe their organizations are designed to be agile. Similarly, 41% of employees rank incompatible organizational design among their top three barriers to adopting agile ways of working.²

To address the misalignment between organization design and agile ways of working, 84% of organizations have redesigned to increase agility in the past two years or are planning to do so.³ Despite all the restructuring, few HR leaders are confident their efforts will be effective; they are uncertain the redesigns they are implementing will significantly improve the organization's agility. In our conversations with HR leaders, they commonly cite two challenges that contribute to this lack of confidence:

- Will our design choice support our business goals?
- How do we implement the new design successfully?

HR leaders can improve the success of organization redesign initiatives by adopting an open-source approach to change management. This approach — which involves employees in strategy setting, planning, implementation and two-way communication — drives more successful change outcomes than a traditional (and much more common) top-down approach to change.

But which approach to organization design will enable greater speed and responsiveness? We hypothesize that while many organizations seek to remove formal structures, the most successful organizations increase the structure and formal process already in place to help employees quickly move and adapt.

Gartner's HR research team is beginning a new study to help HR leaders optimize organization design for future ways of working. This research will explore why so many organization designs fall short and identify how the most successful organizations design for speed and responsiveness. If you are interested in learning more and/or participating in this research, please contact your account executive, who can connect you with a member of our research team.

¹ For more information on the key components of organization design, see "Foundations of Organization Design Part 1: Key Concepts and Relationships."

² 2019 Gartner Q3 Global Labor Market Survey.

³ 2019 Gartner Modern Employee Experience HR Survey.

Evolutions in Workforce Coaching: The Connector Manager Approach

As organizational change accelerates, leaders and managers need to develop the workforce more rapidly and effectively. Most organizations view increased manager involvement in coaching as critical to this development. Through effective coaching, leaders and managers in all functions seek to develop employee skills more quickly, match training more closely to employees' work context and facilitate high-quality peer development.

Despite organizations' reliance on managers to coach employees, their success has been limited. Our data shows only 33% of employees are confident in their managers' ability to coach and develop them. Lack of time, low manager quality and the absence of necessary skills make effective coaching difficult for managers. Forty-five percent also say they feel they are unable to develop the skills employees need today. This growing disconnect is a barrier to unlocking employee performance that delivers business value.

Adopting the Connector Manager Approach to Coaching the Workforce

While every manager has a unique approach to employee coaching and development, our research — which is based on a survey of more than 7,000 employees and managers worldwide

— has uncovered four distinct profiles that describe all managers:

Teacher — Managers develop employees through personal expertise and experience, provide advice-oriented feedback and direct employee development.

Always On — Managers provide continuous, frequent coaching, drive employees' development and give feedback across a breadth of skills.

Connector — Managers introduce employees to other people for coaching and development and create a positive team environment while providing targeted feedback to employees.

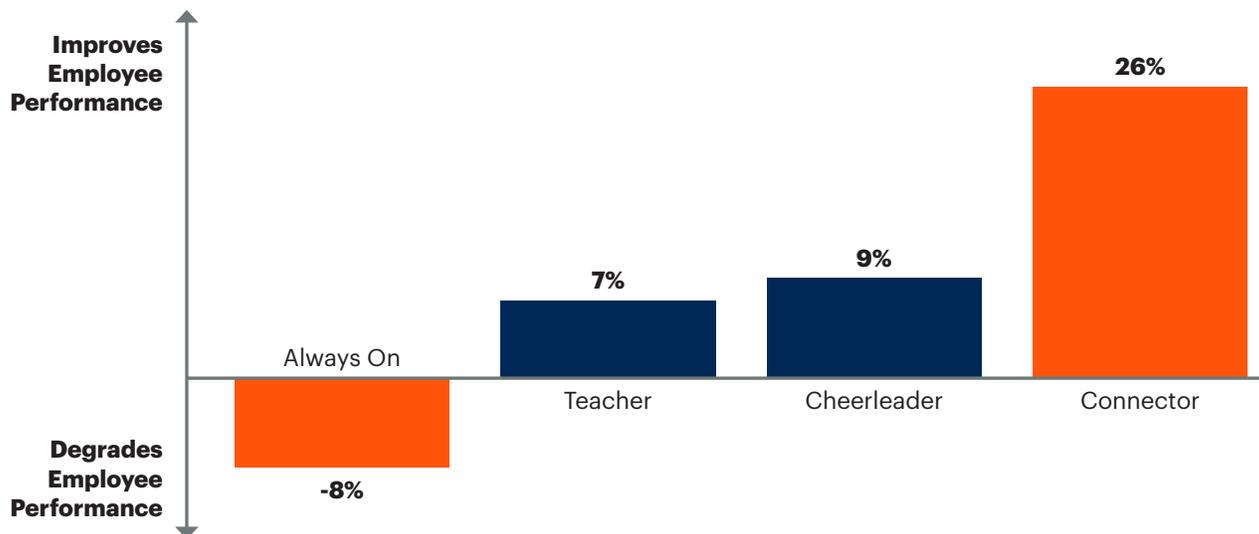
Cheerleader — Managers take a hands-off approach, give empowering, positive feedback and enable employees to take development into their own hands.



