

HR Leaders Monthly

November 2020

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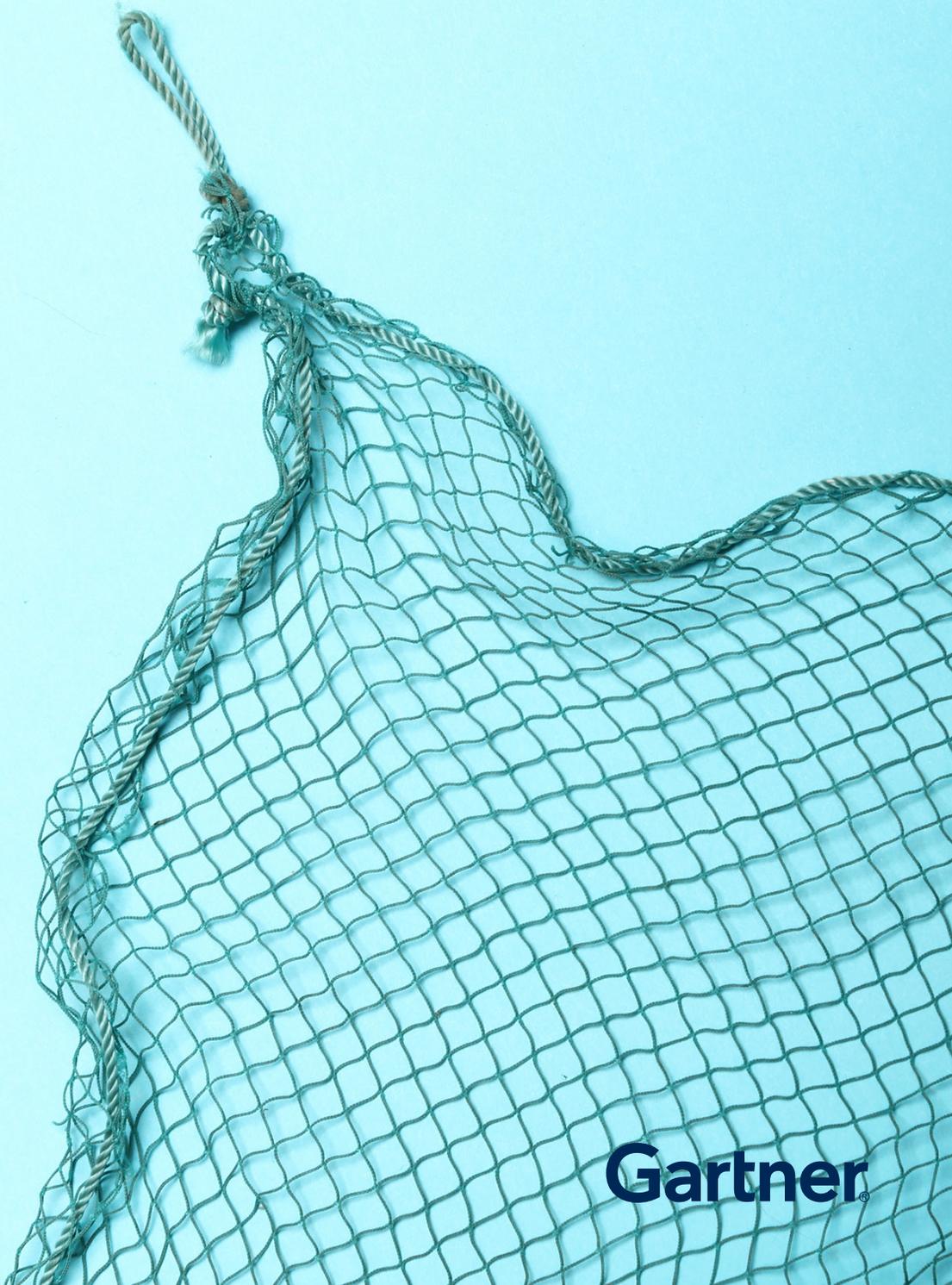
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HR Leaders Monthly

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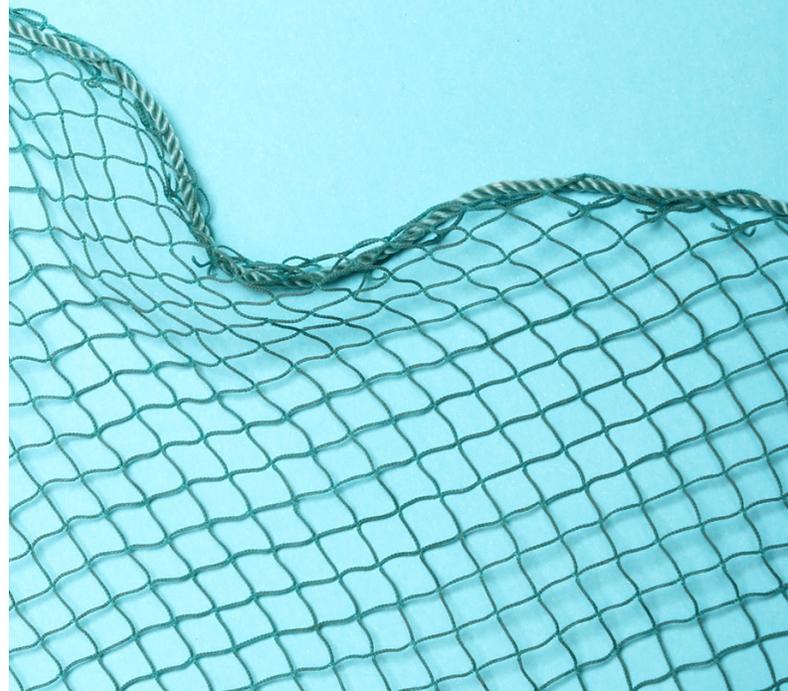
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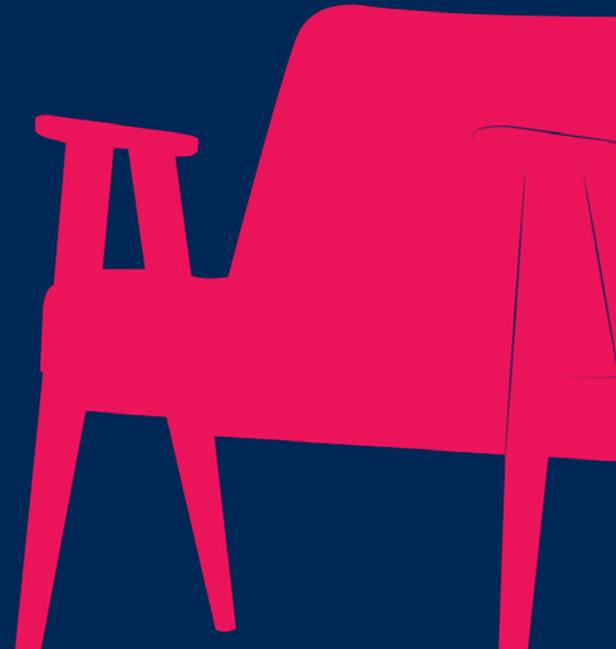
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Editor's Note

By Brian Kropp and Lauren Romansky



Historically, the relationship between employers and employees has undergone the biggest and most rapid changes during times of disruption. The “employment deal” — what you as an employer commit to providing to employees and the value they provide in return — was already evolving before the disruptive events of 2020 accelerated this evolution and pushed it in new directions. Organizations today have an opportunity to make a new deal with employees that addresses employees’ changing needs and expectations while generating value for the business by enhancing performance.

This new employment deal was the keynote theme of Gartner’s ReimagineHR conference this year, which we held virtually for the first time in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual setting reflected the radically changed business environment our clients have been navigating over the past eight months. This new environment has broken down barriers between employees’ professional and personal lives. It has given HR leaders greater visibility into their employees’ human experience and challenged them to make work a more meaningful part of that experience. That can mean giving employees more control over when, where and how much they work; engaging with social issues that employees care about to foster a

sense of shared purpose; and comprehensively supporting employees’ well-being in their personal, family and community lives.

Humanizing the employment deal doesn’t mean giving employees everything they want and expecting nothing in return. The principles of radical flexibility, shared purpose and deeper connections generate business value by driving employee engagement and performance. Embracing these three pillars of the new deal pays off by increasing the number of high performers at the organization and making employees more likely to recommend it as an employer of choice. Maximizing the benefits of this new, humanized deal requires better talent analytics to understand employees’ lives, what they care about and how to unleash their highest productivity.

This issue of HR Leaders Monthly offers a sampling of the insights presented at ReimagineHR, touching on some of the critical issues HR leaders must consider to stay ahead of the curve as the nature of work continues to evolve and talent increasingly expects a new deal. Applying these insights can help create a more agile, data-driven and inclusive talent strategy, which organizations will need to be competitive in the months and years ahead.



How to Create More Compelling Careers for HR Employees

By Liana Passantino

Career development and career pathing have been organizational priorities for years. However, HR employees themselves often do not have as much opportunity for career development. HR leaders must address key obstacles to HR career development and create opportunities for employees to grow their careers.

Transforming HR Structure and Strategy

The increasing speed of change, in combination with the economic pressures exerted by the COVID-19 pandemic, has forced organizations to adapt and recalibrate their business strategies. HR functions must keep pace and transform alongside the business. Our latest research finds 89% of HR functions either restructured within the last two years or are planning to do so.¹ In conjunction with operating model changes, 35% of HR employees report that their organization changes its HR strategy once a year or more.²

HR staff also recognize that their jobs are becoming more complex due to increasing

skills demands and the increasing number of stakeholders with whom they must coordinate. For HR leaders to feel confident in their function's ability to meet the future needs of the organization, HR employees must have the appropriate capabilities and skills. Unfortunately, HR staff do not feel like they are set up for success. Most HR leaders recognize that their current HR structure does not provide compelling careers or support employees by providing development designed to close skills gaps.³ Based on our research, we have identified three key obstacles to HR career development: competing demands on employee time, skills ambiguity and limited mobility within and outside the function.

Competing Demands on Employee Time

In their support role within organizations, HR employees face pressure to complete work for clients and to prioritize that over more strategic tasks or their own development. HR leaders recognize this problem: Just 37% of HR leaders believe their function separates transactional and strategic HR tasks appropriately and most believe that completing transactional work takes away from the function's ability to act strategically and provide value to the business.^{4,5}

One solution to this problem is to clarify roles and rebalance workloads. This allows organizations to separate operational tasks from strategic initiatives. WPS, a midsize health insurance company, recognized that its HR function was concurrently tackling over a dozen strategic HR projects without prioritization, and that its HR business partners (HRBPs) and center of excellence (COE) staff were overwhelmed with operational work.⁶ WPS devised a solution to eliminate individual responsibility for strategic initiatives, prioritize each initiative and create a small team to focus on a specific project for a two-week sprint. Once a strategic initiative sprint ends, HR leaders assign a team to tackle the next most urgent initiative on their list.

