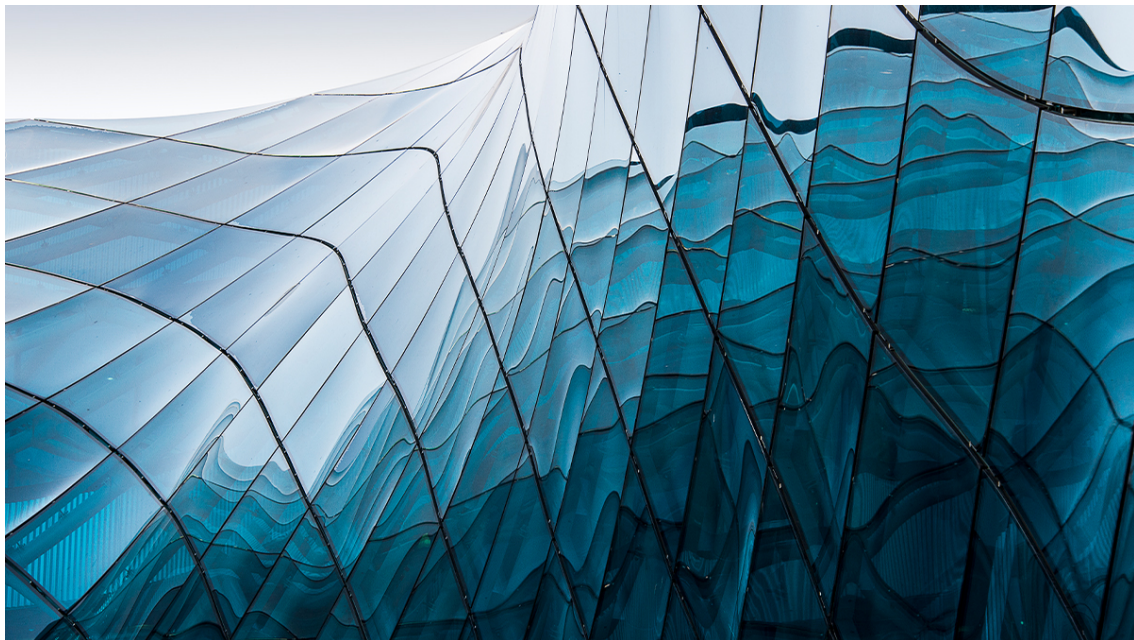


21 HR Jobs of the Future

by Jeanne C. Meister and Robert H. Brown

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Guy Lambrechts/Getty Images

Summary. The Cognizant Center for Future of Work and Future Workplace jointly embarked on a nine-month initiative to determine exactly what the future of HR will look like. They brought together a network of nearly 100 CHROs, CLOs, and VP's of talent and workforce transformation to envision how.. [more](#)

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The Coronavirus has drastically reshaped the economy and the labor force. Since its rapid spread around the globe, we have experienced titanic shifts in how we work, where we work, and the technologies we use to stay connected.

Such massive change is escalating the importance of HR's role within organizations. Workers are turning to their managers and their HR leaders, in particular, for guidance on how to navigate their "new normal" — research indicates that 73% of workers depend on their employer for support in preparing for the future of work. Just as CFOs have greatly increased their scope since the 2008 financial crisis, CHRO's now have that same opportunity to become central C-suite players.

We believe this is HR's moment to lead organizations in navigating the future. They have a tremendous opportunity, and responsibility, to provide workers with guidance on the skills and capabilities they will need to be successful over the next decade as new roles continue to emerge.

With that in mind, The Cognizant Center for Future of Work and Future Workplace jointly embarked on a nine-month initiative to determine exactly what the future of HR will look like. We brought together the Future Workplace network of nearly 100 CHROs, CLOs, and VP's of talent and workforce transformation to envision how HR's role might evolve over the next 10 years. This brainstorm considered economic, political, demographic, societal, cultural, **Explore HBR** business, and technology trends.

