

Research report

The changing face of HR research report

What makes HR teams feel unstoppable

Sage



Introduction

The state of change in HR never stops

HR, the world of work, and the world itself is changing. **91%** of HR leaders and **96%** of business execs told us last year that the scope of HR has changed dramatically over the last 5 years. **96%** of HR professionals we polled this year said they expect the profession to change significantly further over the next 5 years. Whether it's effectively managing hybrid working, an increased focus on well-being, more visibility thanks to technology and data, or understanding the role of AI, HR leaders are at the forefront of change. That itself won't change.

The report 'The changing face of HR' looks at how the world of work and HR is changing, what it means for HR professionals, and what lies ahead. Over time, we've seen HR leaders steer organisations through the war for talent, a pandemic, a shift in hybrid, and flexible working, the Great Resignation and everything in between—with the list continuing to grow.

Is the rate of change slowing? This year's research indicates not. In fact, **95%** of HR leaders are taking on more responsibilities than ever. **91%** told us their workload and hours have increased.

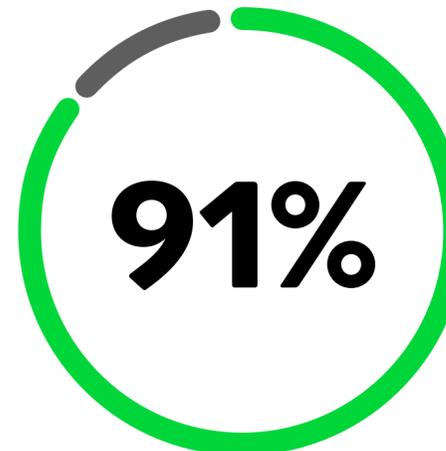
In this report, we'll uncover what changes are underfoot right now, how HR leaders feel about and are dealing with those changes, and what lies ahead. We'll look at how the role of analytics in HR is changing, what's keeping HR professionals up at night, and how AI is shaping the future of HR. With deep dives into the data, and expert viewpoints, we'll reveal the secrets to success, and equip progressive HR leaders with the insights and knowledge to get ahead.

We'll cover:

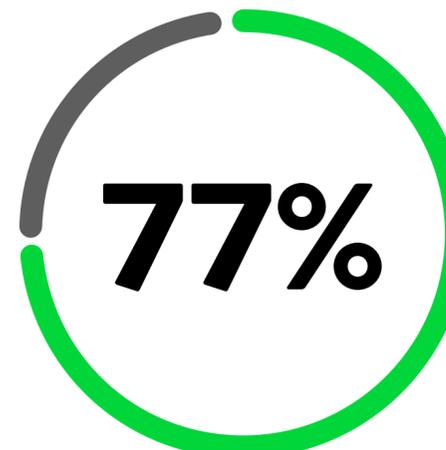
- HR here and now.
- The future of HR.
- Your next steps.



95% of HR leaders have taken on more responsibilities in their role in the last year.



91% of workloads and working hours have increased in HR teams over the last year.



77% say AI has the ability to revolutionise ways of working in their company.

Foreword

A foreword by the CPO of Sage, Amanda Cusdin

Unstoppable. It's not often a word HR leaders may use to describe themselves. Our research over the next few pages reveals that HR teams are managing higher workloads, increased responsibilities, and are feeling more burnt out. Yet when we asked if they feel unstoppable, **78%** said yes.

Why? Because HR leaders get into the profession to affect change. They told us they love what they do, and the opportunity to develop effective leaders and skilled colleagues for a changing business and workplace. We get into the business of people because, ultimately, many of us want to make a difference. Because being successful in your role as a HR leader is a great feeling. When your company has an infectious culture and your people are thriving, it's like flying.

I decided to pursue a career in HR because I'm fascinated by the impact people can have on organisations, society, and the world—and the opportunity to harness that into meaningful change that drives companies forward. I love working in HR because it's such a varied role and is critical to enable successful organisations. It requires real flexibility in skills and capabilities. It encourages me to grow and develop every single day.

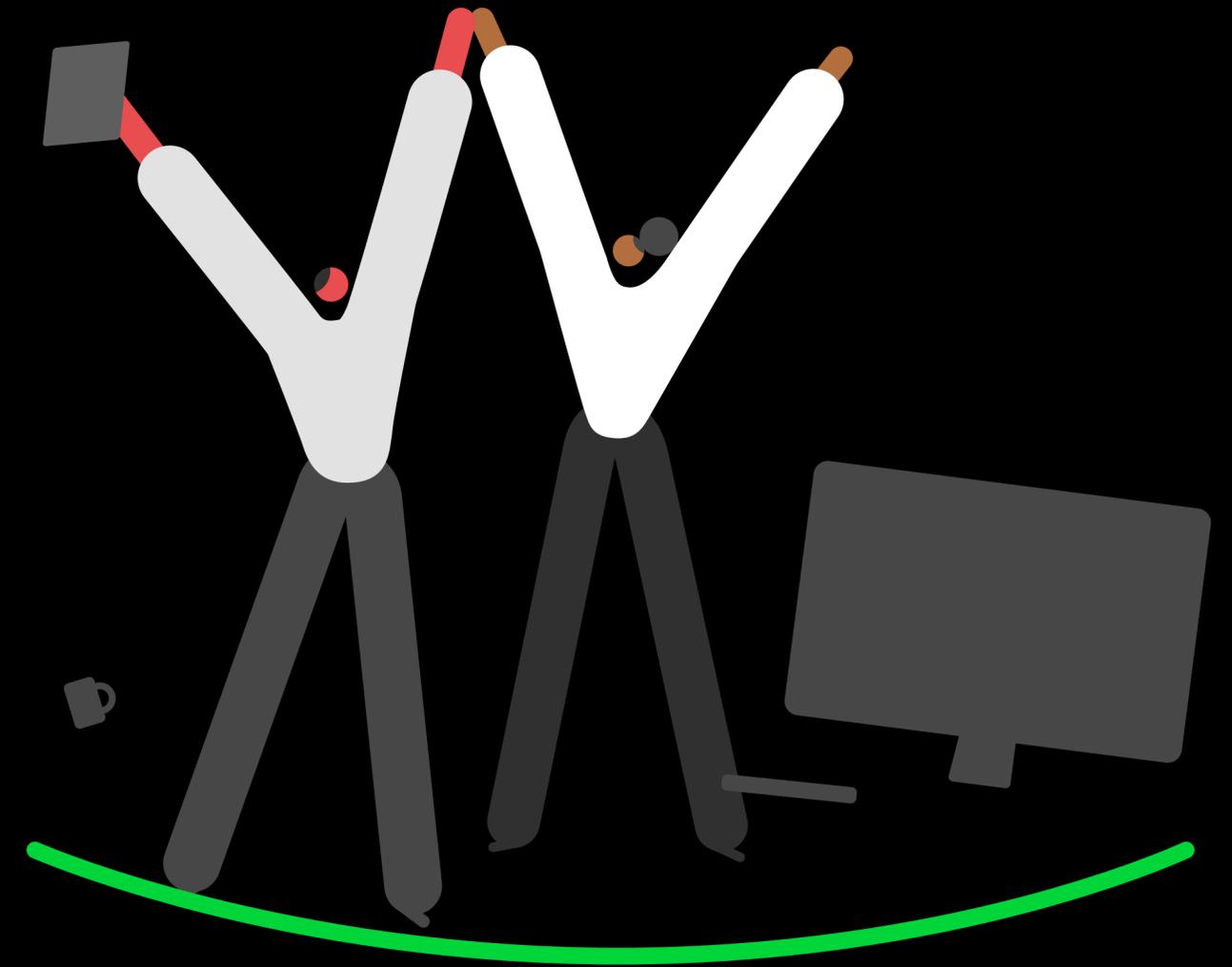
It's a pleasure to introduce this year's 'Changing face of HR' report. The insights HR leaders shared with us, their thoughts on the future, and the role of technology are invaluable—and uncover more about what gives HR professionals that unstoppable feeling.

After all, a business is not the things it sells. It's not the assets it owns. It's the people. It comes down to the things that truly matter: your people and building great experiences for them. That's what makes business flow—and you feel truly unstoppable.



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HR leaders reveal all: who we polled

Over 1,000 HR leaders told us exactly what keeps them awake at night, what they're working on, how they're using tech like AI, and how they feel about the future of HR.

