

the
talent
multiverse.

your choices
define tomorrow

2025 talent trends report



2025 talent trends report

What are your reflections on the changes within the work place over the past 10 years?

Mike Smith
global chief executive
Randstad Enterprise



executive summary.

“When people speak of traveling to the past, they worry about radically changing the present by doing something small, but barely anyone in the present thinks they can radically change the future by doing something small.” —

— Barbara R. Nelson , author

As we celebrate 10 years of [Talent Trends](#) research, our global in-depth survey of workforce and C-suite sentiments, the evolution of talent leadership and the world of work are clear. While some priorities remain constant, businesses have experienced a decade of unprecedented disruption, global crises and shifting expectations. And with these changes, the roles and goals of talent leaders have been disrupted, too.



Ten years ago, talent leaders told us their priorities were claiming their seat at the table, harnessing data to guide talent decisions and overcoming talent scarcity. During the last decade, you've not only mastered many of these goals, but also embraced a truly critical role in leading your organization through the challenges of a global pandemic, and economic and social disruption. You've taught your business what it means to put people first, creating a new social contract with your workforce. Now, the future demands that you reimagine work in the age of AI, balancing ethical applications and optimal efficiencies, while understanding how to skill and supercharge your workforce to gain the greatest potential from both people and technology.

90%

say HR's role continues to elevate and become more strategic in their organization, but

69%

believe HR is still brought into business/operational strategy discussions too late.



the talent multiverse

Now is an opportune time to reflect: What decisions have you made over the past ten years that have shaped the talent leader you are today? How have those choices impacted people and your business? And looking ahead, how will the choices you make today impact who you are as a talent and business leader over the next ten years?

A talent multiverse lies ahead of you, and the opportunities are limitless. While no one knows precisely how the world and work will change, there is much in your hands. You will decide what your values are as a talent and business leader. You will use those values — and the lessons you've learned over the past 10 years — to shape the way businesses approach work, skills, technology, data and people.

What kind of leader do you want to be? What choices — big or small — will you make to get there? And, most importantly, what will happen if you do nothing? The future is yours to define.

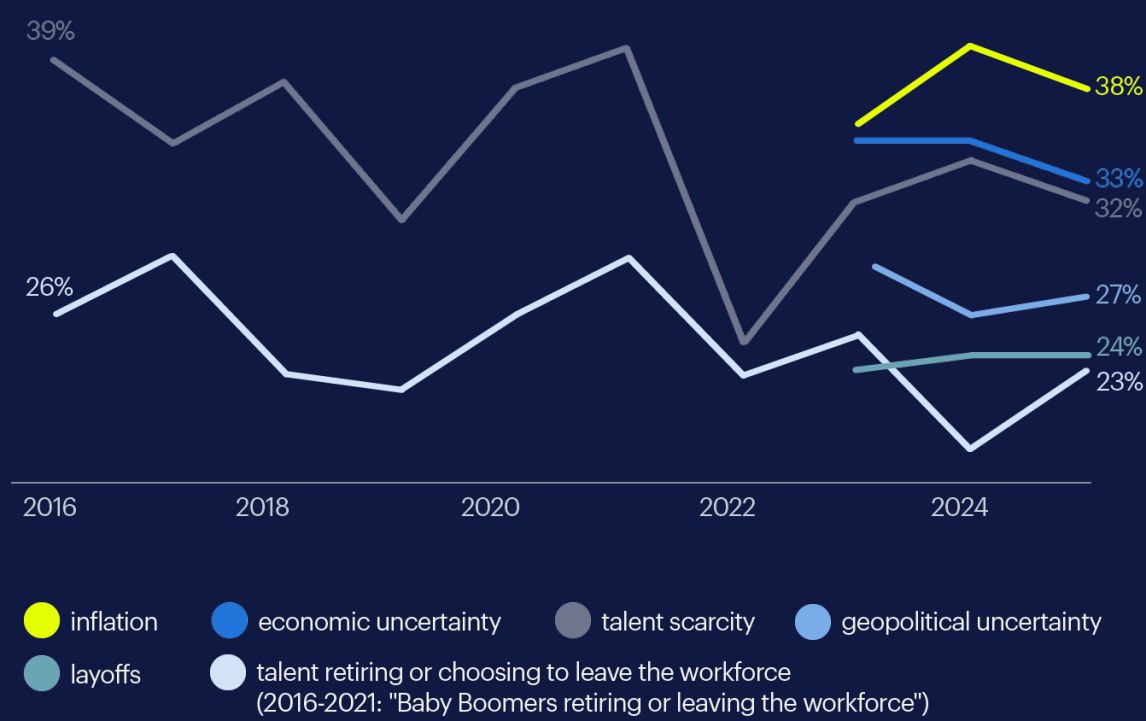
That is why the Randstad Enterprise Talent Trends research seeks to understand both the strategic thinking and the impassioned drives of business leaders. Our 2025 research includes a survey of 1,060 C-suite and talent leaders in 21 markets around the globe, conducted in the fourth quarter of 2024. The findings, and this report, offer a clear understanding of the plans and actions that your peers and competitors are taking to determine their own futures.

Our data shows no single challenge is dominating the attention of talent leaders; rather, they are coping with a myriad of developments. As you know first-hand, the current climate of economic, political and social disruption requires you to create and sustain value for your internal customers at a time when budgets are finite. At the same time, many organizations are transforming, complicating efforts to fulfill talent ambitions.



While some of the top-reported challenges of 2025 have persisted over the last decade, new priorities have also emerged. Examining top-reported challenges, 38% of survey respondents say inflation negatively affected their organization or is one of their biggest pain points (slightly down, however, from 40% last year). Economic uncertainty, which has been a top concern for the past three years, remains so, with 33% believing it weighs negatively on their business. Similarly, 32% cite talent scarcity or skills shortages as a hindrance; a challenge that has been at the top of employers’ concerns consistently over the last decade.

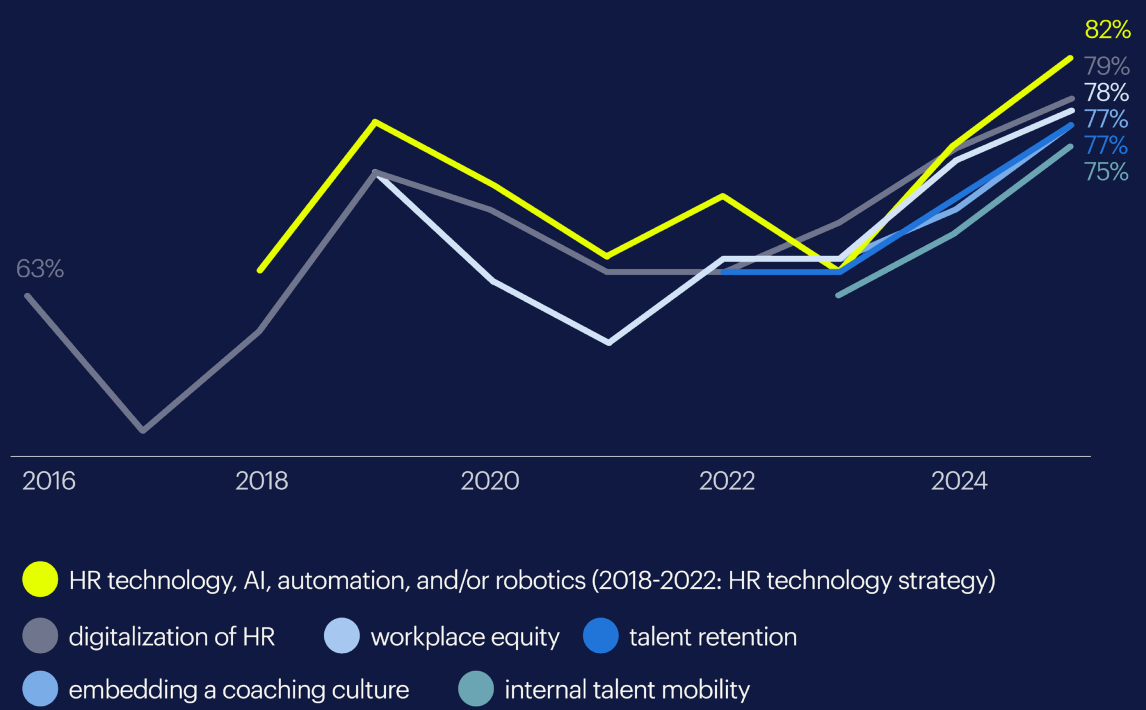
top reported pain points/challenges for employers.



Pain points shown here are based on the top six reported challenges for 2025. While “inflation,” “economic uncertainty,” “geopolitical uncertainty,” and “layoffs” response options were added to the survey in the 2023 research, “talent scarcity” and “talent leaving the workforce” remain top concerns for employers even still.

On the other hand, survey respondents are enthusiastic about big developments in the world of work. Most (82%) positively regard the proliferation of HR technology, AI, automation and robotics; 79% feel this way about the digitalization of HR. While some are pulling back from their equity and inclusion initiatives, 77% say they’ve had a positive impact on their business. A large majority are also excited about their talent retention strategies (77%), embedding a coaching culture (77%) and internal mobility (75%).

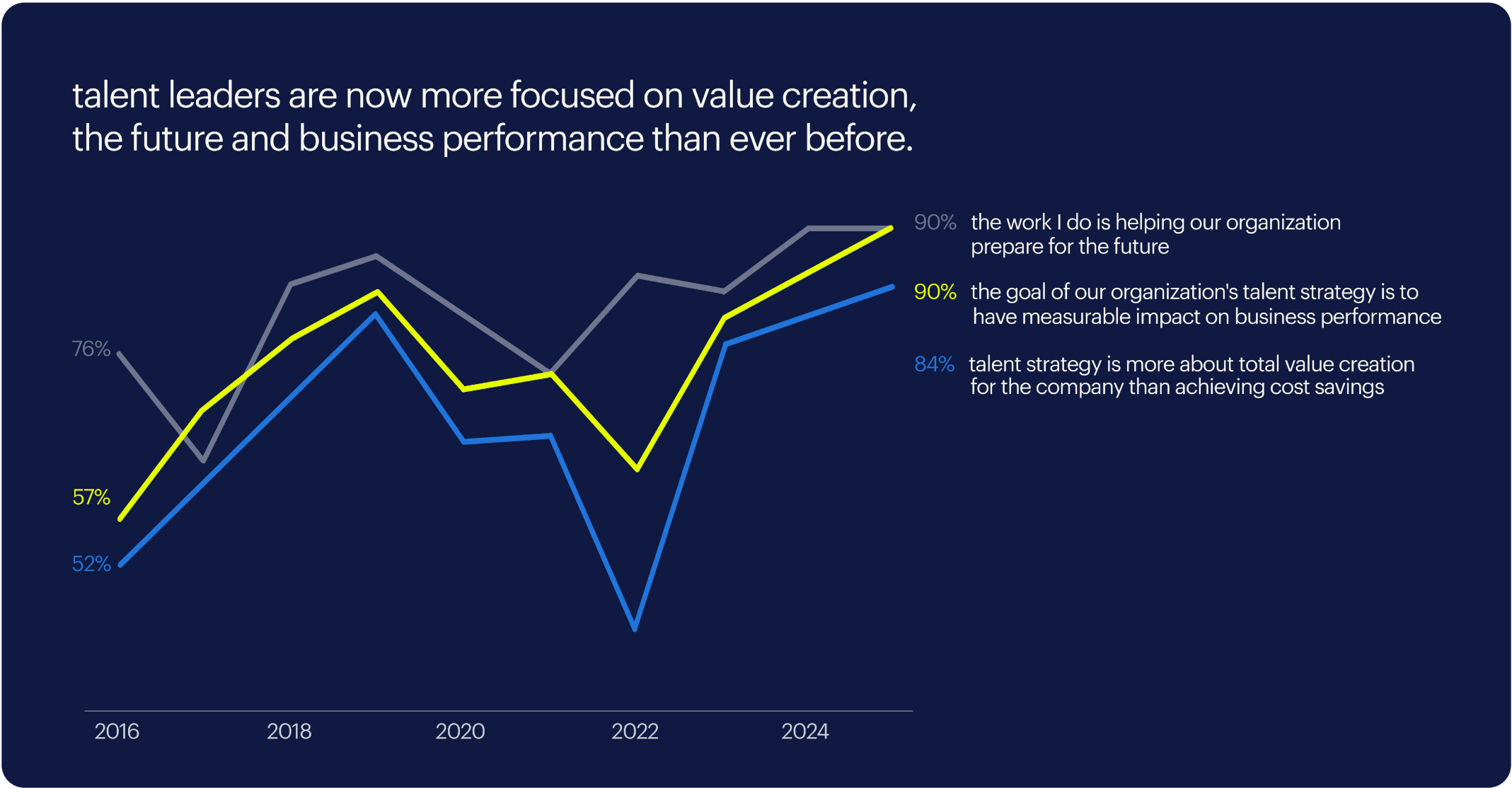
top reported factors that have had a positive impact on business.



Factors shown here are based on the top six reported factors for 2025. While most of these factors have been added as response options over the course of our 10-year study, the “digitalization of HR” has consistently made a positive impact for employers.

The past year has been unusually challenging, possibly the most difficult since the start of the pandemic. Budget constraints, business demand for more value and rising economic uncertainty are pressuring talent leaders to become more innovative and agile. From my interactions with CHROs, it's a mandate they are effectively delivering on. Our data shows they are focused on workforce agility, integrating AI to optimize planning, and prioritizing data and market intelligence as investments. Without question, these efforts will be critical to success both in times of growth and periods of decline.

Now, more than ever in the history of our Talent Trends research, talent leaders believe the work they're doing is preparing their organizations for the future (90%). The same number (90%) report they seek to have a measurable impact on business performance. And, despite challenging economic conditions, 84% tell us they are more focused on value creation for the organization than cost savings this year. This is not only the highest percentage for this response in Talent Trends history, but also a firm recovery from massive drops seen from 2020 to 2022.



defining the next 10 years

What choices can you make to prepare for whatever radical shifts are ahead? The decisions you make today on the following issues can drastically alter the future of work for you and your organization:

01.

overhauling organizational culture with AI

In the two years since ChatGPT and other generative AI tools were released, how organizations manage and nurture people has changed dramatically. AI should be included in every conversation involving people, whether as an augmentative tool to get work done, or to accelerate innovation.

02.

prioritizing the pixelation of work

The [pixelation of work](#) is gaining momentum, and to be truly agile, employers need to deploy resources not to jobs, but tasks. This will optimize output and drive worker satisfaction. This is especially important as AI becomes a talent partner, allowing people to focus on more creative and value-added tasks.

