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# 3 HR Roles of the Future

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**We talk a lot about how technology is changing the world of work. And indeed, the combination of automation and the arrival of new technologies will lead to the extinction of certain jobs, but more importantly, it will push a lot of us to up-skill in order to get ready for the future.**

We also talk a lot about the role of HR in this digital transformation; how can HR help organizations and their employees to become future proof? What role do training and development play in all of this and what skills should we be looking for when hiring candidates?

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Future report based on a survey completed by over 400 professionals from 61 countries. In this report, as its name suggests, they discuss some of the necessary skills HR professionals need to have in order to future proof themselves.

In this article, we'll take a quick look at five of the skills mentioned in the report from My HR Future. We'll also take a shot at describing three roles that will be crucial for HR in the near future.

## HR Skills of the Future

According to the survey by My HR Future, here's what respondents answered when asked 'If you could develop one skill in 2019, what would it be?'

A promotional banner for a "FREE Digital HR Mini Course". The background is blue with white dots. On the left, the text "FREE Digital HR Mini Course" is in white. Below it, a question is posed: "Do you know what Digital HR is about? And how Employee Experience is related to it?". On the right, there are two overlapping screenshots of course content. The top screenshot shows "Lesson 1 - Why are we going digital?" with a video of a man. The bottom screenshot shows "Lesson 2 - Creating and Implementing a Digital HR Strategy" with a diagram titled "BUILDING ON WHAT'S BEEN DONE". At the bottom center, there is an orange button with the text "GET FREE ACCESS" in white.

### 1. People Analytics

28% of respondents said the number one skill they would like to develop 2019 was people analytics.

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### ***3. Digital HR***

12% of respondents want to bring their competencies regarding Digital HR and HR technologies up to speed.

### ***4. Strategic workforce planning***

10% of the survey respondents indicated strategic workforce planning as their most required skill to develop.

### ***5. Design thinking & stakeholder management***

Respectively 9% and 6% of those who participated in the survey believe design thinking and stakeholder management are essential skills to further develop this year.



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can start to think about what the various HR roles of the future could look like.

While there will still be a need for an all-around, generalist type of HR professional, they will need to be equipped with a new range of skills (as seen above).

At the same time – driven by current developments on a technological and global workforce level – there will be a need for HR specialists who are experts in their specific area of expertise.

A couple of HR roles of the future we could imagine seeing (a lot) more of:

## ***The Digital Evangelist***

The current explosion of HR technology is far from over. On the contrary, there is hardly any HR function left that doesn't have an impressive range of software and tools designed to automate and digitize its processes. In recruitment tech alone, there are about a dozen new solutions a week coming onto the market.

Needless to say, it's impossible for everyone in HR to keep up with the latest tech on top of all their other activities. Especially since the number of HR tech solutions is likely to further increase over the next years.

As such, we can imagine organizations having their very own Digital HR Evangelist. A few characteristics of this person:

- someone who is passionate about all things HR tech
- equipped with the necessary skills to grasp the essence of new solutions and their potential benefits for the organization
- digitally and tech savvy

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## ***The Chess Master***

The time when your average workforce mainly consisted of full-time employees is long gone. Today's employees are a mix of freelancers, part-timers, full-times, contractors, and everything in between.

While this new composition certainly has its advantages – think flexibility, expertise and different perspectives on the business – it also has its challenges.

One of them being succession planning.

Because how do you plan ahead when you don't know what your needs will be or how much of your workforce will consist of full-timers and contingent workers?

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If succession planning was a challenge before, when HR still more or less had a certain visibility on who was going to leave and when, it has become a completely different ball game now.

Think for example of the challenges that come with the rapidly [aging workforce](#) or the increasing automation that will cause shifts in both work and workforce.

And let's not forget about recruitment, because when we talk about workforce planning recruitment is an inevitable part of the equation.

When we think about HR roles of the future, someone who is an expert in strategic workforce planning, or, as we like to call it, a true Chess Master, is indispensable.

A few characteristics of this person:

- someone with a knack for solving complicated puzzles (problem-solving)
- who is well-organized

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## ***The People Data Wizard***

It's impossible to think of technology without data. The vast majority of HR tech solutions is driven by data and has an analytics function. This is one side of the data spectrum.

[People analytics](#) is the other. Thanks to the increase of cloud-based HR systems, more and more organizations now store their people data. In order to leverage this data though, they need someone who knows how to work with it.

This means – among other things – a data scientist who knows what data can be used (scientifically validated), where it should be stored (centrally), and, of course, how to get valuable and actionable insights from it that have a positive impact on the business.

But this role entails a lot more.

