



2019 HR Trends and Priorities for HR Leaders



Overview

A tightening global labor market, emerging social and economic trends and new competitive threats are challenging HR executives to create new strategies to drive their organization's mission critical priorities. This report shares results from the 2019 Future of HR Survey and examines top key initiatives for HR leaders overall, as well as how key initiatives vary between HR leadership roles in 2019.

Key Findings

- Across all roles, HR leaders prioritize similar key initiatives for 2019.
- Building critical skills and competencies for the organization ranks as the most prioritized key initiative for HR leaders in the next year, followed by current and future leadership bench and employee experience.
- Problems surrounding talent attraction, development and management are the greatest obstacles to capitalizing on key initiatives for HR functions.

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HR Key Initiatives and Corporate Objectives for 2019

Key initiatives organize Gartner research, resources and tools around our clients' most important projects and programs. Key initiatives typically arise from significant business opportunities or threats and have defined objectives and timelines, substantial financial implications and high organizational visibility. They often cross HR disciplines, roles and topics, but primary responsibility for each key initiative typically resides within a single leadership role. They can comprise many projects but are usually implemented by designated teams with defined roles, responsibilities and performance objectives. For definitions of key initiatives, please refer to the end of this report.

Key Initiative Prioritization

While a successful organization will work on all key initiatives, HR leaders prioritize some more than others for 2019. When HR leaders were asked to select the key initiatives that are a priority for them in 2019, two-thirds (66%) selected *building critical skills and competencies for the organization*, making it the most frequently selected key initiative across all HR leadership roles in 2019 (see Figure 1). The two key initiatives that directly follow building critical skills and competencies for the organization in prioritized ranking for 2019 are *current and future leadership bench* (60%) and *employee experience* (51%).

Figure 1: Key Initiatives for HR Leaders in 2019

Key Initiatives for HR Leaders in 2019
 Percentage Selecting Each as a Priority



n = 843
 Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey
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Percentage of HR leaders selecting each key initiative as a priority; HR leaders selected 2-5 key initiatives they are prioritizing in the next 12 months.

To understand how different key initiatives affect the broader HR function, HR leaders must grasp how different leadership roles prioritize these initiatives. For example, heads of diversity and inclusion would be expected to choose *diversity and inclusion* as a top key initiative, while heads of talent analytics would be expected to choose talent analytics among their top key initiatives. While different leaders did indeed choose key initiatives that are obviously aligned with their specific leadership roles, many roles share several top key initiatives for 2019 (see Figure 2). This creates many opportunities for cross-functional cooperation among HR leaders.

For example, a head of talent analytics may be prioritizing *driving digital business transformation for the organization*, but they may not know many other HR leaders are also prioritizing this key initiative — such as the head of learning and development, the head of HR technology and the head of total rewards. To capitalize on many of these important key initiatives, HR leaders must work across their functions, utilizing a wide range of HR resources and staff.

Figure 2: Top 5 Priorities Across All HR Leadership Roles

Top 5 Priorities Across All HR Leadership Roles

✓ Indicates Whether Each Key Initiative Was a Top-5 Choice Among HR Leaders in Each Role

Key Initiative	Building Critical Skills and Competencies for the Organization	Current and Future Leadership Bench	Employee Experience	Organizational Design and Change Management	Driving Digital Business Transformation for the Organization
Head of HR (n = 302)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional or Business Unit Head of HR (n = 198)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Learning and Development Leader (n = 65)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Talent Management Leader (n = 79)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Diversity and Inclusion Leader (n = 21)	✓		✓	✓	
Total Rewards Leader (n = 65)	✓		✓		✓
Recruiting Leader (n = 50)	✓	✓			
Talent Analytics Leader (n = 54)			✓		✓
HR Technology Leader (n = 9)					✓

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

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HR leaders across many roles share similar priorities for key initiatives in 2019.

