The Future of HR Has Changed

3 Ways HR Leaders Must Adapt

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Strong business and human resources (HR) leaders embrace change.

In fact, you might say that's the hallmark of this field of practice — HR leaders have always been a focal point of change within an organization, introducing new people, policies, and technology to the teams that need it most.

But something unique is happening in the post-pandemic landscape of 2022, and it's having a deep impact on HR providers: the pace and scope of the changes taking place are completely unprecedented.

Before the pandemic, digital transformation was a competitive advantage, but an optional one. It was often cited as a priority for HR and business leaders, but not treated with urgency. Today, however, digital transformation is table stakes for identifying and meeting the needs of your workforce and monitoring the productivity of that workforce — two foundational elements of companies that will thrive post-COVID-19.

To further complicate the matter, change is taking place at different levels. The role of HR is expanding significantly, and, at the same time, so is the role of technology within HR. Moving forward, companies need to rethink how technology supports the role of HR to create a positive feedback loop that equips your workforce with the tools they need to succeed and empowers your HR and business leaders with the workforce data they need to make sound strategic decisions.

While it would be impossible to catalog all the nuanced ways in which the changing role of HR will continue to evolve, every company should be alert to the following three notable shifts in the industry:

Three ways HR must adapt to the future world of work:

1. Unpredictable Business Environment Requires Flexible, Agile Response
2. HR Automation Takes on Administrative Burden
3. HR's Seat at the Leadership Table Requires a Holistic, Future-Focused View

① INDUSTRY SHIFT NO. 1: UNPREDICTABLE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT REQUIRES FLEXIBLE, AGILE RESPONSE

The upheaval and uncertainty of operating through a global pandemic helped organizations become aware of just how widespread the impact of global events can be. From The Great Resignation, where an abnormally high rate of United States (U.S.) workers voluntarily quit their jobs, to the surge of remote work, companies have been forced to acknowledge incoming changes as quickly as possible and be flexible and agile in response.

Unfortunately, it's not as easy as simply deciding to be flexible. According to research from Gartner, organizations struggle to equip employees to be responsive to this change because of common work friction points like misaligned work design, trapped resources, overwhelmed teams, and rigid processes.

Work friction keeps employees from being responsive

Misaligned work design

I've had to create processes for my job where non existed.

Overwhelmed teams

The volume of tasks keeps rising.

Trapped resources

We don't tweak the operating budget throughout the year once it's set.

Rigid processes

It takes too long to secure sign-off for new approaches or ideas.

Gartner reports that organizations "can't respond as quickly as conditions require," and work friction keeps employees from being responsive (Source).

These workplace friction points fall on top of a situation that is already challenging for HR leaders who must wear many hats to support employees in a tight labor market with a limited budget — all while building a cohesive company culture and maintaining compliance.

Moving into a post-pandemic era, HR leaders cannot overlook the importance of replacing the old way of doing business with a way of operating that is more flexible and responsive, based on connection and automation. A modern HCM's features like workflow automation,

integrated data, and an intuitive user experience are often exactly what's needed, allowing an organization to give employees a single core system of record that creates more clarity. And on that foundation of clarity, HR, people leaders, and employees have stable ground from which to operate: adjusting to change, making informed choices quickly, and moving forward with confidence.

2 INDUSTRY SHIFT NO. 2: HR AUTOMATION TAKES ON ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, workplaces around the globe went through a significant amount of change. The Great Resignation led to increased turnover rates, and the shift to remote work required a lot of organizational shuffling. With all of these changes came increased administrative work that burdened HR employees with a never-ending to-do list. Traditional HR systems have had an extremely hard time keeping up with the increased task list, and the manual processes that had to be completed quickly became overwhelming. Which explains why so many HR leaders began to move toward HR technology that could automate and streamline those manual tasks.

HCM solutions are intended to make life easier for people leaders, HR managers, and employees. Without these systems in place, the errors and time involved with the manual effort to complete business operational processes can have a significant impact on a company's profitability, productivity, and overall efficiency, and a company can see slowed processes like the following:

Talent acquisition and employee retention

The cost of hiring and retaining good employees is considerable for many businesses. The average U.S. employer spends around $4,000 and takes 52 days to hire a new employee. If an employee leaves, it costs as much as 33% of that worker's annual salary to replace them — and a bad HCM can add to these time and hiring costs, either by what it can't do or what it does poorly.