03.

stepping into the skills-first era

Skills are the new currency of careers, and workers have a huge appetite for wanting more knowledge. In fact, Randstad's 2025 [Workmonitor](#) survey of 26,000 workers in 35 markets finds that 44% — up from 36% last year — would not accept a job that doesn't offer skilling opportunities.

Our 2025 Talent Trends Report reveals ten actionable ways to invigorate your talent leadership, accelerate your talent goals and make a real difference in your organization and people's lives. The right path ahead in the talent multiverse is yours to determine. Let these insights, inspiring stories shared by your peers and the decade-long learnings be your guide on your exciting journey.



Mike Smith

Mike Smith

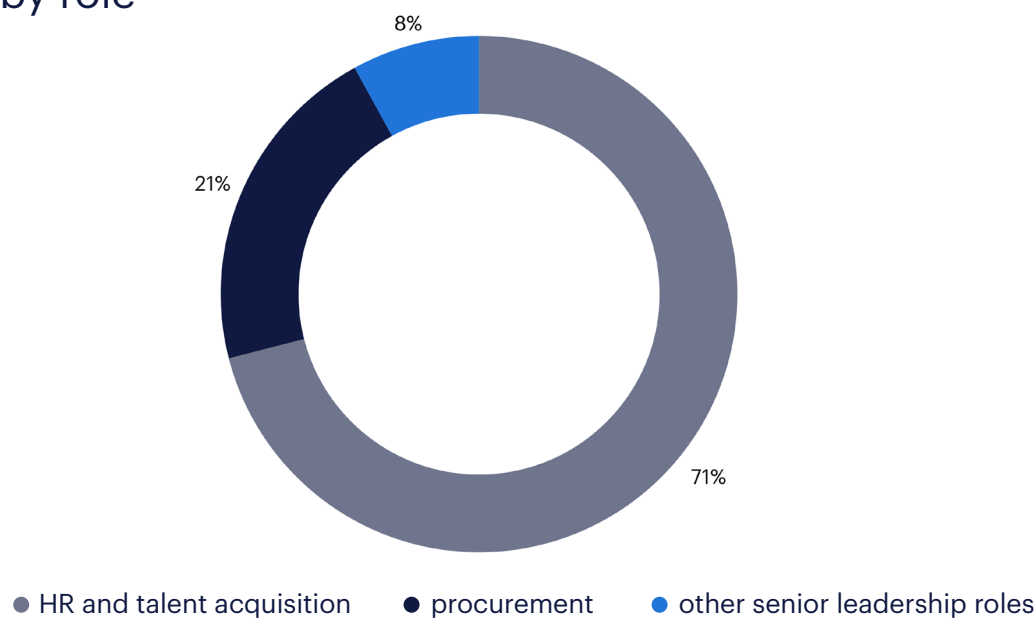
global chief executive,
Randstad Enterprise



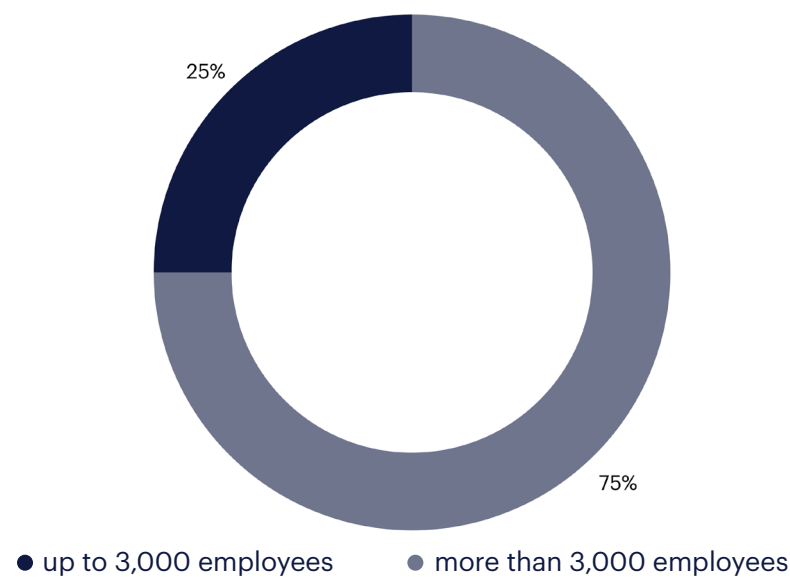
about the 2025 Talent Trends research.

who participated

by role



by company size



key industries

- 25% banking and financial services
- 19% IT and technology
- 6% life sciences and pharma
- 4% high-value manufacturing

Each industry listed here represents a sample size of at least 40 respondents.

21 markets

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Americas | Asia Pacific | Europe | Nordics |
| Argentina | Australia | Belgium | Poland |
| Brazil | China | France | Spain |
| Canada | India | Germany | Switzerland |
| Mexico | Japan | Hungary | U.K. |
| U.S. | Singapore | Italy | |
| | | Netherlands | |



Now in its tenth year, the Randstad Enterprise [Talent Trends](#) research has provided insights that talent leaders need to drive business agility and results with their workforce strategies.

The 2025 Talent Trends research is a survey of 1,060 C-suite and senior talent leaders at global and regional organizations across 21 markets worldwide. Over 10 years, the Talent Trends study has collected responses from 8,400 respondents overall. This year, our research takes a retrospective look at how trends, perceptions and actions have changed over the last ten years, but also uncovers which strategies talent leaders are prioritizing now to shape who they are, what they value and what future consequences they won't risk with inaction.

Conducted by a third party on behalf of Randstad Enterprise, survey panels are composed of business leaders who influence both strategic and operational decisions for their organizations. Online surveys were conducted via external panels during Q4 of 2024. Interviews were self-administered and could be taken across devices (including mobile phones, tablets, desktops and laptops).





2025's top 10 talent trends.

overhaul organizational
culture with AI

01.

rewrite the script on
workplace culture with AI

02.

inspire purpose and
satisfaction at work

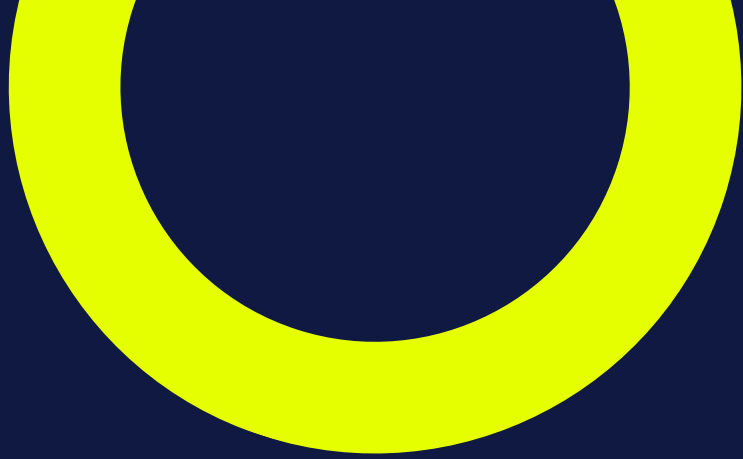
03.

fast track career
growth for all

04.

supercharge neurodivergent
talent with AI





taking bold
steps together:
reimagine HR leadership
in the age of advanced AI



prioritize the
pixelation of work

step into the
skills-first era

05.

think tasks and
skills, not jobs

06.

pioneer new work
arrangements in a labor
market crisis

07.

reimagine value creation
with empowered talent

08.

close the leadership
gap now

09.

jump start skills-based
transformation based on
business imperatives

10.

hyperscale the skills-first
movement with an internal
talent marketplace



01. rewrite the script on workplace culture with AI.

how will you use technology to ignite connection and engagement?

As the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in talent management gains rapid momentum, organizations are scaling its powers to inspire new and personalized experiences — better connecting and engaging with their people. From using generative AI to assess workforce feedback to democratizing career development to enhancing recognition programs, the many ways in which technology is advancing company culture are truly transformational, and those still questioning whether it is impersonal will quickly be left behind.

The talent experience has long been a priority for employers. Since the dawn of Randstad Enterprise's [Talent Trends](#) research, they have been investing in technologies to improve both the candidate (81% in 2016) and employee experiences (82% in 2016). And now organizations are unleashing a treasure trove of AI-powered tools and agents designed to create bespoke experiences for users, with future developments promising to further strengthen these connections. As analyst [Josh Bersin predicts](#), employees will be equipped with digital, personal assistants to support them in many facets of their work. How will you help your workforce make the most of these tools?

The emergence of [agentic AI](#), which is a network of agents collaborating to complete tasks from end to end, will facilitate services such as employee inquiries. For example, workers seeking information about benefits receive, not just content, but also direction and links to select or make changes in a single, optimized moment. In this instance, different agents with access to various resources create seamless experiences, reducing the need for human intervention while improving user satisfaction. Such innovations amplify an organization's culture of service excellence and people-centricity.



These use cases are not new, but exponential advancements are making the technology more powerful and expansive. Holistic records for each employee will enable companies to personalize talent experiences, whether that's for performance assessment, coaching, internal mobility or other services. Never before has this level of customization at scale been possible within talent management.

According to our 2025 Talent Trends research, companies are already deploying AI in ways that will have a permanent impact on their cultures. Surprisingly, only two in five (41%) say they are using various automation tools to personalize the talent experience, and 46% have turned to these technologies to identify workers with specific skills and potential for internal mobility opportunities. This is despite the fact that most (83%) say AI has the potential to reduce unconscious bias when used ethically, and 82% feel AI is driving them to focus more on reskilling and upskilling to address emerging needs.

What steps are you already taking to make the most of AI? If you still remain in the 59% who are not yet using it to support your talent experience, what choices can you prioritize in 2025 to catapult you forward?





83%

say AI can help them reduce unconscious bias when used ethically, but only

46%

have turned to these technologies to identify workers with specific skills and potential for internal mobility opportunities.

With talent enjoying personalized experiences, productivity and engagement will surely rise. As the 2025 Randstad [Workmonitor](#) research finds, 72% of workers say training and development are important requirements for their professional growth, and nearly as many (70%) view advancements and promotion opportunities as essential to their futures. At the same time, just 44% of workers trust their employers to invest and provide opportunities for continuous learning, particularly in AI and technology, and 22% aren't confident this will happen. This indicates a concerning gap between what people value and what they believe their employers will provide.



AI can help close this gap and enhance the employee value proposition. By amassing and analyzing all of a worker's data, technology excels at prescribing career choices, learning paths and coaching curriculum. Even at the outset of joining an organization, talent can enjoy tailored onboarding — and become productive more quickly — with AI's guidance.

Beyond people development, AI offers improved collaboration and communication among workers and managers. There are many examples today where generative AI is used to summarize meetings and emails so peers can quickly share ideas and knowledge. What's more, these tools can recommend [process improvements](#) and enhance productivity. Such use cases provide more than just time savings; they empower people to focus on the essence of conversations and other exchanges, minimizing distractions during the ideation process. Possibilities and applications for the future are almost limitless.

All of these advancements are intended to elevate the talent experience — the pillar of corporate culture. Continuously building on the positive aspects of culture and mitigating the detractors that can damage reputation have been longstanding goals of talent leaders. With the advancement and proliferation of AI, you now have an opportunity that you should grasp to make your biggest gains in the year ahead.

Jay Olson, [Medtronic](#) director of Global Talent Acquisition, shares how AI and people work together optimally in the recruitment process.





5 ways you can build a better culture with AI

01.

amplify the voice of your talent

Design workforce surveys with open-ended questions that elicit rich and meaningful responses, then use AI to analyze and summarize the feedback into meaningful insights.



02.

supercharge collaboration

Invest in automation that can help distill essential ideas from calls and meetings, streamlining communication and accelerating project delivery.

04

champion inclusivity

Deploy AI-empowered tools that can detect and mitigate unconscious bias and create more inclusive environments, whether for self-service chatbots, corporate communications or in everyday emails.

03.

create blended talent experience touchpoints

Showcase your company's innovations with the human touch and a blended approach. Automate touchpoints that can most benefit from AI, but also retain the connections in which a human interface cannot be substituted.

05.

build trust through transparency

Be authentic, ethical and aligned with corporate values when communicating the impact of AI on the workforce. Failing to do so can erode trust and have long-term negative impact on corporate culture.



Glen Cathey

senior vice president,
consulting principal,
Randstad Advisory,
Randstad Enterprise





02. inspire purpose and satisfaction in the workplace.

how will AI change the way your workforce thinks and feels about their day-to-day work?

Overwhelmingly, talent leaders believe the generative AI revolution will transform how people get work done. Less certain, however, is whether talent will embrace this change as enthusiastically. While it's not clear how extensively generative AI will affect people, some recent findings suggest benefits that defy quantification — specifically the impact on job satisfaction and fulfillment.

Having access to AI tools and assistants plays a critical part in how people feel about their jobs. Last year, one study conducted by [Microsoft and LinkedIn](#) found that 84% of those surveyed believe AI allows them to be more creative, and 83% enjoy their work more. Additionally, [Inc.](#) reported that seven in ten workers are happier when they are allowed to use AI at work.

When asked about the importance of innovation in the workplace, 65% of talent surveyed in Randstad's [2025 Workmonitor](#) research say it matters. Nearly half (47%) believe employers could use AI more in the workplace, and 48% think it would make their work more interesting. AI skills (40%) are also the most sought-after skilling priority for talent, up from 29% just last year.

These findings align with the views of talent leaders. According to the 2025 Randstad Enterprise [Talent Trends](#) research, 84% believe robots and machine learning alleviate mundane tasks so knowledge workers are free to do more advanced work — an increase of 6 points year-over-year. It's widely reported that with more time to focus on innovation, creation and collaboration, people feel purposeful and fulfilled. But beyond alleviating busy work, AI is a thought-partner for talent, boosting their creativity, challenging concepts and turning ideas into action.



82%

say they are already using agentic AI to develop strong cognitive skills.

with more time to focus on innovation, creation and collaboration, people feel purposeful and fulfilled

The rise of [agentic AI](#) means people can significantly improve cognitive load management. Using agents to autonomously collaborate on tasks means fewer demands on people overseeing these projects; rather, they are free to focus on the big picture, such as customer relationships and defining outcomes. In fact, 82% of leaders surveyed say they are already using this technology to develop strong cognitive skills among their workforce; an additional 82% report their companies are transforming the way they service customers and do business internally with AI.





Of course, empowering people to be more creative and produce higher-quality work is a sure-fire way to spark joy in the workplace. Workers feel they are progressing in their skills and focusing on purposeful work that taps into their strengths, leading to stronger engagement and high performance. Are you already considering the ways that AI can help you do the same as a talent and business leader? What steps are you taking to help your workforce fully embrace the potential behind these technologies to keep them engaged?