We found Connector managers improve employee performance the most — by up to 26% — while Cheerleader and Teacher managers only improve performance by up to 9% and 7%, respectively. The Always On manager adversely affects employee performance, actually degrading it by up to 8% (see Figure 1).

Only thirty-three percent of employees are confident in their managers' ability to coach and develop them.

Figure 1: Maximum Impact on Employee Performance by Manager Type



n = 7,309 employees
Source: 2017 Gartner Manager Effectiveness Survey

Beyond simply delegating coaching and development, Connector managers perform many core coaching activities, and they foster three distinct types of connections (see Figure 2):

- **The Employee Connection** — Connector managers connect to employees by diagnosing their unique development needs and personalizing their coaching and feedback.
- **The Team Connection** — They connect employees with their peers by creating a team environment that recognizes and encourages peer-to-peer coaching.
- **The Organization Connection** — They help employees learn from and connect with the right individuals and opportunities within and outside the organization for coaching and development.

Connector managers recognize that play a critical, context-dependent role in connecting employees to the coaching and development they need.

Effective Coaching That Supports Employees' Development Needs

To coach effectively, leaders throughout the enterprise should not only adopt the Connector manager approach but also enable managers at all levels in their respective functions to embrace the three connections. Start by discovering managers' current dominant approach to coaching and developing employees. Then, armed with this information, leaders can build an action plan to develop "connector" attributes in managers.

To initiate and sustain Connector managers' efforts, leaders need to facilitate the three types of connections using the six development and support principles outlined below.

Figure 2: The Connector Manager
Three Connections



Source: Gartner

Employees: Really Get to Know Your People

Before managers personalize their coaching approach, they must understand the true coaching needs and preferences of their employees. This can be tricky because employees' true coaching needs may not be immediately obvious. Managers who do not take the time to dig deeper and understand the underlying cause of employees' behavior can misidentify the needs, setting the employees up for failure.

Guide Managers to Diagnose Employee Needs

Leaders throughout the enterprise need to guide their managers on how to accurately assess employees' behaviors so they do not make false assumptions when identifying performance issues. To provide this guidance, leaders should give managers reflective questions to help determine whether the root cause of an employee's development area is a lack of motivation, process breakdown, knowledge gap or lack of skill. Sample questions include:

- **Motivation** — Does the employee want to complete the task? Is the employee fully engaged?
- **Environment** — Does the employee experience conflicting priorities? Does the employee have access to the necessary resources?
- **Knowledge** — Have you clearly explained the expectations to the employee? Does the employee have the necessary information?
- **Skill** — Does the employee understand how to complete the task? Has the employee received all necessary training?

Build Manager Judgment to Prioritize Development Interactions. Many managers struggle to integrate coaching into their routines and practice. They either cannot find the right coaching moments or cannot apply their

Only twenty-five percent of managers have their direct reports coach fellow team members.



coaching skills to employees' circumstances. Managers' priorities sometimes differ drastically from employees' needs.

To prioritize development interactions, leaders should:

- Give managers opportunities to practice coaching and then reflect on and work through their challenges in a safe environment.
- Encourage managers to track their employees' evolving needs by facilitating a periodic employee self-assessment.

Here are some sample questions for employees:

- What are your long-term career aspirations?
- Have these changed since the last time we met? If so, how and why?
- Are you interested in developing in your current role or a new role?
- What specific skills do you want to focus on, either for your current role or future ones?
- What development goals did we discuss last time and what progress have you made toward achieving them?

