+ **Leveraging Technology To Enhance Employee Experience**

EXCLUSIVE

Njeri Jomo
CEO & Principal Officer, Jubilee Health Insurance

Human-centric Leadership in the Digital Age

+ **Leading with humanity in an AI-powered workplace**

+ **The Tragedy of retirement in the gig economy**

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The Executive Director's *Note*

*T*he Q1 edition of our magazine focuses on the critical theme of **"Human-Centric Leadership in the Digital Age."** As we move forward into 2025, this theme highlights a vital balance in our profession—leveraging digital innovation while preserving the essential values of human connection, empathy and authentic leadership.

In this edition, we delve into the strategies and insights that will equip HR professionals to navigate this complex landscape. You will find articles exploring innovative approaches to fostering employee engagement in virtual environments, leveraging technology to enhance diversity and inclusion, and developing leadership skills that prioritise both digital fluency and emotional intelligence.

This focus aligns perfectly with our commitment to expanding Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, offering you cutting-edge knowledge and transformative tools to spur your career to the next level. We believe that by exploring topics such as those presented in this magazine, we empower HR leaders to not only adapt to the digital age but to shape it with a human touch.

As we build upon the foundation laid in 2024, including the launch of our **Strategic Plan 2023-2027,** this magazine serves as a key resource in our collective journey towards a more impactful and innovative HR profession in 2025. It is designed to complement our ongoing efforts to ensure compliance with the HRMP Act and advance strategic legislative reforms.

I encourage you to fully engage with the content of this magazine to reflect on its implications for your practice and to share your insights with your colleagues. Thank you for your continued dedication to elevating the HR profession.

CHRP Quresha Abdullahi, Executive Director, Institute of Human Resource Management (IHRM).

THE YEAR OF EMBRACING INNOVATION, BUILDING RESILIENCE AND DRIVING GROWTH

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

CHRP Odero Phillip Dalmas
National Chairman

As we navigate through the year 2025, I am filled with a sense of excitement and optimism for the incredible opportunities that lie ahead. This year will be a turning point in our profession as we focus on fostering innovation, building resilience and driving growth across all facets of human resource management. Together, we must continue to take the lead in shaping a more impactful and innovative HR profession.

Although membership renewal remains a key component of our strategy for ensuring that every member contributes to this dynamic and evolving professional landscape, we will also consider expanding our Continuing professional development (CPD) activities this year. This will include cutting-edge topics and transformative workshops designed to prepare HR professionals for tomorrow's challenges.

This year we shall also prioritise finalising the amendment of the Human Resource Management Professionals (HRMP) Act. Despite the Act providing a robust framework for regulating HR practices and upholding professional standards in the field, we are still alive to the fact that we must always align with the profession's changing needs, ensuring that we stay at the forefront of global standards.

IHRM Leadership during the Launch of Ethics in HR Management jointly published in collaboration with EACC

As we look ahead, the work we have done together in the past year serves as a strong foundation for the future. 2024 was marked by significant milestones that reflect our shared dedication and collective growth. We launched the **Strategic Plan 2023-2027**, which will guide our profession over the next three years. This plan, shaped by invaluable feedback from all members, gives us a clear focus and direction to navigate the evolving demands of the industry.

Our commitment to enhancing accountability was highlighted by the Performance Contract Signing for the period 2024/2025, which set a benchmark for excellence and measurable impact. The HR Awards 2024 celebrated the achievements of individuals and organisations who continue to raise the bar in HR practice. We also took a significant step towards ethical leadership by partnering with the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) to launch the Ethics in Human Resource Curriculum, reinforcing the values of integrity within our profession.

2024 also saw the graduation of our 2nd Mentorship Program cohort, empowering the next generation of HR leaders, and the successful launch of the IHRM Podcast, which continues to amplify the voice of our community. We were honoured to be recognised as 2nd Runners-Up in the Collaboration & Partnership Category at the APSEA Professionals Excellence Awards, underscoring the importance of partnerships in advancing HR.

Additionally, my appointment to the Attorney General's HR Advisory Board offers an exciting opportunity to represent our members at the national level.

Looking ahead, I am energised by the potential of what we can accomplish together in 2025. This year will be marked by a continued focus on innovation and growth, building upon the achievements of 2024. Our work will be centred around compliance with the HRMP Act, and we are committed to advancing strategic legislative reforms to align with contemporary challenges and global competitiveness.

Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each of you for your unwavering support and dedication. Your contributions have been pivotal in achieving all that we have so far, and with your continued engagement, the possibilities for the year ahead are limitless. Together, we will shape a future that is brighter, more innovative and full of opportunity.

HUMAN-CENTRIC LEADERSHIP IN
the Digital Age

FEATURED:

NJERI JOMO

CEO & PRINCIPAL OFFICER,
JUBILEE HEALTH INSURANCE

*I*n the ever-evolving corporate landscape, where technological advancements redefine industries and leadership expectations continue to shift, one leader stands out for her unwavering commitment to people-first leadership: *Njeri Jomo.*

As the CEO and Principal Officer of Jubilee Health Insurance, she has not only steered the company towards remarkable growth but has also championed a culture that places employees, customers, and stakeholders at the heart of decision-making.

Recently recognised as the first runner-up for the *"Best People-Focused CEO/MD of the Year"* at the HR Awards 2024, Jomo embodies the essence of human-centric leadership. Her journey, marked by resilience, adaptability, and a deep-rooted passion for transformative leadership, is nothing short of inspiring.

In this exclusive feature, she shares her leadership philosophy, experiences across different markets, the role of faith and family in her decision-making, and how she is leading Jubilee Health Insurance into the future through innovation and digital transformation.

Introduction & Personal Journey

Beyond the Title: *Who is Njeri Jomo?*

When asked to describe herself beyond her executive title, Jomo smiles, as if reflecting on a journey filled with lessons, triumphs, and challenges. *"I am very passionate about professional and personal growth. I believe in transformative leadership and creating impact wherever I go. Regardless of the space I find myself in, my goal is to leave it better than I found it,"* she says.

But her leadership journey didn't start at the top. *"I am a girl next door,"* she chuckles. *"I like to believe that leadership is an assignment. You are placed in a particular season to bring change and, once that season is over, you move on to another impactful journey."*

Her insurance career has taken her across different markets, including Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Each of these experiences has shaped her leadership perspective, teaching her invaluable lessons about cultural diversity, adaptability, and the importance of an inclusive approach to leadership and business.

Winning the first runner-up position at the HR Awards 2024 for **"Best People-Focused CEO"** was more than just a personal achievement—it was a validation of her belief that great leadership begins with people. *"This recognition is particularly special because it speaks to what I believe—that you cannot truly lead an organisation and drive impact if you do not recognise that you are leading people first,"* she explains.