When people are doing better work, automated rewards and recognition platforms are highlighting these efforts to colleagues and managers who might otherwise overlook milestones and smaller contributions. These moments can include the completion of a project, fulfilling key KPIs, and achieving greater collaboration. Using AI to automate such recognitions, along with dispensing the appropriate rewards, lessens the burden on managers and leaders while helping talent to feel appreciated. Moreover, the data captured from such programs enrich employees' records to further help them develop and grow.

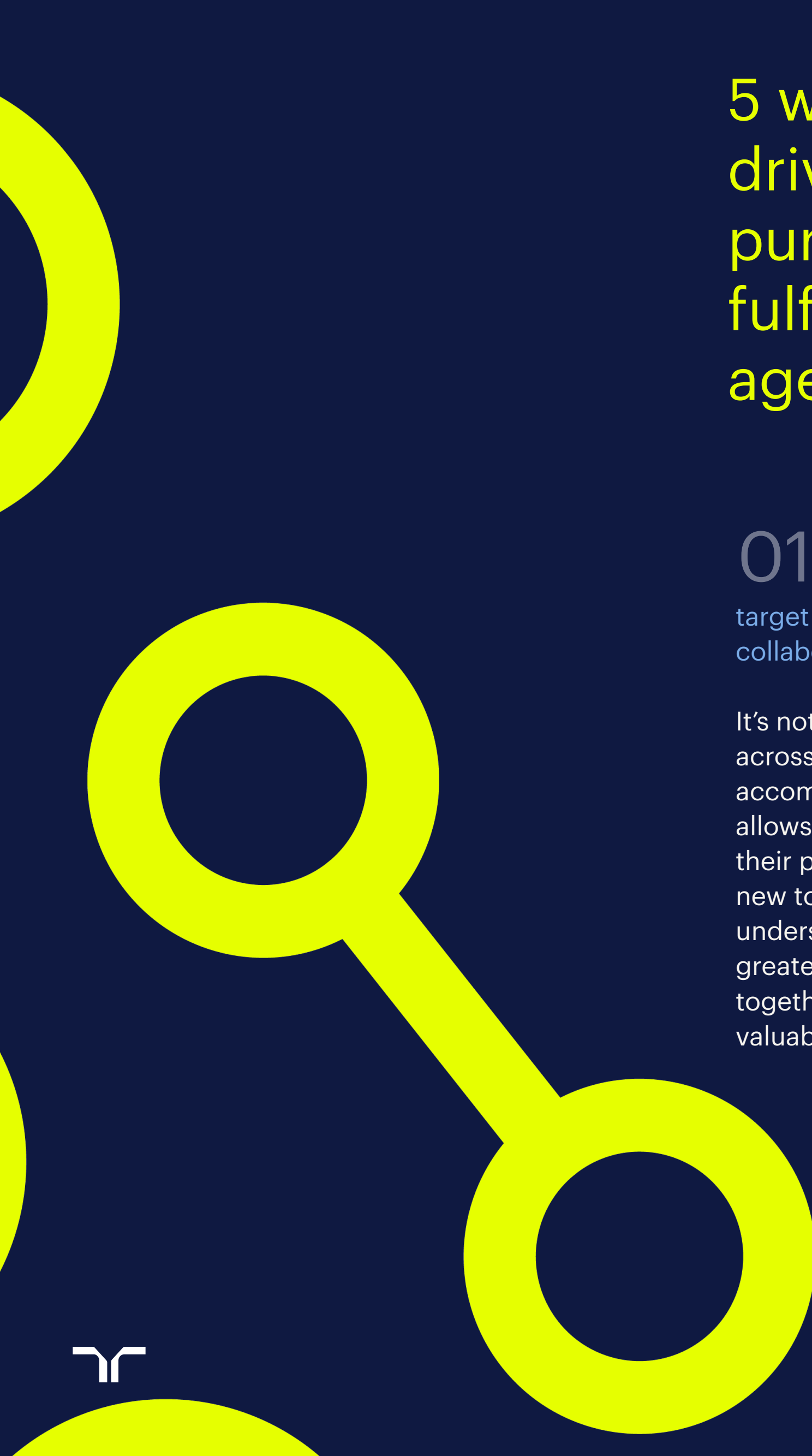


There are many other big and small ways in which AI is helping people feel engaged and connected to their teams and organizations. A growing number of companies are deploying note-taking automation to [capture and summarize meetings](#) so even non-attendees can quickly catch up on key discussion points and action items. Emails are being drafted with generative AI to [convey specific tones and voice](#) and to personalize content. Event reminders to [celebrate birthdays, anniversaries](#) and other milestones will help companies continuously delight their workforces.

These small but important advancements can drive more fulfillment at work, but such sentiments need nurturing and direction that talent leaders can facilitate. By providing the right training, tools and motivations, HR can take the lead on elevating satisfaction and meaning in the workplace. This may be one reason reskilling is a top priority for HR itself; 50% say they are prioritizing training for HR this year — something that just 36% focused on in 2018 when we first asked this question, and only 26% prioritized in 2021.

People's concerns about AI's impact on jobs may never go away, but their comfort level with it appears to be rising. Being able to do more meaningful work better is a powerful value proposition poised to help create more joy and satisfaction in the workplace.





5 ways you can drive greater purpose and fulfillment in the age of AI

01.

target AI training and collaboration

It's not enough to make AI available across the enterprise. This must be accompanied by tailored training that allows your talent to quickly ramp up their productivity and creativity using new tools. Work with teams to understand where AI can have the greatest impact on their roles and define together the ways in which it can be a valuable and essential teammate.



02.

blend automated and social recognition

Automating rewards and recognition is important for regularly acknowledging individual achievements. Make sure your strategy also includes social touchpoints, such as group activities and celebrations, to make it team focused.

03.

build trust and excitement
for the future of work

Work together with your talent to define how AI can be a thought partner, boosting creativity, challenging concepts and turning ideation into action. Focus on technology's ability to redefine, rather than replace, their roles when embraced. Be sure your messaging includes opportunities to learn new skills for employees whose skills may be made redundant, enabling them to transition to new or changed roles.

04

give employees a voice to innovate

Survey your workforce regularly to understand how they feel about and are using AI and automation. Seek their recommendations on ways to boost morale and productivity, and give them opportunities to share their successes across the organization.

05.

know when to use AI to
drive engagement and satisfaction

A phone call, skip-level meeting or water cooler moment can be much more powerful and resonant than an automated workflow that lacks human interaction. Strategically training and implementing processes that provide the right balance are vital for an engaging people experience.



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03. fast track career growth for all.

how will you drive skills development for your total workforce for years to come?

With limited resources, organizations historically have had to prioritize talent for development, which puts skilling support out of reach for many people, limiting opportunities for internal mobility. At the same time, employers often turn to external recruitment when the workforce lacks specific skills, not realizing the hidden potential many of their colleagues possess. But as your business accelerates investments in AI, this new dynamic is ripe for transformation; the democratization of learning and development (L&D) promises to supercharge your workers — each and every one.

AI's ability to gather, analyze and act on huge volumes of data means companies can potentially customize talent journeys for each worker. This includes mapping skills, creating development paths and designing coaching programs — measures that benefit both talent and employers. Already AI is being used to identify the potential of employees; it can analyze performance metrics, skills, behaviors and personality traits to identify patterns that correlate with high performance and leadership qualities — a process also known as [skills inference](#).

This type of rigor will be embraced during the hiring process as well. In the Randstad Enterprise 2025 [Talent Trends](#) research, 48% of those we surveyed say talent acquisition leaders are expected to [collaborate more with L&D](#) — an increase of 13 points since last year.

Generative AI is also being used to create user-specific content and provide feedback to and assessment of their progress. It is capable of generating and curating a variety of content forms, including VR and AR, gamification, video and others. Perhaps the most exciting aspect is the ability to deliver a variety of training interactions, from answering simple questions to developing an entire program.



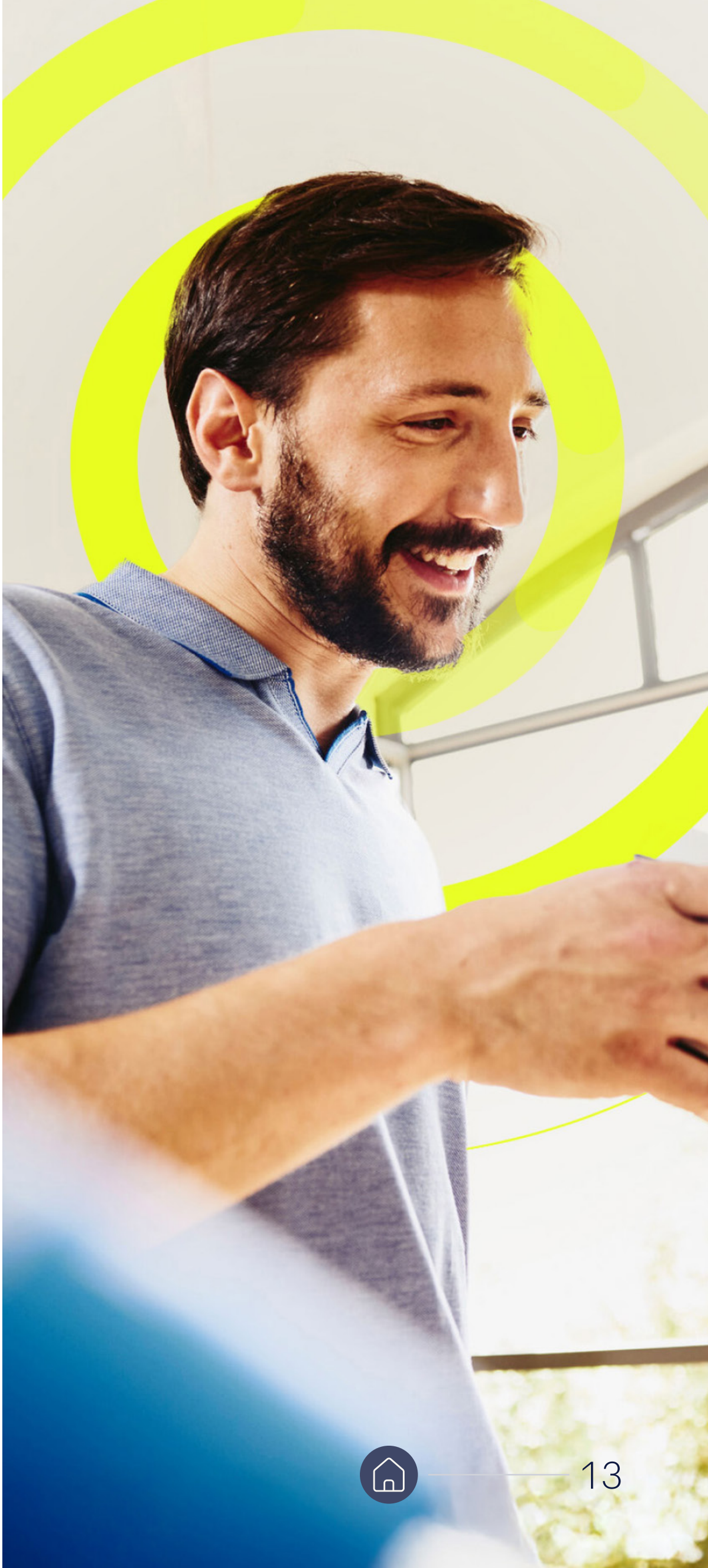
According to Melissa Gee Kee, [Unilever](#) chief talent, development and people analytics officer, AI will fundamentally expand and accelerate the concept of learning in the flow of work. Offering an environment of learning for all, the consumer products giant regularly evaluates how technology helps the company better acquire and retain skills.

“In a just-in-time way, employees will be given help with skill development, which will become a constant, continuous practice.”



Melissa Gee Kee
chief talent,
development and
people analytics officer

Unilever





Mapping the capabilities and potential of every worker to the needs of the organization allows for the most effective deployment of resources. Already employers are focusing more of their resources on skilling capabilities, with 53% planning to increase investments in L&D, and an additional 53% putting much more focus on skills building over the next year. This is within the context of 70% of talent leaders who say they increased their budgets for learning over the last year, a number that has been trending upward over the last three years (57% in 2023 and 65% in 2024).

This learning revolution should enable equitable access to and resources for skills development across the total workforce. About two in five talent leaders tell us they are using AI to reduce bias in relation to employee development and internal mobility, with the highest utilization occurring in the IT and technology sector. Growing these investments will be key to reducing inequities that exist today. Failure to address existing gaps can unfairly leave groups within your workforce behind as skill needs shift radically over the coming years.

Ironically, last year, [Randstad research](#) uncovered major gaps in the training and development practices of companies when it comes to AI:

- While 75% of companies are adopting AI, only 35% of talent have received AI training in the last year.
- 71% of AI-skilled workers are men, and just 29% are women.
- Just one in five Baby Boomers have been offered AI skilling opportunities, compared to almost half of Gen Z workers.

