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# HRBP Quarterly

A Magazine for HR Business Partners  
and Strategic HR Professionals

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# HRBP Quarterly

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# Letter From the Editor

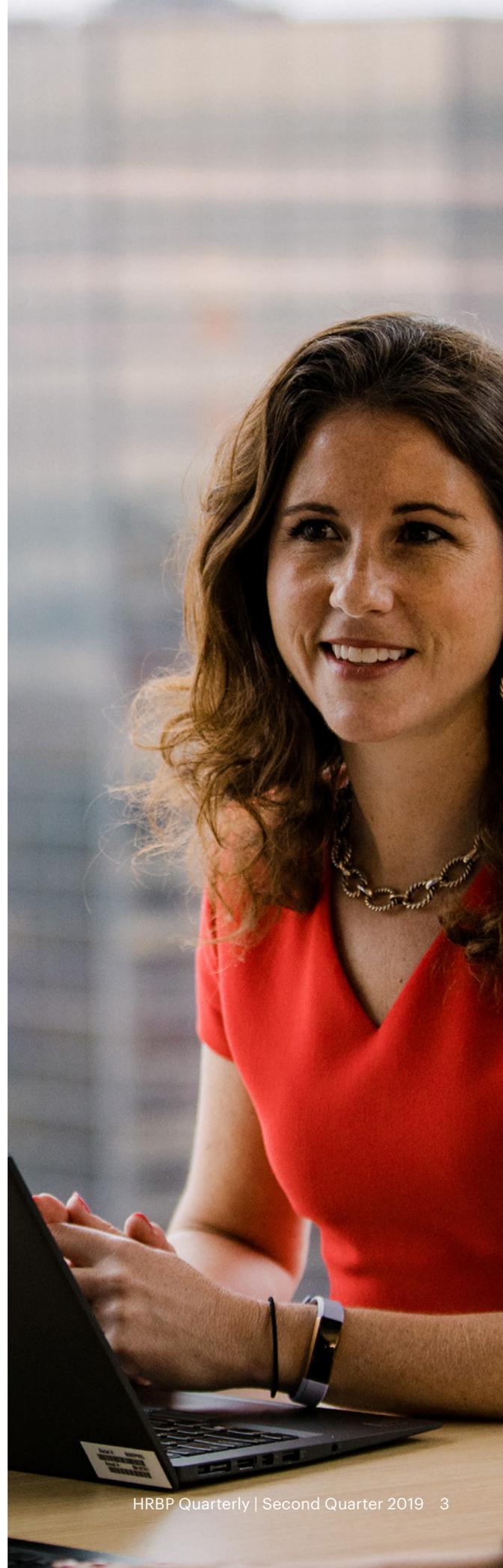
Many of the challenges HR functions face are ones they have struggled to address in the past (such as appropriate responses to #MeToo), while others are ever-evolving challenges (such as digital business transformation) that require new and innovative responses. Brian Kropp, HR group vice president at Gartner, predicts **five key changes** HR leaders will be expected to manage in 2019:

1. The #MeToo movement will accelerate.
2. More companies will use nontraditional listening tools.
3. Workplace tech will go beyond observation and start nudging.
4. Pay discrepancy issues will get worse, not better.
5. A new wage gap will emerge for new hires and current employees.

All of these predictions center on the most important part of any organization: talent. To gain a competitive advantage to attract and retain talent, organizations must be aware of and address these issues. In this journal, we dive into many of these issues to best equip HRBPs to support their leaders to face these challenges head-on with effective responses.

We provide guidance on how HRBPs can act to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, how chatbots and AI are used in the HR space and how HR can use nontraditional listening tools to enhance the employee experience and help their organizations build the culture they need to drive performance. In subsequent issues of HRBP Quarterly, we will continue to address these challenges to provide HRBPs with the insight and tools they need to best support HR and other business leaders to tackle these challenges.

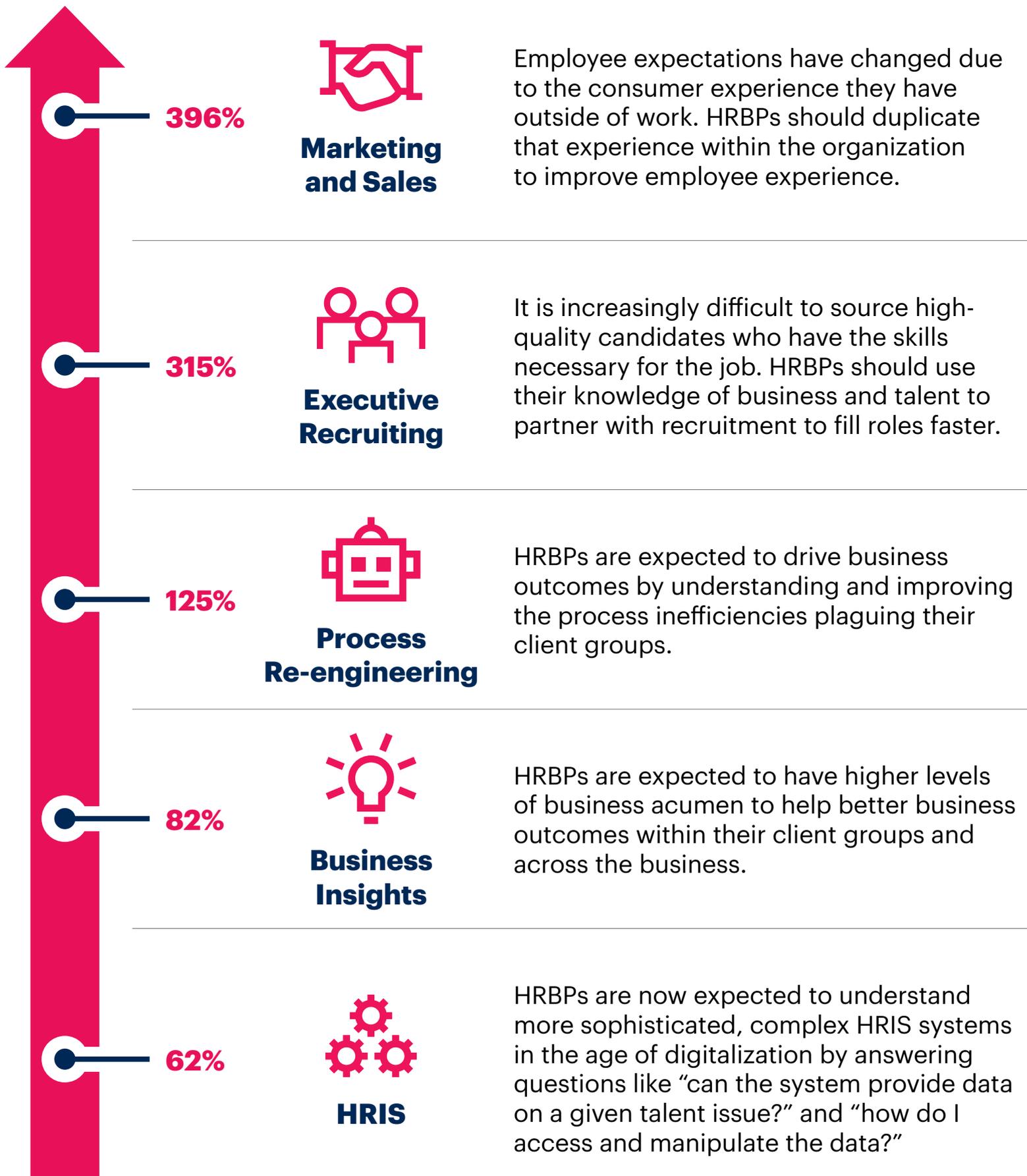
We hope you enjoy this issue.



# Rising Skills for HRBPs

HRBPs should aim to be strategic partners who increase effectiveness of business unit outcomes by 2.29 times by developing new skills in demand.<sup>1</sup>

## Increase in Effectiveness



n = 71,329 job requisitions

Source: TalentNeuron analysis

<sup>1</sup>Source: Gartner 2013 HR Business Partner Survey



# 4 Ways HRBPs Can Help HR Lead Digital Transformation

As business leaders witness their competitors take advantage of the opportunities digitalization provides, they realize they cannot afford to be left behind. In fact, 67% of business leaders agree if their company does not become significantly digitally transformed by 2020, it will no longer be competitive.<sup>1</sup>

However, to understand how to take advantage of digitalization, leaders and HRBPs must understand the meaning and context of the term. Digitalization is the deployment of technologies and practices to enhance the existing business model via products, channels and operations or to create new business or operating models.

HR has an enormously valuable role to play in ensuring a successful transition into the digital enterprise, but it's not always obvious how to achieve that goal. Many organizations opt for a "test and learn" approach involving discrete projects and experiments, rather than businesswide structured programs. This provides leeway for error and experimentation.

In this digital era, HR faces two major challenges:

1. CEOs expect improved performance, specifically a workforce that can produce and perform more higher-quality work in the same time period.
2. Employees expect an improved experience at work through relevant personal tools and resources, access to better data and information, and fast support.

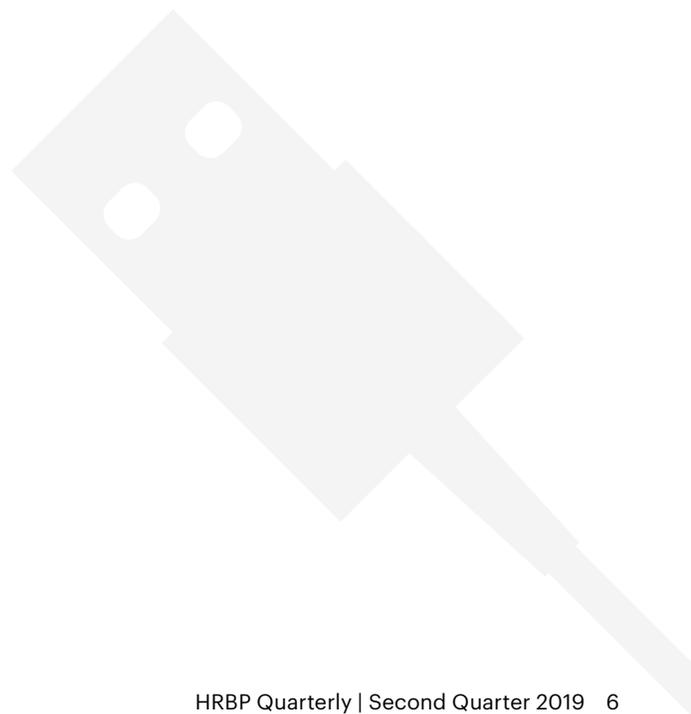
Given their understanding of people's needs and values, and their expertise on organizational culture and change management, HRBPs can enable organizations to digitally transform to improve business performance and enhance the employee experience. Organizations face four challenges where HRBPs can play a key role in leading digitalization.

