



HRO^{TODAY}

**2025-2026 *HRO Today*
Annual Top Concerns
of CHROs[©]**

introduction

This is the sixth edition of the *HRO Today* annual Top Concerns of CHROs survey. While there are other studies that examine the perceptions of the C-suite, none truly capture the outlook of Chief Human Resources Officers (CHROs). Human Resources are directly responsible for workforce planning and employee needs, so the insights gained from this analysis are unique and valuable.

The annual survey includes insights from 259 top HR executives in North America, EMEA, and APAC. Survey respondents were invited to participate in the study via an email invitation sent out between November 11, 2025, and December 15, 2025. The report quantifies the extent of concern when planning for future staffing needs and assesses how organizations are training their workforces to meet anticipated needs. Where appropriate, comparisons are made between findings from prior waves of this study.

In 2026, CHROs and senior HR leaders are operating in an increasingly high-stakes environment defined by rapid AI acceleration, persistent skills shortages, shifting employee expectations, and ongoing organizational restructuring. The most pressing challenges now center on strengthening leader and manager effectiveness, scaling AI-enabled workforce decision-making, future-proofing strategic workforce planning, sustaining change amid continuous disruption, and improving the usability and return on HR technology investments.

Addressing these challenges requires CHROs to move beyond experimentation to execution. This includes embedding AI into core HR processes, redefining leadership capability for a hybrid and skills-based workforce, and building organizational resilience through continuous learning and workforce agility. But what are the true priorities for senior HR leaders in 2026? Read on to discover how today's leading CHROs are tackling these issues to drive measurable impact across their organizations.

key findings

Workforce Challenges

Each year brings new challenges for CHROs, and the extent of concern over ongoing issues varies year-to-year. The overall extent of concern about factors related to the organizational workforce remains largely the same as last year. But the greatest concern among CHROs in this area is how well senior leaders are prepared to lead in the future workplace, with 56% either "extremely" or "very" concerned, up significantly from 43% in 2024. Leading includes change management to optimize technology like AI, and data analytics, which could be driving concern in this area.

The availability of skilled workers in categories needed remains a major concern, cited by over one-half (52%) of senior HR leaders. Despite low job turnover, particularly in the U.S., organizations struggle to find employees with the needed skillsets.

Company culture is also among the major concerns, as cited by more than 6-in-10 study participants. Organizations balance new workforce demands, adoption of AI technology, and the threat of global recession.

Company Operations Challenges

Leader and manager effectiveness is once again the area of greatest concern within company operations. Just over one-half (58%) were extremely or very concerned about it, up from 52% in 2024.

Concern over a potential recession increased the most of any area explored. A potential recession in the next 12 months could negatively impact company profitability, which is a major concern for nearly one-half (49%) of respondents, up 17 percentage points over 2024.

HR Department Management Challenges

Fatigue and burnout across the HR function as a concern was again explored in 2025, and it is regarded as the area of greatest concern of matters related specifically to HR department management. In total, 80% were "extremely" or "very" concerned about fatigue and burnout, up nine percentage points from the prior year.



key findings

Workforce Size

Nearly one-half (47%) of HR leaders plan to increase the size of their workforce in 2026, more than three times the number that plan to decrease it (15%). Today's HR leaders continue to face great challenges, such as the impact of tariffs, angst over AI, stubborn inflation, the continued threat of recession, wide stock market fluctuations, and geopolitical tensions.

Upskilling the Workforce

There has been little progress in upskilling workers despite the acknowledged need for skilled talent. Few CHROs report that they made significant progress in 2025. Just 49% report at least moderate progress. However, only 42% of senior HR leaders consider their own training and development capabilities as strong, the most frequently identified means to close the skills gaps in their organizations.

Artificial Intelligence

AI adoption in HR again increased dramatically in 2025. Over three-quarters use AI, up from 40% in just two years prior. Workforce data and analytics is the most common application of AI and machine learning, supplanting talent acquisition for the first time. Over one-half (51%) agreed that AI will be the biggest disrupter of the HR function in the next two to three years. In the coming years, the key metrics to examine will not be if AI is being used in HR, but the impact of how it is being used.



Regional Divergence

While overall trends are similar across regions, there are significant differences in some key areas. These areas are summarized in the accompanying table. Overall, senior HR leaders from the EMEA region show higher levels of concern across multiple challenges than their North American counterparts.

Key Differences by Geographical Region

What are your plans to change the size of your worldwide workforce in 2026?	North America	EMEA
Increase workforce size in 2026	49%	42%
Concern over company workforce areas		
Wage inflation	50%	31%
Meeting needs of new workforce	28%	38%
Reduction of employee stress and mental health	35%	44%
Senior leaders are prepared to lead in future workplace	53%	59%
Retention	40%	34%
Concern over company operations areas		
Overall price inflation on goods and services	56%	39%
A potential recession within the next 12 months could negatively impact company profitability	52%	44%
Security: Cyber	45%	52%
Downsizing of workforce	22%	28%
Concern over HR Department areas		
Reskill and upskill HR staff to leverage new technologies	29%	45%
Usability of existing HR technology	30%	45%
Fatigue and burnout across the HR function	48%	55%
Obtaining budget for HR technology	30%	36%
Most important to close a potential skills gap		
Internal training	64%	43%
Establishing a strong pipeline from education	17%	21%
Hiring from outside my industry	15%	29%
Currently using AI in HR departments		
Currently use AI in HR	73%	84%



Plans to Change Workforce Size in 2026

What are your plans to change the size of your worldwide workforce in 2026?

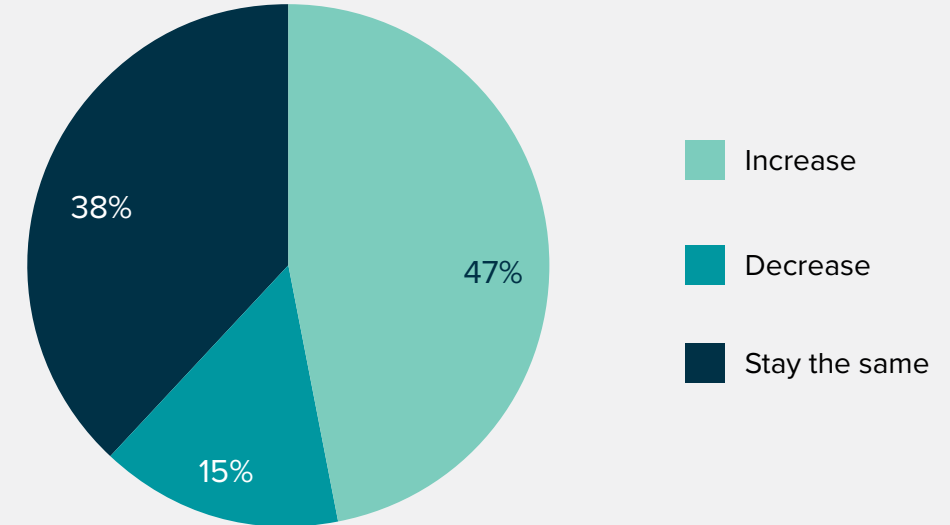
When asked how they planned to change the size of their global workforces in 2026, nearly one-half (47%) of respondents indicated an increase, about the same as what was planned for 2025. However, the percentage planning to increase their workforce in North America increased four percentage points from 45%, while the percentage of EMEA who planned to increase declined from 52% the prior year.