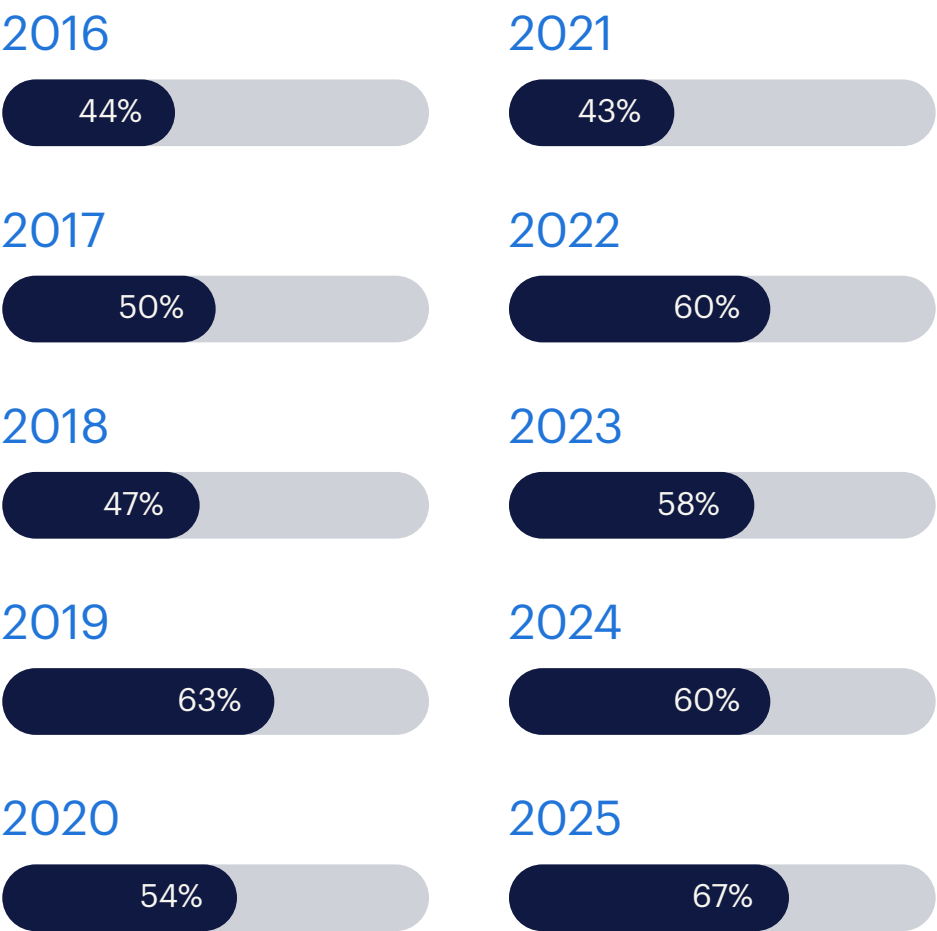
How can you fast track learning for your total workforce? [J&J](#) has developed an end-to-end approach that uses AI to achieve the three “Es” of development: education, experience and exposure. Its learning platform not only aims to facilitate skilling, but to connect talent with mentors, further facilitating career trajectories. Talent leaders also developed the technology to be simplified, powerful and easy to navigate to make it as accessible as possible.

Until recently, the idea of offering externally provided coaching support to everyone has been impractical for many organizations. However, Talent Trends data shows that more are adopting this approach as AI-augmented platforms make coaching more accessible to all talent.

While our data shows that just 9% offer coaching to their total workforce, 40% offer this support to all permanent employees. Not only are the economics of coaching shifting, but the effectiveness is improving as well.

The rise of AI-powered platforms will surely enable swift workforce transformation within organizations that are more invested in L&D. And with more knowledge and tooling to do their jobs, these new amplified workers will usher in huge performance gains in the near future.

percentage who report increasing budgets for reskilling, upskilling and/or training in emerging skills





5 ways you can make learning & development more relevant

01.

[tailor learning programs](#)

Invest in an adaptive AI-powered learning platform that is capable of analyzing user data and outcomes, and designing a curriculum for each individual.



02.

tap the power of human intelligence

While AI is powerful, make sure the bespoke learning content you develop is also vetted by subject matter experts who can validate its accuracy and effectiveness.

03.

engage with variety

Understand the different kinds of learning offerings your platform(s) offer, including gamification, training modules, quizzes and videos that are suited for individualized and accessible learning. Also consider ways you can help employees apply those learnings on the job to ensure it converts from knowledge to application.

04

make equity a north star

Identify gaps in your learning offerings that may overlook the needs of some portions of your workforce. Consider coaching and development programs that are available to your total workforce — not just executives and high-potential talent — to inspire everyone to be the best version of themselves.

05.

turn promise into practice

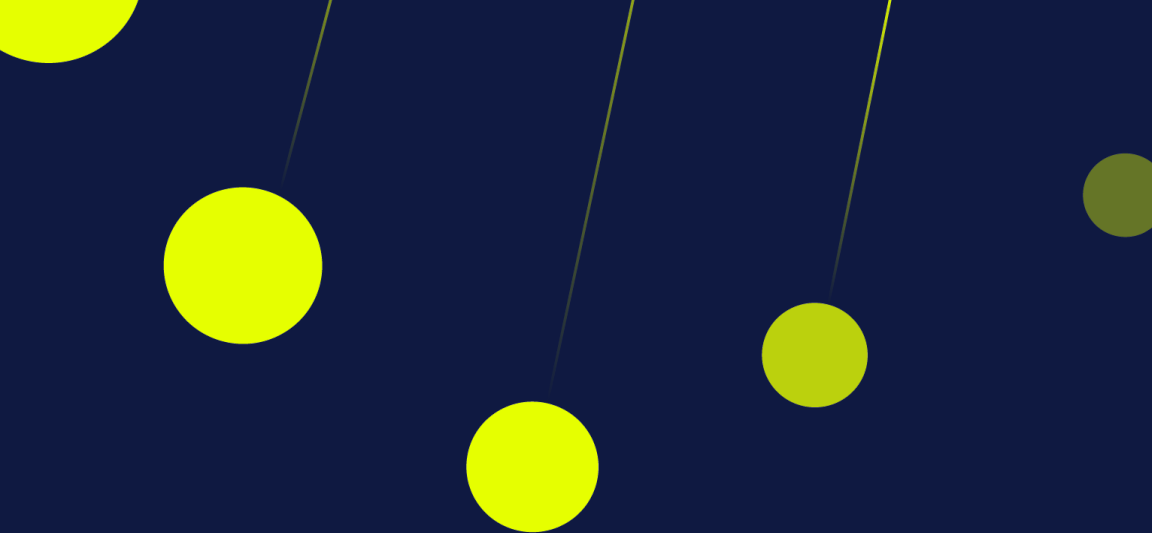
Your strategy and technologies should also identify internal career opportunities for learners once they have completed their skilling courses. Show people how and where they can put their new skills to practice before they take those skills elsewhere.



[Lindsay Witcher](#)

global managing director,
Randstad RiseSmart,
Randstad Enterprise





04. supercharge neurodivergent talent with AI.

how will you tap into the power of neurodivergent talent to rescue your skills-strapped organization?

Talent scarcity and skills shortages have been a top-three concern for talent leaders every single year since we began our [Talent Trends](#) research a decade ago. Market and demographic data confirm this challenge will persist, and competition for in-demand skills will only intensify — but could the solution lie in untapped talent pools?

According to the U.N., neurodiversity is “the idea that all humans have diverse cognitive profiles, neurological abilities and strengths and weaknesses, which should be recognized and respected.” Across the spectrum of a neurodiverse workforce, workers offer a range of unique and sought-after skills, including those that companies often look for and nurture for skilled and leadership roles.

However, data shows that many neurodivergent people — including those with autism, dyslexia and/or ADHD — are often overlooked. According to [MIT Sloan Management Review](#), 30% to 40% in the U.S. are unemployed. Among college-educated autistic adults, that rate could be as high as 85%. [Made by Dyslexia](#), an advocacy organization for the largest neurodivergent group, estimates that as many as 20% of people are influenced by dyslexia.

Neurodivergent talent have different and varied abilities, but often possess [in-demand inherent skills](#) that thriving businesses depend on and talent leaders are hard-pressed to find. For example, pattern recognition — an important skill for machine learning testing, modeling and data science — is a strength among some neurodivergent talent. Some individuals demonstrate outstanding [quantitative competencies](#); others, such as dyslexics, can excel in creativity, problem-solving and communication skills.

At the same time, neurodivergent talent faces challenges at work. ADHD makes the mundane a major hurdle and can be partnered with time blindness. Dyslexic talent may struggle with spelling, reading and memorization. And social interactions and office politics can be hard for autistic talent to navigate, for example. In a world that has historically favored neurotypical traits, neurodivergent talent must continually overcome bias and stigma. How will the choices you make today help stem these challenges for these highly-skilled professionals at work?





Awareness programs and [the rise of AI](#) are empowering neurodivergent people like never before. For example, AI agents and other forms of automation are processing large volumes of facts that help people absorb knowledge at faster rates. Spelling, punctuation and grammar difficulties are all but eliminated with technology and AI. AI-powered task management can break down complex projects into manageable steps, and assistive technologies help people improve the quality of social interactions and support learning.

Increasingly employers are recognizing the value of a neurodiverse workforce. Last year, [Gartner](#) predicted that, by 2027, 20% of the Fortune 500 will actively recruit neurodivergent talent to improve performance. The [Financial Times](#) recently reported that the number of job postings mentioning terms related to neurodivergence has increased six times since 2019.

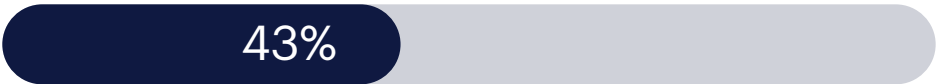
One of the reasons more employers seek such candidates is the competitive advantage they bring to their organizations. Financial giant [JPMorgan Chase](#) operates a Business Solutions Team (BeST) that matches neurodivergent candidates to jobs that fit their unique abilities and skills. Doing so has led to dramatically lowered error rates, improved morale and a more accepting, inclusive culture among peers. Could your business implement something similar?

The Randstad Enterprise 2025 Talent Trends research shows that, 89% say equity and inclusion are embedded within their talent strategies and integral to everything they do — a 13-point increase since last year, when numbers dipped slightly to 76%. Nearly half (43%) report adjusting recruitment processes to accommodate different needs.

Overwhelmingly, 83% of talent leaders believe AI has the potential to greatly reduce unconscious bias when used responsibly. More than one-third (36%) report they’re already using AI, big data or machine learning to source and attract talent with varied backgrounds and experiences. The same number (36%) use these tools to reduce bias — up from just 21% and 24%, respectively, in 2024.



say equity and inclusion are embedded within their talent strategies and integral to everything they do.



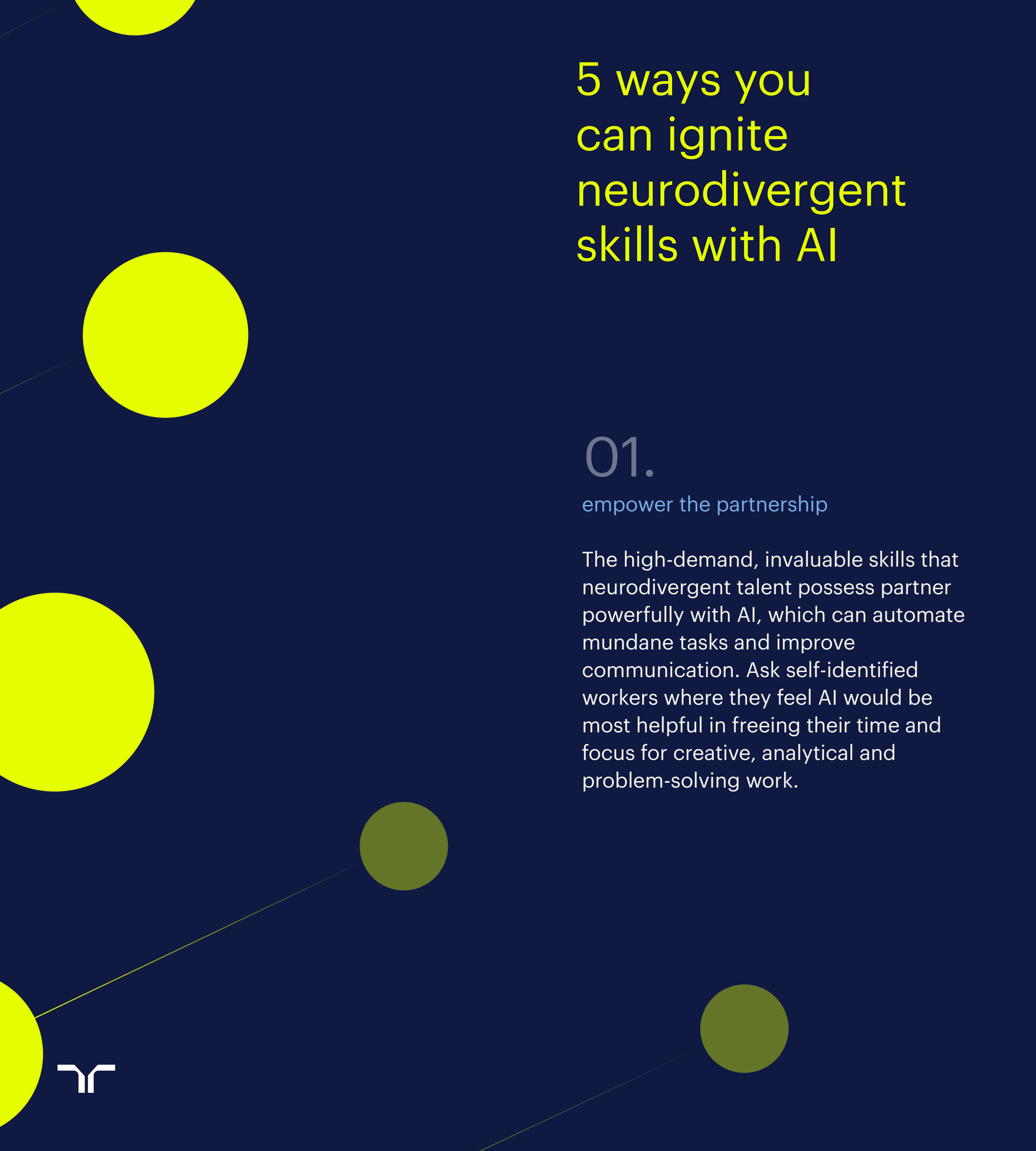
report adjusting recruitment processes to accommodate different needs.

Now's the time to consider how AI can both support neurodivergent talent at work and help reduce bias in talent acquisition and development programs. You will also need to focus on creating inclusive cultures that eliminate misconceptions and bias to be successful. Awareness initiatives, [education](#) and employee resource groups can help minimize these challenges and ensure neurodivergent talent know they are welcome, valued and belong.

[Kate Griggs](#), founder and CEO of [Made by Dyslexia](#), discusses the power of Dyslexic Thinking for organizations that value innovation, creativity, problem-solving and out-of-the-box thinking.







5 ways you can ignite neurodivergent skills with AI

01.

empower the partnership

The high-demand, invaluable skills that neurodivergent talent possess partner powerfully with AI, which can automate mundane tasks and improve communication. Ask self-identified workers where they feel AI would be most helpful in freeing their time and focus for creative, analytical and problem-solving work.



02.

tailor L&D programs to individual needs

Ensure neurodivergent talent isn't excluded from skilling initiatives that are designed for the full workforce. Use varied and inclusive media formats that accommodate varied sensory needs to support learning for all.

03.

focus on the individual

Individuals within the neurodivergent community have varying strengths and needs. Don't make broad assumptions, but rather encourage talent to share what works best for them, where they feel technology will help most and where they feel they excel.

04.

inclusive recruitment

Audit your talent sourcing and attraction strategies to reduce unconscious bias, and identify traditional screening and assessment methods that disqualify high-potential neurodivergent talent. Consider skills-based hiring methods for more inclusive practices.

