



Brandon Hall Group™

HR Outlook 2026

The Year of Progression

Proven Steps to Human-AI Capability and Organizational Growth



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

4

01

THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

8

Current State	9
Complexities	11
Implications	12
Critical Questions	14
Brandon Hall Group™ POV	15
Predictions	17

THE FUTURE OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

20

Current State	21
Complexities	23
Implications	27
Critical Questions	28
Brandon Hall Group™ POV	29
Predictions	32

02

03

THE FUTURE OF INCLUSION

36

Current State	37
Complexities	39
Implications	41
Critical Questions	43
Brandon Hall Group™ POV	44
Predictions	46



04

THE FUTURE OF TALENT ACQUISITION

50

Current State	51
Complexities	52
Implications	55
Critical Questions	58
Brandon Hall Group™ POV	59
Predictions	61

THE FUTURE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

64

Current State	65
Complexities	66
Implications	70
Critical Questions	73
Brandon Hall Group™ POV	74
Predictions	76

05

06

THE FUTURE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

80

Current State	81
Complexities	82
Implications	85
Critical Questions	87
Brandon Hall Group™ POV	88
Predictions	90

THE FUTURE OF WORK

94

Current State	95
Complexities	98
Implications	101
Critical Questions	104
Brandon Hall Group™ POV	105
Predictions	107

07

Expert Perspectives	110
Our Sponsors	130

Contributors	138
What We Do	139

Introduction

The Future Arrives Unevenly, Then All at Once

I've spent decades studying how organizations transform. What I'm witnessing now is fundamentally different from anything we've documented before.

It's not that change is coming faster, although it is. It's that multiple transformations that would normally unfold sequentially are now colliding, converging and demanding simultaneous resolution. The old playbook assumed you could sequence your initiatives: Implement this technology, then upskill your people, then work on culture. That assumption is dead.

We're calling this the Year of Progression because progression (not transformation, not disruption, but continuous, compounding advancement) has become the default state of modern organizations. And HR sits at the epicenter of this shift.

The Fog Is Lifting

Something fundamental has shifted in the past year. The uncertainty and ambiguity around AI and transformation is now fading. Organizations have enough clarity to move with purpose instead of hesitation.

Distinct layers of readiness have fully emerged — early movers building real capability, mid-stage experimenters trying to operationalize and late adopters still stuck in exploration. The early pioneers are now showing tangible outcomes, creating a visible roadmap others can follow.

The gap between stages is no longer mysterious. There's an identifiable progression path that organizations can actually step onto. Our Progression Model shows AI is stabilizing into recognizable maturity bands instead of scattered experimentation.

This coming year is the first time where everyone can level up, because the path forward is clearer and proven. The real opportunity now is not about "discovering AI," but about accelerating along that maturity curve with intent, confidence and evidence.



Three Forces, One Moment

The data we've collected reveals three forces reshaping the workplace simultaneously. What makes them powerful isn't their individual impact but their interdependence.

1 AI has crossed the threshold from tool to teammate.

When we analyzed organizations through our research efforts on AI implementation, we found some striking results: 53% now leverage AI to improve performance management and 58% are leveraging GenAI to accelerate content production for employee development.

These aren't pilot programs anymore. They're production systems that organizations depend on daily. But deployment at scale surfaces questions that pilots never had to answer: How do we build trust in AI-powered systems while ensuring they amplify rather than encode human bias? How do we develop AI literacy across HR teams who were trained for a fundamentally different era?

The organizations pulling ahead have discovered something crucial: The winners aren't those with the most sophisticated algorithms. They're those who've cracked the code on human-AI collaboration, where technology handles scale and pattern recognition while humans provide context, judgment and ethical oversight.

2 Skills are becoming liquid assets.

In our research, we also found a remarkable shift in how organizations are trying to address skills by leveraging AI. 39% are leveraging AI to develop personalized recommendations for learners to streamline and focus skills development. 26% are employing AI for skills assessments to make sure they best understand which skills need to be developed.

But here's what the numbers don't immediately show: the velocity of depreciation. Skills that took years to master now have half-lives measured in months. The competitive advantage isn't in the skills you have. It's in how quickly you can develop new ones.

And there's a fascinating inversion happening. As technical skills commoditize, human capabilities (collaboration, critical thinking, creative problem-solving, empathy) are appreciating in value. They're becoming the sustainable differentiators.

The challenge isn't choosing between human and technical skills. It's building both concurrently through continuous learning ecosystems that operate at business speed rather than training department timelines.

3 Connection has become the scarce resource.

Most Excellence Award-winning organizations have implemented multi-channel communication strategies and stakeholder engagement programs. The investment is substantial and necessary.

Yet technology alone cannot create belonging, psychological safety, or the trust required for high-performing teams. And the acceleration of work (constant connectivity, AI-mediated interactions, distributed teams spanning time zones) risks fragmenting the very human connections that make organizations resilient.

The most successful organizations aren't fighting this reality. They're intentionally designing moments of genuine human connection into AI-augmented workflows, treating connection not as a nice-to-have cultural element but as critical infrastructure.

Why Sequential Thinking Fails Now

Traditional change management assumed linearity. You could pause one initiative while focusing on another. You could master a capability before the next requirement emerged.

Organizations can't pause AI integration while they build skills transformation programs. They can't delay human connection initiatives until technology stabilizes. Everything must advance together, creating complexity that traditional HR operating models weren't designed to handle.

This isn't just difficult. It's categorically different. You're deploying AI systems while simultaneously teaching people to work with AI, while also ensuring that AI doesn't erode the human connections that make your culture effective. And you're doing this while skills requirements shift monthly and competitive threats accelerate.

What We're Learning from the Leaders

This report examines how leading organizations are navigating this complexity across several critical domains:

- **Learning and development:** Using AI to build capabilities in real-time and personalize learning pathways
- **Leadership development:** Equipping leaders with AI literacy to navigate ambiguity and guide teams through continuous change
- **Talent acquisition:** Leveraging AI-powered sourcing, screening and onboarding to find and integrate talent faster
- **Inclusion:** Applying AI and data analytics to create equitable systems, belonging and environments where diverse perspectives drive innovation
- **Talent management:** Using AI insights to treat careers as dynamic ecosystems rather than fixed ladders
- **Strategic HR:** Informing workforce planning through AI-driven insights

The data we've gathered, and the insights and predictions that we've developed, reveal both the opportunity and the urgency.

Organizations that successfully navigate this era will unlock unprecedented human potential, creating workplaces where AI amplifies creativity, continuous learning fuels innovation and genuine inclusion drives measurable business results.

Those that fail to accelerate their evolution risk not gradual decline, but sudden obsolescence as more agile competitors leverage modern capabilities to deliver superior value.

Progression as Strategy

The acceleration isn't slowing down. If anything, it's intensifying.

But I'm optimistic about what this means. The organizations that treat progression as their operating system, that build the muscle to sense, adapt and execute continuously, won't just survive this era. They'll define it.

The critical question facing HR leaders isn't whether to accelerate progress but how to do so while preserving the human elements that create meaning, trust and sustainable performance.

This report provides the roadmap for organizations ready to make swift progress. Not cautious, incremental adjustments, but the kind of bold progression that creates lasting competitive advantage.

The future belongs to the progressors.



Mike Cooke

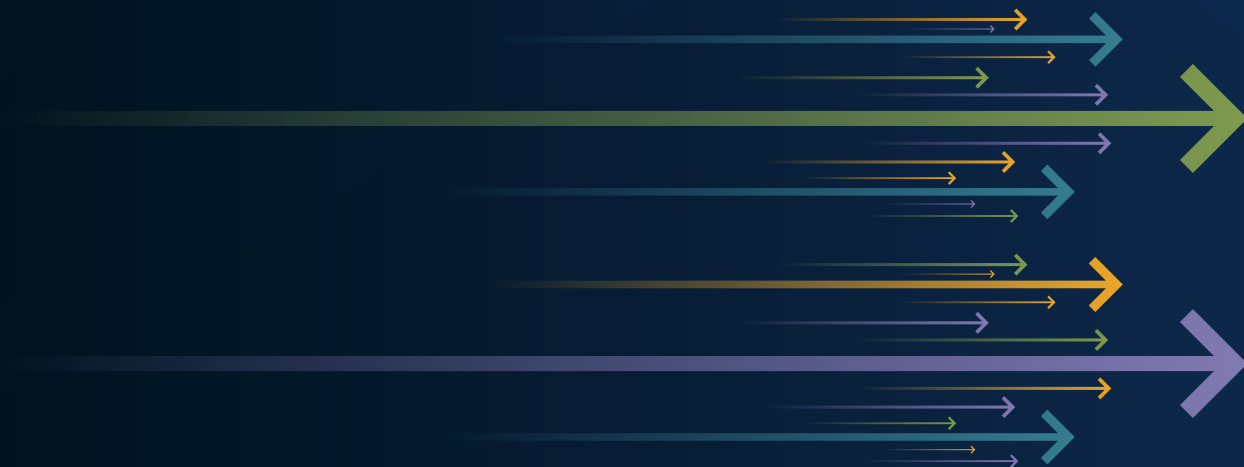
Mike Cooke
CEO, Brandon Hall Group™

01

THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Navigating the Complexity of Preparing Leaders for an AI-Enhanced World

The gap is widening between organizations transforming leadership development through AI-powered ecosystems and those relying on conventional programs, while the most critical capability becomes knowing when to trust algorithmic optimization and when to choose the intentionally human path.



Current State

Leadership development is undergoing a seismic shift and organizations know it. Brandon Hall Group™ research shows that 80% of organizations recognize the need for major changes to how they develop leaders. This isn't your typical "transformation is coming" story; it's already here and the old playbooks are becoming less relevant by the day.

Today's leaders face a world where:

- Strategic planning cycles can't keep pace with change.
- Traditional hierarchies are giving way to more fluid organizational structures.
- AI isn't just a tool but increasingly a collaborator in decision-making.

The skills that defined effective leadership even five years ago – decisive action, long-term strategic planning, command-and-control management, are being supplemented and in some cases replaced, by entirely new capabilities.



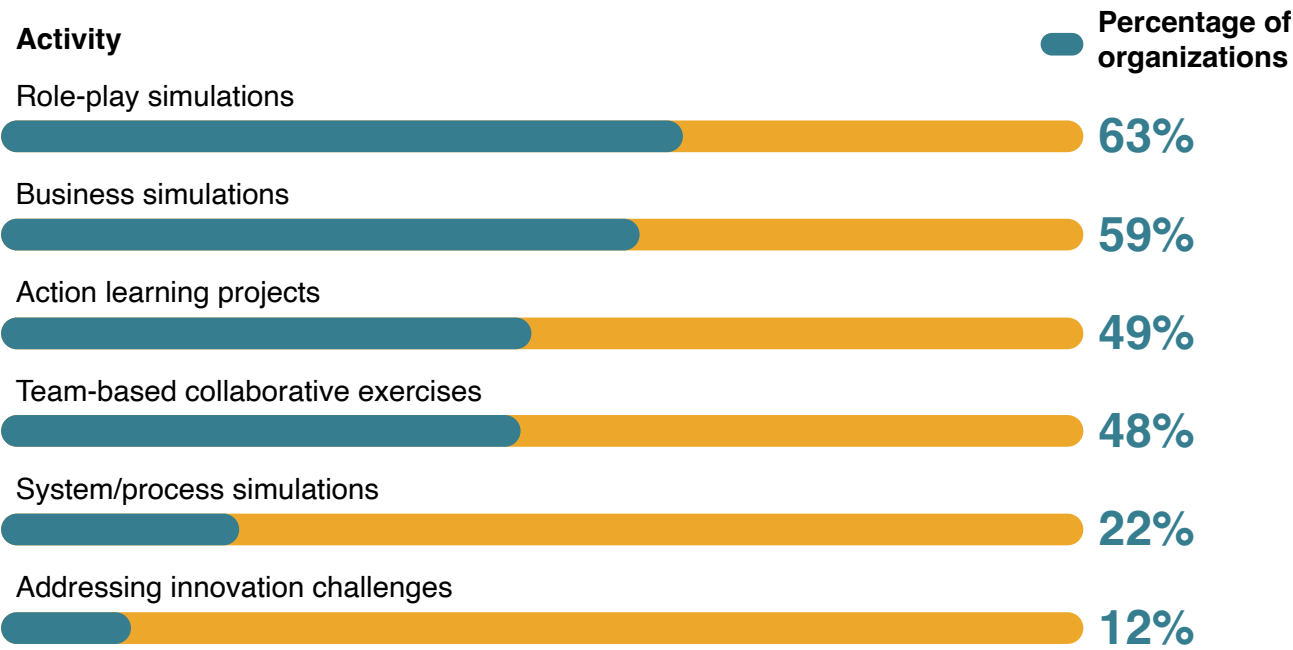
Leadership Capabilities Prioritized by Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-Winning Organizations



Consider the current state of leadership development priorities: 71% of organizations plan to increase their focus on developing leaders at all levels, particularly frontline and mid-level leaders. The challenge is creating learning experiences that reflect the complexity and dynamism of modern work environments.

Brandon Hall Group™ research data show more organizations are delivering experiences that allow for practice, experimentation and collaboration. Even more progress can be made as organizations continue to increase their use of AI and extended reality technologies.

Use of Simulation-Based Learning Activities



Source: Data analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Awards® winners for Best Leadership Development program

Complexities

The path forward is anything but straightforward. Organizations face a web of interconnected challenges that make leadership development feel like trying to hit a moving target in a fog.

The Digital Literacy Chasm

Start with the most obvious: the digital literacy gap. Today's leaders need to understand how AI reshapes business models, how autonomous systems make decisions and how to lead teams that will become increasingly hybrid; part human, part AI.

Many current and aspiring leaders lack this deep fluency and the gap extends well beyond using digital tools to a more troubling question: How do leaders maintain their relevance when AI agents can process information faster and more accurately than any human?

The pace of change compounds everything else. By the time organizations identify a new leadership competency, design a development program and roll it out, the underlying technology or business context may have already shifted.

Traditional leadership development operates on cycles measured in months or years. The future of work operates on cycles measured in weeks or days. This mismatch creates a leadership capability deficit that widens over time.

Redefining What Leadership Means

Then there's the fundamental question of what leadership even means in an AI-enhanced, or perhaps eventually, an AI-driven, world. When AI agents can analyze data, generate scenarios and recommend decisions with superhuman speed, what's left for human leaders to do?

The answer isn't as simple as "the human stuff." Organizations are discovering that leaders need to become curators rather than creators. They must synthesize AI-generated insights, make judgment calls that prioritize human values over algorithmic efficiency and know when to trust the data and when

to override it.

The shift to virtual and hybrid work environments adds another layer. Many leaders who were effective in person struggle to build trust, maintain team cohesion and foster innovation through computer screens. The physical proximity that once enabled informal mentoring, spontaneous collaboration and cultural osmosis is gone. Leaders must now create presence without a body, build relationships without handshakes and inspire teams they may never meet face-to-face.



The Ethics and Integration Puzzle

Organizations also grapple with the ethics and governance of AI in leadership development:

How much should AI influence decisions about someone's career trajectory?

What happens when AI identifies leadership potential using patterns that humans can't see or explain?

The “black box” nature of many AI algorithms creates discomfort, especially when those algorithms are making consequential decisions about people’s careers. And integration challenges make everything harder, legacy learning management systems weren’t designed for AI-driven personalization and retooling entire technology stacks is expensive and risky.

Perhaps most challenging is the psychological shift required. We’re asking organizations to move from episodic training events to continuous learning ecosystems, from standardized programs to hyper-personalized journeys, from fixed leadership models to contextual, emergent approaches. It’s a big lift; an organization-wide mindset shift.

Implications

The implications of these shifts ripple through organizations in ways we’re only beginning to understand. First, there’s a widening capability gap forming between organizations that successfully leverage AI for leadership development and those that don’t.

Leaders developed in AI-enhanced programs will likely be:



More adaptive.



Better at leveraging data for decisions.



More comfortable navigating uncertainty.

They’ll have had thousands more repetitions practicing difficult scenarios, received more personalized feedback and developed capabilities we haven’t even named yet. Organizations that fall behind in this transformation may find themselves with a leadership bench that simply can’t compete.

Democratizing Leadership Development

The democratization of leadership development represents another profound shift. AI makes truly personalized development achievable at scale, which means organizations can extend high-quality leadership development far beyond the traditional high-potential pool.

This could reshape who gets to lead, creating more diverse leadership pipelines and uncovering talent that traditional identification methods miss. But it also raises questions:

What happens when everyone has access to advanced development; does leadership development become commoditized, or does it create a new baseline that raises everyone’s capability?

We're also seeing a redefinition of what leadership potential looks like. AI's ability to analyze patterns in performance data, learning behavior and interaction dynamics could identify future leaders based on signals that human observers never notice. This might reduce bias in talent identification, but it also means organizations will need to develop trust in AI-driven assessments and be prepared to champion leaders whose potential doesn't fit traditional profiles.

The role of learning and development professionals is being fundamentally reshaped. The rise of AI creates demand for "AI translators" who can bridge technical capabilities with leadership development needs. L&D teams will need to rapidly improve in data science and AI just to remain relevant. But more importantly, they'll need to evolve from program designers to ecosystem architects; building environments where learning happens continuously, in the flow of work, rather than in discrete training events.

A Premium on Human Judgment

Perhaps most significantly, we're entering an era where the most valuable leadership skill might be the ability to make decisions that are intentionally "inefficient" from an algorithmic perspective but rich in human meaning and values.

As AI optimizes for measurable outcomes, human leaders will need to preserve space for the less measurable.

- Culture ■ Meaning
- Decisions that build organizations people want to work for, not just organizations that maximize short-term metrics.

The Death of Traditional Strategic Planning

Finally, the nature of strategic planning is being upended. When AI can process thousands of scenarios in the time it takes humans to discuss one, traditional three-to-five-year strategic plans become artifacts of a slower era. Leaders increasingly need skills in rapid sense-making and decisive action under conditions of AI-accelerated change, rather than skills in creating detailed long-term plans. This shift changes not just what leaders do, but how we develop them.

Fluid Leadership Structures

Leadership hierarchies themselves may become more fluid. When leadership can emerge contextually based on expertise and situation rather than position, organizations become more adaptive but also more complex to navigate. The leader of a project on Monday might be a contributor on Wednesday, with AI systems helping to dynamically assign authority.

This "liquid" approach to leadership requires new capabilities in both leaders and organizations:



Comfort with ambiguity.



Strong peer relationships.



The emotional intelligence to lead and follow within the same week.

Critical Questions

These transformations raise critical questions that organizations must grapple with.

How do we develop leaders for a world where AI agents may become advisors, co-workers, or even formal members of leadership teams?

- This addresses preparing leaders to collaborate with autonomous systems in ways that preserve human agency and judgment while leveraging AI capabilities.

What does continuous learning actually look like in practice and how do we move beyond buzzwords to create genuine learning ecosystems?

- Most organizations still operate with program-based models. What infrastructure, culture and technology changes are required to make learning as natural and continuous as work itself?

How do we balance the efficiency of AI-driven development with the irreplaceable value of human mentorship and coaching?

- AI can provide 24/7 feedback and personalized guidance, but human mentors offer wisdom earned through experience, emotional support and the kind of relationship that makes people willing to take difficult developmental feedback. How do these complement each other?

What ethical frameworks should guide the use of AI in identifying and developing leadership talent?

- As AI makes consequential decisions about people's careers, organizations need clear principles about transparency, fairness and human oversight. What does responsible AI use look like in this context?

How do we create development experiences that build resilience and adaptability rather than just specific skills?

- In a world of constant change, teaching leaders to adapt to the next known challenge isn't enough. How do we develop the deeper capabilities that enable leaders to handle challenges we can't even anticipate?

What role should traditional executive education and credentials play when micro-learning and specialized competencies become the norm?

- If learning becomes modular and personalized, what happens to MBA programs and formal leadership certifications? Do they adapt or do they become less relevant?



The future of leadership development isn't about choosing between human and AI, between technology and tradition, or between programs and ecosystems. It's about synthesizing seemingly opposing forces into something new.

Embrace Ecosystem Thinking

Organizations need to embrace what we call “ecosystem thinking” in leadership development. This means moving away from discrete programs with clear start and end dates toward environments where development happens continuously, fluidly and often invisibly. Imagine leadership development as being as natural as breathing — embedded in every interaction, every decision, every moment of work.

AI makes truly continuous learning possible by:



But the critical thing to remember is this: Technology enables the ecosystem, but humans must design it with intention.

The organizations that will win aren't those with the most sophisticated AI tools. They're the ones that use those tools to amplify human capabilities, preserve human judgment and create space for the kinds of learning that only happen through relationships, struggle and reflection.

Make AI Your Partner

We need to think about AI as a partner in developing better leaders. AI agents can serve as practice partners for difficult conversations, thought partners for strategy development and personal coaches providing feedback based on patterns they observe in a leader's behavior.

But the goal isn't to train leaders to think like AI; it's to help them develop the uniquely human capabilities that become more valuable as AI handles more routine cognitive work.

This means leadership development must increasingly focus on capabilities that AI can't replicate:

- Build trust in ambiguous situations.
- Make decisions based on incomplete information and ethical considerations, not just optimization.
- Create meaning and purpose for teams navigating constant change.
- Know when to trust data and when to trust experience-based intuition.

Develop Strategy Curators, Not Just Creators

Employers need to rethink what “strategic leadership” means. In a world where AI can generate strategic scenarios faster than humans can process them, leaders become curators of strategy rather than creators of elaborate plans.

This requires new capabilities, such as the ability to:

- Rapidly synthesize diverse inputs.
- Make sense of patterns across vast amounts of information.
- Communicate strategic direction in ways that create alignment without rigid plans.
- Adjust course based on continuous feedback rather than annual planning cycles.

Never Lose the Human Element

The human element cannot be an afterthought. As organizations become more technology-enabled, the premium on authentic human connection increases. Leaders who can create genuine relationships across digital channels, who can foster psychological safety in virtual environments and who can help their teams find meaning in work that increasingly involves AI collaboration will become invaluable. Leadership development must prioritize these deeply human capabilities alongside digital fluency.

Commit to Continuous Experimentation

Finally, organizations must commit to continuous experimentation. The future of leadership development won't be designed in a conference room and rolled out perfectly formed. It will emerge through iteration, testing new approaches and learning what works and what doesn't. The organizations that embrace this experimental mindset will evolve faster than those waiting for perfect answers.

But the opportunity is immense. Organizations that master this transition will develop leaders capable

The path forward requires courage to:

- Let go of traditional program models that feel safe but are increasingly inadequate.
- Trust AI as a partner in development while maintaining human judgment.
- Develop leaders for a future that's still taking shape.

of building better organizations, creating more meaningful work and navigating whatever changes come next.

The future of leadership development is being written right now, not by technology companies or management consultants, but by organizations willing to experiment, to learn and to reimagine what's possible when human potential meets technological capability. The question is how quickly you can move and how boldly you're willing to act.



Predictions

Leadership Development Will Shift from Programs to Ecosystems

Traditional leadership development programs with defined start and end points will evolve into continuous, adaptive ecosystems. These ecosystems will leverage AI to create perpetual learning environments where development happens in the flow of work, with AI agents serving as always-available coaches, mentors and learning partners. This shift will make leadership development as natural and continuous as breathing, embedded in every interaction and decision.

AI and Agentic Systems Transform Leader Development

1. The agentic delegation revolution:

Progressive organizations will integrate semi-autonomous AI agents into core operations. Leaders will transition from managing people to orchestrating hybrid teams of humans and AI agents, requiring new skills in agent architecture and ethical AI stewardship. Leadership development must include advanced prompt engineering, system-level oversight of agent performance and governance frameworks for when agents deviate from expectations.

2. AI agents as mentors:

Leadership development will shift from human mentorship to personalized AI agents that provide 24/7 coaching, simulate difficult conversations and evolve their coaching style based on neural feedback. Each leader will have a digital twin that practices presentations and negotiations while they sleep.

3. AI co-leaders in the C-suite:

In the not-too-distant future, the first AI agent will hold an informal seat on an executive leadership team as an advisor and provocateur. This “Chief AI Officer” will analyze data at superhuman speeds and challenge human biases in real-time during meetings. Organizations must grapple with legal personhood questions, accountability frameworks and the psychological impact of humans reporting to, or collaborating with, AI systems.

Virtual Failure Laboratories Will Emerge

Companies will establish consequence-free metaverse sandboxes where leaders deliberately practice catastrophic decisions, such as laying off entire divisions, announcing bankruptcies and navigating PR disasters. Think of them as simulations on steroids. This is designed to build resilience without real-world harm. Failure becomes a required leadership credential.

Say Hello to Holographic Global Teams

Mixed reality collaboration will replace video conferencing for leadership teams. Executives will appear as life-size holograms in meeting rooms, with spatial audio and gesture recognition creating the illusion of physical presence. Leadership presence extends beyond the body.

Neurofeedback Will Be Leveraged for Psychological Safety

Precise intervention strategies will emerge to address toxic leadership. Organizations will shift from behavioral observation to neural pattern recognition in assessing leadership potential. This can include neuroscience-based training that maps leaders' individual psychological safety drivers to build awareness of unconscious biases and triggers. Brain-based learning strategies will replace outdated personality assessments.

'Liquid' Leadership Structures Will Develop

Traditional leadership hierarchies will dissolve into "liquid networks" where leadership emerges contextually. An engineer could lead a project on Monday, a marketer on Wednesday, etc., with AI systems dynamically assigning authority based on real-time expertise matching and situational needs.

The End of Strategy Planning As We Know It

AI agents will process scenarios thousands of times faster than human strategic planning cycles. In the near future, traditional three- to five-year plans will be replaced by continuous, AI-generated strategy that adapts as needed, perhaps daily in some cases. Leaders will become strategy curators rather than strategy creators. New competencies in rapid sense-making and decisiveness under AI-accelerated change will emerge.

A Premium on Humanity

As AI automates execution, the most valuable leadership skill will become the ability to make decisions that are rich in meaning, culture and human values. Human judgment will become the ultimate competitive advantage.

Micro-Development for Leaders Replaces or Augments the MBA

Traditional executive education programs fragment into hundreds of micro-credentials in hyper-specific competencies, such as agentic AI governance and quantum risk assessment. Leaders assemble custom learning paths like playlists. The MBA could lose relevance in value for mid-career leaders. Personalized learning at scale will become feasible. This risks credential inflation as everyone acquires dozens of badges.



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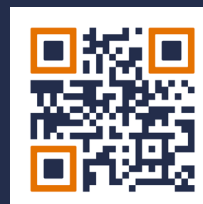
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02

THE FUTURE OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Navigating Transformation from Tracking to Business Impact in an AI-Enhanced World

Organizations are building on the widespread acceptance of learning's value to demonstrate measurable business impact while developing workforce capabilities at unprecedented speed, with AI enabling personalization and effectiveness that were previously impossible.



Current State

After years of fighting for recognition, L&D has gained the organizational acceptance it sought. Now comes the crucial part: demonstrating impact in ways that matter to the business while leveraging breakthrough technologies to transform how people learn and grow.

Brandon Hall Group™ research shows that 75% of learning functions identify improving alignment between learning strategy and business goals as their top priority. Close behind are:

64% Deploying strategies to prove employees can apply learned skills on the job

63% Enhancing learner experience

59% Improving learning measurement and analytics

These priorities reflect a profession ready to close the gap between activity and impact.

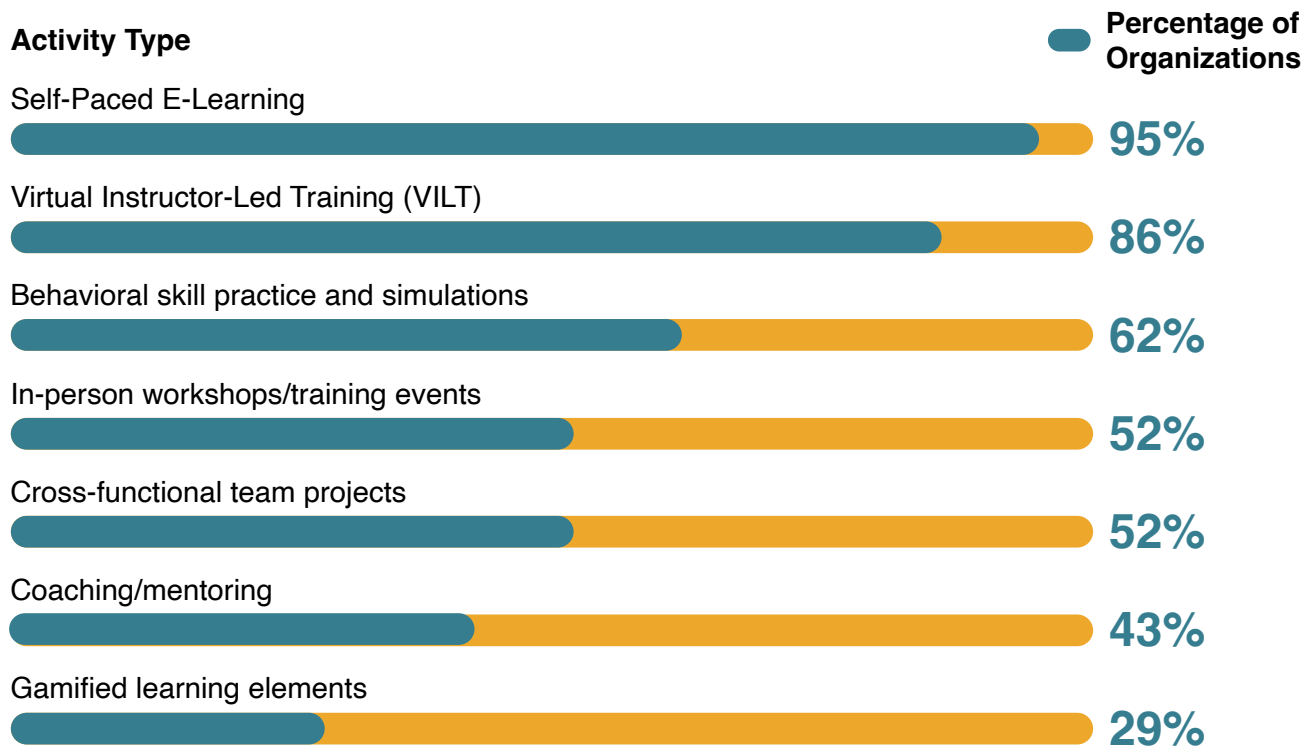
Progress in measurement continues to accelerate. While 87% of successful learning programs already demonstrate business-impact metrics in their initiatives, many organizations still have a significant opportunity to move beyond volume-based measures and satisfaction scores. The ability to measure the business impact of learning represents the most significant opportunity for 48% of L&D teams, alongside upskilling employees at the speed of business (47%).



Building Sophisticated Learning Experiences

The profession demonstrates increasing sophistication in program design. Role-based and personalized learning paths appear in 93% of successful programs. Hands-on and practical application focus reaches 87%. Multi-modal and blended learning approaches achieve universal adoption. These elements reflect a profession embracing more effective, learner-centered approaches that drive real capability development.