## 1. Digitalization Has Changed the Candidate Journey

Online hiring platforms have made it easier than ever for candidates to apply to jobs. Candidates used to research companies and target a set of prospective employers, but now today's casual digital candidates fire off an application first and ask questions later. Organizations need to change the way they recruit to make sure they attract and hire the right people. Sixty-two percent of recruiters agree the best recruiters sell opportunities to candidates.<sup>2</sup>

### What HRBPs Can Do

- Conduct focus groups with new hires and candidates to understand which key criteria they consider when making career decisions.
- Create recruitment channels and messages to demonstrate the organization's digital capabilities.
- Align the assessment process to select candidates with digital dexterity (ability and ambition to use and apply existing and emerging technologies to drive better business outcomes).
- Increase the focus on digital skills during recruitment by including these requirements as a part of job design and job descriptions.



## 2. Organizations Need Better Insight Into Their People

In the predigital world, the engagement survey was the gold standard for measuring employees' attitudes and behaviors at work. Over the past few years, we've seen more organizations abandon these surveys and adopt new, more experimental digital methods for measuring what their employees think and do in real time (see Figure 1).

With new sources of data and methods of collection emerging every year, employers have more options to gain these insights, but some of these options could violate employees' privacy and trust if used improperly. Organizations need to shape the work environment to open channels that make employees' voices heard by decision makers and allow deeper, more frequent involvement. They need to develop more frequent and robust dialogue mechanisms. Our research indicates 46% of organizations use nontraditional data sources to understand their employees (see Figure 2).<sup>3</sup>

### What HRBPs Can Do

- Use models like crowdsourcing to involve employees and ensure their voices are considered while making key decisions.

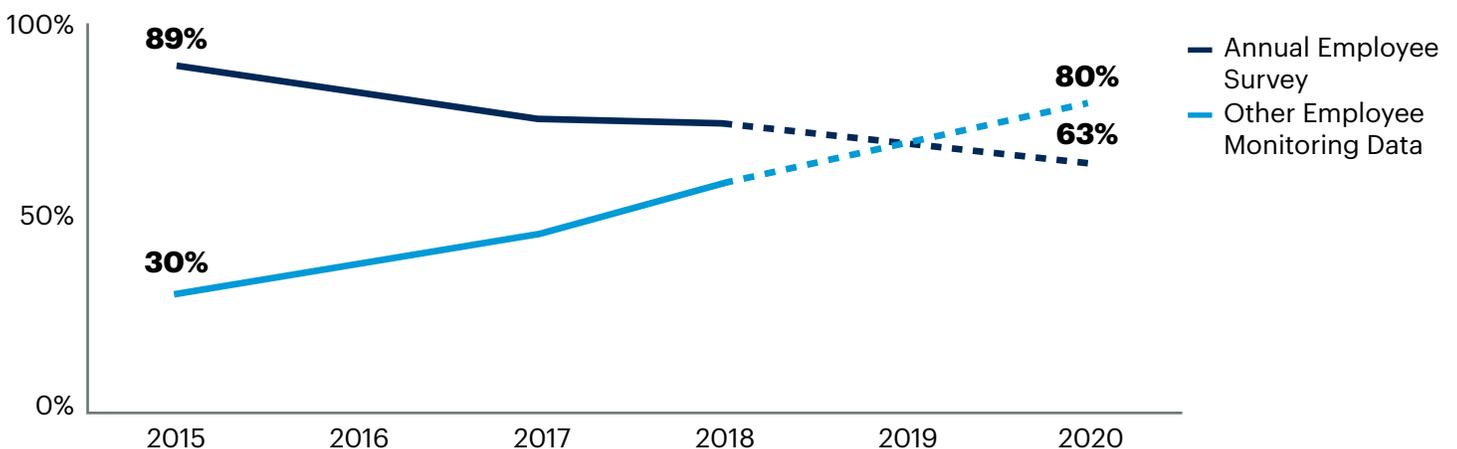
- Obtain visibility into and involvement with your organization by interacting directly with people at all levels regardless of hierarchical structures.
- Leverage technology to make yourself more available by conducting virtual roundtable sessions for remote employees.
- The percentage of organizations using other employee monitoring data to measure employee engagement has steadily increased from 30% in 2015 to a forecasted 80% in 2019.<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Self-Service Technology Isn't Delivering the Desired Results

Most organizations expect to invest in new technologies in the next two years. With thin technology budgets, HR functions are under pressure to maximize the benefit of every new technological solution. The trend in recent years has been to adopt self-service solutions that allow employees to access information and tools anytime and anywhere they want. These self-service technologies, however, have low utilization levels. Employees are dissatisfied with these tools because of unfriendly user interfaces, limited choice and limited integration with other modules.

**Figure 1: Employee Survey Use From 2015 to 2020**

*Percentages of Organizations Using Employee Data*

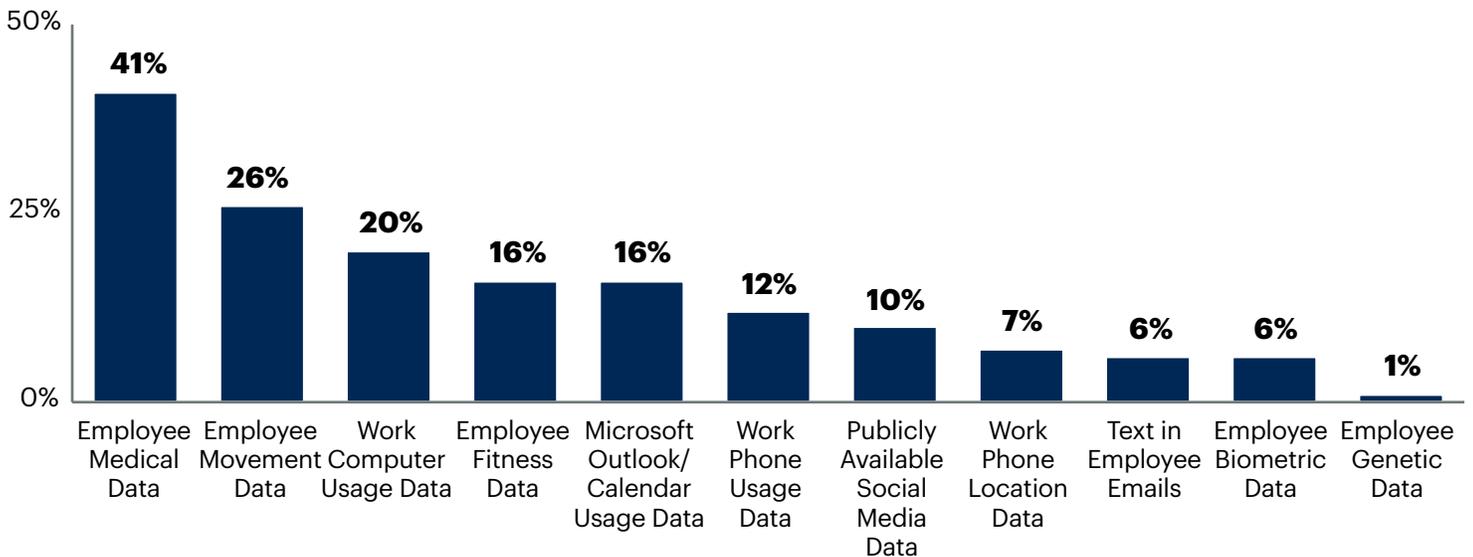


n = 210 HR professionals; 153 chief HR officers; 86 talent analytics leaders; 173 heads of engagement

Source: 2018 Gartner Employee Engagement Measurement Quick Poll; 2018 Gartner CEO 20 Pulse on the Future of Work; 2018 Gartner Future of Talent Analytics Survey; 2015 Gartner Head of Engagement Survey

## Figure 2: Increase in Employee Listening

Percentage of Organizations Collecting Employee Data Using Nontraditional Sources



n = 153 chief HR officers; 86 talent analytics leaders

Source: 2018 Gartner CEO 20 Pulse on the Future of Work; 2018 Gartner Future of Talent Analytics Survey

### What HRBPs Can Do

- Conduct a user experience analysis and present it to executive leadership teams to enable them to improve HR technology effectiveness and boost utilization levels.
- Provide in-person training and ongoing support to employees to help them feel more comfortable using the self-service model.
- Volunteer to conduct pilot tests for any new technology initiatives the larger HR team is implementing.

## 4. Performance Management Needs to Get Faster

One hundred percent of CEOs want HR to improve their performance management process. Many HR functions continue to struggle to implement the right performance management processes for their organization. These efforts usually focus on improvements like simplifying forms or increasing the frequency of feedback, but performance management systems are not fast enough to match the

accelerating pace of business today. Only 33% of employees agree performance management keeps pace with business needs.<sup>4</sup>

### What HRBPs Can Do

- Help employees establish quarterly objectives that are reviewed and adjusted as needed.
- Educate managers on the need to allow for changes in the goals established for their direct reports.
- Implement a flexible goal cascade process that enables necessary shifts during business volatility.
- Organize a session (midyear/quarterly) to evaluate goal alignment throughout the organization.

