



The Modern HR Technology Playbook for a **Digitally Empowered Workforce**



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CHAPTER 1

Setting **people-centered** technology trends



Setting people-centered technology trends

As companies digitally transform their operations, HR leaders are critical to helping guide people-focused priorities and strategies.

This means rethinking the kinds of digital transformations that can result in effective HR that supports collaborative, agile, diverse, and inclusive teams. HR is a strategic partner within the organization, connecting business objectives and human capital like never before.

Fortunately, everything related to enabling people and teams in an organization's culture is already in the wheelhouse of HR, which means that CHROs are well suited to help inform strategy, technology, and investments. With the power of advanced technology and analytics, HR can bring their focus on effective workplace to advance human capabilities and empower employees to do truly creative and amazing work.

It's a critical time for that kind of empowerment and advancement. Companies are looking towards evolving models of work where people can be productive, distributed teams. Accordingly, companies are building solutions to face the challenges of creating teams that can effectively communicate and collaborate no matter where they are. Additionally, organizations are turning into diverse workforces and inclusive workplace cultures to stay innovative and competitive. **The employment rate for HR as a whole is expected to accelerate over the next eight years**, and many HR teams are undergoing significant digital transformations to support their workforce.¹ CHROs are aware of these factors and why human resource departments have never been more essential for empowering collaborative and people-centric companies. In this e-book, you'll find the practical tools to empower your team and your workforce, and the inspiration to help you dream big. Today's technology takes HR in new and exciting directions. There's never been a better time to imagine, "What's possible?" and bring those ideas to life.





CHAPTER 2

Operationalizing insights from people analytics



Operationalizing insights from people analytics

Having an advanced data ecosystem can enable HR teams to derive richer people analytics and drive decision-making across the organization.

More importantly, having HR involved in cross-organizational decision-making helps ensure that organizations use people insights to make strategic leadership decisions.

Using advanced analytics, Microsoft discovered something useful for its own hiring practices within the computer science field. Microsoft had historically approached computer science hiring by determining that the best talent hailed from “top schools.” After looking at internal performance data by employee alma maters, Microsoft HR determined that, over time, **employees performed equally, regardless of where they received their diploma**. In addition to that, Microsoft found that retention actually *improved* as the workforce became more diverse. As a result of these findings, Microsoft changed overall hiring practices to open up talent pools across multiple universities, which led to a more diverse workforce.





Operationalizing insights from people analytics

Using people analytics to shape a people-focused infrastructure

When Anheuser-Busch InBev acquired SABMiller in 2016, they wanted to integrate select business operations into their infrastructure while avoiding unnecessary bureaucratic overhead. While leadership there had anecdotal data about the employee experience, they didn't have hard data to help them make decisions. It was when they started working with Workplace Analytics and MyAnalytics, they learned how to restructure workflows and place the right tools and technology in the hands of employees that could use them.

[Learn more >](#) about how AB InBev leveraged Workplace Analytics and MyAnalytics to guide how they supported employee efficiency and workstyles.

Operationalizing insights from people analytics

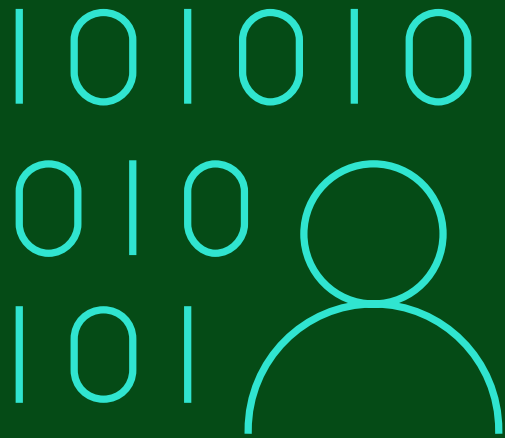
No matter where an organization is in its digital transformation, a CHRO can help emphasize people analytics that can frame questions of infrastructure, technology, and working styles. Platforms like Dynamics 365 provide the kind of analytics that support real change in a company more effectively than anecdotal examples or undocumented opinions by providing a data-driven view of employee behaviors, challenges, and needs.

