Big Shifts: What HR Trends Are Coming In 2019

By Rachael Klinefield August 2018

Recent developments in technology and shifts in how we view employee management are transforming the HR industry. Employees expect more from their companies, and HR departments are striving to retain employees and improve workplace culture. With reporting and recruiting software, employee data, and social media at our fingertips, HR departments have a new world of possibility to explore. While these transformations are already in full swing, 2019 will be a period of refinement as companies smooth over the edges of new HR strategies and philosophies. The big theme question is: How can companies utilize technology better to make more data-driven decisions? It's time to move out of data analysis paralysis and into informed employee management.

People Analytics

In 2017, research showed a dramatic incline in companies' focus on people analytics - formerly a niche practice that didn't get much attention or funding from management. Plans to implement data and create a people analytics database jumped from the usual 10-15% of companies to a majority of 69%.

Many elements of people analytics have already been implemented to improve day-to-day operations. However, issues of data integrity and executives having only a surface-level understanding of their data has been a significant obstacle. 2019 will finally bring more understanding and a level of data mastery that previously didn't exist in the HR industry. Executives may become more educated about how to use their data, or additional positions in data management may appear.

Recruiting Technology

Modern recruitment management systems will be increasingly relied upon in 2019, further streamlining the hiring process for HR departments. Companies can no longer afford to employ outdated strategies to discover, engage and nurture top talent.

Modern recruiting software can assist companies in two key areas: optimization and targeting. In other words, the software will do the dirty work while simultaneously saving recruiters precious time. HR professionals will no longer be wasting time searching blindly for talent. Instead, recruiting technology will enable companies to hone in on places they are most likely to discover their next big hire. In addition, the process will be optimized from start to finish, allowing HR to refine and perfect their onboarding process with less variation.

In addition to learning management systems that foster better team training and communication, more companies will consider what machine learning and artificial intelligence has to offer. Chatbots and similar technology may take on more low-level tasks like scheduling and providing basic information. This will free up HR professionals to spend more time on important relationship-building activities with candidates.

Employer Branding

Reputation management have long been buzz words, but companies will begin to exercise more control over how both customers and potential candidates view them. Companies will move from simply monitoring how they're represented online, to guiding employer brand in the direction they want. As companies crave more optimized and streamlined software to handle low-level functions, we'll see more software integration. More companies are adopting the philosophy of giving to receive – building a company culture based around what their team values and needs. We'll see companies go even further to creatively market their employer brand and place values as the central focus.

Nix the 9 to 5

HR departments are finally getting used to the fact that job roles are becoming more and more transient. By 2020, it's estimated that approximately 50% of the U.S workforce will be temp, contract, or freelance workers. And while many have viewed this shift as economic chaos and disorder, companies have the opportunity to save money and employ skilled talent on an as-needed project basis. Rather than being wed to a finite group of employees who may or may not have the skill and passion to meet a company's expectations, HR departments can nurture an ever-growing network of high-quality talent. This period offers companies an opportunity to move away from the hierarchical management styles that caused the employee engagement crisis in the first place. In turn, they'll move toward relationship-oriented strategies to employ talent that jives with their culture and values. Digital tools that help companies keep track and stay in touch with their talent network will be an important asset going forward.

Settling In

While the eventual results of these changes will undoubtedly be positive, the transition period can leave many HR departments wondering what to do first. With so many new options and overwhelming changes, how can you determine what software truly fits your unique company needs and helps facilitate change?

2019 will see a revolution in HR finally coming to fruition. The sobering effects of the employee engagement crisis are in the spotlight – weakened productivity, high turnover rates, and a lack of team collaboration and innovation. HR leaders know they need to step up their game in an unprecedented way. Companies will begin to see the fruits of the last few years of labor – moving through the growing pains of technology updates and getting used to broad and complex operational changes. As the pace quickens, HR departments can finally settle into these new, empowering systems for strengthening their workforce.

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