05.

build from experience

Create and engage neurodivergent employee resource groups for input on how the organization can better support their workflow and collaboration.



Matt Higgs
vice president,
Global Partnerships,
Made by Dyslexia,
Randstad Enterprise





05. think tasks and skills, not jobs.

how will you reimagine work to focus on outcomes, while still keeping people at the center of your talent strategies?

Among the most transformative talent market trends is the pixelation of work, a method of reimagining work by breaking down jobs into flexible “pixels” of tasks and skills. These pixels are reorganized around desired outcomes, enabling dynamic reconfiguration to changing needs and priorities. As AI continues to reshape the way work gets done, by whom and when, employers are rethinking how outcomes are achieved, expanding the possibilities for thinking and learning in people.

How can shifting from a traditional, role-based strategy to an outcomes-based one help erase challenges such as talent scarcity, skills gaps and turnover for your business today and in the future?

For years, [this trend has been ongoing](#) in many markets around the world. According to the Randstad Enterprise 2025 [Talent Trends](#) research, one-quarter (25%) of talent leaders believe the right person may be an employee, contractor or contingent worker — the same number who agreed completely with this statement in our 2016 research. At the same time, in 2016, 40% told us they were increasing investments in integrated and/or total talent acquisition models; that number has grown to 65% in 2025.

There is additional evidence that a major shift from traditional full-time, permanent headcount to a more flexible workforce has been growing. According to [Staffing Industry Analysts](#), the contingent share of the workforce among large employers has steadily risen since 2009 from an average of 12% to 22% in 2024. And, today, in our Talent Trends research, 87% of leaders claim their talent strategies are more focused on workforce agility than ever — a 21-point boost since our 2022 research and the highest it’s been in Talent Trends history.



87% claim their talent strategies are more focused on workforce agility than ever — a 21-point boost since 2022

Accompanying the growth of the flexible workforce is the rise of complementary developments such as talent marketplaces, self-directed learning and the internal gig economy (Google's longstanding [20% rule](#), for instance). These trends have accelerated the reorganization of work, allowing various work arrangements to be deployed for different work. AI is further making this possible as it becomes a co-worker for people, enabling them to use their time to upskill, transfer expertise, be agile beyond teams and job families, and coach and teach others.





Talent leaders recognize how an outcome-based, pixelated model enables a more efficient and effective way of working for people. In fact, 46% say creating a more fluid and flexible workforce is a top priority, while an additional 43% say it's happening already at their organizations. To achieve this goal, 41% are prioritizing greater access to permanent employees, contingent talent and freelancers, and 43% are prioritizing investments in data and market intelligence so they can better understand how to create a fluid and flexible workforce.

46%

say creating a more fluid and flexible workforce is a top priority.

43%

are prioritizing investments in data and market intelligence so they can better understand how to create a fluid and flexible workforce.

To align talent to the needs of the business, technology can deploy the right resources by tasks and projects rather than by roles. Hiring managers no longer need to think in terms of headcount; instead, they can turn to any number of work arrangements, including robotic process automation. What's more, employers can use AI to help plan resourcing and choose the optimized mix of work arrangements; in fact, this strategy is identified as a priority by 45% of the leaders we surveyed.

For [Baylor Scott & White](#), the largest not-for-profit and one of the most advanced healthcare systems in Texas, technology could potentially redefine work and how resources are deployed in a number of ways. According to Tenneil Dutton, senior vice president of Talent and Diversity, the healthcare provider is currently exploring how such an approach could alleviate some of the talent challenges the company faces. In the future, she added, this approach can significantly benefit departments such as allied health and corporate functions.

"We're getting ready to kick off an initiative to look at an entry-level role that we can't staff fast enough because there is turnover in that role. We are looking at tasks that have a significant AI technology or technology play. And so we'll break down roles into tasks and then, as a result, we'll probably change the profiles of what we hire for."



Tenneil Dutton
senior vice president
of Talent and
Diversity

Baylor Scott & White

Beyond the many benefits that pixelation of work brings to employers, the effects on talent are also transformative. Though boosted by technology, pixelated work designs should always be human-centered. Allowing people to constantly seek out new opportunities within the organization, bringing their expertise to various projects and teams, and acquiring new skills and experience along the way can improve satisfaction and fulfillment and instill a sense of entrepreneurship.



Focusing on the work drives professional growth in both traditional and non-linear ways; it can lead to discovery of alternative career paths. And partnering with technology can help people excel in craftsmanship, creativity, expertise and more.

By embracing a task-based approach to resource allocation, you can unlock enhanced performance and a superior talent experience, helping your business thrive in the face of evolving challenges and opportunities.

[Sam Schlimper](#), managing director of Randstad Advisory at Randstad Enterprise, discusses how trends will impact workplace culture in 2025 and beyond.







5 ways to reimagine how work gets done

01.

start with a specific business need
and guiding principles

Ask what work needs to be done,
what outcomes you're seeking,
what tasks must be completed,
which skills are needed and what
work can be eliminated.



02.

focus on people for
sustainable performance

The pixelation of work should be human-first. Prioritize creating meaningful work that empowers individuals and teams, fostering both personal and organizational growth. While cost savings may occur, the focus always remains on the human experience.

03.

drive ecosystem collaboration

Enable partnerships between CHROs, CIOs, and external collaborators. Success depends on breaking down silos and using collective capabilities.

04

ethical use of technology

When deciding to use AI and other technological resources, ensure strategies align with your organizational values, prioritize privacy and security, and adhere to policies.

05.

be transparent and trustworthy

Clearly communicate purpose, progress and outcomes among teams to build trust and psychological safety. Transparency unlocks speed, scalability and innovation, and fosters honest feedback.



Sam Schlimper
managing director,
Randstad Advisory,
Randstad Enterprise



06. pioneer new work arrangements during a labor market crisis.

how will you engage varied work structures to give your business a sustainable advantage?

The future of work is facing a seismic shift. [Aging workers](#), a steady [decline in workforce participation](#), a growing skills gap, [chronic youth unemployment](#) and falling birth rates are creating a perfect storm of [talent scarcity](#). This structural gap in the global labor market threatens to derail economic growth and leave unprepared companies struggling to achieve their ambitions.

Yet, there is opportunity amid these challenges. If you adapt and offer attractive alternative work arrangements, you will not only help your organization survive but thrive, securing the talent it needs to stay ahead in an increasingly competitive landscape.

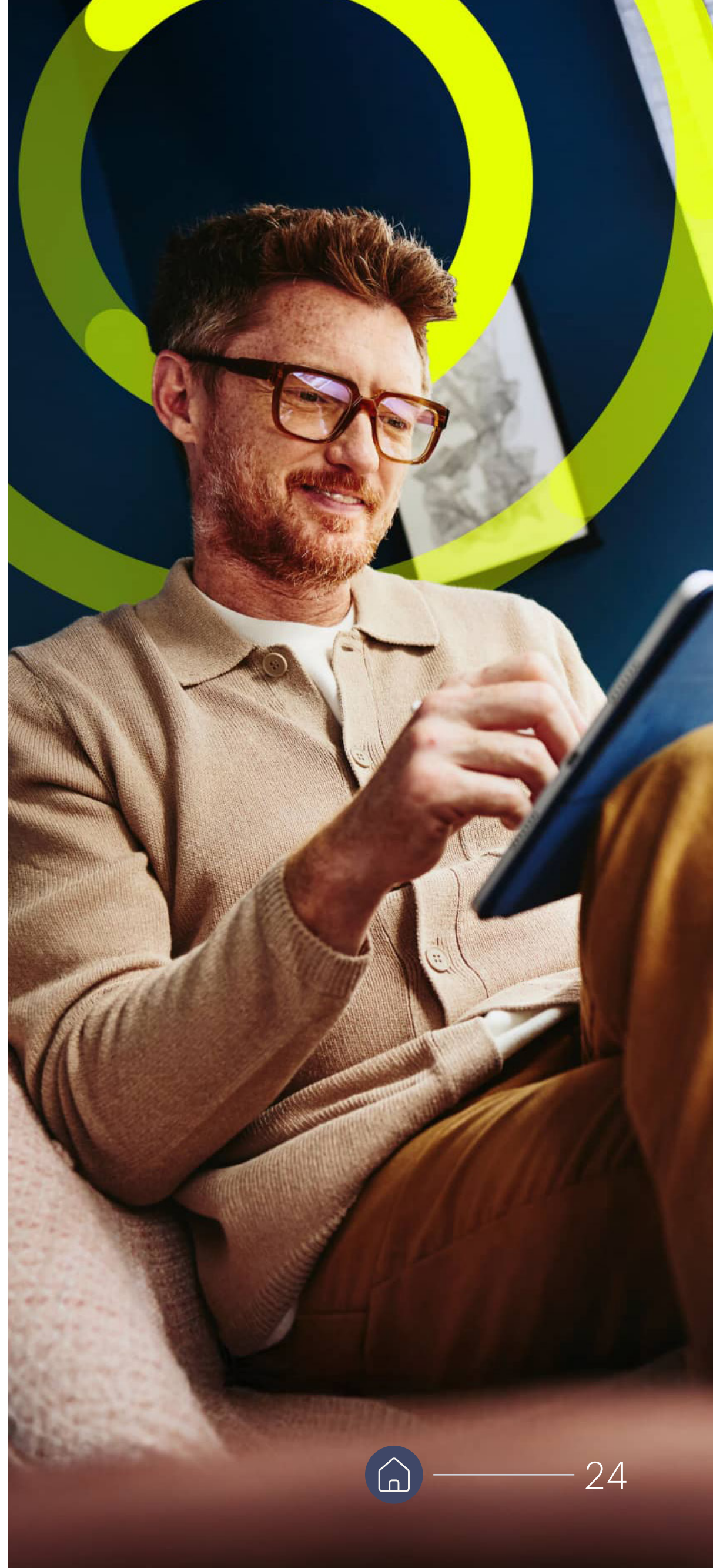
The [World Economic Forum](#) reports that 30% of the global workforce will be 50 and older by 2050. Additionally, according to the [OECD](#), for every 100 workers, 44 are over 50 and have retired or elected not to participate in the labor market. This figure is expected to increase to 56 individuals per every 100 by 2050. What steps will you take to stem the impacts of the aging workforce crisis that threatens so many markets?

Talent access will not only be impacted by an aging workforce. In 2023, the [International Labour Organization](#) uncovered that more than 20% of young people were not in employment, education or training (NEET). At 13%, the youth unemployment rate is equivalent to 64.9 million — a massive portion of people who are not in the labor market. The [World Bank](#) reports that the global labor force participation rate has fallen from 64.2% in 2000 to 60.9% in 2023.



As it's been over the last decade, talent scarcity continues to be a top-three challenge for employers. According to the Randstad Enterprise 2025 [Talent Trends](#) research, 32% say talent scarcity has been their biggest pain point or had a negative impact on business. Nearly one-quarter say the same about talent retiring or voluntarily choosing to leave the workforce, an increase of 4 points since last year. Even more (76%) expect this trend to have the same or greater influence on their business this year, and 88% express similar concerns about talent retention overall — numbers that have steadily grown over the last three years. Ninety three percent (93%) say they will be putting the same or greater focus on talent retention this year.

93% will be putting the same or greater focus on talent retention this year





With skills abundance shrinking, employers must optimize all available talent through innovation while incentivizing others to join or stay in the workforce longer. For example, consumer products giant Unilever launched its [U-Work employment model](#) in 2019 to mitigate the impact from retiring employees, working parents on leave and other talent seeking job flexibility. By offering talent a monthly retainer model, people can continue working at the company but also tend to their personal commitments and interests. Company leaders have said the intent of the program is to give talent opportunities time to provide care, explore their passions or take on other jobs.

The idea of such arrangements may seem counterintuitive; historically businesses have expected exclusive access to the skills and strengths of their talent. However, alternative arrangements, known as polyworking, have clear benefits for organizations, according to [Forbes](#).

People with multiple jobs develop diverse skill sets, their experience at other companies sparks innovation, and talent satisfaction and motivation among this group tends to be higher. These arrangements, however, are different from overemployment, in which workers hold two or more jobs without the knowledge or consent of their employers.

Randstad [Workmonitor](#) data shows that talent wants more flexibility. Nearly half (45%) have asked for flexible work arrangements, and 44% trust their companies will deliver on these requests. Among younger workers, ages 25 to 34, the desire for flexibility and trust of employers is even higher (51% and 46%, respectively).

In our Talent Trends research, employers also report implementing flexible working to both attract (35%, up 9 points since last year) and retain (34%, up 8 points since last year) talent with varied backgrounds and experiences to the benefit of the organization; 81% report that flexible working arrangements are effective in creating greater equity at work. What benefits could your business see with a similar approach?

45%

of talent have asked for flexible work arrangements, and

44%

trust their companies will deliver on their requests.

Source: 2025 Randstad Workmonitor research

At a time when aging demographics, declining workforce participation and chronic youth unemployment are limiting access to talent, you must reconsider how your business can accommodate the needs and desires of its workers; achieving a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining skilled talent will be more critical than ever.





5 ways you can introduce flexible working arrangements

01.

define your goals

Map out the end goals for your initiatives, whether you want to retain retiring workers, attract new ones or incentivize people out on leave to return. Define realistic metrics that will indicate success for your organization.



02.

start small

Begin with a limited pilot by business, geography or function and expand slowly once proof of concept has been demonstrated.

03.

outline and communicate eligibility

Be clear and transparent about who is eligible to participate in alternative work arrangements and why. Create policies that are fair and will meet both the needs of the business and your workforce. Success depends on buy-in from all employees.

04

avoid conflicts of interest

For those who embrace polyworking, whether they're embarking on a side hustle or employment with another organization, make sure the work they do is compliant, ethical and legal.

05.

