



2024 Insights

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Six trends that will impact the world of work in 2024

Trend #1: Leadership tested like never before



In the turbulent landscape of 2024, organizational leaders are on the brink of an extraordinary journey. They must be captains of ships navigating through uncharted waters, steering with unwavering resolve amidst the turbulent waves of a world of work order where hybrid work teams rue the day. The internal organizational challenges they will face demand resolute determination as they simultaneously combat the insidious spread of

societal divisiveness infiltrating the very core of organizations. But the excitement doesn't end there. There is a high stakes race to define AI's role within the organization, as leaders grapple with the ever-shifting technological frontier.

And having successfully put 2023 in the rearview mirror where every economic theory and prediction seemed to be proven wrong, leaders' confidence is shaky. Nonetheless, they must delicately balance on the tightrope of economic uncertainty, deciphering the intricate patterns of financial stability against a backdrop of explosive global geopolitical conflicts and gripping elections, where the world's democracies teeter on the edge of profound change.

One undeniable truth emerges – it is a call for leaders with audacious spirits, those who are agile, flexible, and ready to embrace the exhilarating challenges that lie ahead and shape the destiny of our organizations.

What HR can do:

Leverage Executive Coaching services – In this dynamic environment, Executive Coaches emerge as invaluable champions of leadership excellence, delivering an unparalleled fusion of professional wisdom and personalized support to empower leaders on their transformative journey. Amidst the intricacies of modern leadership, making sound decisions can be challenging, potentially compromising leaders' overall well-being. Executive Coaches step in as strategic allies, granting leaders the competitive edge required to elevate their effectiveness and sustain enduring success.

Our Executive Coaches specialize in orchestrating a profound transformation, equipping leaders with the skills to regain equilibrium by pinpointing stress triggers, refining priorities, and nurturing unwavering resilience. From orchestrating seamless communication within dispersed teams to cultivating a culture of inclusive leadership, our

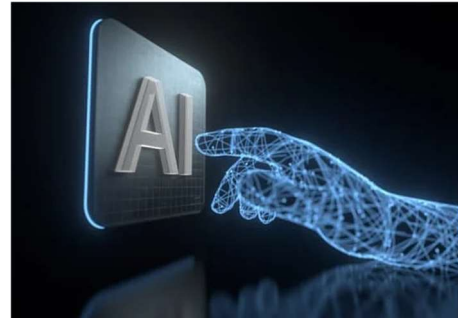
Executive Coaches are instrumental in honing these critical competencies. They offer a sanctuary for contemplation and arm leaders with pragmatic tools to nurture team cohesion, making a significant contribution to the growth and prosperity of your organization.

Leverage Leadership Development Programs – Relentless enhancement of leadership skills is imperative, and when budget constraints pose a challenge, providing your leaders with accessible, concise, and highly effective development opportunities becomes a necessity. While traditional Executive Leadership programs and micro MBAs have their merits, the urgency of today's business landscape demands a swifter response. Your leaders require programs that deliver meaningful impact promptly and efficiently.

Focus on Conflict resolutions Skills: Employee conflict resolution skills are emerging as the next essential competency for managers. As we grapple with upcoming elections, geopolitical tensions, labor disputes, climate challenges, and resistance to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, the landscape is conducive to diverse perspectives and potential disagreements. Managers who adeptly address and manage interpersonal conflicts among their employees, instead of stifling them, will wield a significant and constructive influence on their organizations' ability to meet and exceed objectives.

Trend #2: AI becomes integral to organizational success

LinkedIn's Generative AI analysis reveals a staggering 70% surge in global conversations about AI between over the nine months prior to September 2023—an unprecedented spike in the realm of business trends. To put this in perspective, even the highly publicized cryptocurrency trend experienced a mere 19% peak surge at the zenith.



What becomes abundantly clear is that the adoption of AI is intricately linked to business performance. Organizations that embrace AI stand to gain a competitive edge with improved market performance, heightened levels of innovation and productivity, and the cultivation of healthier workplace cultures compared to their more cautious counterparts.

However, it's crucial to note that the profound impact of AI extends primarily to the people within our workforces. Surprisingly, HR departments seem to be relegated to the sidelines in the AI dialogue. Many HR functions appear ill-equipped for a workplace that is increasingly influenced by AI, potentially missing out on opportunities to shape a future of work that fully harnesses its transformative potential.

