AI Skills in the Workplace:
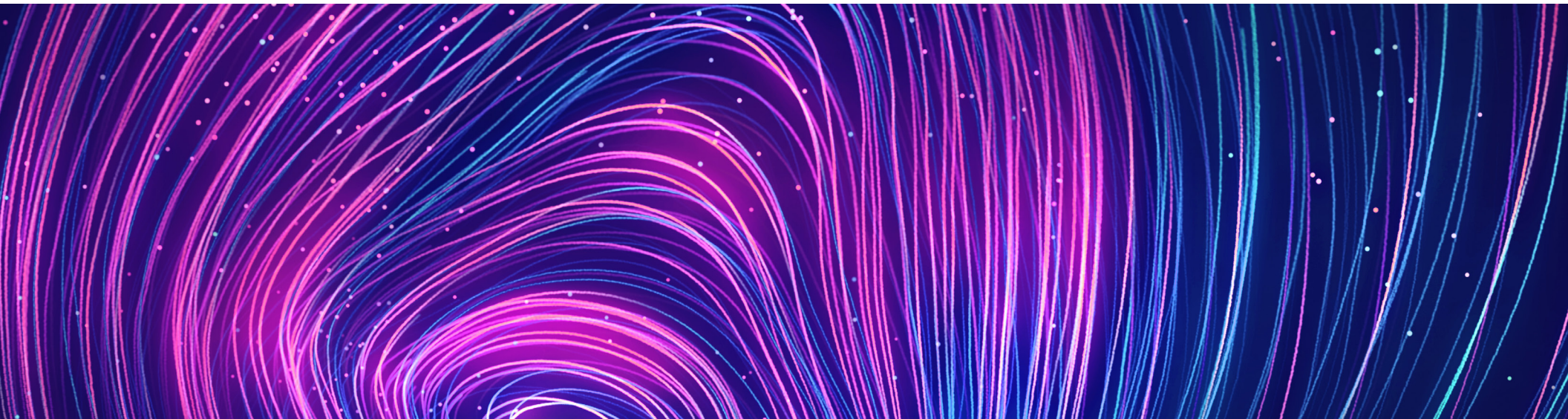## BRIDGING THE GAP IN 2024

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the workplace, affecting job roles across a variety of industries. But it's not something to be fearful of. In fact, as an HR professional, you have the power to be a hero in this rapidly changing landscape.

In this eBook, you'll learn:

- How AI is changing the modern workplace.

- Which AI trends in the HR field you should be paying attention to.

- Recommendations to help HR professionals navigate the new normal.

Keep reading to learn how you can be an HR hero in 2024 – and beyond.

The AI Transformation

AI is altering the work landscape by automating tasks, streamlining processes, and creating new opportunities, but it's also posing unique challenges. As AI technologies advance, millions of job roles are at risk of disruption.

This is not a distant future scenario. It's happening now.

Consider this: A recent McKinsey report, "The State of AI in 2023: Generative AI's Breakout Year," projects that by 2030, approximately 12 million people in the U.S. will need to transition into new job roles as generative AI advances. Automation, driven by generative AI technology, is expected to replace many routine and repetitive tasks across various industries.

But it's not all bad news. This shift towards automation, while enhancing productivity and efficiency, is also triggering a skills gap that needs to be bridged. Automation doesn't necessarily equate to job elimination. Across many industries, it means the transformation of job roles and the creation of new opportunities.

This is where HR professionals come in. HR can be the bridge between employees and AI, helping them navigate the complexities of this changing landscape. In short, you can be the hero, providing employees with the skills, support, and guidance necessary to thrive in an AI-driven world.

The AI Landscape: Trends in HR

Gaining a comprehensive understanding of AI's role in HR means examining the key trends that are emerging.

McKinsey's report offers valuable insights into what's happening right now and what we're likely to see in 2024 and beyond:

1. JOB DISPLACEMENT AND ADAPTATION

The advancement of Generative AI is projected to result in around 12 million individuals in the U.S. needing to transition into new job roles by 2030. Automation powered by generative AI will replace routine tasks, necessitating adaptability, and reskilling among workers.

2. SHIFTING JOB PATTERNS

We're likely to see a significant trend in job changes, with over half of the observed transitions involving individuals leaving roles in areas like food service, customer service, and production. These roles, prone to automation due to their repetitive nature, contribute to reshaping the job market.

3. GENERATIVE AI'S AUTOMATION POTENTIAL

Generative AI's capabilities have the potential to automate up to 30% of jobs by 2030. While this might affect sectors like manufacturing, finance, and customer service, automation can also lead to job role transformation and the emergence of new opportunities.