The U.S. labor force is anticipated to expand in 2026, with total employment projected to grow by approximately 5.2 million jobs from 2024 to 2034, with significant gains in healthcare and professional services, though 2026 itself is seeing slower, steadier growth (around 2-2.5% annually)¹. Many employers are pausing new hiring and optimizing workforces rather than expanding them. Uncertainty about future economic conditions and how to implement technologies like AI has made executives hesitant to add staff.²

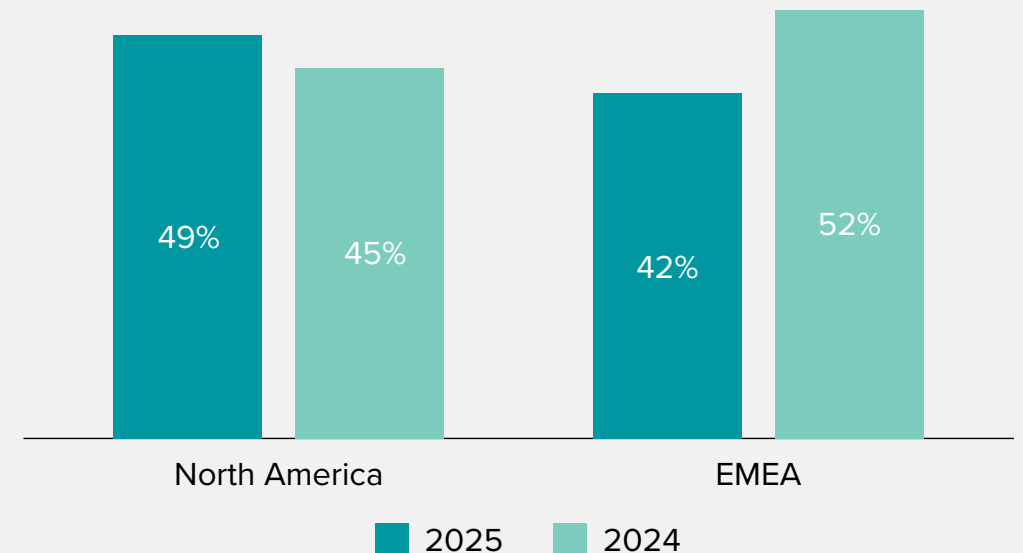
Forecasts for Canada's workforce in 2026 suggest a tight, cautious market with potential for stagnation or slight shrinkage due to slower population growth and immigration changes.³

The International Labour Organization, a U.N. agency, in its Employment and Social Trends 2026 report indicates that global employment will continue but with slow growth. The global unemployment rate is projected to remain around 4.9% in 2026, like in recent years. The worldwide labor force is approximately 3.7 billion people.⁴

Plans to Change Workforce Size in 2026



Plans to Increase Workforce Size in 2026 by Region





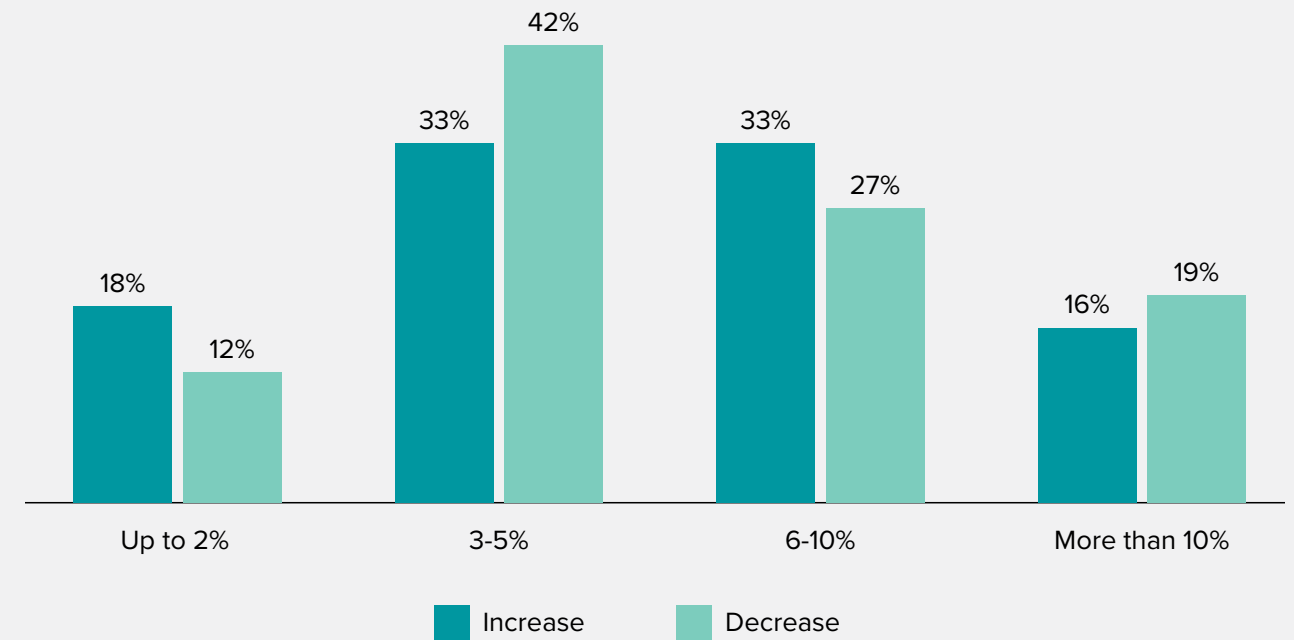
Plans for Workforce Growth in 2026

By what percentage is the size of your workforce planned to increase in 2026?

The respondents who anticipated an increase in workforce size were asked to quantify the size of the planned increase. About as many planned an increase (49%) of at least 6% as those that planned a decrease (46%).

Planned changes vary somewhat by region. In North America, the average workforce increase is 7.1%, while in EMEA the increase is 6.7%.

Plans for Workforce Growth in 2026



Extent of Concern: Company Workforce

How concerned are you, if at all, about each of the following areas that relate to the company workforce?

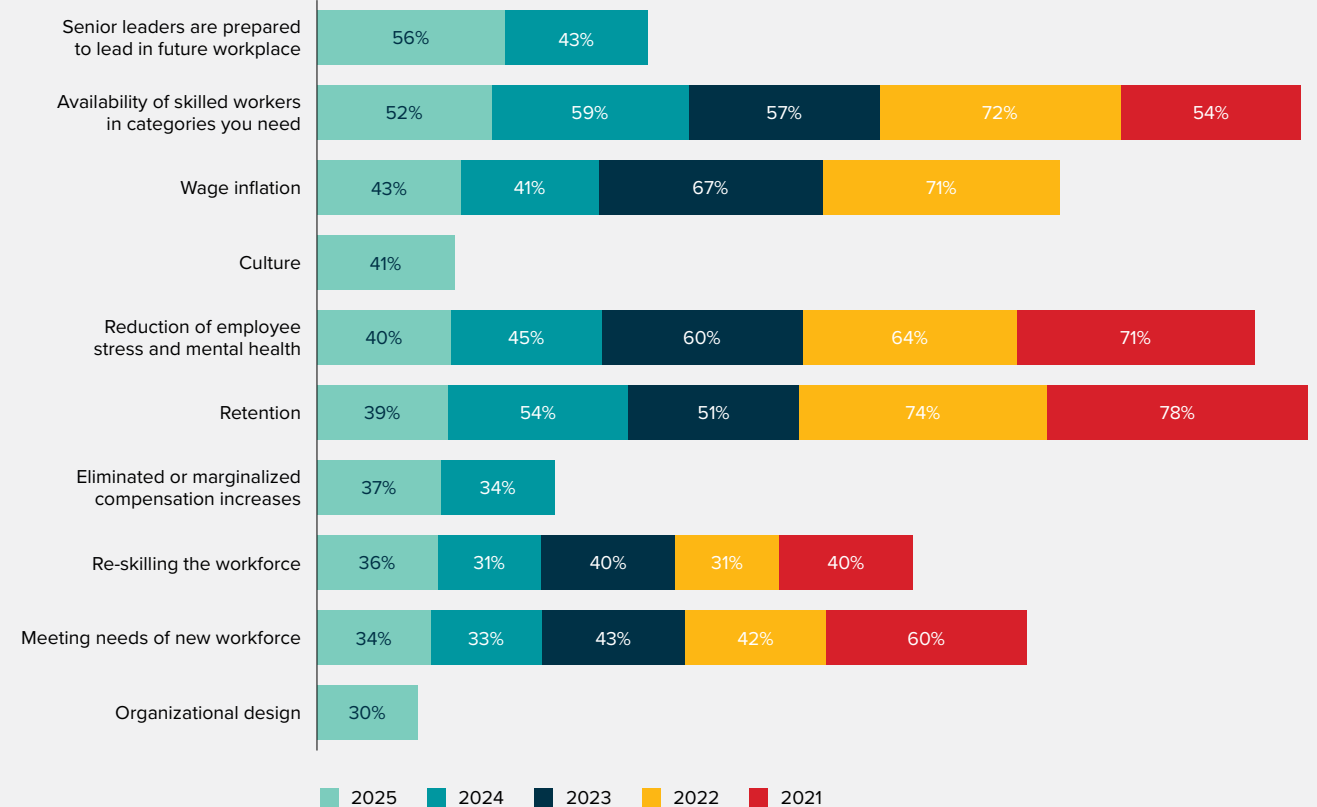
Study participants were asked to indicate their level of concern about 10 priorities related to workforce planning. The extent of concern shown below is defined here as either "extremely" or "very" concerned on a five-point scale.