### Endnotes

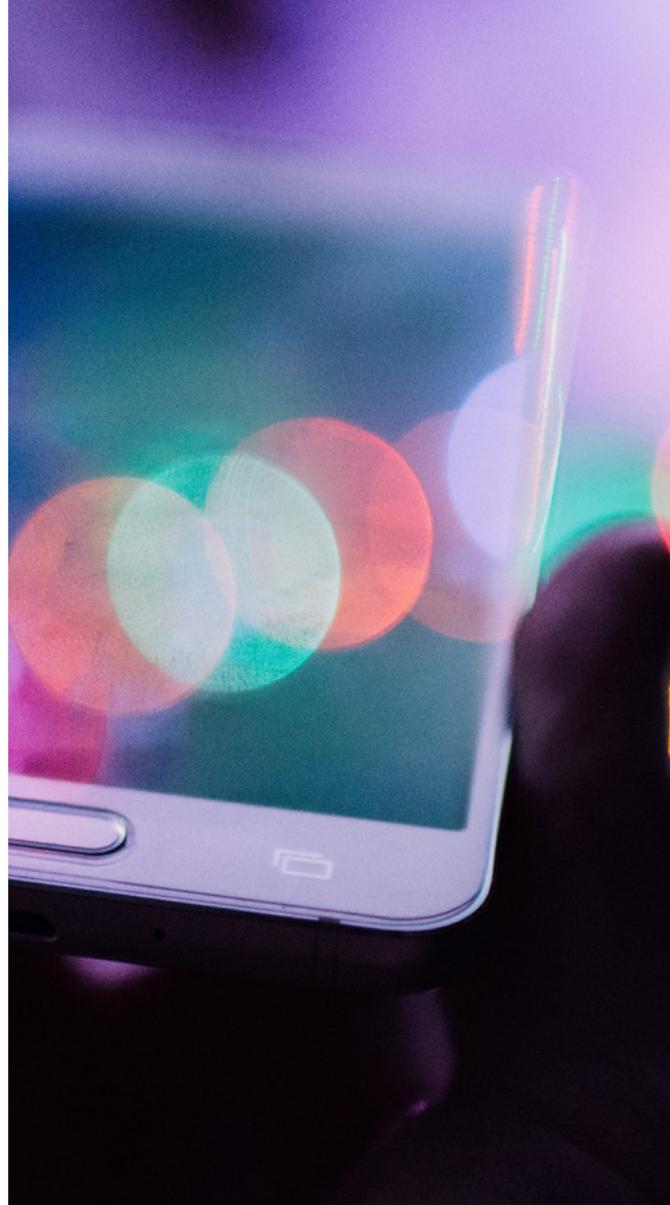
<sup>1</sup> Gartner Digital Enterprise 2020 Survey

<sup>2</sup> 2018 Gartner Recruiting Efficiency Survey; n = 667 recruiters

<sup>3</sup> 2018 Gartner Employee Engagement Measurement Quick Poll, 2018 Gartner CEO 20 Pulse on the Future of Work, 2018 Gartner Future of Talent Analytics Survey, 2015 Gartner Head of Engagement Survey; n = 210 HR professionals; 153 chief HR officers; 86 talent analytics leaders; 173 heads of engagement

<sup>4</sup> 2018 Gartner Digital Employees Experience Survey; n = 5,873 employees

# Leveraging Chatbots to Meet Employees' Digital Expectations



In the digital era, employees are more accustomed to interacting with robots than ever before. We encounter chatbots in our everyday lives, engaging in text or voice conversations to immediately get the answers we seek. Siri tells us where the closest Thai restaurant is, and Alexa orders more paper towels when we run out. A banking bot lets us pay bills on time, and a barista bot arranges for daily coffee pickup.

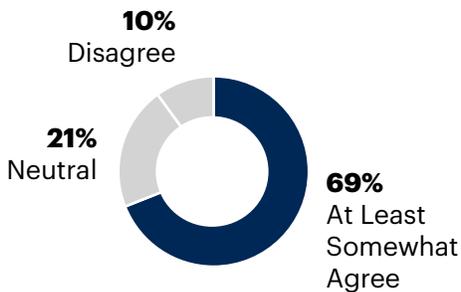
Our employees increasingly expect this kind of on-demand, easy digital experience at work too. Sixty-nine percent of employees say, compared to three years ago, they expect more personalization in communications (see Figure 1). Seventy-seven percent of employees expect easier options for completing routine tasks. And 69% say they expect more intelligent systems to

anticipate their needs.<sup>1</sup> A bot is one solution to meet these changing employee expectations. When properly set up, robotic assistants can check whether rooms are available for specific meetings or seek combinations of datasets that could increase efficiency for office workers.

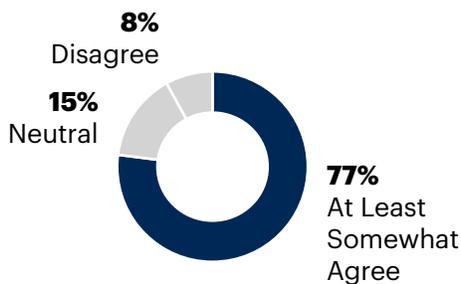
**Chatbots are AI-powered conversational platforms that simulate human-like conversations with users through a text- or voice-based interface.<sup>1</sup>**

## Figure 1: Impact of Digital Age on Workplace Expectations

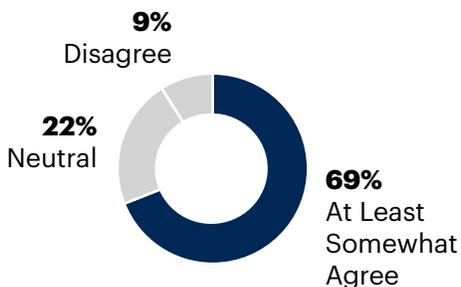
**Q: “Compared to three years ago, today I expect more intelligent systems that anticipate my needs.”**



**Q: “Compared to three years ago, today I expect easier options for completing routine tasks.”**



**Q: “Compared to three years ago, today I expect more personalization in communications.”**

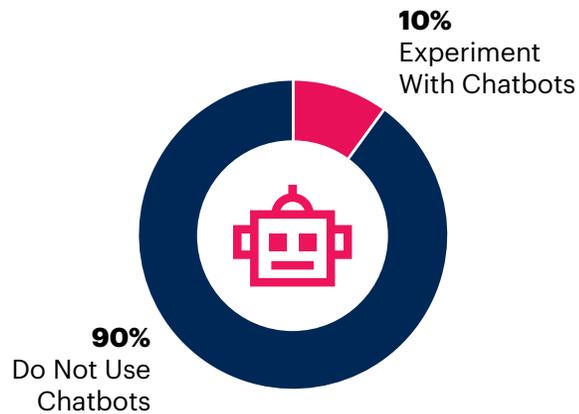


n = 5,873 employees  
Source: 2018 Gartner Digital Employee Experience Survey

Chatbots are not new; they are heavily leveraged in customer service and in some employee self-service solutions. But their use in the HR function is fairly novel (see Figure 2). In fact, only 10% of HR functions say they already experiment with chatbots.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, digital initiatives

such as employee journey mapping, lean product development and behavioral nudges are already being leveraged by nearly one-third of HR functions.<sup>2</sup>

## Figure 2: Percentage of HR Functions Experimenting With Chatbots



n = 253 HR functions  
Source: 2019 Gartner Future of HR Survey

Even so, many of your peers in HR, such as L&D or recruiting, increasingly consider chatbots as a technology solution:

- Sixty percent of L&D functions are planning, piloting or scaling up chatbots as a learning channel in 2019.<sup>3</sup>
- Some chatbot solutions in recruiting, such as Mya from FirstJob, automate up to 75% of the application process.<sup>4</sup>

There’s a dual benefit to HRBPs and the business when it comes to this technology. Chatbots can enable HRBPs to shift their time spend away from tactical and administrative work to focus on spending more time working directly with leaders and managers. And employees can receive faster assistance with common, low-risk tasks.

Those who are pioneering chatbot technology mainly use bots to increase self-service access at an optimal cost. And as an added bonus to the cost optimization, bots can keep a record of communications. Analyzing trends in employee interactions with bots could give your company more ideas to improve corporate processes and give you greater insight into the employee experience for the different employees in your client groups.

Given these benefits, what holds companies back from experimenting with chatbots? Developing workplace chatbots can be a bumpy process. Early adopters say it's hard to determine the right project scope. Which internal processes should the bot focus on? How many bots should you set up? How much should the company invest in developing the bot solution? Answering these questions requires solid research with employees and careful discussions with stakeholders.

And while conversational automation is more mature than ever before, bots still require continuous training. Early stages in the bot rollout can disappoint employees who are eager to adopt the new technology. Christening your new chatbot can also be fraught; make sure the name is easy to pronounce and spell, is acceptable in any language and culture and is gender neutral.

Accenture has handled these challenges and successfully pioneered a chatbot to improve the employee experience in compliance training.

## Accenture's Code of Conduct Bot

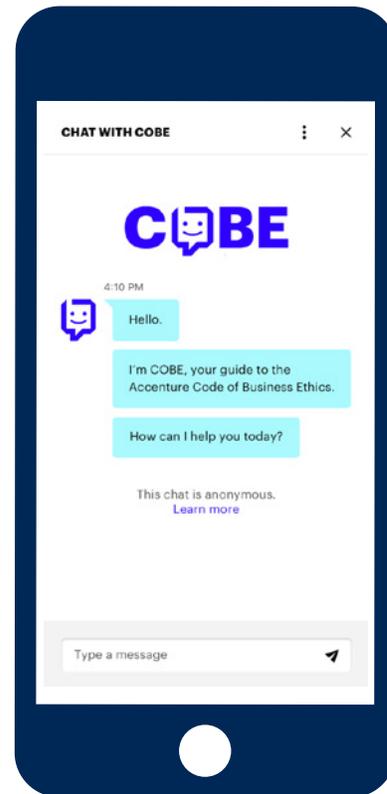
When professional services firm Accenture began revamping its code of conduct, the company wanted to "make it easy for our people to be compliant," Patrick Rowe, Accenture's deputy general counsel, told us.