4. DUAL IMPACT OF GENERATIVE AI

Generative AI's impact has a dual nature, automating roles in fields like STEM, healthcare, and construction while also fostering growth opportunities. For instance, it can enhance healthcare diagnostics and optimize construction project management through AI-driven design.

5. CONTRASTING EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Different industries experience varying growth trajectories. Sectors such as healthcare, STEM, and construction are witnessing job growth due to technological advances and the increasing demand from an aging population.

The Challenges Posed by AI

There's no question that AI is reshaping the future of work. Some of those changes will be challenging for the workforce. Let's examine some of the difficulties posed by AI for HR:

- **Skill Gaps:** As AI takes on more responsibilities within HR, there's an increasing demand for employees to acquire new skills, particularly those related to working with AI systems. HR professionals must identify these skill gaps and develop training and upskilling programs to bridge them.

- **Adaptability Issues:** AI adoption can lead to resistance among employees who may feel AI threatens job security. HR has a vital role in helping employees overcome this resistance and adapt to the changing workplace dynamics.

- **Morale and AI-Phobia:** It's common for employees to be AI-phobic or AI-skeptical. Some may fear the technology, while others may distrust it. HR professionals must recognize these concerns and work to establish trust in AI systems while ensuring that employees understand the technology's benefits.

- **Generational Differences:** The acceptance and comfort level with AI often vary across generations. Baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z may have different perspectives on AI. HR should be aware of these generational differences and tailor their approach to AI adoption and integration accordingly.
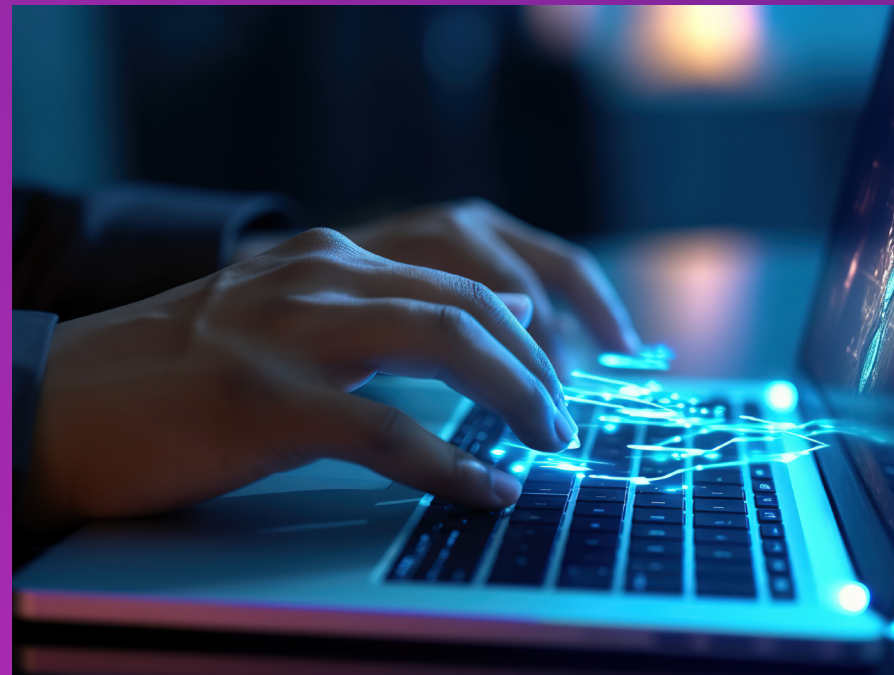
Adapting to Change: Top 5 Recommendations for HR

The AI landscape will continue to evolve as we move through 2024. Here are five recommendations to help HR navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by this technology.

Recommendation 1:
Advocating for Continuous Learning and Upskilling

The McKinsey report highlights the growing skill gaps as AI automates routine tasks. To address this, HR can:

- Identify critical skills gaps within the organization.
- Develop training and upskilling programs that equip employees with the skills to work effectively alongside AI.
- Encourage a culture of lifelong learning and self-improvement, where employees take an active role in their own development.

Recommendation 2:
Harnessing the Power of AI in HR Practices

HR itself can benefit greatly from the integration of AI into its practices. AI has the potential to streamline recruitment processes, enhance talent management, and improve decision-making. HR professionals should explore AI tools and technologies to:

- Automate administrative tasks to free up time for strategic HR initiatives.
- Utilize AI-driven analytics to make data-informed decisions about talent management and employee engagement.
- Implement AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants for more efficient employee support and engagement.