The foremost concern is how well senior leaders are prepared to lead in the future workplace, with 56% either "extremely" or "very" concerned, up significantly from 43% in 2024. One example of how senior leaders must adapt is that they must understand and leverage technology like AI, automation, and data analytics—not just delegate tech decisions. This doesn't mean becoming a developer, but leaders should strategically integrate digital tools and support teams through tech adoption.⁵ Another factor to consider is that with constant change (economic, technological, and social), agility and adaptability are must-have leadership traits. Leaders should embrace change rather than resist it.⁶

The availability of skilled workers in categories needed is an area of concern for the second highest percentage of HR leaders at 52%, down from 59% in 2024. This area has been between 52% and 59% in four of the last five years. Critical skills gaps negatively influence business performance through a multitude of ways, including lower productivity, higher costs, lost revenue, weakened innovation and adaptability, and worker burnout.

Asked for the first time in this study is concern over company culture. Company culture has the fourth highest level of concern at 41%. Culture is the unique way that an organization lives out its company purpose and delivers on its brand promise to customers. For this reason, a strong corporate culture functions as a differentiator in the marketplace. According to Gallup, a connection to culture drives performance.⁷ Those that feel connected at work are 4.3 times as likely to be engaged, 5.3 times as likely to recommend their organization as a place to work, and 62% less likely to suffer burnout. Work has fundamentally changed in recent years because of AI and automation reshaping jobs, higher employee expectations for flexibility, purpose, growth, and ongoing economic uncertainty and restructuring.

Extent of Concern: Company Workforce Extremely/Very Concerned



Concern over the availability of skilled workers is significantly higher in EMEA than in North America (73% vs. 55%), as is concern over senior leaders preparedness to lead (55% vs. 41%). Wage inflation is a greater concern in North America than in EMEA (43% vs. 27%).

Extent of Concern: Company Workforce Top 5 Differences in Concerns By Region

	North America	EMEA	DIFFERENCE
Wage inflation	50%	31%	18%
Meeting needs of new workforce	28%	38%	9%
Reduction of employee stress and mental health	35%	44%	9%
Senior leaders are prepared to lead in future workplace	53%	59%	6%
Retention	40%	34%	6%

Extent of Concern: HR Department Management

How concerned are you, if at all, about each of the following areas that are related to HR department management?

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their concern about seven issues falling under HR department management. Once again, the percentage of responses that are “extremely” or “very concerned” are shown in the accompanying chart. In general, apprehension of the areas falling under HR department management is less of a concern than other topics explored.

Fatigue and burnout across the HR function is regarded as the area of greatest concern of matters related specifically to HR department management. In total, one-half (50%) is “extremely” or “very” concerned about fatigue and burnout, up from 41% in 2024. For HR professionals, the data reflects both progress and pressure as the function is now central to business strategy but carrying a heavy emotional and operational load. For businesses, this is a warning sign: influence without adequate resourcing risks unsustainable workloads and talent drain within HR itself. For the HR profession, it is a pivotal moment to redesign processes, clarify priorities, and protect the people who protect everyone else.⁸

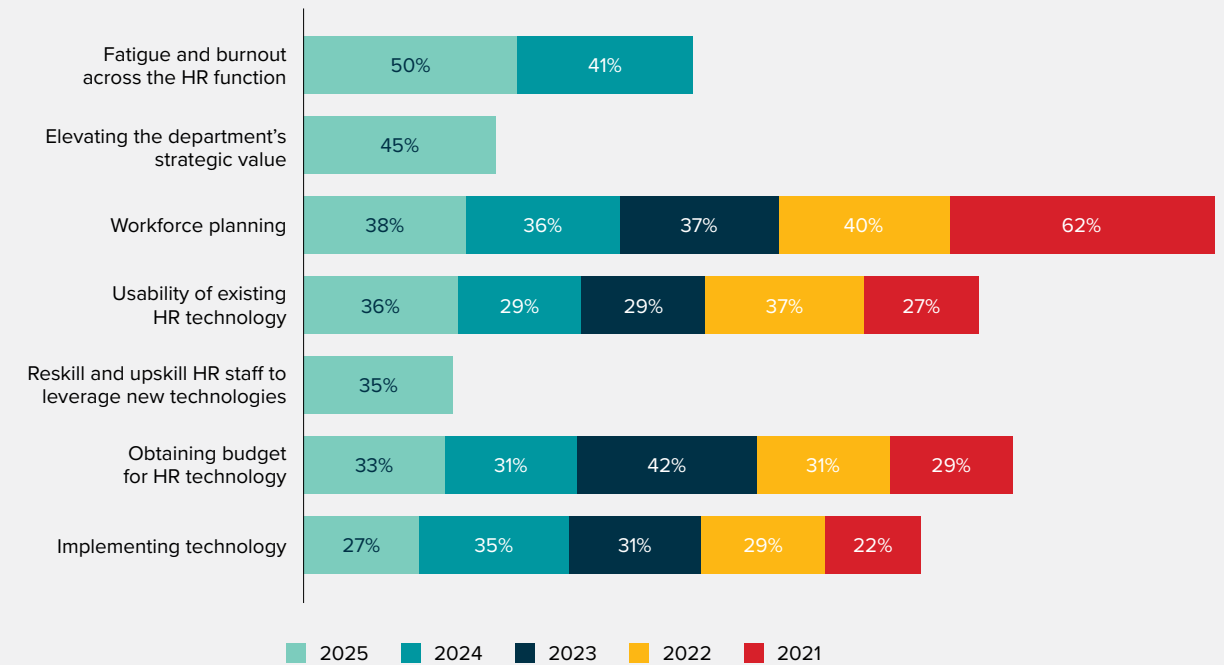
“Elevating the department’s strategic value,” added in 2025 as an area of concern to explore, is indicated by nearly one-half (45%) as an area of concern. The goal could lead to greater stress on the HR department if the resources needed to execute it are not made available.