For example, if your system doesn't have position-based hiring capabilities, when re-filling a position, you may spend more time having to re-enter all the position details like pay rate, org structure, or qualifications because the outdated system cannot retain all that data even when an employee leaves, making succession planning more difficult.

A subpar onboarding experience can also affect employees. Instead of focusing the majority of their time on learning and getting comfortable in their new position, you may be sticking them with a mountain of paperwork and a lot of distracting back-and-forth with HR.

Payroll

Payroll is a complex process with a lot of moving parts that require significant time and high attention to detail. According to a recent survey, payroll taxes alone can take up to five hours per pay period to process. That's five hours that could be better spent on something else.
An HCM that can't handle end-to-end payroll processes can keep you locked in a series of manual tasks and siloed information. Without the ability to connect payroll with employee information, onboarding, taxes and compliance, and reporting, each of these have to be handled as separate workflows or in separate systems that don't share data, requiring you to hunt down information from other departments, update information in multiple places in multiple systems, and take time to find and fix the errors that inevitably occur with manual work.

Time and attendance

Time theft in some form, whether it's an employee recording time they didn't actually work or spending time on personal tasks during the workday, is a real problem that leads to lost productivity, and it's committed by 43% of employees. Add to it the fact that having to manually track time and attendance in an outdated system is itself a time-consuming task.

If employees can't accurately track time and attendance in your HCM, or if you don't have a good way to reconcile timesheets and track PTO accruals, there's no way to rein in those costs. And if your system has a cumbersome time and attendance process, everyone that has to engage with it is wasting valuable hours on the task.

Compliance

The cost of non-compliance with various laws and regulations today is now 2.71 times the cost of compliance. That means whatever you're spending on a combination of legal expertise and technology systems to help you maintain compliance is a smarter investment than taking your chances without it — and risking major fines, lawsuits, and other costly damage from violations.

Though rare, a non-compliant HCM can saddle you with undue risk — and can be more expensive in the long run if you run into compliance trouble. There are a plethora of forms and reporting requirements associated with the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), unemployment claims, and many others that have to be handled accurately and within correct timeframes. When it comes to business compliance, any mistakes or competency gaps in your HCM can leave you vulnerable.

When you eliminate manual processes to support workforce management, you get a system that is...
- **Efficient**
- **Modernized**
- **Accurate**
- **Cost-Effective**

Upgrading an organization's HCM system is a powerful way to avoid costly manual tasks like those listed here. If an existing technology stack is too old, prone to errors, or limited in its functionality, an integrated system like SynchHR can help a company save costs and spend less time on back-office processes by integrating payroll, time tracking and attendance, and talent acquisition — plus benefits administration, performance management, employee onboarding, and other critical HR processes — in a single, business-compliant system.

3 INDUSTRY SHIFT NO. 3: HR'S SEAT AT THE LEADERSHIP TABLE REQUIRES A HOLISTIC, FUTURE-FOCUSED VIEW

For the first few decades of its existence, the HR function focused on managing relations with labor and retaining talent. But today, the demands on HR are much more far-reaching, and it is often used as a way to align the entire executive team to the overall organization. This is a prominent theme in industry analyst Josh Bersin's research on the future of technology and HR professionals: HR tech continues to evolve beyond core HR and payroll functionality to include talent management and collaboration tools that facilitate remote work.[1]

The Transition from HR Tech to Work Tech

Core HR and Payroll	Talent Management	Work Tools
Time and Attendance Scheduling, Safe Workplace	Recruiting, Learning, Talent Marketplace, Culture, Leadership	Communications, Goals, Project Mgt., Collaboration Safe Workplace, Attestation Scheduling, Case Management

HR Tech	Workplace Tech	Talent and Learning Tech	Team Tools	Productivity Tools

Safety	Pay	Benefits	Job	Workplace	Team	Inclusion	Career	Leadership	Culture	Mission	Goals	Projects	Activities	Results

1. *Source: Josh Bersin*[2]

1 "These are the changes coming to the HR tech market," HR Executive, https://hrexecutive.com/these-are-the-changes-coming-to-the-hr-tech-market/?eml=20201027&oly_enc_id=
2 "These are the changes coming to the HR tech market," HR Executive, https://hrexecutive.com/these-are-the-changes-coming-to-the-hr-tech-market/?eml=20201027&oly_enc_id=