For Jomo, leadership is about creating an environment where employees feel valued, heard, and empowered to contribute their best work. *"I never shy away from saying that Jubilee Health Insurance is successful today because of my team. It is easy to see a leader standing on a podium, receiving accolades, but behind that recognition is a team that has worked tirelessly to bring that vision to life."*

Leading Across Borders

Her career as a leader has spanned across East Africa; Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, Jomo has developed a keen understanding of how culture influences leadership and business dynamics. *"One of the biggest lessons I learned is that leadership cannot be copy-pasted from one market to another. Each country has its own identity, unique customer preferences, and regulatory landscape. You have to learn, adapt, and appreciate that diversity."*

Her interactions in Uganda, for instance, revealed the ambitious drive of women professionals in the industry—something she deeply admires and draws inspiration from. *"The diversity in leadership styles across Africa has enriched my approach, making me more adaptable and inclusive in decision-making,"* she adds.

She shares humorous stories of moments when she had to learn on the job, adapting her communication style to fit different cultural contexts.

One of her most profound experiences was adjusting to new ways of communication in different countries. "You think you know everything until you tell a joke in one country, and no one laughs because they don't get it! In Kenya, we have inside jokes, cultural nuances and ways of working that we assume everyone understands. That's when you realise the importance of understanding different people's perspectives," she laughs. You then realise that leadership requires learning beyond the business- it's about understanding people on a deeper level.

Leadership Style

Jomo's leadership style has evolved significantly over the years. *"In my early days, I was more autocratic. I believed that everyone would work the way I did. But experience has taught me the value of a human-centred approach,"* she reflects. Today, she leads with empathy, focusing on collaboration and leveraging the strengths of her team.

"A leader's role is to create a vision so clear that everyone understands why it matters and how their contributions fit into the bigger picture," she says. For Jomo, leadership is an ongoing journey of self-improvement, learning, and adaptation.

She candidly shares that leadership is not always easy. *"There are tough days, moments of self-doubt, and difficult decisions that keep you up at night. But I have learned that the best leaders are not those who have all the answers, but those who are willing to listen, learn, and grow."*

Today, she defines her leadership style as human-centred. *"My focus is on ensuring that my team understands the vision, sees their role in it, and feels motivated to contribute. Leadership is about balancing strategic direction with emotional intelligence."*

Faith, Family & Personal Drive

The Role of Faith and Family in Leadership

For Jomo, faith is more than just a personal belief—it is the foundation of her leadership philosophy. "*Faith has shaped my value system, my decision-making, and my perspective on success. I believe that leadership is a stewardship; you are entrusted with an opportunity to make a difference, and you must do so with integrity.*" For Jomo, faith is a very integral part of what her leadership is anchored on.

As a mother of three daughters, she believes in raising them with the same principles of integrity, hard work, and service that she upholds in her professional life.

"*I want my daughters to look at me and see a woman who pursued her purpose fearlessly, but who was also present for them. It's not always easy, there is clarity about who I am and what I do; but I believe that family is my grounding force.*" It reminds you why you do what you do. "*Leadership does not operate in a vacuum, it's part of a society and so the aspects that impact society impact leadership,*" she adds.

Jubilee Health Insurance & Business Excellence

Driving Business Growth and Innovation

Towards the end of 2024, Jubilee Health Insurance was recognised as Organisation of the Year- at the Women on Boards Network Awards. This award was for recognising the role of organisations in driving inclusivity and diversity.

Jomo emphasises that at Jubilee Health Insurance, inclusivity and gender parity are core values-everyone has a role to play. She highlights some of the organization's flagship initiatives that have significantly impacted underserved communities in the region, such as Afya Mashinani. Through this program, Jubilee Health has touched over 10,000 lives, providing much-needed medical care in partnership with The Aga Khan University Hospital.

In addition, Jubilee Health runs several in-house programs that have made a meaningful difference for both working mothers and underprivileged staff. These include:

- An on-site crèche to support employees with young children,
- A dedicated mothers' room for breastfeeding moms,
- Free medical treatment for underprivileged individuals — the majority of whom are women, and
- Free counselling sessions at the workplace.

Further, she points to another major achievement—Jubilee Health Insurance's menopause cover, a first-of-its-kind benefit designed to support women's health. This innovative approach to inclusivity and well-being played a significant role in earning recognition.

"This recognition is proof that we are moving in the right direction to recognise the goal of providing gender parity and an environment that supports it. Our focus on customer-centricity, innovation, and digital transformation has positioned us as a leader in the industry."

Human-Centric Leadership and Employee Well-being

Under Jomo's leadership, Jubilee Health Insurance has been at the forefront of digital transformation. With AI-driven claims processing, corporate wellness programs, and innovative apps like Maisha Fit- that enables for health and fitness tracking, they are revolutionising healthcare insurance.

"Employee engagement and well-being are now central to business success. At Jubilee, we ensure this remains a priority by fostering a workplace culture that values diversity, mental health, and career growth."

Digital Transformation and the Future of Work

"Technology is not a replacement for people; it is an enabler. It allows us to focus our human resources on high-value tasks while automating repetitive processes," she explains.

She states that with increased digitisation, data protection is paramount. Jubilee Health Insurance invests in robust cybersecurity measures to ensure transparency, efficiency, and trust in HR management.

Jomo adds that the future of work demands a balance between technology and human-centric leadership, and that's the balance she strives to maintain at Jubilee Health Insurance.

Women in Leadership & Mentorship

Breaking Barriers and Empowering Women

As a woman leading a major insurance institution, Jomo has had to navigate challenges unique to female executives. *"Women in leadership often have to prove themselves twice as much. But I have learned that confidence, competence, and a strong support system make all the difference."*

She is passionate about mentoring the next generation of leaders, especially young women. *"Mentorship is about lifting others as you climb. I actively guide young professionals, helping them navigate career challenges and build their leadership capacity."*

One of the things that set Jomo apart is her humility in acknowledging those who have come before her. *"There are people who paved the way before me, and I have benefited from their experiences and guidance. I want to be that kind of leader for others—someone who lifts as she climbs."*

The Future of HR Leadership in Kenya

The HR landscape is evolving rapidly. With the rise of AI, remote work, and digital HR systems, leaders must rethink how they engage and retain talent. The future is about agility, inclusivity, and continuous learning.

Advice to Emerging Leaders

As the interview concludes, Jomo leaves a powerful message for aspiring leaders: "Leadership is not about titles—it's about impact. Be resilient, be adaptable, and always lead with integrity. Success is not about being the smartest person in the room; it's about being the most effective at bringing people together to achieve a common goal."

Through her journey, Njeri Jomo is redefining leadership, proving that in an era dominated by technology, the most successful leaders will be those who never lose sight of what truly matters—people.

