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# Intersection of People, Automation, and AI

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## Situational Analysis

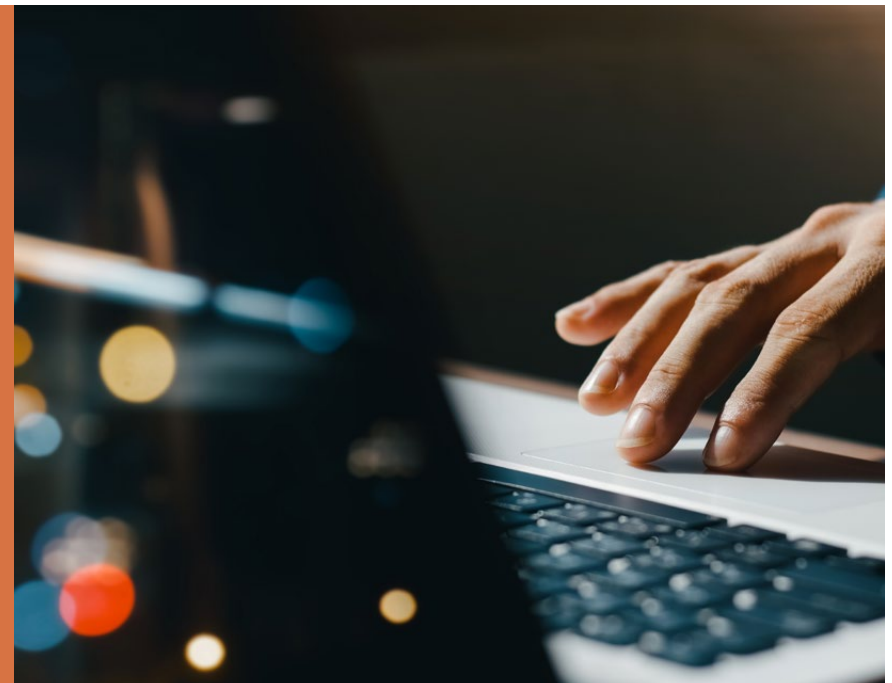
The conversations about HCM technology just a few years ago were about the value of automation, and how the use of automation would create better, more personalized employee experiences at scale. **Automation is no longer the future of HCM — it is mission critical for modern organizations.**

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With that said, it is necessary to take a humanistic approach to using automation and artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace. Digital adoption has been fast-tracked by a number of environmental factors, but that does not mean it has lost its ability to empower a more employee-centric and people-focused workplace. AI and machine-learning (ML) are those rare technologies that have the ability to be a win for everyone, as automation not only lowers costs but also improves the employee experience — but it must be used in conjunction with human skills and oversight.

**AI- and ML-powered automation has numerous applications, but in the context of this whitepaper, a few major positives should be considered:**

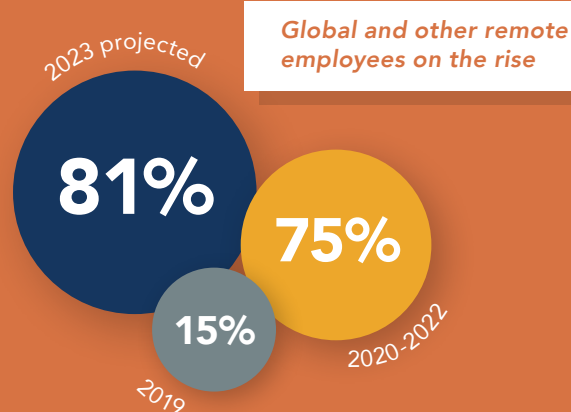
- ✓ It can be used to combat conscious and unconscious bias
- ✓ It can free up time for more human interaction
- ✓ It has the possibility of fostering communication between individuals and groups that previously had no connection



## Challenges to the Business

Organizations are struggling to make meaningful progress on digital transformation initiatives — and are quickly realizing software alone isn't enough to help them achieve their organizational goals and long-term strategies. Due to the pandemic and other external factors (along with some standard generational shifts), digital transformation is no longer an option and organizations of all sizes and industries are fast-tracking their digital adoption. These organizations must do so with caution though — AI and ML have great potential to be forces for a more humanistic workplace, but only if they are properly understood and applied.