Recommendation 3:
Fostering an Adaptable Corporate Culture

A key challenge in the age of AI is adapting to change and fostering a corporate culture that embraces it. HR can take a leadership role in creating an adaptable culture that encourages innovation and flexibility. HR professionals should:

- Promote open communication and transparency within the organization.
- Encourage employees to embrace change and take on new challenges.
- Recognize and reward adaptability and innovative thinking.
- Establish mechanisms for employees to provide feedback and share concerns regarding AI integration.

Recommendation 4:
Ensuring Ethical Considerations with AI Use

As AI takes on an increasingly prominent role in HR and other areas of the workplace, ethical considerations become paramount. HR professionals must ensure that AI use is ethical, transparent, and respects privacy. They can do so by:

- Establishing clear ethical guidelines for AI use within the organization.
- Ensuring that AI technologies are used in ways that respect diversity and avoid bias.
- Regularly auditing AI systems for fairness and compliance with ethical standards.

Recommendation 5:
Collaborating with Leaders to Plan for AI Incorporation and its Workforce Impact

HR professionals should play a crucial role in collaborating with organizational leaders to develop a comprehensive AI incorporation strategy. To achieve this, they can:

- Work closely with leadership to assess the impact of AI on the workforce and identify areas of opportunity.
- Develop a roadmap for AI integration that aligns with organizational goals and values.
- Communicate the benefits and challenges of AI integration to all levels of the organization.

Where Do You Go From Here?

We know – all these changes and all these recommendations can seem overwhelming. There's a lot to take in, and there's a lot to accomplish. So, where do you go from here?

It's best to take things one step at a time. Begin by assessing your current staff's proficiency in a few key areas necessary for an AI-driven future.

Let's take a look at four key areas you can start with. There are many more to consider, but these four skills will be highly prized in 2024 and beyond:

- Using AI tools
- Problem-solving
- Active listening
- Adaptability and agility

Identifying gaps in these areas will help you understand your workforce's proficiency, allowing you to create training programs to grow more resilient, robust, and efficient teams for today's workplace – and tomorrow's.

Using AI tools

Digital skills are vital in a workplace shaped by AI, and this sentiment is echoed by 65% of HR managers, according to research by TalentLMS. Among these essential skills, the ability to effectively use AI tools takes center stage. This proficiency encompasses a diverse range of capabilities, from navigating AI-powered systems and understanding AI interfaces to

harnessing the potential of generative AI.

Proficiency in these tools will be highly useful in the coming years, ranging from enhancing productivity and efficiency to driving innovation and refining decision-making processes. In tomorrow's workplace, mastering AI tools will be the key to unlocking your workforce's full potential.

Problem-solving

While the benefits of artificial intelligence are undeniable, they come hand in hand with obstacles. This is precisely why problem-solving has risen to prominence as a critical cognitive skill.

As technology continues to advance rapidly, introducing complexity and novel challenges, the ability to find innovative solutions and simplify intricate problems is in high demand. Problem solvers, equipped with analytical and creative thinking skills, are poised to be invaluable assets in the AI-driven workplace. In fact, creative thinking is one of the most highly valued cognitive skills prioritized by HR professionals, according to TalentLMS' research.

Active listening

There's a lot of noise out there today; the ability to truly listen is an essential skill , especially in HR. In a world where talking dominates, the power of listening cannot be underestimated.

In the constant buzz of words and opinions, it's the art of listening that HR managers recognize as vital. Amid the clamor, attentive listening fosters understanding, trust, and respect, enriching workplaces with diverse perspectives. Building this skill requires an open mind, receptiveness, and a focus on comprehending people and situations before responding. Organizations that prioritize this skill not only cultivate exceptional teamwork and smooth workflows but also nurture synergistic cultures and create meaningful workplaces.