Despite having limited time for learning and development, HR employees are still looking for ways to cultivate skills and further their careers. Compared to three years ago, 69% of HR executives report more pressure from employees to provide development opportunities that will prepare them for future roles.⁷ At the same time, however, just 44% of HR leaders say their organization ensures managers can connect their employees to various opportunities and people to further their performance, development and career.³ Instead of thinking about learning and development as time spent away from work, organizations should encourage managers and employees to consider using projects to develop skills on the job.

Intel's career services team created the development opportunity tool (DOT) to fill skills gaps throughout the organization and provide

employees with an avenue to build the skills they need.⁸ Managers create listings on DOT when they have a development opportunity, and employees can choose the opportunity most interesting to them. Employees can search the DOT for development opportunities and view the time commitment of each project as well as the skills required and skills that can be developed. Managers can view the profiles of employees to see the skills that they currently possess and what skills they are seeking to develop. This matching program can be implemented through a basic system, such as a spreadsheet on a shared company drive or webpage or via a more complex human resources information system (HRIS). Regardless of the mechanism used, this type of program allows for transparency and enables employees to find the development opportunities that best fit their current skills and development needs anywhere in the organization.



Skills Ambiguity

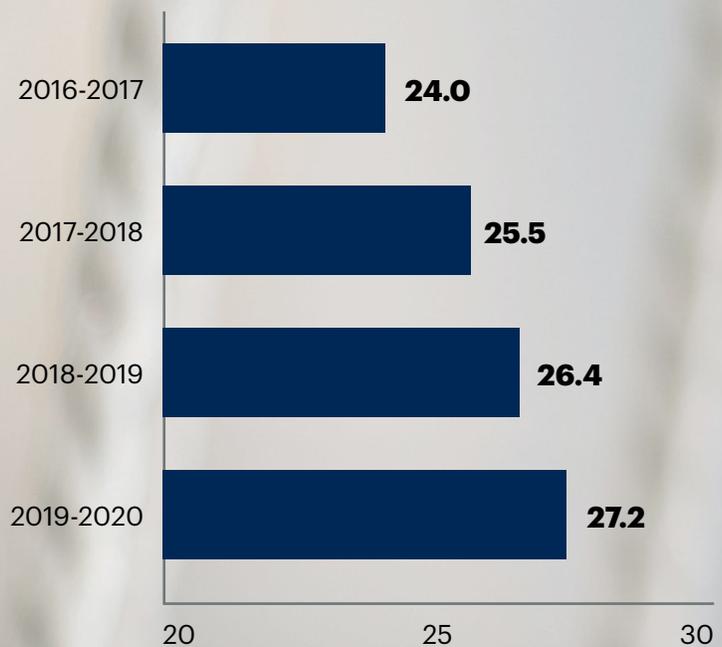
Compared to three years ago, 93% of HRBPs say the skills requirements to be an effective HRBP have increased and 73% report that the number of stakeholders involved in day-to-day work has increased.⁹ This means HR staff must be able to synthesize even more information and understand a variety of inputs. Gartner TalentNeuron data shows the average number of key skills per HR job posting in the United States has increased from 24 in 2016 to 27.2 in 2020 (see Figure 1). Some of the skills growing in demand are consulting, strategic thinking, business acumen and an understanding of talent analytics.

Despite these heightened expectations, only 43% of HR leaders believe their organization provides development that is designed to close HR staff skills gaps.¹⁰ Many HR leaders are concerned that with the pressures to respond to all of the changes that occurred in 2020, employees and organizations are not prioritizing career development, which puts them at risk of being unprepared for the future. Financial services company S&P Global recognized the need to better understand its employees' current and desired skills.¹¹ As part of a transformation to become more agile within the function, the organization implemented a skills inventory (see Figure 2). At first, the tool was located in a simple spreadsheet, though more recently, S&P Global has moved to integrate the inventory with the organization's HRIS. The skills inventory allows HR leadership to more easily staff HR projects and roles with staff who have the necessary skills, as well as to identify what skills staff members need or want to develop.

Limited Mobility

Almost half of HR leaders do not believe HR enables mobility within and outside the function to support career growth.¹⁰ Lack of mobility hinders employees from acquiring the breadth of experience that is valued for leadership roles in HR. When we looked at the public profiles of the top 100 CHROs at S&P 500 companies (excluding companies without HR leaders), we found that we found that 41 of them had work experience outside of HR — among these, 19 had experience in business operations.

Figure 1. Average Number of Key Skills per HR Job Description
HR Roles in U.S.



n = 533,299 (2016-2017); 580,645 (2017-2018); 672,657 (2018-2019); 591,504 (2019-2020) job postings

Source: Gartner TalentNeuron

Figure 2. S&P Global's HR Skills Inventory
Illustrative

Person	Skills	Development Areas
 Suzanne A.	Agile Scrum, Project Management, Verbal Communication Skills	Talent Analytics, Quantitative Modeling, Tableau
 Diego B.	Talent Analytics, HR Information Systems, Microsoft Excel	Design Thinking, User Stories, Collaboration
 Jordan C.	Microsoft PowerPoint, Graphic Design, Collaboration	HRIS, Project Management, Written Communication Skills

Source: Adapted From S&P Global

CEOs increasingly expect their CHROs to be knowledgeable business executives, not just leaders of HR. If HR staff strive to rise to leadership ranks, developing an understanding of the business beyond their existing COE or HRBP area is critical. The structure of the HR function can either obfuscate or enable career mobility. As organizations shift to more agile operating models, creating project-based teams may engender confusion because the roles are so different from traditional, familiar HRBP and COE roles. HR leaders planning on restructuring the function should consider the career implications of role changes and explain to employees what opportunities the new structure can offer them.

One way to overcome career silos is to encourage rotations into different areas of the business. Swiss Re, a financial services organization, developed a global rotation for its recruiting staff to build their knowledge of labor markets in different regions.¹² The program also emphasizes two-way, on-the-job learning by ensuring the rotating employee leads cross-functional teams and conducts training or coaching sessions for his or her home team upon returning from rotation. This concept can work for other teams within HR, not just recruiting. Employees can even rotate through roles outside the HR function. Rotation programs also underscore the fact that career development is not always necessarily upward or linear.

To develop or enrich the careers of HR staff, HR leaders should:

- Build growth opportunities into any future restructuring of the HR operating model.
- Identify limitations to career development within the existing HR function structure and increase mobility through rotational programs or projects.
- Reduce barriers to career growth by creating mechanisms for skills development and project opportunities.
- Encourage managers to engage in transparent conversations to identify employee aspirations and career goals.

Although creating compelling HR careers may sound like a learning and development issue, ensuring that HR employees are equipped with the skills needed in the future is a strategic move for the function. By making HR careers a priority, HR leaders can strengthen their function and secure its place as a strategic partner of the business.

¹ 2020 Gartner HR Structures Survey

² 2020 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey

³ 2020 Gartner HR Score Diagnostic

⁴ 2019 Gartner HR Structures Survey

⁵ 2021 Gartner HR Agenda Poll

⁶ Case Study: Embedded Agile (WPS Health Solutions)

⁷ 2020 Gartner Shifting Skills Survey for HR Executives

⁸ Development Opportunity Tool (Intel)

⁹ 2020 Gartner Agile Survey

¹⁰ Gartner HR Score Diagnostic

¹¹ Case Study: People Agile Team (S&P Global)

¹² Swiss Re: Scalable Recruiter Rotations



3 Ways to Operationalize Your Organization's Culture Data

By Emily Strother

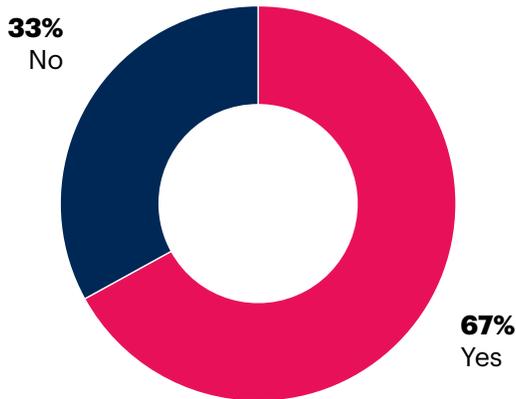
CHROs can read this research to learn how to operationalize their culture measurement strategy to improve their organization's culture.

Managing organizational culture is among HR leaders' most important tasks, but many leaders find their current strategies for measuring culture are falling short. Most organizations measure culture by collecting data from employee surveys, including engagement surveys (86%), exit surveys (75%) and pulse surveys (52%).¹ Unfortunately, many organizations say this data collection is costly and ineffective at measuring culture when used alone. Only 47% of HR leaders

are satisfied with their organization's ability to measure their company's culture, and of those, only 8% say their culture is exactly where it should be.¹

Most HR leaders believe the reason their culture measurement strategy isn't effective is because they can't take action on their data. Sixty-seven percent of HR leaders identify this as a barrier their organization faces when measuring culture, making it the most common barrier by far (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Q: Is “Difficulty Taking Action on Data” a Barrier Your Organization Faces When Measuring Culture?



n = 79 HR leaders

Source: 2020 Gartner Employee Experience and Talent Mobility Benchmarking Survey

Three Ways to Operationalize Culture Data

Rather than collecting more culture data, HR leaders should focus on operationalizing the culture data they already have, helping leaders and employees make sense of this data and act on it.

To operationalize their culture data, HR leaders must:

- **Co-validate culture data** to increase its relevance to employees and the business.
- **Identify cultural tensions** in the data to make decisions about the next best action.
- **Provide leader-sourced culture solutions** identified with data to scale solutions throughout the organization.

Co-Validate Culture Data

Most organizations focus on validating whether employees’ answers are true to make sure data is representative of the organization’s culture. Many HR leaders spend time removing outliers, confirming whether employees are still at the organization or justifying why the results would be different if the survey were conducted more recently. However, these approaches don’t confirm whether the data is valid or trustworthy and don’t shed light on the best timing or cadence for collecting it. Furthermore, even if the data is accurate, that doesn’t make it relevant to the broader organization. The best organizations validate their culture data’s relevance, not just its truthfulness, by comparing HR culture data to other business unit data and co-validating culture data with employees.

At American Eagle Outfitters (AEO), HR leaders identify other business unit data to compare with HR’s culture data, using several prioritization criteria to determine key metrics for which these comparisons would likely be valuable. For example, to uncover insights about ethical behavior and compliance, they compared HR metrics (such as employees’ perceptions of integrity) with key legal metrics (such as the number of employee hotline calls). By integrating other business units’ perspectives, AEO avoids HR bias when validating its culture data.

AEO also integrates employees’ lived contexts into the story the data tells. For example, after seeing low work-life balance scores in their culture survey, AEO’s HR leaders sought to validate the data with employees and understand what was causing the low scores. HR leaders worked with a diverse, cross-functional and leader-recommended team of employees, called the REALists, and learned that employees were not dissatisfied with work-life balance in

general but struggled specifically with “work balance.” Due to AEO’s collaborative work environment, meetings often included too many employees, which led to longer, more frequent meetings. Recognizing this problem, the HR team restructured meetings to make them more productive, increasing employees’ satisfaction with work-life balance (see Figure 2).