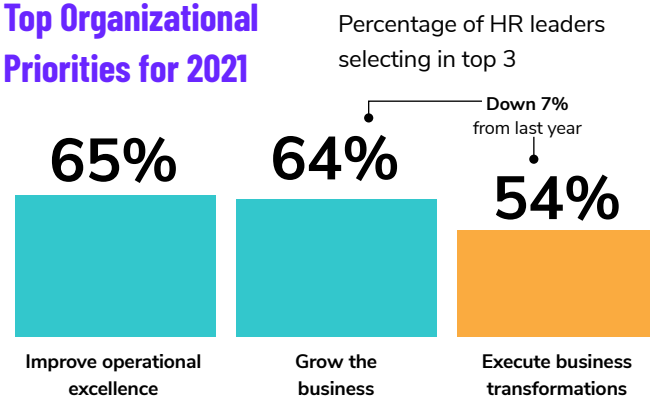HR leaders are more than capable of being this strategic partner, but there's just one problem: successfully thinking about and managing cross-functional and horizontal operations requires HR and people leaders to be able to understand the big picture of how a business operates and manages its workforce. And that can be a monumental challenge, if not an impossible one if HR is not equipped with modern, up-to-date HCM technology that enables a holistic view of the organization.

When HR leaders have access to the HCM technology they need, they gain peace of mind and confidence. Their HR data is easily updated and accessible in real-time via a single core system of record, they can distribute work to the source and remove manual processes, and they can experience less friction and more speed across the employee lifecycle thanks to next-generation automation and dynamic workflows.

When looking into the future, an HR leader empowered with this holistic view can peer into the fabric of the organization's past, present, and future workforce composition – providing instant access to key information, like current headcount compared to budgeted – across time. In this way, an organization can understand not just past behaviors and movement into the future, but also identify gaps that are holding the organization back from its full potential.

Top Organizational Priorities for 2021

Percentage of HR leaders selecting in top 3

65%

64%

Down 7% from last year

54%

Improve operational excellence

Grow the business

Execute business transformations

Operational excellence, business growth, and business transformation are top priorities for HR leaders (Source).

SyncHR's unique position-based architecture protects organization charts from completely collapsing as people enter and leave. Critical position data remains, even as employee data is archived or removed. Controlling and projecting headcount becomes easier, onboarding and termination are more efficient, and financial planning is more accurate.

"

HR has always been important, but in this new world of flexible work and with new opportunities and challenges, there is an opening in front of us where, professionally, [HR] has to define and develop new skills and processes to optimize what is expected of them—and that's to make sure the human capital of a corporation is seriously engaged and inspired and believing."

- Albert Bourla, CEO of Pfizer Inc, quoted by SHRM

"

Previously manual processes and data consolidation that used to take us days can now be done in a matter of minutes with SyncHR... It's not only much faster and easier, but we also know the data is accurate and up to date so we can use it for other purposes like forecasting, budget planning, and helpful with any required compliance reporting."

– VP of Human Resources at a leading commercial refrigeration and HVAC/R provider

Let Strategy Be Your Strong Suit

Imminent change may threaten to throw you for a loop. But change also reveals new opportunities to strengthen and fortify your company's approach to workforce management and HR operations. As you revisit all of your existing tools, technology, and processes, you'll unearth new sources of data, efficiency, and productivity that end up giving you back your power.

With new insights into how individuals and teams within your organization spend their time, a holistic view of the future, and the ability to respond in a flexible and agile way, you'll be unstoppable. Whatever comes your way, you'll be able to identify it, respond to it, and mitigate it in a way that was unthinkable just a few years ago. That's the power of HCM technology — and the power of SyncHR.

Get your power back today — with SyncHR by PrimePay

SyncHR is disrupting the manual, time-consuming, error-ridden operations that hold you back. SyncHR's cloud-based full-suite HCM eliminates repetitive manual tasks like data entry and re-entry, giving your team more time back in their week to focus on higher-value strategies that foster sustainable growth, greater productivity, and more profitability using fewer resources. With SyncHR on your side, you can handle anything the changing future of HR might require.

PrimePay is with you every step of the way.

PrimePay delivers highly configurable cloud-based software and services enabling clients to hire and retain great talent, manage and pay their workforce, and optimize their business in an ever-changing compliance landscape. Learn more at primepay.com or reach out at (833) 968-6288 to connect with one of our experts today.

UNDER 149 EMPLOYEES?
Learn how we are uniquely positioned to serve organizations with an employee size under 149.

150-500+ EMPLOYEES?
Learn how we are uniquely positioned to serve organizations with a large employee count.

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