Team: Make Development a Team Sport

A team is composed of employees who share a diverse skill set, but only 25% of managers have their direct reports coach fellow team members. Having team members coach one another saves time and can be more effective than manager-driven development, since employees often have a broader range of necessary skills than managers can teach.

Help Managers Create Transparency

Within Their Teams. The best managers power their teams for peer development by transparently assessing individual strengths and development areas, catalyzing peer

Leaders should help managers become “mapmakers” to chart high-quality connections across the organization.



coaching and identifying collaboration gaps. To foster team development in existing interactions and workflows, leaders should encourage managers to take the following actions:

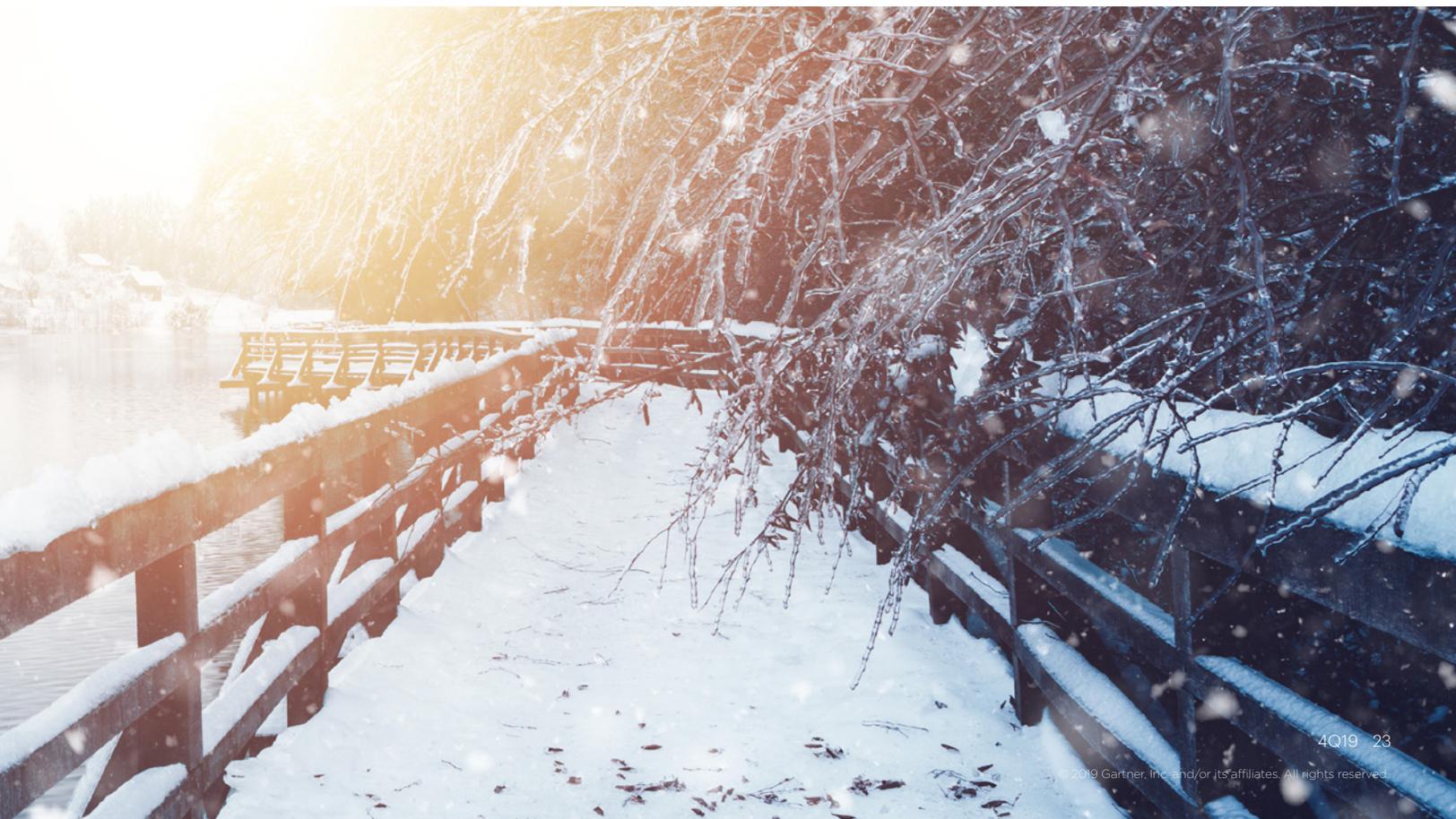
- Conduct a survey to assess the current strength of the peer network, individual proficiency levels and collaboration gaps.
- Identify advocates on the team who are committed to changing the work environment and empower them to influence their peer groups.
- Assign clear responsibilities to employees and managers for coaching and supporting a team environment.
- Create a team code of conduct to outline the principles of effective collaboration.