Identify Cultural Tensions

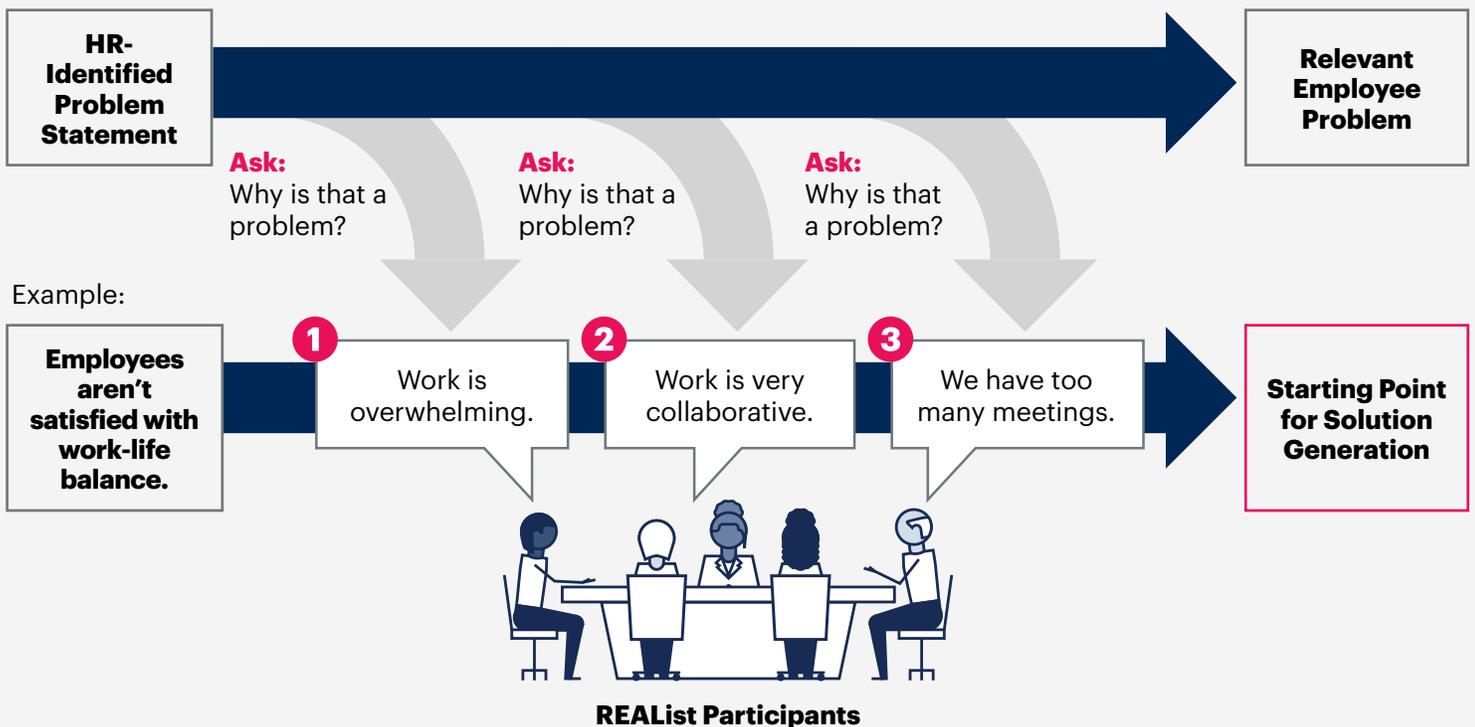
Most organizations focus on fixing the most visible or most common problems identified in their culture data.² However, this approach means they are not always addressing the most important problems, just the ones employees mention most frequently. Instead, HR leaders should use the data to identify tensions between the organization’s culture and the organization’s priorities. Cultural tensions occur when different organizational priorities conflict or

compete, such as in an organization that wants to become more innovative but practices cost consciousness as a core value.

Tensions are not necessarily bad if they are considered thoughtfully and managed in alignment with strategic priorities, but few HR leaders currently prioritize negotiating tensions between their culture data and their organization’s values.² By identifying cultural tensions, HR can enable employees and leaders to recognize and address them using proven techniques of tension management.

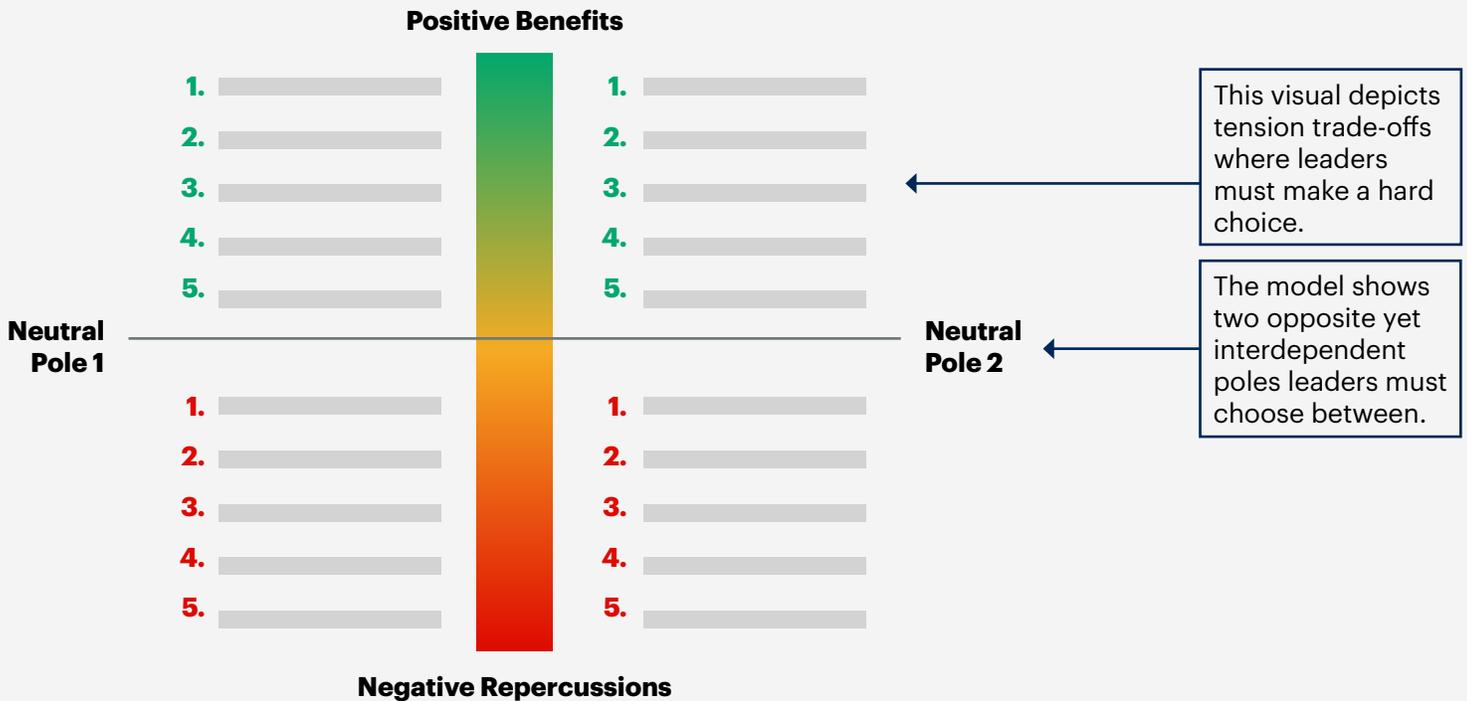
AMRI, a U.S.-based pharmaceuticals company, helps leaders source and reduce cultural tensions within their organization and helps them consider trade-offs among the addressable tensions using a strategic decision-making model. AMRI’s model guides leaders to make trade-offs between competing goals based on their organization’s strategic priorities and

Figure 2. Culture “REAList” Quality Checks



Source: Adapted From AEO

Figure 3. AMRI's Model of the Strategic Choice Facing the Organization



Because each pole brings benefits and repercussions, leaders must consider trade-offs when making a strategic choice.

Source: Adapted From AMRI; Donal Conn Associates

communicate these trade-offs effectively with the broader organization (see Figure 3).

Provide Scalable, Leader-Sourced Solutions

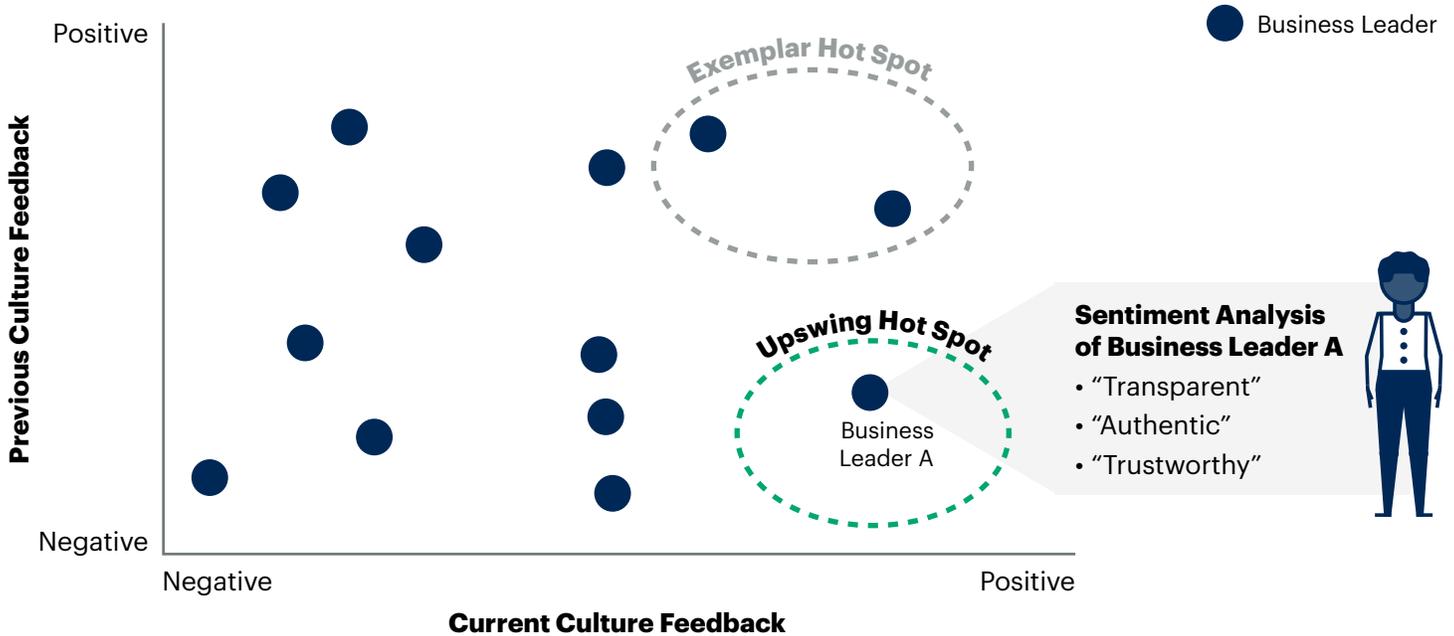
Organizations typically provide business leaders with culture solutions sourced from HR. HR-generated solutions don't result in culture change because business leaders haven't bought into the solutions and don't trust them. Instead, HR leaders should use data to source solutions directly from business leaders. Even when business leaders are encouraged to share solutions with their peers, most HR leaders don't rely on them to solve the challenges identified through culture data and disseminate those solutions throughout the organization. At IBM, a multinational technology company, HR leaders

have determined how to leverage culture data to identify solutions from business leaders and advise other leaders on cultural best practices.