Quantitative research with over 1,000 respondents across a range of sectors



50% From small business
20-249 employees

50% From medium business
250-2,500 employees

Across the following countries



HR leaders with a range of roles, including:



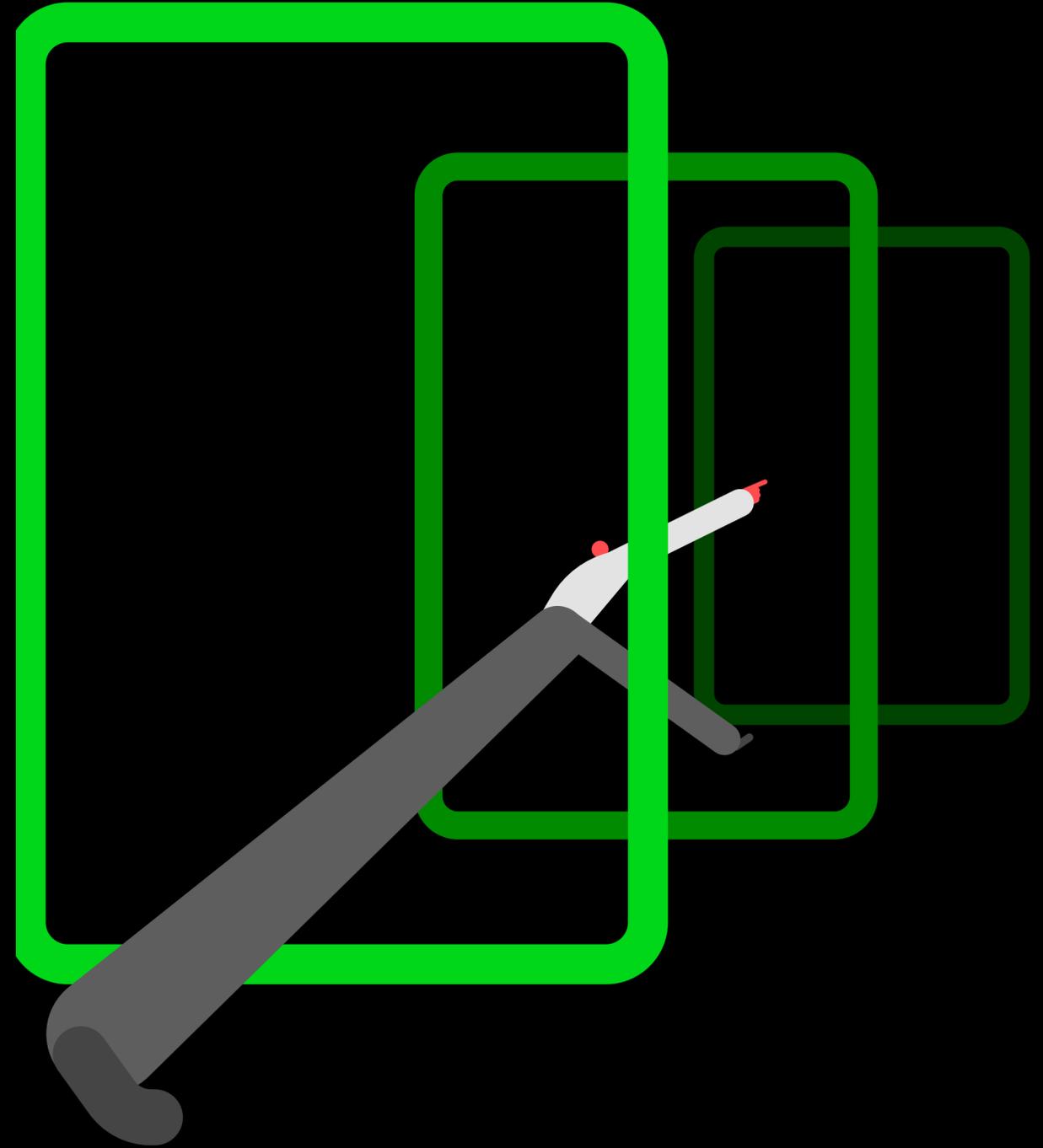
- HR Director
- Head of HR
- CPO
- VP of HR
- HR Business Partner

Across a range of sectors

- Financial services
- Professional services
- Technology
- Business services
- Telecommunications
- E-commerce
- Insurance
- Media
- Not for profit
- FinTech
- SaaS
- Pharmaceutical
- Biotech and life sciences
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Retail
- Hospitality
- Utilities
- Wholesale distribution
- Real estate
- Agriculture

Research findings

HR here and now



HR here and now

HR leaders are feeling change more than ever

Change is the only constant

Never has that been truer than of HR leaders over the last few years. Covid may be over, but the reverberations continue as HR leaders continue to battle the ongoing challenges of managing hybrid workforces, workforce planning in times of uncertainty, and simply keeping all the many ever-changing workforce plates spinning.

95% of HR leaders told us they took on more responsibilities over the last year. **91%** said their workload and working hours had increased. **96%** said they don't see changes in HR slowing down any time soon and expect HR's role to continue to change over the next 5 years.

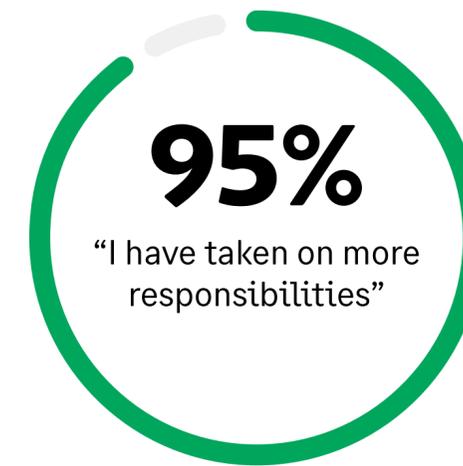
What does this mean for HR leaders?

Christine Temple, Chief Consulting Officer at employee branding company Exaqueo, explains that change is a good thing, particularly for a profession whose role is to support a company's biggest asset for growth—its people. She explains: "HR has always existed to enable and support the talent that a company has. This hasn't changed. What is changing is the way HR is supporting their organisations in doing this."

"2020 was the inflection point for change. Now, in what feels like 'overnight' for many, work environments are being redefined"