Corporate Objectives According to HR Leaders

We surveyed HR leaders to find out the top objectives for their overall organization in 2019. The top organization-level corporate objectives cited by HR leaders are *grow the business* and *improve operational excellence*, with 72% and 64% ranking these in their top three most important, respectively. For nearly every organization-level corporate objective, the corresponding key initiatives were the same. There was one exception, however. For the HR leaders who chose *innovate for success* as their top organization-level corporate objective, their key initiatives tended to be different, suggesting that a different HR focus is required to contribute to that corporate objective compared to some of the other corporate objectives.

Table 1: Corporate Objectives of HR Leaders for 2019

Corporate Objective	% Ranking in Top 3
Grow the Business	72%
Improve Operational Excellence	64%
Execute Business Transformations	58%
Innovate for Success	52%
Optimize Costs	39%
Manage Risk and Regulatory Demands	15%

n = 843

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Key Initiatives and Challenges Within Each Initiative

HR leaders were asked to identify problems related to each key initiative they selected.

Building Critical Skills and Competencies for the Organization

HR leaders selected *building critical skills and competencies for the organization* as the most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problems with *building critical skills and competencies for the organization* are centered around one thing — ineffective managers. The top two problems for this key initiative are “we do not effectively develop employees through our managers” and “we struggle to develop effective managers,” cited by 46% and 44% of respondents, respectively.

Table 2: Problems Building Critical Skills and Competencies for the Organization

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We do not effectively develop employees through our managers.	46%
We struggle to develop effective managers.	45%
Our workforce does not have the skills it needs to drive future performance.	28%

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We do not effectively integrate learning into employee workflows.	24%
We do not have the learning and development solutions to develop the skills we need.	21%
Other	5%

n = 563

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Current and Future Leadership Bench

HR leaders selected *current and future leadership bench* as the second most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problems with *current and future leadership bench* focus on two aspects: the development of leaders and the diversity of leaders. "We struggle to develop effective leaders" and "Our succession management processes do not yield the right leaders at the right time" were selected by 45% and 43% of HR leaders, respectively. "Our leadership bench is not diverse" was selected by 44%.

Table 3: Problems With Current and Future Leadership Bench

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We struggle to develop effective leaders.	45%
Our leadership bench is not diverse.	44%
Our succession management processes do not yield the right leaders at the right time.	43%
Other	13%
We struggle to retain our current leaders.	9%
Our investments in high-potential talent have not paid off.	8%

n = 510

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Employee Experience

HR leaders selected *employee experience* as the third most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problem with *employee experience* surrounds the employment value proposition, with 55% of leaders selecting, "We struggle to bring our employment value proposition to life in employees' day-to-day work." Thirty percent also selected, "We cannot effectively monitor the employee experience at our organization today."

Table 4: Problems With Employee Experience

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We struggle to bring our employment value proposition to life in employees' day-to-day work.	55%
We cannot effectively monitor the employee experience at our organization today.	30%
We struggle to provide employees with an experience that helps them do their work.	25%
Our culture does not support business performance.	18%
We don't have a good business case for investing in employee experience.	11%
Other	9%

n = 434

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Organizational Design and Change Management

HR leaders selected *organizational design and change management* as the fourth most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problem with *organizational design and change management* is employees' reaction to change, with 46% of HR leaders selecting, "Our employees are fatigued from all the change." Thirty-eight percent selected, "Our organization changes too slowly" and 32% selected, "Our organization does not have the right structure to succeed." The top three problems for *organizational design and change management* are found at the organization level — not necessarily the HR level — and indicate many HR functions may feel comfortable with change management that is explicitly related to HR change, but their organizations have change-related challenges that HR cannot easily ameliorate.