IBM's HR function helps business leaders take action on culture by identifying pockets of excellence. HR leaders use data to identify business leaders who have recently improved their team's culture, then interview these leaders about their strategies and behaviors.

At IBM, a multinational technology company, HR leaders have determined how to leverage culture data to identify solutions from business leaders and advise other leaders on cultural best practices.

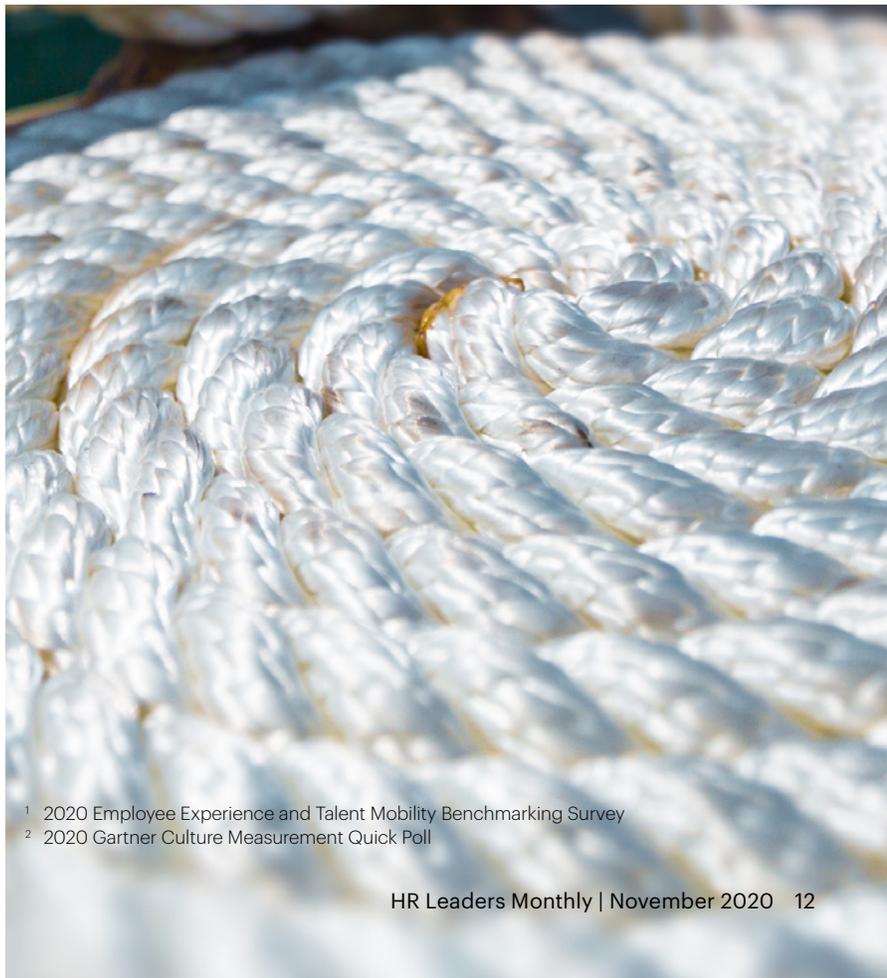
Figure 4. IBM's Culture Hot Spots
Illustrative



Source: Adapted From IBM

For example, IBM's culture feedback showed that one business leader's transparency was particularly well-regarded (see Figure 4). HR leaders set up a one-on-one conversation with this business leader to learn what specific actions the leader took to demonstrate transparency and how he or she would recommend other business leaders scale the approach throughout the organization. HR can use conversations like this to create solution profiles. Because these solutions come from business leaders who have already demonstrated that these strategies or behaviors work, other leaders in the company may find them more credible than solutions developed by HR alone.

Measuring culture is a key component of an organization's culture management strategy. Although most HR leaders focus on collecting data to measure organizational culture, this approach is expensive and doesn't always result in HR leaders taking action on their data to improve the organization's culture. By operationalizing culture data, HR leaders can ensure their culture measurement strategy provides meaningful information and actionable next steps for their organization.



¹ 2020 Employee Experience and Talent Mobility Benchmarking Survey
² 2020 Gartner Culture Measurement Quick Poll

Top 5 Priorities for HR in 2021

Gartner surveyed over 800 HR executives across more than 35 countries and all major industries to assess their priorities and expected challenges for 2021.

This report highlights the key findings from the survey, detailing:



The five initiatives CHROs and HR leadership are prioritizing in 2021



How changes in the business landscape will impact each of these priorities



Actions HR leadership should take to address each priority in the year ahead

View the key findings and assess your top priorities for 2021.

[Download Report](#)



Fostering Cultural Connection in Onboarding

By Delphine Uriburu-Wilder and Jamie Kohn



In today's virtual world, employees feel disconnected in their jobs, and the problem is worse for new hires. HR leaders must intentionally connect new hires to the company's culture from day one by communicating purpose, demonstrating impact and teaching values through action.

Most companies implemented remote work out of necessity at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but data suggests it is here to stay. Business leaders project that nearly half of all employees will continue working remotely at least part-time after the pandemic.¹ Further, 60% of employees would consider the option to work remotely full-time if their employers offered it, with 31% being very likely to take a full-time remote option.²

But whether they work remotely or not, employees feel increasingly disconnected from their organizations. Only 40% of employees feel a sense of belonging at their organization, and the problem is worse for new employees. Only 32% of employees hired in the past 12 months feel a sense of belonging to their organization

(see Figure 1). In addition, current employees have told us that they never know what is going on in their organization, that days go by and they don't interact with anyone and that it feels like they could be working for any company at this point. The pandemic has amplified this feeling of disconnect, as employees struggle with home and workplace safety concerns, economic and job insecurity, and remote work arrangements that force them to interact in new ways.

The message is quite jarring: Cultural connection is at risk. With this insight, a more challenging question emerges: If existing employees — people with ties to, and an understanding of, the organizational culture — feel disconnected, what hope do new hires have to develop a sense of belonging?

Creating Cultural Connection

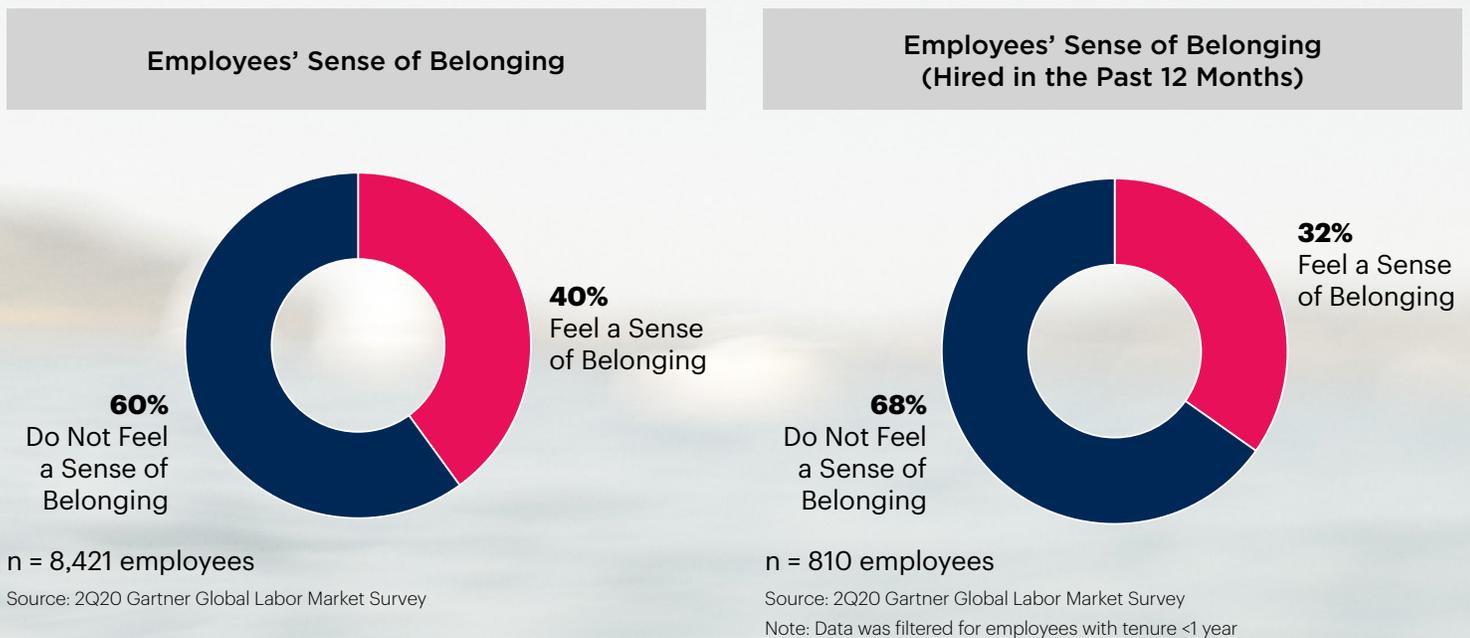
Employees and organizations both benefit when new hires feel a sense of connection to the organization's culture. When employees understand and feel connected to the organization's culture, HR leaders indicate their workforce's performance improves up to 22%.³

Further, 70% of HR leaders believe culture is very important to their organization's financial success.⁴ As many companies transition to a hybrid workforce, in which full- or part-time remote work is more prevalent, this cultural connection can become more tenuous. HR leaders tell us that maintaining their organization's culture is their top concern about managing a hybrid workforce.⁵

Typically, HR leaders have leveraged onboarding to help new hires understand, acclimate to and connect with the organization's culture. But traditional onboarding methods have not been delivering for new hires. Only 52% of recruiting staff say their organization's onboarding process integrates new hires with the company culture.⁶ Further, only 33% of employees are satisfied with their organization's culture and education training.⁷

Though traditional onboarding often missed the mark in connecting new hires to company culture, in many cases that was acceptable because their connections developed organically. New hires connected to organizational culture by living it and witnessing it play out in their day-to-day interactions.

Figure 1. Employees' Sense of Belonging at Their Organization



They learned about organizational norms and how things were done by getting to know their desk neighbors, having casual conversations in the break room or attending happy hours with their team. But whether employees work remotely or on-site, these opportunities are far more limited today. It's harder to pick up on norms from a set of virtual meetings. It's harder to see values play out in everyday business decisions when there's less visibility into the work of others. It's harder to connect with peers when you have no idea who to reach out to or how receptive they will be.

To foster a cultural connection for new hires, HR leaders need to create intentional connections, and that begins on day one of onboarding. Organizations can intentionally connect new hires during onboarding by:

- Communicating purpose
- Demonstrating impact
- Teaching values through action

Communicate Purpose

Employees feel a stronger connection to organizations that communicate their values and purpose, particularly if the organization's values mirror their own. People want to know that the work they do matters — that it makes a difference beyond the bottom line. Further, employees look to see how organizational purpose plays out in everyday business decisions, and by communicating an organization's purpose on day one, HR leaders help employees better understand how the organization makes decisions and how employees should make decisions in their own work.