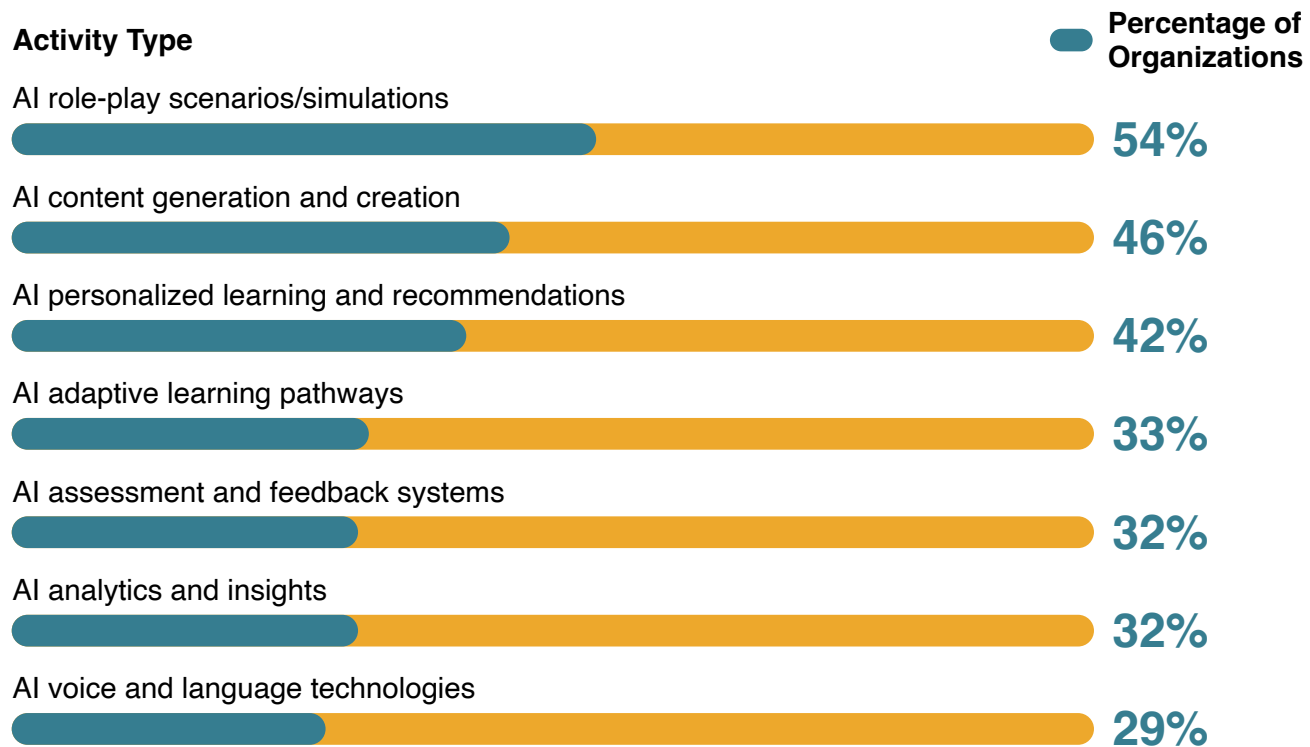
Most Implemented Learning Activities



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Best Learning Program and Best Hybrid Learning Programs.

Technology adoption opens new possibilities and should accelerate in the year ahead. Currently, roughly between one-third and one-half of Excellence Award-winning organizations are leveraging AI powered learning activities.

Use of AI-Powered Learning



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Best Use of AI in Learning

Complexities

L&D faces interconnected opportunities that, when addressed strategically, can elevate the function to new levels of impact and influence.

Building Strategic Connections

The opportunity to strengthen strategic alignment is substantial. Business conditions change rapidly, creating openings for L&D to become more agile and responsive. Organizations achieving success establish continuous learning approaches rather than annual planning cycles, positioning learning as a real-time business partner. This shift to ongoing collaboration enables L&D to anticipate needs and deliver solutions that align with evolving priorities.

Strong communication between L&D, executive leadership and line managers creates the foundation for alignment. When learning professionals understand business challenges deeply and business leaders appreciate L&D's capabilities, magic happens. Programs launch at the right time, address real needs and generate visible impact that builds momentum for future initiatives.

Expanding L&D Capabilities

The competencies L&D practitioners identify as most valuable reveal exciting development opportunities:

Most Valued L&D Competencies in Organizations



Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, State of Learning 2025

These capabilities represent a natural evolution from traditional instructional design skills. The profession recognizes what it needs and can now focus on systematically developing these competencies.



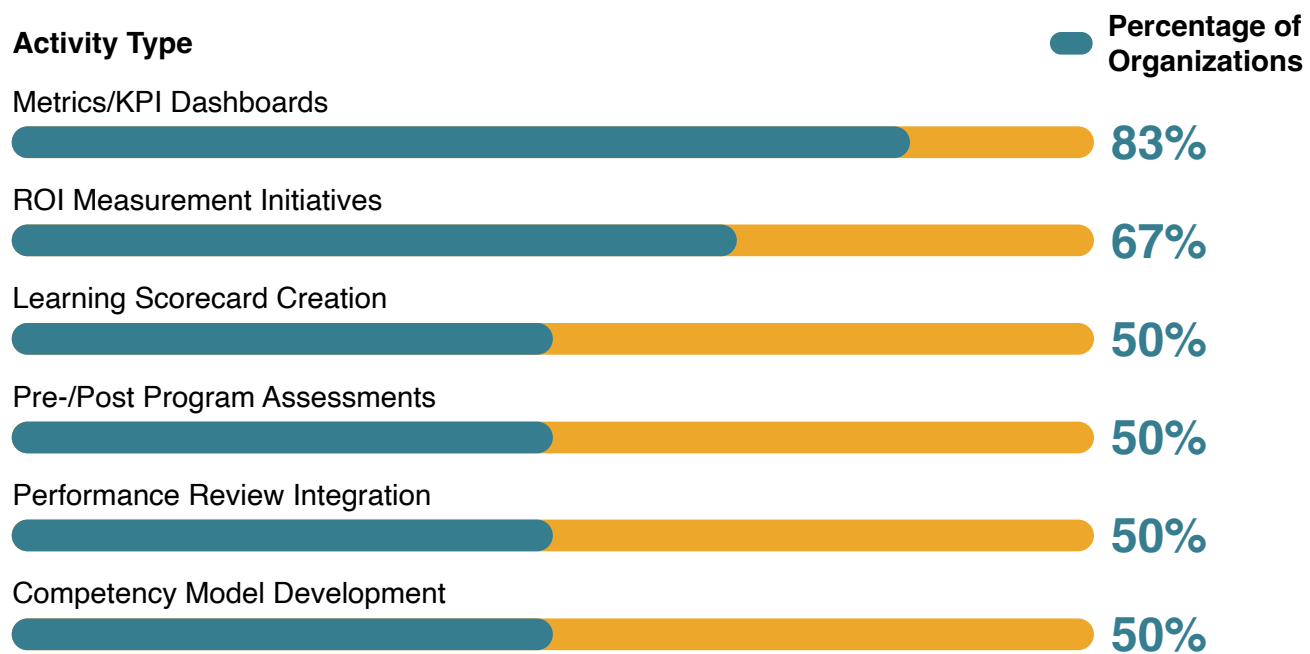
Data science and advanced analytics are emerging capabilities. Organizations can implement technology platforms while building the analytical skills to extract insights and demonstrate impact. This creates an opportunity for L&D to lead with evidence-based decisions and compelling impact stories that resonate with business leaders.

Capturing Attention and Driving Application

Understanding what engages learners in today's environment — interactive elements, relevant content, immediate applicability and respect for their time — enables L&D to design experiences that employees choose to engage with enthusiastically. When learning feels valuable and relevant, completion rates soar and application follows naturally.

The opportunity to bridge learning and application is particularly significant. When employees complete programs and successfully apply new skills, the business sees results and L&D's value becomes undeniable. Organizations can achieve this through mentoring, real-world projects and performance support tools that provide guidance at the point of need. Success stories from these initiatives build momentum for further investment and innovation.

Assessment and Measurement Approaches



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Best Learning Measurement.

Manager involvement proves transformational. When managers reinforce learning, provide practice opportunities and offer coaching, the implementation gap closes. Equipping managers to support learning application creates a multiplier effect that extends L&D's reach and impact far beyond what the learning team alone could achieve.

Accelerating Cultural Change

Organizations increasingly recognize that genuine commitment to learning requires more than words. This creates an opening for L&D to partner with senior leadership on sustained culture change initiatives. By demonstrating impact through adequate resources, performance metrics that reward continuous learning and promotion decisions that consider learning agility, organizations can build cultures where development thrives naturally.

Cultural transformation takes time, but each success builds the case for deeper commitment. Organizations that start seeing business results from learning investments become more willing to provide the resources and support needed for continued evolution. This positive cycle accelerates over time as learning becomes woven into the organizational fabric.

Leadership visibility and participation in learning initiatives send powerful signals throughout the organization. When executives engage in development programs, share their own learning journeys and celebrate learning achievements, employees recognize that growth truly matters. This top-down modeling, combined with bottom-up enthusiasm, creates unstoppable momentum.

Leveraging Emerging Technologies

The pace of technological change, particularly around artificial intelligence, presents enormous opportunities. AI-enabled learning tools can deliver personalized, scalable learning at speeds previously impossible. Organizations that adopt these technologies strategically can transform their learning delivery models while building capabilities that position them as innovation leaders.

AI doesn't replace the human elements of learning; it amplifies them. By automating routine tasks, personalizing content delivery and providing always-available support, AI frees learning professionals to focus on high-value activities like strategic program design, relationship building and complex problem-solving. This combination of technological efficiency and human insight creates learning experiences that achieve both scale and quality.

The skills landscape continues to evolve in ways that create development opportunities. Cloud computing skills appear in 36% of new job roles, followed by artificial intelligence at 31%, data science and analysis at 27% and algorithm design at 27%. For existing roles, collaboration and inclusion skills top the list at 46%, tied with critical thinking and design thinking at 46%, followed by creative problem-solving at 32% and empathy at 28%. Each of these skill areas offers L&D an opportunity to deliver high-impact programs that directly support business needs.



Implications

Organizations that address these opportunities strategically will achieve significant advantages in capability development, employee engagement and business results.

Demonstrating Clear Value

Organizations that excel at measuring learning impact can build compelling cases for sustained investment. Clear demonstration of ROI positions learning as a strategic investment rather than a cost center. This creates a positive cycle in which demonstrated results lead to increased resources, enabling further innovation and impact.

The ability to speak the language of business — metrics, ROI, efficiency gains, revenue impact — transforms how stakeholders view learning. When L&D presents data showing how a program reduced errors by 30% or accelerated time-to-productivity by three weeks, executives listen. These conversations build trust and establish L&D as a function that understands business realities and delivers measurable value.

Developing Competitive Advantage Through Agility

The ability to upskill at the speed of business creates powerful competitive advantages. Organizations with agile L&D functions develop workforce capabilities faster, enabling them to capitalize on market opportunities and adopt new technologies more effectively. This agility directly translates into market position and growth potential.

When organizations can quickly prepare their workforce for new initiatives, they gain first-mover advantages in their markets. Whether launching new products, entering new regions, or adopting emerging technologies, having a workforce ready to execute creates competitive separation. L&D's ability to enable this agility makes it a strategic differentiator.

Enhancing Employee Experience and Retention

Modern, effective training approaches strengthen

employee engagement and retention. Employees increasingly expect on-demand, personalized learning experiences that respect their time and connect directly to their development needs. Organizations that deliver valuable development opportunities enhance their employer brand and win in competitive talent markets.

The employer brand benefits extend beyond retention to recruitment. Organizations known for excellent development programs attract higher-quality candidates who are motivated by growth opportunities. This creates a talent advantage that compounds over time as the organization attracts and retains top performers.

Closing Skills Gaps Proactively

As technology and markets evolve, roles require new capabilities. Organizations that excel at continuous upskilling and reskilling can develop internal talent effectively, avoiding the premium costs and risks associated with competing for scarce external talent. Internal development also strengthens engagement and loyalty, creating multiple benefits from a single investment.

Proactive skills development prevents crises before they occur. Rather than discovering capability gaps when launching critical initiatives, organizations with strong L&D functions identify emerging skill needs early and begin development programs well in advance. This foresight prevents delays, reduces risk and ensures smooth execution when new capabilities become critical.

Elevating the L&D Function

Learning functions that evolve become strategic partners. Organizations now grant that status — and expect measurable results. Evidence-based, impact-driven teams using modern delivery models expand their influence across the enterprise.

Critical Questions

How do we transform learning measurement from activity tracking to demonstrating business impact?

- Demonstrate how learning drives business results through multi-level measurement systems connecting activities to KPIs that executives value.

How do we build the data science and analytical capabilities required for evidence-based L&D?

- Develop team competencies through training, strategic hiring, cross-functional partnerships and accessible analytics tools that enable data-driven decisions and compelling impact stories.

How do we create learning experiences that integrate seamlessly into the flow of work rather than compete with it?

- Leverage AI-powered systems, performance support tools and microlearning to deliver just-in-time guidance within existing workflows where employees naturally operate.

How do we develop L&D team capabilities at the same pace we expect to develop the broader workforce?

- Model learning agility through honest capability assessments, individual development plans, rotational assignments, strategic hiring and visible continuous learning behaviors.

How do we leverage AI and emerging technologies to deliver personalized learning at scale while maintaining human connection and judgment?

- Balance AI-enabled personalization, adaptive systems and automated support with human coaching, mentoring and judgment to create compelling blended experiences.



Technology enables personalization previously impossible and successful implementation balances automation with human elements to create optimal experiences.

Leverage AI Strategically While Preserving Human Connection

Adopt AI strategically across the learning lifecycle. For content creation, the 46% of award-winning organizations using AI-enhanced content development benefit from accelerated production while maintaining quality. AI can generate drafts, adapt content for different audiences and create assessments. Human subject matter experts and instructional designers review and refine AI-generated content, ensuring accuracy and alignment with learning objectives.

Deploy AI-powered learning assistants that provide 24/7 support. The 30% adoption of AI-powered assistants demonstrates growing recognition of their value. These assistants answer questions, recommend resources and provide just-in-time guidance. They supplement rather than replace human instructors and coaches.

Maintain human connection through coaching and mentoring. The 70% of organizations offering one-on-one coaching and 65% providing mentoring programs recognize that technology cannot replace human relationships in development. AI handles scale and efficiency while humans provide empathy, nuanced feedback and motivation.

Establish governance for AI use in learning. Define optimal applications, quality standards, data privacy requirements and monitoring processes. This ensures AI adoption proceeds responsibly while maximizing benefits.

Create blended experiences that combine AI-enabled personalization with human-led elements. For example, AI can recommend learning paths

and deliver content while human coaches help learners apply new skills and navigate challenges. The 100% adoption of multi-modal blended learning in successful programs demonstrates the power of combining approaches.

Focus technology investments on areas with clear ROI. The 80% of organizations prioritizing analytics capability development recognize that visibility into program performance enables improvement. Start with high-impact applications rather than trying to implement AI everywhere at once.



Transform Activity-Tracking Measurements into Demonstrable Business Impact

Organizations can implement multi-level measurement systems that track participation, learning, behavior change and business outcomes. This moves beyond course completions and satisfaction scores to metrics that connect learning to KPIs that executives value.

Successful approaches establish a clear line of sight between learning activities and business metrics. When launching a learning program, define specific business outcomes it should influence: increased sales, reduced errors, faster time to productivity, improved customer satisfaction, or cost reduction. Establish baseline metrics before the program and track changes after implementation.

This connection between learning activities and business results transforms conversations with stakeholders. For example, rather than reporting that 500 employees completed a program, L&D can demonstrate that those employees reduced processing errors by 25%, saving the organization \$300,000 annually. This clarity makes learning's value undeniable.

Award-winning organizations are beginning to partner with finance teams to develop ROI methodologies appropriate for learning investments. This includes isolating learning program effects from other business variables, calculating monetary benefits and expressing returns in financial terms. 67% of award-winning organizations that implement ROI measurement can build compelling business cases for sustained investment.

67% of award-winning organizations use ROI measurement to secure ongoing investment.

Build Data Science and Analytical Capabilities to Support Evidence-Based Decision-Making

L&D teams can acquire data science competencies or partner with those who possess them. This represents an exciting evolution in L&D skill requirements that opens new possibilities for impact.

Organizations can expand L&D teams to include data scientists, experience designers and AI specialists. These diverse teams pioneer approaches that traditional L&D cannot. Where hiring proves challenging, establish partnerships with HR analytics teams, IT data science groups, or external consultants who can provide analytical support.

Implement analytics tools that make data accessible. The 83% of award-winning organizations using metrics and KPI dashboards benefit from real-time performance visibility without requiring deep technical skills. Select platforms with strong visualization capabilities that communicate insights clearly to stakeholders.

Create Seamless Learning Experiences Integrated into Workflows

Learning can become part of how work gets done, not a separate activity. This requires rethinking delivery approaches and leveraging technology for just-in-time learning.

Implement AI and automation to support upskilling and reskilling, which 56% of organizations use. AI-powered learning systems can deliver personalized recommendations, identify skill gaps in real time and provide microlearning content at the point of need.

Design learning journeys rather than isolated courses. Successful programs at 93% prevalence combine formal learning, social learning through communities of practice and experiential learning through projects and assignments. This blended approach ensures continuous development rather than episodic training events.

Embed learning in workflow tools employees already use. Integration with project management systems, CRM platforms and communication tools reduces friction. Employees access learning where they work rather than navigating to separate learning platforms.

Develop L&D Team Capabilities at the Pace of Workforce Expectations

L&D teams can model the learning agility they promote. This requires honest assessment of capability gaps and committed action to close them, demonstrating the power of continuous development.

Conduct skills assessments of L&D teams against future requirements. Identify opportunities in consulting, design thinking, collaboration, learning agility, strategic planning and business acumen. These competencies, valued by 65-77% of practitioners, represent exciting growth areas that differ from traditional L&D skills.

Create individual development plans for L&D team members that address identified opportunities. Provide access to training, coaching and stretch assignments that build new capabilities. The 83% of successful organizations offering individual development support recognize its importance in building high-performing teams.

Establish learning business partner roles that mirror HR business partner models. The 10% of organizations using this structure position learning professionals as strategic advisors to business units rather than order-takers. This role leverages business acumen, consulting skills and the ability to translate business challenges into learning solutions.

The Opportunity Ahead

Learning and Development stands ready to deliver unprecedented value to organizations. The profession has gained the acceptance it sought. Now comes the opportunity to demonstrate the impact that acceptance enables.

Success requires evolution across multiple dimensions: measurement systems that demonstrate business value, analytical capabilities that enable evidence-based decisions, delivery approaches that integrate learning into work, team capabilities that match future requirements and technology adoption that enables personalization at scale.

Organizations that achieve this transformation will develop workforces capable of adapting to change, adopting new technologies and driving competitive advantage. They'll create environments where learning fuels growth, innovation and success.

The path forward requires courage to embrace new practices, commitment to develop new capabilities and willingness to be measured by business impact. L&D has the opportunity to lead organizational transformation and shape the future of work. Seizing that opportunity starts now.

Predictions

The Technology Convergence Accelerates

Traditional technology solutions will evolve into a flexible learning ecosystem. Organizations will increasingly adopt specialized, interoperable AI-driven solutions that connect seamlessly. Content creation powered by AI, skills tracking enabled by emerging technologies such as blockchain and personalized recommendations and delivery orchestrated by AI learning agents will be handled by best-in-class solutions working in concert. The current learning technology stack will transform into a broader constellation of specialized tools that work together to deliver more personalized, responsive and compelling learning experiences.

The ‘Cognitive Offload’ Curriculum

As AI co-pilots take over complex technical and analytical tasks, corporate learning will shift its primary focus toward core human skills. The new mandatory curriculum will center on ethical decision-making, creative-critical thinking, emotional regulation and advanced collaboration and team-building — skills that AI is least able to replicate. Technical skills will increasingly be learned in the flow of work via AI support.

Neural Learning Integration

Early-stage, non-invasive brain-computer interface wearable devices, such as advanced headbands, will become accepted tools for measuring cognitive load and attention during learning. The LMS’s AI will use this data to optimize content delivery, pausing difficult modules if cognitive strain spikes too high, or subtly repeating key concepts if attention wanders. The goal is optimal flow state learning.

Learning as Personal Brand Currency

A decentralized, blockchain-verified skills ledger will replace the traditional corporate transcript. Employees’ demonstrable mastery, validated by AI-proctored simulations and practical application, will become their key asset, transferable across jobs and companies. Learning will be primarily driven by the individual’s motivation to increase their “Skill Capital,” which directly impacts internal mobility, project assignment and compensation.

Hyper-Personalized ‘Just-in-Time’ Learning Agents

Every employee will be assigned a personal, persistent and context-aware AI learning agent. This agent will live within the employee’s workflow — email, project management software, CRM — and proactively provide precisely the one- to three-minute learning intervention needed to solve immediate problems or fill detected micro-skill gaps. The agent may deliver a custom-made video snippet, a process checklist, or a one-question quiz, making traditional “stepping away” for training significantly less needed.

The Corporate ‘Mastery Guild’ Model

For high-demand, non-automatable skills such as quantum computing and advanced ethical AI, corporations will establish internal “Mastery Guilds.” L&D’s role will become the arbiter of mastery within these guilds, not through formal courses, but through setting open challenges, curating apprenticeships and certifying peer-to-peer knowledge transfer. Promotion and pay will be tied directly to “Guild Rank” achieved through demonstrated skill contribution.

Predictive Learning for Employee Retention

AI systems will move beyond tracking current skills to using predictive analytics on employee behavior, project feedback and peer network data to forecast when key employees are likely to seek new opportunities due to stagnation. L&D will proactively intervene with personalized, high-value developmental opportunities such as short-term internal rotations, executive coaching, or specialized external certificates to re-engage and retain top talent.

Gamified Development Integration

L&D will introduce progression systems where achieving specific, high-priority learning objectives instantly unlocks micro-bonuses, temporary premium benefits such as extra vacation days, or permanent small increases in base salary. The line between professional development and immediate reward will dissolve, making learning an undeniable, high-frequency, positive feedback loop that drives engagement and application.



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Engagement report:
Course completions

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↑ 36.4%

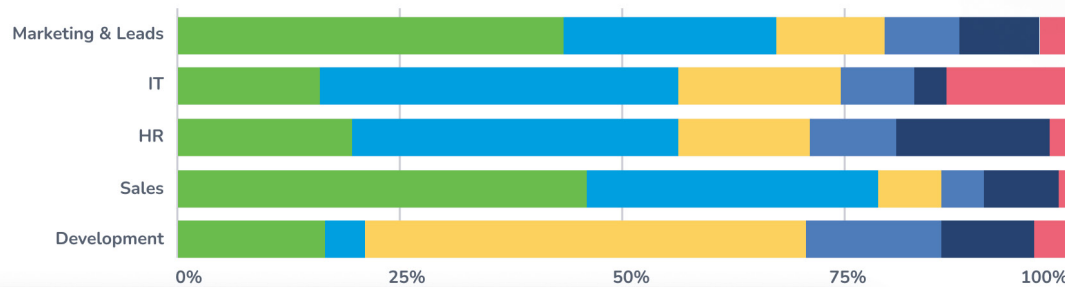
The learning portal

Intelligent Assist

Overview

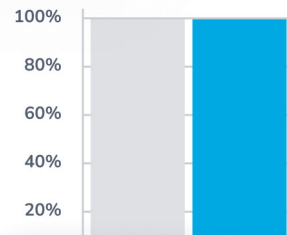
Course enrollment status by department*

Completed In progress Not started Not complete Absent Failed



Course enrollment status by co

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Organizational behavior: know y



Overview Lesson details

Building the right type of E-Learning
Online course

Resume >

Mandatory

Premium - employee engagement
Online course

Resume >

Mandatory

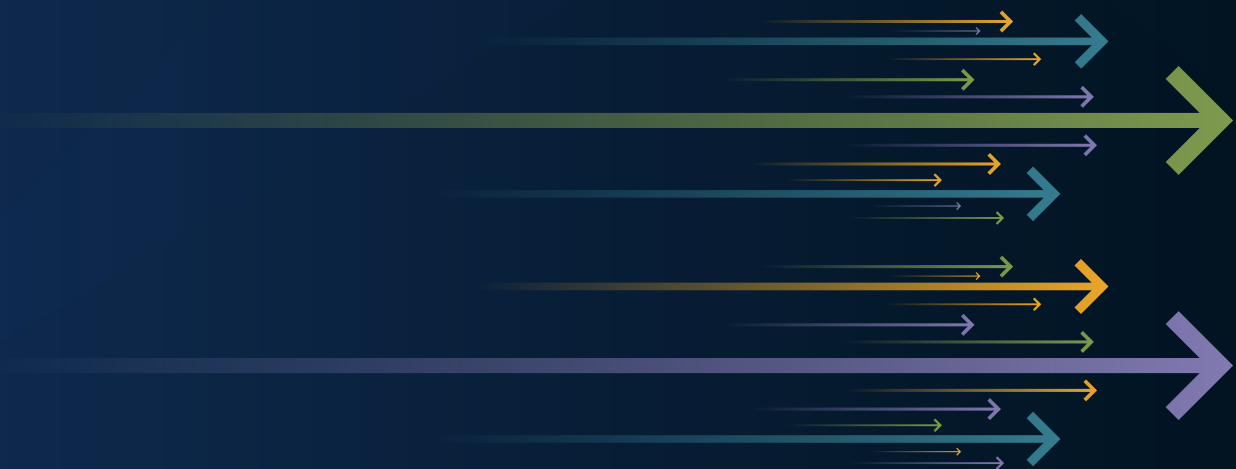
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03

THE FUTURE OF INCLUSION

From Metrics to Meaning: Building Cultures Where Everyone Can Do Their Best Work

The most forward-thinking organizations are discovering that inclusion is an operational advantage waiting to be unlocked. By engineering psychological safety into their systems, revealing hidden contributors and tapping overlooked talent pools, they're accessing capabilities that transform how decisions get made, problems get solved and value gets created.

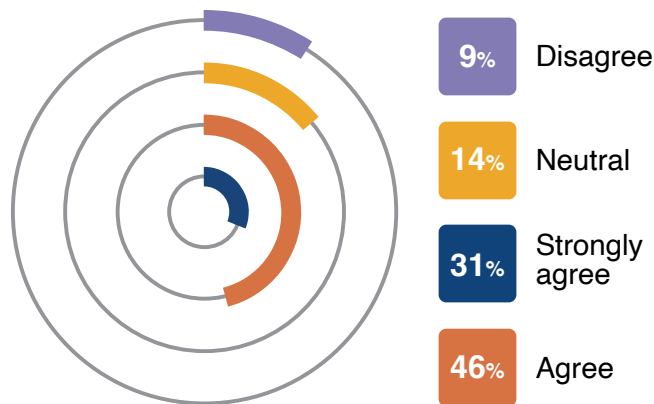


Current State

Something exciting is happening in how organizations approach inclusion. The conversation is evolving from counting heads to unleashing potential. The shift is opening doors to capabilities many companies didn't know they had.

More employers are discovering that diverse teams don't just look different; they think differently, solve problems differently and generate ideas that homogeneous groups simply miss. But here's what's changed: We're learning how to capture that value rather than just hoping it happens. Most organizations believe they have made progress:

“My Employer Considers My Unique Background, Values Me as an Individual and Takes My Opinions Into Account When Making Decisions.”



Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study,
Development of Inclusion in the Modern Workplace

This is where psychological safety becomes your competitive edge. When people can voice unpopular opinions, challenge assumptions, admit what they don't know and build on each other's ideas without fear, something remarkable emerges.

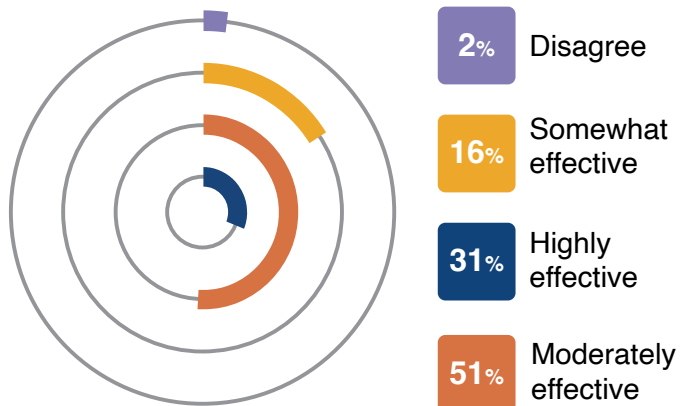
Ideas get sharper.

Problems surface while they're still manageable.

Innovation accelerates because people aren't playing it safe.



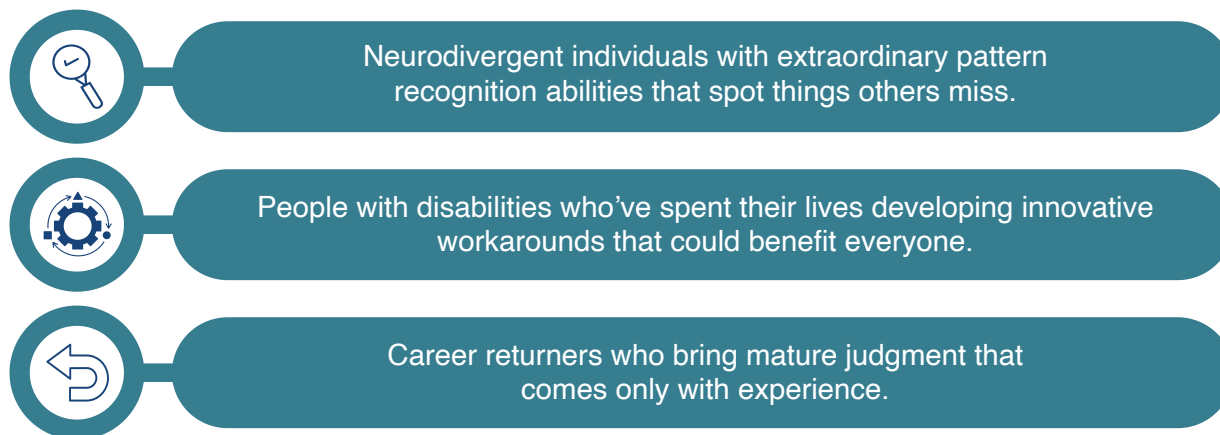
How Employers Rate Their Effectiveness in Creating Psychological Safety



Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Development of Inclusion in the Modern Workplace



Organizations are also waking up to an enormous opportunity in what some call the “hidden workforce.”



These people, along with underrepresented groups, have untapped capabilities that could transform your team's effectiveness.

Technology is starting to reveal patterns that change the game. Intelligent systems can now show you whose ideas actually shape outcomes, which team dynamics generate the best solutions and where your most valuable contributors might be flying under the radar. It's like suddenly having X-ray vision into how work actually gets done.

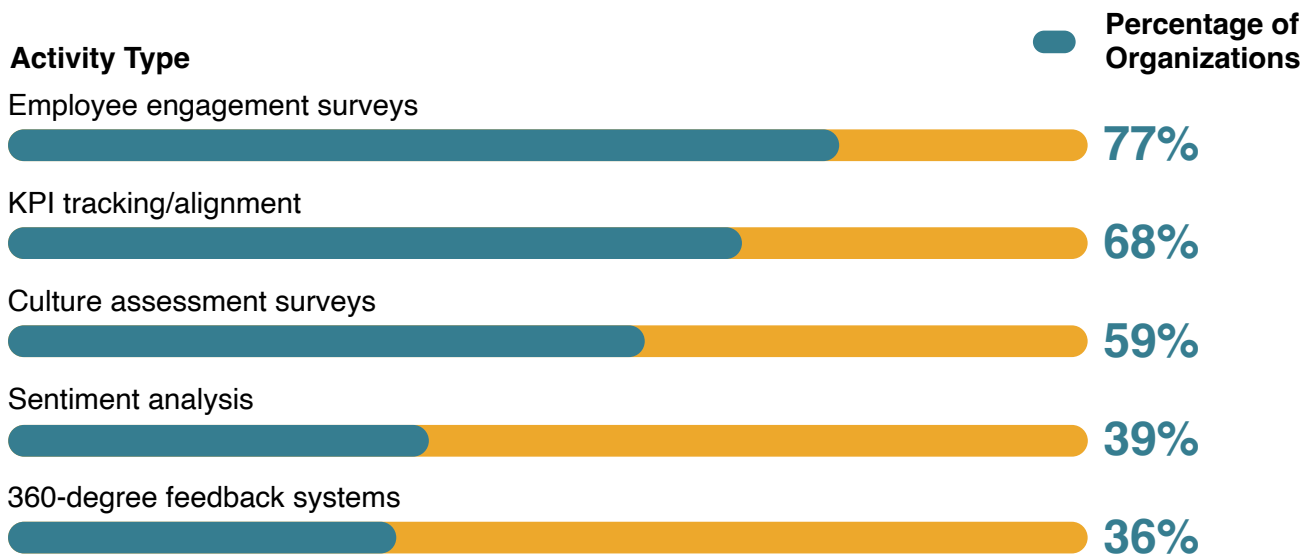
Complexities

Moving toward these opportunities creates fascinating challenges that forward-thinking organizations are learning to navigate.