Her story is not just about corporate success—it is about courage, resilience, and the determination to make a difference. *"I want people to know that leadership is not about titles; it is about impact. If I can inspire just one person to step into their greatness, then I have done my job."*

RENEW & UPGRADE YOUR MEMBERSHIP

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For assistance, contact membership@ihrm.or.ke or call **+254 727 792001 / +254 111 055 184.**

CHRP Abraham S. Wekesa
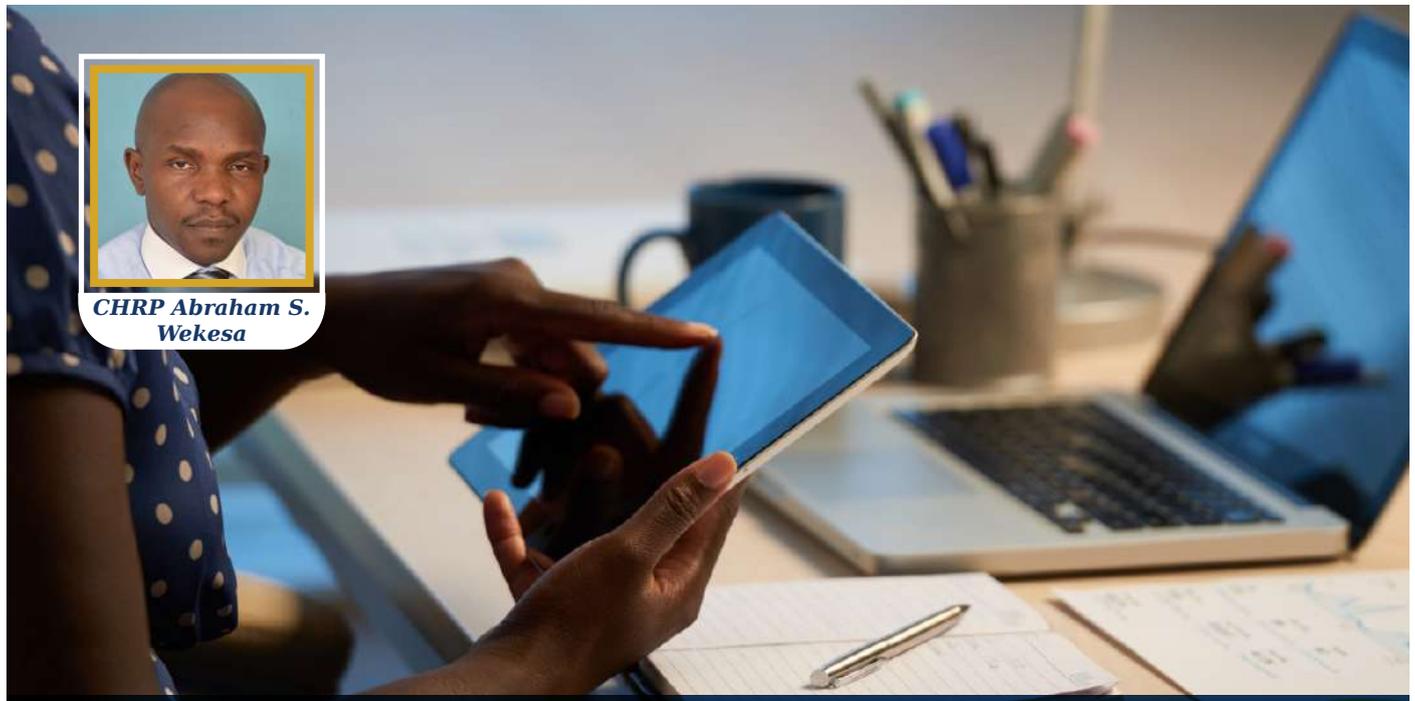
DIGITAL SYNERGY: *LEADING WITH HUMANITY IN AN AI-POWERED WORKPLACE*

*T*he landscape of organisational leadership is undergoing a profound transformation as we navigate the complexities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The 2024 World Economic Forum in Davos has illuminated the critical intersection between human-centric leadership and technological advancement, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges that organisations face in this digital age.

At the heart of this transformation lies the fundamental challenge articulated by *Klaus Schwab*, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum who said, ***"The pace of technological change is outstripping the ability of workers to adapt."*** This observation becomes particularly significant as organisations rapidly embrace Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration, with approximately 80% planning to accelerate their technological transformation. This creates an urgent need for leadership approaches that can effectively bridge the gap between technological advancement and human adaptation.

The evolution of workplace dynamics demands a sophisticated understanding of how AI can enhance rather than diminish human potential. Leaders must now navigate a complex landscape where success depends on their ability to leverage AI-powered solutions while maintaining meaningful human connections.

This includes implementing digital tools that streamline operations and enhance productivity while simultaneously fostering an environment where human creativity, emotional intelligence and strategic thinking can flourish.

A critical aspect of this transformation is the emergence of new skill requirements. The future workforce needs a hybrid skill set that combines technical proficiency with distinctly human capabilities. While the demand for technical roles such as data scientists, AI engineers and cybersecurity experts continues to grow, equally important are skills in creativity, emotional intelligence and adaptive thinking – areas where human capability remains uniquely valuable. This duality presents a significant challenge for leadership development programs, which must now prepare leaders to be both technically competent and emotionally intelligent.

The ethical implications of AI integration have emerged as a crucial consideration. Organisations must address concerns about job displacement, technological inequality and the potential exacerbation of existing socioeconomic disparities. Leaders are tasked with ensuring that digital transformation creates inclusive opportunities rather than deepening divisions. This requires implementing comprehensive reskilling programs and creating pathways for continuous learning that are accessible to all employees.

To address these challenges, organisations are implementing multi-faceted approaches to workforce development. This includes creating personalised learning pathways that accommodate different learning styles and starting points. Mentorship programs that bridge the AI generation gap are becoming increasingly important, as are feedback systems that help identify and address skills gaps in real-time. Public-private partnerships play a crucial role in developing scalable solutions for workforce development, particularly in creating accessible pathways for continuous learning and skill adaptation.

Cultural transformation emerges as a critical success factor in this journey. Organisations must foster an environment that embraces both technological innovation and human connection. This involves creating spaces for experimentation and learning while maintaining a focus on employee well-being and work-life integration. Leaders must champion a culture where digital tools enhance rather than replace human interaction, ensuring that AI serves as an enabler of human potential.

The successful implementation of human-centric leadership in the digital age requires a balanced approach to AI adoption. Leaders must ensure that AI implementations are purposeful and aligned with human needs. This includes:
• *Developing comprehensive digital literacy programs that empower employees to effectively utilise new technologies*
• *Creating feedback mechanisms that allow for continuous improvement of digital tools based on user experience*
• *Implementing wellness initiatives that address the psychological impacts of increased digitalisation*
• *Fostering collaborative environments that combine the efficiency of digital tools with the richness of human interaction*

Looking ahead, organisations must prepare for continued AI evolution while maintaining their focus on human development. This includes investing in both technical infrastructure and human capital development, creating inclusive digital environments that accommodate diverse needs and abilities and maintaining a strong emphasis on ethical considerations in AI adoption.

The future of work demands leaders who can navigate the complex interplay between technological advancement and human needs. Success in this new era requires a leadership approach that recognises the value of both technological efficiency and human insight, creating environments where both can flourish symbiotically.

As organisations continue to navigate this digital transformation journey, the key to success lies in maintaining a balanced perspective that recognises both the power of AI and the irreplaceable value of human capability. The most successful organisations will be those that can harness AI advancement to enhance rather than replace human potential, creating workplaces where innovation and humanity coexist and reinforce each other.