Table 5: Problems With Organizational Design and Change Management

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
Our employees are fatigued from all the change.	46%
Our organization changes too slowly.	38%
Our organization does not have the right structure to succeed.	32%
My function does not have the capabilities to support organizational change.	17%
We do not identify opportunities for innovation within our function.	14%
Other	10%

n = 398

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Driving Digital Business Transformation for the Organization

HR leaders selected *driving digital business transformation for the organization* as the fifth most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

Organizations' greatest problem with *driving digital business transformation for the organization* centers on talent, as 46% of HR leaders selected, "We have inadequate talent to drive the digital transformation." Furthermore, HR leaders are running into obstacles driving the digital transformation in their organization. Thirty-seven percent of leaders selected, "Our operating processes and structures are too rigid for digital transformation" and 34% selected, "Our corporate culture is too risk-averse to capitalize on digitalization."

Table 6: Problems With Driving Digital Business Transformation for the Organization

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We have inadequate talent to drive digital transformation.	46%
Our operating processes and structures are too rigid for digital transformation.	37%
Our corporate culture is too risk-averse to capitalize on digitalization.	34%
We have unclear performance outcomes for digital transformation.	24%
Our digital plans are misaligned across the enterprise.	20%
Other	6%

n = 314

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Talent Analytics

HR leaders selected *talent analytics* as the sixth most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problem with *talent analytics* is "Our data quality (e.g., data is insufficient, inaccurate, inconsistent) prevents us from delivering the talent analytics our business needs," with 50% selecting this problem statement. Additionally, HR staff who are not in the analytics function have trouble using talent data; 31% of HR leaders selected, "Our nonanalytics HR staff do not effectively use talent data."

Table 7: Problems With Talent Analytics

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
Our data quality (e.g., data is insufficient, inaccurate, inconsistent) prevents us from delivering the talent analytics our business needs.	50%
Our nonanalytics HR staff do not effectively use talent data.	31%
We struggle to derive actionable insights from our talent data.	26%
Talent data does not impact business leaders' decision making.	20%
We struggle to use the newest talent analytics technologies and techniques.	19%
We don't know which metrics to track.	11%
Other	9%
Our dedicated talent analytics staff lack the skills to effectively make an impact with talent data.	5%

n = 278

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Recruiting

HR leaders selected *recruiting* as the seventh most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders were clear: Their greatest *recruiting* problem is attracting the right talent and identifying talent needs, with 50% of leaders selecting, "We struggle to attract our target talent" and 28% selecting, "We struggle to define clear hiring needs." Furthermore, 28% selected, "Our onboarding process is not effective." In turn, HR leaders are having problems attracting and hiring the right talent and even when that talent is hired, they struggle with onboarding.

Table 8: Problems With Recruiting

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We struggle to attract our target talent.	50%
Our onboarding process is not effective.	28%
We struggle to define clear hiring needs.	28%
We have difficulty assessing talent.	18%
We are not providing a good candidate experience.	17%
Other	15%

n = 263

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Future of Work

HR leaders selected *future of work* as the eighth most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

Problems with talent needs are one of HR leaders concerns for *future of work*, with 49% of HR leaders selecting, “We struggle to plan for future talent needs.” Additionally, leaders have problems managing technology’s impact on the work force; 41% of HR leaders selected, “We do not have an effective plan in place for addressing how technology will change the skills we need and don’t need in our workforce.”

Table 9: Problems With Future of Work

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We struggle to plan for future talent needs.	49%
We do not have an effective plan in place for addressing how technology will change the skills we need and don’t need in our workforce.	41%
Our organization lacks a clear strategy for how we will change our operations to succeed in the digital era.	32%
Our organization struggles to manage multiple employment models (e.g., employees plus contractors plus gig workers).	26%
Our organization’s strategy for implementing automation is nonexistent or ineffective.	13%
Other	3%

n = 250

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Diversity and Inclusion

HR leaders selected *diversity and inclusion* as the ninth most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problem with *diversity and inclusion* surrounds business leaders, not HR, with 56% of leaders selecting, "We struggle to hold business leaders accountable for D&I outcomes." Forty-two percent also have problems recruiting talent; 42% selected, "We struggle to recruit diverse talent."