The fourth greatest area of concern here is the usability of HR technology, with 36% extremely or very concerned, up seven percentage points from 2024. The usability of HR technology is a major concern for HR leaders in 2026 because poor usability undermines the strategic value of technology investments, increases workload and frustration for HR teams and employees, and ultimately weakens organizational performance.⁹

Overall concern is higher among HR executives in the EMEA region than in North America. The greatest difference between regions is in reskilling and upskilling HR staff to leverage new technologies. Nearly one-half (45%) in EMEA considered this a concern, 16 percentage points higher than in North America.

How concerned are you, if at all, about each of the following areas that are related to HR department management?

Extent of Concern: HR Department Management Extremely/Very Concerned



Extent of Concern: HR Department Management Top 4 Differences By Region

	North America	EMEA	DIFFERENCE
Reskill and upskill HR staff to leverage new technologies	29%	45%	16%
Usability of existing HR technology	30%	45%	14%
Fatigue and burnout across the HR function	48%	55%	7%
Elevating the department's strategic value	43%	48%	5%

Extent of Concern: Company Operations

How concerned are you, if at all, about each of the following areas that relate to company operations?

Participants were asked to indicate the extent of their concern about eight issues related to company operations. In general, the extent of concern in this area is up from the prior year. The two areas of greatest concern are the same over the last two years.

Leader and manager effectiveness is a concern for over one-half (58%), up from 52% in 2024. Leader and manager effectiveness is a major concern for company operations in 2026 because businesses are navigating unprecedented complexity, rapid technological change, talent and engagement challenges, and ongoing economic uncertainty. When leaders and managers are ineffective, it directly harms organizational performance, strategic execution, workforce stability, and innovation.

The area with the second highest level of concern is overall price inflation on goods and services, with over one-half (51%) extremely or very concerned.

The annual average inflation rate in the United States for 2025 was around 2.7%, reflecting a gradual decrease from prior years but stubborn price pressures in key sectors, such as food and electricity.¹⁰ Global inflation in 2025 was estimated to average around 4.2%, showing a moderate decline from previous highs, with projections from late 2025 and early 2026 suggesting further easing into 2026, though significant regional variations persisted.¹¹ However, threats of another round of tariffs from the Trump administration may negatively impact inflation rates globally.

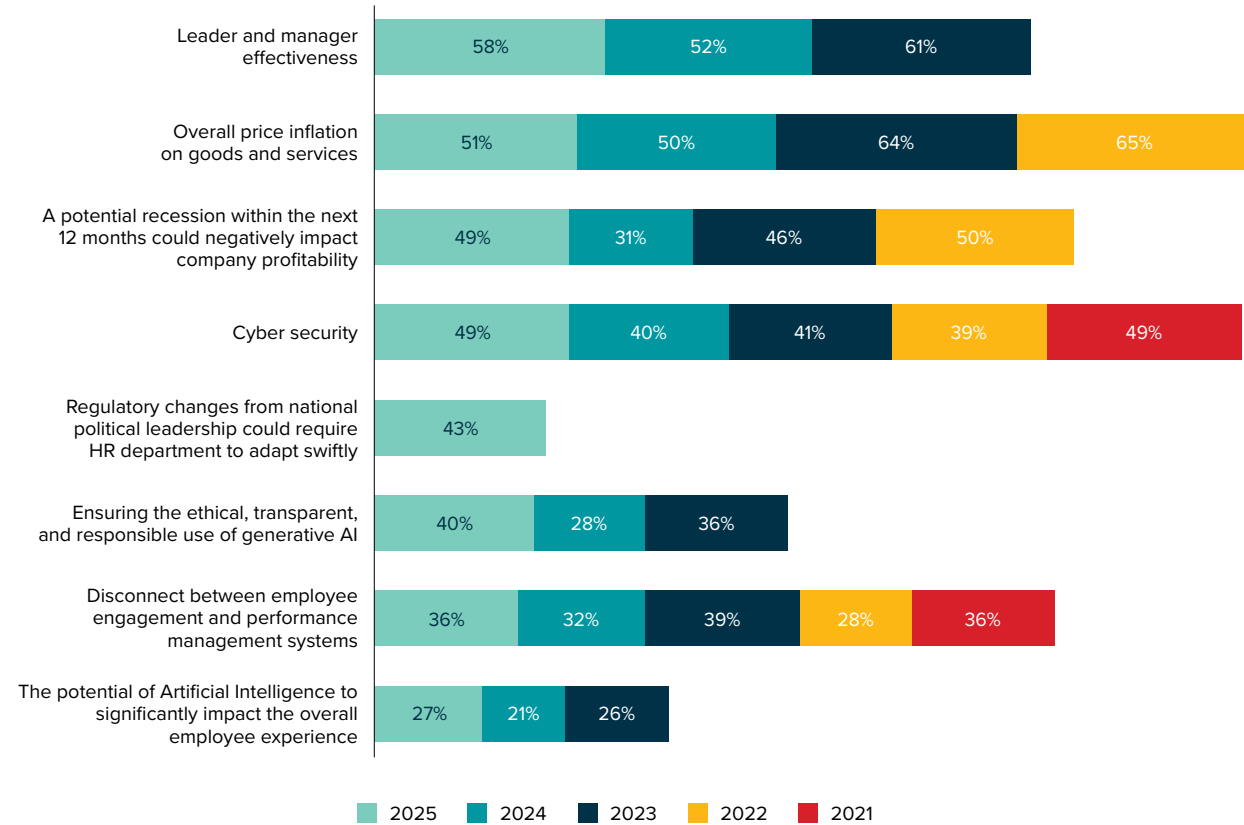
A potential recession in the next 12 months could negatively impact company profitability, which was concerning nearly one-half (49%) of respondents, up 18 percentage points, the sharpest increase in any area and back to prior norms.

Forecasts for a global recession in 2026 are mixed, with many major institutions predicting continued, albeit uneven, global growth rather than a widespread downturn, supported by AI investment and fiscal policies. However, significant risks from geopolitical tensions, stubborn inflation, and trade uncertainty keep a recession possibility alive, with some analysts giving it a 20% to 35% chance. While some economists see strong resilience, others highlight that growth relies on fragile drivers, and CEOs globally rank recession as a top concern.¹²

Regulatory changes from national political leadership that could require HR departments to adapt swiftly is a concern explored for the first time in 2026. Nearly one-half (43%) expressed concern.

HR leaders worry about regulatory changes from incoming political leadership because those changes can alter legal obligations, create compliance challenges, impact internal policies and workflows, and expose organizations to risk if not implemented quickly and correctly. Staying ahead of regulatory shifts isn't just a legal necessity, it is an operational and strategic priority for HR.¹³

Extent of Concern: Company Operations Extremely/Very Concerned



Concern over overall price inflation is markedly higher in North America (56%) than in EMEA (39%), despite more moderate inflation in the US. Potential recession concerns were higher in North America than EMEA. Cybersecurity concerns are larger among senior HR leaders in EMEA than in North America.