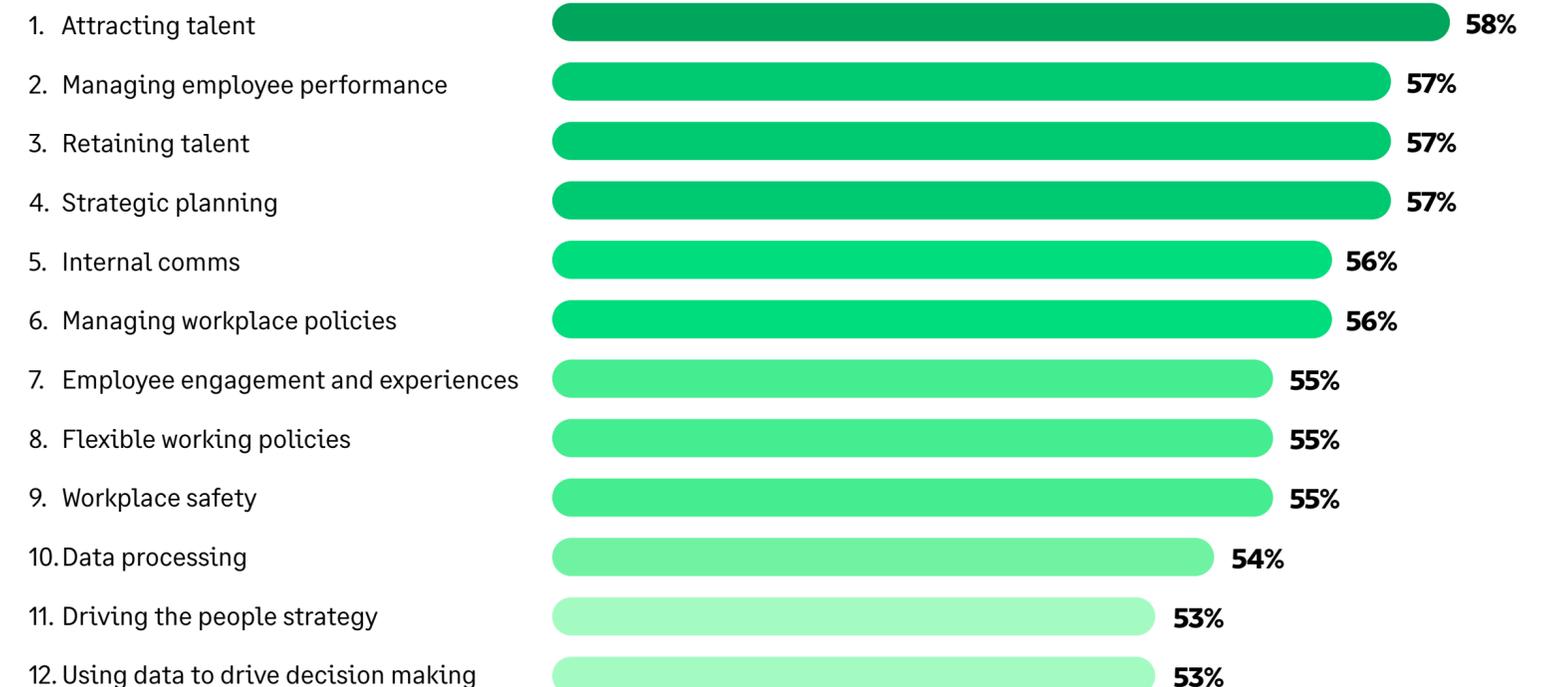
Christine Temple

Chief Consulting Officer, Exaqueo



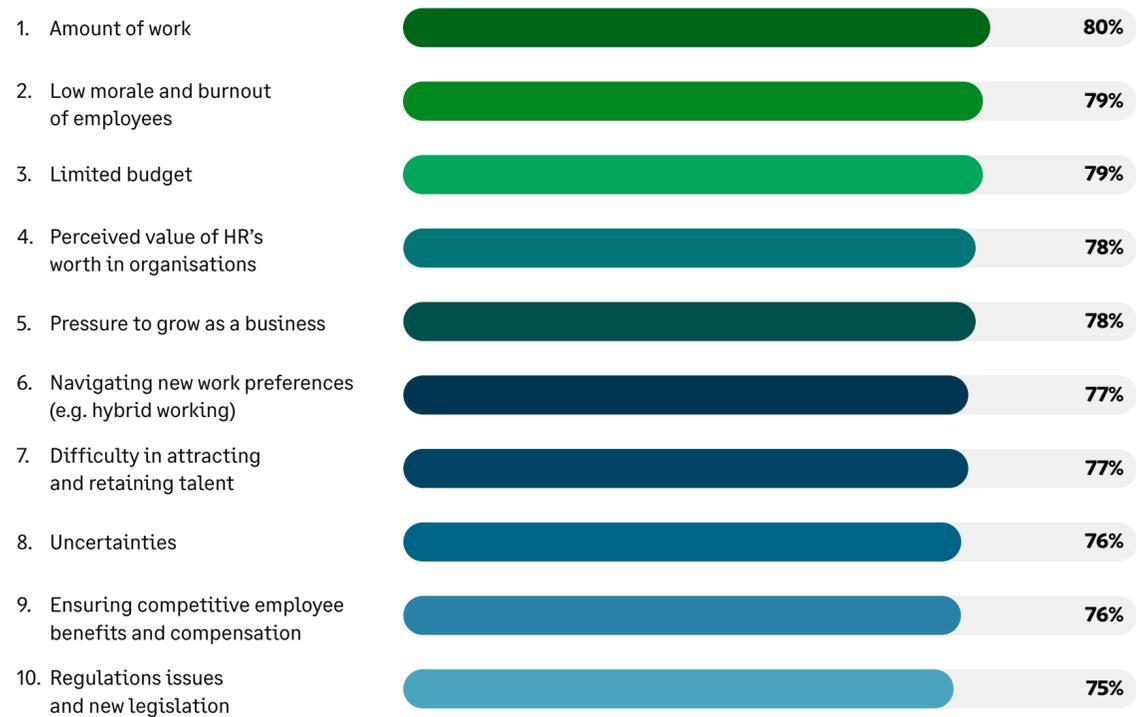
The top things HR teams are spending time on

We gave a list of over 30 areas to HR leaders and asked them what they're spending significantly more time on than the previous year.



HR teams feel they're facing constant challenges

HR leaders' top 10 challenges today



What's keeping HR teams up at night today?

Our research found that HR professionals are struggling with the same challenges globally: limited budgets and resource, high volumes of work, and not having the right HR skills in their team. Gemma Dale, Senior HR lecturer at Liverpool Business School, explains: “The pandemic challenged traditional ways of working and paved a way for change. It also led to an employee shift in how they think about work and its place in their lives. HR need to respond to all of these changes—as well as non-pandemic ones too!”

HR leaders' expected top 10 challenges over the next 5 years



What will be the top challenges of the future?

More change and wider uncertainty in the world, working environment and economy were cited as HR and People leaders' biggest concern over the next 5 years, with this coming up top as the biggest challenge for the future. “The path forward for HR requires some fundamental rethinking about what HR does and how it delivers its purpose,” says Julie Hodges, Author of ‘Reshaping HR’. “This demands HR leaders to be courageous and bold in anticipating their organisation’s transformation needs and taking ownership of their own HR change agenda.”

HR here and now

HR teams are still reluctantly prioritising processes and paperwork over people strategies

HR are still spending too much time on admin

We know HR leaders would rather spend more time on people and strategy than on processes and admin—but doing this is still a challenge for many HR teams.

3 in 4 (**78%**) of HR leaders told us they wish their work was less focussed on admin and process, and more on strategy and people-centric activities. Unsurprisingly, **77%** said they wish they had more resource in their team, and **59%** told us they feel the value of HR isn't well-recognised by their c-suite, as a result.

Post-pandemic, workloads continue to increase

On average, almost half of HR leaders' weeks are dedicated to processes, admin, or paperwork. Worryingly, over a quarter of HR leaders are spending an extra 2 days a month on process and paperwork than they were before the pandemic even still today.

78%

“I wish my work was less focussed on admin and processes, and prioritised strategy and people activities instead”

19hrs

The average time HR leaders spend each week on processes, admin or paperwork.

x3

HR leaders in Germany are 3 times more likely to work over 45 hours per week compared to before the pandemic.

x2

UK HR leaders are 2 times more likely to work over 45 hours per week compared to before the pandemic.

I wish I had more support and resources to excel in my HR role



Most people aren't clear on the value that HR brings to my organisation



HR are understaffed and don't have enough people to do HR work in my organisation



The value of HR work is not as well recognised in my organisation by leadership



HR here and now

HR professionals feel burnt out...

Compared to last year, working in HR is getting harder

According to our research, HR leaders found the last year overall more challenging than the previous year, and as a result, were slightly more stressed and burnt out.

A changing world

It's not just HR that's changing, but the world of work, and world itself. As Perry Timms, Founder and Chief Energy Officer at People and Transformational HR explains: "The intensity and complexity of challenges in the world—such as war, inflation, and political uncertainty—are putting extra pressure on everyone. Couple that with leadership facing this type of complexity, and anxiety levels are higher everywhere you look."

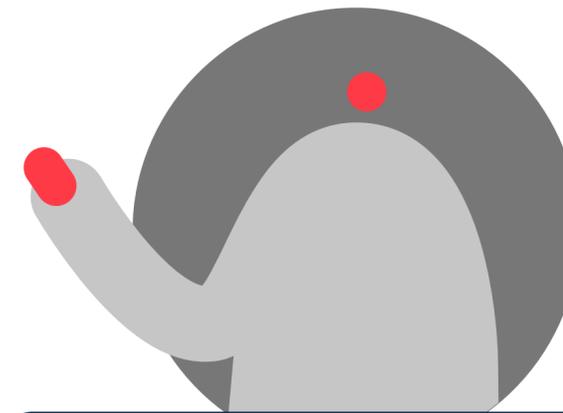
Peer-to-peer support is vital

"There's no doubt that HR work can sometimes be difficult," explains Gemma Dale, Senior HR lecturer at Liverpool Business School. "After all, we all often deal with issues like redundancy, restructuring, and performance management." Her advice? "Peer-to-peer support with someone who understands that nature of the work is one option for managing personal resilience."

"To avoid burnout, HR leaders need to develop capabilities in different skills, operate with agility and fluidity across an organisation."

Julie Hodges

Author of Reshaping HR



87%

"I'm stressed about my HR responsibilities"

This is up from **84%** on the previous year



97%

"My HR responsibilities over the last year were challenging"

This is up from **91%** on the previous year



83%

"I'm burnt out in my current role"

This is up from **81%** on the previous year



82%

"I'm worried about the future in my role"

This is up from **66%** on the previous year

HR here and now

...but still love what they do

HR leaders do what they do to make a difference

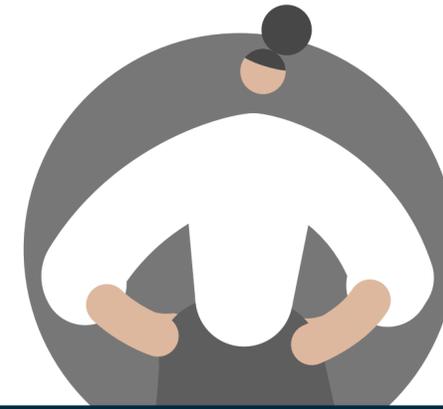
98% of HR leaders told us that, despite the challenges, they enjoy their job. This aligns with last year's research that found **57%** of HR leaders love what they do. HR leaders get into the sector to make a difference to people, and we find this time and time again with our customers. Susan LaMotte, Founder and CEO of Exaqueo explains: "If I can play one small part in helping someone find a workplace where they can thrive, add value, and be valued, then I've added something to this world we live in."

"HR is a very purpose driven profession and this is a key driver of intrinsic motivation. I imagine that is why they feel so unstoppable."