Table 10: Problems With Diversity and inclusion

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We struggle to hold business leaders accountable for D&I outcomes.	56%
We struggle to recruit diverse talent.	42%
Our managers are ineffective at creating an inclusive environment on their teams.	31%
Other	13%
Our unconscious bias training is ineffective at mitigating bias.	10%
We struggle to develop a response to D&I events in the news.	4%

n = 251

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Performance Management

HR leaders selected *performance management* as the 10th most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problem with *performance management* concerns the effectiveness of manager feedback, with 56% of leaders selecting, "Our managers are not able to provide effective performance feedback." Leaders also have problems on the employee level and with performance reviews; 26% selected, "Our employees do not effectively set individual goals" and 22% selected, "Our performance review processes don't adequately reflect employees' true contribution."

Table 11: Problems With Performance Management

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
Our managers are not able to provide effective performance feedback.	56%
Our employees do not effectively set individual goals.	26%
Our performance review processes don't adequately reflect employees' true contribution.	22%
We do not adequately recognize and reward performance.	20%
We do not have mechanisms for recognizing team performance or collaboration.	19%
Our performance management system does not help managers effectively align employee performance to rewards.	19%
Other	7%
Our performance management processes are not transparent.	5%

n = 233

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Technology for My Function

HR leaders selected *technology for my function* as the 11th most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problem with *technology for my function* surrounds the effectiveness of current technology solutions, with 46% of leaders selecting, "Our current HR technology solutions hinder, rather than improve, employee experience." Leaders also have problems with integrating technology; 27% selected, "We struggle to integrate our function's technology systems."

Table 12: Problems With Technology for My Function

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
Our current HR technology solutions hinder, rather than improve employee experience.	46%
We struggle to integrate our function's technology systems.	27%
We do not know how evolving technology trends (such as AI or virtual reality) will impact talent management processes.	18%
We do not have a technology strategy that supports our business's digital transformation.	17%

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We do not sufficiently partner with IT and other functions to optimize employees' digital workplace.	16%
We cannot deliver on our workforce's expectations for more advanced technology in the workplace.	13%
Other	11%
We do not know how to select the right technology solution(s) for our function to meet current and future business needs.	8%

n = 192

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

HR Cost Optimization

HR leaders selected *HR cost optimization* as the 12th most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problem with *HR cost optimization* surrounds the efficiency and effectiveness of HR processes, with 48% of leaders selecting, "Our HR processes are not efficient and effective." Furthermore, leaders have problems with HR structure; 26% selected, "Our HR structure fails to enable us to deliver on our cost optimization targets."

Table 13: Problems With HR Cost Optimization

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
Our HR processes are not efficient and effective.	48%
Our HR structure fails to enable us to deliver on our cost optimization targets.	26%
Our workforce is not structured to enable the enterprise to deliver on its cost optimization targets.	21%
We do not have a total rewards model in place to drive cost optimization across the enterprise.	18%
We struggle with finding opportunities for cost optimization in our HRIS landscape.	14%
We do not have mechanisms in place to balance internal labor with contingent workers.	14%

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We do not know how to get better cost-saving effects out of our HR shared services	12%
Other	5%
We do not know how to get better cost-saving effects out of our outsourced services.	3%

n = 183

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Strategy and Management of My Function

HR leaders selected *strategy and management of my function* as the 13th most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problem with *strategy and management of my function* is "My team's operating model (e.g., use of shared services, manager and employee self-service, HR technology, outsourcing, automation) does not allow us to add strategic value to the business," with 40% selecting this problem statement. Additionally, 26% of leaders selected, "We don't have a compelling strategy for our function."