With flexible access to data and richer people analytics collected in a single location, CHROs can get the information they need for operational excellence and to start constructing an advanced system that makes building for the future a reality.

Envision the future of your analytics by asking these questions:

- What problems are you trying to solve, and how could data and insights shed light on what actions you could take?
- What actions for HR and business leaders will these insights inform?
- How will your HR team use these insights to shape what they do in your organization?





CHAPTER 3

Supporting employees where they are with tools and data



Supporting employees where they are with tools and data

According to staffing solutions firm Randstad, employees consider having access to the latest and most modern tools reduces work stress and allows them to focus on their work while building professional skills.²

A digital workplace enables diverse workstyles and allows employees to maintain their preferred “flow,” optimize productivity, and improve accessibility. Adopting technologies and infrastructure that support multiple kinds of workflows and that allow people to work however they need is key to providing a personalized virtual workstation.





Supporting employees where they are with tools and data

Empowering employees and end-users with Microsoft devices

The Georgia Office of the State Treasurer handles cash and investments for the entire state, including managing revenue investments that help keep state agencies with cash used to support education, healthcare, and public safety. Given the nature of their work, they adopted Microsoft 365 Government with Surface Books equipped with Windows Virtual Desktop to avoid unexpected downtime due to weather, traffic, or disaster conditions. With this technology, employees were able to maintain their efficiency in doing their jobs from home while maintaining critical human connections. The combination of work and communication tools allowed them to have secure connections to government databases while collaborating on documents and files

as if they were in the office. At the same time, they could also maintain their friendships and office community through tools like Teams.

[Learn more >](#) about Georgia's Office of the State Treasurer and how it adopted Microsoft 365 and Surface devices.

Supporting employees where they are with tools and data

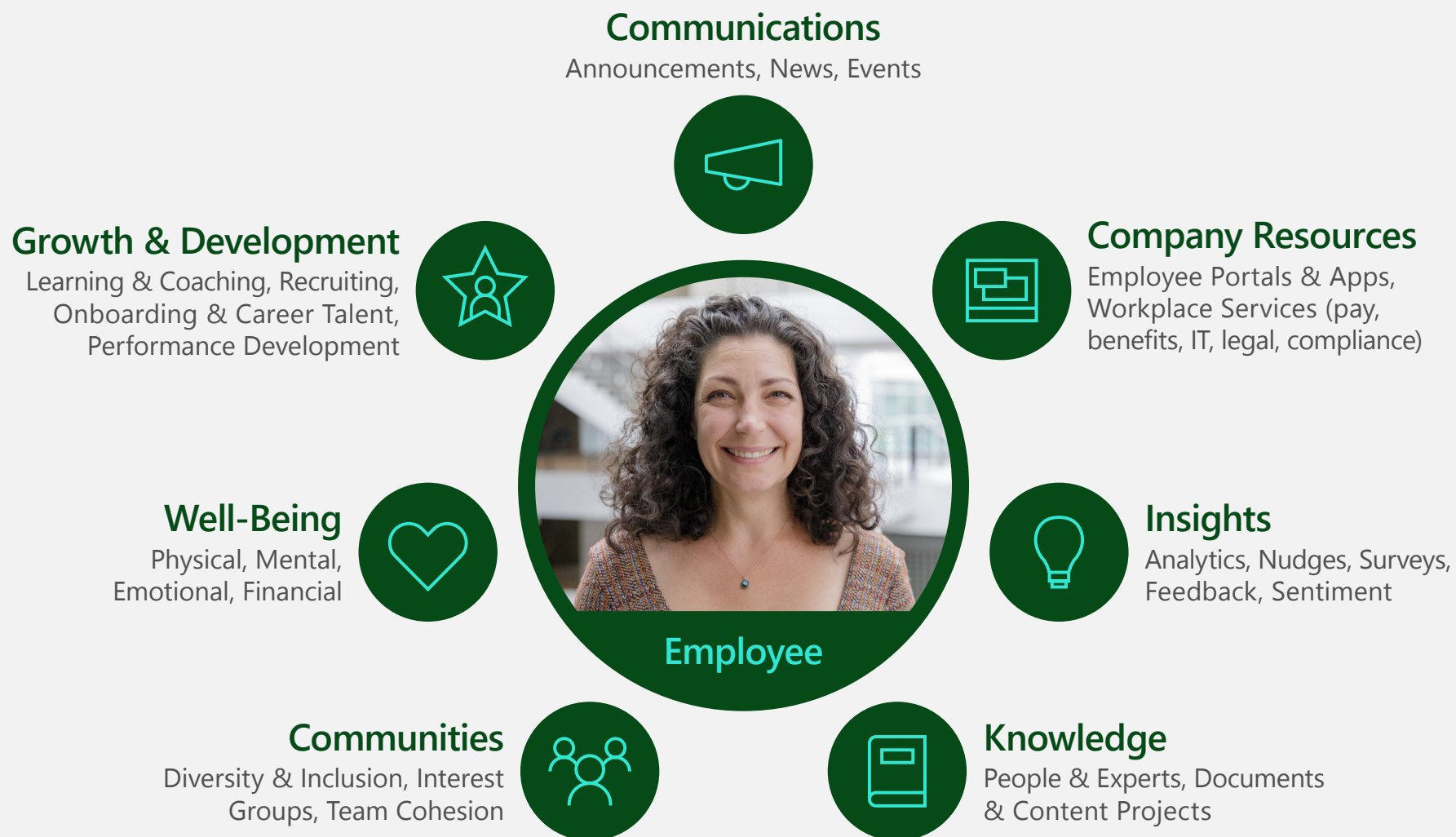
With people analytics, HR teams can work with a multitude of technological challenges and workstyles. Furthermore, by empowering their organization with real data, how new devices and new tools can help employees, they can advocate for the adoption of these tools. Ultra-portable touch devices and cloud software can fundamentally shape how employees successfully work together, empowering—not dictating—their styles of work and collaboration.

