

EXECUTIVE RESEARCH REPORT | SEPTEMBER 2026

Most Significant HR Struggles in the AI Era

A cross-industry view of workforce transformation, skills evidence, AI readiness, trust and accountability.

The central finding

HR's biggest AI-era problem is not simply training employees to use AI. It is determining how jobs are changing, what people can genuinely do with and without AI, where human judgement remains necessary, and whether AI adoption produces measurable business value.

WORKFORCE INTELLIGENCE • 2026

The HR Challenge in the AI Era

HR is being asked to transform the workforce without reliable evidence of capability.

01

SKILLS VISIBILITY GAP

HR knows job titles and qualifications—not verified proficiency.

02

JOBS ARE CHANGING FASTER

Human-only job structures no longer reflect AI-enabled work.

03

AI PROFICIENCY IS UNVERIFIED

Tool usage and course completion do not prove workplace capability.

04

HIRING SIGNALS ARE LOSING TRUST

AI-generated CVs and answers make authentic capability harder to see.

05

RESKILLING LACKS PROOF

Training activity is measured more often than performance improvement.

06

ACCOUNTABILITY IS UNCLEAR

When humans and AI share work, ownership and decision rights blur.

63%

cite skills gaps as a major transformation barrier

39%

of current skill sets may change by 2030

54%

of leaders say they have a clear view of workforce skills

The missing layer: trusted evidence of human capability.

Sources: World Economic Forum, Workday, Deloitte, Microsoft, McKinsey and Gallup.

Prepared for HR, talent, learning, workforce transformation and business leaders.

01 Executive overview

The research points to a capability-evidence crisis: organizations are adopting AI faster than they can redesign work, verify skills or establish accountability.

63%

Employers citing skills gaps as a major transformation barrier

39%

Current skill sets expected to change or become outdated by 2030

54%

Leaders reporting a clear view of skills in their organization

1. Skills data is not skills evidence

Most HR systems describe people through jobs, credentials and self-reports. They rarely establish whether a person can perform in a real or simulated work context.

2. Jobs are decomposing into tasks

The relevant unit of workforce planning is shifting from the static job to the task: what AI performs, what humans supervise and what remains a human decision.

3. AI changes how capability must be assessed

Allowing AI while measuring framing, delegation, inspection, correction and judgement is more representative than either banning AI or measuring tool usage.

4. Trust is becoming a workforce infrastructure issue

Authorship, identity, bias, privacy and decision ownership now affect hiring, performance, learning and mobility - not only cybersecurity.

Research interpretation

The priority order used in this report is a GoMeasure synthesis based on recurrence across major reports, likely enterprise impact and urgency. It is not a ranking published by any single survey.

02

Most significant HR struggles

Challenges 1-4 of 16

01

Lack of reliable workforce-skills visibility

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

HR systems show job titles, qualifications, self-declared skills and course completions, but little verified evidence of proficiency.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Only 54% of surveyed leaders report a clear view of workforce skills; 63% identify skills gaps as a major transformation barrier.

MOST EXPOSED

All industries; especially technology, BFSI, consulting, healthcare and manufacturing.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Create a living skills inventory supported by assessments, work samples, project evidence and manager validation.

02

Jobs and competency models becoming outdated

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Job descriptions built for human-only workflows no longer specify what AI performs, what people retain or who decides.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Deloitte identifies intentional human-AI work redesign as unresolved; Microsoft expects agents to become digital colleagues.

MOST EXPOSED

IT, GCCs, banking, professional services, media and customer operations.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Redesign work at task level: automate, augment, supervise, decide or retain as human-only.

03

Measuring AI-era capability

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Traditional tests either prohibit AI or measure recall, while modern work requires delegation, verification and judgement.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Microsoft highlights delegation, context-setting, refinement, weak-reasoning detection and pushback as core agent-era skills.

MOST EXPOSED

Consulting, technology, finance, legal, education and R&D.;

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Use AI-enabled simulations that measure framing, inspection, correction, decision quality and explanation.

04

Reskilling at the speed of change

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

HR struggles to identify who needs training, which capability is missing and whether learning transfers to work.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

WEF estimates 39% of current skill sets may change by 2030 and 59 in every 100 workers will require training.

MOST EXPOSED

Technology, BFSI, manufacturing, telecom, retail and professional services.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Connect diagnostics, prescribed learning, reassessment, workplace application and business outcomes.

02

Most significant HR struggles

Challenges 5-8 of 16

05

Separating AI literacy from genuine proficiency

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Course completion and tool familiarity are being mistaken for the ability to apply AI safely and effectively in a role.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Workday reports 81% recognize AI is changing job skills; Microsoft emphasizes reasoning and oversight beyond prompting.

