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Top 5 HR challenges of 2021

What are the top 5 challenges facing HR professionals in 2021?

2020 has been a year unlike any other: the covid-19 pandemic has profoundly changed the way we live and work and has forced companies of all sectors and sizes to rapidly **change the way they organise their work**.

These changes have had a huge impact on business processes and will force HR departments to deal with the consequences of this evolution in 2021. In this article we will reflect on the **top 5 HR trends** that will dominate 2021.

Increased focus on employee well-being

The pandemic of 2020 has undoubtedly left its mark on people, so much so that it has prompted companies to put **employee well-being** at the top of their HR priorities for 2021 (Gartner).

What 2020 has shown, in fact, is that if you support employees' personal lives, they perform better. One of the main HR trends that is expected to remain strong in 2021 will be precisely employer support for the well-being of their internal resources. This will translate into an expansion of **company benefits** (programmes related to employee mental health, physical wellbeing, childcare, etc.) and an increased focus on issues such as **work-life balance**, connection and internal collaboration.

Consolidation and regulation of remote working

One of the main trends in 2020 was the rapid adoption of **remote working** as a response to the need for social distancing. But beyond the need for health emergencies, many companies have discovered that some degree of remote working can be beneficial. Surveys show that **80% of employees want to continue working remotely** at least occasionally and 58% hope it will be the primary way of working (Gartner).

In 2021, we expect further consolidation of the various forms of smart working and teleworking and regulation to give remote working a solid regulatory basis (e.g. in the areas of **individual health**, **cybersecurity** and **privacy**).

Technology in HR processes

During the 2020s, many companies were forced to increase their **investment in technology** to stay active and manage the changes imposed by the pandemic. In 2021, HR technology will play an even more crucial role and can be further leveraged to make companies more resilient and better able to adapt to crises.

But what are the main **areas of application of technology in HR**?

- **Recruitment** - While many companies had already adopted solutions to manage their initial recruitment processes remotely prior to the pandemic, we can expect the adoption of these systems to become more widespread.
- **Training** - With the need to maintain social distancing, eLearning was for months the only possible mode of training. But new technologies are making it possible to go even further: for example, artificial intelligence and the use of big data will make it possible to create increasingly innovative and personalised learning experiences.
- **Internal communication** - During the 2020s, technological tools enabled us to stay connected despite social distancing. By 2021, the use of technology will be key to creating sociality and a sense of belonging within companies, as well as fostering communication at a distance.

Dynamic approach to training

In today's ever-changing environment, professional skills are becoming increasingly obsolete, and keeping your workforce up to date has become more of a priority than ever.

The skills needed in the workplace are evolving so rapidly that a **dynamic and continuous approach to training** is required: data shows that the number of skills required is growing by 10% annually (Gartner).

The imperative in 2021 will be to take a dynamic approach to talent re-skilling and reallocation in order to quickly identify changing **skills needs** and develop them when they are needed.

More and more data-driven decisions

In times of crisis, making mistakes is not an option. HR professionals will have to learn how to make increasingly data-driven decisions based on the right data collection and analysis. One of the main HR challenges of 2021 will be to accelerate the use of **people analytics** to support decision-making, taking advantage of the ever-increasing amount of data stored in HR management software.

Data analysis allows us to better understand the functioning of production processes, the performance of workers, and to predict future behaviour (retention rates, absenteeism, etc.). For example, data-driven HR management can help companies understand which candidates to hire, who is receiving adequate compensation or how to improve the retention of their internal resources.

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