The journey toward human-centric leadership in the digital age is ongoing, and organisations must remain adaptable and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities. By maintaining a clear focus on human needs while embracing AI advancement, organisations can create sustainable, resilient and engaging workplaces that drive both productivity and human fulfilment.

The author is the Head of Human Resource Management at the County Assembly of Bungoma.

CHRP Caroline Odandi
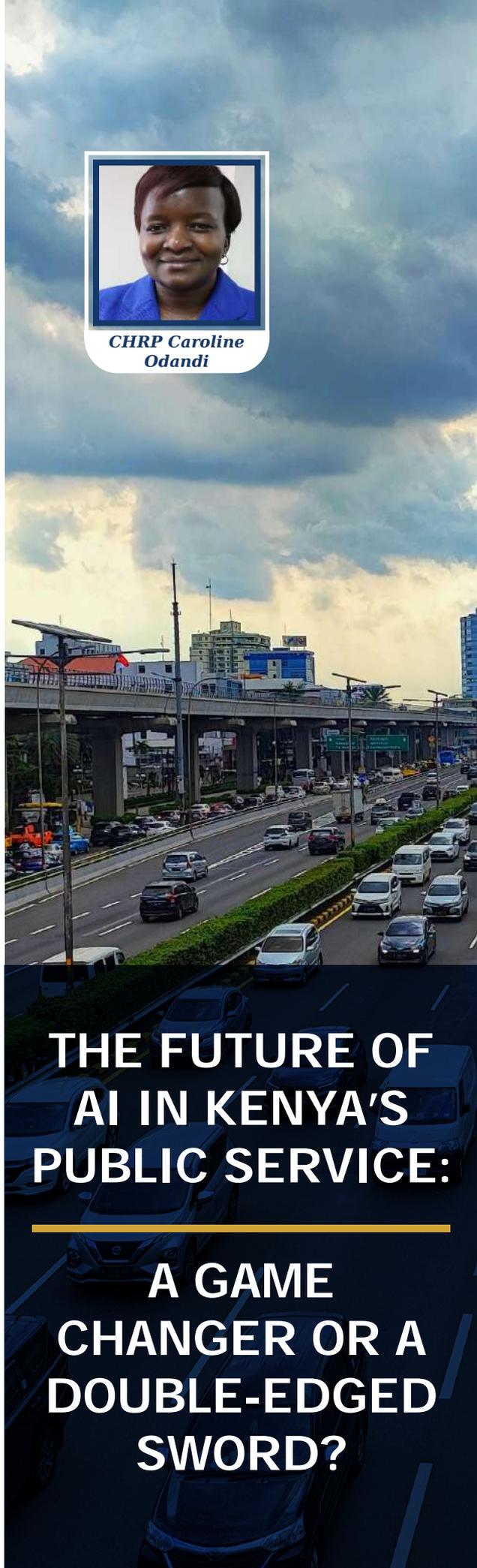
THE FUTURE OF AI IN KENYA'S PUBLIC SERVICE:

A GAME CHANGER OR A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD?

*K*enya's public service stands at a crossroads. While globally recognised for its great talent export, it remains bogged down by bureaucracy and inefficiency. The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) presents a chance to leapfrog these challenges—if embraced strategically. Will AI revolutionise service delivery and reinvent governance or will poor planning and fear turn it into another missed opportunity?

AI for a Smarter Government

A visit to most government offices still means long queues, endless paperwork, and slow responses. AI can change this by streamlining processes like ID and passport applications, freeing staff for complex tasks. Estonia has already automated 99% of government services, and Singapore's AI-driven Smart Nation initiative is setting the standard. Kenya's e-Citizen platform is a step forward, but without AI integration, it risks remaining a digital front for an otherwise manual system.

Rewriting the Rules:
AI and the Future of Jobs

Automation will disrupt traditional roles, but AI is more of a job transformer than a job killer. We must prepare by investing and creating new roles in data science, cybersecurity, and digital governance. The need will be AI specialists, data scientists, cybersecurity experts, and digital policy strategists. The challenge, then, is not job loss but job transition and or transformation.

The World Economic Forum predicts that while AI may displace 85 million jobs globally by 2030, it will also create 97 million new ones. The difference between countries that benefit and those that suffer will be how well they prepare their workforce. Kenya must take decisive action—incorporating AI training into public sector programs, reskilling and upskilling employees.

The Make-or-Break Factor

Our Public service needs to be reimagined. The current regime has already recognised AI's potential through its Digital Economy Blueprint, but progress has been slow. However, AI will not wait for our readiness.

If AI is to fulfil its promise, the public sector must embrace an agile, forward-thinking approach. Ministries and state agencies must foster partnerships with universities and private tech firms, embedding AI-readiness into policy frameworks and governance structures.

Countries that hesitate risk being left behind in a wave of digital transformation. Our Public Service can learn from global leaders like Canada, the UK, and China, which have invested heavily in AI governance and Cybersecurity.

The Challenges

AI is no magic wand. Its deployment in public service brings serious ethical and security concerns that Kenya must address head-on. Data privacy is a ticking time bomb. AI thrives on data how do we ensure that citizen information remains protected? Without stringent data protection laws, AI adoption could morph into digital surveillance, raising alarm bells about government overreach and citizen rights.

Bias in AI is another pressing issue. AI systems are only as good as the data they are trained on. If these datasets reflect societal biases—gender discrimination, ethnic favouritism, or economic disparities—AI will reinforce rather than eliminate these prejudices. Studies have shown that AI-driven recruitment tools if not carefully managed, can disadvantage women and minorities. Kenya must develop frameworks that prioritise fairness, inclusivity, and ethical accountability.

Cybersecurity threats are everywhere. AI-powered automation, while improving efficiency, presents new vulnerabilities. Estonia's AI-driven government model is underpinned by one of the most sophisticated cybersecurity infrastructures in the world. I believe we must follow suit, ensuring that it doesn't open doors to cyberattacks, data leaks, or system manipulations.

AI's Potential Beyond Efficiency in the Public Service

Beyond streamlining services, AI can combat corruption by detecting fraudulent transactions, enhancing healthcare through predictive diagnostics, streamlining medical record keeping and optimising resource allocation. It can also improve election integrity, climate monitoring, and education by customising learning experiences.

The Role of HR in an AI-Driven Public Sector

Far from making HR obsolete, AI will make its role more critical. HR professionals must lead in workforce planning, ethical AI oversight, and talent development to ensure AI augments, rather than replaces, human workers. HR teams in public service must shift their focus from administrative processing to strategic workforce planning, ensuring that employees are prepared for AI-driven workplaces. Talent development, ethical AI oversight, and employee well-being will become core HR responsibilities in an AI-powered governance model.

HR professionals in the Public service are poised to take the lead in shaping policies that ensure AI is used as a tool for augmentation rather than replacement. They must drive discussions on ethics, labour laws, and continuous professional development in an AI-driven public service.