Making the Invisible Visible

Psychological safety lives in the space between perception and reality, which makes it tricky to track. But that's also what makes it interesting. Organizations and especially Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award winners, are discovering creative ways to measure what matters: real-time pulse surveys that catch problems early, communication pattern analysis that reveals team dynamics, sentiment analysis that spots where trust is building or eroding.

Assessing Culture Transformation



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award winners for culture transformation initiatives.

The key is recognizing that measurement itself becomes part of the solution. When you start tracking whether everyone's voice gets heard in meetings, meeting dynamics often improve simply because people become aware of the patterns. It's an opportunity to create self-reinforcing systems that get better over time.

The AI Opportunity

AI can spot patterns in team dynamics, contribution patterns and decision outcomes that human observers never notice. Imagine knowing, in real time, when certain voices are dominating discussions, when someone's about to get talked over, or when a decision is being made without hearing from your best problem-solvers.

The challenge isn't whether to use these tools; it's how to deploy them in ways that build trust rather than undermine it. Organizations that are transparent about what they're measuring and why often find that employees welcome the visibility. People want to know they're being heard and valued. Technology that surfaces those patterns becomes an ally, not a threat.

Recognizing What Was Always There

Organizations have always had employees who make everyone else better: the person whose questions sharpen thinking, whose code reviews prevent costly mistakes, whose emotional intelligence keeps teams functional during tough times. The opportunity is that we can now make these contributions systematically rather than hoping managers notice them.

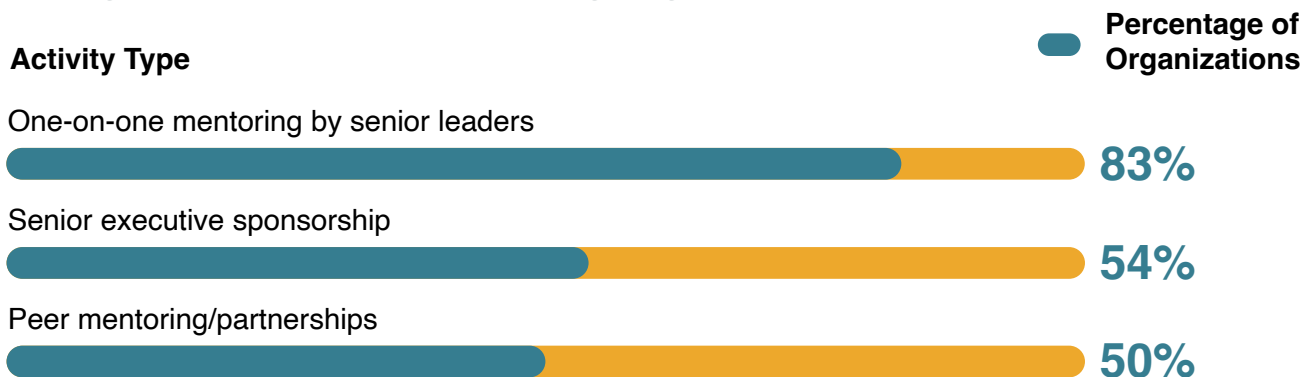
When you reveal invisible work, you can discover patterns about what drives success. Employees whose contributions finally get recognized tend to do more of what works, creating a virtuous cycle.

Building Sponsorship at Scale to Advance Women Leaders

There's growing recognition that women leaders don't need more advice; they need powerful advocates opening doors. The opportunity here is enormous: When senior leaders actively champion talented women for promotions and high-visibility assignments, you accelerate the diversification of leadership while ensuring your best talent gets deployed where it matters most.



Mentoring and Sponsoring Activities for Women Leaders Among Excellence Award-Winning Organizations



Source: Analysis of Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award winners for leadership development programs for women.

Yes, it requires senior leaders to take genuine risk, staking their reputation on others' success. But that's also what makes it powerful. Progress is being made: twice as many organizations now have at least 30% women in senior leadership positions (VP and above), compared to 2020, according to Brandon Hall Group™ research. But that is still only 40% of organizations.

So there is more opportunity for improvement. Sponsorship creates accountability and demonstrates commitment. Employers that crack the code on formal sponsorship programs often find that sponsors benefit as much as those they sponsor, gaining access to fresh perspectives and expanding their own networks.

The Integration Advantage

Inclusion work touches everything, which means getting it right creates compounding benefits. When you redesign decision-making processes to ensure diverse perspectives shape outcomes, you don't just make better decisions on inclusion, you make better decisions period. When you create environments where neurodivergent employees thrive, you often discover you've created spaces where everyone can focus better and do deeper work.

The challenge is that piecemeal approaches don't work. But the flip side is that systems-level thinking about inclusion often reveals opportunities to improve how you operate across the board. It often requires redesigning systems to work better for everyone while unlocking capabilities you didn't know you had.

Implications

The opportunities emerging from these shifts will reshape what's possible in organizations.

Organizations that engineer inclusion into their operations are discovering a form of advantage that competitors struggle to replicate. When you can reliably surface better ideas, make smarter decisions and unlock talent others overlook, you compete differently.

Consider two companies tackling the same complex challenge. One has decision-making processes designed to leverage cognitive diversity, surface dissenting views and ensure the right voices shape the approach. The other relies on traditional hierarchical decision-making. Over time, which organization consistently makes better calls? The advantage compounds with every decision, every product development cycle, every strategic pivot.

Smarter Decision-Making at Scale

When organizations analyze who participates in major decisions and what outcomes result, they discover something powerful: cognitively diverse teams consistently outperform homogeneous groups tackling the same problems. This isn't about fairness; it's about effectiveness.

This insight is driving organizations to restructure strategic decision-making. Some are implementing "decision diversity audits" for major initiatives, similar to financial audits. Others are using AI to analyze past decisions and quantify the value of having diverse perspectives in the room. The result? Decision-making processes that systematically capture more value.

Discovering Your Hidden High Performers

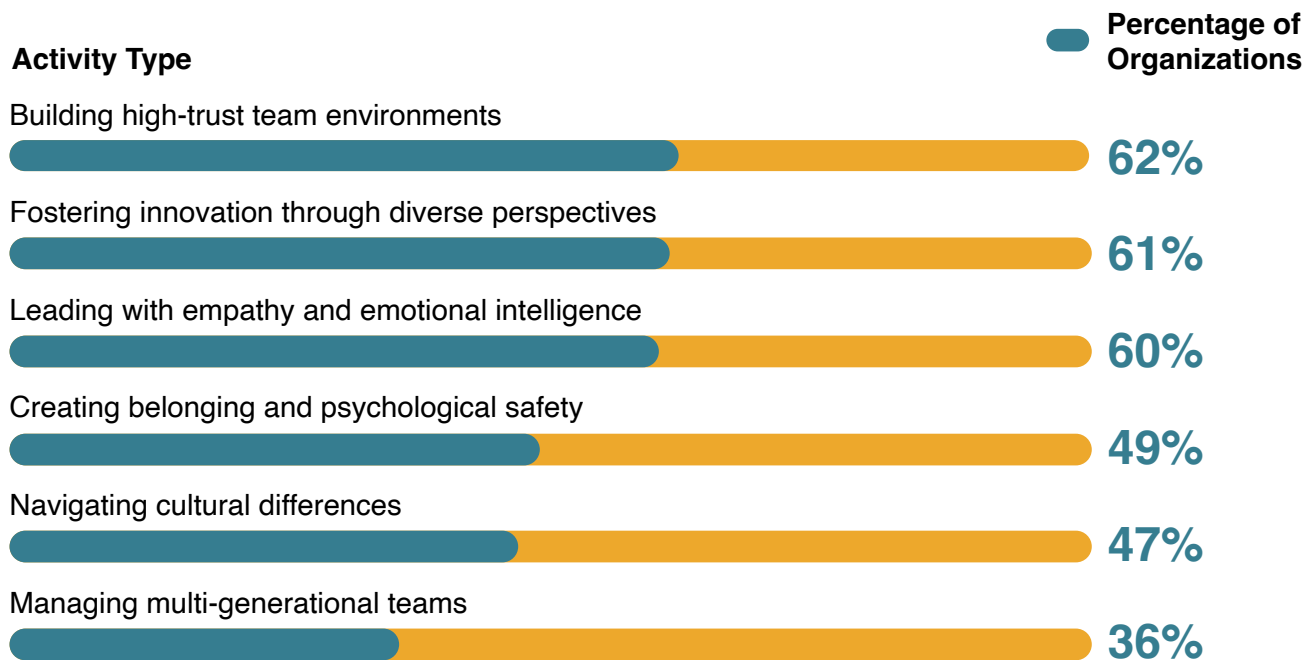
AI systems that analyze communication patterns, collaboration networks and project outcomes reveal something remarkable: many of your highest-value contributors have been hiding in plain sight. The employee whose questions force better thinking. The one whose mentoring multiplies others' effectiveness. The contributor whose code reviews prevent problems before they start.

When these invisible contributions become visible, organizations gain two things: the ability to recognize and retain valuable talent they might otherwise lose and insights into what drives success. This knowledge transforms how you evaluate performance, allocate opportunities and develop future leaders.

Accelerating Leadership Development

When organizations develop inclusive leaders, they accelerate inclusion. Demonstrating inclusive behaviors and developing inclusive competencies can drive real culture change.

How Organizations Prioritize Inclusive Leadership Competencies



Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Development of Inclusion in the Modern Workplace

The benefits of developing inclusive leaders and diversifying the leadership pipeline extend beyond individual careers. Organizations gain more diverse decision-making at the top, sponsors gain fresh perspectives and expanded networks and emerging leaders get real-world leadership experience earlier in their careers. Everyone wins.

Technology as Your Inclusion Accelerator

AI identifies when meeting dynamics favor certain communication styles. Virtual reality lets people experience workplace situations from different perspectives. Analytics reveal whose contributions drive outcomes.

These tools don't replace human judgment; they amplify it, helping organizations spot opportunities and problems that would otherwise remain invisible.

The real opportunity? Technology can serve as an early warning system. Drops in psychological safety scores often predict productivity declines or talent loss months before traditional metrics show problems. That gives organizations time to intervene, turning potential crises into learning opportunities.



Critical Questions

These opportunities raise important questions that shape how organizations move forward:

How can we measure psychological safety in ways that strengthen it?

- The goal should be to create measurement systems that improve team dynamics through visibility. When teams see their own patterns, they naturally adjust. How do we design measurement that becomes part of the solution?

How do we leverage AI's pattern-recognition capabilities while maintaining human judgment?

- AI can spot signals, humans miss identifying future leaders based on contribution patterns, revealing invisible work and flagging decision-making blind spots. The opportunity is learning when to trust AI's insights, when to investigate further and how to use technology to augment rather than replace human wisdom.

How do we access hidden talent pools while building truly integrated systems?

- Neurodivergent talent, career returners, people with disabilities: These groups bring capabilities that could transform teams. The opportunity is to create genuinely inclusive systems rather than separate tracks. How do we build flexibility that benefits everyone while unlocking specific capabilities these groups offer?

What does authentic sponsorship look like at scale?

- Sponsorship involves senior leaders using political capital to advocate for specific individuals. How do we expand access to sponsorship while maintaining the authenticity that makes it powerful? What does formal sponsorship look like when it actually works?

How do we balance inclusion investments with other priorities?

- Building inclusive systems requires time and resources. How do organizations make smart trade-offs that recognize inclusion as capability-building rather than a cost center? How do we measure return on inclusion investments?



**Brandon
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POV

The future of inclusion is about unlocking capabilities that traditional approaches left dormant. Here's how forward-thinking organizations are seizing these opportunities.

Design Inclusion for Advantage

The most exciting shift is treating inclusion as a design opportunity rather than just a cultural challenge. Organizations are discovering they can build psychological safety into their systems. For example:



Meeting protocols that ensure all voices get heard.



Decision-making processes that explicitly leverage cognitive diversity.



Performance systems that surface invisible contributions.

When you design systems that make it easy to hear diverse perspectives and hard to ignore them, you're accessing better information and generating better outcomes.

Deploy Technology as Your Capability Multiplier

AI and analytics are revealing patterns that unlock value. Use technology to surface whose contributions actually shape outcomes, where psychological safety is building or eroding and which decision-making approaches yield better results. The key is transparency.

When employees understand you're using technology to improve team dynamics and recognize valuable contributions, they typically welcome it. The goal isn't surveillance; it's surfacing patterns that help everyone perform better and ensure valuable work gets recognized.

Be strategic about what you measure. Focus on data that leads to action. Early indicators that let you strengthen psychological safety before problems emerge, patterns that reveal opportunities to improve team dynamics, insights that ensure your best contributors don't fly under the radar.

Access Hidden Capabilities Strategically

The "hidden workforce" represents enormous untapped potential. Neurodivergent individuals bring pattern recognition and systems thinking that can transform how problems get solved. People with disabilities often bring innovative problem-solving born from years of navigating accessibility challenges. Career returners bring mature judgment and resilience that only comes with experience.

Accessing these capabilities requires rethinking how you hire, onboard and support employees. Create environments that work for diverse needs, such as quiet spaces, flexible schedules and explicit communication norms. You'll often discover that systems designed for specific groups benefit everyone.

Make Sponsorship Your Leadership Accelerator

The shift from mentorship to sponsorship for women leaders opens a faster pathway to diversifying leadership. Create formal sponsorship programs that pair high-potential women with influential leaders; often men, given current demographics, who actively advocate for their promotions and champion them for high-visibility assignments.

Set clear expectations and track results: promotion velocity, assignment quality, pipeline strength. Make sponsorship part of senior leaders' responsibilities, with recognition for sponsors whose protégés succeed. Frame it as mutual benefit: sponsors gain fresh perspectives, expand their networks and often find that their protégés' success enhances their own reputation.

Treat Psychological Safety as Your Early Warning System

Here's an opportunity most organizations miss: Psychological safety is a leading indicator that predicts future performance. When it drops, problems are coming, possibly including innovation slowdowns, talent loss and productivity declines, even if traditional metrics still look fine.

Invest in real-time measurement through pulse surveys, communication patterns and sentiment tracking. But data without action is just noise. When psychological safety shifts, that's your signal to step in, understand what changed and reinforce what works.

Leverage What Only Humans Bring

As AI handles more routine cognitive work, uniquely human capabilities become your differentiator:

- Building trust in ambiguous situations.
- Making decisions that balance multiple values, not just optimize single metrics.
- Creating meaning that motivates people.
- Knowing when to trust data and when to trust wisdom earned through experience.

As automation increases, your ability to unlock these human capabilities becomes your competitive edge.

Start Learning Now

The organizations that will capture these opportunities are the ones that are experimenting now. Try measuring psychological safety and see what it reveals. Launch a sponsorship program and track whether promotion rates change. Redesign your interview process to access neurodivergent talent and discover what capabilities emerge.

Each experiment teaches you something valuable. You'll discover which approaches work in your culture, which need adjustment and where the biggest opportunities lie. The key is starting, learning and building momentum.

The Opportunity Ahead

Organizations that seize these opportunities can create better workplaces, make better decisions, unlock hidden capabilities and build competitive advantages that compound over time. They'll discover that inclusion is the smart thing to do.

The future of inclusion is being written by organizations that:

The opportunity is immense and it's available right now. The question is how quickly you'll begin unlocking capabilities that have been there all along, waiting to be discovered.

- Recognize it as capability-building.
- See diverse perspectives as strategic assets, not just demographic categories.
- Use technology to reveal value.
- Understand that psychological safety enables the performance that drives success.

Predictions

Technology Becomes the Inclusion Enabler

Agentic AI, real-time analytics and intelligent systems will transform inclusion from a cultural aspiration to an engineered capability. Organizations will design psychological safety into their operational infrastructure the same way they design for cybersecurity, recognizing both as essential business protections.

- **Agentic AI Becomes a Psychological Safety Monitor.** As employers begin to deploy AI Agents, progressive organizations will use specialized agents that monitor communication patterns, meeting dynamics and decision-making processes in real-time to identify behaviors that undermine psychological safety. These agents will privately alert managers when team members are being talked over, when certain voices dominate discussions, or when meeting dynamics favor extroverted communication styles. This enables leaders to work toward behavioral adjustments.
- **AI-Powered ‘Decision Audits’ Expose Inclusion Gaps.** Agentic AI systems will retrospectively analyze thousands of business decisions to quantify the financial impact of who was and wasn’t, in the room. Organizations will discover that decisions made by cognitively diverse teams yield better outcomes than those made by homogeneous leadership, creating data-driven pressure to restructure decision-making processes around inclusion principles. Company boards and executives will begin requiring “decision diversity audits” on major strategic choices, similar to financial audits.
- **Collaboration Analytics Reveal ‘Invisible’ Contributors.** AI systems will analyze code contributions, document contributions, meeting notes and project communications to identify high-value contributors whose work may be overlooked in traditional performance reviews. This will surface “invisible” work often performed by underrepresented groups, ensuring proper recognition. Recognition of invisible contributions could improve retention of valuable contributors and correct systematic undervaluation of certain work styles.

Psychological Safety Architects Will Become a Key HR Role

As psychological safety becomes more measurable, the new role of Chief Psychological Safety Officer (CPSO) will emerge. The person would be responsible for designing organizational systems, communication protocols and decision-making structures that maximize productive psychological safety. Unlike traditional diversity officers focused on representation, CPSOs will be measured on innovation rates, decision quality, problem-solving speed and market responsiveness, making psychological safety a strategic business function.

Inclusive Innovation Labs’ Become a New Form of R&D

Leading organizations will establish “inclusive innovation labs” where problems are simultaneously attacked by teams with different cognitive approaches (i.e., analytical vs. intuitive, detail-focused vs. systems-thinking, risk-averse vs. risk-seeking). This, in time, could cause companies to recruit for “anti-expertise,” deliberately seeking team members with no background in an industry or function to challenge foundational assumptions.

The ‘Hidden Workforce’ Becomes Mainstream Talent Strategy

Within the next two years, organizations will systematically tap into what’s been called the “hidden workforce” — groups historically overlooked or underutilized in employment, including neurodivergent individuals, people with disabilities, historically underrepresented groups and the long-term unemployed. The business case will shift from diversity metrics to capability unlocking. Organizations will recognize that these are untapped talent pools with distinctive strengths: neurodivergent employees excelling in pattern recognition and systems thinking, career returners bringing mature judgment and resilience, workers with disabilities offering innovative problem-solving from lived experience with accessibility challenges.

Sponsorship Becomes the Primary Development Strategy for Women Leaders

Research consistently shows women are “over-mentored and under-sponsored”, which limits their career advancement. Organizations will shift from feel-good mentorship programs to high-stakes sponsorship initiatives where senior leaders actively advocate for women’s promotions and high-visibility assignments. The shift from passive advice-giving to active door-opening will be measured through promotion velocity, assignment quality and executive pipeline strength.

Psychological Safety Scores Become Predictive Leading Indicators

Real-time psychological safety measurement systems (using anonymous pulse surveys, communication pattern analysis and sentiment AI) will emerge as the most reliable predictive indicator of team performance rather than traditional metrics like engagement scores or productivity measures. Organizations will discover that drops in psychological safety scores predict productivity declines, innovation slowdowns and talent loss long before traditional metrics register problems. This could allow companies to poach talent by monitoring competitors’ psychological safety scores through employee review sites and targeting high performers in deteriorating cultures.

Virtual Reality Inclusion Training Becomes Scalable

Organizations will deploy VR-based inclusion training that allows employees to experience workplace situations from different perspectives, including scenarios involving microaggressions, accessibility challenges and communication style differences. Unlike traditional training, VR creates memorable emotional learning that changes behavior more effectively.



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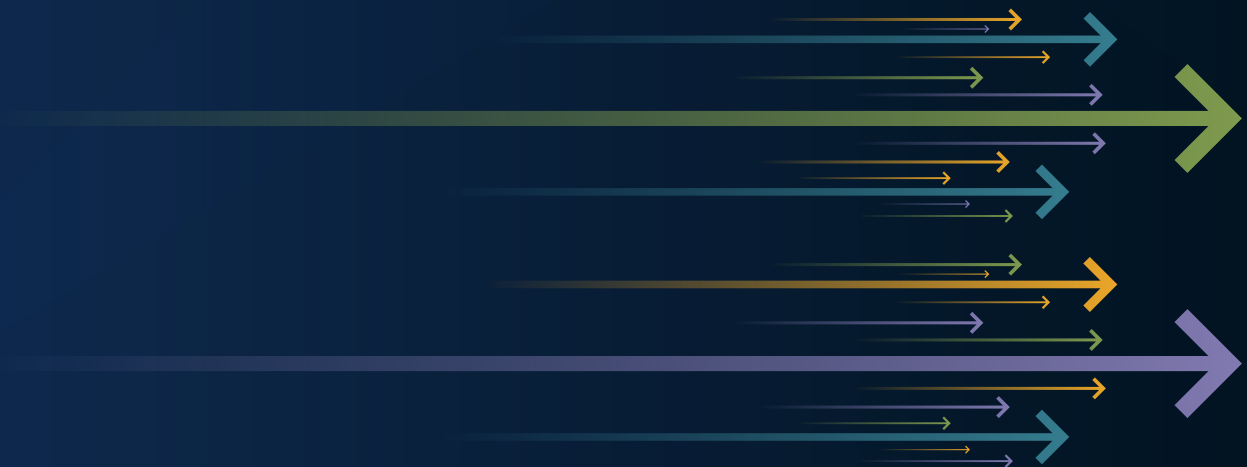


04

THE FUTURE OF TALENT ACQUISITION

From Talent Scarcity to Capability Abundance: Building Intelligence- Powered Systems That Develop People, Not Just Hire Them

AI and predictive analytics are revolutionizing how organizations identify, attract and grow talent, shifting talent acquisition into a strategic capability engine that continuously matches evolving skills with emerging opportunities while creating meaningful employee journeys that drive both business success and human potential.



Current State

Talent acquisition (TA), which once centered on posting jobs and reviewing resumes, is becoming something far more strategic. It's now a capability that shapes workforce potential before roles even exist and reimagines how organizations connect human talent with opportunity.

Converging forces drive this transformation: AI that can process candidate signals at scales impossible for human recruiters, shifting workforce expectations around career fluidity and purpose and the recognition that traditional hiring practices leave enormous value untapped. Organizations are beginning to see talent acquisition as a design discipline; one that architects career pathways, predicts capability needs and creates experiences that attract and develop the workforce of tomorrow.

The most progressive talent acquisition teams are already operating differently. Brandon Hall Group™ research shows they're:



Deploying AI agents that learn from hiring outcomes and refine candidate matching in real time.



Building internal talent marketplaces where algorithms surface opportunities before employees even consider leaving.



Designing candidate experiences that feel less like job interviews and more like mutual discovery processes.

This shift requires new competencies. Today's TA leaders need fluency in data interpretation, workforce analytics and AI system design alongside traditional recruiting skills. They're partnering with data scientists to build predictive models, collaborating with learning teams to map skill trajectories and working with technology teams to create seamless candidate and employee experiences.

The financial reality for talent acquisition reflects this evolution. Organizations investing in intelligent TA systems are seeing measurable returns:



**Reduced
time-to-fill.**



**Improved quality
of hire.**



Lower turnover.



**Decreased external
hiring costs as
internal mobility
improves.**

The business case for modernizing talent acquisition has never been more transparent. What makes this moment particularly significant is the convergence of talent acquisition with broader talent management. The boundaries between recruiting, learning, career development and workforce planning are dissolving. Organizations are recognizing that acquiring and developing talent are part of the same continuum and that this requires integrated systems, shared data and a unified strategy.

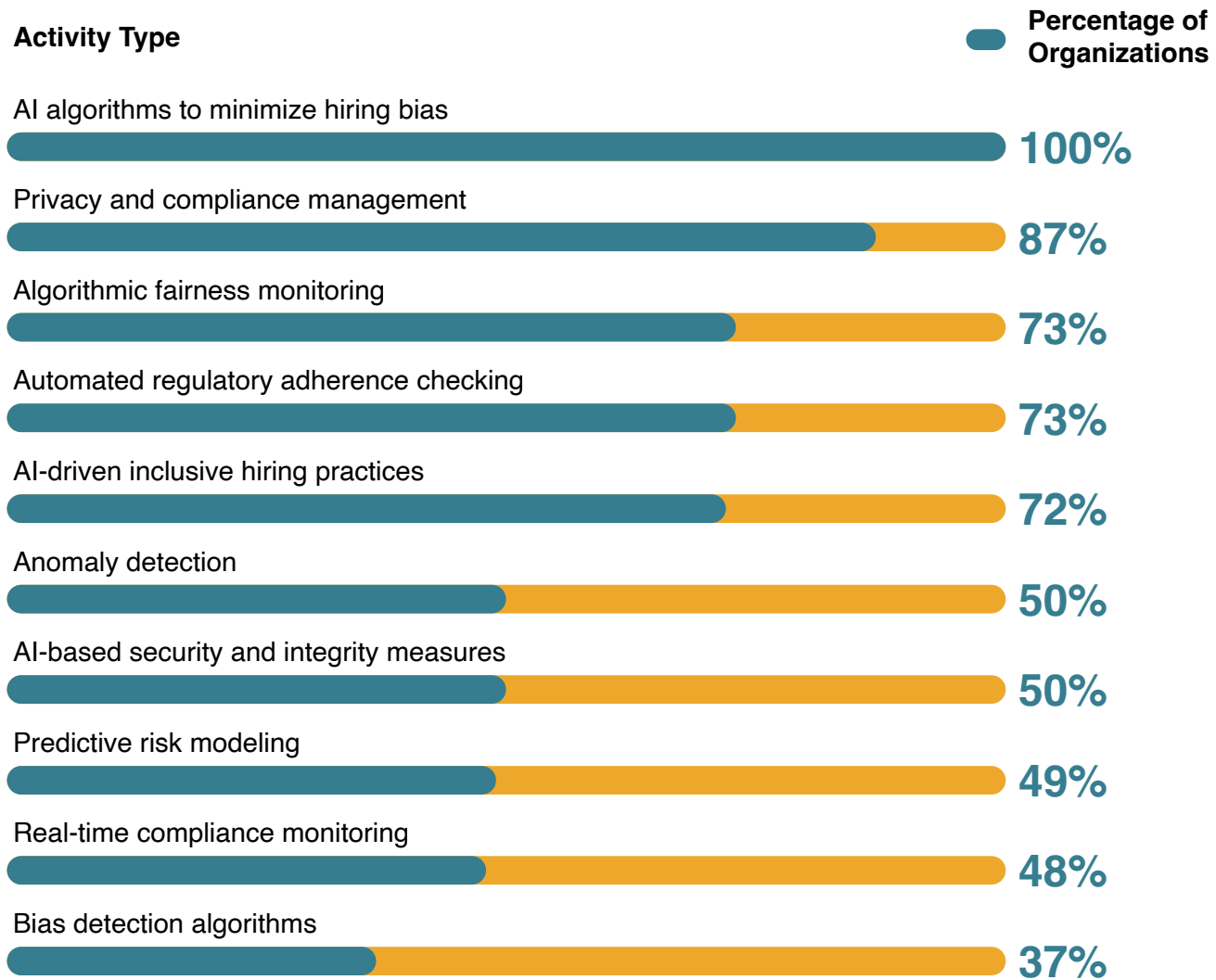
Complexities

The path forward for talent acquisition involves navigating technical, cultural, and strategic challenges.

The AI Trust Gap

While AI technology offers remarkable capabilities for talent acquisition, adoption remains uneven. Many organizations recognize AI's potential but struggle with implementation. Concerns about algorithmic bias, data privacy and the “black box” nature of AI decision-making create hesitation. TA teams need to build confidence in AI systems while maintaining human judgment in the process. This requires transparency in how AI makes recommendations, ongoing bias auditing and clear frameworks for when humans override algorithmic suggestions. Here are how Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations leverage AI for quality assurance and risk management.





Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Best Use of AI in Talent Acquisition

When AI handles sourcing and initial screening, recruiters must serve as interpreters of AI insights and architects of the candidate experience. This role shift can feel threatening without proper change management and skill development.

The Resume's Inadequacy

Traditional resumes and application processes fail to capture what organizations actually need to know about candidates. A resume shows where someone worked and what credentials they earned, but it doesn't reveal how they learn, adapt, collaborate, or solve problems. It doesn't show verified skills or real-world capabilities.

Organizations are experimenting with skills assessments, work samples and project-based evaluations, but these approaches don't yet scale efficiently. The future requires new ways of understanding candidate capability that go beyond self-reported experience, through systems that aggregate verified skills, peer endorsements and demonstrated outcomes into dynamic capability profiles that evolve as people grow.

Internal Mobility as Untapped Opportunity

Most organizations claim to value internal mobility, yet their systems make external hiring easier than internal movement. Career paths remain opaque, internal opportunities aren't visible and managers hoard talent rather than supporting growth. Meanwhile, employees leave for opportunities they could have found internally if only they'd known about them.

Creating practical internal talent marketplaces requires more than technology. It demands cultural change around talent sharing, transparency about career possibilities and incentive structures that reward managers for developing and deploying talent rather than retaining it.

The Experience Disconnect

Candidate experience and employee experience are typically managed as separate domains, but candidates notice when the hiring process promises one culture and the employee reality delivers another. Similarly, employee recognition, engagement and well-being initiatives often operate independently from talent acquisition, creating disconnected touchpoints throughout the talent lifecycle.

Organizations need integrated approaches in which the candidate journey flows seamlessly into onboarding, early employee experiences reinforce what attracted candidates in the first place and the same attention to experience design applied to customers extends to talent.

Predictive Capability Building

Perhaps the most significant challenge facing talent acquisition is its reactive nature. Organizations hire for today's needs using yesterday's methods. By the time a role is approved, sourced and filled, business priorities may have shifted. The future of work demands that talent acquisition become predictive, identifying capability needs before roles exist and building talent pipelines for jobs that haven't yet been created.

This requires partnership with workforce planning, learning and development and business leaders to understand where the organization is heading and what capabilities will drive success. It means moving from job-based hiring to capability-based talent architecture.