Digital HR enables us to think smarter about what data will lead to better performance. Based on this information we can build our systems and start doing our people analytics.

The People Data Wizard, therefore, is more of a people data **and** systems wizard. The below image illustrates this well.

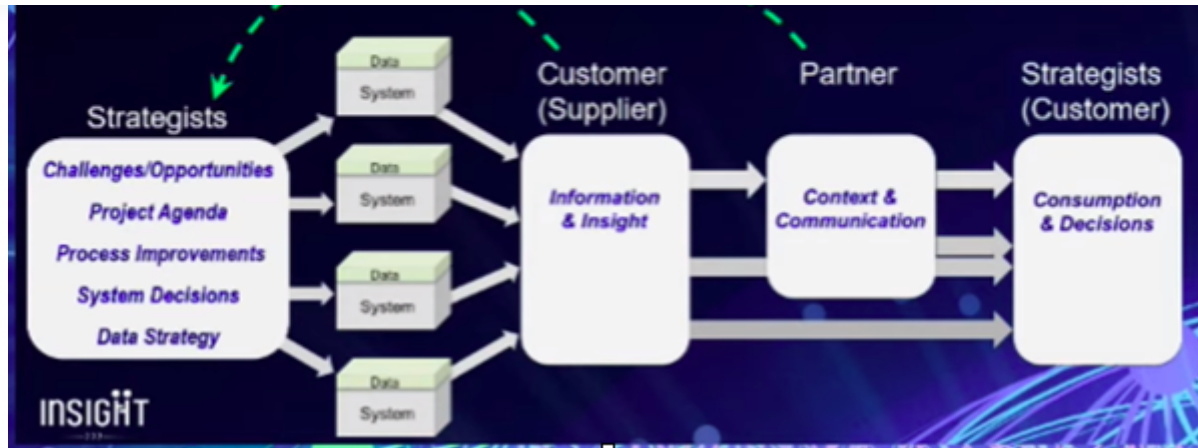
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Image source – [PA: FOW conference](#)

And let's not forget about the fact that a People Data Wizard needs to be able to translate this 'foreign data language' into normal people English if they want the rest of the organization to understand them.

When it comes to the characteristics of this person we imagine:

- someone who is very rigorous
- who loves numbers
- with a strong analytical mind
- able to tell a compelling story
- digitally and tech savvy

## The importance of collaboration

While the HR roles of the future will be (much more) specialized, it would be wrong to think of them as separate entities. In order for each function to really work, our 'special HR units' need to collaborate closely.

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This means they will need to consult with both the People Data Wizard and the Digital Evangelist.

The same thing goes for any other kind of HR issue that needs to be dealt with, whether it's a topic related to performance management, learning & development, or onboarding; in order to come up with a good strategy and execution, all special HR units will have to work together.

## On a final note

In a time where automation and new technologies are rapidly changing the world of work, HR will play a big role in helping organizations and their people become future proof.

But HR itself will look pretty different in the not too distant future too.

HR professionals will need to equip themselves with a new range of skills including people analytics, digital HR, strategic workforce planning, design thinking, and stakeholder management.

While there will still be a need for an all-around, generalist type of HR professional, there will also be a need for HR specialists.

The three roles we mentioned in this article are an example of HR roles of the future we could imagine seeing (a lot) more of. There are without a doubt more of them that I've missed. Feel free to add your vision on future HR roles below and I'll happily include them in a later version!

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### Neelie Verlinden

[Neelie Verlinden](#) is the Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief of AIHR Digital. She's an experienced digital HR & HR Tech writer, speaker, and entrepreneur with an international background. She has written countless articles on all things HR technology.


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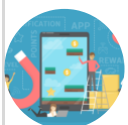


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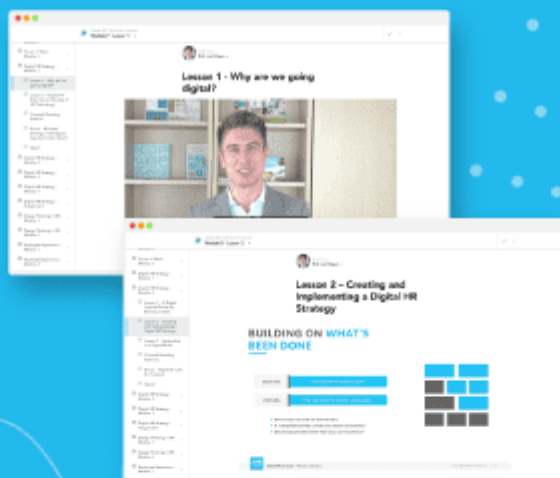


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