Paul Devoy
CEO, Investors in People

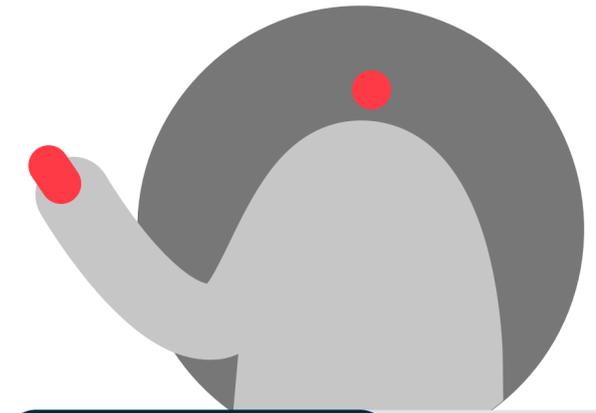
"There's an intrinsic motivation that most HR professionals have—to help others be successful at work."

Christine Temple
Chief Consulting Officer, Exaqueo



98%

"I enjoy my job"



54%

"I enjoy working in HR a great deal"



97%

"I believe HR brings a lot of value to my company"



97%

"I'm excited about the future of HR"

HR here and now

Viewpoint: what does all this change mean for HR leaders today?

Big challenges, but rewarding opportunities too

So, in summary, what does the research show about how HR's changing? The polling revealed that HR teams continue to face more pressure, higher workloads, and increased challenges. The good news is that there is no shortage of opportunities for HR to become more strategic, and lead change in companies today—and there are no better people for it than those who set out to work in the profession of people. However, to do this effectively, HR teams take care of themselves and tap into the opportunities provided by technology, automation, self-service, and analytics.

What HR leaders need to do today

“The profession can't support organisations and people to thrive if it isn't in a position to help,” says David D'Souza, Membership Director at the CIPD. “The old adage of ‘put your oxygen mask on first’ absolutely applies here.”

“Recognising the signs of burnout is crucial, as is taking steps towards self-care. Healthy habits matter— nutrition, exercise, rest and sleep can all help.”

Gemma Dale

Senior HR Lecturer, Liverpool Business School



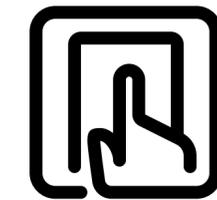
Watch

Member Masterclass episode
How to navigate the 3 stages of change



Read

Our most popular blog on Sage Advice
Why I love working in HR

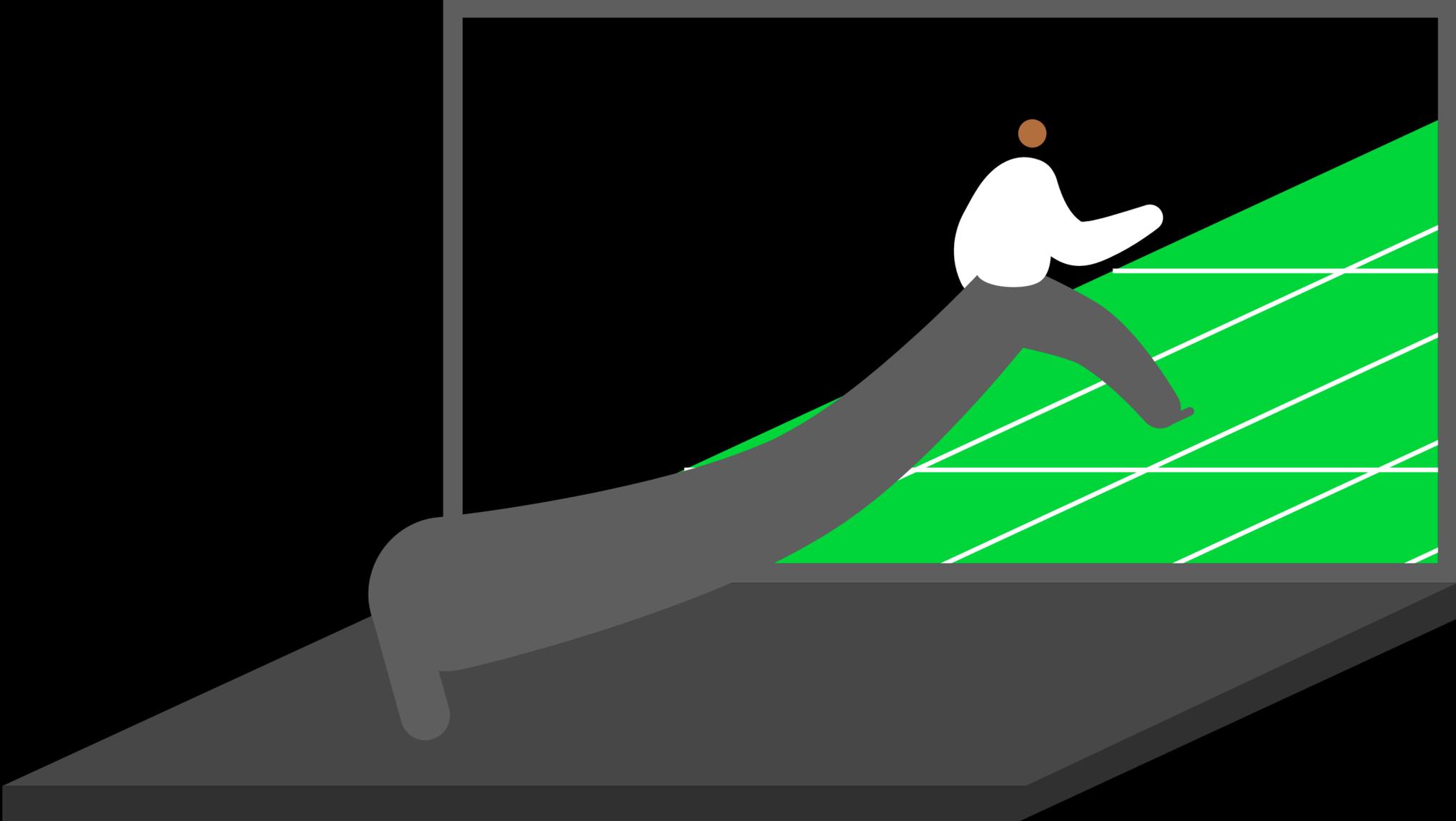


Flick through

eBook from Sage on
How HR can drive business resilience and agility through change

Research findings

The future of HR



Successful HR leaders focus on strategy

What will the HR leader of the future be focussing their time on?

In 5 years time, our respondents expect strategic planning, using data to drive decision-making, and employee engagement to be the top 3 areas on which they spend more time. It's clear that HR leaders have their sights firmly set on a future where there is a fundamental shift from paperwork to people strategies.

A shift in skills and mindset

“Traditionally many HR professionals have joined the function in either legal or operational,” explains Founder and CEO at Pilot Ben Brooks. “Today’s CEOs are looking for a different profile of HR leader, one that’s more business savvy, rooted in data, and dialled into how to create a winning employee experience.” Julie Hodges, author of ‘Reshaping HR’ agrees: “In the coming years, HR’s success will not be defined by traditional responsibilities and benefits, but rather by driving strategic value for the organisation.”

HR teams are getting more strategic with Sage

Sage customers shared some examples of how they’re using technology to streamline and focus on HR strategy instead. “It previously took 6 hours a month to manually create reports for the company’s VPs,” explains Head of People Data and Analytics at Trustpilot, Amalie Lange. “[Thanks to automation] with Sage, those same reports are automatically generated and delivered each month, saving almost one day a month on reporting alone.”

Sage has also increased overall productivity at concierge software specialists TourDesk, by giving the team time back that used to be spent on the very labour intensive HR admin tasks. “Being able to save a few hours using Sage adds up to an overall productivity boost across our team,” explains



Where HR leaders expect to spend more time in the future



 More

CEO Hjörtur Atli Guðmundsson.

The future of HR

HR leaders are getting ahead with tech

What's been tried, tested, and worked?

We asked HR leaders what solutions have worked to overcome challenges they're facing, and what stood out top was increased data analytics to improve decision-making for smaller businesses and educating themselves on new emerging technologies. This worked for **49%** of HR leaders who labelled themselves as 'unstoppable'. **48%** of HR teams who feel unstoppable said they're getting ahead thanks to investment in HR tech.