Implications

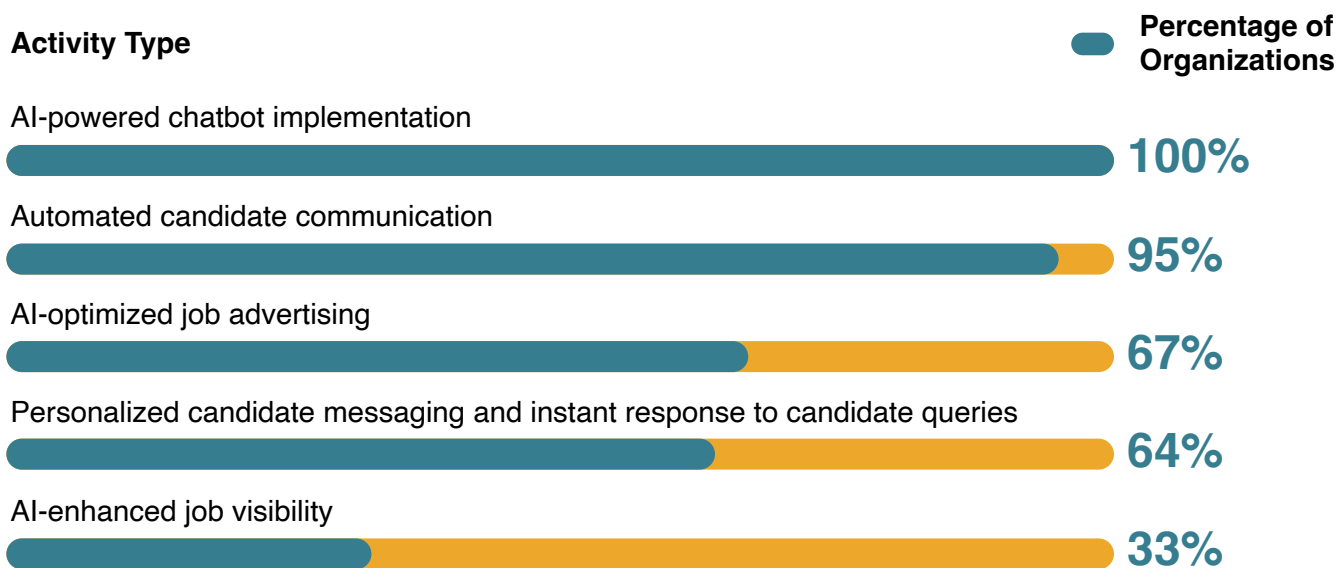
When talent acquisition successfully navigates these complexities and embraces its evolving role, the impact extends across the entire organization.

Talent Acquisition as Strategic Partner

TA leaders who speak in business outcomes and demonstrate clear impact on organizational capability become indispensable strategic partners. As organizations navigate digital transformation and evolving business models, talent acquisition teams that can forecast capability needs, proactively build talent pipelines and measure their impact on business performance earn seats at the strategic table.

This elevation of the TA function changes how organizations compete. Companies with sophisticated talent acquisition systems can move faster, enter new markets more confidently and adapt to disruption more effectively because they've built the capability infrastructure to support change.

Sourcing and Candidate Attraction Activities



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ award-winning organizations for Best Use of AI in Talent Acquisition

The Internal Talent Revolution

Organizations that crack the internal mobility challenge unlock enormous value. When employees can see career possibilities and access opportunities without leaving the company, retention improves, engagement increases and institutional knowledge is preserved. AI-powered talent marketplaces that continuously match internal talent with emerging opportunities reduce external hiring costs while improving employee satisfaction.

This shift transforms the recruiter's role from external talent scout to internal career architect. Success becomes measured not just by external hires but by internal placements, career progression and reduced attrition driven by career dissatisfaction.

Enhanced Employee Experience And Belonging

When talent acquisition extends its experience design expertise throughout the employee lifecycle, organizations create more cohesive and authentic experiences. Candidates who feel respected and engaged during hiring become employees who feel valued and connected. Recognition systems that acknowledge contributions, well-being initiatives that support whole-person needs and psychological safety that enables authentic belonging all flow from an organization’s commitment to human-centered talent practices.

Organizations that excel at this integration create powerful employer brands. They become known not just as good places to work but as environments where people can build meaningful careers, develop new capabilities and find authentic community.

Accelerated Skill Development

When talent acquisition and learning and development work as integrated partners, organizations can hire for potential and rapidly build capability. Rather than seeking candidates who check every box on a job description, TA can identify candidates with strong learning agility and foundational skills, knowing that targeted development can quickly close specific gaps.

How Excellence Award-Winning Organizations Offer Training and Development During Candidate Selection and Onboarding



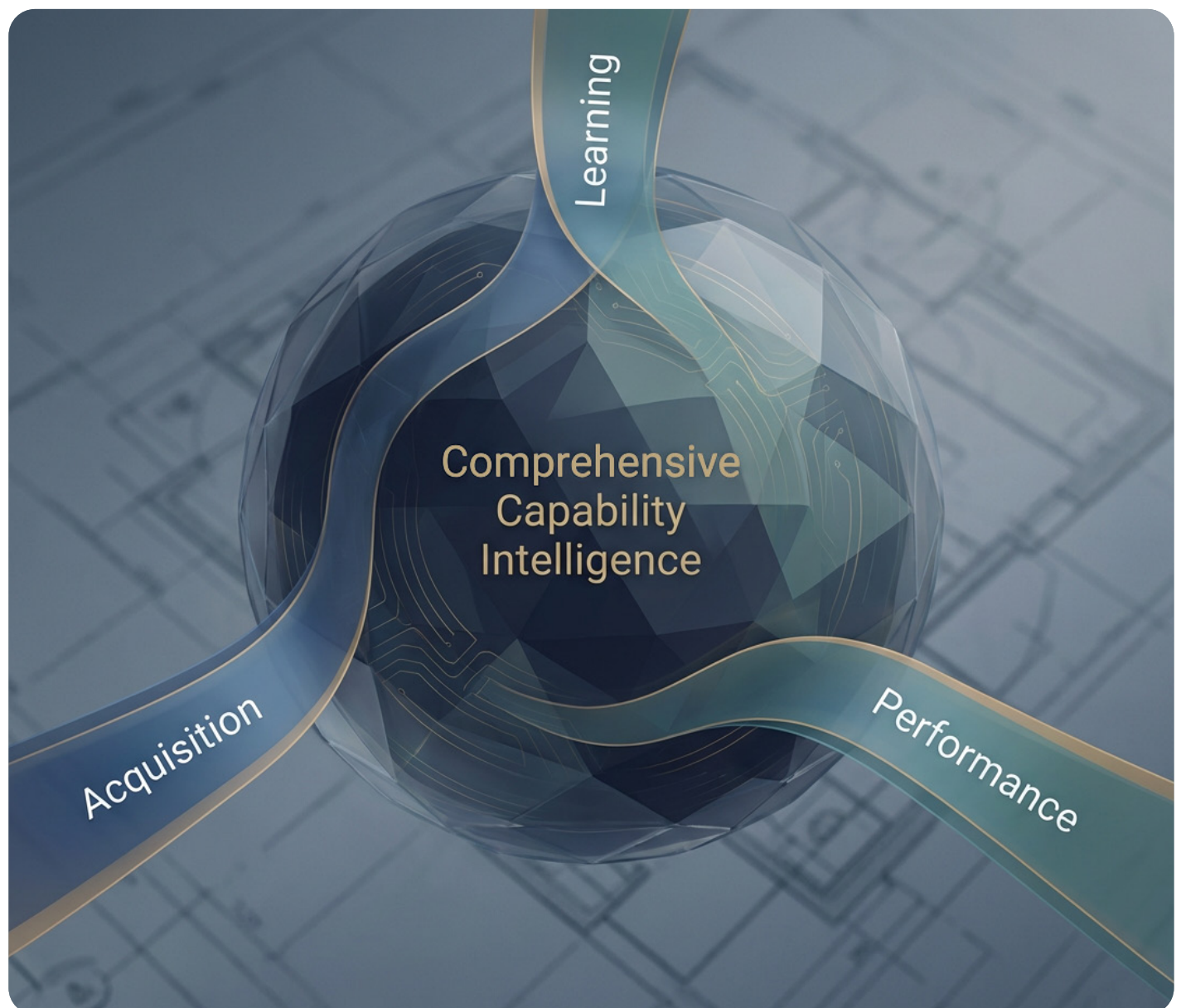
Source: Analysis Of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-Winning Organizations For Best Selecting And Onboarding Program

This approach expands talent pools, improves diversity outcomes and creates more engaged employees who feel invested in. It also allows organizations to compete for talent in tight markets by emphasizing growth opportunities alongside compensation.

Competitive Advantage Through Capability Intelligence

Organizations that build sophisticated capability intelligence — understanding not just what skills exist in their workforce but what capabilities will drive future success — gain a significant competitive advantage. They can redeploy talent faster, respond to market opportunities more nimbly and reduce the risk of capability gaps that slow growth.

This intelligence comes from integrated data across talent acquisition learning, performance and workforce planning. It requires AI systems that can identify patterns, predict needs and recommend actions, supported by human leaders who can interpret insights and make strategic decisions.



Critical Questions

These implications raise essential questions that shape how organizations move forward:

How can we build trust in AI-powered recruiting systems while ensuring they amplify rather than encode human bias?

- As AI takes on more responsibility in talent acquisition, organizations must ensure these systems produce fair, equitable outcomes.

What new capabilities do talent acquisition professionals need to thrive in an AI-augmented future and how do we help them develop these skills?

- The recruiter's role is transforming from administrative screener to strategic curator.

How do we move beyond resumes to capture authentic capability in ways that are fair, verifiable and scalable?

- Traditional credentials don't reveal how people actually work or their potential to grow. What new assessment methods can organizations adopt that show real capability?

What organizational structures and incentives will enable proper internal mobility rather than talent hoarding?

- Most companies claim to value internal career movement, but their systems make it difficult. How do you redesign performance management and compensation to reward managers who develop and share talent?

How can we integrate candidate experience, employee experience, recognition and well-being into a cohesive approach to human connection?

- These functions typically operate independently, creating disconnected touchpoints. How do you design integrated experiences where each interaction reinforces the others?

What does it mean to build predictive talent acquisition capability and how do we partner across the organization to forecast and prepare for future needs?

- Moving from reactive hiring to predictive capability building requires new partnerships and methods. How do you develop workforce models that anticipate future roles?

How do we maintain human connection as AI handles more of the talent process?

- AI can match people to opportunities and predict performance, but relationships still matter. How do you preserve the human elements that build trust and engagement while leveraging AI's capabilities?



The future of talent acquisition is already emerging in leading organizations and it looks radically different from traditional recruiting. This transformation isn't optional; it's the only path to building workforces capable of thriving in an era of constant change.

Embrace AI as Co-Pilot, Not Threat

AI will handle the mechanics of talent acquisition, including sourcing, screening, matching and initial assessment, at greater speeds and scale than humans can. This isn't a threat to recruiters; it's liberation from administrative burden. The recruiter's role evolves to strategic curator: interpreting AI recommendations, applying contextual judgment, building relationships and designing experiences that attract and engage talent.

Organizations must invest in building AI fluency across their TA teams. This means training recruiters to understand how AI systems work, when to trust algorithmic recommendations and how to identify and correct bias. It also means creating ethical frameworks for AI use in hiring, with transparent, auditable systems that can explain their recommendations and be held accountable for fair outcomes.

Start by identifying specific TA processes where AI can add immediate value, such as resume screening, candidate matching, interview scheduling, or communication personalization. Deploy AI in partnership with recruiters, gather feedback and refine the system based on outcomes. Build confidence through small wins before expanding to more complex applications.

Reimagine Capability Assessment

Organizations need new ways to understand candidate capability that go beyond credentials and job titles. This means embracing skills-based hiring, verified capability profiles, work samples and behavioral assessments that reveal how people think and adapt.

Build systems that aggregate multiple signals about capability: validated skills from learning platforms, peer endorsements, project outcomes and demonstrated behaviors in relevant scenarios. Create candidate experiences where people can show what they can do, not just tell you what they've done.

This approach expands access to opportunity for candidates whose potential isn't reflected in traditional credentials. It also gives organizations better predictive power about who will succeed.

Build Internal Talent Marketplaces

AI-powered internal opportunity platforms can continuously scan workforce data, identify capability matches and surface opportunities before employees consider external options. This requires technology, but it also requires cultural transformation.

Create transparency around career possibilities. Make internal opportunities visible and accessible. Train managers to develop and deploy talent rather than hoard it. Build incentive structures that reward talent sharing and internal placements. Celebrate career moves as wins for the organization, not losses for individual departments.

When employees can build careers internally, retention improves, engagement increases and the organization preserves institutional knowledge while building new capability.

Integrate Experience Design

Every touchpoint in the talent lifecycle, from first contact through hiring, onboarding, development, recognition and eventual transition, should feel like part of a coherent, human-centered experience. This requires breaking down silos between talent acquisition, learning and development, employee experience and people analytics.

Design candidate journeys that adapt to individual preferences, values and communication styles. Create onboarding experiences that reinforce what attracted candidates in the first place. Build recognition systems that acknowledge contributions in meaningful ways. Support well-being through flexibility, psychological safety and authentic belonging.



When experience design extends across the entire talent lifecycle, organizations create powerful emotional connections that drive engagement and retention.

Become Predictive

Talent acquisition must evolve from reactive hiring to predictive capability building. This means partnering with business leaders, workforce planners and learning teams to understand where the organization is heading and what capabilities will drive success. Use workforce analytics to forecast role obsolescence and emergent position types. Build talent pipelines for jobs that don't yet exist.

This requires sophisticated data analysis, scenario planning and cross-functional collaboration. It also requires courage to advocate for investing in capability before the immediate need is obvious. But organizations that build predictive TA capability gain an enormous competitive advantage through faster adaptation and reduced risk of capability gaps.

Call to Action

The transformation of talent acquisition from transactional hiring to strategic capability architecture is underway. Organizations that embrace this evolution by investing in AI systems, reimagining capability assessment, building internal marketplaces, integrating experience design and developing predictive capability, will attract better talent, create more engaged workforces and build sustainable competitive advantage.

Predictions

The future of talent acquisition will be shaped by technological advancement, evolving workforce expectations and organizations' recognition that traditional approaches no longer serve. Here's what we see emerging:

AI Becomes the Recruiter's Operating System

Within the next few years, AI agents will fully automate sourcing and initial screening, learning continuously from hiring outcomes to refine their matching capabilities. Recruiters will shift from manually reviewing applications to interpreting and guiding AI decision outputs. Success in talent acquisition will depend on the ability to tune AI systems, audit them for bias and apply human judgment to algorithmic recommendations. The recruiter becomes a strategic curator rather than an administrative screener.

Capability Profiles Replace Resumes

Static resumes will give way to dynamic capability graphs with continuously updated profiles that aggregate verified skills, project outcomes, peer endorsements and demonstrated competencies. These profiles will be portable across organizations and verifiable through blockchain or similar technologies.

Emotionally Intelligent Hiring

AI-powered interview systems will analyze not just what candidates say but how they say it, including tone, confidence, authenticity and engagement. These systems will conduct initial conversational interviews while human recruiters focus on cultural fit, values alignment and potential. The combination of AI pattern recognition and human judgment will create more holistic, accurate assessments than either could achieve alone.

Workforce Ecology Modeling

Talent acquisition will expand beyond immediate hiring to forecast future capability needs using dynamic workforce simulations. Organizations will predict role obsolescence and emergent positions months or years before job descriptions exist.

Internal Marketplace Supremacy

AI-led internal opportunity platforms will continuously propose project rotations, stretch assignments and promotions by analyzing workforce data in real-time. Recruiters will evolve from external talent scouts to internal career architects, reducing external hiring spend by predicting and facilitating internal capability matches before attrition occurs.

Adaptive Candidate Experiences

The candidate journey will become a branded, personalized experience orchestrated by AI. From first outreach through offer and onboarding, each touchpoint will adapt to individual communication styles, values and preferences. Organizations will compete not just on opportunities and compensation, but also on the quality and authenticity of their candidate experience.

Immersive Assessment Environments

Organizations will use gamified, immersive environments to assess collaboration, creativity and problem-solving under realistic conditions. Candidates will demonstrate capabilities through simulated scenarios that reveal how they actually work, creating behavioral portfolios that become part of their verified capability profiles.

The TA Engineer Role Emerges

Recruiters will evolve into talent acquisition engineers and become professionals trained in data interpretation, AI model tuning and workforce system design. Success will depend on technical fluency alongside traditional recruiting skills. These hybrid professionals will fine-tune AI algorithms, build bias-detection systems and create transparency dashboards that explain algorithmic recommendations.

Ethical AI Becomes Mandatory

Regulatory frameworks will require audits of AI recruiting systems for bias, transparency and fairness. Organizations will need to explain how their systems make recommendations and demonstrate that they produce equitable outcomes across demographic groups. Ethical recruiting will become a key differentiator for employer brand, as candidates and regulators demand accountability.

Human-Centered Technology

Despite technological advancement, the most successful organizations will keep humans at the center of talent acquisition. They'll use technology to handle mechanics while preserving space for human connection, judgment and relationship building. The goal isn't to remove humans from hiring but to free them from administrative burden so they can focus on what humans do best: understanding context, building trust and recognizing potential that algorithms might miss.



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Why Download the Model?

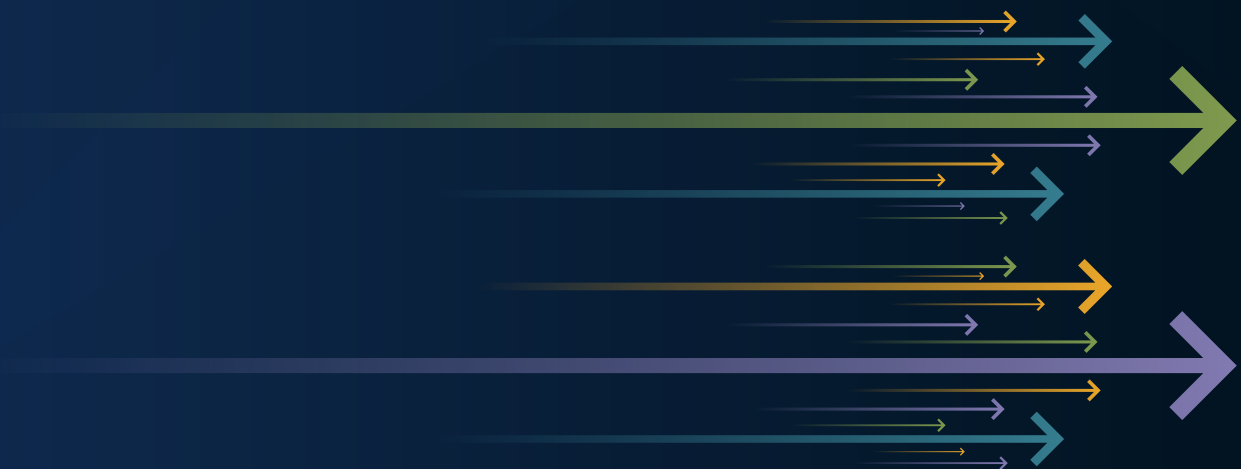
- Benchmark against global HR, L&D & Talent organizations
- Access the five readiness phases & five key indicators
- Identify data, capability & governance gaps
- Build a roadmap to move from chaos to scalable impact
- Support strategic conversations with executives

05

THE FUTURE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

From Career Ladders to Career Ecosystems: Building Talent Strategies That Evolve With Your People

AI is transforming how we discover, develop and deploy talent, turning talent management from a reactive function into a predictive capability that spots opportunities before they're obvious and solves problems before they become crises.



Current State

Something powerful is emerging in how organizations think about talent. The old playbook of fixed career paths, annual development plans and exit interviews is giving way to something more dynamic. Organizations are discovering that talent management can be predictive rather than reactive, personalized rather than programmatic and continuous rather than episodic.

The shift is driven by a recognition that talent is your most renewable resource, but only if you actively renew it. Skills that took years to build can become outdated in months. Employees who seem engaged can be planning their exit before any warning signs appear.

Career aspirations that made sense last year might be completely different today. We now have the tools to keep pace with this fluidity. AI systems can track how quickly skills depreciate in your specific industry. Analytics can predict which employees are at flight risk months before they start job searching. Platforms can match people to opportunities they didn't know existed within their own organization.

The most forward-thinking organizations are moving beyond thinking about talent management as a series of disconnected programs for hiring, development, performance and retention. Instead, they're building integrated ecosystems where career development, skill building and internal mobility flow together naturally.

Consider what becomes possible when these elements connect. An employee's project work automatically surfaces skill gaps that trigger just-in-time learning. That learning opens visibility to new opportunities across the organization. Taking those opportunities builds capabilities that make the employee more valuable and more engaged. The cycle reinforces itself.

This integration is creating new possibilities for how people grow and contribute. Employees are navigating careers that look less like ladders and more like lattices, with lateral moves, project-based work and skill development creating unique paths. Organizations are discovering talent they

didn't know they had, simply by making internal capabilities more visible.

Technology is revealing patterns that change the game. Which employees consistently make others better? Whose skills are approaching obsolescence? Which team dynamics predict innovation? Where are your hidden high performers? AI can now answer these questions in real-time, giving talent leaders the kind of visibility that transforms decision-making.



Complexities

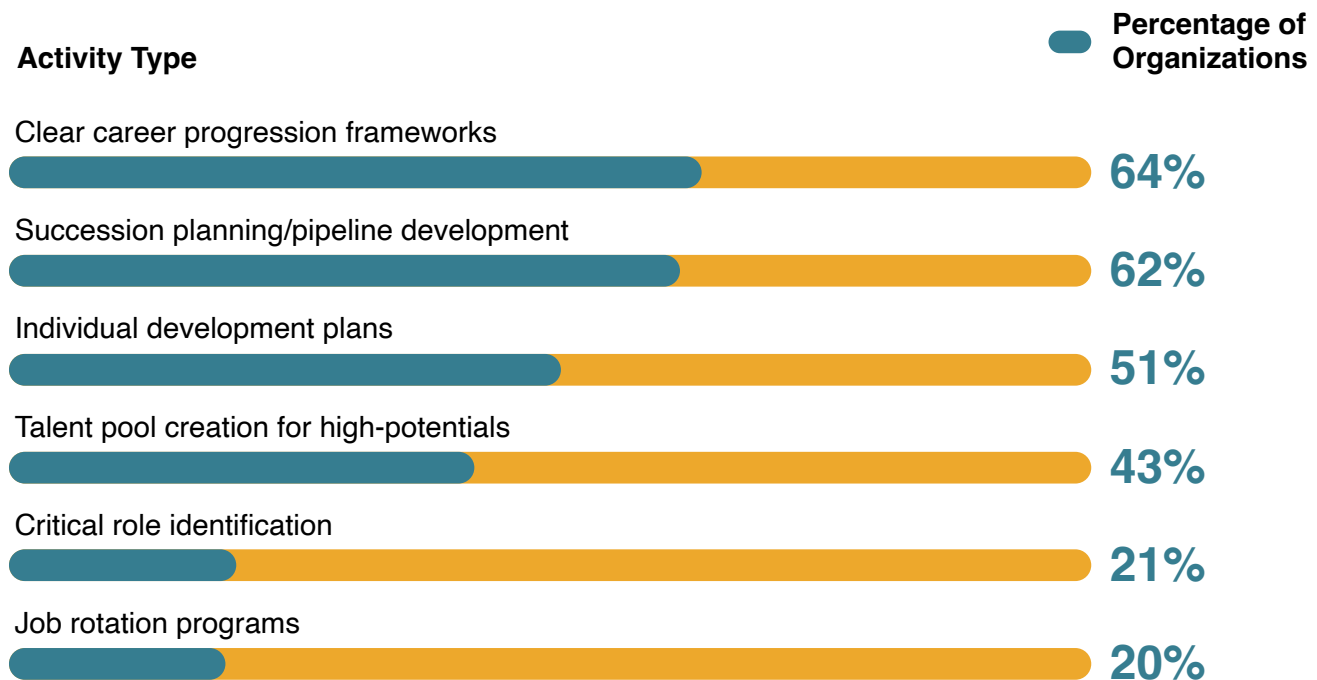
Moving toward these opportunities creates interesting challenges that require new thinking.

The Career Path Paradox

Traditional career paths offered clarity but limited possibility. You knew where you were headed, even if it wasn't quite where you wanted to go. The new model offers infinite possibility but can feel overwhelming. How do you help people navigate careers that can go anywhere when the map keeps changing?



Current Career Development Process Trends



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Talent Management Strategy

Organizations are discovering that personalization at scale requires rethinking the fundamentals. AI can generate custom career paths for every employee, but that raises questions:

-  **How do you ensure fairness when everyone's path is unique?**
-  **How do you maintain organizational capability when careers become completely fluid?**
-  **How do you balance individual aspiration with business need?**

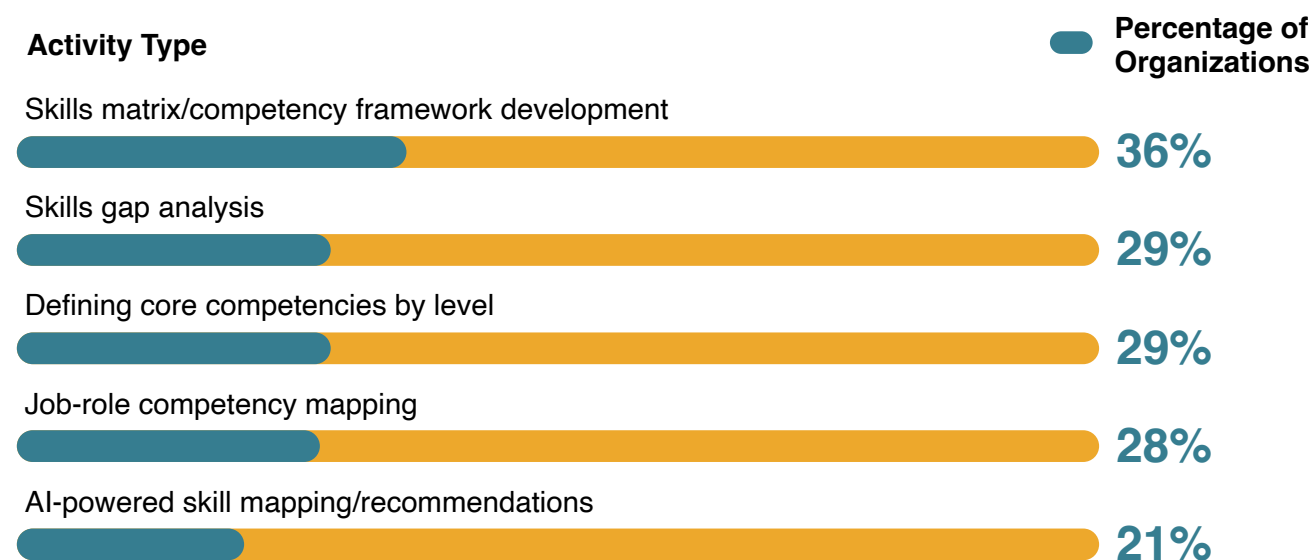
Some organizations are experimenting with AI systems that continuously analyze employee skills, interests and market trends to suggest next moves. These “career architects” can spot opportunities that human managers might miss. But they also require transparency about how recommendations get made and trust that the system has employees’ best interests in mind.

The Skills Obsolescence Challenge

Skills are depreciating faster than ever, but measuring that depreciation is tricky. The half-life of technical skills can be measured in months in some fields. But how do you track when someone’s expertise is slipping without creating anxiety or defensiveness?

Organizations are learning to shift the conversation from “your skills are outdated” to “here’s what’s emerging and how we’ll help you stay ahead.” Some are implementing systems that monitor skills decay in real-time and trigger learning interventions before gaps become problems. The key is making skill renewal feel like opportunity rather than remediation.

Current Skill Assessment and Development Actions

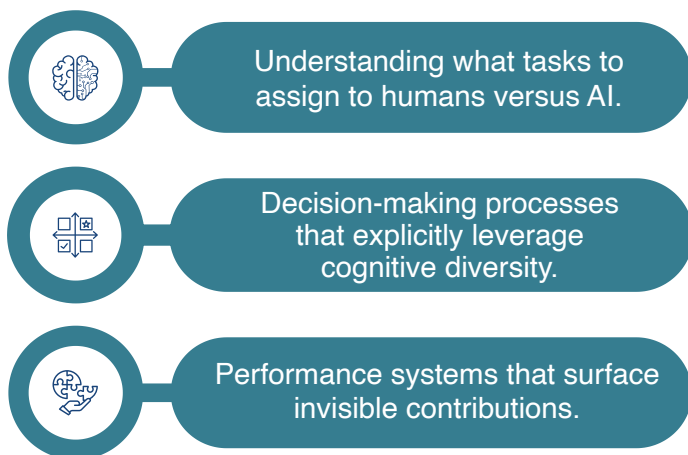


Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Talent Management Strategy

The complexity intensifies when you consider that not all skills depreciate at the same rate. Leadership capabilities might strengthen with experience while technical skills fade. Knowing what to preserve, what to refresh and what to completely rebuild requires nuanced judgment that AI can inform but not replace.

Managing Hybrid Human-AI Teams

As AI agents become permanent members of teams with defined roles and capabilities, talent management will get more complex. You’re not just managing people anymore. You’re orchestrating collaboration between humans who bring creativity, judgment, relationship skills and AI agents that bring speed, scale and pattern recognition.

This requires new capabilities for managers:

It also means thinking about how AI agents themselves develop. When do you upgrade an AI team member's capabilities? How do you ensure the AI's evolution aligns with team needs?

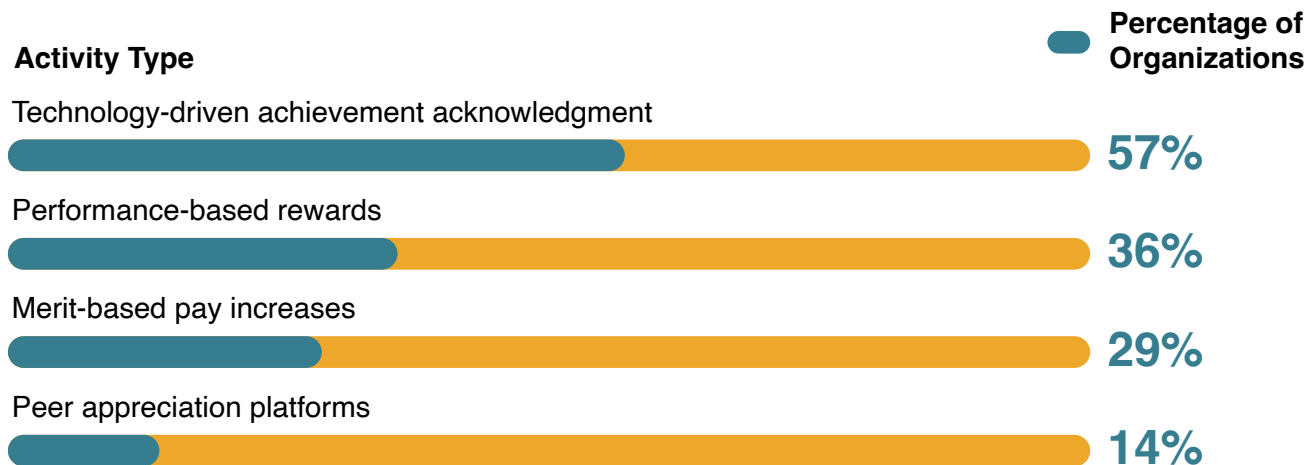
The Retention Prediction Opportunity

Machine learning can now predict flight risk with remarkable accuracy, analyzing communication patterns, engagement signals and hundreds of other indicators. But knowing someone is likely to leave months before they start job searching creates both opportunity and obligation.

Do you intervene preemptively, potentially creating awkwardness if your prediction is wrong? Do you wait for confirmation, potentially missing the window to act? How do you use predictive data ethically while respecting employee privacy and autonomy? These aren't just technical questions. They're about the kind of relationship you want with your people.

Creating Meaningful Recognition

Recognition has always been important, but the bar keeps rising. Employees want to know their contributions matter, but even Excellence Award winners stick mostly with traditional approaches.

