

Can and will HR prevent **THE GREAT EXTINCTION?**

A consideration of the impact of AI on HR practices.

FROM EGYPT



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Stories make people feel safe and like they belong. Stories let people know what is expected of them. Stories make complex jobs clear. Stories explain what our organizations do.

For all these reasons, in the world of HR, stories are key.

Occasionally, and in successive periods, massive winds of change and transformation occur in the business structure and its composition, and most of the time if not all the times the knockout eventually comes, positively or negatively, to the human element. We have witnessed some of these changes and suffered.

History always teaches us lessons to think through. Good science fiction movies also give us an idea of what the future will look like. For instance, Coronavirus was introduced in some movies and books 10 years before the

pandemic. Did you notice?

In 1973, the movie, *Westworld*, was released, opening our eyes for the future to come. We called that science fiction and laughed a lot. Then, 28 years later, in 2001, film director, Steven Spielberg, directed the movie, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*. The fact is, they must have known or seen something or were probably delivering a message to the world of what the future would look like.

Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Data Science are popular terms and hot topics in this era, and knowing what they are and their value in the coming years is more crucial than ever. AI is progressing very fast with new highly developed innovations in the present world.

The new buzz around the use of AI in organizations has gained a lot of momentum in the last few years. Executives are optimistic about the role of AI in improving business performance and improving the efficiencies of both internal processes and the customer service function. It has influenced everything these days; and, subsequently, it affects the HR department's practices.

Some of us have understood the necessity of revamping the integration of human knowledge and machine learning for an effortless work process and a predictive work environment, and others are still wandering around.

We can now predict, or at least speculate, the effect on the function, but the question remains the same: Are we ready yet?

Many practitioners are reluctant to embrace this breakthrough technology. While some feel algorithms can never replace human empathy and intuition, there already exists second generation AI that is doing just that. There are however still doubts about the availability

and quality of data and whether AI can add something new to what we already know about the dynamics of the workforce.

As a matter of fact, we greatly believe that the primary impact on the function will be in Recruitment/Talent Acquisition. Effective recruiting is vital to a modern business. When done right, it allows organizations to grow and add value to their respective industries. According to research from the International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology, AI integration into Human Resources practices will make organizations better because these applications can analyze, predict and diagnose to help HR teams make better decisions.

For example, The Marriott Hotel chain uses a chatbot for initial interactions with job candidates by responding to standard questions, matching candidates' interests with vacancies and providing information on the company's culture and values.

Report authors Prasanna Matsa and Kusuma Gullamajji found in their August 2019 report that AI can be embedded in functions such as recruitment, training, onboarding, performance analysis, retention etc. However, they added, the majority of organizations are still lagging in integrating AI to their HR practices because of cost. "AI implementation should be viewed as an optimistic opportunity, because AI enhances lives. AI creates a better future if it is clearly understood and utilized in a proper way," stated the report.

In today's competitive environment, hiring and retaining the best talent requires a heavy lift from HR teams. HR has to deliver great employee and candidate experiences across recruitment, training and operations functions with speed, accuracy and personalization. While it is clear that Artificial Intelligence will continue to shape the field of HR in the coming years, practitioners should also be aware of the challenges that they might face.

The most common concerns that HR leaders have focus primarily on making AI simpler and safer to use. In fact, the most common factors preventing people from using AI at work are security and privacy concerns.

Additionally, 31 percent of respondents in Oracle's survey expressed that they would rather interact with a human in the workplace than a machine. Moving forward, HR Professionals will need to be prepared to address these concerns by staying on top of trends and technology as they evolve and change.

For instance, employees want their organizations to respect their personal data and ask for permission before using such technology to gather information about them. However, organizations also want to feel protected from data breaches, and HR Professionals must take the appropriate security measures into account.

To prepare for the future of Human Resources Management, professionals should take the necessary steps to learn about current trends in the field, as well as lay a strong foundation of HR knowledge that they can build upon as the profession evolves.

On the surface, it seems a little ironic that computers would be taking over elements of a job that is all about human interactions, but when you dig a little deeper, it actually makes a lot of sense.

Artificial Intelligence Is Winning More Hearts and Minds in the Workplace

50% of workers are currently using some form of AI at work, compared to **32%** last year, with workers in some countries adopting AI over **2X more** than others.

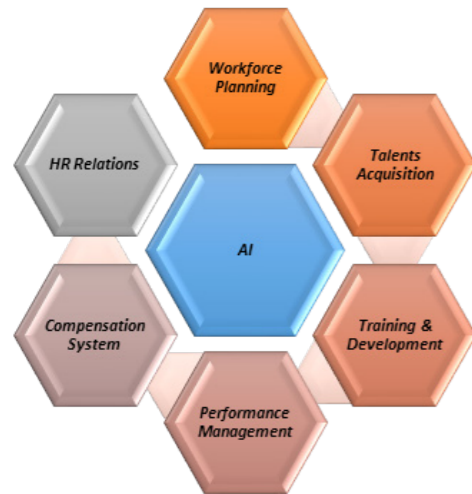
Oracle and Future Workplace AI at Work Global Study 2019

In fact, relying on AI for data management and analysis enables HR to spend more time interacting with people, meaning that technology is helping bring people together, not tear them apart.

The second impact will be in Training. Using AI-enabled tools for designing learning and development opportunities for employees will help in enhancing job satisfaction among employees. Designing the career development plans according to employees' requirements will lead to less absenteeism and improved output.

AI can truly add value in Learning and Development, where some of the key impact areas of Artificial Intelligence on L&D include personalized learning pathways augmented to the needs of the learner, conversational interfaces and analytics for e-learning.

At a later stage, we will see the full integration of AI into the entire HR functions:



The future trend of AI for HRM is still the collaboration of human and machine, with the existence of conflict. The McKinsey Global Institute believes that "more than 30% of activities in 60% of occupations can be replaced by Artificial Intelligence".

According to a research report from the University of Oxford, in the next 10 to 20 years, half of the jobs in the United States

will disappear as a result of the influence of IT, and nearly 47% of US employees will be unemployed. Based on these data, how to elevate the competitive intelligence of Human Resource Managers and deploy human resources efficiently may be very difficult to handle.

CONCLUSION

We have to wake-up from our coma, and carefully watch and translate what those good signals are telling us about our future. Those movies have not come out of thin air.

In the book, The Rise of the Robots, written by Martin Ford, depicting the near future where AI robots take the place of humans, the fear and anxiety are not just related to the massive job loss, but also result from the scary scenario that humankind is dominated by AI robots and will eventually become extinct.

The idea that AI and robots will dominate humankind one day was a main theme of scientific fiction movies, but has become a more serious topic nowadays.

From my point of view, the inclusion of AI in the HR functions will snatch away various jobs from the workforce by replacing them with highly intelligent software. Despite the advantage of AI in reducing the work pressure of employees, it will definitely result in the enormous reclassification and redesigning of jobs at all the levels, but will eventually and most probably increase unemployment. With the rapid advancement of technology, human beings will become extinct, unless we follow Charles Darwin's advice when he observed, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." ■

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