Employee engagement is critical to the success of any organization. Companies are using tools like Power Platform and Glint to streamline engagement so that employees feel ready to collaborate with each other and leadership. Furthermore, services like Azure Translator and built-in Teams translation features provide increasingly global operations AI-assisted tools for immediate collaboration by translating text in real time. Finally, Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools like LUIS help employees collaborate with themselves and Azure to build bots that can respond to their needs through machine learning models. In these ways, leadership empowers employees according to their needs and wants rather than from a top-down perspective and allows new processes to organically grow from their interactions.



Supporting employees where they are with tools and data

Employee experience platforms (EXPs) are a new category of technology solutions designed to help employees feel more connected and engaged. An EXP is a digital platform that puts people at the center by bringing together systems of work with systems of support into an integrated employee experience.



Supporting employees where they are with tools and data

Microsoft Viva is an EXP that empowers people and teams to be their best, no matter where they're working. It helps elevate each employee's experience—how they engage, find knowledge, learn, and work. By improving productivity while also supporting people's well-being, Viva helps the whole organization thrive.

"What COVID-19 has taught us is that we can make the work environment simpler. The underlying platforms play a major role. We're looking at how these solutions can be connected in a seamless way that makes it easier for our employees to do their jobs."

—Neeraj Tolmare, Global CIO, The Coca-Cola Company

"One thing that's clear is the importance of well-being. With this blurring of work life and home life, it's important for us to understand how people are coping. We can look at aggregated data to see where we may be able to lend support."

—Steve McCrystal, Chief Enterprise and Technology Officer, Unilever





Supporting employees where they are with tools and data

Modernizing employee collaboration and accountability

PayPal, Inc, an innovative Fortune 500 financial technology corporation with over 10,000 global employees, discovered a need in 2018 to modernize its operations after conducting an employee survey in which **60%** of its workforce felt its existing tools didn't meet their collaboration needs. The company's existing mix of on-premises and cloud-hosted communications and productivity solutions had resulted in siloed data and limited international collaboration.

With the help of an effective, company-wide, change-management strategy, the organization adopted Microsoft 365, leveraging the accessible and advanced cloud collaboration features of Microsoft Teams, the increased security of Office 365, and the

ability to do data archiving and data retention—and they even managed to have fun with GIFs while doing so.