Recognition and Rewards Strategies in Use

Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Talent Management Strategy

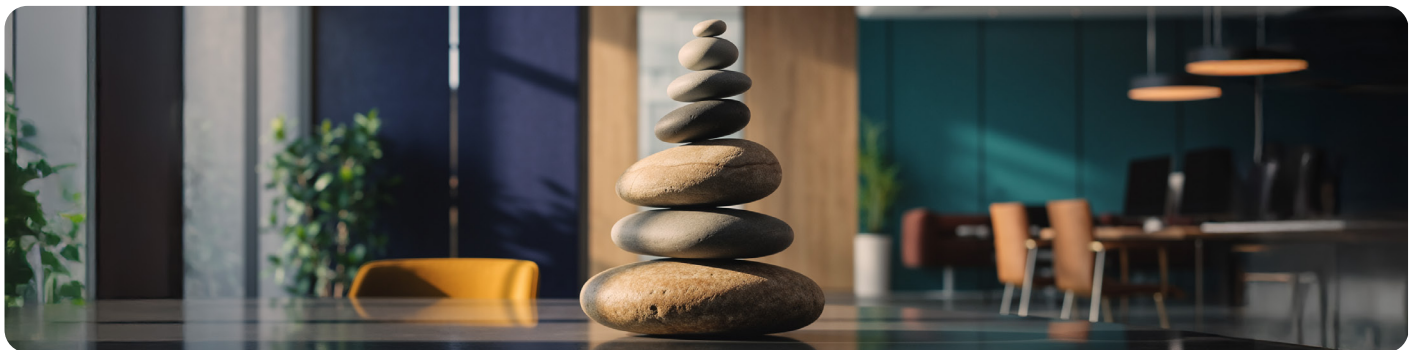
The opportunity is using AI to surface invisible contributions and ensure valuable work gets seen and celebrated. But this creates complexity around authenticity. When AI identifies someone's contribution and suggests recognition language, is that genuine? How do you scale meaningful recognition without it feeling automated? The answer seems to lie in using AI for visibility while keeping the human element in the recognition itself.

Well-Being Integration

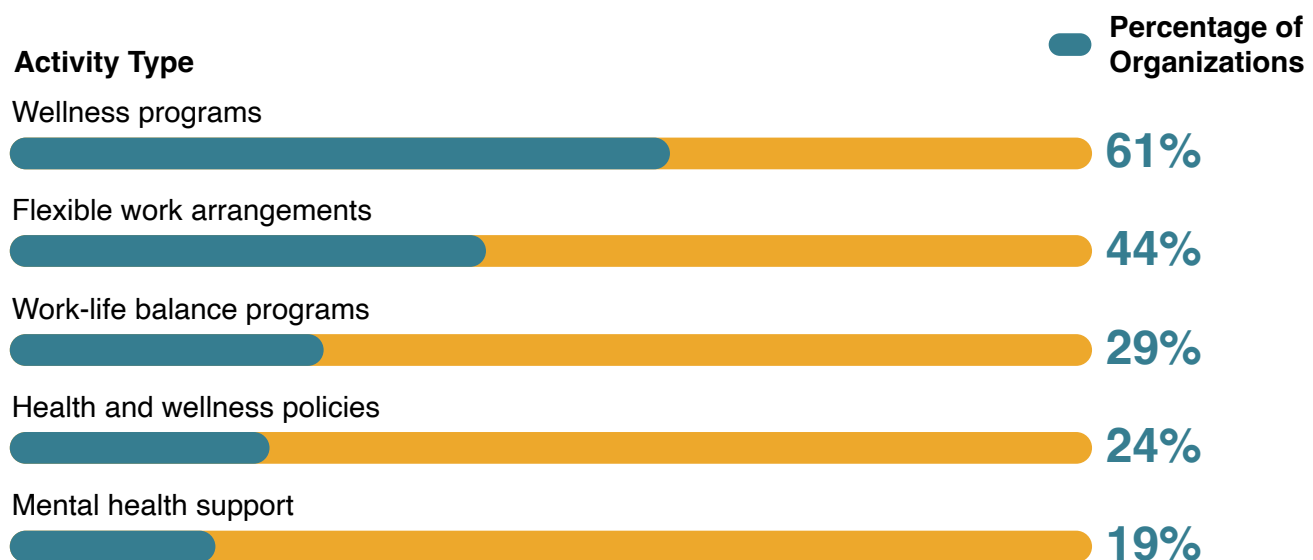
Organizations are waking up to the reality that well-being isn't separate from performance. It enables performance. Burned-out employees don't just suffer personally. They produce less, innovate less and leave more often. The opportunity is shifting from reactive wellness programs to predictive well-being strategies.

Wearable technology and opt-in biometric monitoring can detect early markers of burnout and stress. But this raises questions about privacy, consent and the appropriate boundaries of employer involvement in employee health. How do you support well-being without surveillance? How do you intervene helpfully without overstepping?

Many organizations are still grappling with how to improve wellness beyond traditional programs, so there is a huge opportunity here.



Current Use of Employee Well-Being and Benefits Programs



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Talent Management Strategy

Implications

The shifts emerging from these complexities will reshape how organizations attract, develop and retain talent.

Career Development Becomes Continuous Navigation

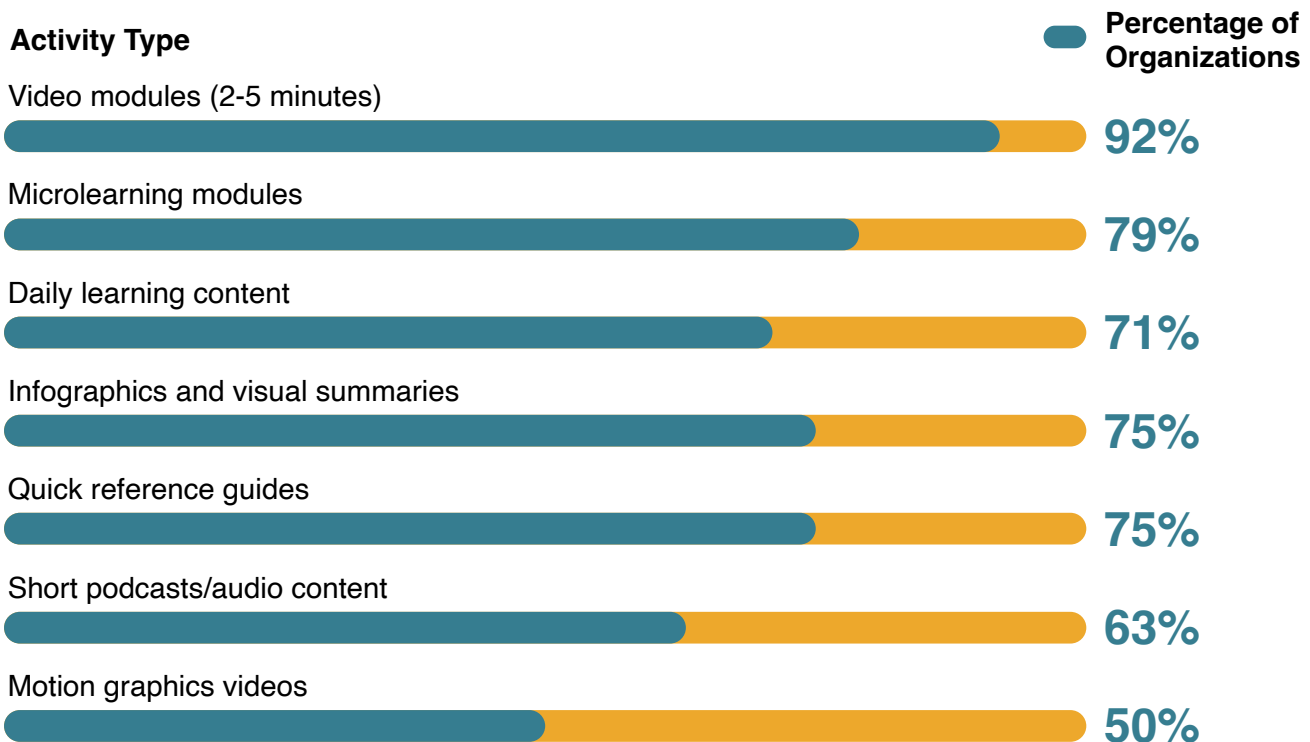
The annual career conversation is fading out. In its place, organizations are building systems for continuous career development where opportunities surface in real-time, skills get matched to projects dynamically and career paths evolve based on emerging possibilities rather than predetermined trajectories.

This creates an advantage for organizations that can help employees navigate complexity. When people can see where their skills could take them, discover opportunities they didn't know existed and access development that prepares them for what's next, they stay longer and contribute more. The organizations that crack this code will win talent wars not through compensation alone, but through career possibilities.

Skill Development Shifts to Just-in-Time

The old model of front-loading development in formal programs is giving way to learning that happens exactly when needed. AI can identify skill gaps as they emerge and trigger micro-learning interventions at the point of need. This makes development more efficient and more effective.

Use of Microlearning and Bite-Sized Content



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Award-winning organizations for Learning in the Flow of Work

But the bigger implication is what this does for agility. Organizations that can rapidly upskill and reskill their workforce can respond to market changes faster than competitors. When you can deploy talent flexibly because people can learn what's needed quickly, your entire organization becomes more adaptive.

Internal Mobility Becomes Your Talent Strategy

The best source of talent is the talent you already have. Organizations are discovering that robust internal mobility not only saves recruiting costs but also increases engagement and retention. People stay longer when they can grow and change without changing companies.

AI is making this more feasible by surfacing internal opportunities that match employee skills and interests, even when those opportunities are in completely different parts of the organization. Employees discover career possibilities they never would have found on their own. Organizations fill roles faster with people who already understand the culture and business.

The implication: talent management becomes less about competing in the external market and more about creating internal talent marketplaces where people can find their next opportunity without leaving.

Retention Becomes Predictive

When you can identify flight risk months in advance, you can stop playing defense and start playing offense. Organizations are shifting from exit interviews that gather data too late to use, to predictive models that enable preemptive intervention.

This transforms retention from crisis management to relationship maintenance. You're not scrambling to save someone who's already mentally checked out. You're proactively creating conditions where people want to stay because you've addressed concerns before they became deal-breakers.

The organizations doing this well aren't just using data to identify problems. They're using it to identify opportunities to make work better, creating a positive cycle where employees feel heard and valued because the organization acts on signals before problems become obvious.

Employee Experience Becomes Your Differentiator

In a talent market where many organizations offer competitive compensation and benefits, experience becomes the differentiator. The daily reality of work, the quality of relationships and the sense that contributions matter determine who stays and who goes.

Organizations are discovering they can engineer better experiences by paying attention to the small moments that add up. Does someone feel their voice gets heard in meetings? Do they have clarity about how their work connects to impact? Are they learning and growing? Do they feel psychologically safe to take risks and be themselves?

AI can help surface where experience is strong and where it's breaking down. But improving experience requires human action: managers who coach rather than control, cultures that celebrate learning from failure, systems that make it easy to recognize good work.

Well-Being Moves From Program to Culture

The shift from reactive wellness programs to preventive well-being strategies has broader implications. Organizations are recognizing that sustainable performance requires sustainable work practices. Burnout isn't just an individual problem. It's an organizational design problem.

The organizations getting this right are building well-being into how work gets done. Realistic workloads, protected time for deep work, cultures where taking breaks is normalized rather than stigmatized, psychological safety where people can be honest about capacity. These aren't perks. They're operating principles.



Critical Questions

These implications raise important questions that shape how organizations move forward:

How do we balance personalized career paths with organizational capability needs?

- Use AI to generate custom career paths that align individual aspirations with critical capability gaps, while establishing clear expectations about skills the organization must maintain and creating incentives for employees to develop in those areas.

How do we make skill renewal continuous without creating development fatigue?

- Embed learning into the flow of work through just-in-time micro-learning at the point of need, rather than adding separate training requirements and ensure managers protect time for skill-building within existing work schedules.

How do we use predictive data ethically?

- Be transparent about what data gets collected and how it's used, act on predictions through supportive interventions rather than surveillance and give employees visibility into their own patterns while maintaining their privacy and autonomy.

How do we maintain human connection as AI handles more of the talent process?

- Reserve the critical moments — career conversations, recognition, coaching and decisions about people's futures — for human interaction, while using AI to handle analytical tasks like matching people to opportunities and identifying skill gaps.

How do we ensure algorithmic fairness in talent decisions?

- Implement rigorous testing of AI systems across demographic groups before deployment, establish independent audits that continuously monitor for bias and maintain human oversight for all decisions that significantly impact careers.

How do we create recognition that feels meaningful at scale?

- Use AI to surface invisible contributions and ensure valuable work gets seen, while keeping the human element in the recognition itself through personalized manager or peer acknowledgment rather than automated messages.

How do we build cultures where well-being enables performance?

- Design work with realistic workloads, protected time for deep work and normalized boundaries, treating well-being as an operating principle embedded in how work gets done rather than as a separate program.



**Brandon
Hall
Group™**

POV

The future of talent management belongs to organizations that recognize talent as a dynamic system rather than a static resource. Here's how forward-thinking organizations are capturing these opportunities.

Build Career Ecosystems, Not Career Paths

The key to success is creating ecosystems where careers can evolve organically. Use AI to help employees discover opportunities based on their skills, interests and the organization's needs. Make internal capabilities visible so people can find opportunities they didn't know existed.

Create transparency about skills needed for different roles and projects. Enable people to express interest in new directions. Use AI to match people to opportunities, but let humans make the final decisions. The goal is to help people navigate possibility rather than follow predetermined routes.

Make lateral moves and project-based work legitimate career progression, not just stepping stones to the next promotion. Some of your best talent development happens when people stretch in new directions rather than just climbing up.

Make Skill Building Continuous and Contextual

Building learning into the flow of work is the best way to skill-building in an environment of continuous change. Use AI to identify skill gaps as they emerge and deliver micro-learning at the point of need. Make it easy for people to learn what they need, when they need it.

Create systems that monitor skills depreciation in your specific context. Technical skills in your industry might have a two-year half-life, while certain leadership capabilities strengthen with time. Know

which is which and build renewal into your talent strategy.

Invest in just-in-time learning platforms that can deliver personalized content based on what someone's working on right now. The best development happens when relevance is immediate and application is instant.

Turn Internal Mobility Into Competitive Advantage

Your existing employees already understand your culture, customers and business. Make it as easy for them to find new opportunities internally as it would be to find them externally. Use AI to surface opportunities that match their skills and interests, even in parts of the organization they might never have considered.

Create internal talent marketplaces where employees can express interest in projects, roles, or skill development areas. Use AI to make connections that human managers might miss. A software engineer might have project management capabilities that could be valuable in operations. A marketer might have analytical skills that could strengthen the finance team.

Make managers accountable for developing talent, not just retaining it on their team. The best managers help people grow, even if that means they move elsewhere in the organization. Create cultures where facilitating internal mobility is celebrated.

Transform Retention Through Early Intervention

Deploy predictive analytics that identify flight risk before it becomes obvious. Look for patterns in communication, engagement, skill utilization and dozens of other signals.



When someone's trajectory changes, investigate why.

But here's the critical part: Don't wait for problems to become crises. If someone's skills aren't being used well, create new opportunities. If work has become routine, offer challenges that stretch them. If they're showing early signs of disengagement, have real conversations about what's changed and what would make things better.

Make retention everyone's responsibility. Managers need tools to understand what drives engagement on their team and visibility into early warning signs. Give them the support to act before good people walk out the door.

Engineer Better Experience

The best organizations think about employee experience as the sum of all interactions someone has at work. Use AI to identify where experience breaks down: Are people getting stuck waiting for

approvals? Is recognition happening consistently? Are good ideas getting lost in bureaucracy?

Make invisible contributions visible. Some of your best performers are the ones who make everyone else better, but that work often goes unrecognized because it's hard to see. Use AI to surface these contributions and ensure they get celebrated.

Create feedback loops that are continuous rather than annual. Pulse surveys, real-time sentiment analysis and communication pattern monitoring can reveal where experience is strong and where it needs work. But remember: Data without action is just noise. When you identify problems, fix them.

Build Well-Being Into Operations

The organizations getting well-being right are designing work in ways that make sustainable performance possible. This means realistic workloads, protected time for focused work and cultures where setting boundaries is respected rather than punished.

Create psychological safety where people can be honest about capacity without fear of career consequences. Some of your best people will tell you when they're struggling if they trust you'll respond with support rather than judgment.

Leverage AI While Preserving Humanity

Use AI to handle the analytical heavy lifting: matching people to opportunities, predicting skill needs, identifying retention risks and surfacing invisible contributions. But keep humans in the critical moments: career conversations, recognition, coaching and decisions about people's futures.

Create transparency about how AI systems work and what data they use. When people understand that technology is helping rather than judging them, they're more likely to engage with it. Make it clear that AI recommends, but humans decide.

Start Experimenting Now

The organizations that will capture these opportunities are the ones learning by doing. Launch a pilot internal talent marketplace in one division. Test predictive retention models with a subset of employees. Experiment with AI-powered career recommendations and see how people respond.

Each experiment teaches you what works in your culture and what needs adjustment. You'll discover where AI adds value and where human touch matters most. The key is starting, learning and building momentum.



Predictions

AI Career Architects Replace Traditional Career Paths

Organizations will deploy AI systems that continuously analyze employee skills, interests and market trends to create dynamic, personalized career trajectories. Rather than climbing fixed ladders, employees will navigate fluid career “lattices” where AI suggests lateral moves, project opportunities and skill development paths in real-time, adapting to both organizational needs and individual aspirations.

Skills Half-Life Monitoring Becomes Standard Practice

Companies will implement systems that track the “decay rate” of employee skills in real-time, measuring how quickly competencies become obsolete in their specific industry. Employees will receive automatic alerts when their skills approach critical depreciation points, triggering just-in-time learning interventions before knowledge gaps impact performance.

Biometric Wellness Integration Predicts Burnout

Wearable technology and opt-in biometric monitoring will enable organizations to detect early physiological markers of burnout, stress and disengagement. Predictive algorithms will alert managers to intervene weeks before productivity declines become visible, shifting talent management from reactive to preventive wellness strategies.

Decentralized Autonomous Teams Self-Organize

Blockchain-based talent marketplaces within organizations will allow employees to self-assemble into project teams based on verified skill credentials and availability. Smart contracts will automatically handle resource allocation, compensation adjustments and performance tracking, reducing hierarchical oversight and enabling fluid organizational structures.

AI Clones of Top Performers Serve as Scalable Mentors

Organizations will create AI replicas trained on the decision-making patterns, communication styles and expertise of their highest performers. These AI mentors will provide personalized, on-demand coaching to hundreds of employees simultaneously, offering guidance that mirrors how the actual expert would approach problems. Unlike generic training, each employee gets a customized learning experience from a digital version of the company's best talent.

Algorithmic Fairness Auditors Become Mandatory

As AI increasingly influences hiring, promotion and compensation decisions, organizations will be required to employ independent algorithmic auditors who continuously test talent management systems for bias. These auditors will certify that AI systems meet fairness standards across demographic groups, creating a new professional specialty at the intersection of HR, ethics and data science.

Digital Twin Workforce Models Enable Scenario Planning

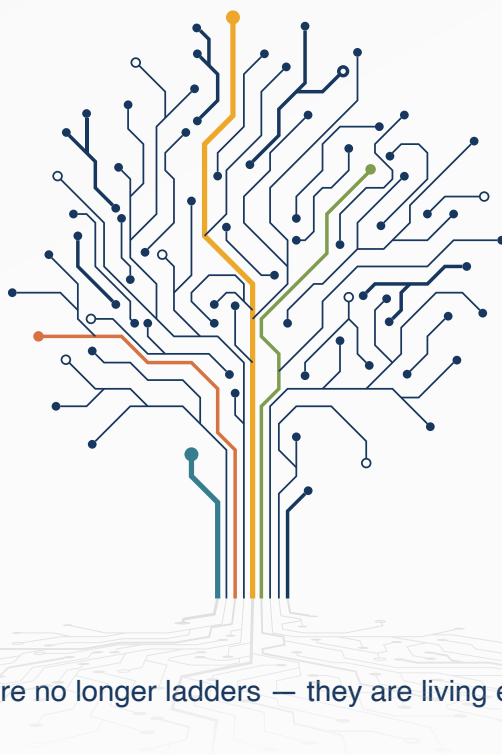
Organizations will create AI-powered digital replicas of their entire workforce that simulate how different talent strategies will play out before implementation. HR leaders will test scenarios like "What happens if we lose our top 10% of engineers?" or "How will this restructuring affect team dynamics?" allowing them to make data-driven decisions about reorganizations, succession planning and resource allocation with unprecedented foresight.

Hybrid Human-AI Teams Require Dual Talent Management

Organizations will formally employ AI agents as permanent team members with defined roles, capabilities and career development paths. HR departments will manage both human and AI workforces simultaneously, handling AI agent onboarding, capability upgrades, performance evaluations and team chemistry between humans and their AI colleagues. Managers will be trained to lead mixed teams, allocating tasks based on human creativity and AI processing power, while mediating the unique dynamics of human-AI collaboration.

Predictive Retention Models Trigger Preemptive Interventions

Machine learning systems will analyze communication patterns, project engagement, skill utilization and hundreds of other signals to predict flight risk with 90%+ accuracy months in advance. Organizations will be able to proactively restructure roles, offer new opportunities or adjust compensation before employees even begin job searching, transforming retention from crisis management to predictive relationship maintenance.



“Careers are no longer ladders — they are living ecosystems.”



Brandon Hall Group
Institute™

**Build the Capabilities That
Shape the Future of Work**

Brandon Hall Group™ certifications are designed for HR and talent leaders who must move from strategy to measurable results in an increasingly complex, AI-enabled workplace.

With eight research-driven certifications, our programs help professionals strengthen credibility, build enterprise capability, and lead transformation with confidence.

Brandon Hall Group™ Certification Portfolio:

- Certified AI Transformation Strategist (CAITS)
- Certified Human Resources Strategist® (CHRS)
- Certified Talent Management Strategist® (CTMS)
- Certified Talent Acquisition Strategist® (CTAS)
- Certified Learning Strategist® (CLS)
- Certified Leadership Development Strategist® (CLDS)
- Certified Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Champion (CDEIC)
- Certified Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leader (CDEIL)



New Certification

The **Certified AI Transformation Strategist (CAITS)** program equips HR, talent, and business leaders with the strategic frameworks and practical tools needed to drive responsible, ethical, and scalable AI transformation across the organization.

Built on Brandon Hall Group's AI Progression Model, CAITS enables leaders to move beyond experimentation to sustainable, measurable business impact.

A Complete Certification Experience:

- 10 expert-led learning modules
- Scenario-based consulting simulation
- Personalized AI Transformation Strategy project
- Analyst review and credentialing

What You'll Learn:

- Assess AI readiness and organizational maturity
- Design ethical AI governance frameworks
- Build AI business cases and measure ROI
- Identify and prioritize high-value AI use cases
- Drive workforce adoption and cultural change
- Lead continuous innovation and transformation

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WITH
CONFIDENCE,
STRATEGY &
CREDIBILITY.

Prepare your organization for what's next.
Become the strategist the future demands.

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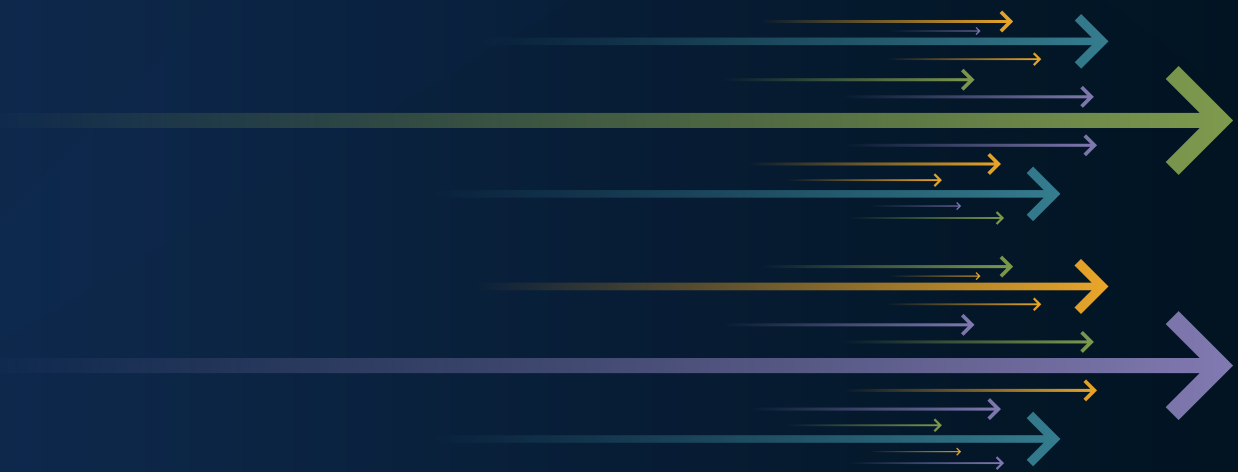
Included with Brandon Hall Group Institute™ Membership

06

THE FUTURE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

HR's Defining Moment: Why Value Matters More Than Ever

AI and predictive analytics are transforming HR into a strategic powerhouse that directly drives business success. Forward-thinking HR leaders are mastering the connection of people initiatives to revenue growth, operational efficiency and measurable ROI.



Current State

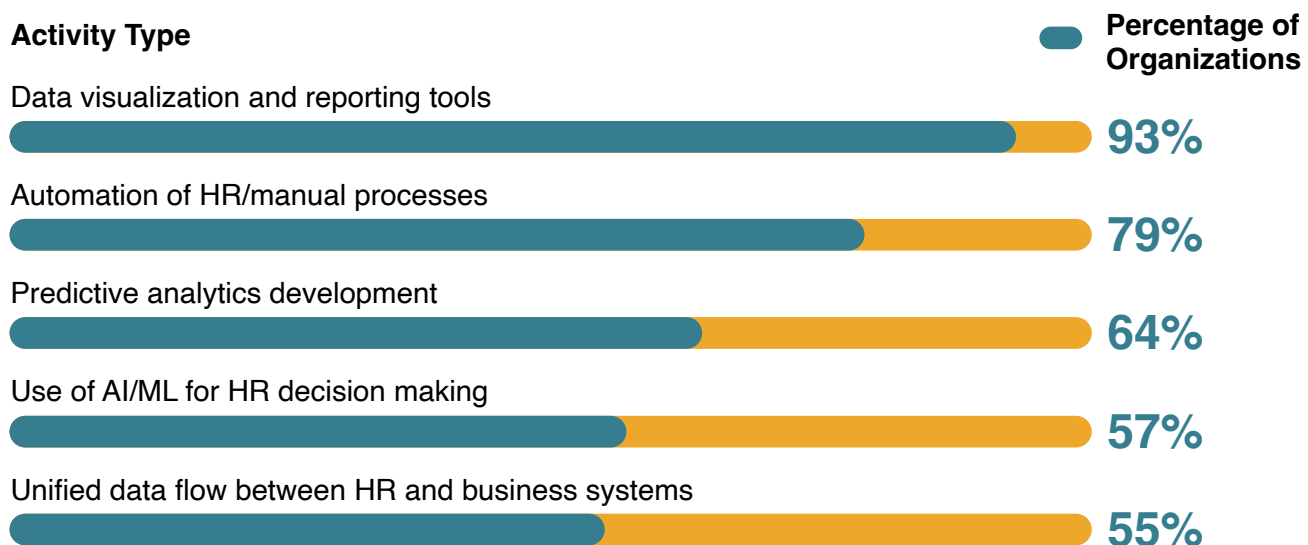
HR has an exciting opportunity in 2026 to demonstrate strategic impact in ways previously impossible. The rapid advancement of AI technology is opening new possibilities for redefining work with significant opportunities for the entire workforce. HR is uniquely positioned to shape how AI enhances the workforce and no function better understands the factors that drive workplace success. This opportunity allows HR to ensure technology amplifies, rather than diminishes, human potential.



An analysis of Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations reveals significant room for growth, offering HR the chance to capture this transformative moment. Only 21% of award winners for innovative HR programs consider themselves fully prepared to meet future organizational needs. This presents an opportunity to build on significant investments in technology and process improvements made over the past few years.

The data reveals important insights about where to focus next. Organizations have collected vast amounts of data, with many KPIs, yet only 39% report that HR metrics align with business results. This measurement foundation shows that HR's opportunity lies in expanding from establishing programs to ensuring those programs deliver even greater measurable business impact. The wealth of available metrics suggests that many HR organizations are well-positioned to generate powerful insights from their data.

Data Analytics Technology Usage Implementation Priorities



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Best HR Strategy Measurement and Data Analytics.

Complexities

HR teams have a window to establish new norms and ways of working with AI co-workers, approaching AI integration much like welcoming an augmented workforce. This creates opportunities to define expectations, optimize workflows and build the skills teams need to leverage AI effectively for enhanced performance.

Forward-thinking HR organizations are already expanding their teams to include data scientists, organizational psychologists, AI ethicists and behavioral economists. These diverse teams are pioneering integrated talent ecosystems that seamlessly connect recruitment, development, performance and rewards into unified employee experiences. Their early successes provide inspiring roadmaps for broader transformation.

The Data Literacy Opportunity

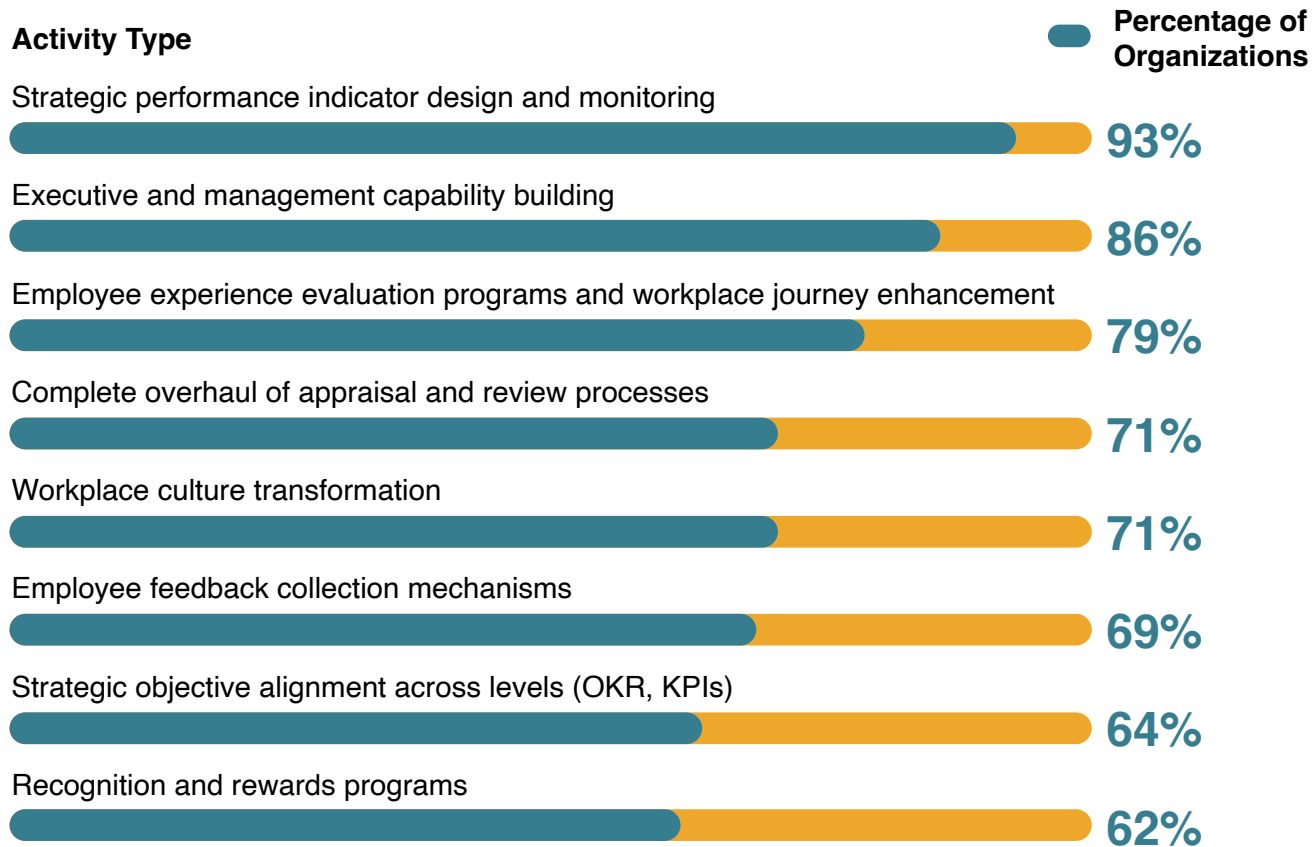
HR professionals have a chance to expand their skill sets in ways that dramatically enhance the function's strategic relevance. Trained primarily in psychology and organizational behavior, many are now positioned to develop advanced analytical capabilities that complement their human-centered expertise. This skills-expansion opportunity enables HR to extract meaningful insights from the data systems already in place.