"We want to have something that is easy to use; something that's like, say, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger or other messenger technology that people are using day to day," Rowe said. The company's workforce, Rowe shared, is "very used to using text chats as a way to communicate."

Enter COBE, named for the company's code of business ethics (see Figure 3). The chatbot provides 24/7 online customer service for Accenture's employees.

With a search capability to pull resources from the company's code of conduct and compliance databases, COBE can immediately offer answers or point to the best place for help when employees type in ethics-related questions. That saves employees' time; they don't have to sift through lengthy compliance documents. They can also get help whenever needed, in any time zone, during or outside of work hours.

**Figure 3: Accenture's Chatbot, COBE**  
*Named for the Company's Code of Business Ethics*



Source: Accenture

Furthermore, COBE uses natural language processing to understand a question and then routes to the relevant sections of the code, Rowe said. The bot responds with unscripted answers. And COBE is flexible: Accenture employees can talk to it "through any device," Rowe told us. "It's access on the go."

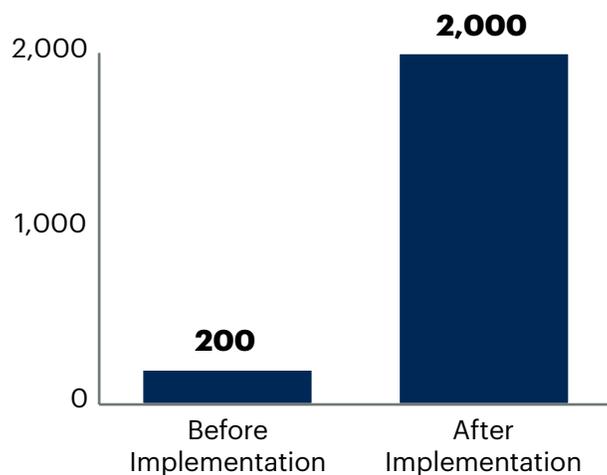
This is a big change from the way employees interacted with Accenture's compliance-related information in the past. Previously, the code of conduct was only available as a PDF on the company's portal.

After implementation, the bot boosted employee traffic to the company's code of conduct website from 200 visits per day to 2,000 (see Figure 4).<sup>2</sup> One year after its September 2017 launch, COBE had held nearly 71,000 chat sessions with Accenture employees.

Accenture recently launched an updated version of COBE. Now in version 2.0, COBE

## Figure 4: Employee Traffic

Visits per Day



Source: Adapted from Accenture

better understands employee requests and provides answers in a more natural and comprehensive way. Another new feature of Accenture's revamped COBE is that it offers analytics that enable the compliance team to segment COBE users into demographics for analysis while preserving employee anonymity. This data capability helps the compliance team understand how people interact with COBE and what questions they ask of it, which means the function can adapt corporate compliance training or edit its code of conduct as necessary.

## Next Steps

Accenture's compliance team successfully leveraged COBE to increase employee exposure to their company's code of conduct. How can you apply similar concepts when your HR team experiments with chatbots or other digital initiatives?

### 1. Think of your employees as consumers.

Companies design better products and services for consumers when they consider the consumers' logical and emotional decisions. HR can design better technology-enabled services by better understanding employees' rational and emotional needs as consumers of the organization's products and services. You are uniquely positioned as an HRBP in your company to measure employee

needs. Become a voice for your client groups during product development or digital initiative experimentation.

**2. Be flexible.** Part of what made COBE initially successful is the fact that Accenture's compliance team just did it; they launched the chatbot, responded and reiterated. When you launch a new technology-enabled service to your employees, be prepared to listen to the employees and respond. Only 30% of employees agree that HR's products and services evolve to accommodate the changing needs of the organization.<sup>5</sup> As an HRBP, focus on creating customer value in your client groups by purposefully responding to consumer feedback and influencing product and service design so it evolves with the business needs.

**3. Make it effortless.** COBE can be accessed by employees anytime, anywhere and from any device. It also leverages natural language processing. As an HRBP, help influence new technology developments at your organization by sharing your expertise of how work is done. What devices do your client groups use? What are the questions your client groups would ask, and how would they ask them? This will help ensure the long-term success of digital initiatives that your organization invests in.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> 2019 Gartner Digital Employee Experience Survey; n = 5,873 employees

<sup>2</sup> 2019 Gartner Future of HR Survey; n = 253 HR functions

<sup>3</sup> Gartner L&D Innovations Bullseye; n = 303 L&D functions

<sup>4</sup> "This Chatbot Can Make Sure Your Resume Won't End Up in a Black Hole," Fast Company.

<sup>5</sup> 2018 Gartner Digital Employee Experience Survey; n = 5,873 employees

In the News

# Personality and Contextual Drivers of Employee Engagement



When HR professionals are thinking about employee engagement, they often ask, “To what extent is engagement just a function of personality?”

A recently published meta-analysis may have some insight. The study’s data draws from 114 independent surveys of over 45,000 participants from multiple countries, and the conclusions drawn indicate that roughly 50% of variability in engagement stems from employees’ personalities.<sup>1</sup>

Since most engagement research has focused on the contextual, or external, drivers of engagement, this new research may surprise some practitioners. At least half of engagement is still affected by contextual factors surrounding employees’ work. So, HR should consider personality and contextual drivers of engagement when designing employee engagement strategies and acting to promote employee engagement.<sup>1</sup>

## The Business Case for Employee Engagement

Engagement is the extent to which employees commit — rationally and emotionally — to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment. All these elements can be affected by the combination of their past experiences, present events and expectations about the future. Engagement then can be broken down into rational and emotional commitment:

- **Rational Commitment** — The extent to which employees believe managers, teams or organizations are in their self-interest (financially, developmentally or professionally)
- **Emotional Commitment** — The extent to which employees value, enjoy and believe in their jobs, managers, teams or organizations

Employee engagement is the amount of effort and intent to stay employees exhibit in their day-to-day roles given their past, current and expected future experiences at their organization. Engagement has always been a top priority for HR leaders, but such an important,

long-standing priority is often seen as a risky target for change and innovation. Leading HR functions are reflecting on their traditional engagement strategies to critically evaluate where they're still relevant — and where they're not — given evolving employee expectations.

Employee engagement matters because, according to our research, employees strongly committed to the organization perform 20% better than their peers. They are also 87% more likely to intend to stay within their position. Engagement drives performance, improves retention, lowers absenteeism and increases profit. In addition, engaged employees are more productive and innovative.<sup>2</sup>

HR teams know disengaged employees are detrimental to workplace culture and overall business, and excessive turnover leads to a loss of organizational knowledge and experience. Companies lose between 20% and 25% of their yearly revenue due to disengaged employees, and the average cost of replacing an employee is \$18,591.<sup>3</sup>

## Personality Factors to Consider

The four main contributing personality factors identified by the authors of the meta-analysis are key components of resilience and emotional intelligence.<sup>1</sup> They are:

- **Positive Affect** — Positive affectivity is a human characteristic that describes how often people experience positive affects and, as a consequence, how they interact with others and their surroundings. People with high positive affectivity are typically enthusiastic, energetic, confident, active and alert.<sup>4</sup>
- **Proactivity** — Proactive behavior involves acting in advance of a future situation rather than just reacting. It means taking control and making things happen rather than just adjusting to a situation or waiting for something to happen.<sup>5</sup>
- **Conscientiousness** — Conscientiousness is the personality trait of being careful or

diligent. Conscientiousness implies a desire to do a task well and to take obligations to others seriously.<sup>6</sup>

- **Extroversion** — Extroversion is the state of primarily obtaining gratification from outside oneself. Extroverts tend to enjoy human interactions and are likely to be enthusiastic, talkative, assertive and gregarious. Extroverts are energized and thrive on being around other people.<sup>7</sup>

## Contextual Factors to Consider

HRBPs can help support managers by using these personality factors in candidate assessments during the hiring process. The three major contextual factors to consider when driving employee engagement are characteristics of the job, organizational culture and leadership qualities.

### Characteristics of the Job

Managers have the opportunity to build career partnerships when thinking about the design of their employees' roles. A career partnership is the relationship established between employees and their company where the organization displays commitment to developing the skills and capabilities necessary for future success.

Career partnerships are significant because low satisfaction with job development causes attrition. Forty-one percent of departing employees cited dissatisfaction with future opportunities as their reason for departing, and 29% of departing employees cited dissatisfaction with development opportunities as the reason for leaving.<sup>8</sup>

To become an important career development partner, managers engaging in a career partnership should display commitment to developing the skills and capabilities necessary for future success. To do this, managers should hold regular development discussions with their employees to maximize the impact on engagement capital and ensure development plans are credible. Furthermore, because managers play a critical role in making career

partnerships work, they should provide the tools and experiences employees need to determine their career aspirations and grow their careers. HRBPs should help in the development of these tools and coach managers on effective development discussion delivery. Furthermore, HRBPs can set a tone that will allow managers to establish strong career partnerships.

### Organizational Culture

A sense of connection with the organization can drive employee effort by as much as 32.8%, and a connection between work and organizational strategy is the number one driver of discretionary effort. Given their unique position to frame organizational culture, managers have the power to align employees' work with broader organizational goals.

Ultimately, one of the main factors that shapes the connection between employees and their organization is their ability to see the impact of their individual work on business outcomes. Connecting employees to the organization requires managers provide three critical types of information about their organization to employees:

1. Who they are
2. Why they exist
3. How they help the organization succeed

HRBPs should work with leaders to solidify this connection by encouraging managers share the following with employees:

- The organization's goals and strategy and why they matter
- How the employee's role directly or indirectly affects revenue goals
- How the organization operates and what senior leadership hopes to achieve
- The organization's mission and vision and how the employee's role helps achieve the mission and vision

### Leadership Qualities

Managers should provide fact- and observation-based informal feedback at least monthly.

Managers who are likely to provide feedback proactively can improve employees' performance by 16% more than managers whose employees must seek out informal feedback. Timely informal feedback can improve employee performance by as much as 25%, and, as a result, managers should reflect often to identify feedback opportunities.