Using these tools, PayPal has seen a huge reduction in the amount of time required to get meetings started and has been able to integrate Microsoft Power BI visualizations into Teams meetings to help collaborators keep track of a project's current status and goals as people join the meeting. The integration allowed PayPal to align all its portfolios and programs and create accountability for projects through standardized visuals.

[**Explore > PayPal's collaborative transformation.**](#)

Supporting employees where they are with tools and data

Envision your future employee engagement by asking these questions:

- How do you see your employees working together in the future? Remotely, in-office, or hybrid?
- What are the more common workstyles utilized by your teams?
- How are you aligning projects with your organization's goals?
- How do you, your team, and company leadership collaborate on those projects?
- How important is security, and how is security best implemented based on workstyles and collaboration needs?





CHAPTER 4

Inspiring self-starters
to teach and learn with
advanced skilling tools



Inspiring self-starters to teach and learn with advanced skilling tools

Part of the employee experience is an organization's commitment to education and skilling. Developing employee skills is critical for companies that want to stay competitive in their industry.

A company certainly needs to have skilled people to succeed. It also needs to attract and retain those people reliably. The best and brightest employees have been shown to stay longer and report higher levels of satisfaction with great onboarding and continued, company-sponsored skill development.³

This is one aspect of the HR industry that is a continuous challenge, however, as it is increasingly necessary but also costly, difficult to scale, and can achieve little to no returns on investment if executed incorrectly. In fact, according to a report from *Training Magazine*, large companies spent an average of **\$17.7 million on training**, with midsize companies spending an average of **\$1.7 million**.⁴ Modern tools and methodologies are also helping HR leaders find solutions to the multitude of challenges companies face with facilitating, personalizing, and scaling employee learning.

Learning and Development teams are pursuing personalized, targeted, and relevant learning paths that focus on specific roles, skill sets, and job tasks. There are many challenges associated with this kind of training, and HR teams can provide the space, time, and guidance to help build solutions for those challenges.

One way digital organizations are leveraging technology in workforce education is through creating educational self-serve portals where employees can have access to reading materials, video, and other learning materials to explore at will. Employees can often follow different learning paths and track what they have learned along the way, and even curate their own content to share with others. Often, this kind of digital, objective-based learning can be instrumental to employees who want to explore different skill sets or learn information outside of their immediate area of expertise.





Inspiring self-starters to teach and learn with advanced skilling tools

Self-serve skilling online

NTT Data Services holds one of the most comprehensive digital solutions portfolios for companies around the world. One of the key areas they needed continual training in was cloud services and technologies. There was a real concern, however, regarding how they would scale their existing training and expertise throughout their global organization. That's when training and HR management decided to utilize Microsoft Learn and the Cloud Skills Challenge.

Microsoft offers its customers access to [Microsoft Cloud Skills Challenge \(CSC\)](#) in conjunction with its skilling platform, Microsoft Learn. The CSC is a gamified, role-based learning tool to help developers accelerate their education goals by giving them well-defined, self-serve training paths to complete based on their needs.

NTT Data Services found that, with a combination of interactive training tools and incentivized learning through competition, their developers were more eager to take their professional education into their own hands. They were able to train on tools like Power BI, Power Apps, and Azure cloud administration, on their own schedules and without direct intervention by NTT Data trainers. Training attendance was up, and management was pleased with the level of fun and comradery the program brought to their cloud services team.

[Learn more >](#) about how NTT Data Services leveled up their employee education with Microsoft Learn and the Cloud Skills Challenge.

Inspiring self-starters to teach and learn with advanced skilling tools

CHROs will see these distributed and self-driven learning tools become the norm in the learning and development space for onboarding, job changes, and continual on-the-job learning. For example, **Microsoft Teams has been a solid tool for teams working remotely**. With the upcoming addition of Microsoft Learning, HR professionals will soon be able to integrate teaching tools like Microsoft Learn and LinkedIn Learning into the Microsoft Teams environment with Microsoft Teams Learning. Not only do they provide advanced and up-to-date skills and knowledge, but they provide ways to scale and incentivize employee-driven reskilling and upskilling without taxing HR professionals and resources.