Messages about organizational values and purpose are common in employment branding. These messages appeal to candidates' own values, encouraging the right candidates to apply for a job. Unfortunately, only 60% of new hires say an organization's branding matches the experience they had once they joined the

Virtual Events



Gartner regularly hosts virtual events across a variety of Human Resources topics. These webinars present an opportunity for you to gain insights from our research experts on leading through disruption, navigating the coming reset and more.

**The 3 Keys of the New Employment Deal
HR Leaders Can Prioritize**

**Balancing Cost and Growth: 7 Mistakes to
Avoid in 2021**

**Top 5 Post-COVID Workforce Planning
Questions Answered with Analytics**

**Implications of the 2020 U.S. Presidential
Election for HR**

The Top Priorities for HR Leaders in 2021

organization.⁸ This mismatch can disillusion candidates and lead them to seek another job.

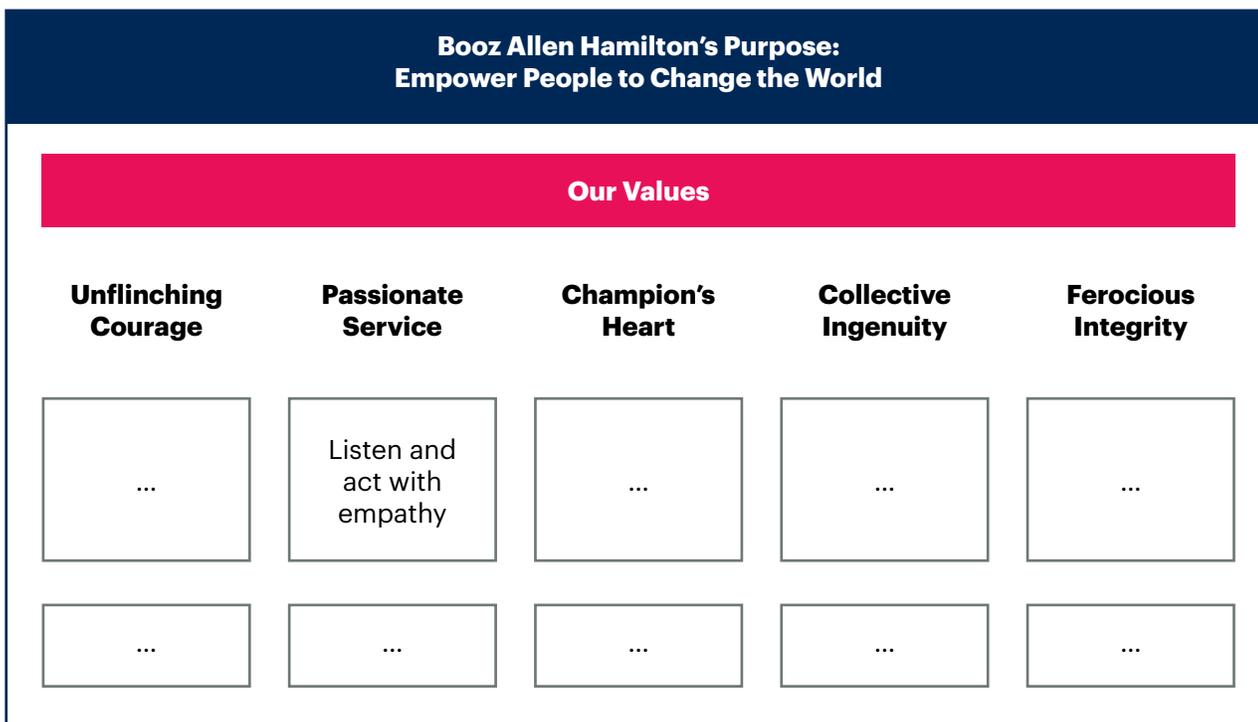
HR leaders must be intentional in communicating and reinforcing messages about the organization’s purpose throughout onboarding. These intentional messages will help new hires understand the organization’s guiding principles and see how their own values align with them. At Booz Allen Hamilton, HR leaders connect new hires to the organization’s purpose on day one. They begin their values-centered onboarding program by communicating the organization’s purpose and describing the five company values that underpin their purpose. They then invite new hires to consider how the organization’s purpose aligns with their individual values (see Figure 2). HR leaders at Booz Allen Hamilton focus on the company’s purpose by organizing values-driven learning pathways to show new hires how to continue enacting these values in their work.

Demonstrate Impact

New hires also need to see how an organization delivers and follows through on its purpose. While purpose and values sound nice, they must also guide the organization’s actions. By demonstrating the impact the organization’s purpose has on decision making, new hires can better internalize the purpose and understand what is expected of them when they begin their role. Tenured employees may know how organizational purpose creates business impact through network connections and lived experiences, but new hires don’t have the same visibility into the organization. HR leaders should create intentional opportunities for new hires to learn how the organization creates impact through its mission and purpose.

At Booz Allen Hamilton, new hires receive client impact cards during onboarding that highlight

Figure 2. Booz Allen Hamilton’s Values Card, Used to Communicate Purpose on Day One



Source: Adapted From Booz Allen Hamilton

Example of a Booz Allen Hamilton Client Impact Card

STEM Girls 4 Social Good

Booz | Allen | Hamilton

Inspiring the Next Generation of Women in STEM

Project Description

Booz Allen Hamilton is on a mission to bridge the talent gap and build a diverse pipeline of future STEM talent.

STEM Girls 4 Social Good, created in partnership with Girls, Inc., is an initiative that empowers middle and high school-aged girls to learn STEM concepts and apply them to society's most pressing problems.

The signature program is a weeklong learning experience where participants used geographic information systems to identify food deserts, applied data science techniques to investigate the problem of human trafficking and learn about the intersection of cybersecurity and safety.

Impact

The program has a cascading mentorship model, bringing together professionals and diversity students with STEM backgrounds to engage the next generation.

Participants have reported increased interest in STEM careers and increased confidence in STEM capability.



Source: Adapted From Booz Allen Hamilton

how the organization's purpose has led to client impact (see Example of a Booz Allen Hamilton Client Impact Card above). This business-specific content enables new hires to really understand the impact of Booz Allen Hamilton's purpose on the business' actions. But they don't just share stories, they also give new hires the opportunity to discuss, in small groups, what the story says about Booz Allen Hamilton's values. These impact cards show new hires how the organization's values matter in the larger world, beyond the organization itself.

Teach Values Through Action

Even when new hires understand what the organization's values are and why they matter, it's not always clear what behaviors actually align with those values. Only 26% of employees know how to translate cultural values into what

they should do in their day-to-day jobs, and even when they do know, 77% of employees encounter cultural tensions that create confusion about the right behaviors.⁹ It may be harder for new hires learning about the organization to see how they should "live" those values in their everyday behavior.

To teach new hires how to enact the organization's values, HR leaders at Booz Allen Hamilton use a simulation to give new hires real-time feedback on how their decisions fit

Even when new hires understand what the organization's values are and why they matter, it's not always clear what behaviors actually align with those values.

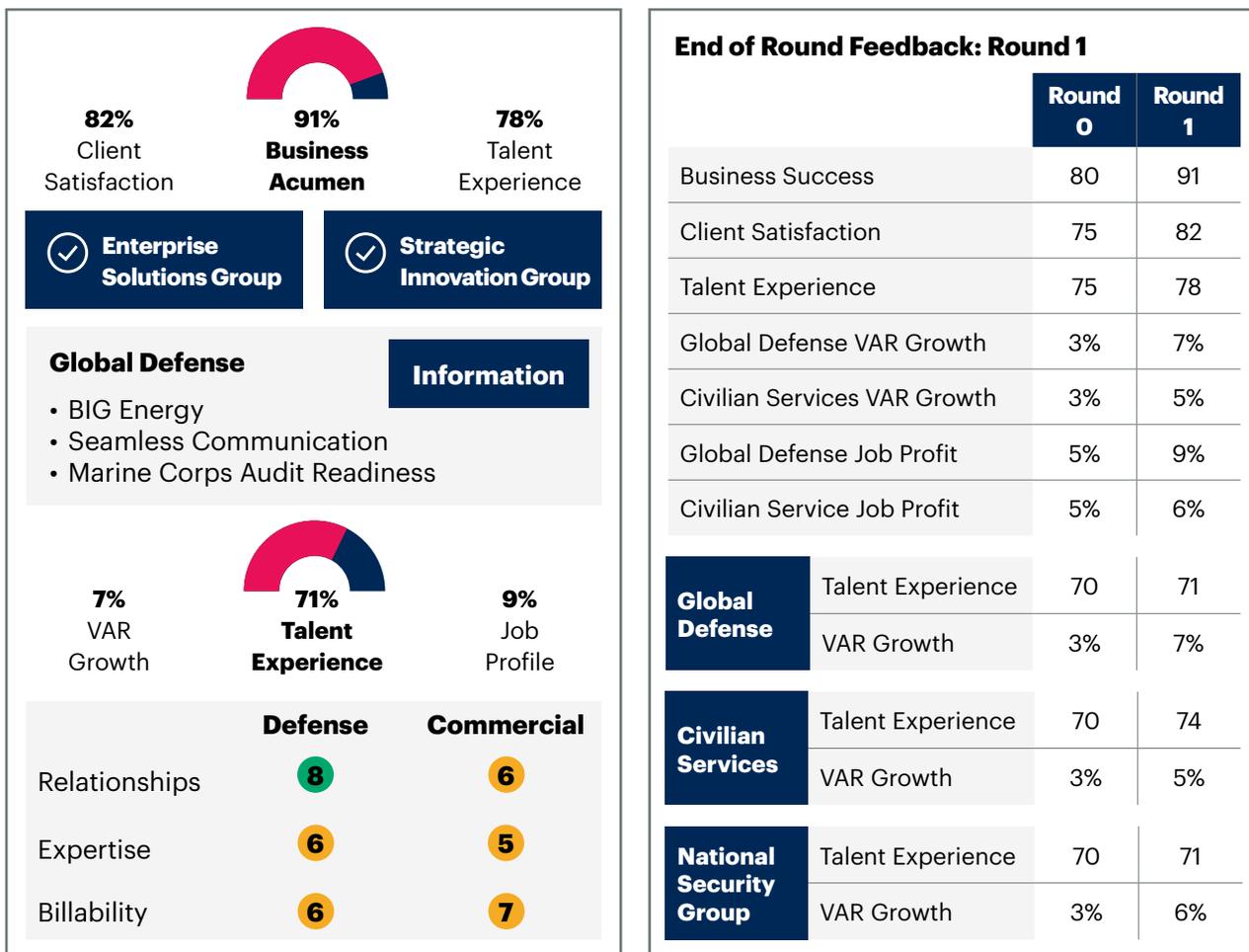
with the organization's values. New hires are divided into teams to work through a scenario that requires them to apply company values to critical business decisions. The decisions have multiple correct answers and sometimes involve trade-offs among values. After each decision, teams receive feedback on how their decision scored on each value (see Figure 3). This hands-on experience shows new hires how to live the organization's values through their day-to-day decisions and equips them to begin living the values from their first day on the job.