Follow HBR on Instagram: Join the 2.3 million readers keeping up with the latest in management. The result was the conception of over 60 new HR jobs, including detailed responsibilities and skills needed to succeed in each role. We then created a ranking of each job by its organizational impact,



allowing us to narrow the list to an initial 21 HR jobs of the future.

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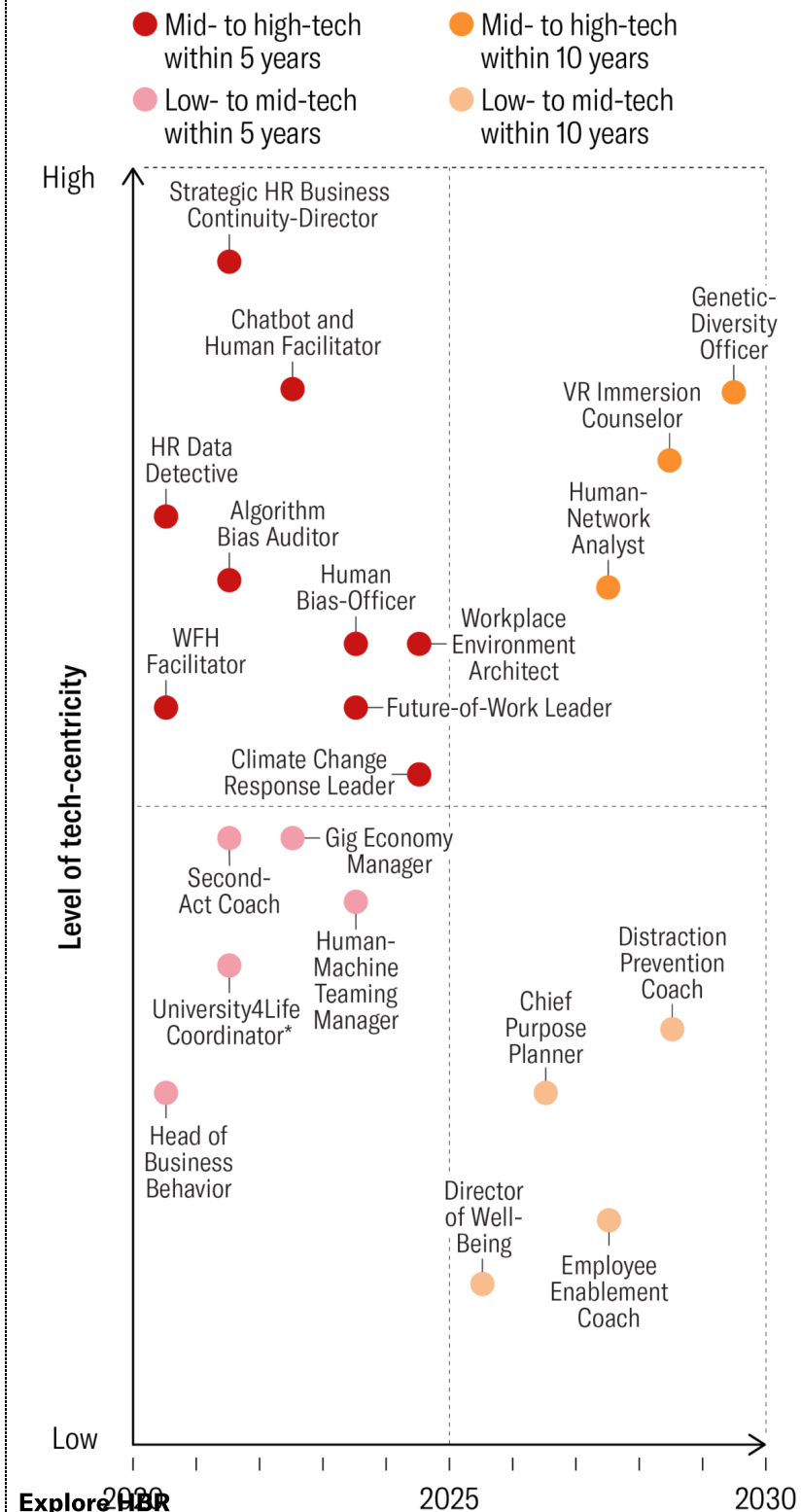
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21 HR Jobs of the Future

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How nearly 100 CHROs, CLOs, and VPs of talent and workforce transformation envision HR's evolution over the next 10 years.