The value of HR analytics thanks to technology

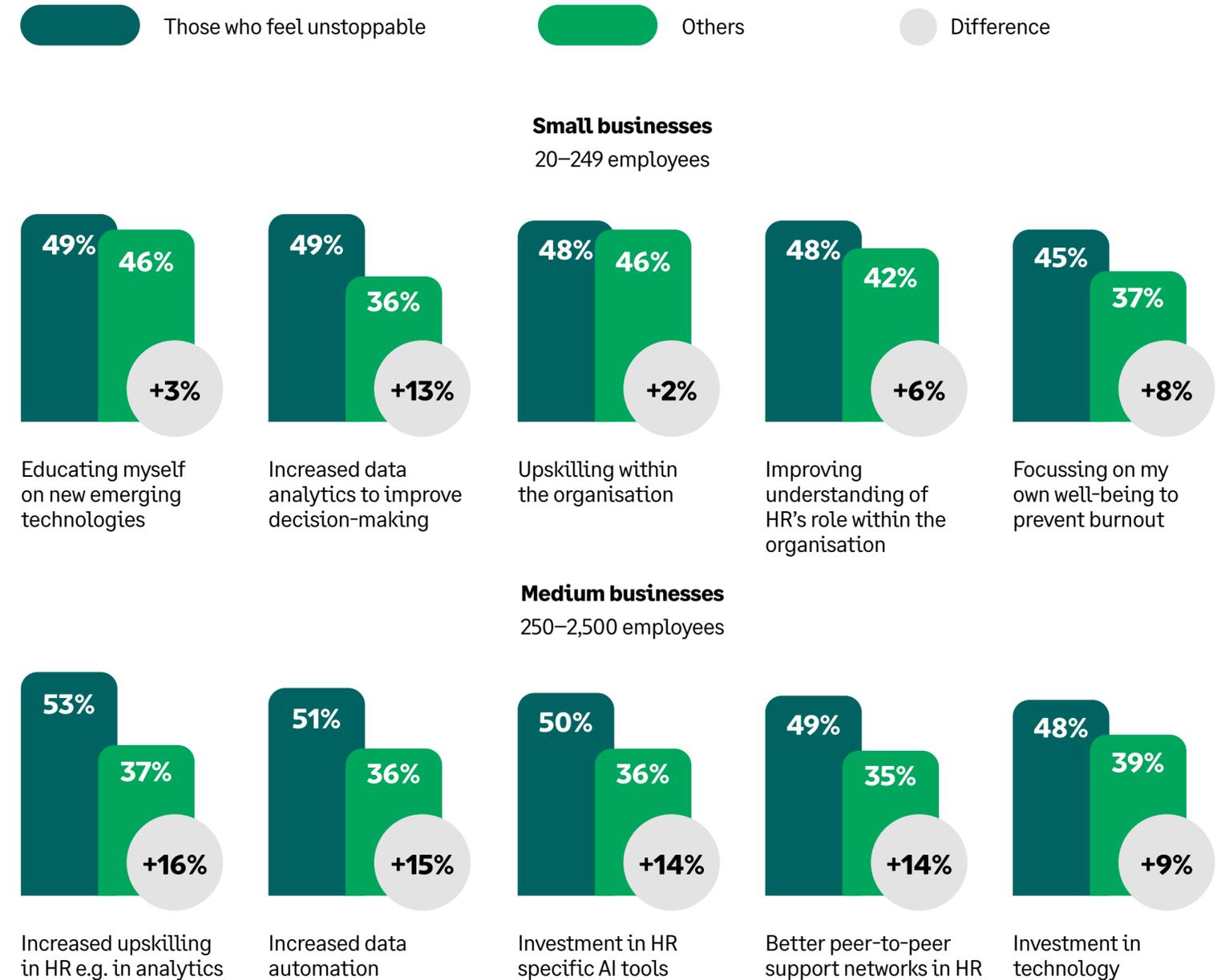
The importance of HR analytics in strategic HR cannot be underestimated, says Ben Brookes, Founder and CEO at PILOT. "Finance, Sales, Operations, Technology, Marketing, and more all come to the table with numbers that illustrate progress, challenges, and performance against goals." HR must do too. He explains: "Leveraging technology to collect, analyse, and report meaningful data-driven insights becomes a superpower for HR."

"Data allows HR leaders to make better informed decisions and ensure that HR activities, initiatives and practices are robust, and evidence based. Investing in data capabilities should be on the list of all HR leaders."

Gemma Dale

Senior HR Lecturer, Liverpool Business School

Top solutions for HR challenges HR leaders found for small and medium companies



The future of HR

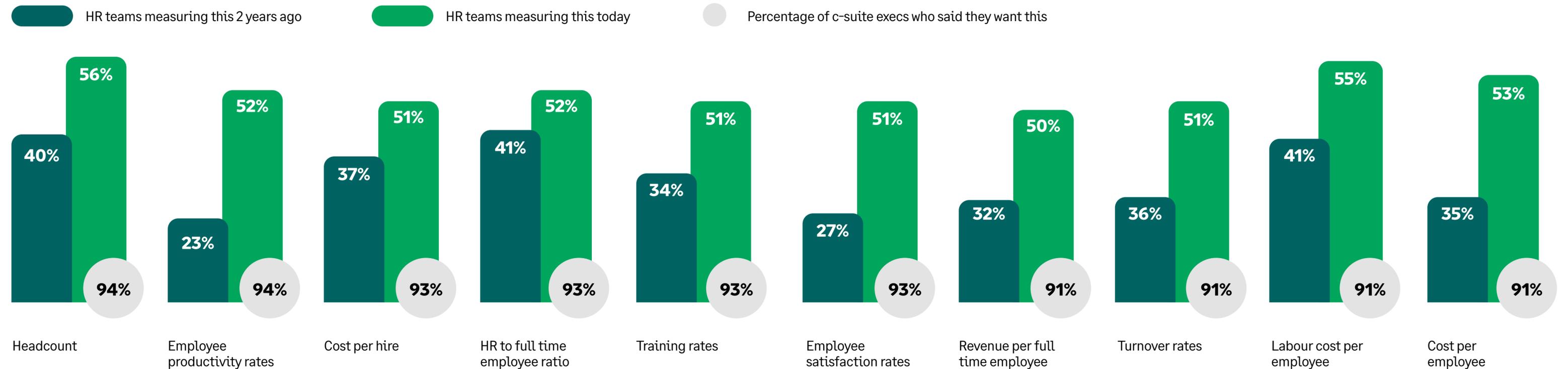
Successful HR leaders use analytics to be more strategic

Successful HR teams are not just collecting data, but analysing it, and acting on it

We asked HR and People leaders what metrics they collect today and still only just over half collect basic metrics like headcount (56%). Encouragingly, however, the third, fourth, and fifth most collected data points were labour cost per FTE, cost per employee, and employee productivity rates—demonstrating that many HR teams are increasingly aligning people metrics to business strategies and profitability.

We've also seen an increase in the number of HR teams collecting certain metrics over the last 2 years. 2 years ago, only 40% of HR teams said they had headcount data—today that number is 56%. That increase was clear across the board, as more HR teams become more prolific in their data collection—something the c-suite have been asking of HR for a while.

The top HR metrics being collected today, and how this compares to 2 years ago



The future of HR

HR leaders report that tech enables them to be more strategic

What technology are HR teams using today?

45% of HR leaders are using HR metrics today; **44%** are using automation; and **43%** using cloud, our research revealed.

Although analytics adoption rates have increased over the last few years, automation and cloud have remained the same. A third (**33%**) of HR leaders are using Chat GPT in their roles today. Almost half of HR teams are using some form of AI tools today, too.

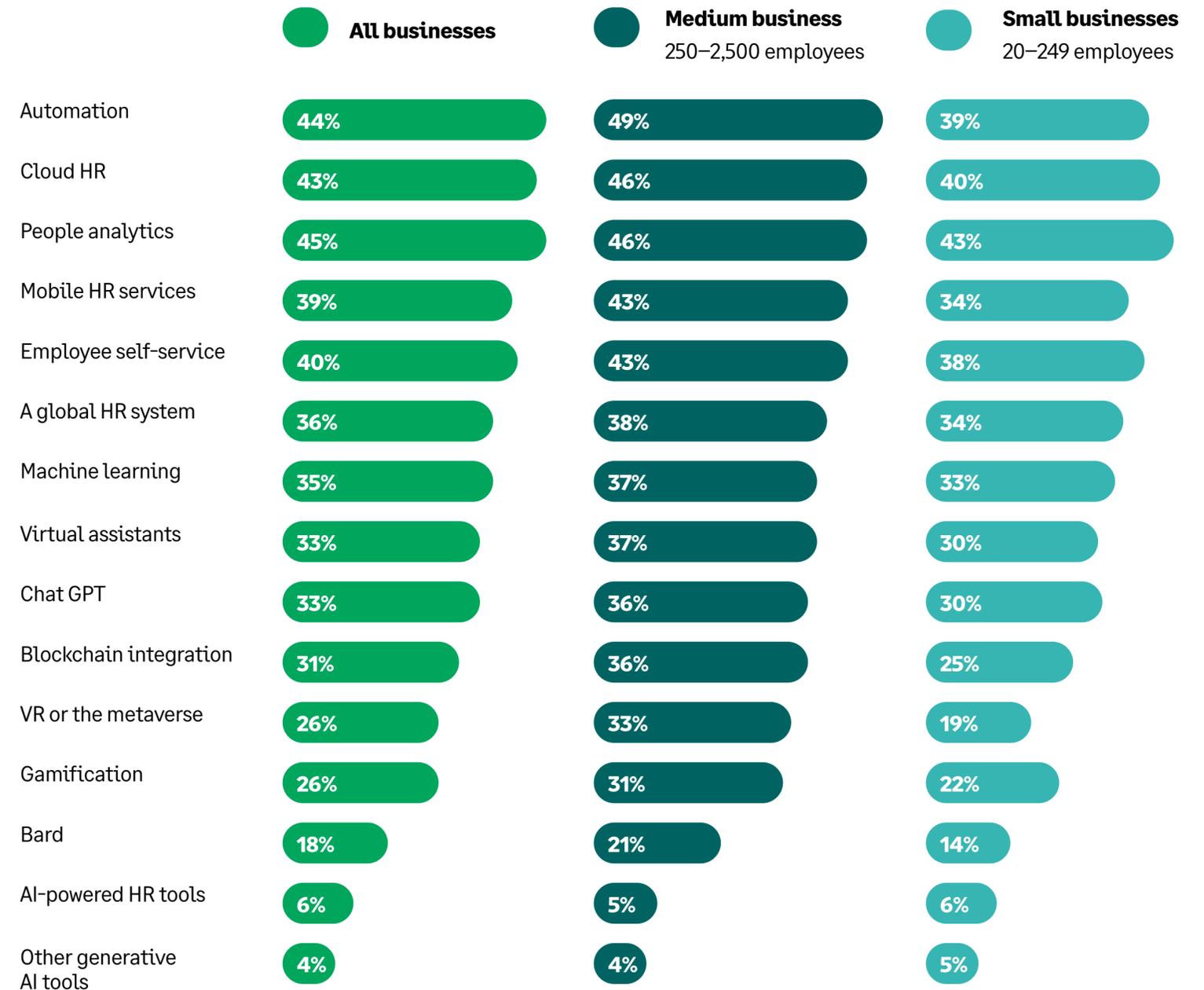
HR leaders also expect to double down on HR tools over the next 5 years, as they look to increase their strategic focus—no surprise considering only **44%** of HR leaders strongly feel they have the tech in their organisation required to operate effectively.