Additionally, organizations can expand on self-guided education through developing internal learning communities, leveraging expert employees to help teach others what they know. These communities can be spun up in digital spaces so that they can be inclusive for remote workers and accessible for employees with disabilities.



Inspiring self-starters to teach and learn with advanced skilling tools

As communication and collaboration become more advanced, CHROs will see other technologies facilitating on-the-job learning. For example, internal enterprise-level platforms like Microsoft 365 Events (including Microsoft Stream, Teams Events, and Yammer) provide space for employees to collaborate and engage leadership with events like live video chats and AMAs. Furthermore, new augmented reality-assisted training can help factory workers learn to operate new and complicated machinery safely. To be sure, it will not be too far off until they can create virtual reality learning experiences to train first responders or even retail workers, without having them risk their safety or harm the organization's profits. The next wave of employee skilling is just beginning.

Envision the future of skilling your workforce by asking these questions:

- What skill sets do you see as beneficial for your entire organization, and what tools can help develop and bolster those skills?
- What learning opportunities would you like to offer your workforce?
- What is your organization's plan to ensure the continued skill development over time, from one generation of employees to the next?
- How will you ensure that the knowledge of your company is quickly and easily accessible by all relevant employees?





CHAPTER 5

Bringing in tomorrow's talent



Bringing in tomorrow's talent

In addition to focusing more resources on supporting a people-centered workplace, organizations are placing increased importance on including more diverse voices in their workforce to support innovation.

In addition to focusing more resources on supporting a people-centered workplace, organizations are placing increased importance on including more diverse voices in their workforce to support innovation. Companies are quickly discovering that when diversity and inclusion are fostered within an organization, employees perform better and have greater intent to stay in their position. As business and HR leaders work together to identify goals, HR can develop strategies to find talent that aligns with those goals, even if they don't necessarily fit on paper. Human bias can create all sorts of barriers to identifying those candidates who can bring innovation and change with them. However, with an "artificial" assist, they can explore new ways of candidate consideration.

In the past, many companies approached hiring with a "culture fit" in mind. However, with the help of artificial intelligence (AI), recruiters can start to actively pursue diverse talent based on the criteria that are important to their organization. This application of AI, alongside a commitment to a more inclusive hiring approach, can help HR reduce existing biases and, therefore, deliver a more diverse pool of candidates.





Bringing in tomorrow's talent

Accelerating time to hire with AI

Online talent acquisition and job interviewing platform, Talview, supports large enterprises, leveraging AI, and cognitive technologies to analyze and streamline the interviewing process through online video and voice analysis. As we're already aware, the hiring process is exhaustive, time-consuming, and expensive, especially when arranging in-person interviews for remote candidates.

Initially, the company developed a mobile application to help expedite the screening process by having candidates answer predefined questions via online video. As time went on, Talview was able to build in behavioral analysis, using linguistics and image-processing algorithms. From there, the AI creates an initial behavioral profile, which is validated and matched to specific job roles by

human psychologists to determine suitability. The technology also catches fraudulent behaviors: It leverages facial recognition to verify that a candidate in the video matches a previously submitted photo ID and can determine whether a candidate is searching for or being fed answers via a device or third party. All in all, the organization has reduced its customers' average time to hire by **60 percent**, earning the company a nearly **90 percent** approval rating.

[Learn more > about Talview's intelligent screening program.](#)

Bringing in tomorrow's talent

In addition to recruiting and hiring practices, AI and machine learning are helping CHROs become more predictive when it comes to determining what roles HR teams will need in the future. That's because AI can leverage rich internal analytics and external trend analysis to deliver a holistic picture of a company, its goals, its gaps, and its talent needs. Armed with that kind of insight and predictive analysis, **HR teams can make informed decisions about where their skills and expertise best serve their organization.**

Organizations are also leveraging AI to help screen candidates, using chatbots and AI applications to accelerate the interviewing process, reduce the chance of bias, and discover new and exciting talent that will help the organization grow. Some AI will even identify and invite qualified candidates to apply to positions. Studies show, however, that AI applications can demonstrate their own biases in hiring practices. That's why it is important to combine HR specialists with AI to minimize bias as much as possible and better provide for an inclusive recruiting effort.⁵

The future of HR and technology is, therefore, one that leverages technology alongside human resources insights to build people-centric operations. Technologies like LinkedIn Recruiter and LinkedIn Talent Insights can help HR support the goals of their organizations with the talent needed to realize those goals. With skilled HR professionals and evolving technology like AI, hiring can help a company bring in the top talent available.