Organizations collecting hundreds of KPIs can now identify which metrics actually drive business outcomes, transforming dashboards from activity reports into strategic insight generators. Leadership teams increasingly recognize HR's potential as a source of workforce analytics, creating momentum for HR's expanded role in data-driven decisions. This creates a positive cycle where HR's involvement in strategic decisions accelerates its analytical capability development.

The opportunity to strengthen the connection between feedback collection and action planning illustrates this potential. While 93% of organizations conduct employee engagement surveys and 71% have implemented recognition and rewards programs, expanding to deeper integration of these systems represents a clear path forward. Employees respond positively when organizations act on their input, creating engagement momentum and improved data quality that fuels continuous improvement.



Use of Analytics for Strategic Improvement



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Best HR Strategy Measurement and Data Analytics

The People-Centricity Opportunity

Organizations increasingly embrace employee-first policies, creating opportunities to align operational realities with these commitments and build credibility that strengthens HR initiatives.



Mental health programs are evolving from reactive responses to proactive wellness strategies that address work design fundamentals.



Flexible work arrangements are maturing into sustainable models that respect boundaries while enabling collaboration.



The emerging language shift from “human capital” and “resources” toward “talent” and “team members” reveals a growing focus on human flourishing alongside performance optimization.

This momentum builds within organizational culture:



Companies investing in wellness programs now have frameworks to ensure cultures support sustainable performance.



Organizations promoting work-life balance increasingly recognize and reward those who model healthy boundaries.



Emphasizing psychological safety creates opportunities to evolve hierarchical structures toward collaborative decision-making.

These alignments create an authentic cultural transformation that employees experience as genuine organizational commitment.

Transparency initiatives show promising evolution. With award-winning organizations implementing comprehensive measurement and analytics practices at rates exceeding 90%, there's clear momentum toward clarifying performance expectations and career progression paths. Organizations are developing frameworks that make advancement opportunities visible, helping employees navigate their futures with confidence. The growing alignment between what organizations say and what employees experience creates trust-building momentum.

The Integration Opportunity

HR functions increasingly recognize that integration multiplies impact, creating momentum for connected systems. While recruitment, learning, performance management and rewards may have historically operated separately, 100% of award-winning organizations now prioritize cross-functional team formation and stakeholder engagement. Organizations are investing strategically in integrated solutions with consistent data definitions and enhanced interoperability, with 90% implementing digital platforms and portals that unify the employee experience.

With integrated data, HR can answer fundamental questions about workforce dynamics:



Which development investments improve retention?



How does career progression affect engagement?



Which managers consistently build high-performing teams?



What combination of factors predicts retention opportunities?



How do different reward strategies impact performance?

These questions become answerable as data integration advances, enabling evidence-based talent strategies that drive measurable business outcomes.

The AI Implementation Opportunity

As AI adoption accelerates, organizations have opportunities to establish ethical frameworks that guide responsible deployment. With 57% of award-winning organizations already integrating AI and machine learning into HR processes and 29% implementing AI-powered HR tools, momentum is building for sophisticated applications.

Data privacy protections, algorithmic fairness practices and thoughtful automation strategies create pathways for organizations to successfully navigate AI implementation. The focus on implementing AI solutions that prioritize both efficiency and equity, augmentation alongside automation, positions HR as strategic technology advisors.

The Skills-Based Transformation Opportunity

While traditional hierarchies, career paths and compensation structures assume fixed jobs with defined responsibilities, skills-based approaches enable dynamic matching of capabilities to work, continuous learning pathways and fluid organizational structures that increase agility. With 70% of Excellence Award-winning organizations implementing skills and competency assessment systems and 50% offering professional certification programs, the infrastructure for transformation is emerging.



Implications

Addressing these opportunities will generate cascading benefits for organizational performance, talent outcomes and competitive positioning.

The HR skills expansion opportunity grows as organizations recognize analytics as core competencies. Organizations building data literacy and analytical capabilities within HR teams position themselves to justify investments confidently, demonstrate value clearly and contribute meaningfully to strategic decisions. HR advances toward strategic partnership, elevated beyond administrative functions as business leaders increasingly seek HR's workforce insights. The 93% implementation rate of KPI development and tracking among award-winners demonstrates that the measurement foundation exists. The opportunity now lies in evolving from measurement to insight generation and strategic action.

Aligning HR commitments with employee reality builds trust in organizational leadership. When people-centric policies materialize in daily experiences, when feedback drives visible improvements, when transparency initiatives share meaningful information, employees engage deeply.

This trust building manifests in increased discretionary effort, enthusiastic participation in initiatives and ultimately, retention of top performers who choose to stay and grow. The fact that almost all of award-winning organizations implement multi-channel communication strategies and stakeholder engagement shows the commitment to authentic dialogue.

Communication & Change Management Effectiveness



Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Most Unique or Innovative Human Resources Program

Award-winning organizations that reduced attrition by 5.6 to 16 percentage points demonstrate what effective execution achieves. Organizations closing the execution gap enjoy reduced recruitment costs, preserved institutional knowledge and competitive advantage as they become talent magnets attracting high performers seeking employers that deliver on their promises.

By leveraging data and emerging technologies effectively, HR departments capture opportunities to drive organizational innovation and performance. With 79% of award-winning organizations implementing HR data analytics and 64% developing predictive analytics capabilities, HR is positioned to identify retention opportunities before employees consider leaving, enabling proactive support.

AI can personalize learning recommendations and career guidance at scale, with 37% of wellness programs already offering one-on-one mentoring and expert coaching among award-winning organizations. Advanced measurement can isolate which practices actually improve outcomes, enabling resource optimization toward the highest-impact activities.

Creating genuinely people-centric environments accelerates engagement and well-being. Organizations implementing wellness programs while optimizing workload, offering flexibility with cultural support to use it and proclaiming values while embedding them in operations see engagement scores rise alongside investment. The benefits extend beyond individual well-being to enhanced innovation, productivity and organizational resilience. The universal adoption of executive sponsorship and modeling (100%) demonstrates leadership commitment to authentic cultural transformation.

As HR becomes a true strategic partner, it plays a more central role in business decision-making, creating a reinforcing cycle. Participation in strategy discussions strengthens HR's understanding of business needs and increases its strategic relevance. With 90% of award-winning organizations tracking ROI and 100% using data-driven decision making, HR is proving its value in terms business leaders recognize. As a result, organizations increasingly rely on HR for workforce strategy, solidifying its role as an essential strategic advisor.

Critical Questions

These implications raise important questions that shape how HR organizations move forward:

How do we build analytical capabilities without losing our human-centered expertise?

- Recruit data scientists into HR teams while training existing HR professionals in analytical thinking, creating roles that bridge human insight and data interpretation.

How do we ensure AI augments rather than replaces human judgment in talent decisions?

- Establish clear protocols that reserve final decisions on hiring, promotion and development for humans while training managers to interpret AI recommendations critically.

How do we close the gap between people-centric promises and operational reality?

- Implement regular pulse checks that measure employee experience at the team level and establish manager accountability for acting on feedback when commitments aren't translating into reality.

How do we maintain data privacy while leveraging workforce analytics?

- Be explicit about what data gets collected and why, use aggregate data for pattern detection rather than individual monitoring and give employees meaningful control over their data.

How do we prove HR's strategic value in language business leaders understand?

- Connect people initiatives directly to business outcomes by linking engagement improvements to productivity gains, development investments to innovation outcomes and retention strategies to reduced replacement costs.

How do we ensure algorithmic fairness when bias can be embedded in data and models?

- Implement rigorous testing before deployment across demographic groups, continuous monitoring for disparate impact and AI ethics committees with diverse representation to flag concerning patterns.



The future of work requires fundamental transformation in how organizations think about human potential, technological capability and value creation. Success demands moving beyond incremental adaptation to embrace continuous reinvention.

Implement AI Responsibly

Responsible AI implementation builds on governance frameworks established during deployment planning. Organizations can create AI ethics committees with representation from HR, legal, technology, employee representatives and business leaders.

Implement rigorous testing before deployment across demographic groups, validation against known outcomes and simulation under various scenarios. While AI can screen resumes, identify development opportunities, or surface retention insights — capabilities being developed by the 57% of award-winning organizations implementing AI and ML — humans make final decisions about hiring, promotion, advancement and compensation.

Build Data Literacy and Analytical Capabilities

Organizations can accelerate analytical skill development within HR teams by deliberately building capabilities that expand beyond traditional HR training. This investment in data science fundamentals, statistical analysis and predictive modeling specifically applied to workforce opportunities yields significant returns. The 93% implementation rate of real-time dashboards and data visualization tools among award winners demonstrates that the technological foundation is in

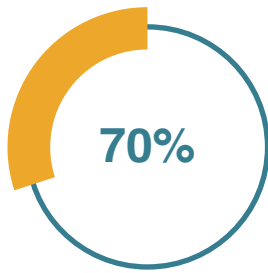
place. The opportunity now lies in building human capability to leverage these systems effectively.

Translate People-Centric Commitments into Experience

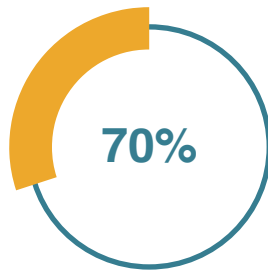
Genuine people-centricity advances through systematic approaches to experience design and accountability that move beyond policies and programs. Organizations can adopt design thinking methodologies that involve employees directly in creating solutions to their opportunities rather than designing for them. The universal (100%) adoption of stakeholder engagement among award winners shows that leading organizations recognize employees as partners in solution design rather than as passive recipients of programs.

Implement regular experience measurement at team levels, not just organizational aggregates. The 93% implementation of employee engagement surveys provides the data foundation, while the 70% adoption of 360-degree and multi-source feedback enables nuanced understanding of experience across different organizational contexts. Establish expectations that managers review team engagement quarterly, develop action plans addressing identified opportunities and report progress to leadership. The 90% implementation rate for manager training demonstrates the organization's investment in equipping leaders for this responsibility.

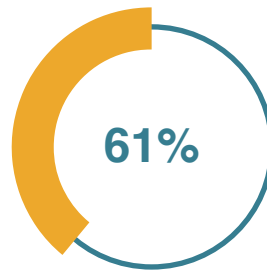
Focus on Employee Engagement



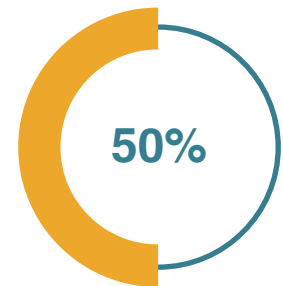
Skills/competency
assessment



360-degree/multi-source
feedback



Employee Resource
Groups (ERGs)



Professional certification
programs

Source: Analysis of 2025 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Innovative Human Resources Program

Embed values and principles into operational processes. Organizations that achieve lasting cultural impact integrate culture into hiring criteria, performance evaluations, promotion decisions and daily routines. The 71% implementation of the performance evaluation system redesign shows that many organizations are rethinking how they assess and recognize contributions. The 92% executive sponsorship and modeling provide the structure for cultural embedding at scale.

Integrate HR Functions

Connecting functional areas enables technical integration, process optimization and cultural transformation within HR organizations. Begin by mapping the employee journey from recruitment through advancement, identifying opportunities where functional coordination can enhance experiences and enable insight generation.

Establish shared data standards across HR systems. Common definitions for skills, competencies, performance levels and engagement ensure consistent analysis across functions. Implement platforms that unify previously separate functions rather than collections of point solutions requiring complex integration.

Redesign processes to create seamless experiences from employee perspectives. Create integrated development journeys that guide employees from hire through role mastery. Connect learning recommendations directly to performance feedback and career aspirations through 360-degree feedback and skills assessment.

Inflection Point

HR organizations in 2026 stand at an exciting inflection point. The foundations built through recent digital transformations create unprecedented potential for strategic impact. Realizing that potential requires moving decisively from program implementation to value delivery. The data from Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award winners demonstrates not just aspiration but achievement — real organizations delivering measurable results through systematic, comprehensive approaches.

Evidence from award-winning organizations demonstrates that effective execution achieves attrition reductions of 5.6 to 16 percentage points, engagement scores of 74-90% and satisfaction improvements of 15-20 percentage points. These results validate that comprehensive HR transformation delivers measurable business value when organizations address strategy, technology, culture and measurement simultaneously.

The path forward involves building analytical capabilities, translating people-centric commitments into reality, integrating functions for seamless experiences, implementing AI ethically and transitioning to skills-based models while enhancing stability. Organizations pursuing these opportunities position themselves for sustainable competitive advantage in talent management.

The opportunity facing HR leaders is clear: build on incremental improvements with transformational advances, committing to the evolution required to deliver on HR's strategic promise. Organizations making this commitment establish themselves as talent magnets attracting exceptional performers, innovation engines driving breakthrough performance and strategic partners shaping business success.

Organizations embracing this moment will expand their capabilities as business requirements evolve, establishing the function as strategically essential.

Predictions

AI-Powered Talent Orchestration

HR will orchestrate networks of internal and external talent through AI-driven workforce optimization, with dashboards serving as real-time “human capital command centers” that map capabilities across projects.

The ‘Work DNA’ Profile

Employee records will evolve into blockchain-secured profiles tracking motivation patterns and cognitive styles, enabling hyper-personalized work design that maximizes engagement.

Predictive Culture Analytics

AI models will analyze collaboration patterns to forecast team development opportunities months in advance, enabling proactive support.

The Intelligent HR Assistant

Every HR leader will have an AI agent that autonomously drafts strategies and runs scenario simulations while ensuring ethical decision-making.

Workforce Governance Excellence Boards

Organizations establish formal AI Ethics Councils, chaired by CHROs, to oversee fairness optimization as HR evolves into a data equity champion.

Employment as a Platform Economy

Large enterprises transform into “talent platforms,” with HR operating as a marketplace operator matching worker aspirations with organizational opportunities.

Augmented Reality Collaboration Spaces

Virtual offices evolve into immersive AR environments where HR facilitates connection with engagement-sensing analytics.

The Contribution Recognition System

Enterprises implement “value contribution frameworks” that recognize all forms of organizational contribution through peer acknowledgment and translate it into tangible recognition.

Human Sustainability Metrics Expand Traditional Measures

Organizations supplement traditional metrics with “human sustainability indexes” that quantify equity advancement and skill development velocity.



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Human Capital Management

Open: January 5, 2026

Deadline: April 10, 2026

Announcements: August 13, 2026

Who should enter:

Training, learning, talent, HR or other related departments can either enter alone or together with a helping organization (such as a vendor aka solution provider, or consultant). Helping organizations cannot enter alone.

Education Technology

Open: April 20, 2026

Deadline: September 4, 2026

Announcements: December 3, 2026

Who should enter:

The EdTech Program has a dedicated focus on entries from innovative and cutting-edge trailblazers in education technology. This program is for K-12, Universities, Business Schools, Professional Development and Education Associations, Non-For-Profit, and Government Agencies.

Technology

Open: April 20, 2026

Deadline: September 4, 2026

Announcements: December 3, 2026

Who should enter:

The Technology Program focuses on solution providers serving learning, talent, HR, workforce, and sales enablement, as well as internal technology teams. Entries may be submitted independently or in partnership with client organizations.

Excellence in Action

Open: May 4, 2026

Deadline: October 16, 2026

Announcements: December 2026

Who should enter:

Excellence in Action is designed for organizations of all sizes and industries that prioritize employee feedback and strive to create inclusive, thriving workplaces. Whether you're a small startup or a multinational corporation, if you're dedicated to amplifying employee voices and driving positive change, this program is for you.

What all Brandon Hall Group™ awards have in common



Research-based
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Judged by
independent
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Benchmarked
against global
best practices



Trusted by
thousands of
organizations
worldwide

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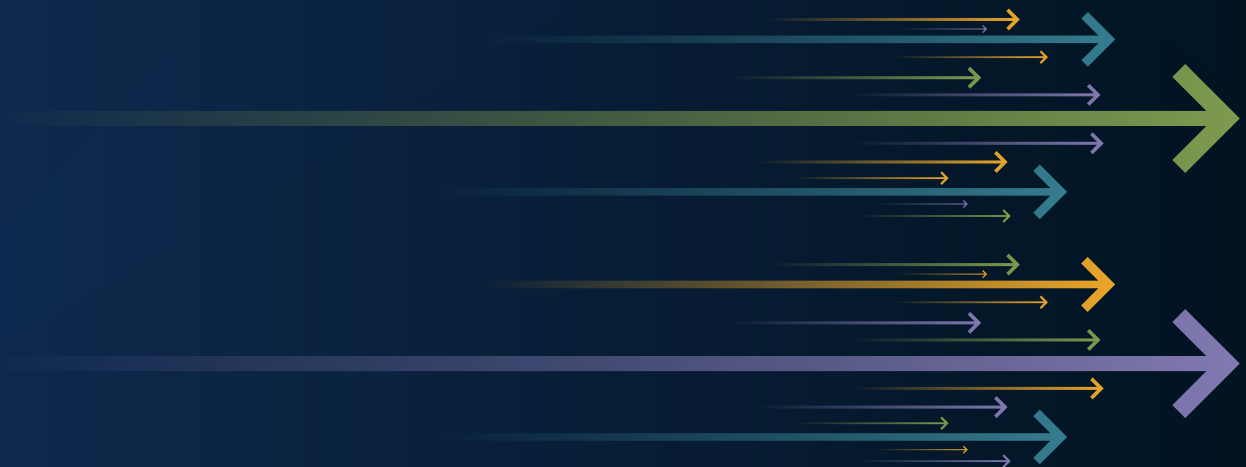
<https://excellenceawards.brandonhall.com/>



THE FUTURE OF WORK

Building Organizations That Thrive In Perpetual Change

The future of work is no longer a distant horizon but an immediate reality demanding continuous reinvention. Organizations must build adaptive capacity that transforms uncertainty from a threat into an opportunity to create systems that anticipate and shape change.



Current State

Organizations no longer prepare for change; they exist within it. The question is not whether disruption will occur but how quickly organizations can recognize, adapt to and leverage emerging opportunities while maintaining human-centered values that attract and retain talent.

This new reality manifests across multiple dimensions:



Remote and hybrid work arrangements, once emergency measures, have become permanent features of employment.



Artificial intelligence has moved from experimental pilots to production systems, fundamentally altering how work gets done.



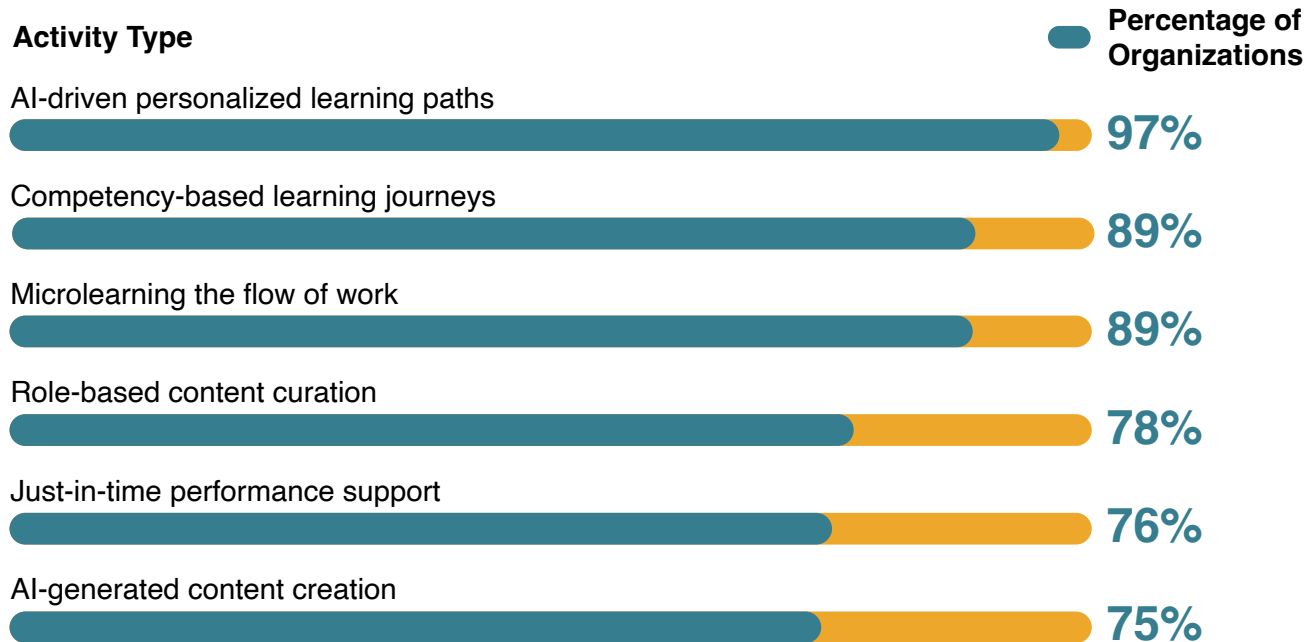
Skills that seemed cutting-edge months ago risk obsolescence, while human capabilities such as creativity, empathy, critical thinking and collaboration emerge as the enduring differentiators.

The Brandon Hall Group™ AI Progression Model, based on data from 600 HR and business professionals, reveals a striking reality: Nearly half (46%) of organizations remain in experimental or piloting phases of AI maturity. This relatively slow progress in arguably the most transformative technology discussion of our time represents both a critical risk and an unprecedented opportunity for HR to claim strategic leadership.

The workforce itself has fundamentally changed. Multiple generations with divergent expectations now collaborate in ways that challenge traditional management approaches. Digital natives seek purpose-driven work with flexibility and continuous growth opportunities. Meanwhile, experienced workers bring institutional knowledge and relationship capital that AI cannot replicate. Organizations must orchestrate these diverse capabilities while building cultures that support both technological advancement and human flourishing.



AI-Powered Learning & Development Activities

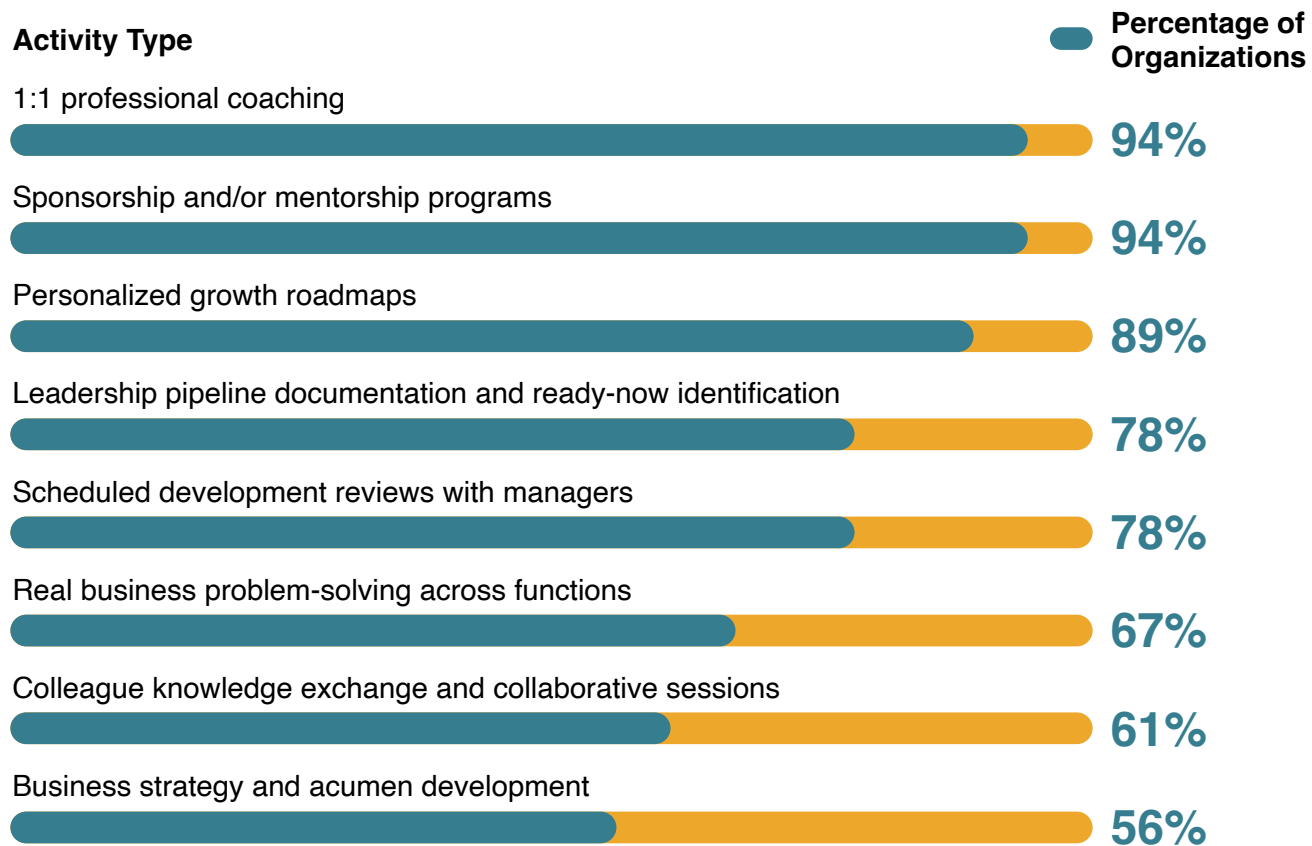


Source: Analysis of Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Best Use of AI for Business

Decision-making structures are evolving from hierarchical command systems to networked intelligence models. Complex challenges require diverse perspectives and distributed expertise. Organizations are learning that while centralized authority may drive efficiency in stable conditions, adaptive capacity emerges from empowered teams that can sense and respond to local conditions. This democratization of decision-making demands new leadership capabilities throughout the organization, not just in executive suites.



Trends in Leadership Development



Source: Analysis of 2025 Excellence Award-winning organizations for High-Potential Development

The skills landscape presents a moving target that traditional development approaches cannot track. Technical capabilities evolve at exponential rates while human skills become increasingly valuable precisely because they cannot be automated.

Organizations face the paradox of needing to build specific technical competencies while developing broad adaptive capabilities. The solution requires continuous learning systems that create both immediate performance and long-term potential.

Geographic boundaries have dissolved as organizations access global talent pools while managing the complexities of distributed collaboration. Time zones become irrelevant as asynchronous work models enable continuous progress. Yet this geographic dispersion creates new challenges for maintaining culture, building trust and ensuring equitable participation across diverse locations and contexts.

Complexities

Navigating the future of work involves managing multiple tensions that cannot be resolved through simple trade-offs but require dynamic balancing.

The Paradox of Efficiency and Resilience

Organizations push toward automation and standardization to drive efficiency while simultaneously needing flexibility and redundancy to ensure resilience. Lean operations optimize for predictable conditions but become fragile when disruption occurs. Building adaptive capacity requires accepting apparent inefficiencies, such as cross-training and experimentation, that enable rapid response when conditions change.

This tension extends to workforce planning. Organizations need specialized expertise for immediate performance while developing generalist capabilities for future flexibility. The challenge involves developing professionals with deep knowledge in specific domains combined with broad collaborative and adaptive skills. Investment in developing these hybrid capabilities often conflicts with pressure to achieve immediate productivity gains, creating difficult resource-allocation decisions.

The Human-AI Partnership Challenge

While technology companies accelerate AI development, many organizations struggle to integrate these capabilities effectively. The challenge goes beyond technical implementation to fundamental questions about human-AI collaboration. Which decisions should remain human? How do we maintain accountability when algorithms make recommendations? What happens to human skills when AI handles routine cognitive work?

Research indicates that 70% of organizations lack the necessary skills for implementing generative AI. This gap exists not just in technical capabilities but in the ability to reimagine work processes,



governance structures and human development strategies for an AI-augmented future. Organizations must build AI literacy while preserving distinctly human capabilities that create competitive advantage.

The ethical dimensions of AI adoption add another layer of complexity. Questions about bias, transparency and fairness in algorithmic decision-making require frameworks that don't yet exist. Organizations must navigate these ethical considerations while maintaining a competitive pace, creating tension between responsible implementation and market pressure for rapid adoption.

The Cultural Evolution Imperative

Traditional organizational cultures built on predictability, hierarchy and standardization struggle to support the agility, innovation and continuous learning the future demands. Cultural transformation cannot be mandated through policy changes or technology implementations. It emerges from thousands of daily interactions, decisions and behaviors that either reinforce old patterns or create new possibilities.

Organizations face the challenge of maintaining cultural cohesion while supporting increasing diversity in work arrangements, locations and employment relationships. Remote and hybrid models offer flexibility but can erode the informal connections that build trust and enable collaboration. Creating a sense of belonging and psychological safety across distributed, diverse teams requires intentional design and sustained effort that many organizations underestimate.

Power dynamics are shifting as knowledge workers gain leverage through specialized expertise and mobility. Traditional authority based on position gives way to influence based on capability and contribution. This power redistribution challenges established management practices and requires new approaches to motivation, accountability and performance management.

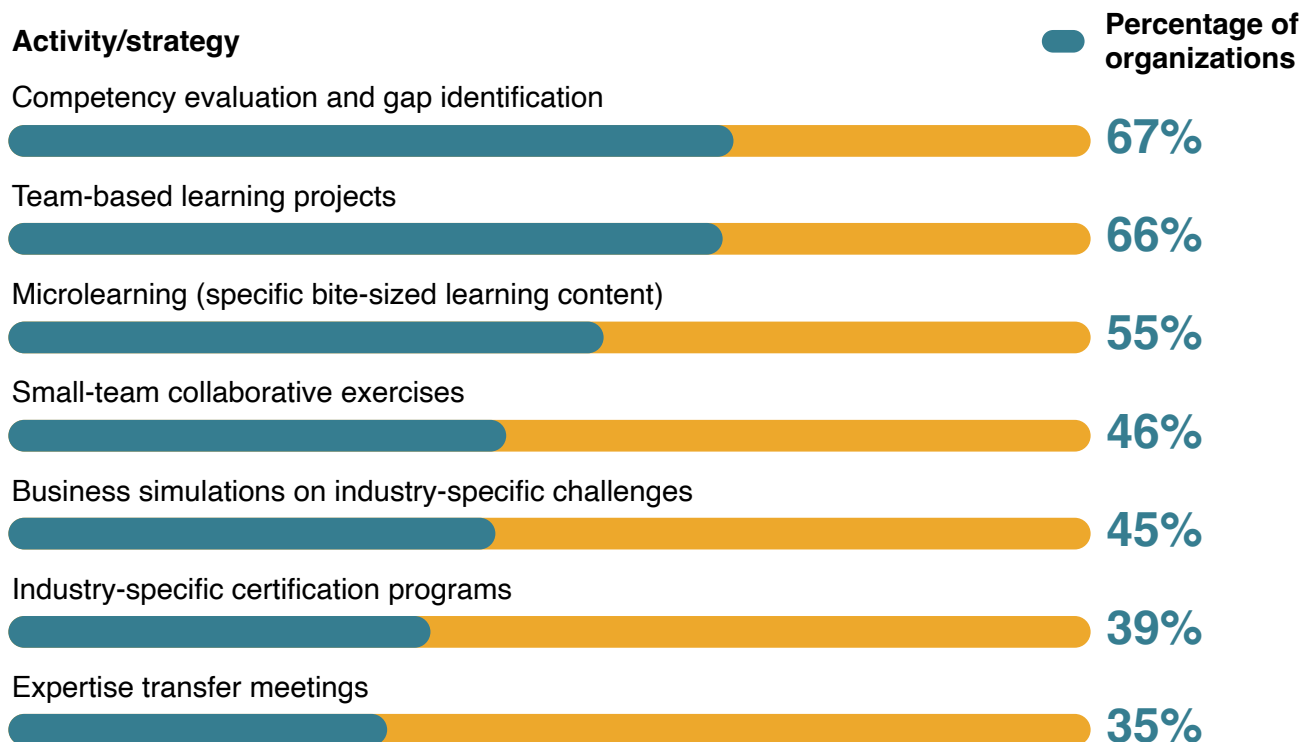
The Learning Velocity Challenge

The half-life of specific technical skills continues to shrink while the time required to develop deep expertise remains relatively constant. Organizations

must accelerate learning while maintaining quality and depth. Traditional training approaches, including scheduled courses, static content and periodic assessments, cannot keep pace with change.