The Way Forward

I am persuaded that there is a need for a National AI Strategy, bringing together policymakers, tech experts, and civil society to shape its future. AI will either drive a new era of efficiency and accountability—or become a missed opportunity. The choice is ours.

The writer is a seasoned Certified Human Resource and Administration Management Expert. She is the Head of HR and EACLGA Focal Person at the Council of Governors and has held positions in both the UN and American Embassy and Humanitarian Leadership Academy (UK) taking on responsibilities of Human Resource, Administration and Project Management.

Catherine Wekesa

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Human-centric leadership is an emerging leadership style that prioritises people and purpose over profit, creating a culture based on trust, empathy, and open communication. This approach focuses on valuing individuals for their unique qualities and perspectives, offering them psychological safety to express themselves freely and innovate without fear of judgment. Research identifies authenticity, empathy, and flexibility as key traits of human-centric leaders, making this leadership style essential for organisations seeking to enhance employee engagement, creativity, and overall productivity.

In the digital age, the importance of human-centric leadership has amplified as businesses navigate technological advancements and remote work environments. Leaders must balance technical expertise with interpersonal skills, fostering a workplace culture where employees feel valued, empowered, and supported. This article explores the principles of human-centric leadership, its role in the digital workplace, and actionable strategies for integrating these practices effectively.

Understanding Human-Centric Leadership (HCL)

Human-centric leadership focuses on creating an environment where employees feel valued, empowered, and connected to the organisation's mission. It goes beyond traditional hierarchical leadership by fostering trust, empathy, and collaboration as central elements of workplace dynamics. Leaders are expected to actively listen to employees, provide psychological safety, and prioritise personal and professional development.

This approach does not only enhance employee engagement but also builds stronger interpersonal relationships within teams, making employees more likely to contribute innovative ideas. For example, leaders who embrace transparency and authenticity inspire loyalty, as employees feel connected to a shared purpose. Furthermore, human-centric leadership drives organisational adaptability by encouraging a feedback-rich culture, enabling teams to respond effectively to change.

HCL is not merely a leadership trend, it's a transformational framework that aligns individual employee goals with organisational objectives, ensuring long-term sustainability and success.

The challenges of human-centric leadership in a digital environment

While HCL offers tremendous benefits, implementing it in a digital environment comes with significant challenges. The fast-paced nature of digital transformation often prioritises technological efficiency over human connection, making it difficult for leaders to balance automation with empathy. Leaders may also struggle to develop the digital leadership skills needed to manage remote or hybrid teams effectively.

Another challenge is ensuring inclusivity and accessibility, particularly when employees have varied levels of digital literacy. Leaders must address this by providing equal opportunities for all team members to engage with new technologies. Resistance to change, a common hurdle, requires leaders to communicate the value of human-centric approaches and involve employees in decision-making processes.

Moreover, ethical concerns related to AI and data use add complexity to the implementation of HCL. Organisations must ensure transparency in how technology affects employees, building trust through open communication and aligning digital tools with employee needs. Leaders must prioritise ethical AI

frameworks and advocate for fairness and inclusivity to overcome such barriers. To overcome these barriers, organisations must invest in upskilling, foster a culture of collaboration, and ensure that technological adoption aligns with human values and ethical considerations.

Strategies for leveraging human-centric leadership in the digital age

To effectively implement HCL in a digital workplace, leaders should adopt a multi-faceted approach. First, fostering inclusivity and diversity is essential. This can be achieved by establishing diverse leadership teams and encouraging cross-functional collaboration to promote innovation. Leaders should model behaviours that prioritise empathy and open dialogue, enabling employees to feel heard and respected.

Second, leveraging technology to personalise employee experiences is critical. AI-driven tools can be used to tailor training programs, track employee development, and provide real-time feedback. For example, AI-powered chatbots can offer on-demand support to employees, enhancing both productivity and job satisfaction.

Third, leaders must adopt adaptive leadership styles, such as servant leadership, to cultivate a supportive and growth-focused environment. Investing in infrastructure that supports hybrid and remote work is another key strategy, enabling employees to work flexibly without sacrificing connectivity and collaboration.

Finally, promoting a digital-first culture is crucial for organisations to thrive. This involves integrating digital tools into daily workflows while ensuring that human values remain central to organisational decision-making. By blending technological advancements with human-centric practices, leaders can create workplaces that are both innovative and inclusive.

Conclusion

Human-centric leadership is vital in the digital age, bridging the gap between technological advancements and human connection. By prioritising empathy, adaptability, and collaboration, leaders can create workplaces where employees thrive. Organisations that embrace this leadership style stand to gain improved employee satisfaction, higher innovation rates, and a stronger competitive edge.

To thrive in this ever-evolving landscape, leaders must adopt strategies that align digital transformation with human-centric values, ensuring sustainable growth and employee engagement. It's time to put people first for both organisational success and employee well-being.

The writer is an Operations, Human Resources & Performance Consultant. She is the Managing Director of International Talent Management Consulting Ltd.
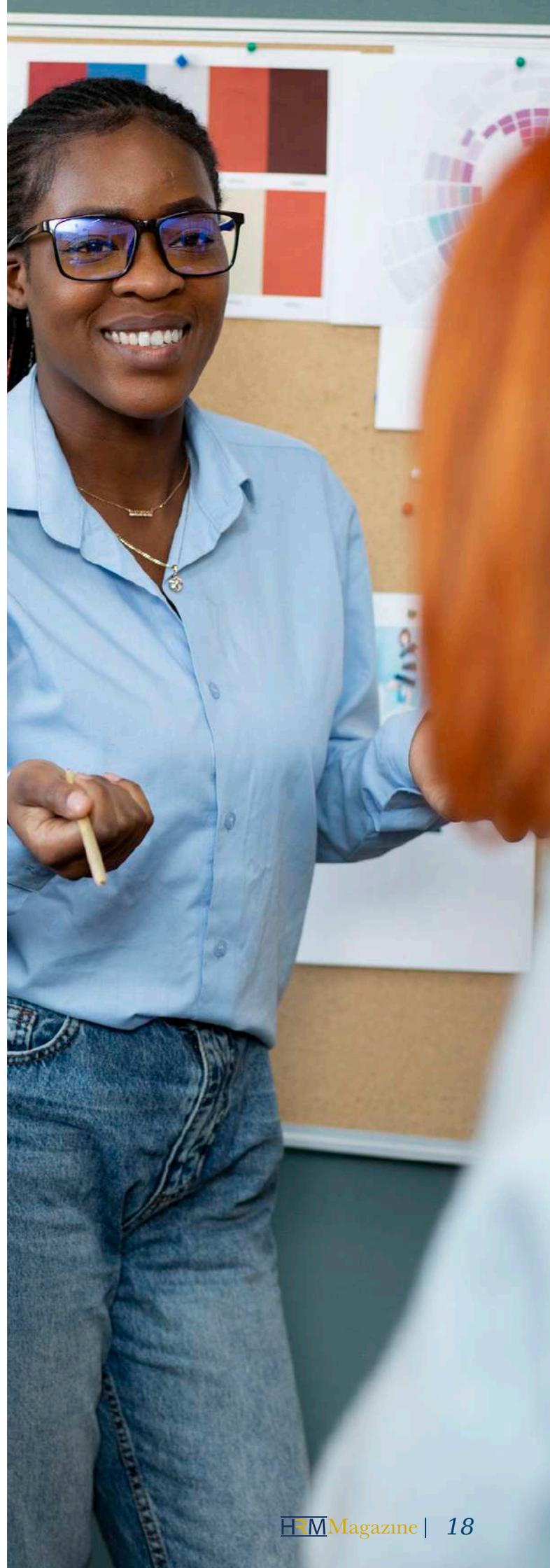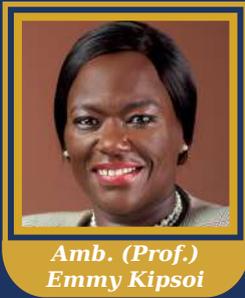
**Amb. (Prof.)
Emmy Kipsoi**