Extent of Concern: Company Operations Top 3 Differences By Region

	North America	EMEA	DIFFERENCE
Overall price inflation on goods and services	56%	39%	17%
A potential recession within the next 12 months could negatively impact company profitability	52%	44%	8%
Cyber security	45%	52%	8%



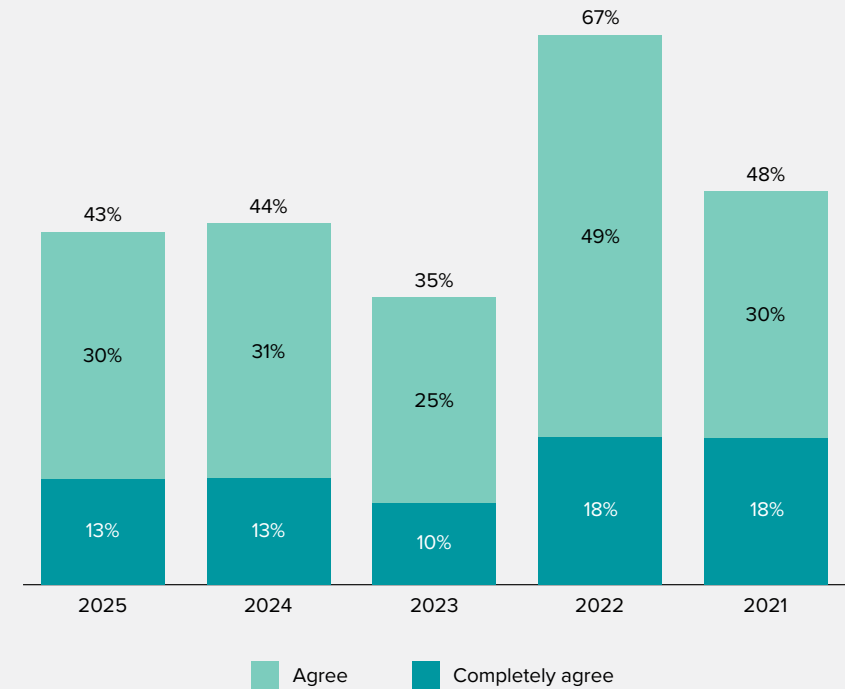
Concern Over Remote Work’s Impact on Employee Attachment and Loyalty

Please indicate your extent of agreement with the following statement: “I am concerned that remote work over an extended period has reduced employee attachment and loyalty to our company.”

Remote work became the new normal during the COVID-19 pandemic, but concerns remain about its long-term impact on company culture. Overall, 43% of CHROs agreed that remote work has reduced employee attachment and loyalty to their company, similar to the last three of four years.

Remote work may negatively impact employee attachment and loyalty to their organization in several ways. There may be weakened social bonds, as employees may struggle to form strong relationships with colleagues and leadership. And there is a risk of a reduced organizational identity, leading to a disconnection from company culture. Communication gaps may also arise in remote teams.

Extent of Agreement: Concern Over Remote Work’s Impact on Employee Attachment and Loyalty



The extent of concern about remote work’s impact on employee attachment and loyalty is somewhat higher in North America than in EMEA.

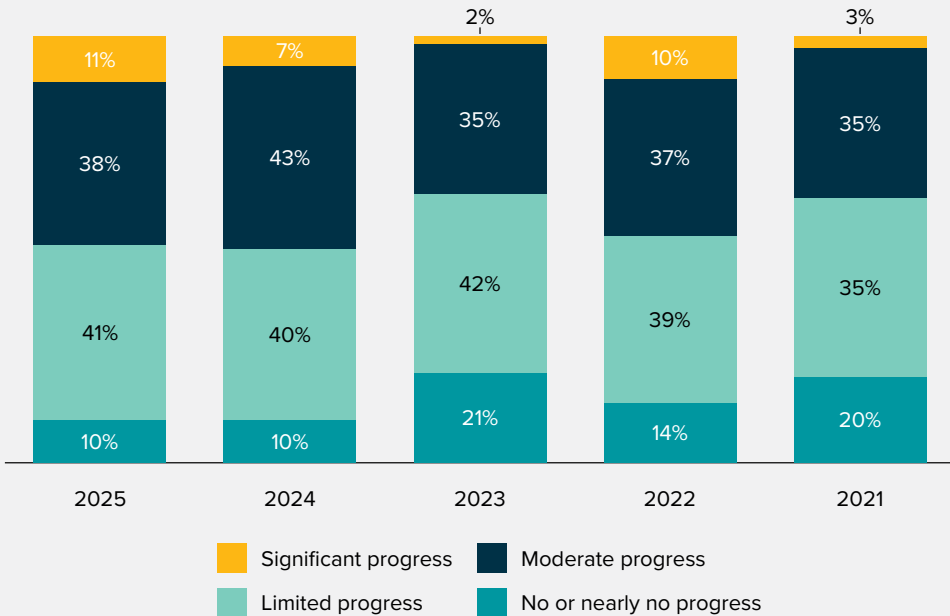
Extent of Agreement: Concern Over Remote Work's Impact on Employee Attachment and Loyalty By Region

	North America	EMEA
Agree (net)	43%	38%
Completely agree	12%	15%
Agree	31%	23%

Concern over the impact of remote work on employee attachment and loyalty is not unwarranted. An ongoing study by Gallup shows that employees who are operating in a hybrid setting have the highest level of engagement, though engagement has fallen across all full-time employees across work locations over the past five years.¹⁴



Progress in Establishing Upskilling Programs



Progress in Establishing Upskilling Programs

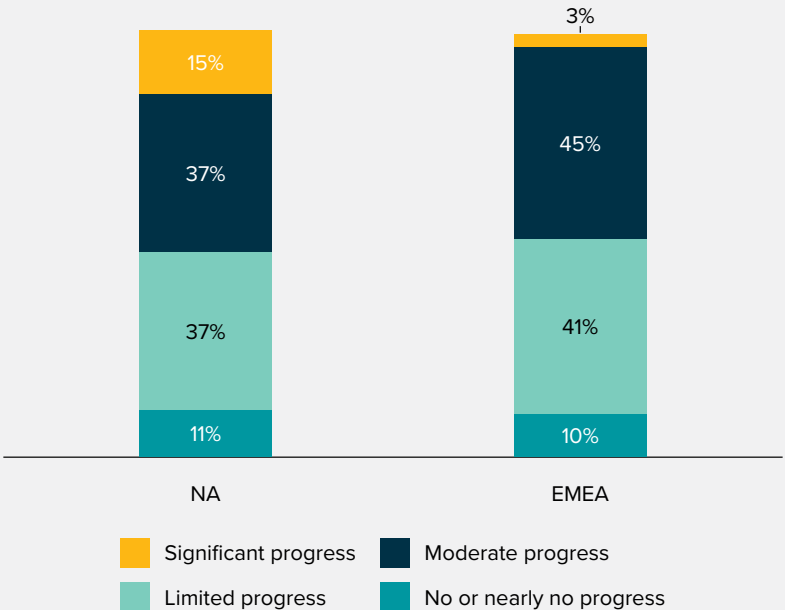
How much progress has your organization made in establishing an upskilling program that develops a mix of soft, technical, and digital skills?

When asked about their progress with upskilling programs that develop a mix of soft, technical, and digital skills, it becomes apparent that organizations have made little progress since 2021. Only 11% of CHROs reported that they made significant progress in 2025, though that has increased in the last two years. But overall, there has been little momentum for this initiative

In 2025, senior HR Leaders from North America reported similar progress in establishing upskilling programs to those from EMEA, a departure from prior years when EMEA reported greater progress. According to the World Economic Forum’s estimate, by 2030, 59% of the worldwide workforce will need training just to keep pace with shifting job requirements. Of those workers, 29% can be upskilled within their current roles, 19% can be reskilled and redeployed to new roles, and 11% may face structural unemployment.¹⁵

The accelerating pace of technological change, coupled with evolving industry demands and employee concerns, has heightened the need for upskilling programs that develop a comprehensive blend of soft, technical, and digital skills. Organizations and educational institutions must collaborate to design and implement training initiatives that prepare the workforce to navigate and thrive in this dynamic environment.