Envision the future of your workforce by asking these questions

- In what ways do you see your recruiting efforts needing to change?
- If you spent less time on the recruitment and hiring process, where would you spend it instead?
- In what ways could you refine your screening process for a more diverse talent search?





CONCLUSION

Envisioning
“What’s possible?”



Envisioning “What’s possible?”

Now, it’s your turn to imagine what’s possible for your organization. What do you dare to dream and how will you accelerate your business on those dreams?

The truth is that what you and your organization can accomplish is going to be based on how well you prioritize your employees. Gathering data, understanding needs and challenges, and addressing those needs and challenges will help you shape decision-making throughout the company. It’s equally important, however, to have a vision for your company’s workforce that can inform how leadership invests in its infrastructure. **That’s why it is so important for CHROs to take charge when it comes to envisioning what is possible.**

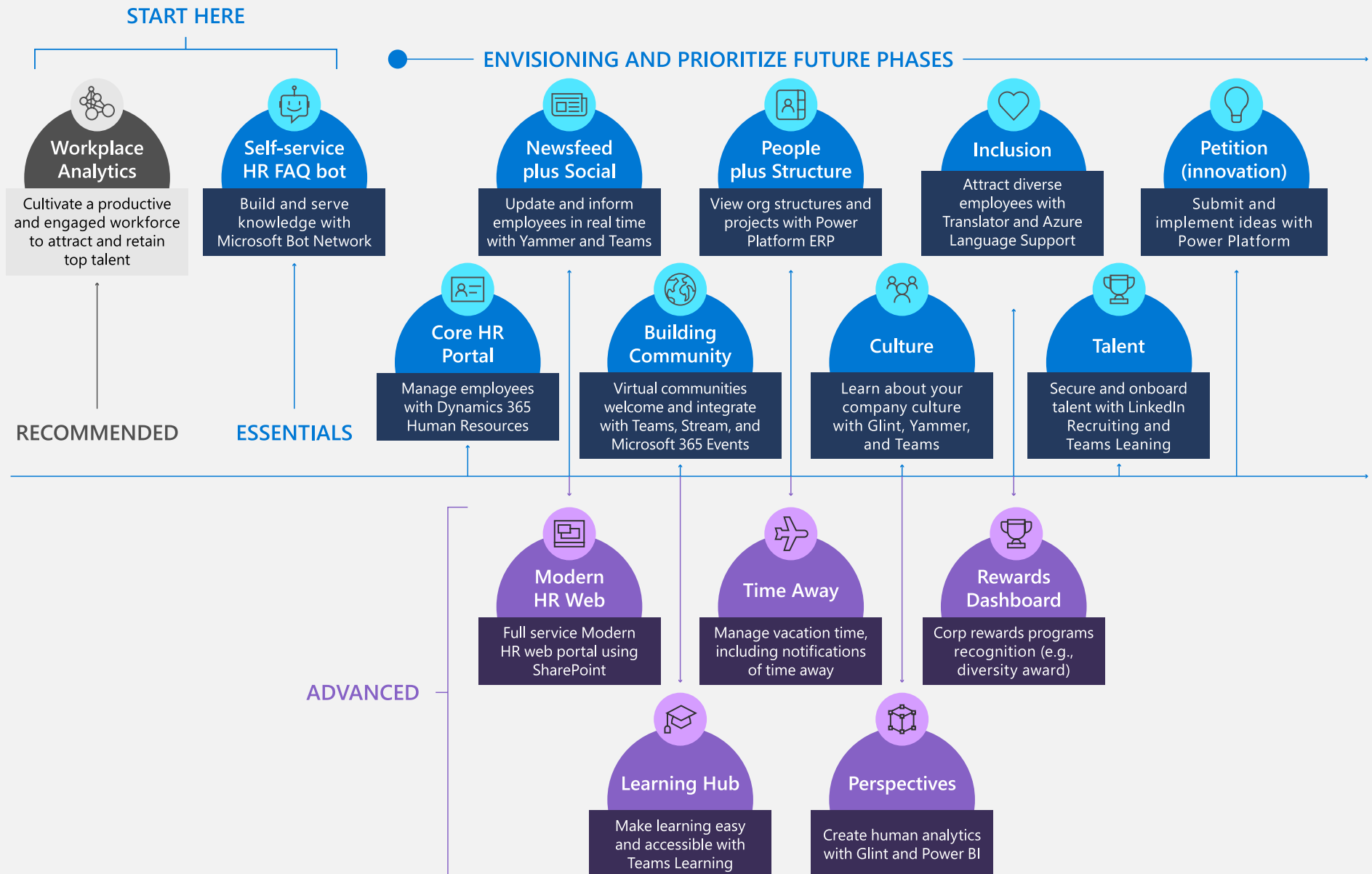
Once you’ve identified your workplace’s needs and envisioned the ways that new technology and a motivated HR team can meet them, you can start to take the steps toward a more modern digital workplace that empowers your workforce. Make technology work for you and increase the efficiency of your organization.

