

10 HR Trends as Generative AI Expands in the 2025 Workplace

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The unprecedented rise of generative AI, the growth of AI agents, and the need to apply digital and human skills in every job, demonstrate how AI is transforming the workplace.

In 2025, a growing number of organizations will move from experimenting with generative AI to making it an essential part of their business planning process, transforming key functions from customer service to supply chain and human resources.

Here is my countdown of what to consider as you include generative AI as part of your HR roadmap for 2025.

1. AI Agents Will Proliferate And Become The Killer App In The AI Era

AI agents are rapidly becoming the “killer apps,” of the AI era. AI agents are a combination of a large language model (LLM) and a traditional software application that acts independently to complete a task. Various types of AI agents are emerging, from specialist agents with a defined set of repetitive tasks, such as answering employee inquiries, to co-worker agents that participate in brainstorming sessions, and respond on Slack, to supervisor agents that oversee the work of multiple types of agents. Deloitte's Global 2025 Predictions Report predicts 25% of

enterprises who use generative AI plan on deploying AI agents by 2025, growing to 50% by 2027.

Workday recently announced Recruiter Agent, designed to create job descriptions, source candidates, and schedule interviews, while also providing insights to present top candidates for consideration. Humans will still make the hiring decision, but AI agents will be configured for specific tasks will handle most of the labor-intensive part of recruiting. Mayfield, a global venture capital firm, refers to the growth of AI agents as "Cognition as a Service," where AI performs cognitive tasks that augment human expertise.

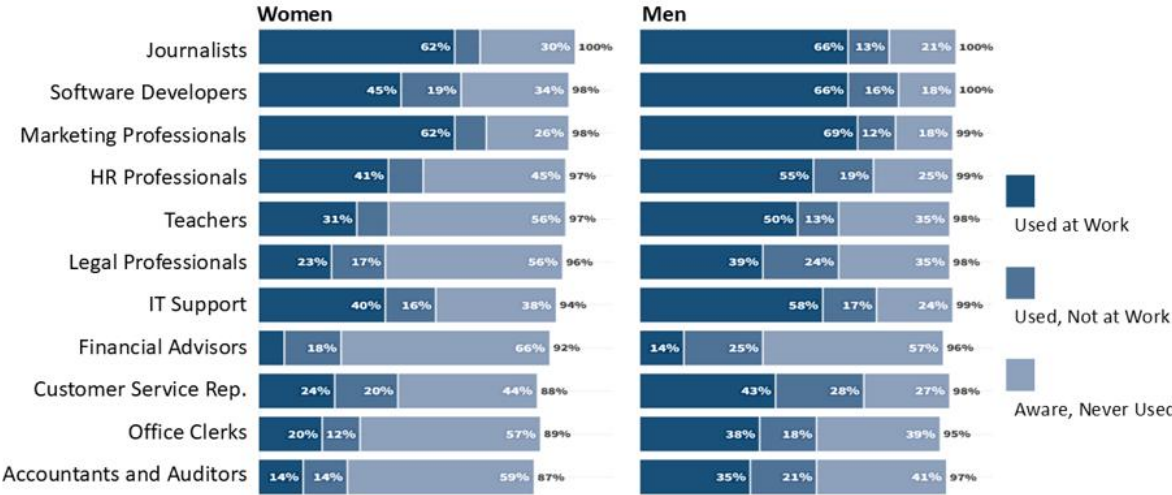
2. The Generative AI Gender Gap Needs To Be Closed

Women were much less likely than men to use generative AI in 2023. 50% of men report having used gen AI over the previous twelve months, compared to 37% of women.

This gender gap is even more pronounced for younger employees. Slack Workforce Lab reports that men between 18 to 29 are 25% more likely to have experimented with artificial intelligence technology than their female counterparts.

The Slack survey also found a gender gap in the adoption of ChatGPT. Women are 20 percentage points less likely to use ChatGPT compared to men in the same occupation.

Figure 1: Adoption of ChatGPT across Occupations, by Gender



Source: University of Chicago, Becker Friedman Institute for Economics, 2024
 Jeanne Meister LLC

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University of Chicago, Becker Friedman Institute for Economics, 2024

A gender gap is also present among frequent users of generative AI, with more men using AI on a weekly basis than women. Research from the Federal Reserve Bank Survey of Consumer Expectations finds this gender gap is not driven by demographic characteristics such as income, education, age, or race. Instead, it is due to whether workers have been trained to use generative AI and their attitudes toward privacy and trust. Women tend to be more concerned than men about the negative consequences of sharing data.

This highlights the need for training programs to address gender disparities and ensure equitable access to generative AI.

3. Generative AI Is an Opportunity to Upskill and Reskill Workers

The World Economic Forum's Jobs Initiative study found that close to half (44%) of worker skills will be disrupted in the next five years and 40% of these tasks will be affected by generative AI tools. Research from Boston Consulting Group report more than half of workers are aware of coming disruptions in their fields and are willing to reskill to remain employed.