### Percentage of Remote or Hybrid Workers



Source: Brandon Hall Group research studies, 2021-2022

In the last three years we have seen a dramatic increase in work-from-home workers, mass automation — including machine learning and AI in our HCM systems, and an increase of interest in employee wellbeing including social connectivity apps for the workplace. Dehumanization is not just a philosophical concern, it can have real effects on disengagement. For example, if we have to do mundane tasks all the time, we feel devalued, not self-actualized. But if AI can do some of the repetitive tasks for us, it's possible we'll become more engaged because we'll be able to focus on more strategic concerns. AI can also help sharpen our

developed perceptions to improve in areas such as workforce planning and forecasting.

When used correctly, organizations that use advanced-technology-backed HCM systems make more informed decisions and see an increase in wide-ranging business metrics that allow for more personalization, and can help individuals find meaning in their work. However, the use of automation and the reasons behind that use need to be transparently communicated to employees so they do not feel as if a machine is replacing them or making decisions that affect them.



## Questions to be Considered

Organizations must communicate that AI technology isn't solely about efficiency but also about finding the most human way of making business decisions.

**The key questions for the business are:**

- What are the issues that can arise from new technology?
- Which areas of the business stand to benefit the most from new technologies?
- What are organizations doing to communicate the benefits of AI and ML-driven people systems?

Technology is not the solution alone, but the solution does involve better uses of technology – a more humanizing approach. The impact of moving from paper to spreadsheets to smart applications for managing business is the ability to reimagine how business is done. Digital transformation helps organizations of all sizes create better outcomes by connecting people, places, and things.

# New Ethics of Leadership/Ethical AI/Transparency

Caring is the foundation of the new ethics of leadership. We are amid an ethical crisis that is confronting leaders with vexing issues and painful trade-offs. Organizations are under immense pressure and are being held accountable to a high standard of ethics of both employees and customers. People are exhausted and looking for answers, guidance, action, and hope.

Today's expectation is to ethically act on challenges like diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEI&B); climate change; and artificial intelligence (AI).

Hopefully no one has to be convinced of the importance of DEI&I, but it is often overlooked how impactful it truly is. For every hiring and business metric, Brandon Hall Group research has looked at the results and they are always better for those organizations that have DEI&I embedded as part of driving their business results.

## Impact of DEI&I as Driver of Business Results

Organizations that see DEI&I as a business issue rather than a compliance issue are, on average, 57% more likely to see KPI improvements, develop diverse talent and demonstrate fairness in performance evaluations and compensation.

- DEI&I is to achieve business results
- DEI&I is to comply with legal requirements

DEI&I programs improve employee engagement



We have programs to recruit diverse candidates



We have a diverse current talent/candidate pipeline



DEI&I programs improve employee retention



DEI&I programs improve EVP/employer brand



DEI&I programs improve innovation



We have programs to demonstrate fairness in performance evaluation, compensation



We have programs to develop pipeline of diverse leaders



Source: Brandon Hall Group

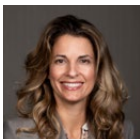
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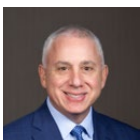
**Claude Werder** ([claudio.werder@brandonhall.com](mailto:claudio.werder@brandonhall.com)) wrote this report. He is Senior Vice President and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. He leads the Talent Management research and advisory practice, specializing in leadership development, performance development, learning, career development, employee engagement, succession management, talent retention, and diversity, equity and inclusion. He also produces Brandon Hall Group's HCM Excellence Conference.



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**Michael Rochelle** ([michael.rochelle@brandonhall.com](mailto:michael.rochelle@brandonhall.com)) contributed to this report. He is Chief Strategy Officer and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. Michael leads a wide range of advisory support and strategic engagements for Fortune 1000 and small- to medium-sized organizations as well as leading and emerging solution providers across the HCM industry. Michael has more than 30 years' experience in HR, IT, sales, marketing, business development, and strategic and financial planning in Fortune 500 and venture-backed start-up organizations.

# About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 30 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