Virtual onboarding has reduced opportunities to build organic cultural connections. Today, HR leaders must create intentional connections

by giving new hires a stronger sense of the organization's purpose and values, the impact of those values and what those values actually look like in day-to-day behaviors.

- ¹ Gartner COVID-19 Crisis Benchmarking Against Your Peers Webinar Poll (2 April 2020); 2020 Gartner Cost Cutting and Employee Experience Survey; COVID-19: How Finance Leaders Are Responding to the Emerging Situation Webinar Poll (26 March 2020)
- ² 2Q20 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey
- ³ 2017 Gartner Culture Benchmarking Survey
- ⁴ 2020 Gartner Employee Experience and Talent Mobility Benchmarking Survey
- ⁵ Gartner Return to the Workplace Benchmarking Against Your Peers Webinar Poll (5 June 2020)
- ⁶ 2020 Gartner Future of the Recruiter Survey
- ⁷ 2019 Gartner Modern Employee Experience Workforce Survey
- ⁸ 2019 Gartner Candidate Survey
- ⁹ 2017 Gartner Culture Workforce Survey

Figure 3. Booz Allen Hamilton's Simulation Feedback Against Value-Based Metrics



Source: Adapted From Booz Allen Hamilton



It's Time to Put Data Ethics at the Forefront of Talent Analytics

By Krista Anderson and Chantal Steen

Now more than ever, HR analytics leaders recognize the importance of data ethics in HR. Despite this increased focus, employees still do not trust talent analytics enough. This article presents three steps leaders can take to increase employee trust by rethinking HR's data ethics strategy.

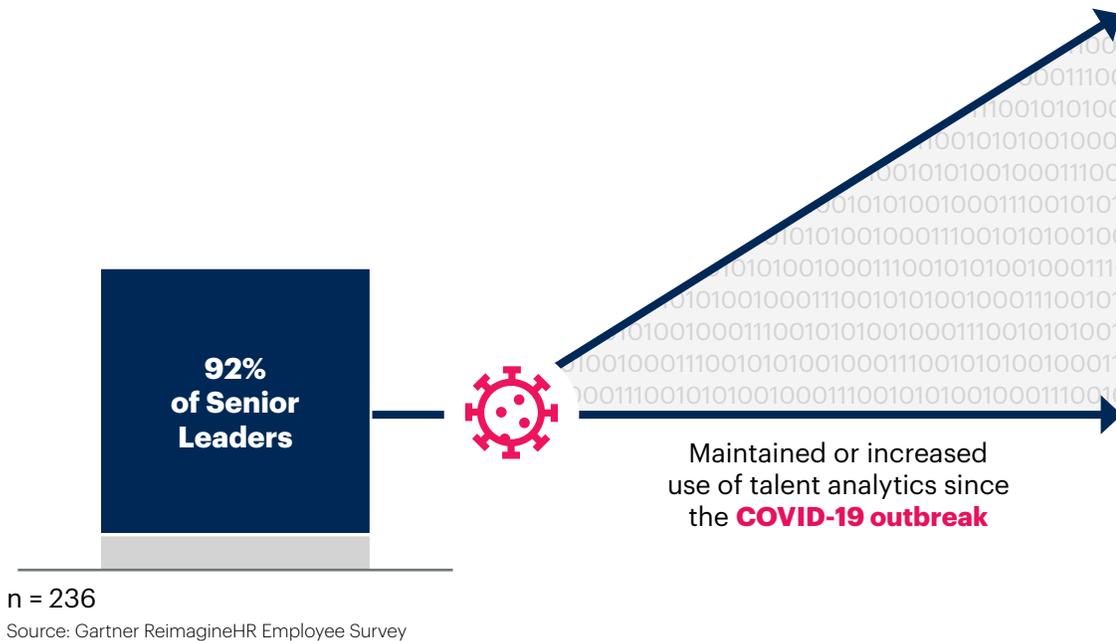
The widespread shift to remote work in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic has given organizations new opportunities to collect different-in-kind data about their employees, as well as more data overall, including productivity tracking, mobile device usage and even employee health data. Our research shows that business leaders have been using more of this type of data this year. More than 90% of senior leaders say they have maintained or increased their use of talent analytics since

the COVID-19 outbreak (see Figure 1).¹

This data is valuable, and leaders are using it to make decisions. That represents a step forward for talent analytics in overcoming the challenge of generating actionable insights.

However, a major shortcoming of the current approach to talent analytics is that fewer than 50% of employees trust their employer with their data.² If employees do not trust the organization, they will be unwilling to share their data and will

Figure 1. Increased Use of Talent Analytics Since the COVID-19 Outbreak



form negative impressions of the organization's talent analytics program.

The legal implications of data ethics may garner the most attention, but data ethics is about more than ensuring legal compliance. Organizations face serious consequences if their use of employee data violates regulations. Policies such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) impose harsh penalties on organizations that fail to protect employee or customer data privacy. For example, a company in the Netherlands received a €725,000 fine earlier this year for collecting employee biometric data in a manner prohibited under the GDPR.³

However, even when data collection efforts are legally permitted and legal compliance is satisfactory, an organization's approach to data ethics requires close oversight. Mismanagement can also harm an organization's public image, internal culture and employee experience. Talent analytics leaders have a responsibility to use and collect data ethically to preserve employees' trust and protect the organization's reputation.

Leaders can take three steps to operationalize their data ethics strategy and apply it consistently throughout the organization.

Diversify Partnerships Across Teams

Talent analytics leaders typically partner with legal and compliance teams, and occasionally some other leaders, to discuss the ethical implications of incoming analytics projects. But this collaboration is typically ad hoc, lacks a consistent evaluation process and limited to only a few teams within the organization. Instead, talent analytics should work with a broader range of partners, such as IT, business unit leaders, and possibly even an outside expert (such as a university professor or the leader of a local ethics council). Data ethics is not purely an HR or legal issue; it concerns teams throughout the organization.

By fostering collaboration on ethics, leaders are more likely to gain a holistic view of organizational and employee perspectives. Promoting collaboration also ensures alignment with the organization's culture and values. Leaders should identify productive partnerships throughout the organization at the start of every project and business decision. Partnerships should be strategically chosen depending on the project's specifications.

This approach ultimately benefits the business, talent analytics teams and employees by providing the groundwork for more ethical decisions and addressing any potential issues upfront.

Embed a Formalized Ethics Framework

An ethics framework is only useful if employees know that it exists and how to apply it. Although 84% of HR leaders say that they have an ethics framework, only 41% of employees say that they are aware of one within their organization (see Figure 2).¹ Talent analytics leaders should write down a formal framework and create clear guidelines around the responsibilities of team members and opportunities for employees. This framework needs to be embedded into the project intake process to ensure a shared

understanding among all partners involved. A framework ensures consistency and keeps everyone in the organization aware of what the talent analytics team is doing.

One way to embed an ethics framework is to create an ethical litmus test that is applied at every stage of the project, from project intake to final decision making. This ensures that data ethics remains at the front of leaders' minds. If a project fails the litmus test at any stage, leaders can work together to modify the project to better align with ethical guidelines. If the project cannot be modified to fit the guidelines, it should not be pursued further. For example, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) uses a framework that holds the analytics team and its internal clients accountable for following four specific ethical principles (see Figure 3). This framework is used throughout the project intake process to guide decision making.

Figure 2. Employees' Awareness of Their Organization's Ethics Framework



n = 121 HR leaders; 2,500 employees
 Source: Gartner HR Coronavirus Outbreak Survey (May 2020);
 Gartner ReimagineHR Employee Survey (May 2020)

Figure 3. GSK's Ethics Framework^a



Source: Adapted From GSK

^a This framework was developed externally in collaboration with multiple organizations.

Craft a Two-Way Dialogue With Employees

Rather than relying on the internal communications department to disseminate updates through mass emails, talent analytics leaders should establish a dialogue with employees and involve them in the decision-making process. This approach provides the talent analytics team with another source of input and gives employees a voice in the process. It also provides a forum for questions the analytics team might not otherwise know it needs to address and helps create positive branding for the talent analytics program.

For example, the talent analytics team might use an internal social media platform, as GSK does, to communicate with employees, obtain feedback and answer questions. GSK's forum keeps employees updated on the talent analytics team's work and generates excitement for future projects. This two-way approach builds engagement and trust, and our research shows that employees who trust their organization's talent analytics program are more comfortable sharing their data.²

Talent analytics' opportunity to drive alignment of organizational culture and employee trust has never been greater, and we anticipate its potential will only continue to grow. However, collecting employee data also poses serious ethical risks that can lead to reputational, legal and financial liabilities and the loss of employees' trust. When the talent analytics team makes data ethics a priority throughout the decision-making process, the business and its employees benefit. Diverse partnerships throughout the organization, a formal ethics framework and a continuous dialogue with employees are powerful tools HR leaders can use to ensure their talent analytics program has a positive impact.

¹ Gartner ReimagineHR Employee Survey (May 2020)

² 2Q20 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey

³ [Processing Employee Fingerprint Data](#), Law Business Research.



How to Build a Resilient and Responsive Organization

As organizations move from initial COVID-19 response to a more sustainable game plan, they increasingly need to anticipate, strategize, plan and execute at speed.

Questions your HR peers and leaders are asking:



How do we get the right skills in the right place at the right time?



How can we redesign processes and structures to adapt better to disruption?



How can we respond to demands from our customers, as well as our leaders, managers and employees?



Discover 5 strategies and steps to build a more resilient organization.

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Agile Career Pathing for Dynamic Organizations

By Jane Alancheril and Benjamin Loring

Traditional career pathing cannot keep pace with change, and only 32% of employees can picture themselves in a future role at their current organization. This article shows how talent management leaders can make career pathing more adaptive to changing employee preferences and organizational needs.