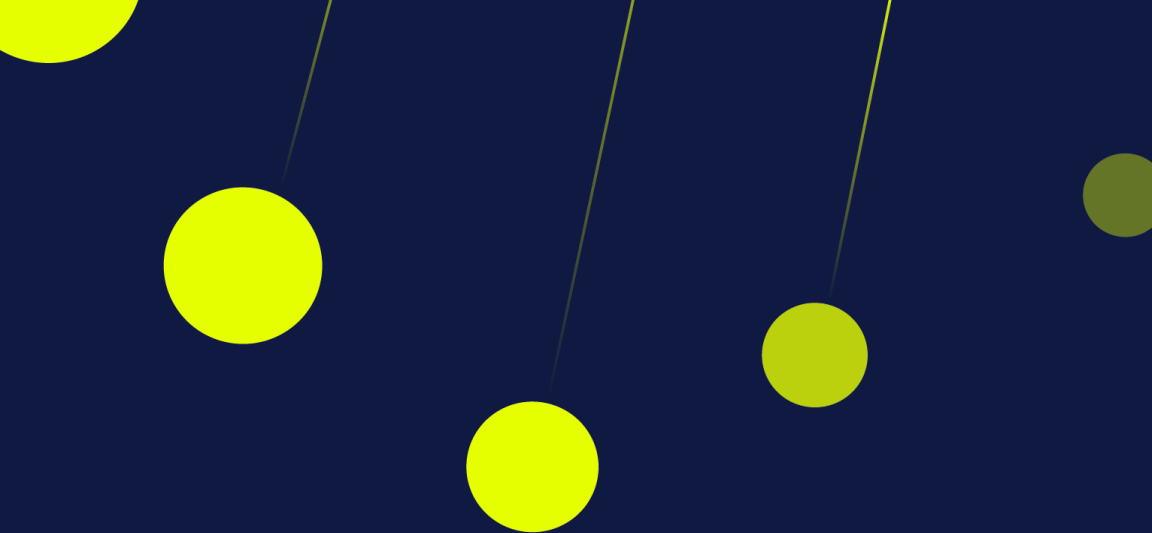
test and refine

Be persistent and don't give up if your initial pilot isn't perfect. Identify points of failure and work toward refining the program before expanding to other areas of the business.



Paul Vincent
global leader,
Service Design,
Randstad Enterprise





07. reimagine value creation with empowered talent.

what steps will you take to
supercharge your workforce?

The great value proposition of the digital revolution is significant empowerment of workers, no matter the skill level or job grade. By augmenting people's ability to think, solve problems and innovate, technology has the power to help get work done more quickly, efficiently and effectively — which leads to the question: How should you redefine the value of your organization's people in the age of AI and data?

Moving the goalpost is a necessity in today's digital economy. As workers tap the power of AI agents and other tools to automate daily routines, time savings and increased focus are two clear benefits. By offloading low-value, time-intensive tasks, people can spend more time on higher-value activities such as collaboration, critical thinking and communication, where the human touch is essential to success. At the same time, AI can support people with high-value work, working as a thought partner and teammate, helping them be more creative and organizing their ideas into actionable plans. So while productivity and output will greatly benefit from the maturing of AI, so will human potential.

while productivity and output will greatly benefit from the maturing of AI, so will human potential

According to the [World Economic Forum](#), the current wave of innovation is accelerating how companies create value beyond productivity gains. Workers augmented by AI are achieving faster product commercialization, stronger customer relationships and market expansion. What started out as pilot programs — these efforts to supercharge people’s abilities — are now building at scale, producing returns across the enterprise. And those companies that continue to wait before testing the waters may struggle to catch up.

To fully reap the rewards of these investments, you’ll need to look beyond simple productivity metrics. A more important and challenging measure is the impact on people’s potential to create more value with the help of generative AI, machine learning, natural language processing and sentiment analysis. The end goal isn’t to just save time; it’s to create a future-ready, agile workforce that’s capable of taking on any contingency.





The Randstad Enterprise 2025 [Talent Trends](#) research finds that potential to learn is one of the most important factors in choosing both senior and early careers hires (41% for each respectively). In fact, this is the top-cited criteria, noted as extremely important, for entry-level hires. For senior-level talent, 43% of leaders rate inherent intellectual or personality traits, such as critical thinking and emotional intelligence, as extremely important; this criteria ranks second for early careers talent (37%). Nearly as many (34% for early careers, and 36% for senior talent) say relevant personal motivations and aspirations are also critical traits in a candidate. These are important considerations because jobs and responsibilities are evolving rapidly (According to the [IMF](#), 40% of global employment is exposed to AI).

top 3 criteria in choosing early careers hires: potential to learn, inherent intellectual or personality traits, and relevant personal motivations and aspirations

top criteria in choosing senior hires: inherent intellectual or personality traits, such as critical thinking and emotional intelligence

For workers to thrive in such dynamic environments, sharp inherent skills are more important than ever to ensure people can adapt and further their careers. With the support of employers, talent must continually redefine value creation for their organizations and themselves. Delivering more impactful work output is important, but so are learning and development to ensure talent stays current with global skill demands.

How will you help your workforce continue to drive value and advance business goals? Reskilling is the bedrock of any strategy, but beyond this, you'll need to have a clear understanding of how the business will evolve and what the associated resourcing needs will be. As [McKinsey](#) points out, companies are rushing to build AI literacy, but without first considering the business goals of such an exercise. You should aim to prioritize the identification of future skill needs over future role needs.

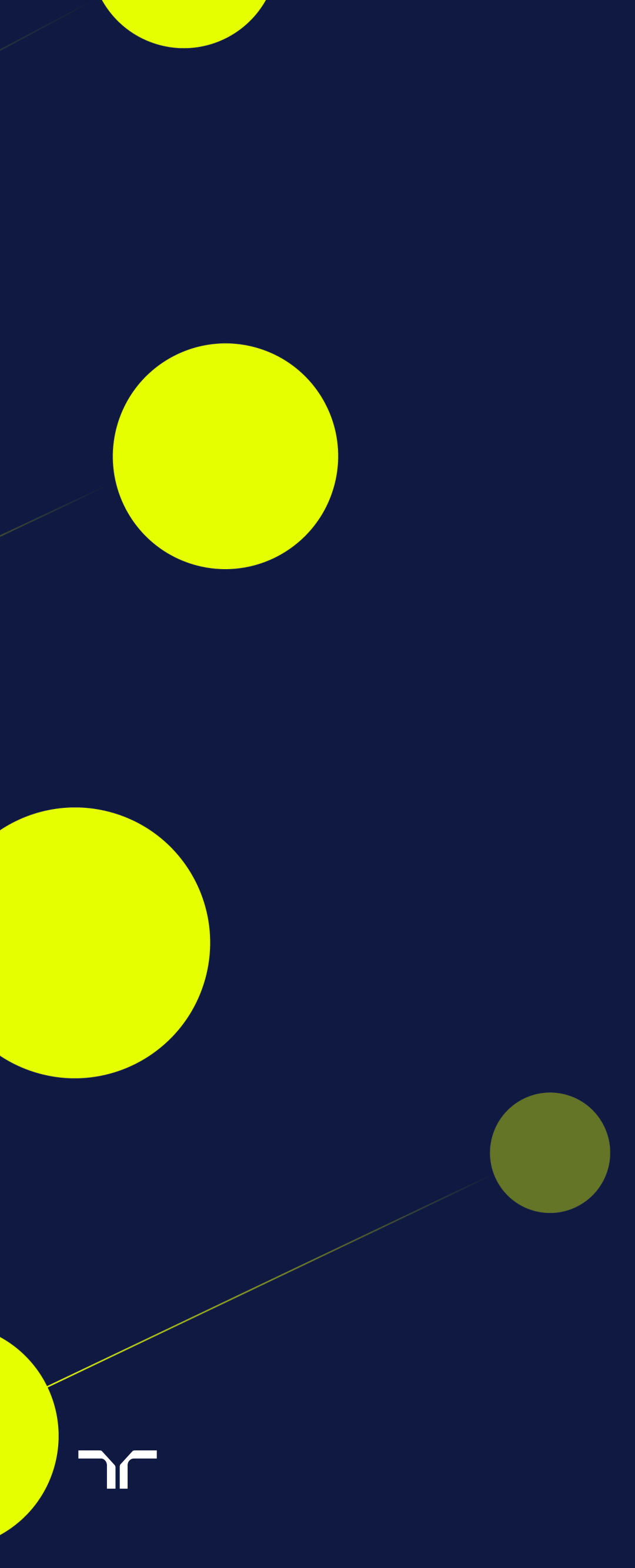
Another cornerstone of people empowerment is providing data in support of decision-making. Most of the companies we surveyed (66%) say they expect to provide data training or reskilling to existing employees to meet changing business needs. However, this is down from 84% in our 2020 research; as data science continues to advance, it should still remain a top priority.

People possessing such skills will be critical to all functions within the business, especially those in talent management where this kind of insight will help mitigate talent scarcity and the skills gap. Such value creation may be difficult to quantify initially, but over time these contributions will have a significant impact on workforce readiness.

Many employers are already moving in this direction. More than two in five say understanding how technology can help them make smarter hiring decisions is one of their top considerations. Nearly all (91%) say they are able to sustain or intensify their focus on process alignment across the organization and creating consistency.

At many organizations talent executives are among those taking the lead in AI transformation; how will you help your business realize the benefits of a more empowered workforce? It's a journey that will constantly raise the bar on performance and value creation, certain to accelerate on the next wave of innovation.





5 ways you can create new sources of human value

01.

survey for insights

Gather feedback from line managers on how technology can boost their teams' performance and capacity to inform investment decisions.

02.

plan for today, and for tomorrow

Consider what resources are needed to empower people both day-to-day and long-term, such as AI-directed coaching that can benefit their careers and performance.

03.

tailor learning

As roles change, develop learning curricula that are relevant to each worker, so they can acquire new skills that will help them increase their value to the organization and global workforce.

04

examine the way work happens

Along with building skills, also reassess the ways that work gets done, such as how people collaborate, innovate and communicate. These are all processes that people know by rote, but will evolve with the integration of AI.

05.

track and adjust

As with other business initiatives, make sure to measure outcomes and look for opportunities to improve. AI transformation will be a long journey, and organizations must regularly gauge their progress.



Wesley Connor

head of Global Skilling,
Development and
Employee Experience,
Randstad





08. close the leadership gap now.

with the leadership pipeline narrowing, can you reverse the trend?

With the global economy shrouded in uncertainty, skilled leaders are needed more than ever. Even as organizations budget sizable resources for leadership learning and development, their attempts to build a stable leadership pipeline may be inadequate, spelling disaster in the near future.

A recent study of leadership development programs, published in [MIT Sloan Management Review](#), found current efforts fall short of what companies need. A 2023 [Deloitte](#) survey of business and HR executives shows only 23% believe their organization's leaders have the right capabilities in today's dynamic environment.

Also troubling, [Forbes](#) reports that the pipeline for developing female leaders is broken, with only 87 women promoted for every 100 men. At the director level, women are more likely to leave their jobs than men. Just 29% of C-suite leaders are women, according to [McKinsey](#); they also only account for 30% of corporate board members in the [Russell 3000](#).

The leadership gap is a chronic challenge that businesses are well familiar with. Every organization struggles with acquiring and retaining talent with strong [leadership qualities](#) such as [empathy](#), vision, adaptability and strategic thinking. However, with AI promising to transform all functions of a business, the urgency to secure these skills is growing. Additionally, macroeconomic trends continue to stall business ambitions, further requiring leaders be well coached and prepared for what may come next. In its 2024 survey of CEOs around the world, [PwC](#) found that 45% believe their companies won't be sustainable in 10 years if they don't course correct.



Clearly leaders are under pressure to reimagine their companies and themselves. Despite this mandate, the Randstad Enterprise 2025 [Talent Trends](#) research finds that only 36% of companies are specifically providing leadership training to meet changing business needs. The bright side: This number is up from 25% the year before. At the same time, this number is concerning because it demonstrates a short-sightedness that is exacerbating the leadership gap.

only 36% of companies are specifically providing leadership training to meet changing business needs. — an increase from 25% the year before

Looking back, in 2016, 46% said they were planning to increase investments in leadership development. Over the following years, that number bounced from 52% in 2017, to 45% in 2018, to 61% in 2019. After the pandemic, prioritization decreased, dropping to 49% in 2020 and 44% in 2021. Now, it's time for businesses to put leadership back at the top of their lists. Without a greater effort to prepare managers and executives for the changes ahead, your business could face an existential threat. So, how will you collaborate with your business executives to change course?





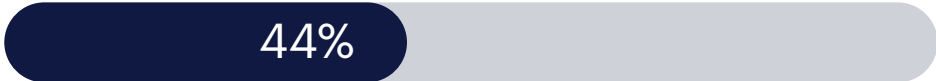
Technology is beginning to transform the way companies provide skilling and coaching for their people. Our data shows 46% of companies are using AI to analyze and recommend high-potential employees for leadership roles. Additionally, some employers are looking to coaching to prepare talent for leadership.



offer coaching to executives and senior leadership.



offer coaching to future leaders.



offer coaching to managers and those who are likely to become managers.

Executive skilling and coaching are key to helping leaders adapt to a new economy. Understanding the technologies behind the trends, the skills people must have to navigate forward and the intelligence their organizations need during this disruptive time make leaders much more likely to succeed in their transformative journeys. Additionally, this kind of support can energize and ignite people's passions and ambitions, enabling them to fulfill their potential.