Tomorrow’s innovations are in the hands of HR.



Envisioning “What’s possible?”

HR for Modern Workplace Components





APPENDIX

A modern HR technology toolkit



A modern HR technology toolkit

People analytics:

[Workplace Analytics](#)—Informs leaders' decisions with a personal dashboard to manage collaboration and organizational agility

[MyAnalytics](#)—Gives employees resources and tools to empower their own productivity

[Dynamics 365 Human Resources](#)—Drives better decisions by centralizing workforce data and using embedded analytics to uncover valuable insights

[Power BI](#)—Self-service analytics and smart tools to derive insights using AI, Excel integration, and several third-party integrations

Collaboration:

[Microsoft 365](#)—Provides accessibility tools and empowers cloud collaboration across functions

[Yammer](#)—Allows executive leadership to have ongoing engagement with employees through AMAs

[Microsoft Teams](#)—Enables employees to easily collaborate and connect across locations

[Microsoft Viva](#)—Brings together communications, knowledge, learning, resources, and insights to create a great employee experience

[Microsoft Surface](#)—Enables teamwork anywhere with powerful, connected devices

[Microsoft Stream](#)—Publish videos and deliver live and on-demand content for customers and employees

[Cortana](#)—Save time and make your people more productive while breaking down roadblocks to efficient work

[Translator](#)—Collaborate and communicate with colleagues and contacts with real-time cloud translation

[Microsoft 365 Events](#)—A collection of platforms that includes Microsoft Stream, Teams, and Yammer to expand how colleagues in an organization share information.

Talent:

[Microsoft AI](#)—Informs leaders' decisions with a personal dashboard to manage collaboration and organizational agility

[Dynamics 365 Human Resources](#)—Gives employees resources and tools to empower their own productivity

[LinkedIn Talent Insights](#)—Drives better decisions by centralizing workforce data and using embedded analytics to uncover valuable insights

[LinkedIn Recruiter](#)—Self-service analytics and smart tools to derive insights using AI, Excel integration, and several third-party integrations

[Glint](#)—Self-service analytics and smart tools to derive insights using AI, Excel integration, and several third-party integrations

HR support:

[Azure](#) and [SharePoint Online](#)—Informs leaders' decisions with a personal dashboard to manage collaboration and organizational agility

[Microsoft Bot Framework](#) and [PowerApps](#)—Gives employees resources and tools to empower their own productivity

[Dynamics 365 Human Resources](#)—Drives better decisions by centralizing workforce data and using embedded analytics to uncover valuable insights

[Azure Language Support](#)—Self-service analytics and smart tools to derive insights using AI, Excel integration, and several third-party integrations

[Power Platform ERP](#)—Self-service analytics and smart tools to derive insights using AI, Excel integration, and several third-party integrations

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