Table 14: Problems With Strategy and Management of My Function

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
My team's operating model (e.g., use of shared services, manager and employee self-service, HR technology, outsourcing, automation) does not allow us to add strategic value to the business.	40%
We don't have a compelling strategy for our function.	26%
My staff lack the capabilities to add business value.	23%
Other	21%
We are dissatisfied with the vendors we use (e.g., technology, recruiting process outsourcer, training vendor, benefits vendor).	17%
My staff are too risk-averse.	14%

n = 173

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Working With the CEO, Board and C-Suite

HR leaders selected *working with the CEO, board and C-suite* as the 14th most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

When it comes to *working with the CEO, board and C-suite*, 54% of HR leaders selected, “Our succession plan for the CEO or other senior executives is insufficient.” Problems with talent also arise; 25% selected, “The board has insufficient insight into the organization’s talent health.”

Table 15: Problems Working With the CEO, Board and C-Suite

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
Our succession plan for the CEO or other senior executives is insufficient.	54%
The board has insufficient insight into the organization’s talent health.	25%
We have too much conflict on our senior leadership team.	23%
Our organization is not effectively responding to emerging social issues/trends.	21%
Other	17%
Our executive compensation process does not meet shareholder expectations.	8%
Our senior leadership team is low-performing.	5%

n = 170

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Total Rewards

HR leaders selected *total rewards* as the 15th most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders’ problems with *total rewards* concern the processes and their communication to employees, with 40% selecting, “Our pay for performance processes do not effectively motivate increased employee performance” and 32% selecting, “Employees do not understand the value of the benefits available to them.” Additionally, 26% selected, “We struggle to develop a cohesive total rewards function and strategy.”

Table 16: Problems With Total Rewards

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
Our pay for performance processes do not effectively motivate increased employee performance.	40%
Employees do not understand the value of the benefits available to them.	32%
We struggle to develop a cohesive total rewards function and strategy.	26%
Our rewards plan design does not support our organization's talent goals.	18%
We don't know the best approach to pay transparency for our organization.	15%
We do not sufficiently support employee well-being.	13%
We are behind the pay equity maturity curve.	11%
Other	9%

n = 166

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Internal Labor Market

HR leaders selected *internal labor market* as the 16th most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

HR leaders' greatest problem with *internal labor market* is overwhelmingly "Career paths are unclear in our organization," with 40% selecting this problem statement. Additionally, 30% of leaders selected, "We do not know what skills are available in our workforce" and 29% selected, "Our talent review processes are ineffective."

Table 17: Problems With Internal Labor Market

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
Career paths are unclear in our organization.	58%
We do not know what skills are available in our workforce.	30%
Our talent review processes are ineffective.	29%
Managers do not encourage internal mobility.	25%
Our employees are unable to find available jobs within the organization.	17%
Other	5%

n = 154

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Leading the Next-Generation HR Workforce

HR leaders selected *leading the next-generation HR workforce* as the 17th most prioritized key initiative for 2019.

Thirty-eight percent of HR leaders selected, “We don’t know how to lead an augmented (human plus digital) workforce in HR;” 35% selected, “We have insufficient information about how external trends and emerging technologies will impact our HR staff across the next 5 years” and 35% selected, “We struggle to source/build emerging critical skills for HR staff.” All three of these problems concern the evolution of HR in the coming years and HR leaders have concerns about how that will affect their functions.

Table 18: Problems With Leading the Next-Generation HR Workforce

Problem Statement	Percent Selecting
We don’t know how to lead an augmented (human plus digital) workforce in HR.	38%
We have insufficient information about how external trends and emerging technologies will impact our HR staff across the next five years.	35%
We struggle to source and build emerging critical skills for HR staff.	35%
We don’t know what emerging skills will be most important for our HR staff over the next five years.	31%
Job design for our HR staff isn’t keeping pace with evolving workforce needs and preferences.	19%
HR leaders’ individual skills are misaligned with HR staff needs.	8%
Other	0%

n = 105

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Key Initiatives by Role

Head of HR

Heads of HR prioritize key initiatives in an order similar to HR leaders overall. They are prioritizing *building critical skills and competencies for the organization* (73%), *current and future leadership bench* (67%) and *organizational design and change management* (58%) as the most important key initiatives for 2019, followed closely by employee experience. The key initiatives that were selected least frequently as priorities among heads of HR were still selected by at least 10% of HR heads, which reflects the fact all key initiatives are important to the head of function.