Encourage Managers to Recognize Individual Contributions That Improve Team Performance. As managers start using their direct reports to coach other members of the team, leaders must move toward a system that evaluates team-level performance. Leaders should partner with

Most managers focus on the number of development connections rather than increasing the quality of these connections.

HR to facilitate this transition and ensure employees' peer development efforts are recognized. They should:

- Share stories of successful network contributions, providing concrete and memorable examples to reinforce desired behaviors.
- Enable employees to evaluate their impact on the team environment through a self-assessment that asks employees to reflect on the “shadow” they cast on others. Employees should discuss the results with managers, trusted peers or mentors to better understand their impact on their peers.



Organization: Ensure Better, Not Just More Connections

Managers recognize the importance of building high-quality development connections for their employees. However, most focus on the number of development connections rather than increasing the quality of these connections. They encourage collaboration across different teams rather than creating skill-sharing opportunities.

Support Manager Efforts to Increase the Quality of Development Connections.

Progressive leaders recognize any initiative to build high-quality development connections for employees requires organizational support to ensure adoption and sustainability. Instead of predefining coaching interactions for employees, leaders should help managers become “mapmakers” to chart high-quality connections across the organization. Most organizations build an effective development ecosystem by:

- Evaluating the current effectiveness of connections through feedback from key stakeholders: managers, employees, and learning and development
- Using transparent skill profiles to pair employees with complementary strengths and development areas
- Equipping managers with robust partner-selection criteria to facilitate connections
- Holding periodic discussions with stakeholders to understand the effectiveness of the program and identify course-correction opportunities

- Inviting individuals from all functions to volunteer as coaches to increase the likelihood employees will find a relevant one

Enable Managers to Support Employee Learning Experiences at Key Moments.

Managers are responsible for making sure employees’ connections are effectively used to address their most critical development needs. Leaders can support managers in the following ways:

- **Help managers prepare employees to learn from their development connections.** Have managers create a template for the preparation discussion with their direct reports. Managers should communicate the relevance of network connections and identify the key teachings of the discussion. Managers should set a clear timeline to complete the network experience and help employees apply what they learn.
- **Ensure managers interact with employees at different stages of their development experience.** To structure the interactions, leaders should equip managers with a detailed checklist of activities to be covered during each of these conversations.

Leaders should also share a sample list of actions for managers to consider at the various stages of an employee’s development experience (before, during and after) to ensure they support employee development effectively (see Table 1).

Table 1: How to Support Employee Learning Experiences at Key Moments

Before a Learning Experience (“Warm-Up”)	During a Learning Experience	After a Learning Experience (“Cool-Down”)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss development connection opportunities. • Set clear development expectations with the employee. • Establish a timeline to check on progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with employees to discuss their progress. • Help employees create a strategic reflection guide to capture their development. • Guide employees toward relevant application opportunities on the job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with employees to see if they need guidance on how to apply what they’ve learned to their daily job activities. • Discuss employees’ success in applying what they’ve learned and identify areas to work on.

Source: Gartner

Conclusion

Connector managers are best positioned to build the future workforce. They tailor their coaching to the development needs of employees and foster distinct types of connections to employees, teams and organizations. Leaders across the enterprise can build and support Connector managers within their organization in three major ways:

- **Really get to know your people.** Train managers to base development on individual employee needs and interests, rather than standardized approaches.
- **Make development a team sport.** Equip managers in all functions to promote reciprocal and real-time development within the team as opposed to just focusing on individual development.
- **Ensure better connections, not just more.** Support managers' efforts to increase the quality, not just the quantity, of development connections outside the manager and team.

As a senior leader, your own role and reach go well beyond that of the frontline manager, so your impact as a Connector leader also has the potential to ripple outward across the managers you manage.

To find out your manager type, take our quiz, **'What Type of Manager Are You?'**