Managers have many opportunities to provide feedback to their direct reports. Setting intentional moments will help them identify opportunities to provide quality informal feedback and serve as a reminder to provide feedback as soon as possible after a specific event. HRBPs can role model effective feedback conversations during check-ins with managers and role play important conversations when support is needed.

Furthermore, managers should recognize employees on an ongoing basis. Ideas for noncash rewards and recognition include: public acknowledgment, tokens of appreciation, development opportunities and low-cost perks. Regular feedback has proven essential because employees with managers who reward and recognize achievement show 22.7% higher discretionary effort and show 31.6% more intent to stay.

## What Can HRBPs Do?

HRBPs can take several actions to drive and sustain employee engagement while considering contextual and personality drivers of engagement:

- **Staff diverse teams** — Effective and synergistic teams are made of individuals with strengths that complement their teammates. Creating a team that is diverse in how they think and act, and displays cognitive diversity, is key.<sup>9</sup>
- **Encourage and promote feedback sessions** — Greater emotional intelligence and resilience may be great for individual performance. However, they may be detrimental to the performance of the team in poorly functioning environments. This means resilient employees might not be as likely to tell managers about

any systems or practices that might be inefficient. With a culture of feedback in place, employees will be encouraged to challenge structures that hurt team performance and engagement.

- **Encourage managers to create diverse teams and psychologically safe work environments** — Building inclusive leaders and creating diverse teams increases productivity. Encouraging employees to be their full authentic selves will foster the effectiveness of a team.

## Conclusion

While some practitioners are surprised that personality drivers of engagement can influence nearly 50% of employee engagement, HRBPs have direct lines into the workforce and are well-positioned to support in this area by promoting personality and contextual drivers of engagement.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> "Who are the most engaged at work? A meta-analysis of personality and employee engagement," Journal of Organizational Behavior.
- <sup>2</sup> "DNA of Engagement: How Organizations Can Foster Employee Ownership of Engagement," The Conference Board.
- <sup>3</sup> "The Social Economy: Unlocking Value and Productivity Through Social Technologies," McKinsey.
- <sup>4</sup> F.G. Ashby, A.M. Isen and A.U. Turken. "A neuropsychological theory of positive affect and its influence on cognition." Psychological Review. 1999.
- <sup>5</sup> T.S. Bateman and J.M. Crant. "The proactive component of organizational behavior: A measure and correlates." Journal of Organizational Behavior. 1993.
- <sup>6</sup> "Development and Validation of an International English Big-Five Mini-Markers," Personality and Individual Differences.
- <sup>7</sup> "Extroversion," Merriam Webster Dictionary
- <sup>8</sup> 2017 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey; n = 76,900
- <sup>9</sup> "Teams Solve Problems Faster When They're More Cognitively Diverse," Harvard Business Review.





# 5 Strategies for HRBPs to Mitigate Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

## Defining Sexual Harassment

According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that can include unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.<sup>1</sup> It can also include offensive or derogatory remarks about a person's gender that are not of a sexual nature.<sup>2</sup> Harassment is considered illegal when it is frequent or severe enough to create a hostile work environment, implicitly affect an individual's employment or unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance.<sup>1</sup>

It seems almost every day, reputable companies are making headlines for the wrong reasons. Grassroots public movements, such as the #MeToo and #TimesUp social media campaigns, mark the surging public outcry for a greater degree of corporate accountability and responsibility for the prevention of workplace harassment. In response, leaders are taking a harder look at their own companies and trying to develop proactive strategies to prevent sexual harassment before it becomes a systemic organizational problem. As a trusted advisor

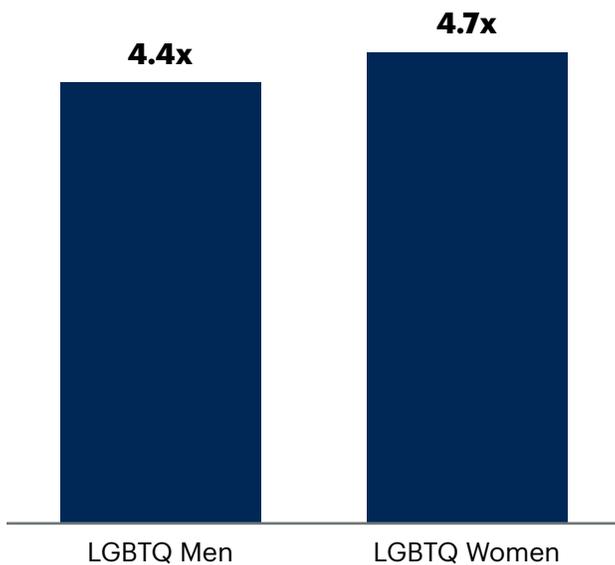
to your business leaders, you can take many steps to mitigate sexual harassment at your organization.

## The Pervasiveness of Harassment in the Workplace

In 2017, one in 10 adults reported they experienced an unwanted workplace interaction of a sexual nature in the past year.<sup>3</sup> Forty-two percent of U.S. women said they experienced harassment of a nonsexual nature — including demeaning sexist insults and remarks.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, U.S. women we surveyed faced triple the risk of experiencing such behaviors compared to men. The risk also remains high for employees who defy gender expectations. For example, LGBTQ men and women are often viewed as defying gender expectations and roles. As such, they are also likely to experience sexual harassment as a form of backlash against their perceived gender nonconformity (see Figure 1). And women who have served in the military are at 7.6 times greater risk of sexual harassment than nonveteran women.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1: Increased Sexual Harassment Risk for LGBTQ Employees Compared to Heterosexual Employees (U.S.)**



n = 541; 603

Source: 2018 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey

## Costs of Harassment

In 2016, the total cost of sexual harassment for organizations was nearly \$1.6 billion.<sup>5</sup> Sexual harassment in the workplace and tolerance of a hostile work environment can negatively affect employee morale and sometimes irreparably damage the brand and reputation of companies. Sexual harassment in the workplace can increase employee absenteeism and turnover rates and lower productivity. When employees observe harassment at work and when employees believe the company does not consistently respond to allegations, they may be more likely to engage in acts of misconduct themselves.<sup>6</sup>

## Strategies to Help HRBPs Mitigate Sexual Harassment

No magic bullet will eliminate sexual harassment, but organizations can take several steps to mitigate sexual harassment. HRBPs can employ five specific strategies to mitigate sexual harassment and create an environment that discourages sexual harassment issues.

### 1. Empower Employees to Be Active Bystanders

One in four women report experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace. Furthermore, 8% of women and 7% of men report they have directly observed sexual harassment in the workplace. Yet, less than half of the employees who have observed sexual harassment chose to report it. As an HRBP, your responsibilities can be expansive; you cannot be everywhere all the time. You need to rely on your employees to actively discourage instances of sexual harassment. This requires active bystanders. Consider taking the following steps to empower employees in your client groups to be active bystanders:

- Create a “speak up” policy. Partner with legal and compliance to develop an HR policy that emphasizes the importance of speaking up and directs employees on how to report instances of misconduct.
- Design a bystander intervention program that will resonate with employees in your client groups. Whether you develop sexual harassment training for your employees from scratch, use existing company training or resources or hire a vendor to carry out training, ensure the training includes relatable scenarios and interactive intervention exercises.
- Target managers and train them to respond effectively. Managers receive almost 70% of all employee reports of misconduct. Ensure they are prepared to respond to those reports through specific training on how to further report and/or escalate accusations of wrongdoing and they have practical tools that help them correctly and consistently handle concerns.

### 2. Role Model Respect, Civility and Equity

An effective role model will speak up, behave and operationalize desired cultural behaviors. Only 12% of organizations say their leaders operate or manage their business processes based on the desired culture.

As a trusted advisor to the leaders in your client groups, work with them to operationalize a culture that is vigilant in instances of sexual harassment. Engage employees in your client groups in a living code of conduct that penalizes sexual harassment — including ostensibly “milder” forms of sexual harassment such as gender-based jokes and insults (see Figure 2).

### 3. Rethink Performance Management Processes to Address Inappropriate Behavior

In many organizations, records of employee misconduct are not required to be included in performance reviews. For most organizations, though, this decision has not been formally addressed or discussed by HR. By omitting conversations around employee conduct during calibration sessions, your organization may be unintentionally rewarding performance over behavior.