Table 19: Key Initiatives for Heads of HR

Key Initiatives	Percent of Heads of HR Selecting
Building critical skills and competencies for the organization	73%
Current and future leadership bench	67%
Organizational design and change management	58%
Employee experience	57%
Driving digital business transformation for the organization	36%
Recruiting	34%
Performance management	31%
Working with the CEO, board and C-suite	28%
Future of work	28%
Talent analytics	27%
Diversity and inclusion	26%
Total rewards	23%
Technology for my function	22%
Internal labor market	21%
HR cost optimization	20%
Strategy and management of my function	19%
Leading the next-generation HR workforce	10%

n = 302

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Regional and Business Unit Head of HR

Regional and business unit heads of HR prioritize key initiatives in an order similar to HR leaders overall. They are prioritizing *building critical skills and competencies for the organization* (72%), *current and future leadership bench* (70%) and *organizational design and change management* (54%) as the most important key initiatives for 2019, again closely followed by employee experience.

Table 20: Key Initiatives for Regional/Business Unit Heads of HR

Key Initiatives	Percent of Regional/Business Unit Heads of HR Selecting
Building critical skills and competencies for the organization	72%
Current and future leadership bench	70%
Organizational design and change management	54%
Employee experience	53%
Driving digital business transformation for the organization	36%
Talent analytics	33%
Diversity and inclusion	31%
Recruiting	30%
Future of work	28%
Performance management	27%
HR cost optimization	26%
Internal labor market	20%
Total rewards	19%
Working with the CEO, board and C-suite	19%
Strategy and management of my function	19%
Technology for my function	15%
Leading the next-generation HR workforce	11%

n = 198

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Diversity and Inclusion Leader

Diversity and inclusion leaders prioritize key initiatives concerning diverse and inclusive workplaces and employee experience, but they are also concerned with talent analytics. seventy-one percent of diversity and inclusion leaders selected

diversity and inclusion, 62% selected *employee experience* and 43% selected *talent analytics* as their most important key initiatives for 2019. Notably, total rewards and internal labor market were considered priority key initiatives by few if any diversity and inclusion leaders.

Table 21: Key Initiatives for Diversity and Inclusion Leaders

Key Initiatives	Percent of Diversity and Inclusion Leaders Selecting
Diversity and inclusion	71%
Employee experience	62%
Talent analytics	43%
Organizational design and change management	38%
Building critical skills and competencies for the organization	33%
Recruiting	33%
Performance management	29%
Future of work	24%
Current and future leadership bench	24%
Strategy and management of my function	19%
Working with the CEO, board and C-suite	19%
Driving digital business transformation for the organization	14%
HR cost optimization	10%
Technology for my function	10%
Leading the next-generation HR workforce	10%
Total rewards	5%
Internal labor market	0%

n = 21

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

HR Technology Leader

HR technology leaders prioritize key initiatives concerning technology and the role of HR in innovation within an organization. Seventy-eight percent of HR technology leaders selected *driving digital business transformation for the organization*, 56% selected *HR cost optimization* and 44% selected *technology for my function* as their most important key initiatives for 2019. None of the HR technology leaders surveyed indicated recruiting, organizational design and change management, internal labor

market or working with the CEO, board and C-suite is a top priority for them in their role as HR technology leader in 2019.