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*In the role of a Learning Coach, this role guides lifelong learners toward the best, most relevant programs for their individual needs.
Source: Cognizant Center for the Future of Work and Future Workplace LLC



We arranged these HR jobs on a 2×2 grid; the X-axis depicts time, and the order in which we expect them to appear over the next 10 years, while the y-axis depicts “technology centrality” (i.e., all jobs will utilize innovative technologies, but only the most tech-centric will actually require a grounding in computer science). Furthermore, each job was analyzed in the form of a job description (overall requirements, specific responsibilities, skills/qualifications, etc.) similar to those an HR organization will need to write in the coming decade.

In some ways, the advent of Covid-19 compressed time like an accordion, resulting in a handful of these roles becoming “jobs of the now.” The 2020s will be a reset moment for HR. We fully expect to see more examples of these theoretical “jobs-made-real,” by visionary leaders in the coming months and years. As we’ve long maintained, before it can be built, it has to be dreamed.

While some of the roles we identified are entirely new positions, others are new responsibilities that are becoming increasingly important as HR re-imagines and reboots its strategy in light of the pandemic. All 21 jobs embody five core themes we came across in our research.

Individual and organizational resilience. The worldwide remote work measures taken in response to Covid-19 have caused the digital economy to grow more rapidly than ever before, along with our “always on” culture and the stresses of managing work-life balance. These challenges have put a new emphasis on the importance of worker health and wellness — and not just in terms of physical health.

For HR professionals, this means the future of work will include developing a stronger focus and a more holistic view of employee wellbeing, one that encompasses the emotional, mental and spiritual **In management.**

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health of workers along with the physical. (Even before the virus, Gallup reported two thirds of full-time workers experienced burnout on the job.)

This paves the way for a new HR role focused on well-being as a business strategy for increasing employee retention — and not just an office perk. For example, the role Director of Wellbeing could provide strategic management over wellness and design services and practices to nurture the emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual health of all employees. We are already seeing some companies hiring for the Director of Wellbeing role, and expect to see more within the decade as we believe the future of work will increasingly be the future of worker wellbeing.

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Today, with more than 88% of knowledge workers now doing their jobs remotely, this role would need to work cross functionally to make sure employees outside of the office are receiving the same benefits as those working onsite. That's where we see the role of a Work from Home Facilitator

coming in. This person would ensure that the organization's processes, policies, and technologies are optimal for remote workers. A key metric of success for this role would be to build remote workers' strong sense of belonging within the organization, ensuring that they know their purpose and feel deeply cared for.

Organizational trust and safety. HR professionals are in a unique position to be guardians and models of an ethical and responsible workplace. As organizations invest in digital transformation

initiatives and establish a “data culture,” we believe the expectations to uphold this responsibility will increase.

