



New Perspectives: Elevating Technology's Role in People Management

Redefining Approaches to People Management

The ongoing pandemic is dismantling traditional attitudes towards ways of working while radically accelerating our reliance on technology. Given that HR professionals reside at the collision point between technology and the workforce, the long-term, strategic significance of HR's role is becoming increasingly important. Ultimate Kronos Group (UKG), Smart WFM, and Connect Media recently united leading HR professionals from a variety of sectors for a candid conversation on elevating technology's role in people management.

Understanding the Collision of Technology and Culture

Technology's role in the people management space has undergone a significant transformation over the past decade. Historically, technology was developed and implemented in siloed environments with a view to make operational changes rather than holistic business transformation. Change management was relegated to an afterthought, and due consideration was not given to the end-user. Now, as technology becomes thoroughly integrated in our ways of working, it's crucial that the end-user is at the forefront of the design and implementation process, and their voices heard throughout the transformation journey. HR leaders are now recognising that adopting technology in work environments does not necessarily equate to digitisation.

Cross-functional efforts are required for both getting the technology right and communicating the benefits of the change to the organisation's people increase adoption.

The steps are:

- 1 Have a clear vision.**
Craft a cohesive "why" so end-users know the overall purpose and how change is going to benefit them.
- 2 Turn the vision into an actionable strategy.**
Create a step-by-step plan of what needs to be done to realise the benefits.
- 3 Dedicate the right resources.**
Put the right people in place, from the executive sponsor to the project team, to the change advocates. Make sure everyone knows their role.
- 4 Revisit and sustain the vision.**
Keep momentum throughout the entire project, and ensure decisions are made in alignment with the project's initial vision.

As technology continues to advance at an incredible rate, human lag and limitations on our ability to adapt are limiting potential. HR leaders must work with executive leadership to address cultural roadblocks in their organisations, establish a unified vision, and identify the tools and technologies that will allow full potential to be reached, or exceeded.





Positioning Technology in Your Business

The distinction between humans and technology has slowly eroded. As the complexity and efficiency of technology increases, and human capabilities are enhanced with diverse tools, people's value in the workforce has become intimately connected with technology. This relationship has accelerated to a new level in the broader context of the ongoing pandemic. The trend of technological advancement has advanced as the pandemic spurred new levels of digital reliance and distorted the line between works and personal spaces. Whilst this trend is industry agnostic, it has been particularly pronounced in the healthcare and retail sectors, where digital reliance increased significantly.

It is crucial to recognise that our IT landscape is becoming heavily intertwined with, if not indistinguishable from, our workforce experiences. A failure to recognise and address the deep impacts that

technology has on our workforce is not so much a failure of technology as it is a failure of leadership. Leaders need to set an example by adopting a model of communication, collaboration, problem-solving, security, ethics, and project management.

Finding ways to strategically balance the inherent conflicts between humans and technology will underpin future stability. That is not to say that HR leaders need to entirely reorient their core skills, but they need to understand how to apply new technology to traditional HR practices. Technological developments should never be viewed as replacement or redundancy. It's important that HR leaders understand how technology frees up resources and automates manual processes, enabling people to focus on strategic work and streamlining change management.

Flexing with the Times: Building and Retaining Digital Muscle

It is inevitable that technology will continue to expose new redundancies in the ways we work. In order to remain relevant and competitive, businesses need to be agile, flexible, and responsive in the face of change. An example of how organisations can put this into practice is by quickly building up digital muscle across the organisation; that is the ability of people to strengthen their core digital competencies, while flexing to absorb new technological developments.

This requires less of a focus on specific digital tools, but rather a broader connection of technical and interpersonal skills and frameworks. The value of digital muscle has been amplified in the pandemic environment as talent shortages in technical and analytical areas emerged. By building internal capabilities and more closely connecting individual employees with an organisation's strategies, business leaders can more effectively retain the muscle they need to compete.

The Road Ahead for HR Professionals

The pandemic amplifies the strategic importance of HR management, as many successful leaders define themselves by connecting and empowering workforces. As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, it is clear that the technological strides made in people management will be integrated into new, hybrid models of work. Looking ahead, HR leaders must continue to hone their understanding of how technology will shape patterns of work – not just from an efficiency angle, but through a change management and cultural lens too.

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