Table 22: Key Initiatives for HR Technology Leaders

Key Initiatives	Percent of HR Technology Leaders Selecting
Driving digital business transformation for the organization	78%
HR cost optimization	56%
Technology for my function	44%
Performance management	44%
Strategy and management of my function	33%
Diversity and inclusion	33%
Employee experience	33%
Future of work	33%
Current and future leadership bench	33%
Building critical skills and competencies for the organization	22%
Total rewards	22%
Talent analytics	11%
Leading the next-generation HR workforce	11%
Recruiting	0%
Organizational design and change management	0%
Internal labor market	0%
Working with the CEO, board and C-suite	0%

n = 9

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Learning and Development Leader

Learning and development leaders prioritize key initiatives that concern building skills and preparing employees for leadership positions in the organization. Eighty-five percent of learning and development leaders selected *building critical skills and competencies for the organization* and 66% selected *current and future leadership bench* as their most important key initiatives for 2019.

Table 23: Key Initiatives for Learning and Development Leaders

Key Initiatives	Percent of Learning and Development Leaders Selecting
Building critical skills and competencies for the organization	85%
Current and future leadership bench	66%
Driving digital business transformation for the organization	45%
Employee experience	45%
Organizational design and change management	38%
Strategy and management of my function	34%
Diversity and inclusion	29%
Performance management	28%
Future of work	25%
HR cost optimization	20%
Talent analytics	20%
Technology for my function	17%
Leading the next-generation HR workforce	15%
Recruiting	15%
Working with the CEO, board and C-Suite	11%
Internal labor market	8%
Total rewards	6%

n = 65

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Recruiting Leader

Recruiting leaders prioritize key initiatives concerning recruiting and talent outcomes, but they also prioritize skills and leadership development. Eighty-two percent of recruiting leaders selected *recruiting*, 52% selected *building critical skills and competencies for the organization* and 48% selected *current and future leadership bench* as their most important key initiatives for 2019.

Table 24: Key Initiatives for Recruiting Leaders

Key Initiatives	Percent of Recruiting Leaders Selecting
Recruiting	82%
Building critical skills and competencies for the organization	52%
Current and future leadership bench	48%
Diversity and inclusion	46%
Talent analytics	38%
Technology for my function	36%
Driving digital business transformation for the organization	36%
Employee experience	34%
Internal labor market	30%
Future of work	28%
Strategy and management of my function	28%
HR cost optimization	22%
Organizational design and change management	22%
Performance management	12%
Leading the next-generation HR workforce	8%
Total rewards	6%
Working with the CEO, board and C-suite	4%

n = 50

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Talent Analytics Leader

Talent analytics leaders prioritize key initiatives concerning talent analytics and processes that will impact the organization in the future. Seventy-two percent of talent analytics leaders selected *talent analytics*, 44% selected *future of work* and 41% selected *technology for my function* as their most important key initiatives for 2019.

Table 25: Key Initiatives for Talent Analytics Leaders

Key Initiatives	Percent of Talent Analytics Leaders Selecting
Talent analytics	72%
Future of work	44%
Technology for my function	41%
Driving digital business transformation for the organization	41%
Employee experience	39%
Building critical skills and competencies for the organization	31%
Organizational design and change management	22%
Leading the next-generation HR workforce	19%
Current and future leadership bench	17%
Diversity and inclusion	17%
Performance management	15%
HR cost optimization	15%
Recruiting	13%
Strategy and management of my function	11%
Internal labor market	9%
Working with the CEO, board and C-suite	7%
Total rewards	6%

n = 54

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Talent Management Leader

Talent management leaders prioritize key initiatives concerning skill and leadership building and change management. Seventy-eight percent of heads of talent management selected *current and future leadership bench*, 71% selected *building critical skills and competencies for the organization* and 54% selected *organizational design and change management* as their most important key initiatives for 2019. Overall, key initiative prioritization for talent management leaders is most similar to that of heads of HR and learning and development leaders.

