

HR's Messiest Challenges of 2025

HR Executive | Jill Barth | December 22, 2025



From generational friction to AI transformation gone sideways, HR leaders faced unprecedented complexity in 2025. These stories capture the year's thorniest workplace challenges, the leaders who tackled them head-on and the lessons learned when traditional strategies no longer worked. Here's what defined one of HR's messiest years yet.

Focusing on people

Can Boomers and Gen Z really work together? HR's next big challenge: Given rising age diversity in the workplace, experts say that managers and leaders, guided by HR, need to be more intentional about bringing together workers across generational divides.

As chronic illness drives persistent high-cost claims, how HR can strategize: A small share of individuals account for a disproportionate amount of total healthcare use and spending, according to a new report.

HR's challenges and opportunities as the pace of change shows no signs of letting up: Three CHROs share their approaches to change management and transformation—and the skills it takes to succeed.

When workplace solutions became workplace problems

The technology adoption paradox. When workplace solutions create new challenges: While some of the world's largest companies have successfully integrated tech into HR, some unexpected issues have arisen.

10 ways CHROs can strengthen people strategy in a changing workplace: Leading transformation isn't just about technology, according to this expert. It's about preparing employees, strengthening skills and guiding the workforce through uncertainty.

To win with gen AI, what CHROs, CLOs and CIOs must do differently: Gen AI is not a tool; it's a transformation. That's why siloed adoption strategies are failing. Here's what HR and other leaders can do to align their functions and strategies.

The CHRO role reimaged

Rethinking leadership (again). What CHROs need to know: The most potent, data-backed insight from a recent study is this: Work has become so distributed that leadership itself must be distributed. Four practices from i4cp to support leaders' effectiveness.

Sustainability as a talent tool? Make it genuine, these CHROs say: Employees increasingly crave purpose-driven work, including with employers that invest in sustainability efforts. Here's how Pandora, IKEA and Bloom Energy are aligning their talent and sustainability strategies.

The new-age CHRO is driving innovation at the intersection of IT and HR: The CHRO role is shifting to lead culture, innovation and collaboration with IT in an AI-driven, post-pandemic world.

Why this CHRO says it's time to 'destroy' traditional workplace culture: Traditional strategies for developing workplace culture—which are brought to life through recognition, L&D, benefits and more—aren't working for frontline employees.

The changing CHRO role, leading 'organizational evolution' in the age of AI: Misaligned organizational structures are a bigger barrier than many realize, according to the author of a new book.

The bold shift to a skills-based workforce. A CHRO's perspective: Citizens has been migrating to a skills-based workforce for several years. Get the story about what works, and what doesn't, from the org's CHRO.