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COLLABORATING WITH EMTECH:
THE FUTURE OF HR

Accelerated by the last two years of the pandemic, Human Resources or Human Capital Management has now reached its inflexion point. Technology now presents a greater impact on the future of work and the workforce.

Tech-enabled HR management has fast become a priority for most organizations.

Having and using the right technology for digital transformation of people and processes are key to delivering a competitive edge. EmTech or emerging technologies are bringing forward innovation and applications of new age -concepts like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), big data, the metaverse and more—and HR leaders who aim to understand this phenomenon from the get-go are and will continue to be pivotal to the evolving future of work.

In this article, Kingsley Gate aims to understand the relevance of these technologies, its collaboration with human capital, and the way forward for organizations.



In 2022, we stand at the helm of automation and its relevance to HR processes. With time at a premium and targets looming large, emerging technologies are being progressively used to automate and improve basic HR processes like recruitment, onboarding, data collection, updating and maintaining currency of personal records. Artificial intelligence is also being used for critical repeatable tasks that require reminders, follow ups, discovery, cadence, or standardized responses to queries on communication and information platforms.

An effective use of AI in recruitment is using the emtech to **screen and shortlist candidates** that match the selection criteria for a job role in a fraction of the time as against the traditional approach.

One example is when Schneider launched its Open Talent Market in 2020—an innovative application of AI in HR helped place the company's considerable internal expertise where it is most needed. The platform currently performs three functions:

- matching employees to vacant roles
- helping them find a mentor
- connecting them to side projects.

Conspicuously, it puts employees in control of their own careers. People are free to share whatever personal information they feel is relevant to their career aspirations and goals, such as competencies, skills and goals, which is then matched by the system's algorithms to the new job requirements of the company.

38,000 of the company's 75,000 white-collar workers have already enrolled and there's a plan to make it available to the blue-collar workforce via on-site kiosks.¹

Another example is the AI-powered decision support tool designed by IBM. The tool assists a critical function like **compensation planning**. This helps line managers avoid underweighting or overweighting critical data points. The application reviews dozens of data points before making its recommendations, integrating both information from external sources like the Bureau of Labor Statistics while calibrating internal decision points such as the cost of replacement. The application is currently being deployed for tens of thousands of first-line managers to assist with their compensation planning, following the successful early trials in some geographies that have a large employee base.

IBM also emphasizes transparency in AI-based compensation support. Employees can see where they sit relative to the market, because the low and the high range of compensation for workers with their skills is provided, in addition to their personal salaries.²

Chatbot conversations too can be set up to deeply analyze and study a potential candidate's technical skillset and EQ. With AI, one can interpret a candidate's social media presence by crawling through interactions in the public domain and highlight key relevant attributes. This, naturally, gives an insight into the work style, ethics, and other relevant attributes. HR practitioners can therefore easily use these tools to pick and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce where gender, race, ethnicity, ability etc. will be treated equally without bias.

Learning and Development programs are fast becoming one of the go-to recommended applications of artificial intelligence. These platforms not only add value to the individual at a professional level but also help speed up the knowledge capital and skill base of the organization leading the growth and development. This clearly helps create a digital space within the organization that augments and elevates the career trajectory of employees according to their individual needs leading to retention and higher motivation levels.

IBM, for example, provides high quality career guidance to all employees, regardless of level, with their personal advisor, Watson Career Coach (WCC)—an AI assistant that brings the benefits of career coaching to all of IBM. The personal advisor interacts with employees who are thinking about future opportunities. It gets to know the current mindset of the employee by asking and answering questions with natural language while integrating with historical information available with the company.³

Employees can also collaborate with peers and distant colleagues using these emerging technologies to host meetings, interviews, discussions, and other forms of engagement in real time, sitting next to each other without travelling. This further improves the ability of organizations to control travel costs while retaining an immersive experience of a physical meeting or a social interaction in the virtual world.

That said, companies are finding ways to use these pathbreaking and disruptive technology with the careful calibration. The metaverse, for example, can be used to gamify team building engagements and social interactions.

¹RACONTEUR: How one company used AI to transform talent

²IBM: The Business case for AI in HR

³IBM: The Business case for AI in HR



THE MULTIVERSE OF THE METAVERSE

The last few years the tech world has been building and moving towards a converging platform that is an immersive, connected, online and a three-dimensional universe called the Metaverse.

With the convergence of these multiple technologies like the Metaverse, Edge computing and AI, we are beginning to realize Experiential internet aka the Internet of Experiences. When personal experiences are shared to collaborate over digital platforms, human-centric HR gets amplified to drive better employee experience and manage the retire to hire processes. Technology led ecosystems to Institutionalize culture is key to organizational success in today's hybrid mode post-pandemic digital era," said Pravin Hungund, Ex Chief Technology Officer, Wipro / Currently Chapter President VRARA (VR /AR Association).

The multiverse has managed to bring together people across the globe together in one room, collaborating virtually with their colleagues through their avatars. Gaming, VR and AR are right at the precipice of it with a potential to segue us into the interphase between the virtual and physical world.

At the recruiting stage, this has evolved into a more experiential exploration of a potential candidates' skills.

The metaverse has tremendous potential at a recruiting stage. Some use cases are assessing a candidate's ability to solve a problem with a code/debug a code, figure out a technical glitch in a process at a junior/ mid-junior level or participate in senior level (virtual/ AR based) leadership deliberations to aid taking hiring decisions," said Vikrant Kapur CHRO, better.com

With more people working out of their homes, especially in the information technology enabled domains, metaverse could be the answer to build more employee engagement opportunities.



CONCLUSION

However, as they say, with great power (of technology), comes great responsibility.

Bringing in new technology can sometimes prove to be difficult and disrupting. It affects existing jobs and vested interests, and, therefore, may require strong commitment and leadership from the organization—as well as effective change management strategies and initiatives.

Such pathbreaking and disruptive technology requires careful calibration. Total dependence on AI can lead to loss of personal interaction that can be potentially isolating for new recruits. Appropriate intervention from the organization may be required to deliver the much-required human touch.

This is where organizations need to deploy smart human resource professionals who bring together appropriate elements of strategy, transformation, and change management. Organizations that are able to identify the quick wins in its own setting are able to get on with the journey much faster. It goes without saying that innovation in Human Resources could quickly deliver the competitive edge in a highly competitive talent market.

The future HR leader of a company has to bring this understanding of how to:

- Embrace these technologies • Manage change
 - Deliver real impact to the business including productivity and effectiveness of human capital.
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Looking at the talent market, such roles not only require a high degree of creativity and exposure to technology but also the functional ability to deploy these critical processes in quick time. It is this coming together of multiple competencies that make such roles extremely critical for organizations and difficult to find. Therefore, finding the right people or building the right team structure assumes great importance.

Titles/Roles such as Chief Innovation Officer, Chief Transformation Officer are being given to spearhead this change and Kingsley Gate Partners is privy to some searches where innovation and change management brought forward by digital transformation is being looked at by progressive organizations as the growth drivers of the future.

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