Progress in Establishing Upskilling Programs By Region





Rating of Company Training and Development Capability

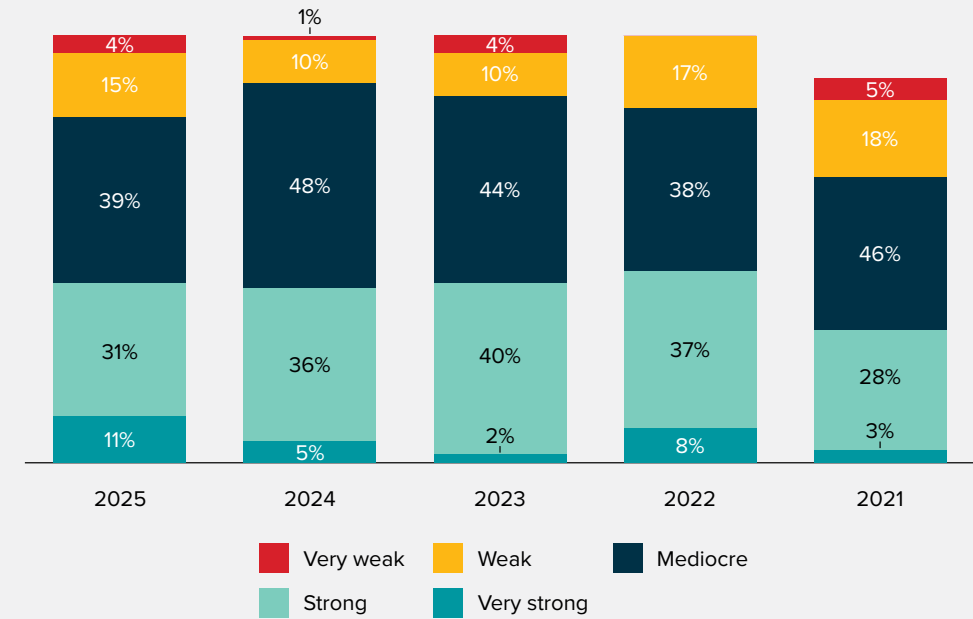
How would you rate your company's training and development capability?

When asked to rate their company's training and development capability, less than one-half (42%) of respondents considered it strong or very strong, nearly the same as in prior years. This is not a high score.

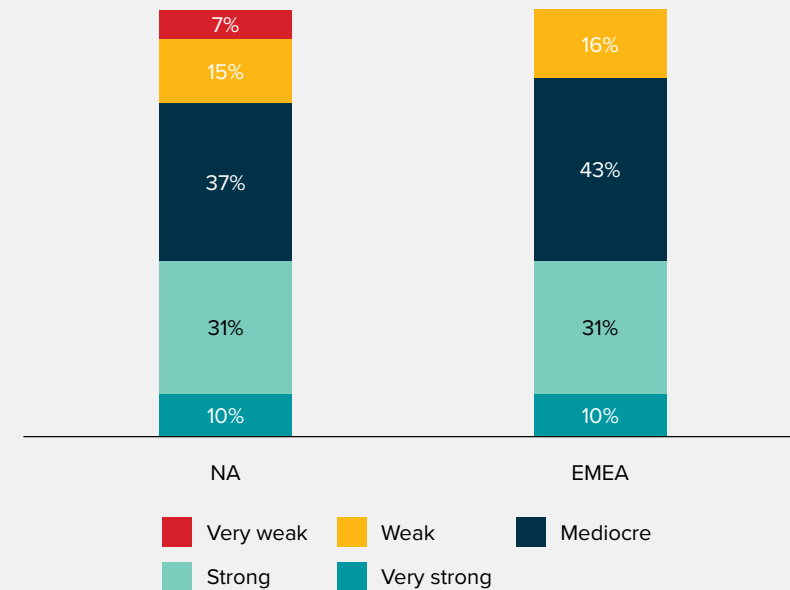
There is little difference between regions, as 41% of respondents in both North America and EMEA considered their company's training and development capability strong or very strong.

So, what is holding back progress in improving organizational training and development capabilities? Employees and managers often lack time to participate in training during work hours, which makes development feel like an added burden rather than part of the job. Gallup found that 89% of CHROs see time away from job responsibilities as the top barrier to learning and development, and employees also cite this as a key obstacle.¹⁶ Financial constraints are also a major barrier, especially in smaller organizations that lack training infrastructure.

Rating of Company Training and Development Capability



Rating of Company Training and Development Capability By Region



Closing the Skills Gaps

Which of the following is the most important for closing a potential skills gap in your organization?

Respondents were asked to identify the most important vehicle to close potential skills gaps in their organizations. Overwhelmingly, internal training was the clear choice again in 2025, as indicated by over one-half (56%) of respondents, more than twice that of any other area. There has been little year-over-year change in this area since 2021.

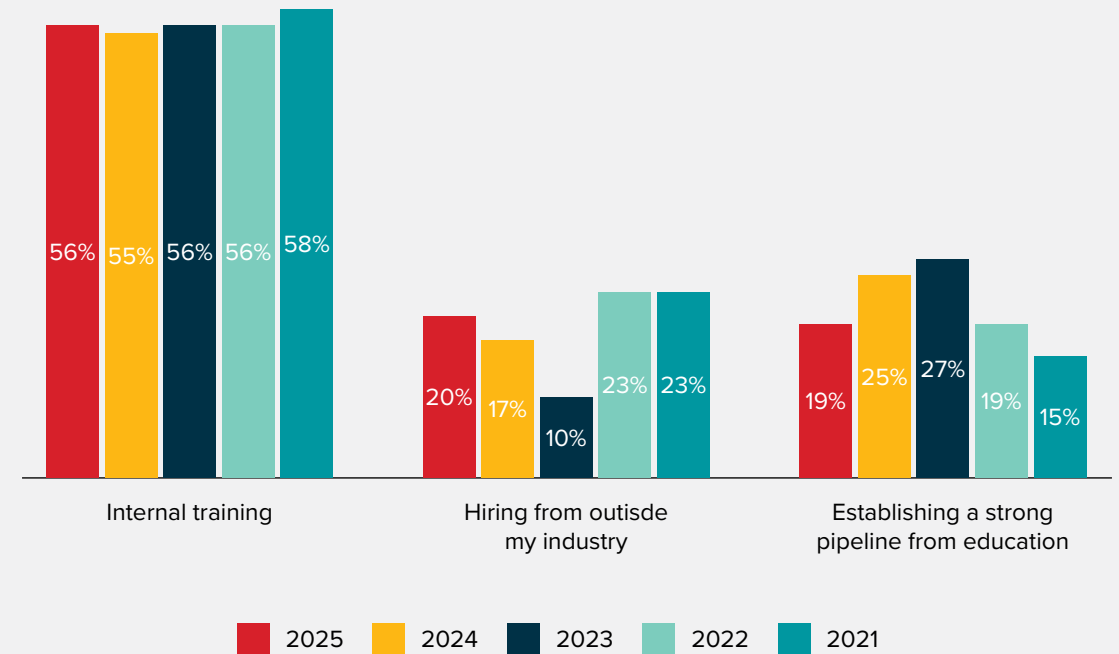
The issue this raises is that only 42% of CHROs consider their training and development capability strong or very strong. How can they hope to use internal training when they consider their success in this area to be entirely mediocre? Organizations must invest more in internal training if they hope to close the skills gap.

There are stark differences between how North American and their EMEA counterparts are addressing the skills gap. North American respondents are more likely to use internal training (64%) vs. those from the EMEA region (43%). Just over one-quarter (29%) in EMEA are hiring from an outside industry, compared to 15% in North America.