MOST EXPOSED

All knowledge-work functions.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Define role-specific levels: awareness, assisted user, proficient collaborator, workflow designer and AI supervisor.

06

Proving ROI from AI adoption

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Organizations buy tools and run pilots but cannot show whether quality, productivity, capability or customer outcomes improved.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Deloitte reports tech-focused AI approaches are 1.6x more likely not to exceed ROI expectations than human-centric approaches.

MOST EXPOSED

GCCs, technology, BFSI, shared services and customer operations.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Establish pre-deployment baselines and track adoption, cycle time, work quality, risk and business value.

07

Uncontrolled or invisible employee AI use

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Employees use public AI tools for sensitive work without adequate visibility, policy, training or data controls.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

McKinsey found substantial employee GenAI use was three times higher than leaders estimated.

MOST EXPOSED

Technology, consulting, marketing, finance, legal, education and healthcare administration.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Combine approved tools, clear policies, workflow telemetry, risk classification and safe alternatives.

08

Employee anxiety, trust and resistance

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Employees fear job loss, surveillance, workload intensification and unclear standards for future performance.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

McKinsey found 41% apprehensive about workplace AI; Workday found widespread negative sentiment around unclear AI strategy.

MOST EXPOSED

All industries, especially organizations automating or restructuring.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Communicate role impact transparently, involve employees and provide credible reskilling and mobility paths.

02

Most significant HR struggles

Challenges 9-12 of 16

09

Managers overloaded and underprepared

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Managers must implement AI, redesign work and manage anxiety without sufficient training, time or authority.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Gallup reports global manager engagement fell from 31% in 2022 to 22% in 2025; South Asia saw the largest regional decline.

MOST EXPOSED

IT services, BPO, retail, healthcare, hospitality and manufacturing.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Build manager AI-change capability, coaching, clearer decision rights and manageable spans of control.

10

Hiring signals losing credibility

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

AI-generated CVs, interview assistance and assessment cheating make authentic capability harder to distinguish.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Deloitte describes blurred authorship and deteriorating confidence in people and work data as a digital-trust issue.

MOST EXPOSED

Remote hiring, technology, BPO, BFSI, consulting and graduate recruitment.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Use identity assurance, realistic work simulation, adaptive follow-up and evidence-based scoring.

11

Bias, explainability, privacy and accountability

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

AI influences screening, workforce analytics and people decisions without consistent explanation or documented oversight.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Deloitte flags unclear accountability in joint human-AI decisions; McKinsey reports widespread concern about inaccuracy and cyber risk.

MOST EXPOSED

BFSI, healthcare, government, insurance, education and large enterprises.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Require human review, audit trails, bias tests, consent controls and explicit decision ownership.

12

Performance management no longer reflects contribution

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Higher output may come from AI while judgement, understanding, accountability or quality remains weak.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Deloitte identifies growing uncertainty around authorship, effort, ownership, fairness and accountability.

MOST EXPOSED

Software, consulting, sales, content, finance, research and design.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Evaluate outcomes, verification behaviour, correction ability, reasoning, collaboration and responsible use.

02

Most significant HR struggles

Challenges 13-16 of 16

13

Human skills remain difficult to measure

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Judgement, empathy, ethical reasoning and conflict resolution are increasingly valuable but still measured subjectively.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Workday identifies ethical decision-making, empathy, relationship-building and conflict resolution as critical AI-era capabilities.

MOST EXPOSED

Healthcare, leadership, sales, hospitality, education and consulting.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Use behavioural simulations, structured interviews, situational judgement and longitudinal evidence.

14

Internal mobility and career paths are breaking

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

Employees cannot see how careers evolve when AI absorbs tasks, while organizations continue to favour external hiring.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Workday found internal promotions declined in 10 of 11 tracked industries while high-performer attrition increased.

MOST EXPOSED

Retail, healthcare, technology, financial services and large enterprises.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Create skills-adjacency maps, transparent pathways, internal marketplaces and readiness-based deployment.

15

HR's own capability and operating model

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

HR is expected to lead AI workforce transformation while often lacking skills data, AI proficiency and transformation authority.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Deloitte says conventional HR, finance and IT functions are often too slow and siloed for multidisciplinary transformation.

MOST EXPOSED

All medium and large organizations.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Strengthen HR AI literacy, skills architecture, people analytics, governance and operating integration.

16

India-specific AI talent quality gap

WHAT HR IS EXPERIENCING

India has substantial talent volume, but employers struggle to identify applied AI capability combined with domain judgement.

RESEARCH SIGNAL

Deloitte-Nasscom projects Indian AI talent demand above 1.25 million by 2027, potentially creating a quality and supply gap.

MOST EXPOSED

Indian IT services, GCCs, BFSI, consulting, manufacturing and startups.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Verify talent through applied projects, role simulations, evidence portfolios and industry benchmarks.

