



[The Hot HR Trends to Watch This Year](#)

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Blog

The gig economy and the importance of flexibility. The gig economy, which is comprised of individuals with short-term or temporary engagements with a company, is substantially important to employers. Here, workers are seeking increased flexibility and control over their work environments. Since many questions remain unanswered regarding worker classification issues and the application of existing laws in the gig economy, look for the Department of Labor to issue an opinion letter or guidance in 2019 detailing how a company may compliantly work within the gig economy and not run afoul of existing independent contractors.

Flexibility also is important for all employees ? not just for the gig economy. While telecommuting and remote positions are not new, they are being emphasized again to better engage employees and increase retention metrics.

The tech effect on future of HR. The strategic and consistent use of workforce data analytics to predict and improve a company's performance has exploded over the last several years, with additional momentum expected in 2019. While most HR professionals rely on metrics for basic recruiting and turnover rates, more in-depth analytics and trend spotting has become the norm.

Once trends are identified in, for example, turnover rates, an HR professional should have the tools to dive into

the data and analyze root causes, such as the need for manager training, review of compensation strategies or a change in the company's culture. Using predictive analytics in the HR space is helping companies make better informed, dynamic and wiser decisions based on historical data, as well as placing HR on the level of other data-driven company departments, such as finance and marketing.

The collection of this enormous amount of data also poses challenges and potential risks to companies, including negative perceptions among employees about how their data is being used, employee privacy laws and potential security breaches. Strong and comprehensive security policies, protocols and controls are necessary to ensure employers are keeping their employees' data safe. In 2019, a steady flow of communications to employees regarding advanced security and usage policies is key to prevent data misuse or misunderstanding regarding how information is collected and used.

Artificial intelligence also will continue to be a significant focus driving improvement in the HR arena. Determining which data to collect, analyze and protect will provide opportunities for AI to assume a larger role in HR. Also, in some large organizations, AI already is being used for more than just automating repetitive HR tasks, such as onboarding new employees. The future of AI for most companies will include creating more personalized employee experiences as well as supporting critical decisions. From analyzing performance data to eliminating biases when screening candidates, AI will continue to be a pivotal HR tool.

Strategies for successful recruitment. Running an effective talent pipeline should be the objective of all hiring endeavors. Pipelining is consistently gaining traction as a recruitment tool for new employees. The concept employs marketing concepts to ensure that companies have a diverse group of strong recruits waiting to be hired. Pipelining reduces time to hire and leads to better quality candidates.

Health, wellness and adequate employee training. Another area of importance is multi-faceted wellness programs, which focus on an employee's total well-being, from nutrition to financial wellness. These programs often include a comprehensive employee assistance program, training and activities during worktime. The training can focus on anything from physical health to development of employees' knowledge base and technology-focused education. A greater emphasis also is being placed on workplace communication coaching, such as collaboration and negotiation, which are critical to success in the workplace.

Continued training and heightened prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination will be another trend this year. Organizations big and small must ensure that compliant policies are in place and employees are trained on the policies. Several states including California, New York, Connecticut and Maine already mandate that private employers must provide harassment training to workers, and the number of states requiring this training is expected to increase in the coming years.

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