HR leaders in mid-size companies are also, understandably, further along in their digital transformation journey than HR functions in smaller companies.

A top tip for making the business case for HR tech investment

“As HR’s expectations continue to rise, we must continuously and rigorously evaluate the work we do, searching for opportunities to leverage technology, as it is far easier to get third-party software expense approved than it is for additional HR headcount,” says Founder and CEO of PILOT, Ben Brooks. He explains: “One exercise I encourage HR to do is to assess all of their tasks and workload as well as establishing a billable hourly rate for their services. Then assess the value of the output relative to the cost. Putting this in a simple spreadsheet helps identify where time—and money as a result—is being spent, and what might be most eligible to move to technology.”

HR tech adoption rates



The future of HR

HR teams using automation are getting ahead

Automation has been in HR teams' toolkits for a while

Although automation sounds less glamorous than AI, it's been a long feature in HR leaders' toolkit. **80%** of HR teams in medium companies say over half of their HR processes are automated today. The number is smaller for HR teams in smaller businesses at **57%**. HR leaders in all organisations also believe more HR processes in their company could be automated to improve effectiveness; **79%** said this.

It's not about what we automate in HR—but how HR choose to spend the time freed up as a result

The benefits of automation are so vast and can be used so widely in HR, that “we’re approaching a point where the questions will be less about what can automate and, instead, what we will decide not to automate,” explains Membership Director at CIPD, David D’Souza. He explains that automation enables more time spent on value-added tasks: “When we talk about HR expertise it is rarely in paperwork or processes, it’s about how we deliver real difference beyond those tasks.”

Perry Timms, Founder and Chief Energy Officer at PTHR, agrees that the real value in automation lies in the human opportunity it opens up. “It’s not about whether we should leverage automation [in itself]” he explains passionately. “But the knock-on impacts along the value chain.”

Not using automation yet? It's not too late

“With any kind of technology, changing human behaviour is almost always the failure mode,” believes Ben Brooks, however. “What we can do with software today is astounding, but our brains move far slower than the pace of innovation.” His advice for HR? “Adopting new technology must be received as an opportunity. HR teams must be open to learning, change, addressing their fears, and asking for help” when out of their comfort zone, he believes.



The future of HR

HR teams believe AI will free up time for more strategic work

AI is a hot topic in HR right now

78% of HR leaders told us they believe that implementing AI in HR tasks will save them a considerable amount of time in their role. **77%** of HR leaders say they believe AI has the ability to revolutionise ways of working in their organisation. Respondents also overwhelmingly told us they expect AI in HR to create more jobs, improve job satisfaction, and positively impact c-suite relationships. The overarching message? If HR teams aren't using AI to get ahead, then they're falling behind.

Respondents also listed the top 5 areas they would like to see them saving time on: data processing (**39%**); digital transformation (**32%**); attracting talent (**31%**); using data to drive decision-making (**31%**); managing employee benefits and pay (**29%**). Find out more about the AI capabilities from Sage, at [sage.com/ai](https://www.sage.com/ai).



say the role of HR will change considerably due to AI.

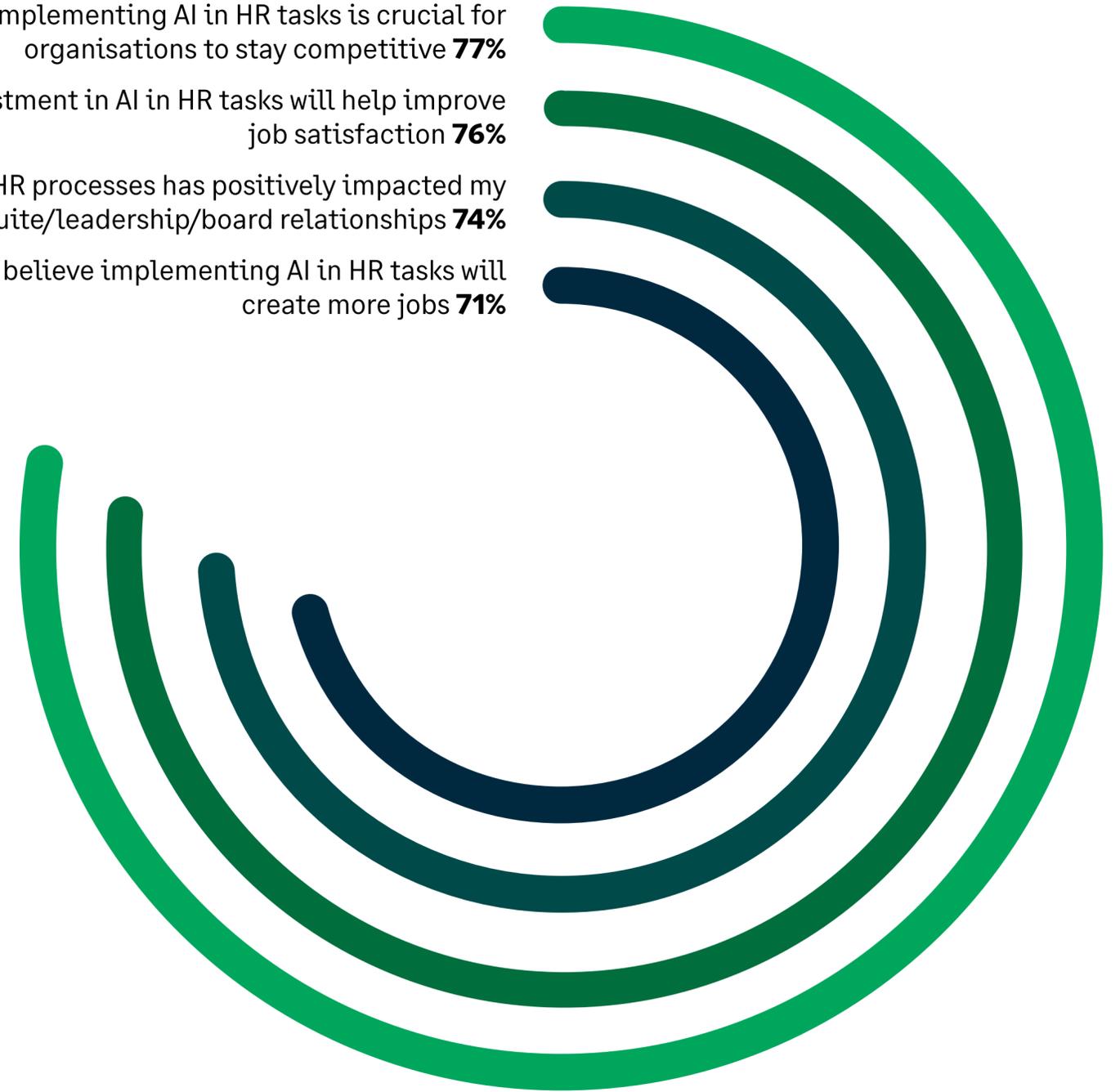


expect organisational changes in response to AI adoption in HR tasks over the next 5 years.



say AI has the ability to revolutionise ways of working in my organisation.