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~~Just~~ ~~last~~ ~~year~~, ~~joint~~ ~~research~~ ~~conducted~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~attitudes~~ ~~toward~~ ~~AI~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~workplace~~ ~~by~~ ~~Oracle~~ ~~and~~ ~~Future~~ ~~Workplace~~ ~~found~~ ~~many~~ ~~people~~ ~~were~~ ~~concerned~~ ~~about~~ ~~data-security~~ ~~breaches~~. ~~Of~~ ~~the~~ ~~8,370~~ ~~HR~~ ~~leaders~~, ~~hiring~~ ~~managers~~, ~~and~~ ~~workers~~ ~~surveyed~~ ~~across~~ ~~ten~~ ~~countries~~, ~~71%~~ ~~were~~ ~~“at~~ ~~least~~ ~~sometimes~~ ~~concerned”~~ ~~and~~ ~~38%~~ ~~said~~ ~~that~~ ~~they~~ ~~were~~ ~~“very~~ ~~concerned”~~ ~~about~~ ~~data~~ ~~breaches~~. ~~In~~ ~~fact~~, ~~80%~~ ~~of~~ ~~respondents~~ ~~said~~ ~~their~~ ~~company~~ ~~should~~ ~~ask~~ ~~for~~ ~~permission~~ ~~before~~ ~~using~~ ~~AI~~ ~~to~~ ~~gather~~ ~~data~~ ~~on~~ ~~them~~.

This is a problem. LinkedIn research found that 67% of hiring managers and recruiters said AI saves them time as they source job candidates. But questions are now being raised around this technology and its potential for bias, inaccuracy, and lack of transparency. Every time an employee clicks, likes, and swipes on their social media channels, they reveal their interests, preferences, intent, and location to anyone equipped to collect this data — including HR professionals. As a result, employees’ awareness about privacy and how much they are willing to blithely share is intensifying.

The need for data privacy in the age of algorithms has amplified the need for more systems with humans in the loop to ensure fairness, explainability, and accountability among senior HR leaders. We believe this could lead to HR roles such as the Human Bias Officer, responsible for helping mitigate bias across all business functions. These professionals would ensure that people are treated fairly throughout the entire employee lifecycle — from recruiting to off-boarding — regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, background, age, or culture.

In addition to Human Bias Officer, another new role aimed at ensuring employee safety has already emerged: Strategic HR Business Continuity Director. This person leads the HR response team and works with the CEO, CFO, CIO and the Facilities Director to propose how to create a safe workplace — for both onsite and remote workers. Elizabeth Adefioye, Senior Vice President and CHRO of Ingredion, has incorporated emergency preparedness and business continuity in

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her senior HR role. Says Adefioye, “Since the Covid-19 pandemic, I have been partnering with our CEO and key executives from the technology, finance, communications, and facilities departments to develop a phased, safe global approach to returning to the workplace.” According to SHRM research, this is a key objective for CHRO’s as, 34% of organizations did not have an emergency preparedness plan prior to Covid-19 pandemic.

Creativity and innovation. As business leaders envision new ways to grow their organizations in the midst of rapid change, a new role at the intersection of corporate strategy and HR must arise. The Future of Work Leader, would be responsible for analyzing what skills will be most essential as the workforce continues to evolve. This role would focus both on setting the organization’s strategy for the future of work, as well as proposing reskilling and upskilling efforts for current employees. The position would also synthesize big-picture inputs from academia, industry association, and competitive threats in the marketplace to envision new jobs and skills critical to the organization’s continued success.

Furthermore, as meetings and trainings continue to go virtual, another role we imagine is the VR Immersion Counselor. This role would help realize the potential of using virtual reality to scale training programs for a number of use cases, including onboarding, coaching, reskilling, upskilling, and even medical, and safety training. H&R Block is an example of a company that has already been using virtual reality simulations to train customer service representatives to de-escalate customer interactions. By practicing how to respond to difficult customer questions in a virtual reality simulation, the company has seen a 50% decrease in dissatisfied customers with 70% of H&R Block customer service representatives preferring virtual reality simulations to traditional forms of learning. Already, research from ABI, sees the VR training market reaching \$6.3 billion by 2022.

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Data literacy. ~~Follow now~~ ^{Not today} Currently, only a few HR functions are building analytics capabilities into their teams to solve key people challenges – such as uncovering why one team performs better than another, or how their organization can create a more diverse and inclusive culture. In the future, we believe more HR teams will follow in the footsteps of other departments, like customer experience and finance, and adopt this practice, taking on a more data-driven function. Doing so would allow them to provide more accurate insights around everything from employee performance and retention to the engagement level of C-suite leaders.