Adaptability and agility

In any industry, the ability to adapt and remain agile is crucial for success. In the evolving AI landscape, nurturing this adaptability in your workforce is the key to not just surviving but thriving in an ever-changing environment. Your efforts to foster adaptability will enhance your employees' individual success and contribute to the overall resilience and growth of your organization.
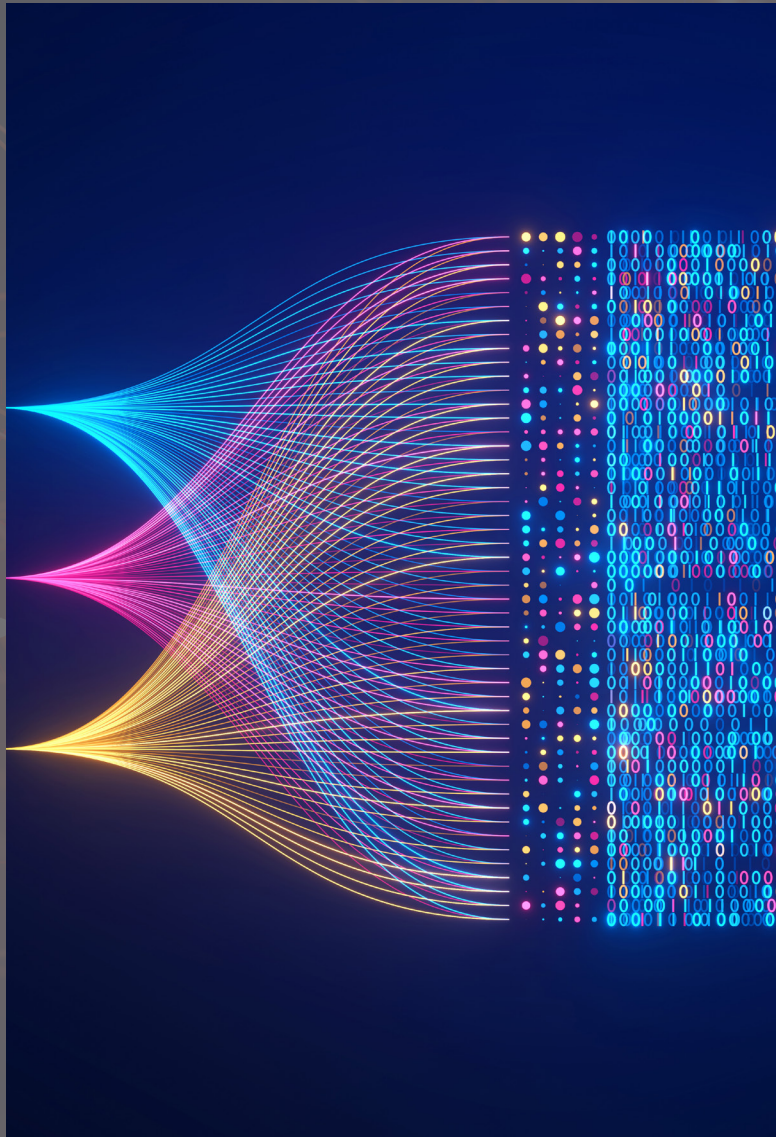
- **Workforce Consultation:** Staffing firms can help you identify the precise skill sets required to thrive in an AI-driven future and assist in developing a roadmap to acquire, develop, or retain these skills.

- **Trained Workers and Professionals:** Staffing firms have access to a pool of trained workers and professionals who are equipped with the right skills and mindset for an AI-driven future. This can be particularly valuable when you need to fill specific roles quickly or need to access expertise that is in high demand.

- **Freeing Up Core Employees' Time:** As AI takes on routine tasks and administrative work, your core employees can be liberated from these responsibilities. Staffing firms can help you identify tasks that can be outsourced or managed by temporary professionals, freeing up your core employees' time to focus on strategic upskilling or reskilling.

- **Access to Skilled Experts**: In addition to providing access to trained professionals, staffing firms can connect you with skilled experts in various domains. These experts can assist in driving AI initiatives, managing projects, and providing specialized knowledge. Their expertise can be instrumental in ensuring the success of AI projects and in upskilling your existing workforce.

The HR Hero in an AI World

The impact of AI on the workplace is undeniable. It challenges job roles, transforms skills requirements, and necessitates adaptability on a scale never seen before. Using the recommendations, insights, and strategies we've discussed, HR can champion AI integration, bridging skill gaps, fostering adaptability, and leading the charge towards a brighter workplace future.

The only constant in the world of work is change. And HR is the hero, set to guide the workforce through 2024 and beyond as AI continues to impact the workplace.

Staffing: Your Force Multiplier

Remember: your staffing partner is your trusted ally, here to help you navigate the changes AI brings. The strategic insights, tactical talent solutions, and wide-ranging resources of a staffing firm can empower your organization to thrive in an AI-driven workplace. Get in touch today to learn more about the solutions we provide.

We hope the new year brings you peace, joy, success – and a lot more opportunities for us to work together.

https://www.marktechpost.com/2023/08/03/the-impact-of-generative-ai-on-the-future-of-work-5-key-insights-from-the-mckinsey-report/

https://sem.talentlms.com/rs/801-TSH-506/images/Skills%20for%20Success%20in%20the%20AI-Driven%20Future%E2%80%94Research.pdf?

https://www2.staffingindustry.com/Editorial/Daily-News/Reskilling-needed-for-40-of-workforce-because-of-AI-report-from-IBM-says-66542