- Implementing AI in HR tasks is crucial for organisations to stay competitive **77%**
- Investment in AI in HR tasks will help improve job satisfaction **76%**
- AI in HR processes has positively impacted my c-suite/leadership/board relationships **74%**
- I believe implementing AI in HR tasks will create more jobs **71%**



The future of HR

Successful HR leaders are prioritising AI skills and knowledge to get ahead

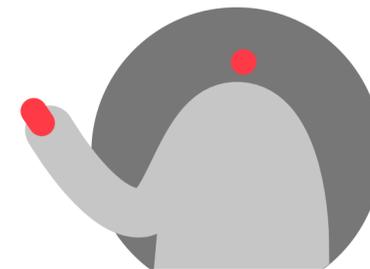
What does AI in HR look like?

We suspected that, for some HR leaders, they may be familiar with AI in broad terms but not necessarily have detailed knowledge about specific AI tools and functionalities, and what this looks like in practice. When we asked them this, **75%** agreed.

“With AI in the news constantly and perhaps the biggest buzzword in business today, it is easy to get confused between what is simply technology-enabled automation, true Artificial Intelligence and the holy grail, Generative AI,” explains Founder and CEO of PILOT, Ben Brooks. He adds: “HR leaders should lean into at the very least establishing a baseline understanding of these technologies and knowing which use cases they are ideal for.”

How to use AI in HR

VP of HR Operations and Talent Acquisition at Eikon Therapeutics, Grant Weinberg’s advice is to “Define HR’s biggest automation opportunities” first. “Once defined allow the HR team working on the project to research, learn and consider different AI tools to support them. Make the introduction of AI meaningful in creating efficiency, removing labour intensive work from humans, and showing them direct correlation with improved performance as a result.”



75%

“I’m familiar with AI in broad terms but I don’t know what it looks like in practice”



71%

“I’m concerned my company lacks the skills or guidance to effectively implement AI in HR tasks”



79%

“I need more training and support from my HR software provider to fully capitalise on AI in my role”

The future of HR

Deep dive: top tips for building AI skills in HR

1. Don't wait for training

“If HR is waiting for AI training, they're screwed,” says Founder and CEO of PILOT, Ben Brooks. “If you've ever built training or written books you know there is a long lag between something being understood to when it can be documented or taught.” He explains, instead, “HR must get out of their comfort zone of formal education and start their own primary research and independent analysis of what's happening in the market. Attend conferences, join webinars, engage in virtual HR communities on Slack, spend more time with technologists internally, and be curious.”

2. Get confident using the language

“Digital fluency for HR leaders is vital,” believes Author of ‘Re-shaping HR’, Julie Hodges. “This is the aptitude to effectively and ethically interpret information, discover meaning, design content, construct knowledge, and communicate ideas in a digitally connected world.” She believes its vital HR teams get comfortable with understanding the language of AI in HR—and using it.

3. Take time out from the day-to-day for your own career development

Setting aside time to invest in your own career development may often fall on the wayside but is imperative. “If HR leaders invest in their own capabilities, they can be at the forefront of using AI in HR activities,” believes Gemma Dale, Senior HR Lecturer at Liverpool Business School. “Keeping up with new technologies is a requirement of all leaders, including HR.”

She adds: “Given the speed at which technology and AI is developing this should be seen as a critical priority for HR teams everywhere.”



The future of HR

Viewpoint: what does the increased focus on tech mean for HR today?

The HR tech revolution has only just begun

Our research reveals the opportunities and power of AI in HR both today and in the future of HR. However, for HR professionals who feel like it's beyond their grasp, there's plenty to be getting on with when it comes to technology that's been available for a while in the meantime, like automation, analytics, and self-service.

These have two huge advantages. First, enabling HR teams to be more strategic in the work they do and the insights they generate. Second, by freeing up time on a practical level, they enable HR's time to be spent less on processes and paperwork, and more on the reason many got into HR in the first place: to build great people strategies that truly make a difference to people's working lives.

What HR leaders need to do today

"It's easy to get overwhelmed, confused or even disempowered in the face of change, in particular knowing how burnt out many in our field of HR are after the past few years," says Founder and CEO of PILOT, Ben Brooks. "I'd encourage everyone to reframe the emergence of these technologies from 'another thing I have to deal with' to 'an opportunity to improve the way we work and make my job more satisfying.'" His advice for HR leaders when it comes to technology and getting ahead? "Prioritise addressing the challenges in your function, the things that zap your energy, and things that would elevate HR's status within your organisation."



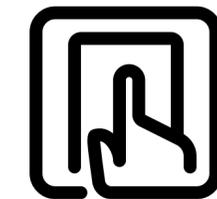
Watch

Sage's Member Masterclass episode **How to manage human capacity**



Read

The eBook **HR automation: 5 ways to raise your game**



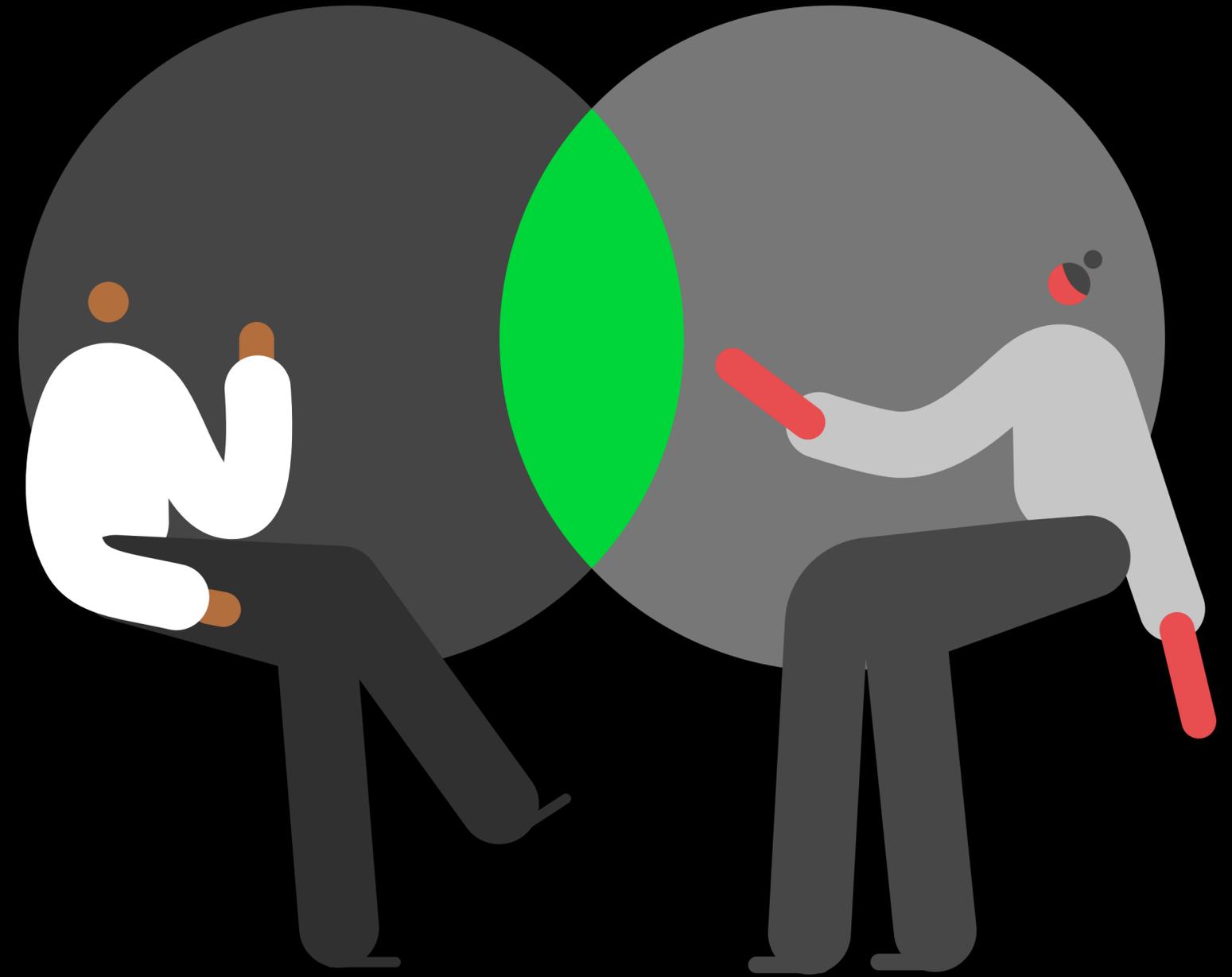
Flick through

The essential **10 step guide to building a compelling business case for HR software**

from Sage

Your next steps

Sage advice for future-focussed HR leaders



Your next steps

Conclusion: top tips from the experts

What can we learn from the research?

HR teams are facing more change, challenges, and constant pressures than ever, our research found. At the same time, many HR professionals told us they get into the sector to make a difference—and there’s been no change in that, this year’s report found.

A central theme we’ve also seen over the last few years remains: how can HR teams spend less time on processes and paperwork, and more time on strategy, and the things that really matter? Our research shows there’s two answers. Firstly, by tapping into the power of technology like automation, analytics, and AI. Secondly, it’s only by balancing this with the human touch, that successful HR teams feel truly unstoppable. HR leaders have an edge that others don’t. You know your people, and what makes them tick. This in turn makes a difference to how you manage your workforce and ultimately the company’s bottom line as a result. So, what are the takeaways for HR teams reading this right now?