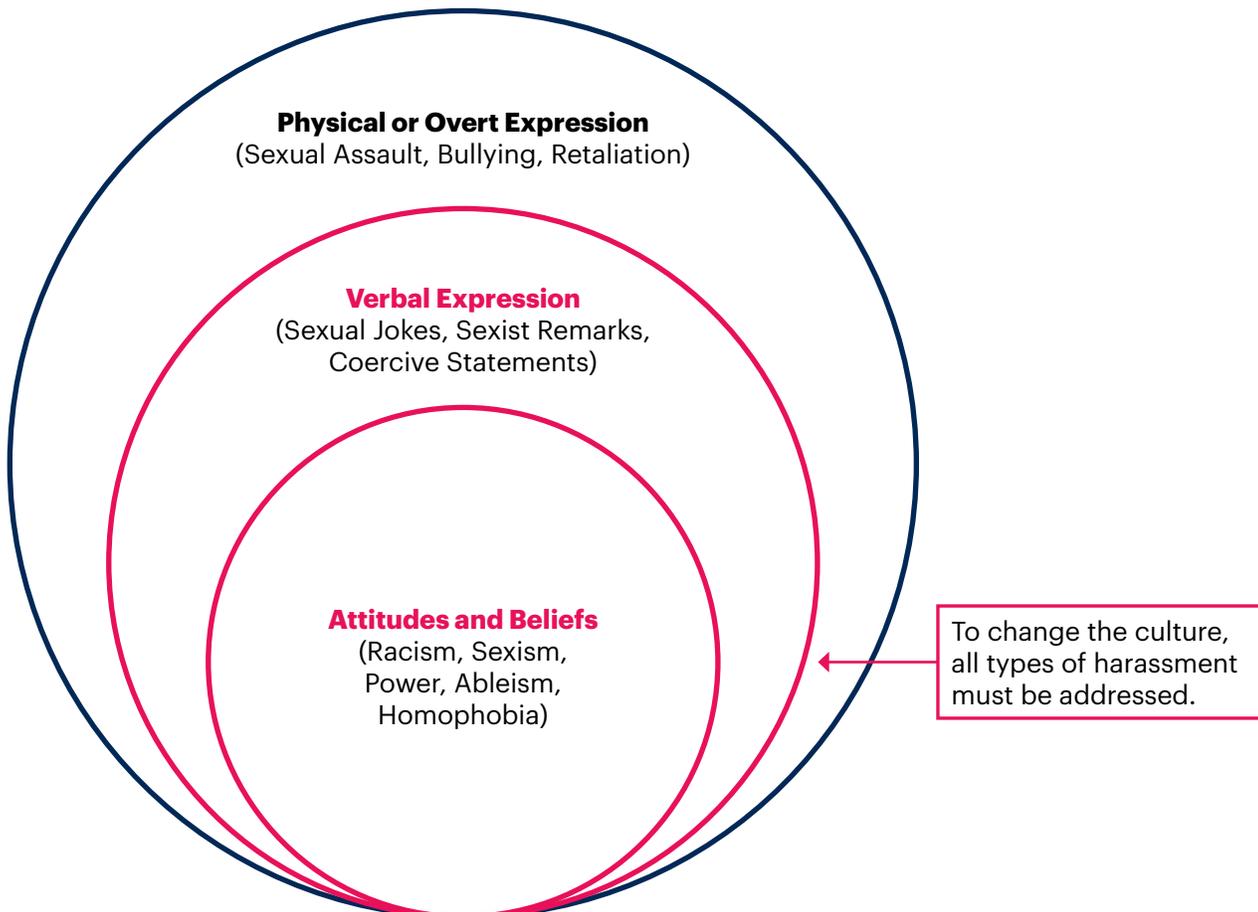
Consider adding discussion around misconduct and behavior in the calibration sessions you lead in addition to performance and competencies. You may also want to explore making misconduct and, more generally, behavior, a formal consideration in your organization's performance review process.

### 4. Conduct a Sexual Harassment Workplace Climate Survey

You are likely to be aware of overt sexual harassment if ever it takes place in your client groups. Severe assault, explicit bullying or clear retaliation is easier to detect — and more likely to be reported. But these behaviors can be just the tip of the iceberg.

Overt expressions of sexual harassment might be a symptom of an environment where it's permissible to have attitudes and beliefs about colleagues that suggest power is based on race, gender, able bodiedness, sexuality and more. When these beliefs are not actively acknowledged and rejected, they can then lead to verbal expressions of sexual harassment — like jokes and light-hearted remarks of a sexual nature.

**Figure 2: Components of Sexual Harassment**



Source: "Violence Pyramid," CCASA.

Consider conducting an anonymous sexual harassment survey in your client groups. You should weigh these key considerations before launching a survey:

- Keep the survey anonymous. This will ensure employees are more comfortable responding candidly.
- Explore different ways to promote the survey to ensure you get a good participation rate. Could you ask business unit leaders to promote the survey? Is there an incentive you could offer for completion?
- Be prepared to address and share the results. Climate surveys can reveal very raw information.

## 5. Support Women in Leadership to Close Gender Pay Gaps

The lack of female representation within senior leadership positions is a well-documented and well-covered challenge within today's global workforce. In addition, organizations globally continue to see a thinning of women represented within their leadership pipelines as women opt out of the workforce and are not promoted at the same rates as their male counterparts. Our research suggests closing gender gaps in management and on work teams may offer the best inoculation against sexual harassment. And the added bonus: Gender balance boosts business performance.

We found a few sobering facts to share with your leaders:<sup>3</sup>

- When a company's top management team showed gender imbalance (whether it was dominated by men or women), employees faced nearly double the risk of sexual harassment than when their top management team was gender balanced.
- Men and women were only half as likely to report their sexual harassment experience when men held the majority of positions (as opposed to when genders were balanced equally).
- When an employee's immediate team was dominated by men, men and women were at nearly double the risk of sexual harassment.

Closing gender gaps at the top will take concerted, long-term efforts, but you can start by creating more visibility into leadership opportunities for women and by engaging them before retention issues arise.

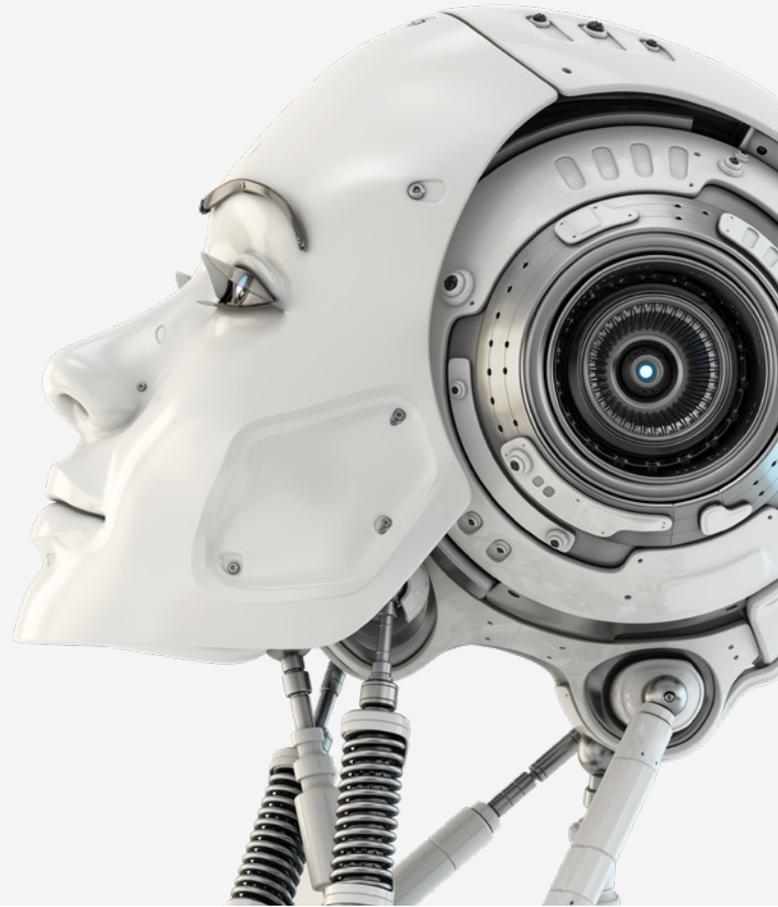
### Case in Point: Strategy&

Strategy& recognized the importance of the retention of female employees at all stages in the career life cycle. An organizationwide "Plan Your Path" initiative focused specifically on more junior-level female employees and introduced more formal short- and long-term career planning conversations based on their own unique work preferences. In addition, the sessions also devoted time to the discussion of taboo topics, often related to being women in the workforce, to ensure women felt supported in knowing who to access for these conversations and how to broach these more challenging topics from the start of their tenure.<sup>4</sup>

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> "Sexual Harassment," U.S. EEOC.
- <sup>2</sup> "Sexual Harassment at Work," International Labour Office.
- <sup>3</sup> 2019 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey; n = 1,565
- <sup>4</sup> "Gender Discrimination Comes in Many Forms for Today's Working Women," Pew Research Center.
- <sup>5</sup> "Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace", U.S. EEOC.
- <sup>6</sup> "The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intentions, and Absenteeism: Findings From Pakistan Compared to the United States," Springerplus.

# Understanding AI in HR: What AI Is, And What It's Not



## Defining Artificial Intelligence

To maximize artificial intelligence's (AI's) value to enable strategic work, HRBPs must understand how AI works and its limitations. Employees have many misconceptions about AI and, as a result, we frequently hear sentiments like “AI will take my job” or “AI only plays a role in science fiction books and the biggest tech companies.” AI hype has stoked fear throughout organizations and in HR. While the spectrum of opinions ranges from AI taking over the world (and, at the very least, everybody's jobs) to AI being nothing more than a buzzword, the reality lies somewhere in the middle.

We define AI as the application of advanced analysis and logic-based techniques, including machine learning (ML), to interpret events, support and automate decisions and take action. AI is technology that emulates human

performance, typically by learning from it. Conversations around AI tend to focus solely on automation and, as a result, miss the opportunity to highlight how HR, and HRBPs specifically, can use AI to their benefit.

But AI has its limitations. It cannot strategize, empathize or improvise, and it lacks creativity and aesthetic judgment. Successful AI relies on a large volume of data from which to draw information to determine the best response to a situation. Without sufficient data — or if the situation encountered does not match past data — AI falters. The more complex a situation, the more likely the situation will not match the AI's existing data, leading to AI failures.

HRBPs are closely intertwined with their client groups and understand the complexities and nuances, so they cannot be completely replaced by AI. Instead, they can utilize AI by supplementing AI's strengths with the necessary and complex solutions.

## What AI Is Not

**AI doesn't function like the human brain and it cannot learn on its own.** AI is a computer engineering discipline. In its current state, it consists of software tools aimed at solving problems. Some forms of AI might give the impression of being clever, but it would be unrealistic to think current AI is similar or equivalent to human intelligence.

Although some forms of ML — a category of AI — are inspired by the human brain, they are not equivalent. Image recognition technology, for example, is more accurate than most human brains, but it cannot solve a math problem. The rule with AI today is that it solves one task exceedingly well, but if the conditions of the task shift even slightly, it fails.

A finished ML product gives the impression it can learn on its own. However, experienced human data scientists frame the problem, prepare the data, determine appropriate datasets, remove potential bias in the training data and, most importantly, continually update the software to enable the integration of new knowledge and data into the next learning cycle.

**AI isn't perfectly objective.** Every AI technology is based on data, rules and other kinds of input from human experts. Because all humans are intrinsically biased in one way or another, so is the AI. Systems that are frequently retrained — for example, using new data from social media — are even more vulnerable to unwanted bias or intentional malevolent influences.