Career Pathing's Challenge: Changing Roles, Structures and Skills

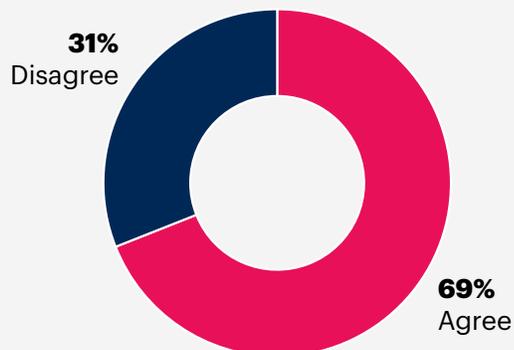
Organizations often recruit employees by promising career growth and development, but many employees feel they are not getting what they need. According to our research, just 21% of employees believe their employer provides helpful resources for navigating their

careers, and less than a third say they can picture themselves in a future role at the organization.^{1,2}

Learning leaders are well aware of this problem (see Figure 1): 69% say employees are increasingly putting pressure on HR to provide development opportunities that will prepare them for future roles.³ At the same time, only 27% of learning leaders say their function is effective at identifying the internal moves employees need to make to grow their careers.³

Figure 1. HR Leaders Feel Pressure to Act

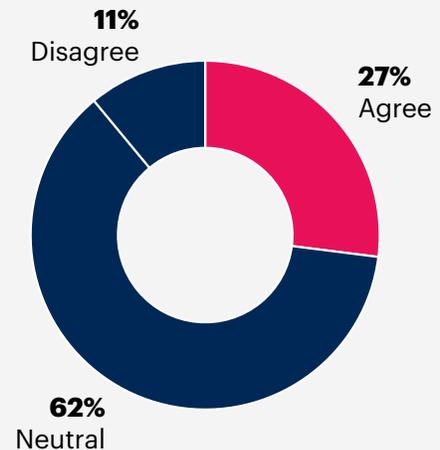
“Compared to three years ago, employees increasingly put pressure on HR to provide development opportunities that will prepare them for future roles.”



n = 79

Source: 2020 Gartner Shifting Skills Survey for HR Executives

“My HR function is effective at identifying internal career moves employees need to make in order to grow their career.”



n = 78

Source: 2020 Gartner Shifting Skills Survey for HR Executives

Career pathing — supporting employees’ movement from position to position within an organization — therefore presents a struggle for most organizations. In a recent survey, talent management leaders identified three reasons why they struggle with career pathing:⁴

- Roles constantly evolve.
- Organizational structures often change.
- Skills emerge and become outdated quickly.

These challenges also affect employees’ ability to chart their own career paths.

- Roles change or disappear, making it hard for employees to target a specific one. In our research, 83% of organizations say they have eliminated roles in the last three years.⁴
- Organizational structures change. Sixty-eight percent of learning leaders say the complexity of their organization has increased in the last three years. Only 27% say their organization is effective at identifying the internal moves employees need to make to grow their career at the organization.³

- Only 39% of employees believe the organization is effective at predicting the skills they will need in the next three years.⁵

With so much change and uncertainty, it’s no wonder that few employees see a future role for themselves with their current employer. A lack of future career growth is the second most frequently cited reason for voluntary employee departures.² At the same time, only 38% of learning leaders say they are effective at leveraging internal talent pools.³

A New Approach: Agile Career Pathing

In the last 10 years, organizations have increasingly addressed career development by creating new career pathing frameworks. One popular solution has been to change from a ladder-based framework, focused on vertical career progression, to a lattice-based one, in which growth happens horizontally, vertically and even diagonally.

But mapping to a fixed destination does not work as well in organizations where change is constantly accelerating. Because roles, structures and skills needs are always changing, the destination can also change. So, while lattices work for organizations with stable role definitions and structures, they require constant updating in more dynamic organizations.

To accommodate constant change, dynamic organizations need to approach career pathing in an agile way. By “agile,” we mean dividing work into short cycles with frequent iterations and adaptations, focusing on the end user and enabling collaboration. Agile career pathing means:

- Regularly reassessing and adapting career plans to changes.
- Focusing on the employee as the end user.
- Enabling collaboration and information sharing between business units, managers, employees and HR.

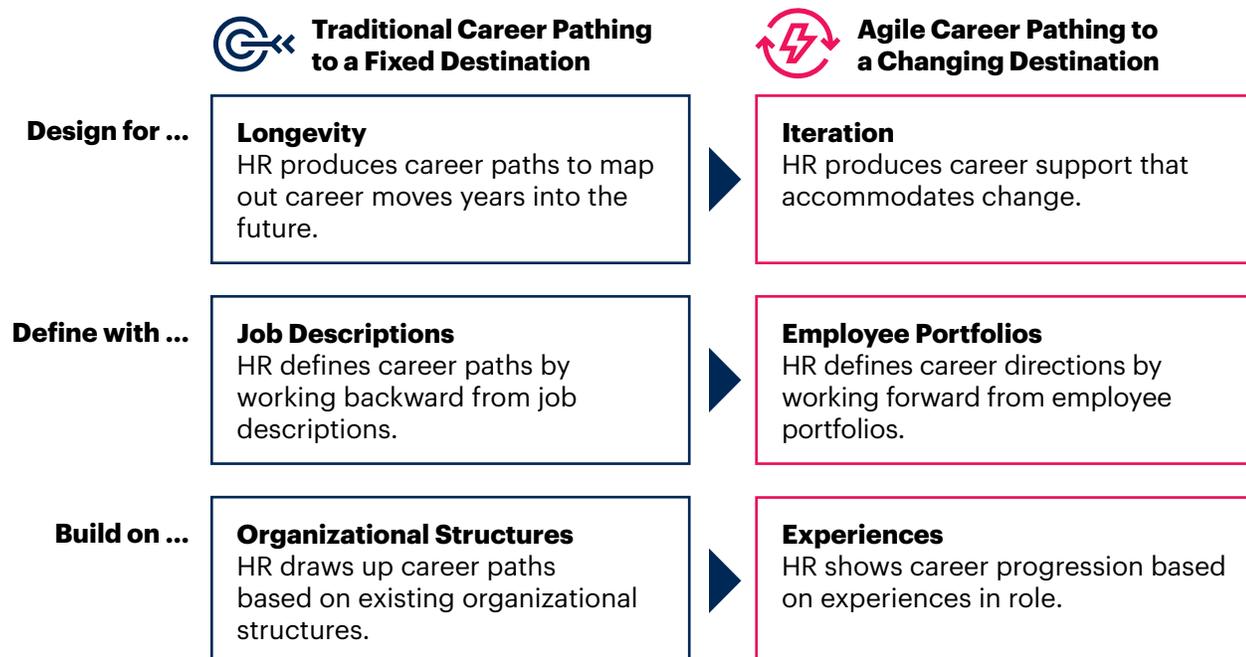
Transitioning from a traditional approach of ladders and lattices to an agile one requires three fundamental shifts (see Figure 2).

By “agile,” we mean dividing work into short cycles with frequent iterations and adaptations, focusing on the end user and enabling collaboration.

First, dynamic organizations should shift from designing for longevity to designing for iteration. Currently, HR designs career paths to map out careers years into the future. Instead, it should move toward designing career support that accommodates changes in employee preferences and organizational needs.

Second, career pathing support should not be based on job descriptions but on changes in employee interests and preferences. Traditionally, we start with the job description of a critical role and work backward to show how the employee should accumulate the necessary skills and experience for that role. However, just as roles, structures and skills change, employees’ preferences and interests also evolve. Organizations should start with the employees themselves, understand the direction they wish

Figure 2. Three Shifts to Implement Agile Career Pathing



Source: Gartner

to take in their careers and work forward to find the right roles for them. Successful organizations do this with employee portfolios that enable employees to customize and personalize their own career paths as they progress.

Finally, instead of relying on existing structures and hierarchies, which are constantly changing, organizations should base career paths on in-role experiences. This means matching and moving employees to new roles based on the experiences needed for and gained in those roles. This enables more cross-functional, lateral and diagonal movement, because employees are no longer restricted to one silo or function.

Agile Career Pathing in Practice

In our research, we have seen examples of organizations that have successfully put all three of these shifts into practice.

Design for Iteration

Instead of following a path, employees at Schlumberger follow a direction or “career logic.”⁶ As they move, employees grow in the context of changing skills needs, organizational structures and role responsibilities. The logic the employees choose is based on their interests, talents, performance and potential. Crucially, the process is iterative. Employees and managers reassess, and if necessary, adjust their career directions through regular career conversations and performance check-ins.

For any organization seeking to adopt this approach, its guiding principle should be to make it easy to reassess and adjust career directions. To get started, HR leaders should:

- Identify the most common career pathways at their organization.
- Define potential triggers, for the organization and individual employees, that could result in career moves that do not follow a prescribed path.
- Make an action plan to remove barriers to conventional and unconventional career moves.

Critically, organizations should review their career pathing framework on a regular basis

to ensure that employees can move in the direction that fits their preferences and the organization’s needs.

Define With Employee Portfolios

Schlumberger uses employee portfolios, which the company also refers to as “career backpacks,” filled with inputs to create a holistic picture of the employee. This portfolio starts at the very beginning of an employee’s career with Schlumberger, during onboarding, and continues throughout his or her career. Schlumberger embeds career portfolios directly within its talent management processes. Employees are told, “Your career is about your portfolio.” Schlumberger does not, as a rule, post jobs internally or externally, so the portfolio is actually the primary way to move around the organization. As a result, over 95% of Schlumberger employees have a complete portfolio, and the company uses portfolios to move 30% to 40% of its employees every year.⁶



Here are some tips for organizations seeking to introduce employee portfolios:

- Have employees fill out basic portfolios during onboarding and as part of the performance review process. The portfolios can be as simple as a résumé with the experiences the employees gained in the roles they had with previous employers. Once the portfolios are created, managers can ensure that employees update them regularly in advance of career conversations and performance check-ins.
- Save managers' and employees' comments and updates from performance check-ins and quarterly career conversations in the portfolio.
- Enable talent management, recruiters, HR business partners and hiring managers to search employee portfolios when seeking to fill vacancies.

The portfolio thereby becomes a passport that enables employees to move from position to position within the organization.

Build on Experiences

To build careers on the basis of experiences, leading HR functions start by breaking down roles into key experiences. Cross-functional teams develop role profiles based on the experiences desired for the role and the experiences gained in the role. Employees can then compare profiles across functions, find connections and identify possible moves where they may not have initially thought to look.

Further, HR can translate this approach into a visual, dynamic map on a career portal or HR platform to show employees possible career paths throughout the organization based on the experiences they have and would like to gain. A dynamic tool enables employees and managers to explore conventional and unconventional moves during career conversations.

To create experience-based career support, HR leaders should:

- Create basic role profiles that include the experiences most needed for each role and the experiences that employees gain in those roles.
- Frame career goals as developmental experiences the employee can acquire in the future.
- Encourage employees to visualize potential moves to new roles based on the experiences they want to gain. This is critical to helping them picture their future development at your organization.

As HR leaders make career pathing more adaptive, they should keep in mind the principles of iteration, end-user focus and collaboration. Agile career pathing offers a new approach to improving employee retention while making more effective use of organizations' internal labor markets to fill skills gaps.

