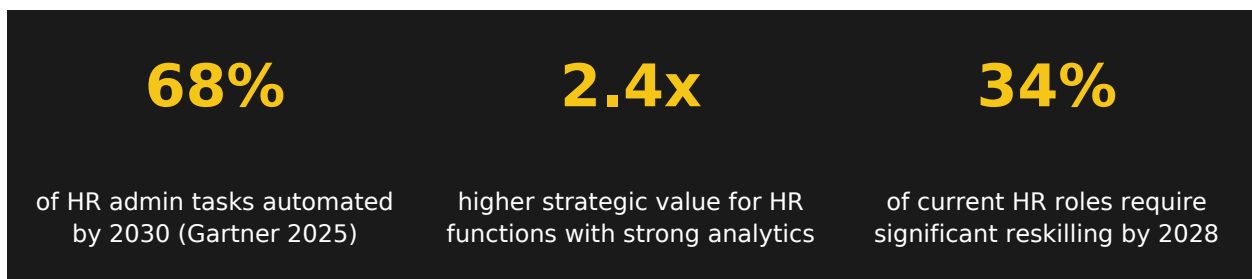


HR RESEARCH SERIES 2026 - REPORT R42 OF 10 (EXTENDED)

# The Future of the HR Function 2030

How AI, automation and changing workforce expectations are transforming what HR does, and who does it.

The HR function is undergoing the most significant transformation in its history. AI automation eliminates administrative work, workforce analytics enables data-driven decisions and changing employee expectations demand more strategic support. These forces are fundamentally reshaping what HR does, how it is structured and what capabilities it needs.



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The HR professionals who will thrive in 2030 are those who invest in capabilities AI cannot replicate, strategic judgment, human connection, organisational navigation and analytical interpretation, while embracing AI tools that eliminate the administrative burden currently occupying 60% of many HR professionals' time.

## What AI automates in HR

HR activity	Automation level by 2030	What stays human
Payroll processing	Very High (85%)	Exceptions, regulatory changes, employee queries
HRIS data management	High (75%)	Policy decisions, exceptional cases
Employee FAQ handling	Very High (80%)	Complex personal situations, escalations
Job posting distribution	Very High (90%)	Content, channel strategy
CV screening and ranking	High (80%)	Final shortlist judgment, override decisions
Interview scheduling	Very High (85%)	Complex multi-party coordination
Onboarding documentation	Very High (82%)	Culture integration, relationships
Strategic workforce planning	Low (25%)	Most of it, judgment, relationships, strategy

## The new HR capability framework

Capability	2020 importance	2030 importance	Investment priority
HR process knowledge	Very High	Medium	Maintain minimum, AI handles detail
Employment law compliance	High	High	Stable, more complex not simpler
Workforce analytics	Medium	Very High	Top priority, largest gap
AI tool literacy	Low	Very High	Critical, use, evaluate, govern AI
Strategic business partnership	Medium	Very High	Develop financial fluency
Change management	High	Very High	Transformation frequency increasing
Administrative execution	Very High	Low	Automate, free capacity for strategy

## The HRBP evolution

The HRBP role is under more pressure than any other HR role. Its traditional scope, employee relations, policy guidance and manager support, is being simultaneously automated and elevated. HRBPs who don't move upmarket will be automated out. The 2030 HRBP analyses workforce data, shapes organisational design, builds leadership capability, presents talent strategy to the board and measures people ROI.

**HRBP reskilling priority in order: data literacy (reading dashboards, interpreting statistics), financial storytelling (translating HR metrics into business language), AI literacy (knowing what AI does and when to override it) and strategic facilitation (running workshops, building consensus). All are learnable with focused investment.**

## Building an analytics-first HR function

Maturity level	Description	% of EU HR functions	Next step
Level 1, Descriptive	Reports on what happened	54%	Build consistent data collection
Level 2, Diagnostic	Understands why	28%	Add causation analysis
Level 3, Predictive	Anticipates what will happen	12%	Develop forecasting models
Level 4, Prescriptive	Recommends what to do	4%	Closed-loop decision automation
Level 5, Autonomous	AI-driven decisions with oversight	<1%	Future state

## HR technology roadmap to 2030

Category	2030 status	Primary driver
HRIS, core HR	Consolidates, AI-native versions replace legacy	Integrated analytics, compliance automation
ATS, recruiting	AI-native displaces keyword-matching legacy	EU AI Act compliance + quality requirements
Payroll	Fully automated, exception-only review	AI achieves near-zero error rate
L&D	AI-personalised, skills-data integrated	Personalisation demand
Analytics / BI	Integrated into HR platforms	Platform-native analytics sufficient

Category	2030 status	Primary driver
Performance management	Continuous, AI-assisted, real-time	Annual review cycle becomes obsolete

## Making the case for HR transformation

Investment area	Annual cost / FTE	Time to value	3-year ROI
Analytics training, all HR team	EUR 4,500	6-12 months	4.2x
AI literacy programme	EUR 2,800	3-6 months	6.8x
Strategic facilitation training	EUR 3,200	6-12 months	3.4x
AI-native ATS (tenperzent)	EUR 948/yr	30 days	68x vs. spreadsheets
Full analytics platform	EUR 8,000/yr	12-18 months	3.1x

## Forward outlook 2026-2030

CHROs who cannot present workforce analytics to boards begin to lose influence in 2026, HR admin roles reduce 25% as AI absorbs routine work by 2027, AI-native HR functions operate with 40% fewer humans for equivalent outcomes by 2028, and by 2030 the function fully bifurcates: AI handles administration, humans handle strategy, judgment and human connection.

### Built for what's next.

tenperzent.com is the AI-native ATS designed for European hiring in 2026 - GDPR by default, EU AI Act compliant, free to start, €79/month to scale.

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