FUTURE OF JOBS 2025 REPORT:
WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONERS IN KENYA

The Future of Jobs 2025 Report by the World Economic Forum (WEF), released in January 2025, provides comprehensive analyses of the evolving global labour market, driven by five major trends, namely technological advancements, demographic shifts, changing economic dynamics, climate change mitigation, geo-economic fragmentation, and geopolitical tension. (Future of Jobs Report 2025, World Economic Forum) For human resources (HR) practitioners in Kenya, this report offers critical insights into the challenges and opportunities for our industries and workforce and the need to manage the change. HR professionals must provide leadership and guidance for their organisation to remain resilient and ensure the work for competitiveness in navigating the terrain ahead.

One of the key findings of the Future of Jobs 2025 Report is that the rapid pace of technological change is leading to both the creation and destruction of jobs due to structural labour market transformation. The report mentions that 60% of the organisations under the sample indicated that they expected their business to change with the transformation in technology such as AI, robotics and automation. The report shows that between 2025 and 2030, there will be a net growth of 7% of total employment, a displacement of 8% of current jobs, and a creation of 14% of today's employment or 179 million jobs. *(Future of Job Report 2025, World Economic Forum)* Therefore, it is urgent to note the report, contextualise it for our organisations, and plan and manage the change that will arise in our contexts to assist the employees and prepare for the implication projected by retooling, reskilling, upskilling or even transitioning in cases where jobs become obsolete, as noted that there is a fast decline in demand for specific jobs, such as cashiers, postal service clerks, and clerical and secretarial workers.

In Kenya, where unemployment is a public concern, it is essential to be candid in our discussions as HR professionals to inform on the future of jobs as driven by macro trends; the future of jobs must be discussed and approached from a multisectoral approach, considering that the trends are in favour of automation and digitalisation as a business senses, and, the value of AI in easy and efficient service delivery is attractive. The report highlights the growing demand for skills in data analysis, artificial intelligence (AI), digital literacy, and emotional intelligence. HR professionals will need to guide the workers on this future of the job; the voice of the HR professional should also be heard and felt at the national level by driving the dialogue on the national level of the skill set required, thus informing Country training policy and decisions, for productive national human resource development.

For instance, when adopting AI and automation in Kenya's HR, practitioners must ensure that employees have the right skills and attitude to support the change in the organisation. The definition of the workplace has changed. It no longer refers to brick-and-mortar buildings, where employers report at prescribed hours. Today, the place of work is abstract and opaque. The COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya introduced a new trend., which is entrenched and has become the new norm of business, namely remote work and gig economies, otherwise defined in Kenya as hustle and flexible working arrangements. Therefore, as HR professionals, it has become imperative that the traditional employment models are dismantled to pave the way to the new normal that matches the temperament of the latest generation of workers (Gen Z and Beyond) joining organisations today in response to the demographic shifts witnessed in the labour market; this means that the organisational structures and policies will need to be responsive to create a sustainable and nurturing a sense of belonging of all team players in the organisation. If anyone needs further convincing that drastic changes in HR practices are on, pick a copy of No Rules Rules, Netflix and the Culture of Invention by Reed Hastings and Eric Mayer to guide your conversion.

HR practitioners in Kenya are responsible for guiding the country in navigating the rapidly changing labour market and mapping and prioritising skills development that drive the global labour market development. By doing so, they can ensure that Kenya's workforce remains competitive, productive and resilient in the face of international trends.

The writer is the Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to the Republic of Korea.

IS YOUR WORKPLACE READY FOR THE IOT REVOLUTION?

By Faith Sidi

*T*he Kenyan workplace is changing faster than ever. Technology, particularly the Internet of Things (IoT), is no longer a futuristic concept but a present reality, it's here, and it's changing how we work and reshaping how we interact. Sure, IoT can boost productivity, but its real magic lies in making work better for people. I believe that if Kenyan leaders put the people first and use IoT wisely, then we can create a future where technology empowers employees, improves their well-being, and helps businesses thrive. This article explores how Kenyan businesses can leverage IoT to create a more connected, engaging, and human-centred workplace.

The Human-Machine Partnership:
Building Trust and Collaboration

The fear that machines will replace humans is a common concern. However, I see IoT not as a threat, but as an opportunity for a powerful human-machine partnership. In Kenya, where our workforce is diverse and resourceful, we can leverage IoT to augment human capabilities, not replace them. Imagine a manufacturing plant where sensors monitor equipment health, alerting human technicians to potential issues before they escalate. This allows technicians to focus on complex problem-solving and strategic decision-making, while IoT handles the mundane and repetitive tasks. Building trust in this human-machine partnership is crucial. Transparency in how data is collected and used, coupled with clear communication about the role of IoT in the workplace, will foster a sense of collaboration rather than apprehension. Ethical considerations must be at the forefront of any IoT implementation, ensuring that technology serves humanity and not the other way around.

IoT and Employee Well-being:
Creating a Supportive Workplace

The well-being of our employees is paramount. IoT offers exciting possibilities for creating a healthier and more supportive work environment. Wearable devices can track employee activity levels, sleep patterns, and even stress levels, providing personalised insights and recommendations for wellness programs. In Kenya, where work-related stress is a growing concern, such data can be invaluable in designing targeted interventions and promoting a culture of well-being

Personalisation at Scale:
Tailoring the Employee Experience

One of the most compelling aspects of IoT is its ability to personalise the employee experience at scale. From workspace comfort to learning and development, IoT data can be used to tailor various aspects of the employee journey. Imagine a learning platform (LMS) that recommends relevant training modules based on an employee's skills and interests, or a recognition program that rewards employees in real-time for their contributions. In Kenya, where we value individuality and recognise the unique talents of each employee, such personalisation can be a powerful tool for driving engagement and motivation.