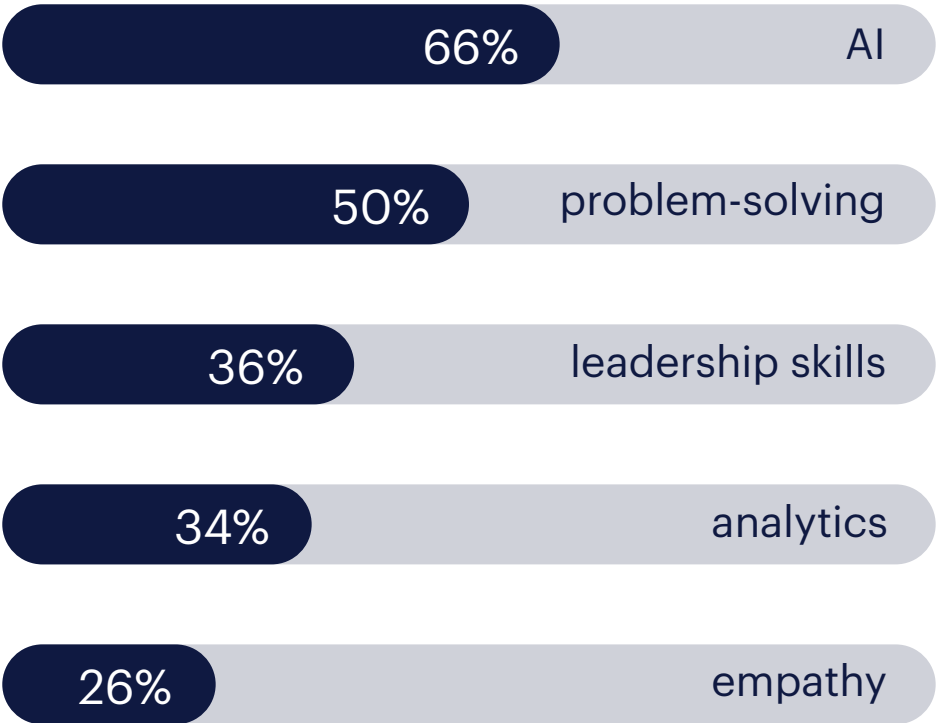


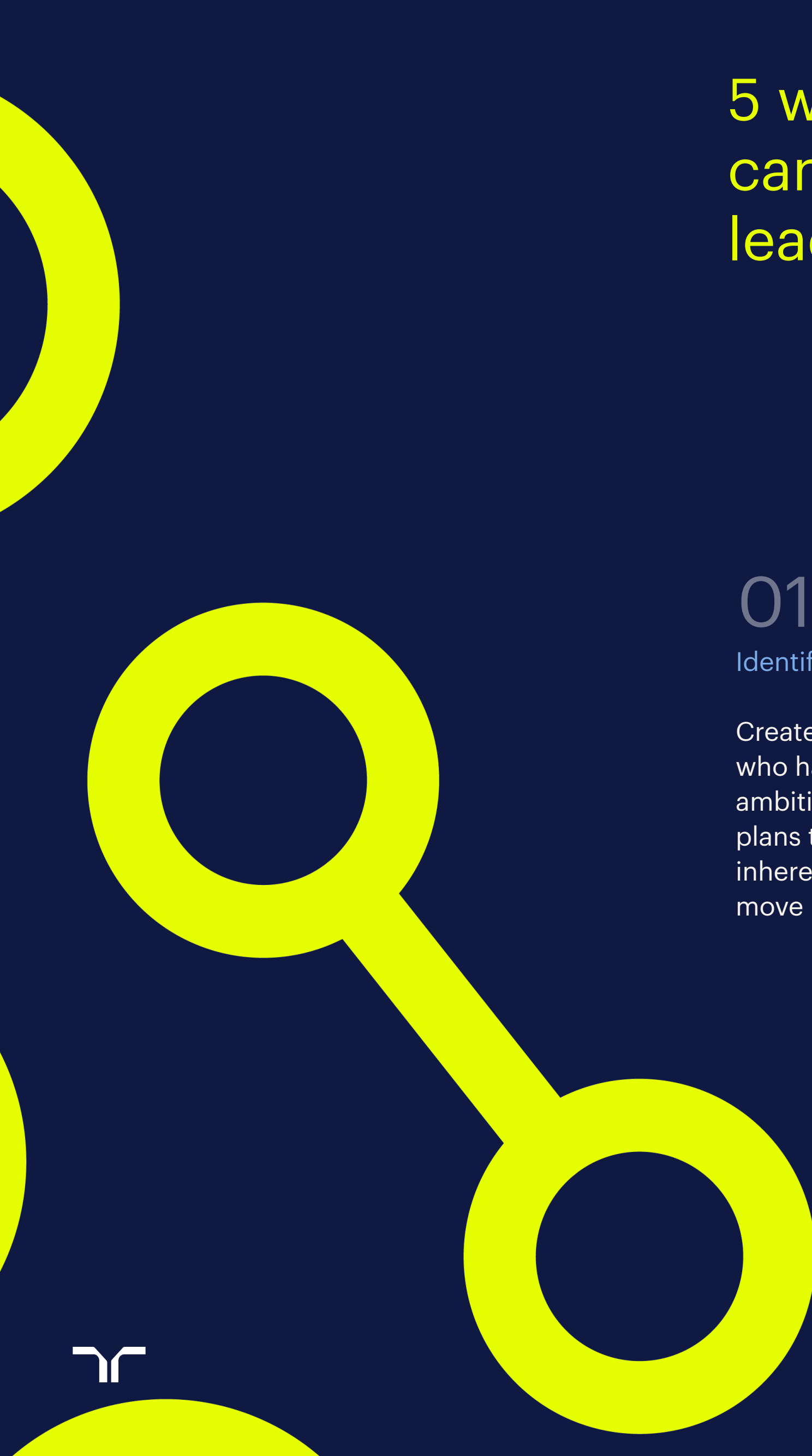
These efforts should be part of a larger strategy of offering coaching for all. Not only does such an approach strengthen the leadership pipeline, it also reduces bias and supports equitable opportunities for all talent to advance into the C-suite.

Mentorship is also important to developing people’s leadership skills, regardless of career level — during his time as CEO at Microsoft, [Bill Gates](#) often credited Warren Buffet for providing mentorship. As [Fast Company](#) has reported, even CEOs need mentors to escape the echo chamber that can accompany the corner office. In today’s turbulent business climate, such feedback is critical to developing a balanced and informed business strategy. In particular, these types of support [are critical](#) to closing another gap at the C-level — the gender gap — and helping high-potential women grow into leaders.

The leadership gap is not going away. If anything, more indicators of a growing gap have emerged recently. Last year brought a record number of [CEO turnovers](#), many the result of poor leadership and performance. Now’s the time to deeply assess your executive development strategies and execution to ensure there is a robust pipeline of talent ready to move into management roles. Doing so will keep your business ahead of competitors during periods of disruption.

employers report they are training people up on





5 ways you can close the leadership gap

01.

Identify and nurture potential

Create a process to identify talent who have leadership qualities and ambitions early on. Tailor development plans that will help them hone their inherent skills and prepare them to move into relevant roles.

02.

measure development ROI

Track and assess your ROI on executive coaching and other development investments by measuring their impact and participant feedback. This may include evaluating the effectiveness of follow-up on actions and effects on organizational change.

03.

discern pipeline barriers

Examine your leadership pipeline to address any obstacles that hinder employee advancement or may lead to attrition. One size doesn't fit all. Design roles and stretch assignments that accommodate different life stages, balancing professional growth with personal responsibilities to optimize your succession planning.

04

walk the talk

If workforce equity and inclusion are important to your organization, they must be important to your leadership strategy too. Ensure people of various backgrounds and experiences are equally represented on your leadership team, and put plans in place to rectify both short- and long-term gaps.

05.

personalize leadership pathways

Work with executives to craft their personalized development plans. Understand their learning needs, provide resources and coaching for continuous development, and continue building their management skills and professional knowledge.



Tatiana Ohm
chief operating officer,
Randstad Enterprise





09. jump start skills-based transformation based on business imperatives.

how will you prepare your workforce
for a reimagined world of work?

According to the Randstad Enterprise 2025 [Talent Trends](#) research, in 2016, employers' top pain points were talent scarcity and skills shortages (39%), as well as more competition for top talent (30%). Over the last decade, despite innovative talent acquisition and development strategies, these challenges persist.

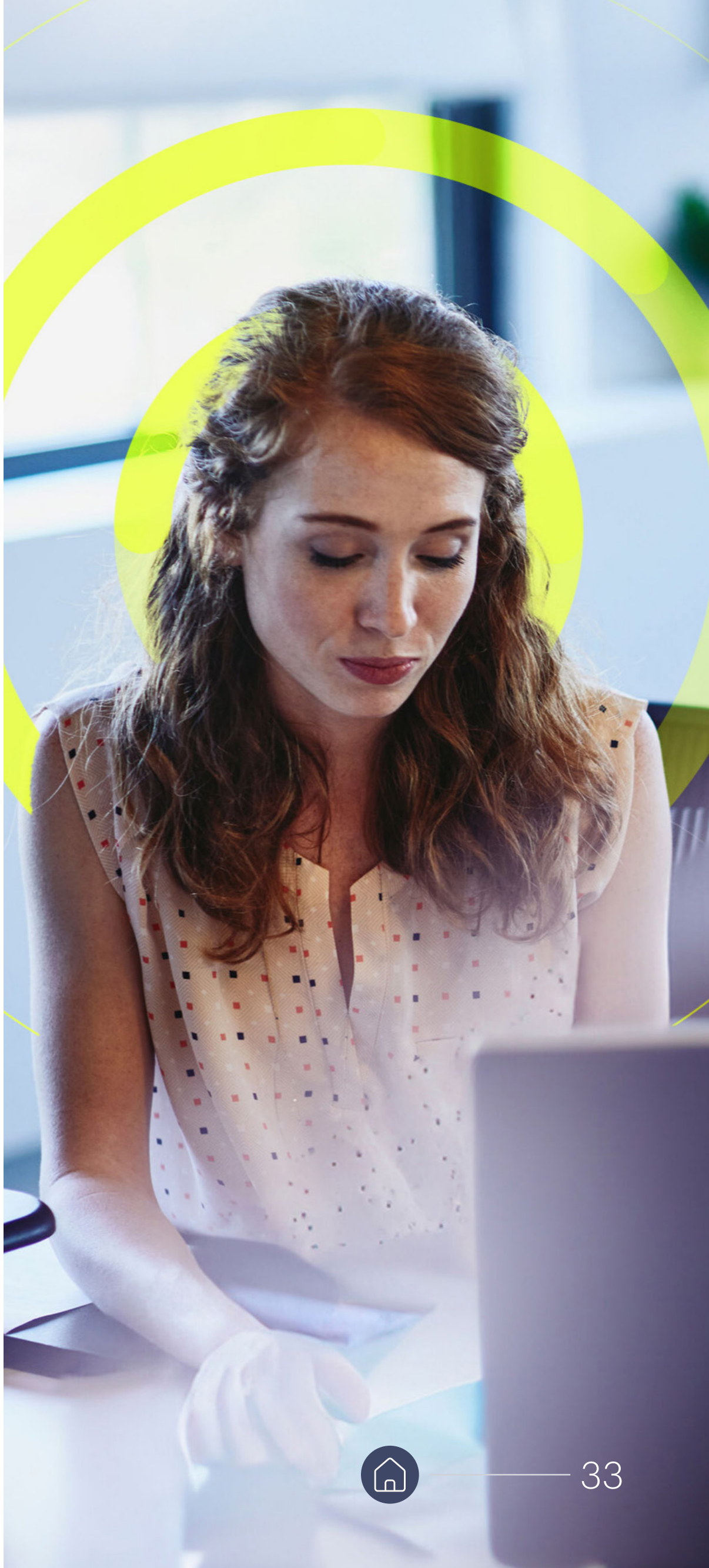
The AI revolution has made it abundantly clear that a skills-first approach to workforce management is no longer an option; it's a necessity of survival. Companies that fail to upskill and reskill their workforces will fall far behind competitors that have clear technology strategies and are giving their people the competencies and confidence they need to use these innovations effectively. But as AI becomes pervasive across the enterprise, how can you make sure the skills-based journey you develop will have maximum impact?

a skills-first approach to workforce management is no longer an option; it's a necessity of survival



Employers are realizing they simply cannot rely on legacy measures of performance to hire and develop talent; they must also consider potential, ambition and motivations. According to our 2025 research, 83% are moving to or have already moved to a skills-based model — an increase of 14 points since 2024, when we first asked this question. This broad adoption is buoyed by the many perceived benefits of skills-based models, including improved equity (41%), greater organizational preparedness for the future (39%), improved hiring outcomes (39%) and stronger talent development outcomes (37%).

perceived benefits of skills-based models





These are just a few benefits of adopting a skills-based model. Human potential, as well as ambition, are key predictors of success because they reflect characteristics and drive that are inherent to the individual; employers can tap a person's natural strengths and motivations, while teaching them the learned skills they'll also need. This creates talent abundance for employers, while motivating people to do their best work. Skills-based models also improve visibility of skills across the workforce, helping talent leaders identify current and future gaps, and support equity at work, since people are hired and promoted based on their potential and not their pedigrees.

Adoption, however, can be challenging, especially in complex, matrixed organizations where job titles and skill requirements may vary considerably. For example, skills assessments can also be time and labor intensive; 32% cite this as a challenge.



Getting hiring managers on board with this strategy may require coaxing; 30% agree that, while HR and talent leaders have embraced a skills-based mindset, functional managers still remain more focused on specific jobs and roles. This may be why 79% report they are providing manager training on soft skills. Only 5% of companies report that they experience no barriers to the adoption of a skills-based model at their organizations.

Despite these challenges, very few organizations (9%) do not feel successful in their attempts to embrace a skills-based model — an eight-point drop from 17% just last year. Many are optimizing outcomes by starting small: They're testing skills-based hiring and development strategies for specific projects and initiatives based on business imperatives.

For example, during a recent [Randstad Enterprise webinar](#), J&J shared that the organization's skills-based transformation began with talent development initiatives aimed to close the skills gap. The company prioritized precision to ensure its employees have personalized access to the education, exposure and experience they need to develop skill sets that match business needs.

During the same session, Siemens Plc told us how the company used a skills-first approach to address gaps while creating a more equitable experience. Many other employers start their skills-based transformations with early careers programs, where talent is less experienced, and inherent skills and personal motivations have historically been highly valued criteria.



It's clear to HR leaders that adopting a skills-based model is not an option; it's an imperative in today's fast-moving, technology-driven labor market, where the shelf-life of skills shortens with each day. While making the shift can be complex, starting with one project can help move your initiatives forward, serving as a success story that gets the whole organization on board. There is no easy transition, but over time it will be an investment well worth the time, energy and resources you have put into it.

[Jacquelyn Liddell](#), vice president of Talent Acquisition at [Mass General Brigham](#) shares her thoughts on which trends will influence her business and talent strategy most in 2025.







5 ways you can make the skills-based shift

01.

establish an ontology for
your organization

First, will you buy or build? Either way, it's important to classify and standardize skill clusters in a way that reflects business priorities.



02.

phase it in

When starting out, focus on a particular problem your business needs to solve, for example, scarcity of cloud specialists. By focusing on an initiative with a limited scope, implementation is more manageable and likely to succeed.

03.

be wary of unintended consequences

Hiring and promoting based on inherent skills is meant to minimize bias, not amplify it. As you initiate a skills-based model, clearly outline the skills that are necessary for success and performance. Track outcomes to make sure you aren't doing the opposite.

04

take an integrated approach to tech

Be deliberate when selecting technologies that help map skills within your company. Look for a platform that can integrate with your existing talent tech stack.

05.

evangelize the benefits

Line managers and colleagues may be hesitant to work with talent who don't have the experience but do have the skills. Share success stories, talent intelligence and other evidence to illustrate the benefits of a skills-based approach. Encourage managers to support skills-building and internal mobility across the existing workforce as well.



Jenna Alexander
global Talent
Transformation leader,
Randstad



10. hyperscale the skills-first movement with internal talent marketplaces.

how will you put your current
workforce's skills first, too?

The most powerful catalyst for skills building is putting learning into action, and for some organizations, this is where a gap can occur. Because talent sometimes is unable to apply newly acquired skills to their existing jobs or have limited opportunities to do so, these learnings aren't optimized and risk being forgotten.