What HR can do:

Harness the power of AI – it comes as no surprise that the demand for AI-related positions in HR has nearly tripled since 2019 (i4cp, 2024). Organizations across the board are embracing AI to achieve heightened efficiency and effectiveness. In this landscape, HR must seize a leadership role in orchestrating the optimal integration of AI within the organization (especially in functions like recruitment) to sustain and enhance overall efficiency and effectiveness. Concurrently, HR faces the task of addressing the concerns employees may harbor regarding AI potentially usurping jobs.

The reassuring news is that a remarkable 87% of organizations firmly believe that generative AI is more inclined to augment employees rather than supplant them, paving the way for a harmonious coexistence between human and AI-driven workforce solutions.

Trend #3: Organization Culture & Hybrid Workplace



In the wake of the pandemic, organizations are navigating an ever-evolving workplace landscape. The definition of what employees' value from their employers is shifting, with factors like workplace flexibility and remote work continuing to exert significant influence. While some employers have enforced a return-to-office policy for remote employees, the prolonged period of remote work has made employees acutely aware of the costs of in

office work in terms of time and money.

Consequently, the return to the office remains a contentious issue, with hybrid work arrangements serving as a tentative 'truce' in this ongoing debate. However, a 2022 global study conducted by Gartner, a respected research and advisory firm, unveiled a striking statistic: only 25% of remote or hybrid knowledge workers reported feeling deeply connected to their company's culture. This underscores the challenges organizations face in nurturing a strong sense of culture and belonging among their remote and hybrid workforce.

What HR can do:

Embrace the Opportunity - Rather than perceiving hybrid work as a disruption to the cultural fabric, leaders should recognize it as an exciting opportunity to shape and foster culture in innovative ways. Effective collaboration, communication, and relationship-building in remote work settings remain challenging. Providing development and team-building opportunities can enhance teamwork. Further, emphasizing a shift from transmitting culture through office presence to infusing it into the work itself, emphasizing emotional connectivity over physical proximity becomes the new approach.

Given the limited workplace interactions for remote and hybrid employees, each interaction carries greater significance. This underscores the urgency of identifying and addressing toxic individuals, especially those in positions of influence. When employees perceive their contributions as valuable, their connection to the culture strengthens. This necessitates leaders with a coaching mindset that prioritizes positive reinforcement and the recognition of achievements, departing from traditional command and control methods.

Trend #4: Defining your Employee Value Proposition (EVP) Statement

As per the Mercer 2024 Global Talent Trends© Survey, 61% of respondents identified Employee Value Proposition (EVP) as a top priority for HR in 2024. An EVP is a declaration of the advantages, incentives, and growth prospects that an organization provides to its workforce. The primary aim of an EVP is to allure, retain, and engage employees while bolstering the employer's brand.

What HR can do:

Human Resources plays a pivotal role in shaping an organization's Employee Value Proposition (EVP). HR can take immediate action by implementing the following three strategies to understand and enhance the organization's EVP:

- **Collect Employee Feedback.** Cultivating an environment where employees feel genuinely heard is fundamental to boosting engagement, commitment, and overall satisfaction. Employing effective measurement tools, such as Ahria's Employee Pulse assessment, which comprehensively assesses all three of these critical attributes, is paramount. Relying on superficial "feel good smile sheet" assessments is insufficient and risks missing valuable insights. Combining robust assessments with methods like focus groups can provide in-depth understanding and help prioritize your workforce's needs with precision.
- **Promote Internal Career Development.** In light of the fact that nearly 40% of the workforce has transitioned between jobs or roles since 2020, instituting an internal mobility strategy becomes imperative. This strategy not only bolsters organizational agility and efficiency but also fosters the progression and development of your most valuable assets investors: your employees.
- **Provide Development Opportunities.** Beyond the pursuit of work-life balance, competitive compensation, and attractive benefits, the perceived absence of opportunities for professional development and career growth emerges as a prominent factor contributing to employee turnover. Recent research underscores this point, revealing that nearly half of all employees are inclined to remain in their current roles when presented with robust training opportunities. An unwavering commitment to employee development not only enhances performance but also nurtures a profound sense of loyalty and dedication within your workforce.

Trend # 5: A Challenging Talent Landscape:

The current talent pool appears both unsettled and discerning. Candidates find themselves navigating economic uncertainties with a sense of bewilderment about their place within it. Millennials and Gen Z are rethinking how important work is in their lives while older generations look for greater flexibility so as to defer retirement on their terms. As such, particularly among passive candidates, there is a growing inclination to be highly selective, adapting to the dynamic market conditions and their own personal needs.