Beyond Productivity: *Enhancing Engagement and Motivation*

While increased productivity is a desirable outcome, the true potential of IoT lies in its ability to enhance employee engagement and motivation. Gamification, personalised feedback, and real-time recognition are just a few ways in which IoT can create a more dynamic and engaging work experience. Imagine a sales team where performance dashboards provide real-time feedback and recognise top performers or a customer service team where IoT-enabled chatbots assist with routine inquiries, freeing up human agents to focus on complex customer interactions. These examples illustrate how IoT can be used to create a more stimulating and rewarding work environment.

The Power of Sensors:
Understanding the Technology

Understanding the different types of IoT devices and their applications in HR is crucial for successful implementation. From environmental sensors that monitor air quality to wearable devices that track employee activity, the possibilities are vast. In Kenya, where we have a growing tech-savvy population, we can leverage local expertise to develop and implement innovative IoT solutions tailored to our specific needs.

Data Privacy and Security:
Protecting Employee Data

With great power comes great responsibility. Data privacy and security are paramount in the age of IoT. Kenyan businesses must adhere to strict data protection regulations and implement robust

security measures to safeguard employee data. Transparency in data collection practices, clear consent mechanisms, and secure data storage are essential to building and maintaining employee trust.

Integrating IoT with Existing HR Systems

Integrating IoT data with existing HR systems is key to creating a seamless and efficient HR ecosystem. This requires careful planning and collaboration between HR and IT departments. In Kenya, where many organisations are still in the early stages of digital transformation, this integration can be a significant challenge, but it is also a tremendous opportunity to leapfrog traditional HR processes and embrace a more data-driven approach.

The Evolving Role of HR:
From Administrator to Experience Designer

IoT is transforming the role of HR. HR professionals are no longer just administrators; they are becoming experienced designers, responsible for creating a positive and engaging employee journey. This requires a new set of skills, including data analytics, technology literacy, and a deep understanding of human behaviour. In Kenya, I believe that investing in the development of these skills within the HR profession is crucial for our future success.

Case Studies:
Leading the Way

Several organisations in Kenya are already exploring the potential of IoT in HR. While many are still in the pilot phase, these early adopters are paving the way for others to follow. Sharing these success stories and lessons learned is essential to accelerating the adoption of IoT in HR across the country.

In conclusion, the future of work is connected. IoT has the potential to revolutionise the employee experience, creating a more human-centred, engaging, and productive workplace. However, successful implementation requires a human-centric approach, a focus on data privacy and security, and a willingness to embrace change. I believe that Kenyan businesses are well-positioned to leverage IoT to create a truly world-class employee experience, driving innovation, and achieving sustainable growth. By embracing the power of IoT and putting people first, we can unlock a future where technology empowers our workforce and strengthens our organisations.

50% OFF MEMBERSHIP ARREARS

The IHRM Council has extended a 50% waiver on all membership fee arrears for periods up to 31st December 2023, giving members a unique opportunity to settle outstanding balances at half the cost and restore their membership to good standing.

This waiver is designed to ease the financial burden for members who may have fallen behind on their payments, allowing them to reclaim full access to IHRM's exclusive benefits, including:

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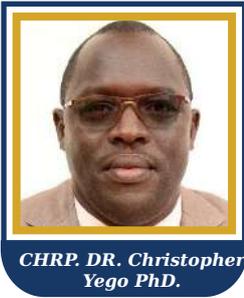
CHRP. DR. Christopher Yego PhD.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The professional world is becoming increasingly competitive and is constantly changing, so professional development and continual learning are more important than ever in being successful and achieving career goals. Technologies and best practices are evolving and progressing in every industry, making it crucial for both new and experienced professionals to continue developing their skills and honing their knowledge.

Professional development refers to continuing education and career training after a person has entered the workforce to help them develop new skills, stay up-to-date on current trends and advance their career. Continuing professional development (CPD) is important because it ensures you continue to be competent in your profession. It is an ongoing process and continues throughout a professional's career. The purpose of professional development is to allow professionals to learn and apply new knowledge and skills that can help them in their jobs and further their careers. It's all about building your skill set and knowledge base for your field.

The outcome of well-planned continuing professional development is that it safeguards the public, the employer, the professional and the professional's career.

Well-crafted and delivered CPD is important because it delivers benefits to the individual, their profession and the public. Benefits of CPD include:

- **Career Advancement:** Opens doors to future career changes and leadership opportunities by developing management, coaching and mentoring skills.

- **Skill and Knowledge Enhancement:** Helps you maintain and improve the skills needed to deliver professional services, keeping your capabilities aligned with industry standards.
- **Relevance and Adaptability:** Keeps your knowledge up to date with industry trends, ensuring you remain competitive in a fast-changing environment.
- **Innovation and Growth:** Exposes you to new knowledge areas and skills, encouraging creativity and breaking routine patterns.
- **Workplace Effectiveness:** Enhances your contribution to your team, making you more effective and valuable in your role.
- **Professionalism and Impact:** Provides a deeper understanding of your profession's implications and advances the body of knowledge and technology in your field.
- **Public Trust and Societal Impact:** Increases confidence in your profession and contributes to improvements in public safety, sustainability and economic stability, especially in high-risk or specialised fields.

You need to take ownership of your career and its continuing development, as the job market is always changing and you may no longer be able to rely on your employer to identify and satisfy your development needs. You must focus on maintaining and building upon your current competencies whether you are seeking promotion and greater responsibility or wider professional recognition through membership of an institution or a professional qualification. The professional development cycle demonstrates how structured professional development becomes cyclical and self-fulfilling.