The focus on internal training is a sound strategy. Internal training programs can be tailored to address the specific needs of the organization, ensuring that employees acquire skills directly relevant to their roles and the company's objectives. These programs aimed at employees can also be more cost-effective than hiring externally.

Further, offering internal training opportunities demonstrates a commitment to employee growth, enhancing job satisfaction and loyalty. This investment in professional development can lead to higher retention rates and a more engaged workforce.

Closing the Skills Gap



Closing the Skills Gap By Region

	North America	EMEA
Internal training	64%	43%
Establishing a strong pipeline from education	17%	21%
Hiring from outside my industry	15%	29%
Other	4%	7%



Interest in Skills-Related HR Goals

Please rank (1-6) the following skills-related HR goals in order of interest.

Study participants were asked to rank six skills-related HR goals in order of interest. Retaining employees who have been upskilled was reestablished as the highest ranked HR goal, where it has been in four of the prior five years.

In some ways, retention returning to the highest priority of HR goals is puzzling. “Job hugging,” or rather the low voluntary job separation rate, is a very low 3.4% in the U.S. though much higher in EMEA. But retention remains a major priority of senior HR leaders. Training and upskilling employees is time-consuming and costly. HR teams invest resources in learning and development with the expectation that employees will stay long enough to provide a return on that investment. If employees leave shortly after being upskilled, that investment is effectively lost, making retention a priority.

Defining the skills organizations should build is again the second highest area of interest, consistent over the last four years. Given the lack of progress in establishing upskilling programs, this area would be a solid first step in developing the plans for enhancing upskilling initiatives.

The top ranked areas vary between respondents from North America and EMEA. Defining the skills the organization should build is top ranked in North America, but third in EMEA. The ability of employees to learn new skills was fourth ranked in North America, but second in EMEA.

Rank Interest in Skills-Related HR Goals

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Retaining employees who have been upskilled	1	3	1	1	1
Defining the skills your organization should build	2	2	2	2	4
Ability of employees to learn new skills needed for the future	3	1	3	4	3
Dedicating additional resources to conduct the upskilling programs we need	4	5	4	3	5
Better managing disruption of day-to-day business activities	5	4	5	5	2
Measuring the return on investment of our upskilling program	6	6	6	6	6

Rank Interest in Skills-Related HR Goal By Region

	North America	EMEA
Defining the skills your organization should build	1	3
Retaining employees who have been upskilled	2	1
Dedicating additional resources to conduct the upskilling programs we need	3	4
Ability of employees to learn new skills needed for the future	4	2

Deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning

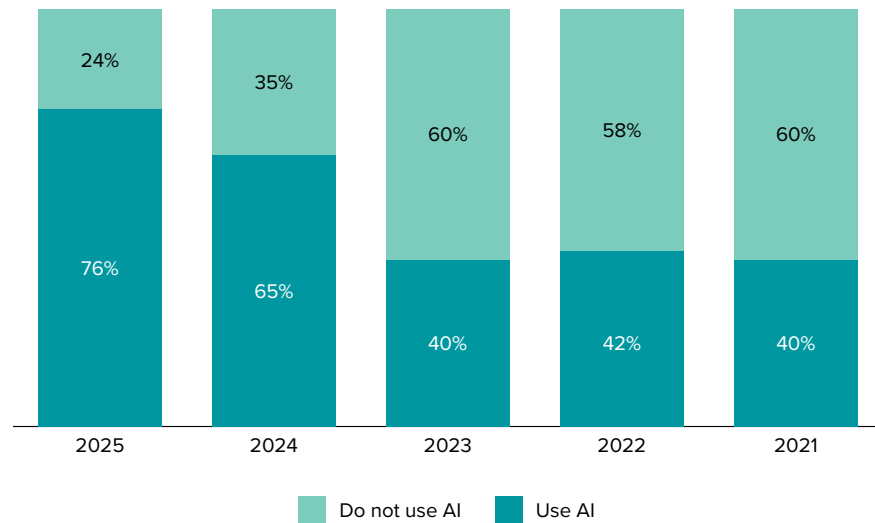
Where in your department are you employing the use of AI/machine learning?

AI adoption increased again in 2025, after a dramatic increase in 2024. Over three-quarters (76%) use AI, up from 40% in 2023. AI adoption was essentially flat between 2021 and 2023 before taking the dramatic jump.

The dramatic increase in AI adoption in HR is consistent with implementation of the technology in general. Around 43% of organizations now leverage AI in at least some HR tasks, up from 26% in 2024. These tasks include workforce planning, HR technology support, recruiting, and learning and development.¹⁷

The percentage of those using AI in EMEA is slightly higher than that of North America, 84% vs. 73%, respectively. The gap between the two regions more than doubled in 2025.

Adoption of AI and Machine Learning in HR



Adoption of AI and Machine Learning in HR By Region

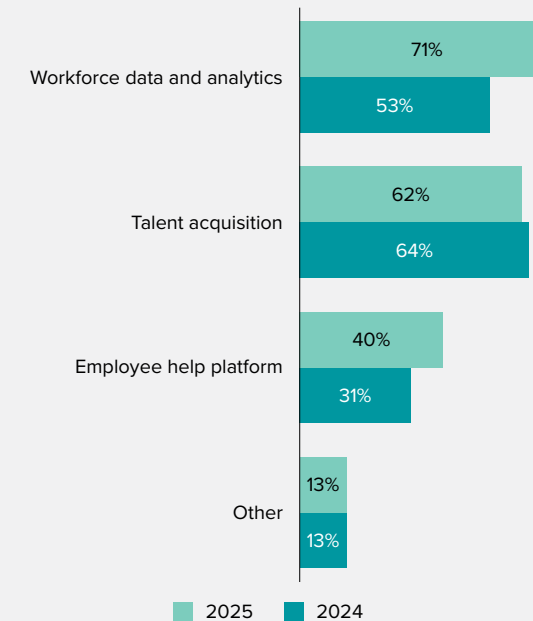
	North America	EMEA
Use AI 2025	73%	84%
Use AI 2024	64%	69%

In 2025, workforce data and analytics is selected most often as a use of AI within HR, by nearly three-quarters (71%). This is up substantially from 2024's 53%, though only time will tell if the increase is real or a one-time statistical anomaly. Algorithms can forecast workforce demand, identify skill gaps within organizations, and recommend actions by analyzing historical data, market trends, and business plans. AI can predict which employees are likely to leave and can forecast future hiring needs and skill gaps.¹⁸ Further, HR teams get real-time analytics dashboards and alerts about trends like declining engagement.

Talent acquisition remains a common application of AI and machine learning, as indicated by nearly two-thirds (62%) of respondents. Examples of how AI is used in TA include algorithms that analyze resumes to identify candidates whose qualifications align with job requirements, significantly reducing the time recruiters spend on initial screenings; AI-driven virtual assistants to engage with applicants, answer queries, collect information, schedule interviews, and expedite the hiring process; and AI-powered personality and psychometric tests.¹⁹

The percentage using AI within their employee assistance platforms increased by nine percentage points to 40%. AI-powered chatbots are often used to enable employee self-service. Chatbots have the advantage of being available 24/7. AI-powered ticketing systems can categorize and prioritize employee requests, ensuring that urgent matters are addressed promptly. Further, AI can assist in creating and maintaining a comprehensive knowledge base, making it easier for employees to find information on HR-related topics independently.

