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**Top six talent management trends for 2018 and beyond**

Some of the major trends set to redefine talent management in 2018 and beyond include:

**1. The rise and rise of Artificial Intelligence**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is permeating every industry and every profession. HR is no exception. While AI can take many forms, in 2018 we will see a sharp increase in the uptake of AI-enabled chatbots to match candidates with jobs.

As a result, recruiters will be freed to spend more time adding value to the sourcing and selection process: conducting interviews and making offers to a considerably reduced and select pool of candidates. It heralds a better talent acquisition experience for everyone.

**AI will also automate essential administrative processes (e.g. indexing and filing candidate records), onboarding, measuring performance and offering personalized curated learning content. In turn, HR professionals will refocus their efforts on strategic workplace initiatives and contributing real business value.**

**Many common daily tasks will lend themselves to AI automation.** That said, automation doesn’t necessarily equate to the loss of human jobs; in fact, it bodes well for augmenting current HR roles by eliminating low productivity tasks and tapping into AI to make informed workforce decisions. The resulting improved efficiency and effectiveness of the HR function will be recognized across the business.

Stay ahead of the curve: AI isn’t going away. If you haven’t already, it’s time to start exploring applications of AI and educating the business on its value.

**2. The end of the employee - as we know it.**

The new currency of the labour market will be mobility, not stability. The balance of power in the employer/worker relationship has tipped in favour of workers and many businesses are still awakening to this realization.

HR professionals will need to rethink the way they manage the growing number of workers shifting to freelance and contract modes of employment. HR-tech will be essential to help workers maintain connections across borders, managers lead their teams and drive collaboration.

Gartner estimates that by 2020, 60% of organisations will use a unified talent management (UTM) strategy for their entire workforce – freelancers, contractors and employees. In 2018, we will see an accelerated uptake of UTM technologies, as more businesses identify the need to galvanize a multifaceted workforce.

Stay ahead of the curve: Initiate the internal dialogue on changing workforce expectations and workplace arrangements. Improve your HR-tech subject matter expertise by exploring and testing best-in-class technologies.

**3. Learning goes viral – self-directed micro-learning becomes the norm.**

Traditional learning models have hit their use-by dates. Expect to see more businesses move away from traditional, structured programs, toward self-directed, social, informal learning platforms.

The pressure is on for workers to constantly increase and update their skills. HR and businesses will play a crucial role in delivering learning that is continuous, consumable, relevant, and available on-demand. Small bursts of micro learning will be reinforced through repetition in future lessons and tasks, as well as shared through social networking platforms. Moreover, social connectivity breeds user-generated content and idea sharing, making learning more digestible and engaging. In place of fixed, formal content, this will lead to workplace learning content to spread organically through an organisation with viral impact.

Stay ahead of the curve: Apps like the PageUp™ Everyday Learning App allow employees to share relevant content with their teams. Industry-leading tools like Slack and Microsoft Teams can also be repurposed to drive collaborative learning in an informal setting.

**4. The end of one-size-fits-all: personalization boosts employee engagement**

As millennials become the key demographic in the workforce, businesses can no longer rely on a one-size-fits-all approach to talent management if they want to attract and retain top talent. Additionally, people are pursuing career development opportunities at every age and are working longer than ever before. So tailored and personalized learning opportunities for employees of all types will become the norm. Rich data insights are set to help organisations deliver more engaging content and meet growing consumer expectations for highly relevant and targeted information in the workplace.

HR analytics will expose gaps in employee productivity, highlight ways to improve engagement, uncover what motivates employees and map the overall employment experience. Machine learning algorithms will apply text and pattern recognition analytics to enrich the insights delivered via employee surveys, providing HR professionals with an accurate reflection of employee sentiment, engagement and productivity in real time. HR professionals will have the tools to be able to better make data-driven workforce decisions.

Stay ahead of the curve: Task yourself with understanding the value and contribution HR analytics can bring to your business. Develop pilot use cases to practically demonstrate the power of analytics.

**5. Design thinking applied to HR**

Traditional hierarchical organisation structures will soon be a thing of the past. Replaced by new organisational designs that better facilitate teamwork, agility and collaboration, for many, this will be a welcomed relief. As more and more companies hire employees across different time zones, working on multiple projects and using various media, organisational design will evolve to accommodate a more fluid work stream. **Matrix structures will replace linear hierarchies and employees will be measured on how they collaborate with internal and external networks. Managers are likely to be hired on a project basis.**

This evolution in organisational design also warrants a shift in performance management. In 2018, we can expect managers to be providing real-time feedback and coaching in place of fixed review cycles and businesses to be investing in mobile performance coaching applications to facilitate and track performance discussions.

Stay ahead of the curve: Address organisational design for the future of work in your next HR strategy planning session. Challenge your existing performance management policies and practices for their alignment to what workers and managers need in the future.

**6. Augmented and virtual reality tools to amplify talent management**

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) will begin to find their way into the talent acquisition toolkits of tech-savvy recruiters. Expect to be served up interactive job advertisements, go on a VR tour of your future workplace in Australia while sitting in Singapore, and complete VR assessments during your recruitment process. AR/VR will also be used to enhance the employee experience by providing simulations of tasks and work challenges, better preparing workers for real-world situations before they have to face them.

Stay ahead of the curve: Familiarize your talent acquisition and learning teams with this emerging trend by incorporating basic AR/VR technology into your current recruitment and learning practices.

The future of talent management will see a more symbiotic relationship between people and technology in the workplace.

Advanced technologies will strengthen and augment the HR toolkit. Where, when and how people work will reflect the expectations of workers as well as the enablers unleashed by digital technology.

HR will play a new, enhanced role in this landscape. In 2018 HR will be instrumental in preparing the workplace and the workforce for the tsunami of changes ahead.

In doing so, HR professionals will also need to craft the re-design of their own function – in order to ride the wave of change, rather than be swamped by it.