More companies need to follow the lead of IKEA, which reskilled 8,500 customer service agents for new roles as virtual interior design consultants. This happened as the IKEA bot trained in customer service began managing 47% of customer inquiries. IKEA reskilled customer service representatives to become interior design consultants, generating a new revenue stream of \$1.4 billion of virtual interior design.

IKEA's reskilling efforts provided customer service representatives with new skills and the organization with a new revenue stream.

4. Tech Jobs Will Become Ubiquitous

As technology becomes central to the operations of organizations, all jobs will have elements of technical fluency. "Advances in technology are reinventing work and expanding the definition of 'tech jobs' to include virtually all roles across all industries," notes Melissa Matlins, Global Head of Workforce Solutions, Pearson.

As tech jobs become ubiquitous, employers will expect all workers to have some level of digital expertise. Think of nurses who now need to understand data analytics as well as patient care, and teachers who can personalize learning by using Khanmigo as their AI powered teaching assistant. For job seekers, this means having a digital fluency in knowing when and how to leverage generative AI for both increased productivity as well as a creative resource. Matlins notes Pearson is seeing this change in the types of Credly badges issued in 2023. These range from Generative AI Overview for Project Managers to Generative AI in Modern Marketing. By 2028, Pearson estimates technology augmentation of jobs will impact 11.2 million jobs with technical and human skills blended into every professional job.

5. Leaders Will Need To Adapt To An AI Accelerated Workplace

There is much discussion about how AI will transform the workplace, from automating jobs, creating new jobs, and re-designing current jobs. While the focus has been on how workers will face a learning curve, leaders will also need to adapt as AI expands across the organization.

First, leaders must recognize the pool of generative AI talent is not limited to data scientists and software engineers. McKinsey estimates 88% of workers who use generative AI are in nontechnical jobs ranging from healthcare to education and human resources. Leaders will need to encourage team members to not only experiment with AI in their jobs but also share results. Next, leaders will need to adapt AI tools themselves to keep pace with their teams. If a dozen team members can now do the work of 30 powered by AI, leaders will need to develop new capabilities in using AI, delegating, verifying the work of AI, and understanding what is truly means to be the “human in the loop.”

6. Middle Managers Have An Opportunity To Humanize The Workplace

It’s not only leaders who need to adapt to AI, as middle managers will also be impacted by AI. Middle managers report the highest levels of stress and burnout and lowest levels of work-life balance according to Future Forum. In their 2024 Workforce Trends Report, Leapsome finds over 50% of workers say their mental well-being has deteriorated last year, accelerated by layoffs at the senior levels, leaving middle managers with filling leadership gaps and fueling burnout.

As teams start using generative AI, the middle manager’s job will evolve to managing blended teams composed of human and digital assistants. This will require middle managers to develop “collaborative intelligence,” becoming orchestrators and creative thinkers to guide and enhance the capabilities of digital assistants. This collaboration will allow middle managers to develop uniquely human skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and complex problem-solving, allowing them to spend more time on people related parts of their job. I call this the humanization of the workplace as middle managers, who traditionally spend roughly half of their time on administrative tasks and only one quarter of their time on managing direct reports, can now devote more time to supporting direct reports and nurturing creativity, collaboration and innovative thinking in the workplace.

7. Workers Choose Flexibility Over Salary When Looking for a New Job

Research from FlexJobs’ State of the Workforce Report found remote work topped the list of factors workers consider most important in a job (81%), surpassing salary (77%). Over half (58%) of workers in FlexJobs’ Wellness Workforce Report finds employees willing to accept a pay cut in exchange for the option to work from anywhere, with 31% of workers willing to accept a cut of 5%, and almost 20% willing to accept a 10% cut, for the freedom to work from anywhere.

These findings have two implications for organizations. First companies that embrace flexible work will have an advantage in sourcing talent from companies that impose harsh return-to-

office (RTO) mandates. Research shows RTO mandates can impact women, especially those who desire flexibility in child bearing years.

Secondly leaders will align talent strategies with flexible work policies. As I outlined in my column, the Future of Hybrid Work, instead of implementing one-size-fits-all RTO policies, more companies need to shift hybrid policies from where to how. This is already happening at Allstate with its intentional hybrid work policy giving team leaders the autonomy to figure out a rhythm of working that works best for their team members. Team based flexible work policies must also include shift schedule flexibility to frontline workers, who want and deserve flexibility. This shift in hybrid work policies in 2025 will be away from an overly simplistic mandate, to one which focuses on how teams work best.

8. Companies Will De-Stigmatize Workers Who Have a Physical or Mental Condition

The Qualtrics Employee Experience Trends Report finds 25% of 35,000 global workers report having a long-lasting physical or mental health condition with 23% saying this impacts their daily activities. When Qualtrics asked a similar in 2023, 15% of workforce reported having a physical or mental condition. Benjamin Granger, Chief Workplace Psychologist at Qualtrics believes there are a few reasons for this jump notably, the societal definition of having a disability has expanded over time, and more workers with a disability are able to join the workforce and work remotely.