Deployment of AI and Machine Learning



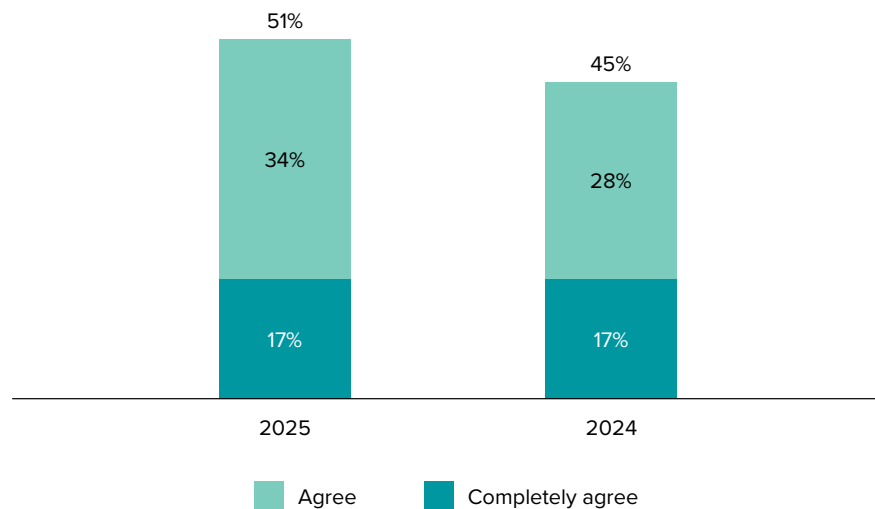
Extent of Agreement about AI as an HR Disruptor

Please indicate your extent of agreement with the following statement: Artificial Intelligence will be the biggest disrupter to the HR function in the next two to three years.

Beginning in 2024, a question was asked among study participants to indicate the extent of their agreement that AI will be the biggest disrupter of the HR function in the next two to three years. The percentage who agreed increased in 2025 to 51%, up 6 percentage points from the prior year. Nearly one-half (45%) agreed with the statement, over three times more than they disagreed (15%).

AI is poised to be the biggest disrupter of the HR function over the next two to three years because it fundamentally changes how work is done, how decisions are made, and what capabilities HR must provide for the business. AI will automate a significant share of administrative and transactional HR work, freeing HR teams to focus on strategic priorities such as workforce planning, skills development, and organizational effectiveness. At the same time, predictive and agentic AI will elevate people data into real-time decision intelligence, enabling HR to forecast attrition, anticipate skills gaps, personalize employee experiences, and support leaders with forward-looking insights rather than retrospective reports. This shift will redefine HR roles, requiring new skills in data interpretation, AI governance, and human-machine collaboration, while also introducing new challenges around ethics, bias, trust, and transparency. As AI adoption accelerates and becomes table stakes, HR functions that fail to adapt risk falling behind, while those that embrace AI can transition from service providers to strategic architects of workforce capability and business resilience.

Extent of Agreement about AI as an HR Disruptor



Company Respondent Characteristics:

JOB TITLE	
CEO/President/Owner	5%
CHRO	17%
Executive/Senior VP Human Resources	16%
Head of HR	12%
Director of HR	29%
Other	21%

NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTEs) GLOBALLY	
Fewer than 500	48%
500 - 2,999	21%
3,000 - 9,999	16%
10,000 - 24,999	8%
25,000 - 49,999	2%
50,000 - 99,999	3%
100,000+	2%

REGIONS	
North America	59%
EMEA	33%
APAC	8%

PRIMARY INDUSTRY	
Aerospace/Aviation	1%
Automotive	1%
Business Services	4%
Construction	8%
Consumer Goods, Electronics	2%
Education	4%
Engineering	4%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	10%
Government	3%
Healthcare/Health Sciences	6%
Hospitality	3%
IT, Technology, Software	8%
Manufacturing	11%
Media/Entertainment/Hospitality	3%
Non-Profit	4%
Pharmaceuticals	2%
Power, Oil & Energy	2%
Professional services	11%
Retail/Wholesale	5%
Transportation	4%
Other	5%

End Notes

1. "Employment Projections," *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, accessed January 20, 2026. <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>
2. Ma, Jason. "The job market in 2026 will suffer from 'uncomfortably slow growth'" *Fortune*, December 28, 2025. <https://fortune.com/2025/12/28/job-market-outlook-2026-trade-trump-tariffs-immigration-deportation-ai-productivity/>
3. Janzen, Nathan. "Canadian Analysis," *Royal Bank of Canada*, January 12, 2026. <https://www.rbc.com/en/economics/canadian-analysis/featured-analysis/insights/canadas-shifting-labour-market-recalibrating-breakeven-employment/>
4. "Employment and Social Trends 2026," *International Labour Organization*, January 14, 2026. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/employment-and-social-trends-2026>
5. Bouttell, Laura. "Leadership Skills of the Future: Preparing for Tomorrow's Workplace," *Quarterdeck*, November 7, 2025. <https://quarterdeck.co.uk/articles/leadership-skills-of-the-future>
6. "How To Thrive in The Future Of Work: Must-Have Leadership Skills," *Forbes*, December 12, 2025. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2025/12/12/how-to-thrive-in-the-future-of-work-must-have-leadership-skills/>
7. Morgan, Iseult and Dvorak, Nate. "Harness the Power of Your Organizational Culture in 3 Steps," *Gallup*, February 8, 2021. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/329312/harness-power-organizational-culture-steps.aspx>
8. Homer, Natalie. "HR Health Check Report UK 2025," *HiBob*, December 8, 2025. <https://www.hibob.com/research/hr-health-check-2025>
9. "Augmented HR: Unlocking HR's Business Impact Through Technology," *Gartner*, May 29, 2024. <https://www.gartner.com/en/documents/5471295>
10. "United States Inflation Rate," *Trading Economics*, Accessed January 16, 2026. <https://tradingeconomics.com/united-states/inflation-cpi>
11. Neufeld, Dorothy. "Mapped: Global Inflation by Country in 2025," *Visual Capitalist*, January 7, 2026. <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/global-inflation-by-country-in-2025/>
12. Wearden, Graeme. "From the AI bubble to Fed fears: the global economic outlook for 2026," *The Guardian*, January 4, 2026. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/jan/04/global-economic-outlook-2026>
13. "The Imperative of Evolving HR Operations," *SHRM*. Accessed January 19, 2026. <https://www.shrm.org/labs/resources/the-imperative-of-evolving-hr-operations>
14. "Indicators: Hybrid Work." *Gallup*, Accessed January 26, 2026. <https://www.gallup.com/401384/indicator-hybrid-work.aspx>
15. "The Future of Jobs Report 2025," *World Economic Forum*, January 7, 2025. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/>
16. Tatel, Corey and Mulherin, Megan. "Addressing the Barriers Blocking Employee Development," *Gallup*, July 22, 2025. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/692642/addressing-barriers-blocking-employee-development.aspx>
17. "2025 Talent Trends: AI in HR," *SHRM*, Accessed January 22, 2025. <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/research/2025-talent-trends/ai-in-hr>
18. Deligiorgi, Iliana. "How to use AI in HR: 5 Examples for 2025," *Talent HR*, March 25, 2025. <https://www.talenthr.io/blog/how-to-use-ai-in-hr/>
19. Liu, Evie. "Chipotle Looks to Hire 20,000 New Workers with the Help of AI," *Barrons*, February 19, 2025. <https://www.barrons.com/articles/chipotle-stock-hiring-burrito-season-c7c5439c>



About *HRO Today*

HRO Today magazine and newsletters are read by more than 200,000 HR executives and leaders worldwide and cover the latest industry trends in HR outsourcing, services, shared services, and operations.

HRO Today is the publication of choice for the most senior executives facing strategic decisions about operational excellence.

HRO Today and www.hrotoday.com offer the best content choices for the HR leaders seeking online information in the form of newsletters, webinar series, and online video content. *HRO Today* is a product of SharedXpertise Media.