At the more senior level, factors such as compensation, benefits packages, growth prospects, company culture, and the inherent challenges within the role carry significant weight. The costs associated with changing jobs in today's volatile market have surged, intensifying the need for candidates to meticulously evaluate opportunities.

Interestingly, many organizations are encountering difficulties in successfully finalizing candidate placements. Even those with well-established internal recruiting teams are grappling with unforeseen challenges throughout the offer process, ranging from protracted negotiations to counteroffers and other unexpected developments. In response to the tight labor market and declining undergraduate graduation rates, organizations are shredding the “paper ceiling” and welcoming workers with alternative credentials with little to no experience evaluating this new approach.

The assumptions and heuristics that underpin many organizations' talent management strategies will prove a growing barrier to acquisition and retention.

What HR can do:

Partner with a trusted recruiter – In today's fiercely competitive market for talent, a new challenge looms during the critical period between extending an offer and the candidate's actual start date. While the occasional loss of a candidate to a last-minute competing offer was not uncommon in the past, the frequency and intensity of such incidents demand a strategic response from CEOs, Boards, and hiring teams.

To effectively mitigate this risk, it's essential for hiring teams to shift their perspective. They must acknowledge the looming battle, anticipate potential risks in the hiring process, and proactively employ thoughtful tactics to thrive in today's dynamic talent landscape. Here, a trusted professional recruiter emerges as a valuable asset, reshaping candidate perceptions and aligning a company's value proposition with the candidate's aspirations and prerequisites. A seasoned professional recruiter possesses the expertise to form genuine partnerships with both organizations and candidates, ensuring the optimal outcome for both parties and fostering a harmonious, mutually beneficial long-term success story.

Trend # 6: DEI isn't going away.



The COVID-19 pandemic heightened awareness of social injustices and disparities, prompting organizations to commit to DEI practices. Organizations are shifting from treating DEI as a separate initiative to integrating it throughout the organization. Regardless of how people feel about diversity — or DEI — which includes the idea that all of the individuals in a diverse organization should treat each other with respect and dignity —

has a positive impact on the bottom line. McKinsey & Company, for example, found that “companies in the top 25% for racial/ethnic and gender diversity were respectively 36% and 25% more likely to have superior financial returns. While commendable, it's important to acknowledge that these efforts can sometimes be polarizing. In fact, after significant corporate attention in the past few years disillusionment with DEI efforts has grown.

A 2022 Gartner article unveiled a striking statistic: nearly half of employees acknowledge that an increasing number of their peers feel alienated and resentful due to DEI efforts. Surprisingly, some perceive these initiatives as divisive. This reaction may seem unexpected, but it aligns with human psychology. As discussed in a Harvard Business Review article, individuals are often driven to protect their self-esteem and belief in their innate moral standing. When confronted with challenges to these beliefs, resistance, rejection, and backlash can result.

What HR can do:

It is crucial for organizational leaders and HR professionals to clarify the authentic essence of DEI, differentiating it from the misconceptions often fueled by social media. DEI should not be reduced to mere checklists and quotas, where merit is disregarded. Instead, these strategies should strive for workforces that mirror our diverse society, emphasizing the equitable treatment of individuals in environments that minimize unnecessary stress.

Implementing DEI initiatives parallels other change projects, necessitating high-caliber change management approaches. Leaders should actively engage and collaborate with dissenting voices, recognizing that seeking guidance from those with diverse perspectives can be a catalyst for both social and business transformation.

Within HR, the solicitation, attentive listening, and actioning of employee opinions are imperative, especially in light of the multifaceted global developments impacting every

facet of life and business. Maintaining a keen awareness of employee sentiments, particularly in the context of these external factors, remains paramount. Moreover, posing insightful questions about the primary concerns of your teams provides a robust foundation for a DEI approach that honors the diverse facets of each individual's identity.

At the core of inclusion lies psychological safety, where every individual feels secure and empowered to thrive. A genuinely inclusive culture fosters an environment where all employees, regardless of their backgrounds, feel comfortable and encouraged to contribute their perspectives, even if they diverge from the majority. This culture of trust and psychological safety forms a resilient foundation for diversity and equity.

To mitigate perceived threats or apprehensions associated with DEI efforts, consider engagement activities aimed at cultivating empathy and fostering awareness of the experiences of various groups.