Alexander Linden, vice president analyst at Gartner, says, “At the moment, there is no way to completely banish bias; however, we have to try our best to reduce it to a minimum. In addition to technological solutions, such as diverse datasets, it is crucial to also ensure diversity in the teams working with the AI and have team members review each other's work. This simple process can significantly reduce selection and confirmation bias.”

**AI will not just replace mundane jobs; it will augment complex processes.** AI enables businesses to make more accurate decisions via predictions, classifications and clustering. These abilities have enabled AI-based solutions to reach deep into work environments, not only replacing mundane tasks but also augmenting more complex tasks.

HRBPs are a critical component to successfully managing AI's impact on the workforce of the future. HRBPs should assess roles in their client groups that require minimal social-creative skills, as those roles are likely to be the most affected by AI. As a result, HRBPs should initiate these conversations with business leaders in their client groups to discuss AI strategy and what it means for the current and future workforce.

## AI's Capabilities to Create Jobs

In a report entitled “Artificial Intelligence, Automation and Work,”<sup>1</sup> MIT professor Daron Acemoglu and Boston University professor Pascual Restrepo argue that new technologies, such as AI, affect the work environment in two ways:

1. The displacement effect: New technologies remove or reduce the need for certain types of jobs.
2. The productivity effect: An increase in demand for labor for nonautomated tasks.

Using AI for automation has a displacement effect on work, effectively eliminating particular jobs. This automation is just one side of the AI coin, however. The other is augmentation. Because AI can perform certain tasks faster, less expensively and more accurately than humans, it creates opportunities for scale. People who rely on AI outputs to do their work can now receive these outputs faster and in greater volume. In turn, employers hire more people for the positions that use AI outputs. However HR should consider that those hired may have different skill sets than those being replaced.

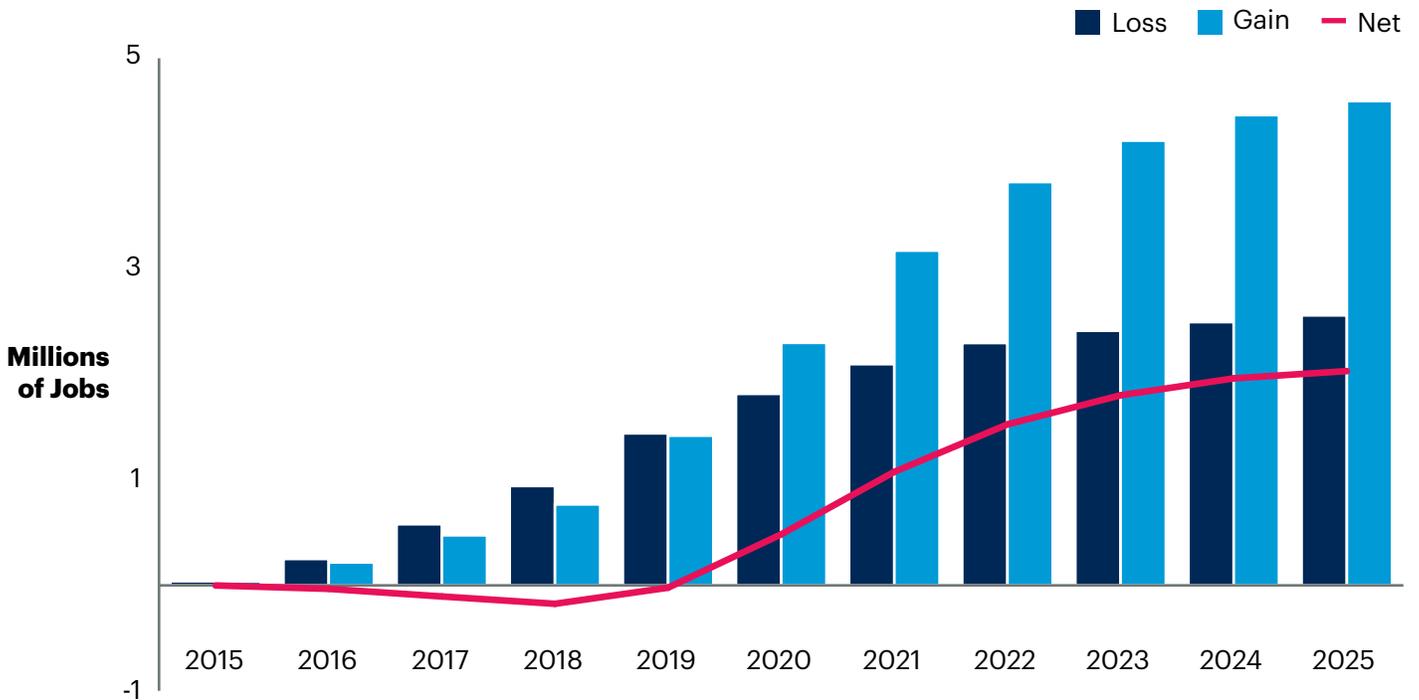
Ultimately, by 2020, we predict AI will create more jobs than it replaces with 500,000 net jobs created (see Figure 1). And by 2025, 2 million net jobs will be created by AI.

## AI Enables Strategic Work

The AI productivity effect has the potential to enable HRBPs to act more strategically. AI can reduce time spend on tactical work and augment strategic work.

For example, AI is used to pinpoint talent needs in organizations, allowing HRBPs to

**Figure 1: AI's Net Job Creation**



Source: Gartner (April 2019)

more efficiently and effectively work with hiring managers to hire the best candidate for the role. Here, HRBPs can present key talent data and insights — produced by AI — to hiring managers and work strategically with them to select the best candidate. As previously discussed, however, AI can only perform as well as the quality of information it is given. HRBPs must work with hiring managers to clearly define desired skills and talent needs (the inputs for AI).

Additionally, AI can greatly improve HRBPs' usage of data to make informed and effective decisions. Eighty-four percent of HRBPs agree

their internal clients expect them to use data when making talent-related recommendations, and AI can do much of the data-related heavy lifting. This means HRBPs can better meet client expectations and reduce their time to do so.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> "Artificial Intelligence, Automation and Work," National Bureau of Economics Research.

# Improve the Employee Experience for Remote Workers

## Trends in Remote and Flexible Work

Since the early 2000s, an increasing number of organizations have started offering their employees the option of remote and flexible work. In fact, 4.3 million employees in the U.S. now work from home at least half the time.<sup>1</sup> From 2011 to 2016, the share of employees working remotely rose from 39% to 43%.<sup>2</sup> Eighty-three percent of organizations with flexible working arrangements have seen an increase in productivity.<sup>3</sup>

While remote work has business and talent benefits, it can also be a challenge to implement effectively and best support the employee experience. HRBPs must simultaneously balance the needs of the business and the needs of the client groups they support, which can be challenging. However, because they have direct insight into the employee experience and what employees need, HRBPs are strategically positioned to assess and improve the employee experience for remote and flexible workers. As remote and flexible work options become increasingly common, HRBPs must ensure employee engagement is not negatively affected by potentially new workforce dynamics that come with a partial or total remote workforce.



**Flexible work options vary by organizational demands but typically involve the possibility of working from alternative locations, sometimes in off-schedule, compressed hours.**

**Remote work** refers to situations in which employees work mainly from home and communicate with the organization and their peers using virtual channels, such as email and telephone.

## Challenges Supporting Remote Employees

HRBPs must be fully proficient in gathering employee feedback, as it is one of the key challenges in the role. It's also an essential element to understand and get right in the process to enhance remote employees' experience. Traditionally, HR functions have used employee experience surveys to understand their organizations. In 2015, 89% of organizations conducted annual employee surveys.<sup>4</sup> New trends are emerging that can help HRBPs gather employee feedback to more effectively support employees.

By 2020, 80% of HR functions are expected to use alternative listening tools to better understand the employee experience of their client groups.<sup>4</sup> While the implementation of new processes has the potential to show new challenges, HRBPs have an opportunity to use new tools, such as listening tools, to substantially improve employee experience.

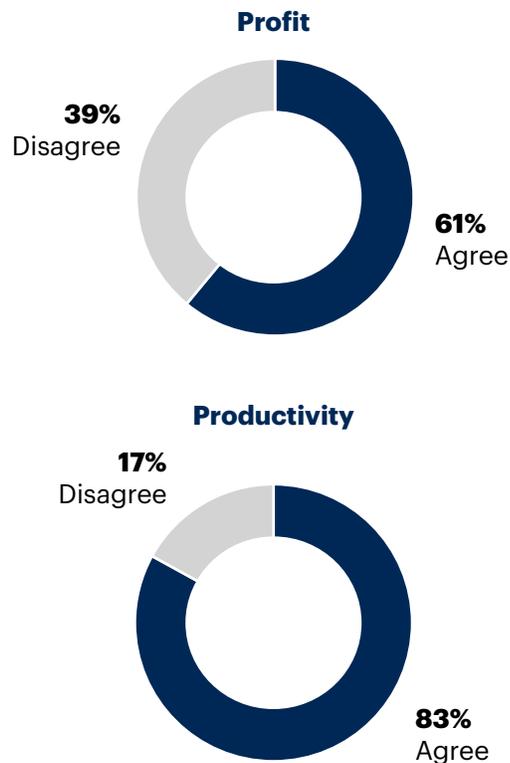
## The Benefits of Remote Work

Misconceptions about remote work can cause managers or colleagues to worry if employees who are not in the physical office are getting work done. While this is an understandable fear, data demonstrates that 61% of organizations have seen an increase in profit when implementing a flexible work policy.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, remote work results in higher morale and job satisfaction and lower employee stress and turnover.<sup>6</sup> Remote workers can deliver the performance the business needs while also being able to address any conflicting family and work demands that may hinder professional development (see Figure 1).

Women can benefit a lot from flexible work options. When options are implemented and

### Figure 1: Effect of Flexibility on Business Outcomes

Percentage of Employees Reporting Improvements After Their Organization Implemented a Flexible Working Policy



n = 8,000

Source: Adapted from Vodafone

supported properly, female employees can have an improved employee experience. Women found they received higher performance ratings from their supervisors and their career prospects improved, rather than worsened, when given flexible work options.<sup>4</sup>

To enhance the employee experience for all remote workers, HRBPs must engage relevant stakeholders throughout the organization. For example, HRBPs should train managers to best support remote workers. HRBPs can help managers evaluate employees based on the completion of their projects rather than the process through which they arrived at the final deliverable. This shift does not confine employee productivity; it gives employees more freedom to work in their own efficient way.