03

How the problems differ by industry

The underlying themes are universal, but the capability being measured and the consequences of failure vary materially by sector.

INDUSTRY	MOST ACUTE HR PROBLEMS	CAPABILITY TO MEASURE	SPECIAL RISK
Technology and IT services	Skill obsolescence, unverifiable AI claims, bench redeployment and changing developer roles.	Architecture judgement, AI-assisted coding, debugging, security and verification.	Acceptable output without underlying technical understanding.
BFSI and insurance	Reskilling, governance, model oversight and accountable decisions.	Risk judgement, fraud analysis, regulatory interpretation, explainability and escalation.	Biased or unexplainable decisions affecting customers.
Healthcare and pharmaceuticals	Talent shortages, burnout and balancing clinical judgement with AI recommendations.	Clinical reasoning, evidence evaluation, empathy, ethics and escalation.	Patient harm from automation bias or incorrect recommendations.
Manufacturing	Automation transition, maintenance capability and frontline digital literacy.	Troubleshooting, safety judgement, robotics, process control and data interpretation.	Certifications that do not demonstrate shop-floor competence.
Retail and e-commerce	High attrition, manager overload, frontline productivity and uneven access to AI.	Customer handling, demand interpretation, AI-assisted selling and operational decisions.	Different AI access creating performance and opportunity inequality.
Professional services	Authorship ambiguity, productivity pressure and weakened distinction between junior and senior output.	Problem framing, hypotheses, validation, client judgement and defensibility.	Polished AI output concealing weak reasoning.

03

How the problems differ by industry

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INDUSTRY	MOST ACUTE HR PROBLEMS	CAPABILITY TO MEASURE	SPECIAL RISK
BPO and customer operations	Automation-driven role change, workforce anxiety and narrow productivity measures.	Exception handling, empathy, escalation, agent supervision and quality control.	Optimizing handling time while service quality declines.
Education and EdTech	AI-assisted cheating, unreliable credentials and educator readiness.	Critical thinking, original explanation, AI verification and applied knowledge.	Assessments measuring AI access rather than learner proficiency.
Government and public sector	Legacy skills, slow reskilling, governance and transparency.	Policy judgement, citizen communication, data interpretation and responsible AI use.	Opaque public decisions with weak challenge mechanisms.
Energy and utilities	Aging workforce, knowledge transfer and safety-critical capability.	Technical troubleshooting, field judgement, safety and AI-supported maintenance.	Tacit knowledge disappearing as experienced workers retire.
GCCs in India	Scaling AI, proving ROI, creating hybrid roles and retaining skilled employees.	Domain plus AI capability, workflow redesign, agent supervision and execution.	Large training programs producing certificates without operational impact.
Startups and SMEs	Limited HR capacity, fluid roles, informal hiring standards and rapid change.	Adaptability, multi-role execution, AI leverage and commercial judgement.	Over-hiring based on AI-assisted interviews or portfolios.