¹ 3Q19 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey

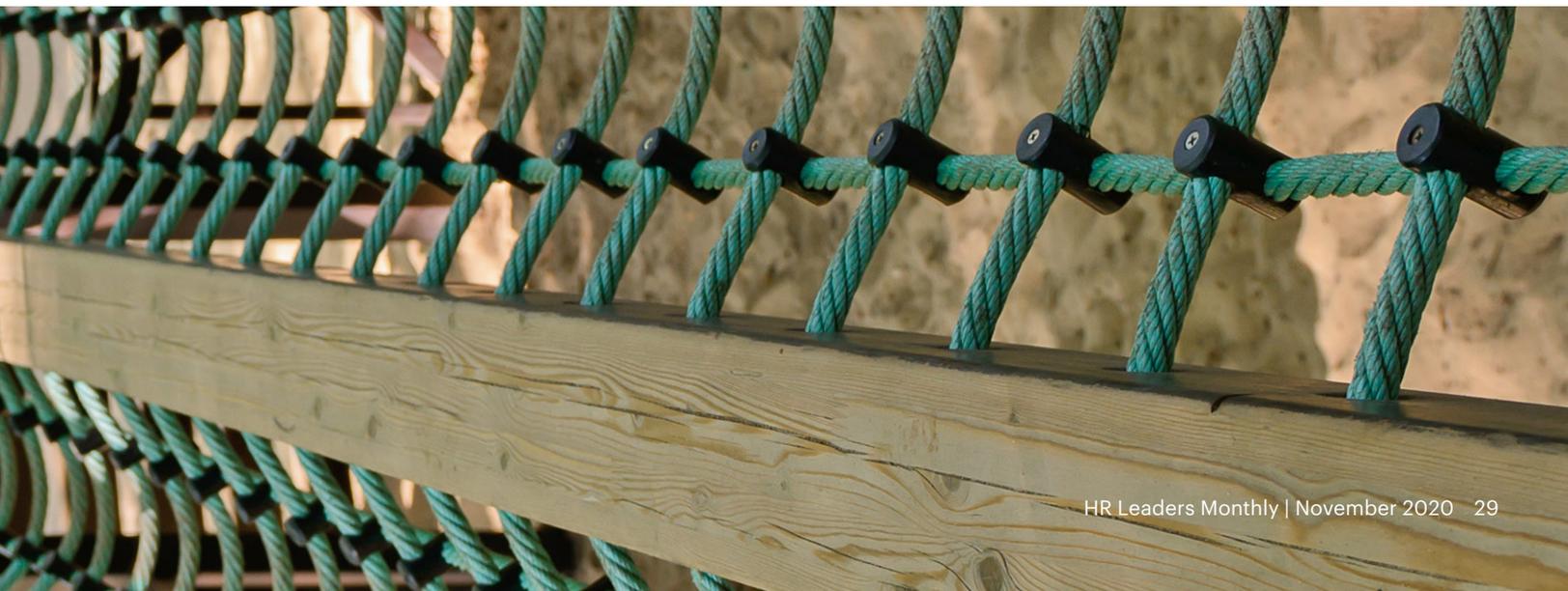
² 2Q20 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey

³ 2020 Gartner Shifting Skills Survey for HR Executives

⁴ 2020 Gartner Employee Experience and Talent Mobility Benchmarking Survey for HR Executives

⁵ 2020 Gartner Shifting Skills Survey for Employees

⁶ Case Study: Adaptive Career Logic (Schlumberger)



Interview

Taking Inclusive Leadership to the Next Level With Stefanie Johnson

By Jonah Shepp
and Lauren Romansky



Stefanie K. Johnson Professor and Author

Stefanie K. Johnson, Ph.D., is an associate professor of organizational leadership and information analytics at the University of Colorado Boulder Leeds School of Business.

She is the author of “Inclusify: The Power of Uniqueness and Belonging to Build Innovative Teams” and has presented her work all around the world, including at the White House for a 2016 summit on diversity in corporate America.

It seems, today, that many leaders are feeling the urgency of diversity, equity and inclusion, but are also facing a lot of competing pressures. In your view, what are leaders most worried about right now?

In just about any arena, leaders are worried about the economic impact of COVID-19 and how it will affect their business. At the same time, every leader I talk to is concerned about their people. Leaders wonder if they are supporting their employees as well as they can and whether their company is on the right track for ensuring racial and gender equity. Back in 2016, the conversations we were having were, “Is this a problem?” or “What’s the business case?” No one is having those conversations anymore. Instead, the conversation is about, “What can we do?” And in many cases, leaders just don’t know what to do.

Leaders wonder if they are supporting their employees as well as they can and whether their company is on the right track for ensuring racial and gender equity.

What’s motivating leaders to reconsider some of their management styles and leadership approaches?

The increased focus on equality stemming from the #BlackLivesMatter movement has awakened many leaders in the U.S. (and globally) to racial injustice. Managers are finally saying: “There is a problem. I don’t want to be part of the problem; I want to be part of the solution.” Then they just want to know how, which is actually easier than they think.

Well, first, why is it hard for leaders to be confident talking about issues of diversity?

It is hard because none of us wants to be racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. We all want to be good people. And if you happen to be white, male, cisgender and heterosexual you probably do not have a lot of experience talking about these things. I am a Mexican woman, so I have been talking about race and gender my whole life. But I am cis and heterosexual, so I might stumble a little more when engaging in conversations about gender identity. The trick is to lean into

that discomfort and hope that the folks you are talking to give you a little grace.

What kind of language are leaders using to talk about DEI today? What do you think this framing gets right, and what does it miss?

The word that comes to mind is “belonging.” Belonging was one of the biggest diversity trends in 2019. But here’s the thing: It’s not just belonging. It’s really not enough for the immense pressures we’re facing in society. 2020 is the year of the “return of the JEDI”: Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Would you rather fit in or stand out? It should be a hard question to answer, because we want to be able to do both. Fitting in is belonging, but people don’t really feel included if they can’t also be themselves. If you have to fake it in order to be accepted, you might have an appearance of belonging, but you don’t really have that feeling of inclusion. When you feel like you belong as your true self, that’s where inclusion lies.

In your book, *Inclusify*, you define several archetypes of managers, based on their approaches to belonging and employee uniqueness. Are any more common than any others?

There are four quadrants of the types of leaders who generate different inclusion outcomes. A leader who’s high on belonging but doesn’t invest in their employees’ uniqueness, I call a “culture crusader.” These are the leaders who are all about culture and want to hire someone they’d like to have a beer with. They hire for culture fit and are really big on belonging, as long as everyone is the same. Leaders who don’t focus on uniqueness or belonging, I call “meritocracy managers.” These are the leaders who say, “I don’t care about culture, or belonging, or individual differences; I just want the best person for the job, the top performer.” In the high-uniqueness/low-belonging quadrant are “white knights” and “shepherds,” and these are most often leaders who are trying to support diversity but inadvertently tokenizing the women and people of color they were trying to support.

When you feel like you belong as your true self, that’s where inclusion lies.

In the middle are the optimists: I love optimism, but as we've seen over the past four years, optimism does not change diversity and inclusion outcomes. It takes action. And then of course, there's the "Inclusifyer," who cares about both uniqueness and belonging and is willing to take the steps to make it happen. I have a quiz you can take, at www.inclusifyer.com, to find out which of these types of leader you are.

As for how common they are, it really depends on the industry or sector. In tech and finance, I see a lot of "culture crusaders." In sales, many leaders are "meritocracy managers." I have found many more Inclusifyers than I expected, which makes me think that the world really is changing and leaders are willing to start having conversations about diversity and inclusion.

A lot of organizations really struggle with consistency when it comes to both diversity and inclusion. Do you have any advice for organizations that might have pockets of success but struggle to scale it?

It really is the "frozen middle" that is slowing down progress. Lots of top leaders see the vision and are actually leading inclusively, and many of our youngest employees are much more fluent in diversity and inclusion than past generations. But

Words are good, but if you want to change behavior, make diversity and inclusion part of performance appraisals, promotion criteria and compensation.

those in the middle struggle with the status quo bias: "This is how I have always done things, so I can't change now." If organizations really want to move the middle, they need to communicate how important diversity and inclusion is to the organization's mission, vision and values. And don't just communicate it with words. Words are good, but if you want to change behavior, make diversity and inclusion part of performance appraisals, promotion criteria and compensation. That way, you are clearly communicating the behaviors you expect and you will certainly get leaders' attention, because what is measured matters, and if this is important enough to be on evaluations, it is a signal that this matters.

HR of course plays a hugely important role in culture, change and supporting diversity and inclusion initiatives. For organizations that are just now getting into formal DEI strategies, where is the best place for them to start?

HR is poised to help because they control one of the most important things in the organization: the data! I would start by compiling the data around diversity and inclusion metrics, like the number of women (for example) at each level of the organization and in each department. Critically examine other metrics, like differential turnover (are you losing many of your Black employees?). Find some of the spots where diversity may be breaking down. Is it recruitment? Selection? Turnover? Promotion into management? Promotion into executive roles? Then, do some benchmarking of what other similar companies look like in terms of representation and set tangible goals for moving the needle. Finally, determine strategies to move the needle where you want it to go.



Quant Corner

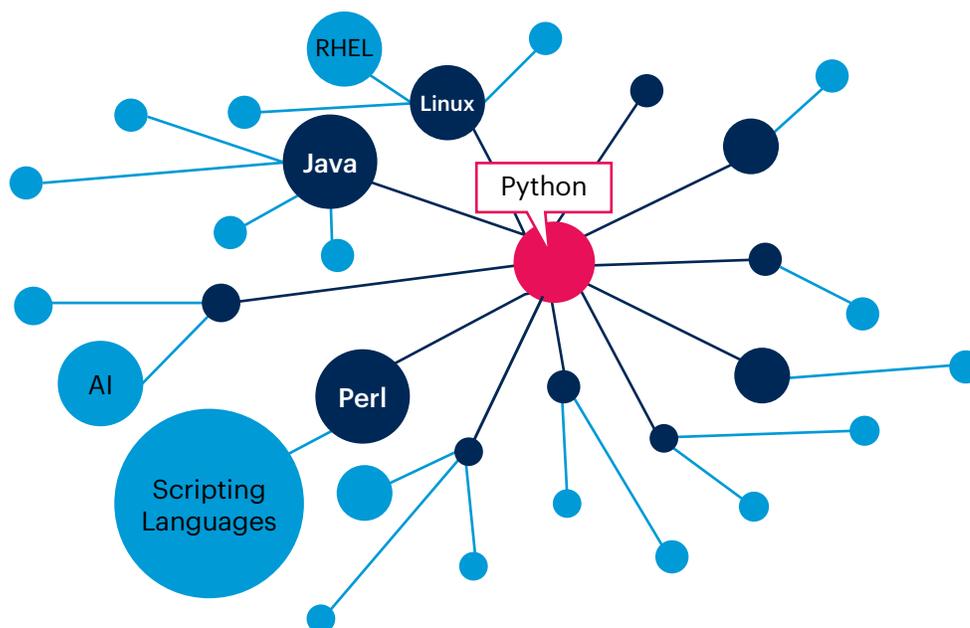
Targeting Skills Adjacencies Can Help Organizations Close Skills Gaps

Matt Hitchens

The skills landscape is rapidly shifting. Over the past three years, we've seen a 10% annual increase in total skills required for the average job across IT, Finance and Sales. Further, one in three of those skills will be obsolete in less than four years. Not only are more skills required than ever, but they are expiring faster than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these pressures. This has left organizations struggling to close critical skills gaps at their organization. One way organizations can close these gaps is by leveraging skills adjacencies, recognizing that employees with a particular skill are more likely to have or be familiar with closely related skills.

Figure 1 provides a practical example, using real skills adjacency data from Gartner TalentNeuron. As the network diagram shows, the programming language Python is adjacent to the secondary skill of Perl, which is in turn adjacent to Scripting Languages. In general, an employee who knows one of these adjacent skills can more easily upskill to Python than someone who doesn't. Identifying these adjacencies enables HR to close critical skills gaps more efficiently by targeting the right employees for training in specific skills.

Figure 1. Skills Adjacent to Python



Source: Gartner Talent Neuron