

CHRO CONSORTIUM EXCHANGE

JANUARY 17, 2019



Seven chief human resource officers (CHROs) from major companies met by phone to share leading practices and discuss topics of mutual interest based on an agenda created through advance interviews. The discussion centered on the digitization of HR.

HOST

Phil Rowley
Executive Director and
Chief Revenue Officer
BRG

HOST

Joe Bohling
Managing Director, HR
Performance & Strategy
BRG

FACILITATOR

Susie Krueger
Profitable Ideas Exchange

QUOTES OF THE DAY

"You sit around some days and say, 'Boy this is stupid. Why am I doing it?' We make a list of those things and figure out, can [we] automate them or stop doing them?"

"The leaner your HR teams, the more you rely on manager and employee self-service, and the more you have to equip managers to really be able to guide development planning conversations. You need to hold them and the employee accountable for having the development plans and then fulfilling them."

"We actually had a pretty big thirst in the organization to move away from having people call into the HR group for information. We put in some pretty decent analytics that allow managers and employees to go out and do a lot of self-service now."

"The next generation [of analytics] is not just rearview—it's that prescriptive use of data and analytics to actually see what's coming in the future so we can get in front of it."

DIGITIZATION OF HR

Key Takeaways

- The group discussed digital transformation within HR, with participants highlighting their use of digital solutions to improve employee experiences. Several executives shared an interest in leveraging automation and artificial intelligence (AI) within their functions. BRG's Joe Bohling noted that AI initiatives necessarily involve cybersecurity considerations, given the large volume of data being collected, synthesized, and stored.
- One executive is focused on the area of sourcing and reprogramming Alexa for application within HR call-center work. Another executive created a "Project Stupid" aimed at identifying low-level, time-consuming tasks that could be automated.
- In an effort to reach a broader, more diverse applicant pool for open positions, one executive has implemented an AI tool that scans LinkedIn and other social media platforms within specific parameters. Manual intervention is necessary during the pre-screen phase, as the tool is designed to capture a broad pool that can be pared down after.





Another participant agreed, noting that the leaner the HR team, the more it must equip managers and employees to own career development plans.

- BRG's Phil Rowley stated that the firm has moved to an automated and digital review process, which ensures consistency but lacks the one-on-one feedback that has proven helpful in career development. He shared an interest in capturing the content of reviews (e.g., employee interests, reviewer feedback) to improve talent development strategies. Similarly, one participant is considering a review company that identifies behaviors or necessary discussions triggered by employee responses. They are also considering a company that uses AI to screen candidates' social media presences for potential brand risks (e.g., racial-themed posts).
- A participant is looking for automation solutions in the career development space, noting that as employees move within an organization, career development becomes largely their responsibility, since there is no automated way to help leaders serve as guides. Another participant agreed, noting that the leaner the HR team, the more it must equip managers and employees to own career development plans.
- One participant has focused on training by position through an automated process in which job titles trigger necessary training programs for employees. The process eliminated the need for HR to track and remember everyone's progress, as training is automatically assigned, scheduled, and sent to employees' inboxes.
- Partnering with an analytics application company, one CHRO is analyzing data sources on their factory floor in hopes of finding productivity opportunities around human interactions with the machines that could lead to further automation of processes. The company also offers an augmented reality platform that the CHRO has found useful in training new employees.

TRACKING EMERGING TRENDS

Key Takeaways

- To keep up with trends and new technologies, one participant relies on information from members of their IT help desk. They also find that LinkedIn is becoming a better resource for discovering emerging trends outside of general, HR-related technologies. Another member shared that advisory firms, and BRG specifically, have been a great place to turn for perspective on what is considered leading-edge in HR.
- One participant looks at customers' processes and the operations side of their business for inspiration on ways to evolve HR services and delivery. Innovations around data are easily translatable to HR, since data collection and usage are now common across functions and industries.
- A few members have partnered with a global research and advisory firm to establish benchmarks for their HR function. The benchmarks provide insights into HR talent trends and other relevant topics, such as digitization and regional market information. One executive works with business membership and research association's senior HR executives council to gain industry insights, while another partnership has helped one executive better organize their talent management strategy.
- Joe Bohling stated that being near Silicon Valley and connecting with private equity and VC firms helps BRG to stay informed on new trends, business models, and innovations that are emerging. Phil Rowley added that BRG has used a platform for professional learning for survey work and information on targeted audiences.



KEEPING HR PERSONAL

Key Takeaways

- A participant highlighted the challenge of “keeping the human in human resources” while the function grows increasingly dependent on digital solutions. They have outsourced or automated much of their HR work, but noted that communicating in a personal way and interacting with employees on a one-to-one basis remain critical.
- One member’s organization faced considerable pushback from employees after it outsourced benefits administration. Specifically, retirement benefits proved to be challenging, since to many employees a third party overseeing the retirement process seemed impersonal. The member noted the challenge for HR is to strike a balance between connecting with employees and avoiding unnecessary specializations (e.g., retirement experts) on the HR team.
- The group acknowledged the difficulty in transitioning employees from having an HR representative down the hall to more self-serve or outsourced models. One participant stated that the only two real options are a quick, rip-off-the-bandage approach or a more gradual transition. It was noted that one way to make the transition more palatable is by marketing faster response times—bot and self-help options are faster than waiting for HR to return a call.

BIOS

Joe Bohling, JD

Managing Director, Global Practice Leader

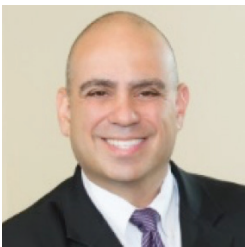


- Global Practice leader for the HR Performance and Strategy / Dynamic Capabilities practice
- More than twenty years of experience in legal, operations, human resources, and business development executive and frontline leadership roles
- Served in top chief human resources officer positions for Fortune 500 companies
- Broad and deep experience in industries including manufacturing, media/telecommunications, consumer packaged goods, high technology, healthcare, higher education, and financial services

Joe Bohling brings over twenty years of experience in operations, human capital, performance improvement, learning and development, recruiting, staffing, health, welfare and retirement benefits, and business development leadership roles. He has proven expertise in developing and operationalizing strategy, comprehensive performance improvement, cultural advocacy, and executive coaching. He has served in top C-suite executive positions for Fortune 500 companies, including as chief human resources officer at Aflac, Inc. and senior vice president of Human Resources at CitiFinancial Auto / Citigroup.

Angel Rodriguez, MBA

Practice Director, HR Performance Practice



- More than twenty years in senior and frontline leadership positions for Fortune 500 and privately held companies, including chief HR officer roles
- Senior HR executive for Frito Lay’s 43,000-employee field sales and operations organization
- Business and cultural enabler across all organizational levels
- Expertise in project and process management

Mr. Rodriguez served as the chief HR officer for WorldVentures, a travel and direct selling company, with over 250,000 representatives and headquarters staff. Before this, he served as the senior HR leader for Kellogg Co.’s international business, specifically for Asia, Latin America, and Europe, and was a key leader in the integration of the Pringles acquisition by Kellogg. He was also previously senior vice president of HR for United Surgical Partners International, a leading firm in the ambulatory surgery industry.

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