It will be critical to stem this challenge at a time when, according to the Randstad Enterprise 2025 [Talent Trends](#) research, 81% of employers believe talent acquisition leaders will put more emphasis on internal mobility rather than external recruitment, and 85% believe talent acquisition leaders will be responsible for preserving the workforce and preventing layoffs.

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But you can help learning leap forward, bringing talent development to life through internal [talent marketplaces](#) (ITMs). Both internal and external marketplaces have gained momentum in recent years; for example, [this market](#) has grown by double digits from 2019 to 2022. ITMs offer more than just a channel to connect talent to job opportunities; they enable companies to efficiently identify employees who can be redeployed to projects as business needs arise.

ITMs match people to projects, gigs and mentorships to give them real-world learnings and experience. Talent can use marketplaces as a north star for their skills development by identifying the capabilities that are most in-demand and presenting exciting new career opportunities they can pursue without leaving the company. As a tool for internal mobility, ITMs are fundamentally changing career trajectories at many companies. What impact could one make at yours?





This technology also fits within many organizations' ambitions to align talent acquisition to skills-based models, with 89% saying their structure supports their internal recruiting, employee development and talent mobility efforts. ITMs can also help alleviate some of the barriers to skills-based adoption, as 22% feel it is still more difficult to promote talent with a skills-first approach, and nearly as many (21%) say it is challenging to hire based on skills.

According to [Gartner](#), ITMs are among the top-three most important emerging innovations. Additionally, our survey shows that 59% of talent leaders plan to increase their investments in internal mobility this year — up 20 points from our 2016 survey (39%). Half (50%) of talent leaders tell us they will dedicate much more focus on keeping their employees from leaving for other employers; an additional 43% expect to dedicate the same focus to this area.

One of the reasons more organizations are investing in ITMs is the growing impact on talent management.

With AI powering ITM technologies, employers are able to [process large volumes](#) of data about their talent to provide intelligence and drive internal mobility program outcomes. As the technology further matures, it will integrate more closely with other people functions, such as learning and development (L&D), talent acquisition, and rewards and recognition.

Banking giant [HSBC](#) reported that it invested in ITMs to empower more than 220,000 employees with the skills they need now and tomorrow. Its platform takes a skills-based approach that matches talent supply with skills demand in a transparent, digitized and scalable way. Through people interactions, the AI learns talent preferences and matches their skills with internal opportunities. This greatly benefits talent because the matches are based on their strengths, not titles.

As a result, opportunities are recommended to people who would not typically have discovered them on their own. Talent can also take part in short-term projects that help them develop skills on the job. For line managers, the results are equally impressive. For example, one manager says he was able to locate a resource within a day using the ITM; a task that might have taken months to complete otherwise.

Access and transparency were also drivers for PwC, which launched its ITM in 2023. In an interview, its U.S. Chief People & Inclusion Officer Yolanda Seals-Coffield said its platform, called [My Marketplace](#), ensures managers and leaders have access to the right skills while giving employees greater agency over their careers. The marketplace also encourages participants to list their interests and passions, which are essential factors in a skills-based model.



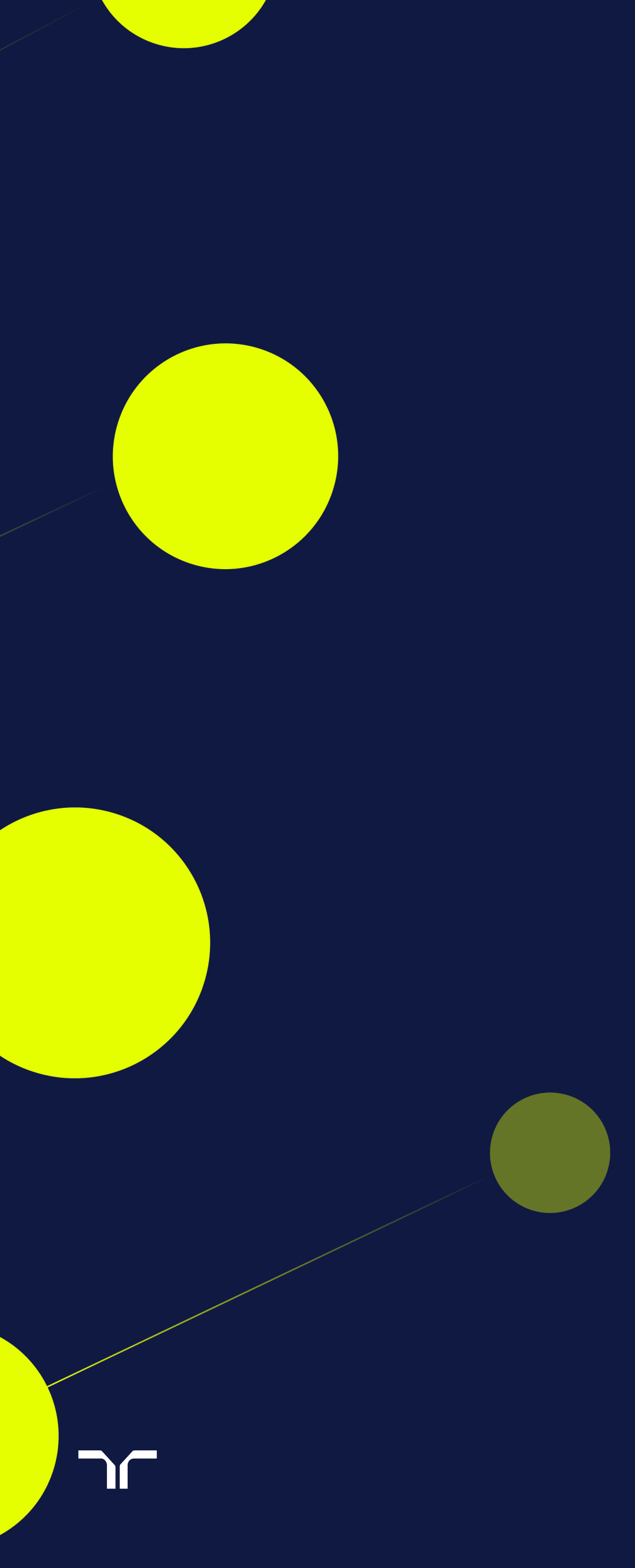
As ITMs become prolific for organizations, this development will surely elevate the availability of internal skilling. Not only will these technologies match the ambitions and interests of talent, but integration with learning platforms will eventually allow people to pursue the skills they need to take on gig work, temporary assignments and new roles within their companies.

Increased internal mobility will only add to the skill sets companies possess, improve talent retention, and allow your business to avoid disruptive hire-and-fire cycles as its needs change.

[Thomas Jajeh](#), chief digital officer of Randstad Enterprise discusses ways to create a cohesive technology ecosystem that supports HR in today's new talent models.







5 ways you can launch a successful internal talent marketplace

01.

set focused objectives

Don't try to do everything. Define your primary ITM objectives and work toward those first. A marketplace has many benefits; start out by setting realistic goals and then gain momentum.



02.

drive enterprise-wide engagement

Showcase the value of your ITM. Clearly communicate how the marketplace benefits talent, managers and the organization. This will fuel platform adoption and participation.

03.

tap potential, passion and purpose

Encourage talent to broadly disclose not just their learned skills and experience, but also their interests, inherent strengths, passions and ambitions. These often reveal hidden talents and create stronger matches than learned skills alone.

04

track skill development

Make every experience count. Document the skills or expertise workers gain from temporary assignments, gigs or new permanent roles within the ITM. This will help you continuously map skills within your business.

05.

integrate internal mobility and L&D for strategic growth

Align your ITM with L&D strategies where possible, so talent can easily identify ways to build the skills they'll need to take on work and projects that interest them.



Thomas Jajeh
chief digital officer,
Randstad Enterprise





taking bold steps together.

reimagine HR leadership in the age of advanced AI

Over the past decade, it has been my privilege to lead our Talent Trends research initiative, providing talent leaders with the insights needed to navigate the ever-evolving world of work. As we stand at the threshold of an unprecedented era of change, led by advancements in AI, the pace of transformation in the next five years will without doubt eclipse anything we've experienced before.

This pace will require all of us to step boldly into the future, making small and big moves to position the HR of 2030 as a strategic powerhouse leading organizational success — always brought early, not late, into business strategy discussions. Talent leaders will define how organizations adapt, innovate and thrive in times of continuous disruption and opportunity. They will adopt a multi-faceted role as architects, ethicists, visionaries and strategists, embracing technology while safeguarding the human essence of work. The reinvention of HR will not only shape the workforce but also redefine what it means to work in the AI-powered age.

Together, we will rise to the challenge, looking around the next corners to shape an agile talent and workforce agenda that meets the needs of this rapidly changing world and brings AI to the center, driving the next revolution in the era of work. The road ahead demands courage, vision and collaboration — and I am confident we are ready to meet this moment.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Louisa Wilson
chief growth officer
Randstad Enterprise



looking ahead: the role of HR by 2030

With AI as my data geek, thought provoker and insight analyzer, here are 8 exciting roles I expect HR will take on by 2030.

01. HR as architects of adaptive organizations

HR leaders will become organizational architects, designing agile, AI-driven ecosystems where talent flows seamlessly across roles, projects and geographies.

key changes

- Traditional HR structures will dissolve, replaced by dynamic teams aligned with business priorities.
- Workforce strategies will be cocreated with AI, blending predictive analytics with human intuition to anticipate needs and craft solutions.
- HR leaders will be tasked with orchestrating a balance between human creativity and AI efficiency.

new skills required

- expertise in organizational design and systems thinking
- fluency in AI and data science to collaborate effectively with AI systems
- strategic foresight to anticipate and navigate disruption

02. HR as guardians of ethical AI and culture

HR leaders will be the stewards of AI ethics, ensuring that AI systems are transparent, fair and aligned with organizational values.

key changes

- Ethical AI governance will be a core HR responsibility, involving regular audits and stakeholder collaboration.
- HR will safeguard cultural integrity by humanizing AI-driven processes, from recruitment to workforce management.
- Trust-building will become central as employees navigate AI's pervasive influence on their work.

new skills required

- deep understanding of AI ethics, governance and compliance
- cultural agility to lead diverse, global and virtual teams
- communication expertise to bridge the gap between technology and humanity



03. HR as curators of the human-AI workforce

The HR function will evolve to manage hybrid workforces composed of humans and AI, focusing on maximizing the unique strengths of both.

key changes

- HR will oversee the integration of AI “colleagues” alongside human teams, fostering collaboration and reducing resistance.
- Performance management will account for human-AI synergy, measuring outcomes rather than individual contributions.
- Training programs will prepare employees to thrive in augmented roles, ensuring inclusivity in a rapidly transforming workplace.

new skills required

- ability to design workflows and collaboration models for hybrid teams
- skills in AI-augmented performance metrics and employee experience design
- change management expertise to navigate workforce shifts

04. HR as data visionaries

Data mastery will become the cornerstone of HR leadership, enabling leaders to predict, strategize and innovate with unparalleled precision.

key changes

- HR leaders will use AI to harness vast amounts of data for real-time insights into employee behavior, engagement and productivity.
- Predictive analytics will guide workforce planning, ensuring the right skills are available at the right time.
- Data storytelling will become essential as HR leaders translate complex analytics into actionable strategies.

new skills required

- proficiency in advanced analytics tools and AI platforms
- strong storytelling abilities to communicate data-driven insights effectively
- continuous learning to stay ahead of evolving AI capabilities



05. HR as drivers of lifelong learning

HR will lead the charge in building cultures of lifelong learning, ensuring employees remain adaptable in a world of constant change.

key changes

- Learning platforms will leverage AI to provide hyper-personalized, on-demand training tailored to individual needs and business goals.
- HR will partner with educational institutions and technology providers to deliver cutting-edge skilling programs.
- Internal talent marketplaces will enable dynamic career growth and skill mobility.

new skills required

- expertise in learning experience design and talent development
- ability to create partnerships with external learning providers and AI-driven platforms
- strategic alignment of learning initiatives with organizational objectives

06. HR as human-centric workplace designers

HR will focus on designing workplaces that prioritize well-being, inclusion and employee satisfaction, supported by AI-driven insights.

key changes

- AI will monitor and optimize workplace conditions, from workload balance to mental health support.
- Employee experience teams within HR will create customized work models that blend flexibility with engagement.
- Equity and inclusion strategies will use AI to eliminate bias and foster belonging.

new skills required

- behavioral science expertise to understand and enhance employee experiences
- AI-powered equity and inclusion strategy development
- proficiency in designing policies for hybrid and flexible work environments

07. HR as business strategists

HR leaders will transition into strategic business partners, directly influencing organizational direction and driving value creation.

key changes

- HR will contribute to C-suite decisions by providing predictive workforce insights that shape business strategies.
- Talent strategies will be aligned with broader goals like innovation, market expansion and sustainability.
- HR's impact on business outcomes will be measured and optimized using advanced analytics.

new skills required

- strategic acumen to align HR initiatives with business objectives
- financial literacy to understand and contribute to profitability metrics
- advanced stakeholder management to influence decision-making at all levels

08. HR as sustainability champions

HR will integrate sustainability into every aspect of talent management, ensuring that workforce strategies contribute to environmental and social goals.

key changes

- Green skills will be embedded into talent development frameworks.
- HR will lead initiatives that align employee values with organizational sustainability missions.
- Workforce sustainability metrics, such as carbon impact and social equity, will become as critical as traditional KPIs.

new skills required

- knowledge of sustainability practices and green job design
- ability to embed environmental social governance (ESG) goals into workforce strategies
- collaboration with external stakeholders to amplify impact





about Randstad Enterprise.

Randstad Enterprise is the leading global talent solutions provider, enabling companies to create sustainable business value and agility by keeping people at the heart of their organizations. As part of Randstad N.V. — a global talent leader with revenue of €25.4 billion — we combine unmatched talent data and market insights with smart technologies and deep people expertise.

We are uniquely positioned to support the world's leading enterprises with the inflow, crossflow and outflow of all talent — whether full-time, part-time, temp, freelance or gig. As part of Randstad Enterprise, Randstad Sourceright delivers talent acquisition solutions (RPO, MSP, services procurement/ SOW and talent BPO), and Randstad RiseSmart delivers talent development and transition solutions (talent mobility, career coaching and outplacement).

Our subject matter experts and thought leaders continuously evolve these integrated talent solutions to solve critical talent challenges and enable organizations to deliver on the power of talent marketing, talent intelligence, talent mobility, technology optimization, and equity and inclusion. As the leading partner for talent, we help companies build skilled and agile workforces that move their business forward.

For more information, visit www.randstadenterprise.com.

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