With one quarter of the working population reporting a physical or mental condition impacting their daily work, HR and business leaders must go beyond launching Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to address this. Instead, leaders must invest in training managers to be aware of the growing population of workers with physical or mental conditions, educate them on the range of invisible mental health conditions, (i.e., mental illness, neurodiversity) and encourage them to use inclusive language focusing on how to support workers with different abilities.

Bryan Gill, Head of JPMorganChase Office of Disability Inclusion and Neurodiversity is doing this. The Office of Disability Inclusion was launched in 2016 to close the employment gap for the disability community. "We consider disability inclusion to be a business imperative, as these individuals bring a unique set of skills and perspectives, representing the customers and communities we serve," says Gill. The Office of Disability Inclusion trains managers to lead with empathy, improves the overall employee experience for workers with different abilities, and provides managers with easy access to a centralized workplace accommodations team.

9. Entry Level Jobs Must Be Re-invented to Create AI-Human Hybrid Roles

As AI takes on more routine functions in sectors ranging from law to marketing research, consulting, graphic design, tax preparation, and technology, we must address the impact of AI on entry level jobs.

The Brookings Institute finds the tasks involved in entry-level knowledge jobs are much easier to automate than the ones done by supervisors.

What will this mean for career progression? Molly Kinder, Fellow at the Brookings Institute asks, “Will firms be willing to hire recent graduates as apprentices, to watch and learn — even if there isn’t anything immediately useful for them to do? If so, how many?” And what does on-the-job learning look like if AI handles nearly all the work that junior staffers once performed?

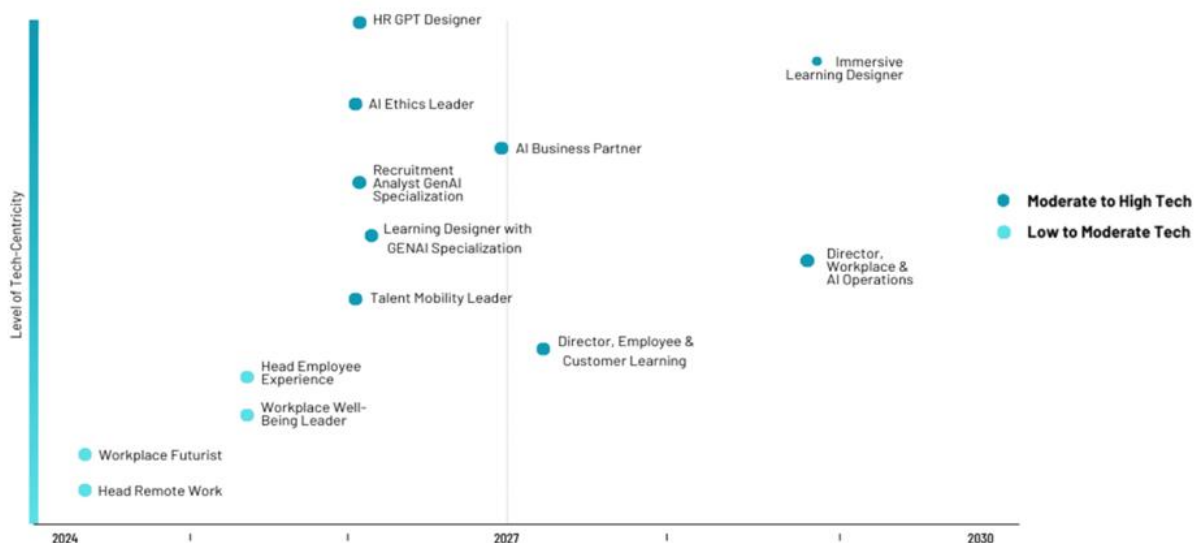
One strategy is to create AI-Human Hybrid roles which give entry level professionals the responsibility for AI oversight and as well as completing professional tasks. These AI-Human Hybrid roles can focus on learning what to delegate to AI, checking the accuracy of AI delivered tasks and spending more time working focused on strategic projects and communicating the results to the organization.

10. Generative AI Will Transform the Future of HR Jobs

HR leaders need to apply a continuous learning mandate advocated for the rest of the organization to HR teams. In my article, 13 HR Jobs of the Future, I discuss how generative AI is transforming HR, not only automating processes but creating new jobs. While some of these HR jobs are new workstreams, others are new positions, such as AI Ethics Leader, AI Business Partner, or HR GPT Designer, designing custom AI agents.

The 13 HR jobs of the future underscore how leveraging AI in HR is not a zero-sum game. Some roles in HR will be new, like Director Workplace & AI Operations, others will leverage generative AI to automate manual work; but most HR jobs will evolve to include new ways to activate generative AI into current HR roles.

Figure 2: 13 HR Jobs of the Future



Source: Jeanne Meister LLC, 2024

Figure 2: 13 HR Jobs of the Future

Jeanne Meister LLC

As generative AI continues to transform the workplace, jobs are going to evolve, roles are going to shift, and organizations will need to rebalance their workforces for a future where employees and AI work in partnership to augment human intelligence.