“The role of HR will become more strategic in nature wherein routine tasks will be managed by automation and AI, and HR leaders can focus on the bigger picture strategy of people and work.”

Sankalp Chaturvedi

Professor of Organisational Behaviour and Leadership
Imperial College Business School

1. Embrace change

“The pace of change has been fast in the last 5 years,” says CEO at Investors in People, Paul Devoy. “But the next 5 years are going to be even faster.” So how do HR leaders navigate that? Paul says simply: “They have to embrace it. HR leaders have to be curious about what’s going on in the wider world, in AI and in world affairs. HR teams who can react to unexpected and unusual circumstances, come up with new policies, take new approaches, and design and implement them quickly will be the high-performance HR teams of the future.”

2. Celebrate the amazing work that’s happening

One theme that came up regularly interviewing our experts is the necessity to focus on the wins. “[HR] has created real value for their people and for the business” over the last few years, explains Ben Eubanks, Chief Research Officer at Lighthouse Research & Advisory and Author of Talent Scarcity. “Unplug when you can, have realistic expectations of what you can do, and get a community around you to celebrate, not commiserate, on the amazing work that you’re doing.”

3. Think carefully about what the challenges are you’re trying to solve

For David Howell, Founder at Able and Rush, it’s vital to consider what the problem is HR teams are trying to solve day-to-day, and then looking for the right solution. “Those who generally have the solutions to these ongoing issues are those located closest to the problem,” he explains. Once you know the problem you’re trying to solve, that’s when HR technology comes into its own. “I expect that [in the years ahead] many companies will experiment more with technology, get a better understanding of how to effectively use these new tools and integrate them into their daily practice,” believes Principal Consultant at HRpepper Management Consultants, Patrick Amm.

4. Put data at the heart of what you do

We’ve seen throughout the research the importance of people analytics in insight-driven decision making. For Veronika Birkheim, Director of People Experience at Aurebus Consulting, data literacy and communication skills are vital. She explains: “HR leaders should get used to work based on data, derive their decisions and programs from quantitative data combined with qualitative backup, and listen to employees.”

5. Focus on the strategic by using tech to free up time on the admin

“Some HR departments have shied away from large scale automation,” says Grant Weinberg, VP of HR Operations and Talent Acquisition at Eikon Therapeutics. “We need to embrace GenAI and look at automation to help HR professionals do the work that bots cannot. This will drive operational excellence and increase compliance as a result.”

David D’Souza, Membership Director at the CIPD, couldn’t agree more: “Organisations need to recognise that investing in tech to drive down administration can drive up the capacity they have to really deliver more productive organisations. No organisation sets out to pay experts to do transactional paperwork, so purposefully freeing up that capability can help drive change and performance across the board.”

6. The importance of upskilling

“What got HR here will not get HR there,” explains Grant Weinberg firmly when asked about HR skills. “The biggest threat to today’s HR professional is not the bot, but rather the other HR professionals who are embracing this generative AI revolution of work.” The best way to upskill? Ben Eubanks believes it’s “by doing. You can read all you want, and watch courses. But you really don’t build and hone skills until you do them. Practice telling stories and tying that back to data and what’s happening. Practice using tools and technology that may add value to your HR strategy.”

7. Remember why you got into HR in the first place

“There is something unique about HR professionals’ dedication to their work, exemplified by their passion to make a difference,” says Perry Timms, Founder and Chief Energy Officer at PTHR. “Sometimes, this can create an overwhelmed feeling. Deploying the best that digitisation offers is a way to channel that drive and desire to make a difference into efficiencies.”

Gemma Dale agrees. “Great HR can make a very real difference to the lives of employees and their experience of work,” she says. “This can provide HR professionals with purpose and meaningful connection with their work. Tapping into what we are passionate about and what we personally value is good for our well-being, productivity, and happiness at work.” That’s what’s going to make HR teams truly feel unstoppable.



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Our research revealed how HR leaders are faring today, what they're concerned about in 2024, and how to address some of these challenges—so, where do we go from here? Sage has a range of resources to help, when it comes to getting ahead in HR.

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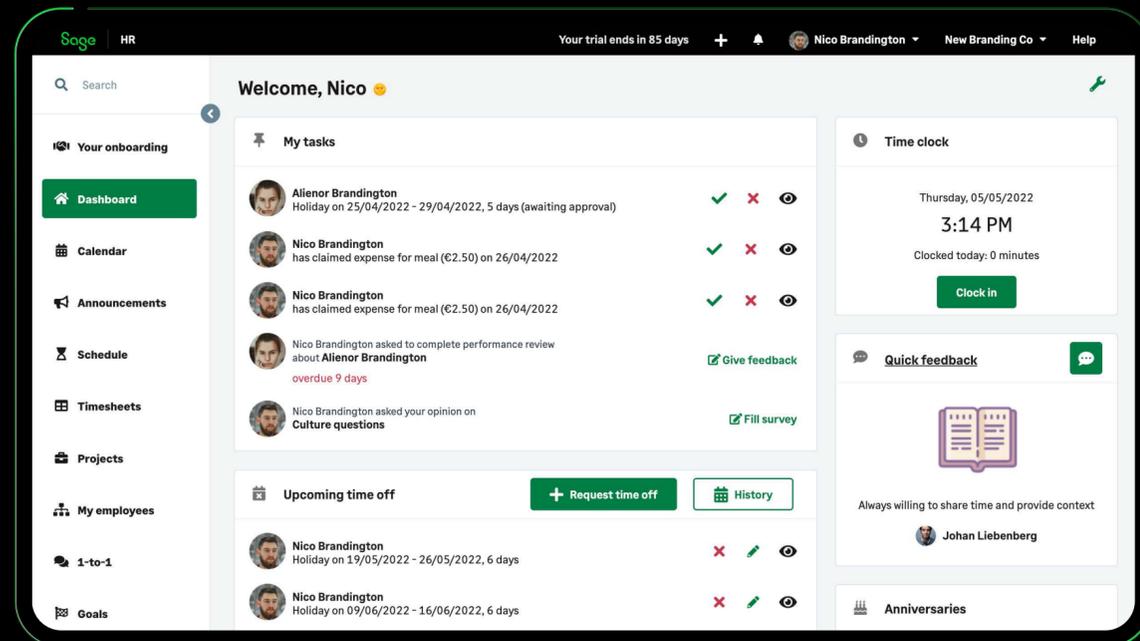
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Your next steps

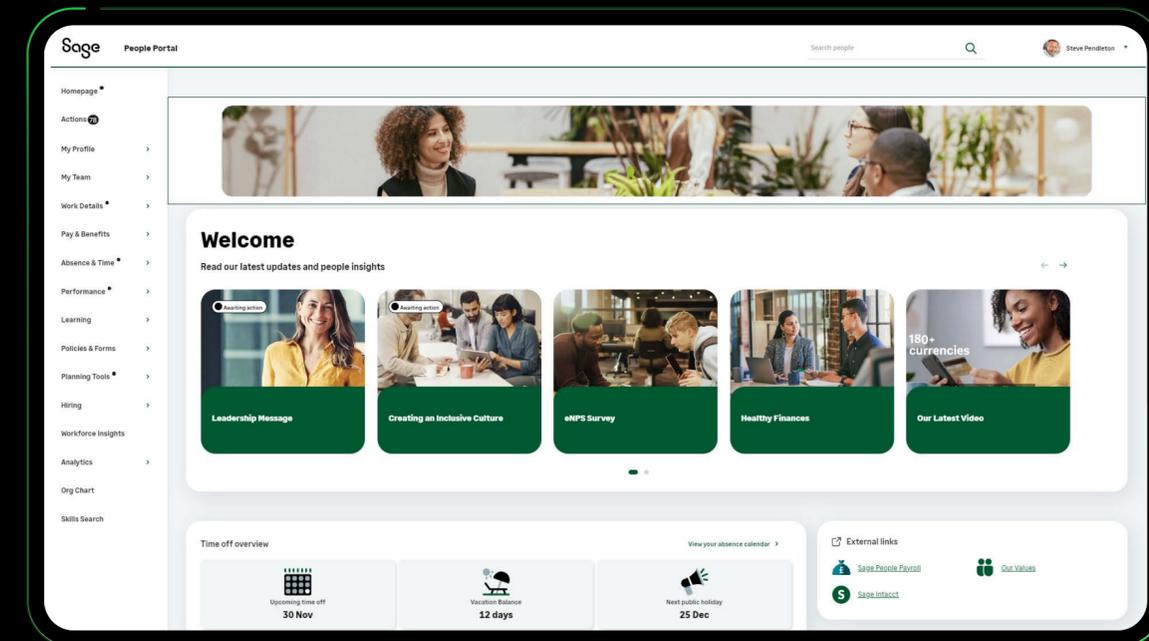
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