Creating continuous learning cultures requires more than providing access to content. It demands reimagining work itself as a learning experience, where every project builds capability, every failure generates insight and every interaction develops collaborative skills. This integration of learning and working challenges traditional boundaries between training, development and performance. Even Excellence Award-winning organizations are still adapting to this challenge:

Competency and Skill-Building Trends



Source: Analysis of 2025 Excellence Award-winning organizations in competency and skill development

The democratization of information through AI and digital platforms means that access to knowledge no longer provides a competitive advantage. Instead, the ability to synthesize, apply and create new knowledge becomes the differentiator. Organizations must shift from knowledge transfer to capability development, from information delivery to experiential learning.

The Well-Being and Performance Balance

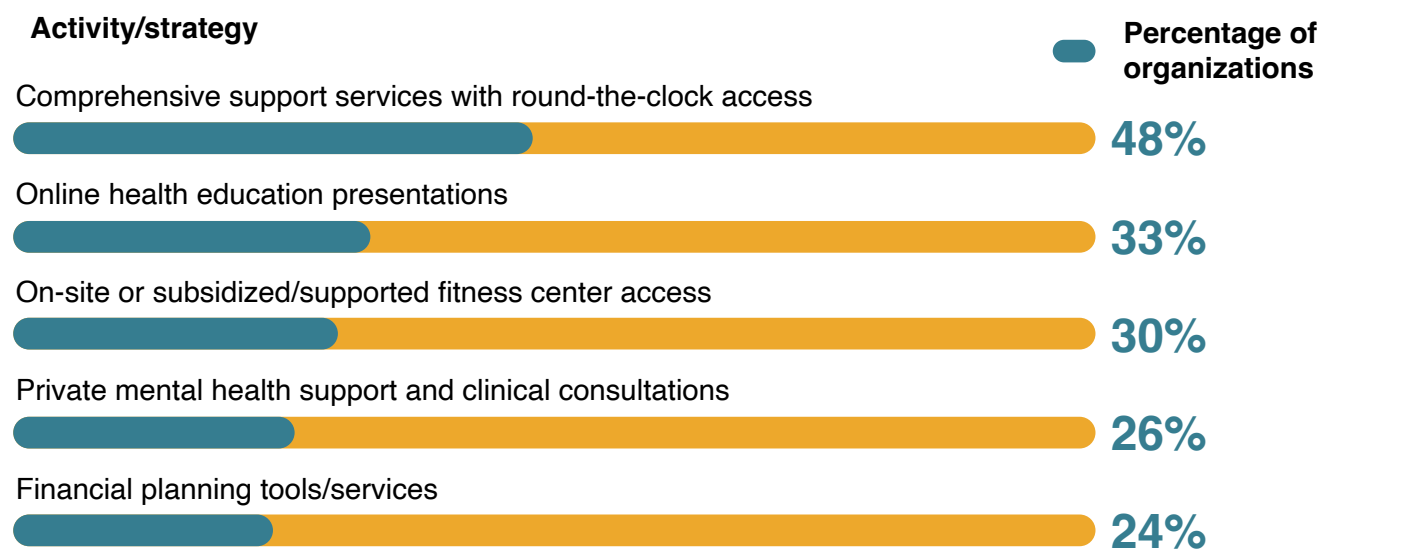
Intensifying performance demands collide with growing recognition that sustainable performance requires holistic well-being. Organizations cannot drive results through burnout cultures that deplete human capacity. Yet competitive pressures and stakeholder expectations create constant pressure for immediate results.

Mental health challenges have reached crisis levels, with experts increasingly recognizing that HR organizations must play a significant role in driving direct mental health care access. This goes beyond traditional employee assistance programs to a fundamental redesign of work systems, management practices and cultural norms that either support or undermine human thriving.

Digital overwhelm compounds well-being challenges. Constant connectivity, information overload and the blurring of work-life boundaries create chronic stress that undermines both performance and health. Organizations must design digital experiences that enhance rather than exhaust human capacity, creating sustainable rhythms that allow for both intense focus and necessary recovery.

Despite the complexity of these problems, most Excellence Award-winning organizations still do not have comprehensive health and well-being programs:

Most Frequently Offered Health and Well-Being Support Programs



Source: Analysis of 2025 Excellence Award-winning organizations in Best Benefits, Wellness and Well-Being programs

Implications

Failing to address future-of-work challenges carries consequences that cascade across organizational, individual and societal levels.

Organizational Obsolescence

Organizations that cannot adapt quickly enough face competitive displacement. This is not a gradual decline but a sudden irrelevance as new entrants leverage modern capabilities to deliver superior value. Traditional competitive advantages such as scale, market position and brand recognition provide less protection when disruption can emerge from unexpected directions.

The inability to attract and retain talent accelerates organizational decline. Top performers gravitate toward organizations offering meaningful work, growth opportunities and cultures aligned with their values. Companies maintaining outdated work models face talent exodus, particularly among younger generations who have options and are willing to exercise them.

Market dynamics increasingly favor organizations with adaptive capacity over those with established positions. Speed of learning and adaptation matters more than accumulated resources. Organizations

that cannot sense and respond to changing conditions find themselves outmaneuvered by more agile competitors, regardless of size or history.

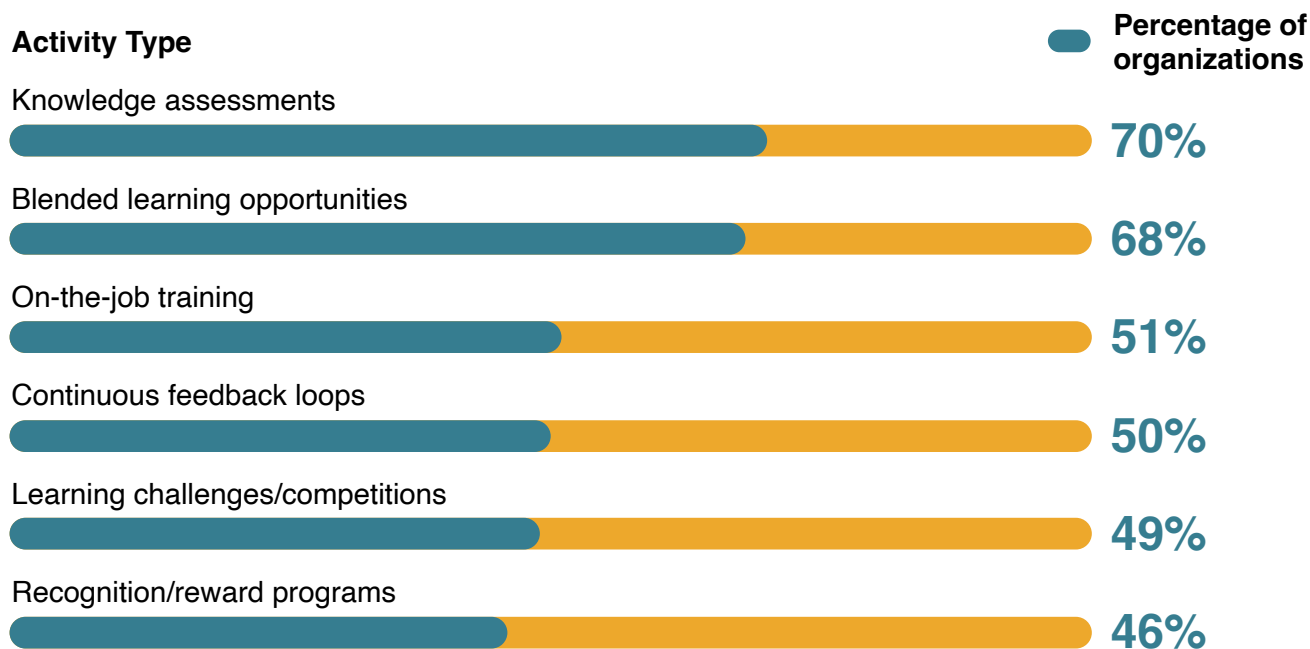
Workforce Disengagement and Depletion

When organizations fail to invest in continuous capability development, their workforce becomes progressively less valuable in the labor market. Employees stuck in roles with obsolete skills face career stagnation or displacement. This creates a vicious cycle in which the most capable leave for better opportunities, while those remaining lack the skills to drive transformation.

The psychological impact extends beyond career concerns. Employees in organizations that resist change experience learned helplessness and disengagement. The resulting culture of resignation makes transformation even more difficult, creating organizational learned helplessness that becomes self-fulfilling.



Most Common Capability Development Activities



Analysis of Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Award-winning organizations for Learning Supporting Business Transformation

Skills atrophy accelerates as the gap between organizational practices and market evolution widens. Employees become increasingly unemployable outside their current organization, creating mutual dependency that breeds resentment rather than loyalty. This phenomenon of trapped talent undermines both individual agency and organizational vitality.

Innovation Paralysis

Organizations that fail to create environments where human creativity and AI augmentation coexist lose innovation capacity. Innovation emerges from the intersection of diverse perspectives, creative tension and psychological safety that enables experimentation. When organizations optimize solely for efficiency or rely entirely on either human or artificial intelligence, they lose the generative friction that sparks new ideas.

This innovation deficit compounds over time. Organizations fall progressively further behind the innovation frontier, making catch-up increasingly difficult. The gap between leaders and laggards widens, creating winner-take-all dynamics in many industries where network effects and data advantages create insurmountable barriers for late movers.

Trust Erosion

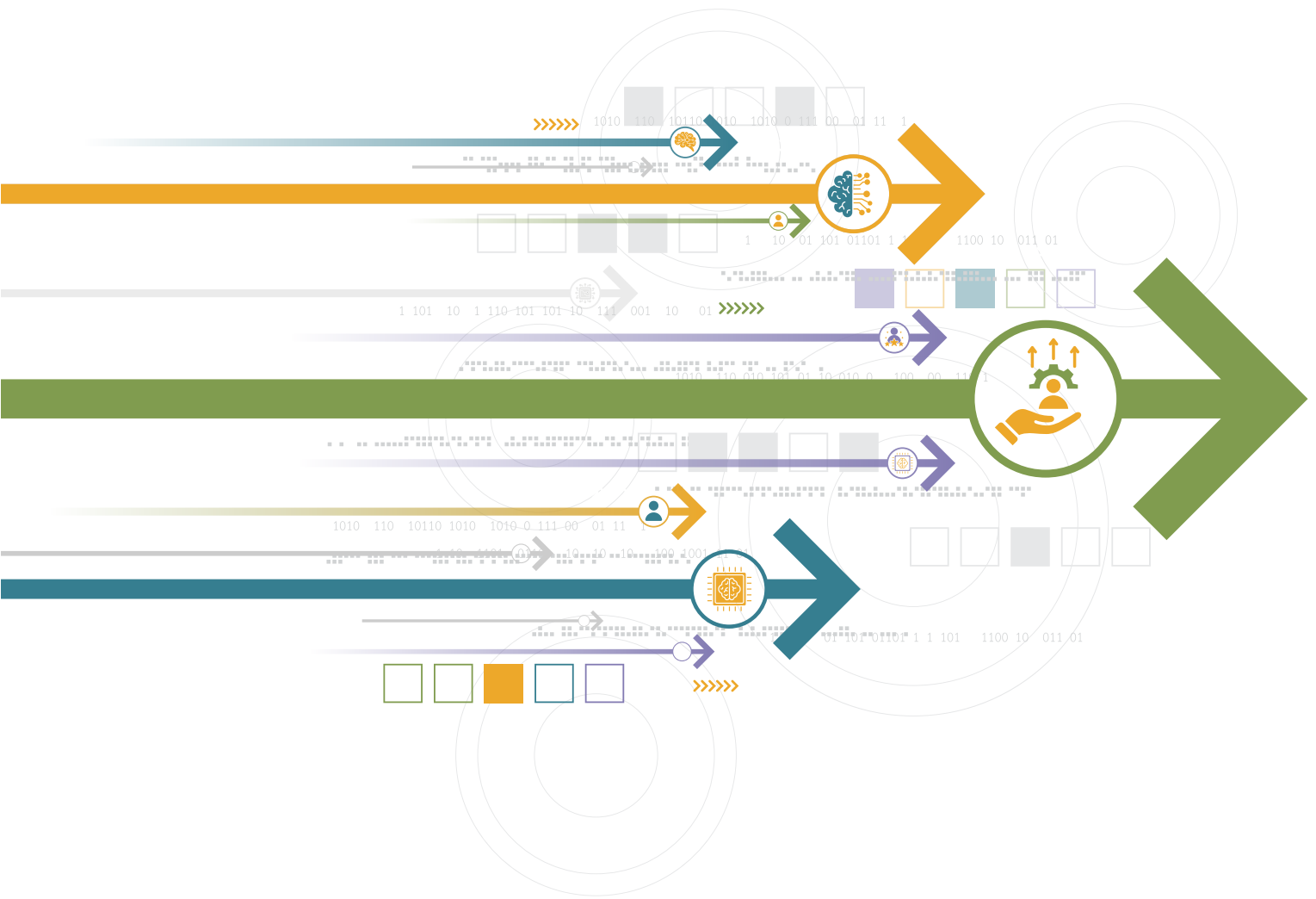
Excessive monitoring, algorithmic management without transparency and cultures that prioritize metrics over meaning erode trust between organizations and employees. This trust deficit extends beyond the employment relationship to impact customer relationships, partner collaborations and other business activities.

Once trust erodes, rebuilding becomes exponentially more difficult. Organizations find themselves in adversarial relationships with their workforces, spending energy on compliance and control rather than innovation and value creation. The resulting toxic cultures accelerate talent departure and make attracting new talent nearly impossible.

Systemic Dysfunction

Organizations failing to prepare for the future of work contribute to systemic challenges: skill gaps that constrain organizational growth, inequity that undermines inclusion and the degradation of employee well-being. These challenges and more create that undermine preparing the organization for the future.

Only 35% of organizations rank innovative technology as critical to employee experience, according to Brandon Hall Group™ research, which exemplifies a broader organizational issue that technological solutions are not considered a priority in their Employee Value Proposition.



Critical Questions

Organizations must grapple with fundamental questions that will shape their approach to the future of work:

How can we develop organizational literacy and leadership around AI while ensuring ethical implementation?

- Moving from passive observation to active participation in AI strategy requires building fluency without expecting everyone to become technical experts. Employers should create a shared understanding of AI capabilities and limitations and create governance structures to ensure ethical implementation while enabling innovation.

How do we build continuous learning cultures that develop both technical and human capabilities?

- As skill obsolescence accelerates and human capabilities become key differentiators, organizations must transform learning from episodic events into continuous journeys. Organizations must determine how to embed learning in work without overwhelming employees.

How can we create truly flexible, personalized work experiences while maintaining organizational cohesion and culture?

- Employees expect work to adapt to their lives, but organizations need shared purpose and collaborative effectiveness. How do you deliver personalized experiences across diverse, distributed workforces? What rituals and practices maintain culture when people rarely share physical space? How do you balance individual autonomy with collective accountability?

How do we develop leaders capable of managing holistically in hybrid environments?

- Traditional leadership development approaches prove insufficient for the complexity leaders now face. What capabilities do leaders need to orchestrate human-AI teams? How do they maintain connection and build trust across distributed teams? What development experiences prepare leaders for ambiguity and constant change?

How can we leverage technology to enhance employee experience without compromising human connection and well-being?

- Technology promises efficiency and insight, but can also create digital overwhelm and surveillance anxiety. How do organizations select and implement technologies that augment rather than replace human capabilities? What guardrails prevent technology from undermining well-being? How do you preserve space for human connection in increasingly digital environments?



The future of work requires fundamental transformation in how organizations think about human potential, technological capability and value creation. Success demands moving beyond incremental adaptation to embrace continuous reinvention.

Lead Ethical AI Integration

HR must claim leadership in organizational AI strategy, not as technical experts but as informed advocates for responsible implementation. This requires developing AI literacy across the HR function to understand capabilities, limitations and implications for the workforce and workplace.

Establish cross-functional AI governance with HR representation at the decision-making level. Create ethical principles addressing bias, transparency, privacy and workforce impact. Develop assessment frameworks for evaluating AI solutions before implementation. Build relationships with IT and data science teams to bridge technical possibilities and human impact.

Become educated AI consumers by actively using generative AI platforms to understand capabilities, limitations and safeguards. Experiment with AI tools in low-risk environments to build confidence and insight. Share learnings across the organization to accelerate collective understanding.

Build Integrated Learning Ecosystems

Transform learning from a training function to a continuous capability-building system. Move beyond course catalogs to personalized learning journeys that develop both immediate skills and long-term potential. Create transparent pathways showing how capabilities connect to opportunities.

Focus significant resources on distinctly human skills: creativity, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, ethical reasoning and cross-cultural competency. These capabilities provide a

competitive advantage as AI handles routine cognitive work. Make learning embedded in work through micro-learning, simulations and real-world applications.

Personalize the Work Experience

Build cultures centered on flexibility, respect, inclusion and authentic listening. Offer flexibility in when, where and how work occurs through remote options, flexible schedules and job sharing. Create individual development plans through regular career conversations that explore possibilities.

Leverage analytics to understand working styles and preferences while respecting privacy. Tailor engagement, recognition and development approaches to individual needs. Provide benefits offering choice across diverse life circumstances: extended healthcare, flexible leave, mental health support and financial wellness.

Foster inclusion through education, celebration of diversity, employee resource groups and zero tolerance for discrimination. Train leaders in bias mitigation, cross-cultural understanding and the creation of psychological safety. Build systems that surface diverse perspectives and ensure all voices are heard.

Transform Leadership Development

Recognize that command-and-control approaches fail in environments requiring agility and innovation. Future leaders must be digitally savvy, data-informed and capable of leading through influence rather than authority. They need emotional

intelligence to navigate human dynamics and analytical capability to interpret complex data.

Implement cohort-based learning where leaders apply skills in real situations within risk-free environments. Use simulations to build decision-making capabilities in the face of uncertainty. Require demonstrated proficiency before promotion rather than relying on tenure or technical expertise.

Address not just what leaders do but who they are, focusing on mental, emotional and cognitive health. Leaders need resilience to navigate constant change, empathy to understand diverse perspectives and courage to make decisions with incomplete information.

Create Human-Centric Technology Strategies

Ensure technology investments enhance, rather than diminish, human capability and experience. Establish selection criteria, including user experience, accessibility, integration capability and well-being impact, alongside functionality and cost.

Partner closely with IT throughout the technology

lifecycle from identification through implementation and optimization. Given that only 47% of award-winning HR organizations collaborate well with IT on digital workplace tools, improving this partnership represents a significant opportunity for value creation.

Looking Forward

The future of work is not a destination but a continuous journey of adaptation and innovation. Organizations that embrace this reality, including investing in both technological advancement and human development while maintaining ethical frameworks and human-centric values, position themselves for sustainable success. The stakes are high, but the opportunity to create more productive, engaging and meaningful work experiences has never been greater.

This transformation requires courage to challenge established practices, wisdom to preserve what remains valuable and persistence to sustain change efforts despite resistance and setbacks. It demands leaders willing to model vulnerability and continuous learning while maintaining optimism about human potential.



Predictions

The Augmented Colleague Era

AI copilots evolve into embedded thought partners. Rather than assistants, they act as autonomous collaborators within communication platforms, providing real-time ideation support, context summarization and emotional tone balancing during meetings. Human teams become “hybrid intelligence units,” leveraging cognitive diversity between organic and synthetic thought.

Work Without Borders 2.0

The hybrid work revolution deepens with metaverse and spatial computing integration. Entire corporate campuses exist as persistent virtual spaces designed for social presence and innovation. Employees “walk” the digital workspace daily using lightweight XR headsets, transforming from distributed collaboration to genuine creative immersion..

AI-Driven Employee Collectives

Collective bargaining shifts from unions to data-driven “AI collectives.” Workers pool anonymized performance, pay and satisfaction data into decentralized networks. These collectives use AI analytics to negotiate fairer compensation packages, work hours and even psychological safety standards.

Immersive Well-Being Ecosystems

Corporate well-being programs evolve from apps to environment-integrated systems. Acoustic tuning, lighting adjustments and micro-break prompts are orchestrated by ambient AI responding to biometric signals from wearables. Stress intervention becomes predictive rather than reactive, blending health tech and environmental design.

Skills-as-Identity Platforms

The résumé is replaced by dynamic, blockchain-secured “skillchains.” Workers continuously mint and trade verified skill tokens that quantify mastery, rarity and commercial value across industries. Freelancers and employees alike manage evolving “competence portfolios” visible to employers and AI recruiters in real time.

The Post-Manager Corporation

Management partners with automation and decision-making intelligence systems. AI governance layers coordinate task prioritization, performance insights and feedback loops, freeing humans for mentorship, creativity and ethics oversight. Leadership shifts from supervision to stewardship, navigating a hybrid environment of AI and HI (Human Intelligence)..

Talent Twins and Career Simulations

Digital twins — AI replicas of employees trained on their workflows — simulate future career trajectories, identifying optimal reskilling paths and alternate roles before workers plateau. These simulations feed both individual decisions and organizational workforce planning with near-perfect predictive insight.

Generative Strategy Labs

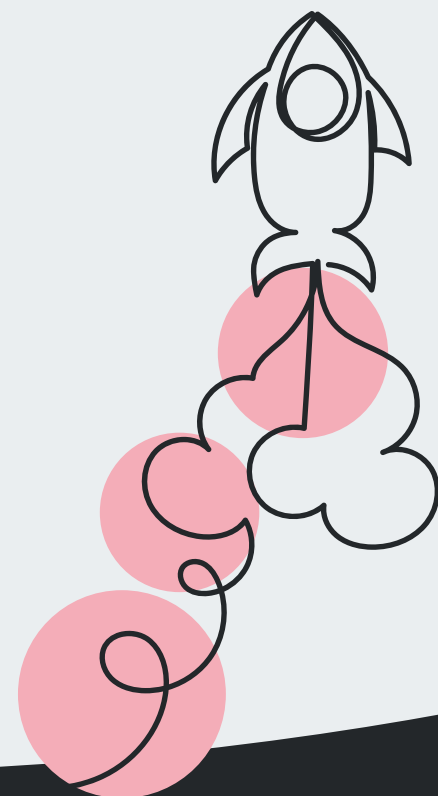
Executive decisions increasingly involve co-creating with generative AI boards — algorithmic ensembles trained on company data, competitor strategies and behavioral economics. These AI boards propose, debate and simulate strategic moves before human leaders vote on the most ethically and financially viable paths.

The Purpose Dividend Economy

Corporate reward models evolve to measure and compensate not only output but societal contribution. Employees earn “impact dividends” calculated by AI quantifying individual and organizational alignment with ESG outcomes, carbon savings and social equity contributions. Work becomes both personally enriching and civically measurable.



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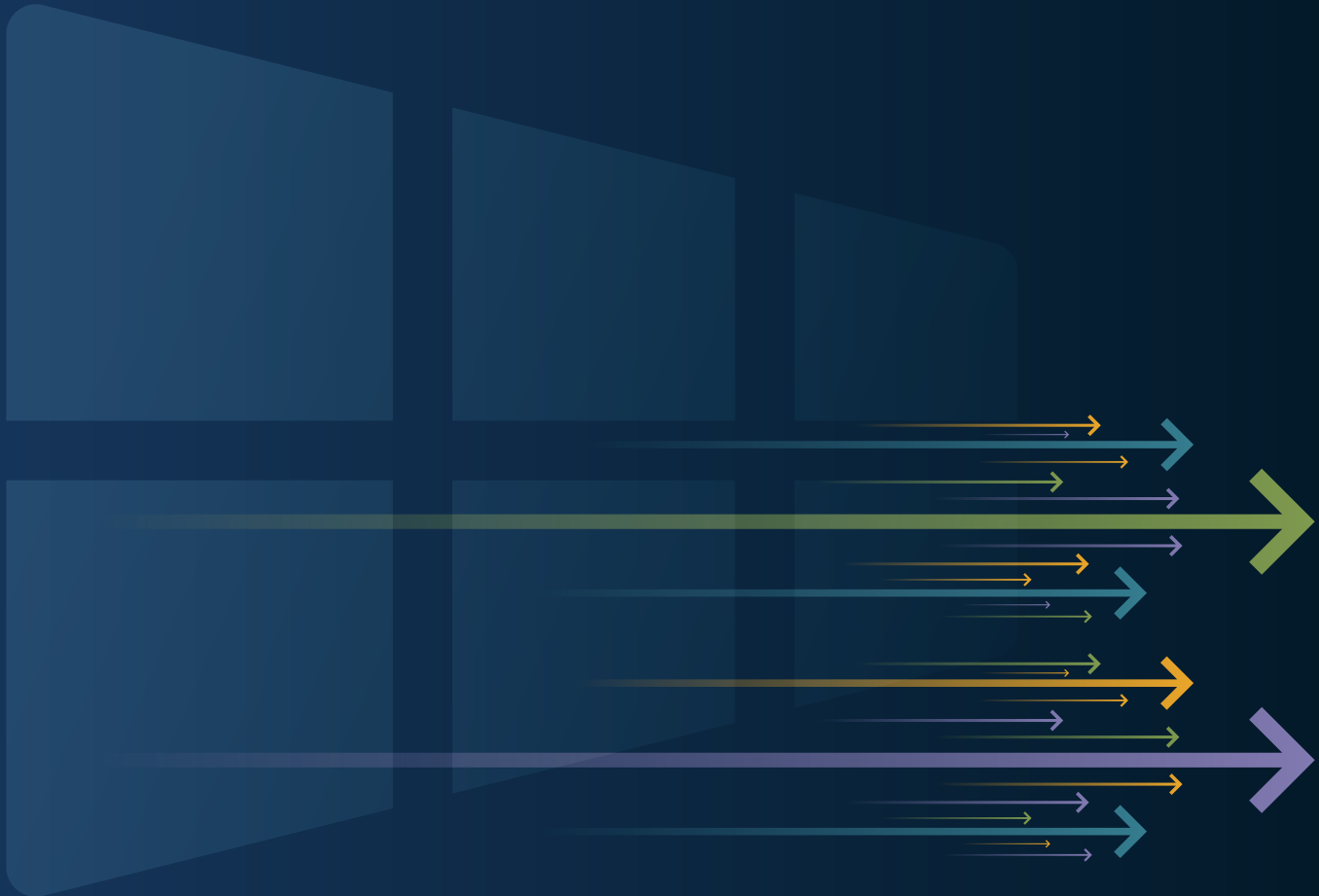
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Throughout this chapter, the individuals quoted share their perspectives. Their views and opinions are their own and do not necessarily represent the positions of their employers or affiliated organizations.


KraftHeinz


ALEXANDRA HYLAND

Head of Learning Strategy & Transformation

Q What sets trailblazing leaders apart in today's rapidly changing business landscape?

A "Trailblazing leaders aren't just adapting to a map; they're forging new paths to meet unprecedented change. Their edge is listening bravely, fearlessly blending technology with distinctly human strengths; empathy, emotional intelligence, storytelling and turning the yet unknown into a launchpad for breakthrough success."


accenture


DAVID CHESTNUT

Principal Director, Talent Strategy & Agentic Reinvention

Q How does the role of L&D leaders need to evolve in the age of AI?

A "L&D leaders have to shift from running a content factory to running a capability engine. That means moving from 'delivering learning' to orchestrating human + AI ecosystems where context, guidance and performance support come first. The real mindset shift is accepting that the first team many employees will lead will be artificial and our job now is to teach people how to work with digital coworkers as fluently as they work with human ones."

Real AI transformation runs as a parallel path: you give every employee the power to spin up a single-use digital coworker to solve the work in front of them and at the same time you build the enterprise systems that make all that intelligence hang together. Bottoms-up enablement plus top-down orchestration. That's how you turn AI from a novelty into a capability engine."





RACHEL BOLTON

Leadership Development Executive

Q As the leadership development function becomes more strategic and technology-enabled, what personal and professional evolution is required for leaders in this space to maintain credibility and impact?

A “As leadership development becomes more strategic and technology-enabled, I’ve found that the real evolution required of us isn’t just learning the tools... it’s strengthening the POWER SKILLS that make those tools meaningful. Yes, I’ve had to deepen my understanding of AI and data so I can design experiences that are more inclusive, scalable and responsive. But personally, the bigger shift has been in how I choose to show up. This season has stretched my curiosity, my adaptability and my capacity to lead with presence and empathy. AI may change how we work, but it can’t replace the trust, emotional intelligence and human connection that truly move people forward. To stay credible in this era, I think we have to model what we teach: staying grounded, staying human and permitting ourselves to grow right alongside the technology.”



KELLY STUART-JOHNSON

Global Head of Learning

Q What fundamental shifts in thinking and action are required for L&D leaders to successfully navigate the transition to AI-enhanced learning cultures?

A “AI removes technical barriers that used to limit the solutions that learning teams could consider, whether due to budget, time, or lack of technical skill. This enables a shift in thinking from repeating what’s been done before or what could be accomplished on a small budget to extraordinary creativity by working with AI to code or partner on custom solutions to drive and measure behavior change. The fundamental shift is from order-taker to creative problem-solver, from asking what are our options? to what will actually work?”



BANK OF AMERICA

BERNARD HAMPTON

Managing Director, Head of the Academy

Q As AI transforms how employees learn and develop skills, what strategies should be implemented to leverage AI effectively and responsibly in driving learning outcomes that directly support your organization's business objectives?

A "At Bank of America, The Academy is embedding responsible AI practices into every learning experience – ensuring teammates understand how to use AI ethically and effectively. By combining strong governance with practical skills like effective prompting, we help employees boost productivity while keeping human judgment at the core of decision-making."


 ADVOCATE HEALTH

AMANDA ARCHER

Director, Learning Experience

Q What fundamental shifts in thinking and action are required for L&D leaders to navigate the transition to AI-enhanced learning cultures successfully?

A "The learning industry needs to embrace AI as our new teammate. We need to look at all of our processes, from how learning is created to how it is delivered and how we measure its impact on the business and ask how this new teammate can make us more effective and efficient. It can't just be about automating the way we do things today. We need to think about how we can do each of these things differently in the future with AI."

To do this effectively, we must consider the human skills we bring to this partnership with AI and ensure those are the skills our teams and we are focused on and that the business relies on us for. We must be seen as strategic partners to the business; we can no longer be learning order takers. Strategic partners will work alongside AI in the future; order takers will lose work to AI."