HRBPs need to ensure performance interviews fairly assess the performance of all employees, ranging from those who work on flexible schedules, remotely or on traditional schedules. HRBPs can support the business and remote workers in several ways:

- Ensure meeting etiquette supports remote employees.
- Build a business case that supports the improvement of remote employee experience.
- Partner with IT to accommodate all workers.

## Tactics to Enhance the Remote Employee Experience

To best support flexible and remote employees, instruct managers to coach their teams to set up collaborative meetings that allow every employee to participate comfortably regardless of their physical location. Additionally, employee engagement is a space where HR functions should partner with IT, real estate, communications and other functions to ensure remote and nonremote employees remain connected and can work collaboratively. Consider the following tactics:

- **Meeting Etiquette** — When scheduling meetings, encourage client groups to choose a time that accommodates the time differences of all stakeholders involved. Additionally, set up the call or virtual meeting a few minutes before the start time so virtual guests can join the call with ease. Furthermore, coach managers to minimize muffled lines and poor connection issues to ensure the remote employee can follow and participate in discussions in virtual meetings freely.
- **Employee Alternative Listening Techniques** — HRBPs should consider making a business case for the use alternative listening tools that go beyond employee surveys, such as email scraping, tracking workspace usage, data mining, natural language processing and semantic analysis. This allows HRBPs to get a

holistic understanding of their client group's employee experience.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, supporting telecommuting cultivates a more inclusive organizational culture for employees who require special accommodations. This allows for a fair playing field for all employees to engage in the organization, furthering positive business outcomes to the organization.

- **Partner Closely With Other Support Functions** — HRBPs can work closely with the IT teams to ensure the support processes in place to accommodate every worker's needs, including those who work remotely. Furthermore, business partners can work with real estate and communications teams to ensure the most efficient resources are in place to support remote workers, such as proper videoconferencing technology and software that enables collaboration.

## Takeaways for Supporting Remote Workers

Providing a positive employee experience is an undeniable goal of the talent management process that can affect business outcomes. To capitalize on the benefits, HRBPs must understand the current climate of their organizations and the impact it has on flexible workers. They must also help managers shift their remote employee evaluation style to evaluate the final deliverable rather than the process. Once HRBPs assess the current state of the remote employee experience and train managers to properly evaluate the work of remote employees, they should turn these efforts into sustainable policies to maintain the health of the organization.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> "Telecommuting Trend Data," Global Workplace Analytics.
- <sup>2</sup> "America's Coming Workplace: Home Alone," Gallup.
- <sup>3</sup> "Enabling Effective Flexible Work"
- <sup>4</sup> "5 Changes HR Leaders Can Expect to Manage in 2019"
- <sup>5</sup> "HRBP Guide to Updating Organizational Policies and Practices for Inclusion Essentials"
- <sup>6</sup> "Telecommuting Has Mostly positive Consequences for Employees and Employers, Say Researchers," American Psychological Association.

# Fostering Innovation Through Psychological Safety With Dr. Amy Edmondson



**Dr. Amy Edmondson** is the Novartis professor of leadership and management at the Harvard Business School and the author of “The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation and Growth.”

To promote economic growth, organizations demand innovation. Ask someone what the key ingredients of innovation are, and they'll likely say new ideas, collaboration and critical thought. While the key ingredients for innovation are widely accepted, many people often overlook the inevitability of failure in success-driven environments.

How, in a culture that fears failure, can we challenge ourselves to be innovative and collaborative? And how can HR promote this kind of culture at their organizations?

We often see failure as an insurmountable misstep and believe the best teams never fail. However, Dr. Amy Edmondson, the Novartis professor of leadership and management at the Harvard Business School and author of “The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation and Growth,” believes the opposite.

Through her research, Dr. Edmondson discovered that not only did better performing teams make errors, but it seemed they made more errors than those with worse performance.

Continuing with her research however, she found it wasn't that the best teams made more errors, but rather they could admit their failures and openly discuss them among their peers to grow from their mistakes and improve their overall performance. She found better performing teams felt psychologically safe when working with their colleagues.

Psychological safety is a shared belief you won't be punished for making a mistake.<sup>1</sup> The existence of this at your organization, or lack thereof, can drive new growth or bring your organization to a halt through idea suppression, silence and intimidation.

"Human beings are going to protect themselves. That's an instinct. And it's an appropriate instinct," Dr. Edmondson shared in her interview with Gartner's Talent Angle Podcast. However, when this instinct occurs in the workplace, then "you're protecting yourself, and you're not expressing yourself. You're not contributing. You're not engaging in the way that's possible."

In a psychologically safe environment, team members feel accepted and respected and can bring their authentic selves to work without fear of negative consequences.

Dr Edmondson shares that: "People err on the side of holding back. They err on the side of silence when in fact we want them to err on the side of voice. We want them to speak up, and then we want that speaking up to be welcomed."

In psychologically safe environments, employees feel their thoughts are welcomed and are, therefore, more open to sharing different perspectives, thoughts and ideas. This, in turn, creates an environment ready for innovation.

According to Dr. Edmondson, organizations that lack psychological safety can face two risks:

- **Risk one** occurs when a safety concern or problem is left unaddressed and the product makes it to the customer as a faulty service.
- **Risk two** occurs when individuals are not given the opportunity to innovate and come up with great new products.

So how do we avoid these risks and foster an environment that promotes engagement and idea sharing within our client groups? How do we make this part of our culture and organizational framework?

HRBPs can take a few of Dr. Edmondson's methods outlined in this article to coach managers, leaders and employees and create an environment of psychological safety within their client groups.

## What HRBPs Can Do

During her interview with the Talent Angle, Dr. Edmondson shared the four following methods HRBPs can use to foster psychological safety within their organizations:

### 1. Promote Openness, Ask Questions, Admit Weaknesses and Acknowledge Things You Don't Know

To get work done, individuals must often partner with stakeholders throughout the business and outside of their usual teams to solve larger, organizational challenges. Such challenges require solutions sourced from innovative ideas and diverse perspectives.

To support their client groups to solve challenging business problems and cultivate an inclusive environment, HRBPs must train leaders and employees to be open and be willing to ask questions. Coach leaders to promote environments where employees speak up and freely share ideas even if the ideas aren't fully fleshed out. Furthermore, encourage employees to explore and understand their development areas to allow for enhanced collaboration and idea sharing among the team.

### 2. Let Yourself Off the Hook

Dr. Edmondson states: "It's like you can sort of free yourself up, unshackled, and think about what difference [I can] really make here in this project, in this organization. It doesn't have to be overly profound, but just what if you let yourself off the hook?"

Meet with business leaders and client group members to discuss the pressures they face and emphasize that every idea need not be groundbreaking to lead to innovation. This will relieve the pressure leaders and employees feel to constantly be extraordinary and, in turn, make them more useful to their organization by simply being their authentic selves.

### 3. Create Meaningful Goals

While Dr. Edmondson believes it is beneficial for organizations to create environments of psychological safety for their employees, she states, “I never believe that the right thing to do is go have a psychological safety initiative. No. It has to be a ‘rescue the miners’ initiative, or ‘make the hospital safe for patients’ initiative or ‘man on the moon’ initiative. And then we all get around and get excited about this shared meaningful goal.”

Rather than creating a program around psychological safety, HRBPs should meet with leaders to discuss the goals of client group and the overall organization. Once the goals have been determined, help employees understand how their day-to-day role supports these overarching organizational and team objectives.

As a result, employees will feel they are participating in something meaningful and larger than themselves. They will desire to make a difference, be creative, be more open and persevere, creating a climate where they will be more capable of being vulnerable and authentic while working together.

### 4. Be Deliberate About Fostering Psychological Safety

While Dr. Edmondson does not believe in specific initiatives promoting psychological safety, she does state that you must be deliberate about it to do it well. She identifies that: “[There are] really two categories of deliberateness. One is leadership behavior, and the other is structure.”

HRBPs should work specifically and deliberately with leaders and train them to adopt certain behaviors that will promote psychological safety at their organization. Dr. Edmondson gives an example of these behaviors from the CEO of Pixar:

“Ed Catmull, the co-founder and longtime CEO [of Pixar], would say, ‘if I don’t do it, if I don’t acknowledge my mistakes or where I got it wrong or laugh about my own failure, how can I expect others to do it? They just won’t, right?’ So, part of the recognition here of a particularly thoughtful and wise business leader is you have to go first. You have to do the kinds of things that make it easy for other people to do it too because they see, oh, the cool kids are doing it. I’ll do it.”

The systems, processes and routines currently in place to support the organization’s culture are the structures that also must be deliberately designed to promote psychological safety.

Without deliberate design, these processes can inhibit psychological safety. For example, an organization may ask employees to be collaborative to foster innovation, but then force rank them against their colleagues at the end of the year. While this type of organization may want their employees to share ideas and bring their authentic selves to work, their processes and culture prevent this from successfully occurring.

HRBPs should work with leaders to determine which behaviors they demonstrate and organizational processes that inhibit employees from feeling they can be vulnerable and authentic, especially when they are asked to be collaborative. Work with leaders to exhibit new behaviors and restructure designated processes to promote a psychologically safe environment.

## What Success Looks Like

When employees feel they can bring their authentic selves to work, they will take more risks, communicate openly and think more creatively, which ultimately benefits the business.

Psychological safety is a key factor that affects individual and team performance. To drive for the performance the business needs, HRBPs can support their client groups to be vulnerable and authentic to express their thoughts and opinions more freely. An organization that successfully fosters psychological safety can expect higher levels of engagement from employees, escalated motivation around difficult problems and an increase in innovative ideas produced by their employees and teams.

### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> “High-Performing Teams Need Psychological Safety. Here’s How to Create It,” Harvard Business Review.