At a time when data scientists are in short supply, however, a new role, HR Data Detective, could help bring about this change. This person would be responsible for synthesizing disparate data streams (such as employee surveys, learning management systems, and benefits portals) to help solve business problems. Equally comfortable with being “in the weeds” of big data as well as seeing and explaining “the big picture,” data detectives would gather and compile HR-pertinent insights to help improve employee performance and drive better results for the whole business.

We predict companies like Genentech that have already begun building this kind of data literacy into their business functions will have a competitive advantage. Chase Rowbotham, head of People Analytics at Genentech, says, “As remote work becomes the new normal, we are able to gather insights from our HR information systems to develop a number of new HR practices such as training managers of remote workers on successful strategies for leading a remote global team to ensure both productivity and continued employee engagement.”

Human-machine partnerships. As the use of robots in companies continues to increase, it has become apparent that there is a need for human-machine collaboration in the workforce. Judgment is usually easy for humans, but still hard for computers. Robots are very good at the “science” of a job, especially when reliance on computational capabilities, analysis and pattern recognition poses questions on the

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most appropriate action to take next based on all data available.

Humans are very good at assessing situations, or the “art” of the job, and essentially asking, “What is the right thing to do in a given situation?” Sorting out the balance of the “art of the job” (for humans) vs. the “science of the job” (for bots) will likely result in the creation of new HR roles focused on how both can work together intuitively.

One new job that could be created is the Human-Machine Teaming Manager, a role that operates at the intersection between humans and machines and aims to create seamless collaborations. These managers would look for ways to increase cooperation rather than competition.

For instance, James Loo, Head of Human Resources at DBS Bank (Taiwan) sees a possible new job role, ChatBot Coach, responsible for creating a seamless a candidate experience. According to Loo, “A Chatbot Coach would work with the DBS Bank recruiting team, to train the chatbot to handle the routine tasks of screening candidates and answering frequently asked questions of candidates, while the human recruiters have more time to focus on strategic areas such as engaging with hiring managers to better understand the need for a new job and the changing needs of the business for new hires.”

Keep in mind, many of these new roles would rely on the creation of other jobs of the future (predominantly in HR), some which have already been created and many of which haven’t been “invented” yet. For example, a Human-Machine Teaming Manager may find themselves working with a Chatbot Coach to enhance an AI-powered candidate experience. These dependencies would also inform career paths. Someone with several years’ experience as an HR Data Detective may be a prime candidate for the role of Head of Business Behavior, another new HR job of the future.

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Do you have a question about the future of HR? Are you looking for new HR roles? On the contrary, now is the time for HR leaders to plan for future growth. If we look back just a few years, several new HR jobs were just being created including the role of Financial Wellness Manager,



~~Follow now~~ ~~Not today~~ which has now been widely adopted. In fact, a survey released by the Employee Benefit Research Institute shows that about half of companies with more than 500 employees now offer some sort of financial wellness program; 20% are actively implementing these programs for their employees today, and a further 29% are interested in implementing a financial wellness program in the future.

The Global Head of Employee Experience is another example of a new HR role that has emerged in the last few years. This role is best exemplified by the Chief People Officer of Airbnb who re-imagined the role by bringing together disparate people, technology and real estate functions to create a consumer grade employee experience. As of June, 2020, organizations such as ABN-AMRO, ING, IBM, HPE, Novartis, and Walmart have HR professionals with this title.

All this to say, change is coming, and it's best to get a head start. Companies that can anticipate their organization's future HR roles are not only in a position to outperform competitors, they are also squarely positioning HR as a strategic business driver. As new and existing roles evolve, the most successful organizations will have a clear understanding of what needs to change to meet future business priorities (both anticipated and unanticipated). You never know — one day soon, you might be recruiting someone to fill any of these 21 jobs, or doing one yourself.

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