AMY HAPP

Director, Leadership Development and Professional Skills

Q How is AI reshaping the future of leadership development?

A “Leadership development is entering a new era — our programs will now teach leaders not only how to lead, but how to harness AI to amplify their impact. As technology transforms this space, credibility will hinge on digital fluency and the ability to turn data-driven insights into human-centered action. AI will also help us personalize learning journeys and surface diverse talent pools at speed. But scale cannot come at the expense of trust — we audit must for bias and ensure every AI-driven recommendation is explainable and aligned with our values.”



SHELBY SMITH

Director of Talent and Organization Development

Q What role do you think AI should play in helping your organization make smarter, faster talent decisions while maintaining fairness, transparency and the human touch in talent processes?

A “In our space, AI helps with streamlining the operational side of talent work (faster screening, scheduling efficiency, tracking development progress, assistance in building JIT materials rather quickly, etc), but the moments that make an impact on the associate’s journey can’t be automated. When we gather associates in person for a learning program or a career development event, their eyes light up because they’re seeing possibilities they didn’t know existed and creating organic, genuine moments with peers and leaders that AI simply can’t replicate. AI should handle the logistics that get associates to transformational moments and provide us capacity to pour our passion into those moments, but it will never be able to replace the mentorship, encouragement and human investment that help associates see their own potential. If and when we do choose to lean into AI assistance in our work, transparency is a non-negotiable. We have created guidelines within and around our work that will continue to evolve as new/different access and capabilities emerge within the AI space.”



JIVKO KIROV

Sales and Partner Training

Q As AI transforms how employees learn and develop skills, what strategies should be implemented to leverage AI effectively and responsibly in driving learning outcomes that directly support your organization's business objectives?

A "I think the key to a successful AI strategy is no different to any other strategic transformation: clarity of goals and objectives, setting realistic timelines and expectations and using effective management of change to drive adoption. What is different with AI is the 'hype', the expectation that it can completely automate and personalize learning without the need for human intervention. That is not borne out in reality. Our focus and approach have been to implement AI in areas that drive tangible change in the learner experience: AI-powered coaching and AI-assisted learning development to accelerate the speed of delivering learning assets. The next phase is to start transforming the online learning experience, where AI allows new types and level of interactivity between the learner and the content from mono-directional content consumption to bi-directional active learning."

Q What fundamental shifts in thinking and action are required for L&D leaders to successfully navigate the transition to AI-enhanced learning cultures?

A "L&D leaders need to clearly define where their organizations are in this journey and where they want to go. For example, we at HP recognize that we are at the 'Human led/ AI assisted' phase, where AI augments human talent and potential. We leverage AI to drive increased speed, scale and personalization, while recognizing that it still requires continuous human guidance and validation. To put it differently, L&D now has 'helpers' who can do really 'cool' things but often need corrections and guardrails. Our ambition and strategy is to evolve into an 'AI-led/Human assisted' model, where different AI agents work to provide a seamless orchestration of learning workflows, including areas like skill assessments, training content creation, delivery and evaluation."



SUJATHA DAS

Global Head of Learning and Organizational Development

Q How do you believe your organization should use AI to transform HR and workforce management to drive business performance and employee satisfaction?

A “I believe our organization should embrace AI as a powerful ally in reimagining HR and workforce management – using it to open new levels of efficiency, transparency and associate empowerment. By harnessing intelligent automation and deep analytics, we can create a workplace where every individual feels supported, valued and inspired to enhance their capabilities. This transformation isn’t just about technology – it’s about building a culture where both our people and our business thrive together.”

Q How must HR and workforce management leaders evolve themselves to navigate the increasing complexity of managing a modern, technology-enabled workforce?

A “As HR and workforce management leaders, we have the chance to harness AI to gain real-time, data-driven insights into our people and predict future talent needs. By embracing these tools, we can create meaningful, personalized growth paths for our associates - making our organization a place where individuals thrive and business results grow. This approach allows us to confidently navigate the complexities of today’s technology-driven workplace while keeping our teams engaged and satisfied.”



BEN DYER

Learning Innovation and Design

Q As AI transforms how employees learn and develop skills, what strategies should be implemented to leverage AI effectively and responsibly in driving learning outcomes that directly support your organization's business objectives?

A "First, get clear on what the "Jagged Frontier" means in our domain so you know what AI can help with and what it can't. Philippa Hardman is doing a lot of good work on this. Next, apply AI to the problems it can help you with. The way you do that is: 1) get the domain knowledge (in Learning in our case) to ensure you can effectively guide AI to value and 2) build the skills in conceptual and communicative clarity that enable you to articulate the desired value to AI as you work with it"

Q What fundamental shifts in thinking and action are required for L&D leaders to successfully navigate the transition to AI-enhanced learning cultures?

A "L&D Leaders need to have clear and realistic vision for what AI can do for their organization at scale. That vision needs to have both the specific value that AI can bring as well as the constraints of responsible policy. L&D Leaders need to enable their people to realize that value with effective training, smart technology investments and a measurement plan that focuses on the ROI that Learning is bringing back to the business as AI creates impact on employee performance in frontline work. Finally, L&D Leaders need to effectively communicate that story to their business stakeholders so they can build L&D functions into a growth driver for the company."



NADINE TANNER

Head of Enterprise Learning

Q What does it take to build an AI-enhanced learning culture?

A “To successfully transition to an AI-enhanced learning culture, L&D leaders must shift from a traditional, role-based curriculum to curating dynamic, personalized, skill-based learning journeys. This means embracing a growth mindset ourselves and leveraging AI-powered learning ecosystems to design truly enhanced digital learning experiences for our people.”



RANJEESH SHARMA

Head of Human Resources

Q How do you believe your organization should use AI to transform HR and workforce management to drive business performance and employee satisfaction?

A “I believe my organization should harness AI not as a mere tool, but as a mirror reflecting our shared humanity in HR and workforce management — illuminating hidden potentials through predictive insights while reminding us that true performance blooms from nurtured souls.”

Q How must HR and workforce management leaders evolve themselves to navigate the increasing complexity of managing a modern, technology-enabled workforce?

A “I must evolve as an HR leader through introspective humility, continually questioning my assumptions like Socrates to harmonize AI’s relentless logic with the profound unpredictability of human spirit in our tech-driven era. This evolution calls for phronesis — wise judgment — to weave digital tools into empathetic leadership, sparking dialogues that illuminate shared purpose amid flux.”



NITHYA PARTHASARATHY

VP of Human Resources

Q How do you believe your organization should use AI to transform HR and workforce management to drive business performance and employee satisfaction?

A “In today’s workplace, using AI can help organisations by automating everyday HR tasks, personalise employee development and provides smart insights based on data. This not only improves business results but also makes employees feel more involved and valued, because the true power of technology is in connecting people.”

Q How must HR and workforce management leaders evolve themselves to navigate the increasing complexity of managing a modern, technology-enabled workforce?

A “In the past, Jobs were about muscles, now, they are about brains, but in the future, they will be about the heart ”

“This insight truly reflects today’s reality. As HR professionals, we must continuously adapt, sharpen our skills swiftly and lead with empathy, ensuring that we remain relevant in a world where intelligence is rapidly evolving.”



BRENT O'BRYAN

SVP of Global Training & Talent Development

Q What fundamental shifts in thinking and action are required for L&D leaders to successfully navigate the transition to AI-enhanced learning cultures?

A “Learning Leaders should shift our thinking and the direction of our teams from being strictly content creators and instructors to becoming strategic enablers of capability building and performance support. And, at the same time, we cannot lose our place in the success equation. We need to lean into what makes us irreplaceable. Competencies like empathy, social awareness, ethical decision-making and trust-building must remain the foundation of our function”



ANTHONY LEWIS

VP of People Development

Q As DEI work becomes more complex and scrutinized, how must leaders in this space evolve to build coalitions, leverage data and sustain momentum even in challenging political and economic environments?

A “DEI work has been around for decades and it’s true, the environment is tough. And usually when something is hard, it’s because it matters. That’s why adapting to these moments are so important. Strong coalitions across the organization: legal, finance, analytics, comms and our employee communities keep the work connected to the things that matter most to them even as external pressures shift.

Data is also becoming a bigger part of the conversation. It doesn’t replace the human side, but it helps us tell a clearer, more grounded story about progress and where support is still needed. When DEI is connected to talent, culture and business goals, leaders are more likely to stay aligned and committed.

It’s human nature that people want to feel like they belong and have room to grow. If we stay connected to that need, stay flexible and keep bringing others with us, the work continues to move forward, even in challenging times.”



DR. DANIEL NEUBAUER

HR Business Partner WM LatAm International, GFIW LatAm,
BRO LatAm and WM COO Front to Back



Q What role do you think AI should play in helping your organization make smarter, faster talent decisions while maintaining fairness, transparency and the human touch in talent processes?

A “AI will revolutionize Talent Management, supporting HR Professionals to utilize data of past performance, skill sets, mindsets, or location and role changes, in a much more efficient and holistic way. It will allow for much more internal mobility, matching individuals with key roles in the organization, whilst providing guidance on possible learning experiences. It will take out bias from line management and HR, creating a much more holistic approach to develop the right people into the right place at the right time.”

Q What fundamental evolution in thinking and expertise is required for talent management leaders to successfully navigate the convergence of people analytics, AI and strategic workforce planning?

A “It will be a new playground for HR Professionals to use technology and a new focus human-centricity. They need to be able to identify the problem first, use then AI recommendations and then be able to come up with feasible solutions by providing the human touch. Hence, HR leaders need to be able to a) understand and design HR strategies, which are aligned with the business, b) better understand data and analytics and c) review recommendations from AI with a human-centric approach”



JAY FORTUNA

Senior VP of Talent and Operations

Q How should AI transform your talent acquisition strategy and what principles guide responsible use?

A “AI should streamline sourcing, screening and matching so teams can shift their energy from high volume tasks to high impact relationship building and candidate experience. It enables more precise talent targeting and reduces time to hire while improving fairness through consistent, skills based evaluation. With a focus on transparency, ethical data use, human oversight, we ensure AI augments decision making.”

Q What shifts are required for TA leaders to move from filling requisitions to shaping workforce strategy in an AI augmented environment?

A “TA leaders need to evolve from transactional hiring to strategic workforce design, using AI driven insights to anticipate talent needs before they emerge. This means reframing TA as a growth engine that shapes capability pipelines, influences employer brand and partners closely with business strategy. Success depends on embracing a systems mindset where skills data, future capability needs and internal mobility shape how talent is acquired and developed”

eHealth[®]

DR. JANA BROWN

Chief Human Resources Officer

Q How must HR and workforce management leaders evolve themselves to navigate the increasing complexity of managing a modern, technology-enabled workforce?

A “Organizational and workforce viability in the digital era demands strategic and courageous HR leaders capable of mastering paradoxical tensions such as legacy power versus future sustainability, margin protection versus strategic risk-taking, comfort versus competitiveness and technology versus humanity. This is not about choosing sides; it is about architecting the “and” which requires a curious, adaptive and growth-centered mindset to integrate seemingly opposing priorities. Positioned uniquely at the intersection of culture, capability and change, my research study reveals that HR leaders are the most poised to unlock organizational readiness, increase the return on digital investments and ensure the long-term viability of both workforce and business at a time when industry and society are being redefined.”



Sandals



DR. LUZ LONGSWORTH

Senior Corporate Director, Sandals Corporate University

Q What does effective AI-powered leadership development and succession planning look like in practice?

A “Sandals Corporate University harnesses AI-powered training and analytics to identify high-potential leaders and design personalised development plans, creating a robust pipeline for succession planning. This strategy ensures an ethical, equitable and transparent process that blends data-driven insights with a people-first approach, supporting our team members’ personal and professional growth and career progression throughout their journey with Sandals Resorts.”





LISA CALLICHIO

Senior VP and Chief HR Officer

Q How should your organization use AI to transform HR and workforce management?

A “Start with the basics first - automate routine and administrative HR tasks. Not only will it deliver time and effort savings, it will produce ‘wins’ that establish the credibility of AI in enhancing roles and work processes and reduce the anxiety of replacing people. Next-level use of AI can include personalizing employee experiences and delivering predictive insights that align your talent strategies with business goals. However you use AI, use it responsibly, ethically and appropriately, mindful that it’s an enhancement tool and not a replacement for human-centric leadership and collaboration”

Q How must HR and workforce management leaders evolve themselves?

A “I strongly believe one is always evolving in life, including in our careers and areas of expertise. Some of the in-the-moment development priorities I’d offer include becoming digitally fluent, embracing evidence-and-data-driven thinking and – this one never comes off the list - leading with agility in rapidly-changing environments. It’s about balancing technological savviness with human-centric leadership — the keys to navigating complexity and shaping an always-ready workforce”





CONNIE WHITE
CLO

Q As AI fundamentally reshapes how, where and when work gets done, how can organizational leaders leverage AI effectively and responsibly to create more productive, flexible and human-centered work environments that drive business success?

A “A few things come to mind that are important. Leaders should ensure that there are guardrails to mitigate against bias when using AI tools and that the tool is adding the value of saved time without impacting the employee experience. Good questions to ask are: is this tool or application effective with the impact needed versus status quo? is this going to save leaders time to do more valuable work? will this AI application impact employee confidence in the process or platform, or their experience?”

Q As the nature of work transforms dramatically, what skills, mindsets and leadership approaches must organizational leaders develop to successfully navigate hybrid work models, AI-augmented workflows and rapidly shifting employee expectations?

A “I would say having an open, flexible and growth-oriented mindset are key for many things to be successful, including AI adoption. Knowing where you want the organization to go and how you can get there, while ensuring your employees are your partners and understand what is expected of them is critical for the success of fast-evolving organizations. Goes without saying - love what you do and be contagious about your enthusiasm!”



A. SEDA KOYTAK

Employee Experience Director

Q How do you believe your organization should use AI to transform HR and workforce management to drive business performance and employee satisfaction?

A “At Toyota Turkey, we view artificial intelligence as a strategic tool to enhance both business performance and employee experience. We are committed to ensuring that our employees can confidently use AI to improve productivity and develop their skills, while routine tasks are automated to free time for creativity and strategic work. By applying AI transparently, ethically and responsibly, we aim to organizational growth and the development of our employees.”

Q How must HR and workforce management leaders evolve themselves to navigate the increasing complexity of managing a modern, technology-enabled workforce?

A “We believe that HR and workforce management leaders need to keep evolving to meet the challenges of a modern, technology-driven workforce. By embracing digital tools and AI, making decisions based on data and balancing technology with the human side of work, leaders can create an environment where their teams feel supported and empowered. Learning from experience and leading with empathy helps ensure that creates a leadership model that motivates every employee to make the best contribution.”



AKSHAY LOOMBA

Senior VP and Head of Talent Acquisition

Q What fundamental shifts in perspective and practice are required for TA leaders to successfully transition from filling requisitions to shaping workforce strategy and employer brand in an AI-augmented environment?

A “TA leaders must shift in perspective from reacting to open roles to moving upstream, for example start using AI to shape workforce plans by advising business leaders on labor availability, cost, attrition risk and location strategy before hiring demand is finalized.

TA leaders should focus on operationalizing AI to deliver consistent, personalized and data-led candidate experiences at scale, while owning the employer brand through transparent, human-governed automation that reinforces trust, safety and long-term employment value rather than just filling jobs.”



JULIA MEYER

Head of Talent Development

Q How do you build trust when implementing AI in workplace learning?

A “AI is an enabler, not a replacement. To use it responsibly, align AI-driven learning with business priorities and pair innovation with empathy. A transparent, human-centered approach creates adaptive, inclusive experiences that amplify potential and build trust.”





ANDREW LAWRENCE

VP Team Member Development

Q What's the right balance between AI and human judgment in talent management and workforce planning?

A “AI should act as an accelerator and advisor, not an autonomous decision-maker. It brings speed, precision and personalization, while human leaders ensure empathy, context and accountability. AI can analyze large volumes of workforce data — skills inventories, performance metrics, engagement trends — to identify patterns and predict future talent needs. This enables proactive succession planning and targeted development investments.”

“DEI leaders must collaborate with HR, business units and executive leadership to embed inclusion into core business strategies. Engage with industry networks and community organizations to share best practices and amplify impact. Use compelling narratives backed by data to gain buy-in from stakeholders who may be skeptical in polarized environments.”



BRADY BAIR

Talent Development Director, Enterprise Programs, Human Resources, CNA



Q What role do you think AI should play in helping your organization make smarter, faster talent decisions while maintaining fairness, transparency and the human touch in talent processes?

A “AI should serve as an accelerator for insight, helping us identify patterns and predict learning needs faster, while leaving judgment and empathy to humans. By combining AI-driven analytics with transparent processes and human oversight, we can make smarter, fairer talent decisions without losing the personal connection that drives engagement.”

Q What fundamental evolution in thinking and expertise is required for talent management leaders to successfully navigate the convergence of people analytics, AI and strategic workforce planning?

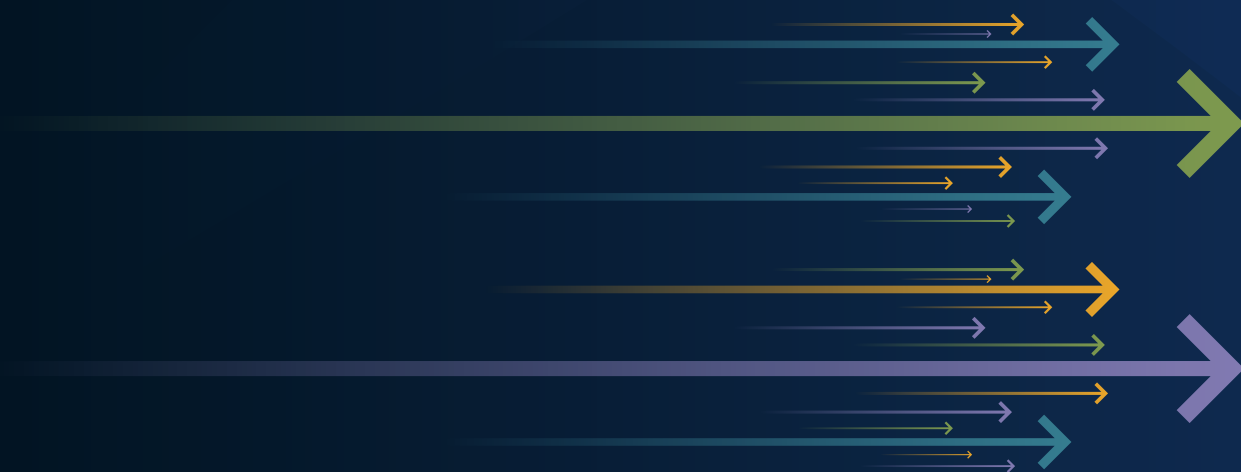
A “The role of talent leaders is shifting toward anticipatory, insight-led decision-making, where expertise in analytics, AI and workforce planning is essential. The goal is to harness technology to enhance — not replace — the human touch that drives engagement and leadership development. In a time of such disruption, leaders are our greatest lever for stability and transformation. They set the tone for adaptability, resilience and engagement—especially when business priorities shift rapidly. By equipping leaders with the right development experiences, we amplify their ability to guide teams through uncertainty, connect strategy to execution and sustain performance in a changing environment.”





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V2X is a leading global defense and government services contractor that provides integrated mission-critical solutions across the entire lifecycle of defense and national security operations. The company specializes in four core capabilities: operations and logistics, aerospace and aviation, training and technology services. V2X serves defense, national security and commercial markets worldwide, offering comprehensive support that enhances readiness, optimizes resource management and boosts security for government customers. With a converged, connected and committed approach, V2X links people, technology and capabilities globally to deliver proactive operational solutions that power a more ready force and responsive government.


www.trainingorchestra.com

Training Orchestra is a global leader in Training Resource Management Systems, providing award-winning software that optimizes instructor-led training operations for organizations worldwide. Founded in 2001 in Paris, the company serves over 600 clients across 20+ countries, managing more than \$6 billion in training budgets through its comprehensive platform. Their Training Management System automates and streamlines the entire training process—from session scheduling and resource management to instructor collaboration, cost tracking and reporting—helping L&D departments, training companies and associations “train more with less.” As a complement to learning management systems, Training Orchestra replaces manual processes and spreadsheets to increase resource utilization, optimize session scheduling and provide organizations with better control over their training investments.


www.siyonatech.com

SiyonaTech is an award-winning digital learning company that creates bespoke, high-quality custom digital learning experiences using their unique “Storytelling++” approach. Based in Brighton, UK and Zug, Switzerland, the company specializes in eLearning, gamification, immersive training, performance support and HR learning campaigns that go far beyond traditional “tick box” training approaches. With 122 industry awards—the highest award wins for a European company—SiyonaTech has established itself as an expert in creating compelling learning experiences that captivate learners and drive meaningful behavior change. The company’s mission is to inspire change and improve lives by designing inspirational solutions that have a positive impact on learners, working with major clients including Abbott, Swiss Re, HARMAN and numerous Fortune 500 companies.


www.tier1performance.com

TiER1 Performance is a strategic business transformation consulting firm serving Fortune 500 and global enterprises as an end-to-end organizational performance partner. The firm focuses on four core areas: People (culture, leadership, employee experience), Operations (cybersecurity, enterprise platforms, process improvement), Growth (customer experience, M&A, market expansion) and Evolution (digital and AI-driven transformation). TiER1 combines strategy and change management, leadership and culture development, learning and growth and experience enablement to help organizations address complex challenges. A certified B Corporation and SOC 2 compliant company, TiER1 delivers measurable, lasting results across industries including automotive, aviation, financial services, life sciences and retail.


www.novoed.com

NovoEd is a comprehensive AI-enabled talent development platform founded at Stanford University that helps enterprises and training providers transform their workforce through engaging, scalable learning experiences. The platform offers three interconnected products: Learn+ for organizationally-led learning, Mentor+ for relationship-based development and Practice+ for scenario-based skill building, all enhanced by NovoAI features that accelerate course creation and delivery. NovoEd serves major global organizations including Volvo, Intuit, Marriott International and USC, helping them address critical challenges in leadership development, employee onboarding, functional upskilling and sales enablement. With award-winning technology recognized by Brandon Hall Group, G2 and the Craig Weiss Group, NovoEd combines learning science with social and collaborative features to deliver measurable business impact, including better performance through the right skills, stronger talent retention and demonstrable ROI on L&D investments.


www.litmos.com

Litmos is a leading cloud-based learning management system (LMS) that delivers powerful yet easy-to-use training solutions trusted by over 4,000 top-performing companies and 30 million users worldwide. The award-winning platform features AI-powered tools for rapid content creation, automated course assignments and comprehensive training delivery supporting 37 languages across employee training, compliance, customer education and partner enablement. With limitless scalability and over 98,000 off-the-shelf courses from providers like Go1, Litmos enables organizations to launch training programs in minutes rather than months through seamless integrations with existing systems like Salesforce, SAP, ADP and Microsoft Teams. Customers like Mercedes-Benz and Coca-Cola rely on Litmos for its intuitive interface loved by both administrators and learners, robust reporting capabilities that measure real business impact and built-in eCommerce features that enable organizations to monetize their training content.


www.eightfold.ai

Eightfold AI is a talent intelligence platform that uses agentic AI and deep learning to transform how organizations hire, develop and retain talent. Built on over 1.6 billion career profiles, 1.6 million skills and 10 years of anonymized talent data, it provides a single AI-native system for talent acquisition, management, resource management and workforce exchange. Eightfold's AI Interviewer uses autonomous agents to screen candidates, conduct interviews and identify top talent, freeing recruiters to focus on strategic decisions. Trusted by Fortune 500 organizations including Salesforce, Coca-Cola Europacific Partners, Vodafone and the U.S. Department of Defense, Eightfold holds FedRAMP Moderate Authorization and ISO/IEC 42001:2023 certification, reflecting its commitment to responsible AI and high data-security standards.



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COMPANY**

www.regiscompany.com

The Regis Company is a learning technology provider behind SimGate™, the industry's first Skills Practice Platform, designed to transform learning design and delivery for global enterprises. The AI-powered platform enables learning leaders and instructional designers to create scenario-driven learning experiences 50% faster, using tools such as Design Co-Author, AI integrations with Synthesia and Pictory, adaptive learning and robust scoring and reporting. Trusted by Fortune 500 organizations including Abbott, Accenture, BCG, Deloitte, Eli Lilly and PwC, SimGate supports high-impact upskilling and reskilling programs with real-time analytics and behavioral insights. An award-winning solution recognized by Brandon Hall Group™ and Training Industry, The Regis Company operates as both a platform provider and partner network, enabling service and channel partners to deliver scalable, world-class learning solutions.


www.mentorcliq.com

MentorcliQ is an employee mentoring and community software platform used by over 6.5 million users at global organizations including Disney, AMD, Deloitte and Takeda Pharmaceuticals. As the largest provider in the category, with 3+ million mentoring hours logged and 450,000+ matches in the past 12 months, MentorcliQ enables talent and HR teams to scale mentoring programs and manage ERGs effectively. The platform features SMART Matching based on a Nobel Prize-winning algorithm, a Visual Personality Survey and flexible admin-led or self-directed matching options. Delivering measurable ROI, MentorcliQ achieves an average 32% reduction in employee turnover, rising to 62% when combined with CommunityCliQ, supported by reporting dashboards that track engagement, development, retention and business impact at individual, program and enterprise levels.


www.vantagecircle.com

Vantage Circle is a global employee engagement platform serving 3.2+ million users across 700+ companies in 100+ countries, offering integrated solutions for recognition, wellness, perks and feedback. Its four core products include Vantage Recognition, Vantage Fit, Vantage Pulse (eNPS-based surveys) and Vantage Perks, which provides access to 10,000+ discounts in 16+ languages. With average ratings of 4.7 across G2, Capterra and GetApp, Vantage Circle helps improve engagement and reduce turnover, with organizations reporting up to a 62% reduction in turnover when combining mentoring and employee community programs. Additional services include Vantage Swags for corporate gifting and AIRe Consultation for program audits and management, all supported by ISO certification and GDPR compliance.


www.chronus.com

Chronus is a purpose-driven development platform trusted by 830+ enterprise customers, supporting 3,000+ development programs and connecting 6.5 million users across 17,000+ communities worldwide. Its software suite includes mentoring solutions with proprietary Purpose Assessment technology and advanced SMART matching, along with Connection Communities software for managing employee resource groups and internal communities. Chronus serves corporations, government agencies, academic institutions, nonprofits and professional associations, helping organizations improve retention (including a 37% increase at T-Mobile), inclusion and belonging, upskilling, engagement and career development. Key features include AI-powered Guided Conversations, seamless system integrations, detailed ROI reporting and enterprise-grade scalability supporting organizations from hundreds to hundreds of thousands of users.


www.cognota.com

Cognota is a LearnOps software platform that drives operational excellence and business alignment for L&D, talent, HR, enablement and finance teams. Recognized as a category leader by analysts including Fosway Group, Brandon Hall Group and Talented Learning, Cognota delivers an all-in-one platform built around five core capabilities: Align (strategic intake and governance), Plan (capacity, budget and success metrics), Execute (AI-powered project management and facilitator scheduling), Measure (ROI and performance benchmarking) and Optimize (data- and AI-driven tool consolidation and continuous improvement). Organizations using Cognota achieve 7+ $\times$ ROI, payback in under six months and significant cost savings through smarter investment and tool consolidation. Beyond software, Cognota offers a complete LearnOps ecosystem through its community, Cognota Assist consulting, the LearnOps Academy certification program and free workshops to deliver measurable business impact.


www.explorance.com

Explorance provides feedback analytics software for course evaluations and institutional surveys in higher education and corporate learning through its flagship platform, Explorance Blue. The integrated platform offers end-to-end automation, deep LMS and SIS integrations and flexible configuration for decentralized institutions and is trusted by organizations including the University of Chicago, University of San Francisco, Boston University and Northwestern University. Explorance Blue automates the evaluation lifecycle—from multi-channel survey distribution to AI-powered reporting via Explorance MLY—while meeting WCAG 2.2 AA and Section 508 standards, ensuring data security and privacy and delivering 24/7 support and training through the Explorance Learning Academy to improve response rates, teaching effectiveness and data-driven decision-making.


www.easygenerator.com

Easygenerator is a user-friendly e-learning authoring tool trusted by 50,000+ authors at 2,000+ companies worldwide to create company-specific training at scale without technical expertise. Its drag-and-drop interface enables subject matter experts to build engaging courses for onboarding, compliance, sales, customer success, product training, health and safety and remote workforce learning. EasyAI, included in all plans, converts existing files or creates courses from scratch, while EasyTranslate enables instant localization across 75 languages. The platform supports flexible distribution through native LMS/LXP integrations and dynamic SCORM, offers support in 120+ languages and ensures enterprise-grade security with ISO 27001 certification, GDPR compliance and secure data centers in Frankfurt, Germany, helping organizations reduce training costs while scaling learning effectively.


www.trainery.one

Trainery One is a cloud-based talent management technology provider headquartered in Raleigh, North Carolina, founded in 1985. The company offers integrated learning and human capital management solutions designed to help organizations develop and retain their workforce through comprehensive training and development tools. Their product suite includes TraineryLMS (learning management system), CompBldr (compensation management software), ReviewCloud (performance management) and TRAKCoaching, serving over 50,000 users across 300+ clients throughout the United States. With over 35 years of experience and access to one of the largest online training content libraries in the market, Trainery One combines AI-powered features with customizable modules to support organizations from onboarding to employee development. The company was recognized on Training Industry's 2024 LMS Watch List for innovation and capabilities in the corporate learning sector.



Ignis AI

www.ignisai.ai

Ignis AI is a Boston-based predictive hiring and skills intelligence platform that uses artificial intelligence to transform talent acquisition and workforce development. Leveraging computational psychometrics, generative AI and human-centered design, Ignis AI delivers science-backed skills assessments, personalized coaching and faster hiring for individuals and enterprises. The platform enables hiring managers and recruiters to make smarter, more confident decisions with AI-driven insights, identify skill gaps and create actionable development pathways, with skills-based hiring at the core of its approach to redefining workforce success.



www.valence.co

Valence is a New York-based technology company that provides AI-powered leadership coaching at enterprise scale through their AI coach, Nadia. Founded in 2018, Valence has evolved from improving team collaboration to delivering personalized, always-available coaching grounded in organizational culture and values for a fraction of traditional coaching costs. In September 2025, the company raised a \$50 million Series B funding round led by Bessemer Venture Partners, with participation from Insight Partners and Resolute Ventures. Valence serves some of the world's largest companies including Delta and Experian, helping them transform performance management, feedback conversations and goal setting across their entire workforce. The platform combines cutting-edge AI research with research-backed frameworks to provide confidential, secure and compliant coaching that adapts to each user's needs while incorporating company-specific processes and values.



www.scheer-imc.com

Scheer IMC is a leading global provider of digital training solutions and enterprise learning technologies, founded in 1997 by Professor August-Wilhelm Scheer in Saarbrücken, Germany. With over 25 years of experience as an eLearning pioneer, the company serves more than 1,300 organizations worldwide across all major sectors, transforming learning experiences for over 10 million learners globally. Their comprehensive product portfolio includes the imc Learning Suite (learning management system), imc Express (AI-powered eLearning authoring tool), custom learning experiences and off-the-shelf content spanning cybersecurity training, employee onboarding and partner education. Scheer IMC operates through 12 locations across Europe, the USA, Singapore and Australia with over 400 employees and is part of the Scheer Holding innovation network. The company has earned numerous industry awards for its commitment to transforming enterprise learning strategies into measurable business success through innovative, human-centered learning solutions.

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André Carrack (andre.carrack@brandonhall.com) designed this report. André is a graphic designer at Brandon Hall Group™, responsible for creating high-quality visual assets across digital and print. With more than 20 years of experience, he brings a blend of precision and creativity to support the team's marketing and branding goals.



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