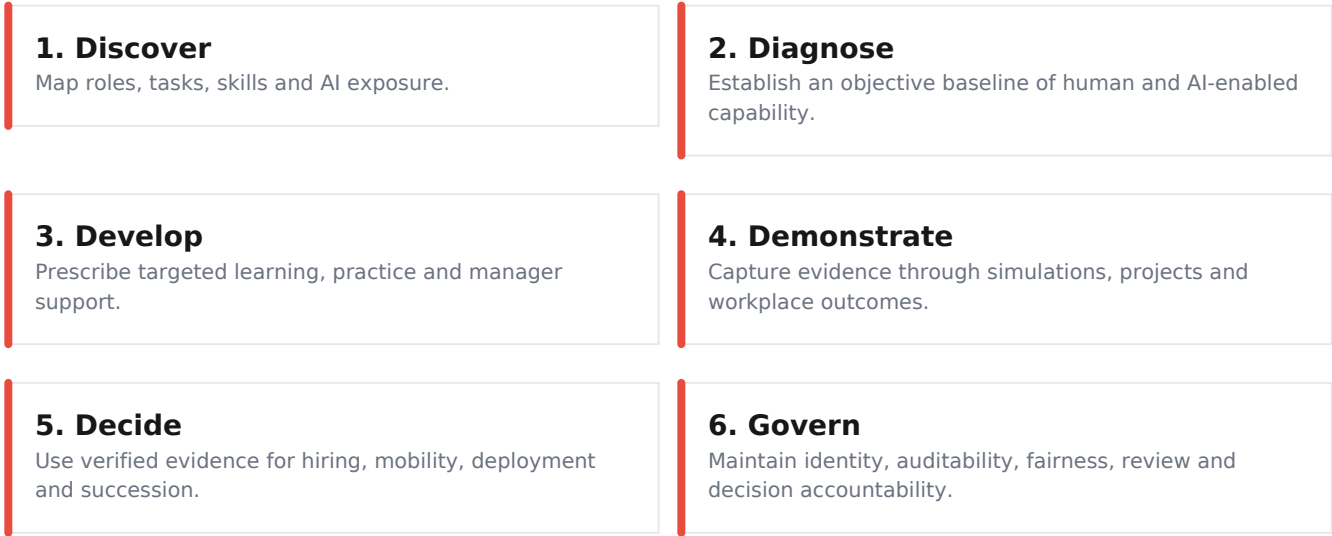
04

What HR must change

AI-era workforce management requires a move from administrative records and periodic programs toward continuous, evidence-based capability intelligence.

OLD ASSUMPTION	AI-ERA REALITY	NEW MANAGEMENT QUESTION
Jobs are stable bundles of responsibility.	Tasks automate and augment at different speeds.	Which tasks should AI perform, assist or never own?
Credentials and experience indicate capability.	AI can produce CVs, portfolios and polished answers.	What can the person demonstrably do?
Training completion shows readiness.	Completion can occur without application or proficiency.	Can the person apply, verify and improve the work?
More output means higher productivity.	AI can raise volume while hiding poor reasoning.	Did speed, quality and business outcome improve together?
Work is produced by an employee.	Work is increasingly co-produced by people and AI.	What did the human frame, inspect, correct and decide?
Skills are refreshed annually.	Important skills can change within months.	How do we continuously refresh capability evidence?

A practical measurement architecture



05

GoMeasure viewpoint

The strongest market opportunity is a workforce capability evidence layer - not another generic assessment catalogue or course library.

ENTERPRISE QUESTION	CAPABILITY REQUIRED
What skills do we genuinely have?	Evidence-based baseline combining simulations, assessments, project evidence, interviews and validated feedback.
Who can work effectively with AI?	AI-native assessment of Frame -> Delegate -> Prompt -> Inspect -> Challenge -> Correct -> Decide -> Explain.
Where are the risks?	Detection of overreliance, weak verification, hallucination acceptance, privacy errors and poor escalation.
Did training and AI investment work?	Pre/post proficiency evidence connected to adoption, work quality, productivity and business outcomes.
Who can move into emerging roles?	Skills adjacency, readiness scoring and targeted development pathways.
Can we trust the evidence?	Identity, monitored sessions, evidence records, confidence levels, audit logs and human review.
How capable is the organization?	Team, role, function and enterprise benchmarks, including AI oversight capability.

MEASURE WHETHER YOUR WORKFORCE CAN PERFORM, DECIDE AND REMAIN ACCOUNTABLE IN AN AI-ENABLED WORKPLACE.

Why this matters
Organizations increasingly need to distinguish AI access, AI usage and genuine human-AI capability. Trusted evidence is the bridge between workforce strategy and defensible decisions.

06 Research sources and methodology

This report synthesizes recent global and India-relevant research. Vendor-published studies are treated as directional evidence and triangulated across multiple sources.

World Economic Forum - The Future of Jobs Report 2025

<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/digest/>

Deloitte - 2026 Global Human Capital Trends

<https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/human-capital-trends.html>

Microsoft - 2025 Work Trend Index: The Year the Frontier Firm Is Born

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/2025-the-year-the-frontier-firm-is-born>

McKinsey - Superagency in the Workplace

<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/tech-and-ai/our-insights/superagency-in-the-workplace-empowering-people-to-unlock-ai-s-full-potential-at-work>

Gallup - State of the Global Workplace 2026

<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx>

Workday - The State of Skills / Skills-Based Strategies

<https://www.workday.com/en-us/perspectives/hr/workday-global-study-leaders-embrace-skillsbased-strategies.html>

Workday - Elevating Human Potential: The AI Skills Revolution

<https://newsroom.workday.com/2025-01-14-New-Global-Research-from-Workday-Reveals-AI-Will-Ignite-a-Human-Skills-Revolution>

Deloitte-Nasscom - Advancing India's AI Skills

<https://www.deloitte.com/in/en/about/press-room/bridging-the-ai-talent-gap-to-boost-indias-tech-and-economic-impact-deloitte-nasscom-report.html>

Methodology notes

- 1 Coverage emphasizes workforce transformation, skills, learning, hiring, performance, trust, governance, employee experience and the HR operating model.
- 2 The priority order reflects recurrence across sources, expected enterprise impact and urgency; it is not a universal ranking from a single survey.
- 3 Industry implications are analytical interpretations based on the nature of work, risk exposure and the consequences of capability failure in each sector.
- 4 Statistics retain the scope and timing of their source reports. Readers should consult the linked source for methodology, geography and sample details.



Verified skills intelligence