Table 26: Key Initiatives for Talent Management Leaders

Key Initiatives	Percent of Talent Management Leaders Selecting
Current and future leadership bench	78%
Building critical skills and competencies for the organization	71%
Organizational design and change management	54%
Employee experience	49%
Performance management	35%
Diversity and inclusion	34%
Driving digital business transformation for the organization	34%
Future of work	34%
Talent analytics	33%
Recruiting	27%
Internal labor market	23%
Working with the CEO, board and C-suite	22%
Strategy and management of my function	19%
Leading the next-generation HR workforce	19%
HR cost optimization	18%
Technology for my function	16%
Total rewards	4%

n = 79

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Total Rewards (Compensation and/or Benefits) Leader

Total rewards leaders (including leaders overseeing compensation and/or benefits) prioritize key initiatives concerning total rewards, employee experience and skill building. Sixty-eight percent of heads of total rewards selected *total rewards*, 52% selected *employee experience* and 49% selected *building critical skills and competencies for the organization* as their most important key initiatives for 2019.

Table 27: Key Initiatives for Total Rewards Leaders

Key Initiatives	Percent of Total Rewards Leaders Selecting
Total rewards	68%
Employee experience	52%
Building critical skills and competencies for the organization	49%
Driving digital business transformation for the organization	38%
Technology for my function	37%
Current and future leadership bench	32%
Talent analytics	32%
Future of work	28%
Organizational design and change management	26%
HR cost optimization	25%
Strategy and management of my function	20%
Working with the CEO, board and C-suite	20%
Performance management	20%
Recruiting	18%
Diversity and inclusion	17%
Internal labor market	14%
Leading the next-generation HR workforce	14%

n = 65

Source: Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey

Key initiatives organize Gartner research, resources and tools around our clients' most important projects and programs. Key initiatives typically arise from significant business opportunities or threats and have defined objectives and timelines, substantial financial implications and high organizational visibility. They often cross HR disciplines, roles and topics, but primary responsibility for each key initiative typically resides within a single leadership role. They can comprise many projects but are usually implemented by designated teams with defined roles, responsibilities and performance objectives. For definitions of key initiatives, please refer to the end of this report.

Definitions of Key Initiatives

Building critical skills and competencies for the organization: Manager development, L&D solutions and on-the-job learning

Current and future leadership bench: High-potential employees, succession management and leadership development

Diversity and inclusion: Diversity recruitment, unconscious bias and team inclusion

Driving digital business transformation for the organization: Digital services, digital skills and digital preparedness

Employee experience: Culture, EVP and employee engagement

Future of work: Gig economy, strategic workforce planning and automation

HR cost optimization: HR spend, structure and service delivery

Internal labor market: Career pathing, talent mobility and talent reviews

Leading the next-generation HR workforce: Job design and future skills

Organizational design and change management: Organizational structure, change management and innovation

Performance management: Performance reviews, rewards and recognition and team performance

Recruiting: Attraction, candidate experience and onboarding

Strategy and management of my function: Operating model and staff performance

Talent analytics: Data management, dashboards and reporting and analytics capabilities

Technology for my function: Technology selection, technology implementation and digital workplace

Total rewards: Well-being, compensation and remuneration plan design and rewards communication

Working with the CEO, board and C-suite: Board presentations, executive succession, executive compensation and senior team dynamics

Conclusion

While different HR leadership roles prioritize some key initiatives differently to accomplish their goals in 2019, key initiatives are highly consistent across all

HR leadership roles. As HR leaders work to plan and execute their plans for 2019, they should work to understand the challenges their peers face and the key initiatives their counterparts prioritize.

About This Research

We surveyed 843 HR leaders across the globe and in almost every industry in the Gartner 2019 Future of HR Survey, including 302 heads of HR, 198 regional or business unit heads of HR, 65 heads of learning and development, 79 heads of talent management, 21 heads of diversity and inclusion, 65 heads of total rewards, 50 heads of recruiting, 54 heads of talent analytics and 9 heads of HR technology. We assessed their priorities and expected changes for 2019 and what key initiatives they were prioritizing to accomplish their goals in the next 12 months. This report describes the data from this survey.