Dr. Yego is a lecturer at the School of Business and Economics, Kisii University.
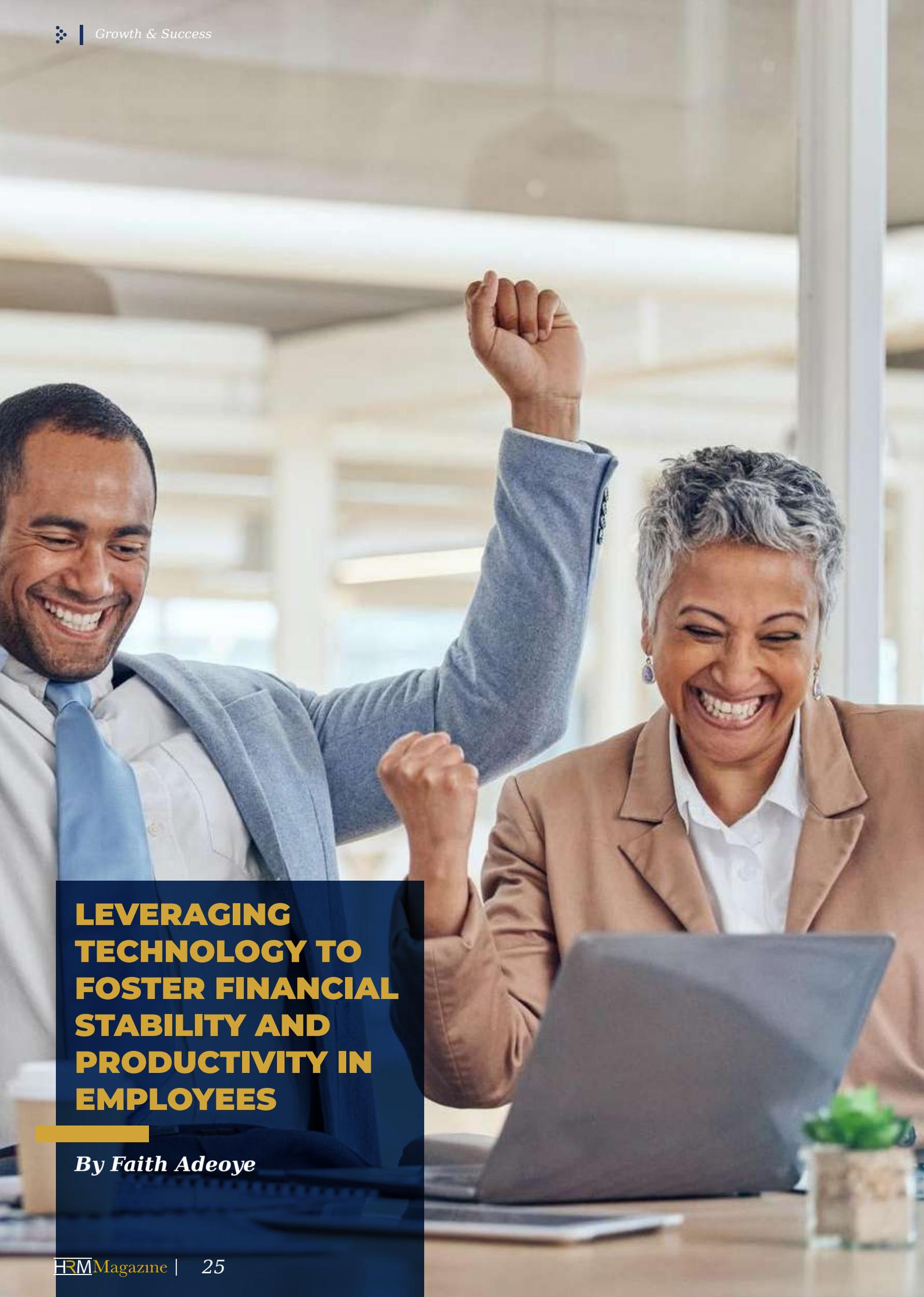
LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO FOSTER FINANCIAL STABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY IN EMPLOYEES

By Faith Adeoye

In 2025, great business leaders know that employee experience is more than just perks and paychecks—it's about helping people feel secure and stay productive. Financial stability plays a big role in this. When employees aren't constantly worrying about money, they're more engaged, focused, and committed to their work. Simply put, financial wellness benefits everyone—employees feel secure, and businesses get a more productive workforce. One way to make a real impact is through Earned Wage Access (EWA), which gives employees more control over their finances.

A survey mentioned by Forbes, found that 84% of employees using EWA pay bills on time, 67% reduce credit card debt, and 63% view their employer more positively. Similarly, a recent PwC report revealed that 76% of financially stressed employees are likely to seek employers who prioritise their financial well-being. The message is clear: financial security matters.

So, how can businesses use financial benefits to boost productivity and improve employee experience? Let's explore.

How can business leaders improve employee experience through earned wage access?

Let's be real—money problems don't stay at home. If an employee is struggling to make ends meet, that stress follows them to work. It leads to distraction, low productivity, and even higher turnover rates. On the flip side, companies that help their employees feel financially secure build trust, loyalty, and a happier, more committed workforce.

For decades, employees have been stuck waiting for payday, even when bills and emergencies don't follow the same schedule. Earned Wage Access (EWA) changes that by letting employees access part of their earned wages before payday. It's a simple, tech-driven solution that reduces reliance on high-interest loans and payday lenders.

This means employees are able to cover unexpected expenses without the stress

waiting weeks for their paycheck. But beyond convenience, what does this mean for the workplace, businesses, and employees?

When employees don't feel financially secure, money stress doesn't just stay at home—it spills into the workplace. A financially unstable workforce often leads to:

- *Lower Productivity:* Employees distracted by financial worries aren't fully present at work. They're stressed, less engaged, and more likely to make mistakes.
- *Increased Absenteeism:* Struggling employees may take more time off to deal with financial issues, whether it's running around looking for loans or dealing with the mental strain of money troubles.
- *High Turnover:* When employees feel unsupported financially, they're more likely to leave for companies offering better financial benefits or stability. Recruiting and training new hires is far more expensive than retaining existing talent.

When employees are financially unstable, businesses feel the impact too. Implementing EWA isn't just about making life easier for employees—it has real advantages for businesses as well.

For employees:
Less stress, more control
- Employees no longer have to rely on high-interest loans or credit cards to get by between paychecks.
- They gain more control over their finances, reducing stress and improving mental well-being.
- Unexpected expenses (like medical bills or car repairs) become manageable without the fear of debt traps.

For Businesses:
Stronger engagement, higher retention

- A financially stable workforce is more productive, engaged, and focused on their tasks.
- Offering EWA makes businesses more attractive to job seekers, positioning them as forward-thinking employers.
- Reduced turnover means less time and money spent on hiring and training new employees.

Earned wage access: A smart investment in employee experience
The workplace is evolving, and financial well-being is now a key part of the employee experience. Leaders who recognise this and offer solutions like Earned Wage Access create workplaces where employees feel valued and supported.

The reality is, life happens in real time—bills, emergencies and daily expenses don't wait for payday.

Offering employees flexible access to their earnings isn't just an act of goodwill - but a strategic human-centric leadership style that strengthens employee retention, and builds an organisation's reputation as an employer that prioritises well-being. Employees who aren't stressed about money are more focused, more engaged, and more likely to stick around. High turnover is expensive, and replacing talent costs more than investing in tools that keep employees happy.

When business leaders adopt Earned Wage Access to improve employee experience, it's a win-win: employees get financial peace of mind, and businesses benefit from a happier, more engaged and productive workforce. The future of work isn't just about salaries—it's about financial empowerment. And the time to start is now.

What other financial perks can businesses offer employees?
Employees need more than just paycheck and earned wages —they need financial security. Offering other financial perks like short-term and long-term loans can make a significant difference in their well-being.

Short-term loans help employees cover unexpected expenses without resorting to high-interest debt. On the other hand, long-term loans for major expenses like housing, education, or medical emergencies provide stability and peace of mind, reducing financial stress.

Additionally, businesses can offer financial wellness programs—such as budgeting tools, savings plans, or access to financial advisors—employees feel more in control of their finances, leading to lower stress levels.

How can businesses enhance stability in wage disbursement through technology?
While it is ideal for employees to access their accrued wages, businesses can also leverage technology to improve employee experience through instant disbursement of salaries.

For businesses, maintaining a steady wage disbursement process is crucial—not just for

employee experience but also for overall operational efficiency. Late or inconsistent payments can lead to employee disengagement, decreased productivity, and higher turnover rates. With technology solutions, businesses can automate calculations, ensure compliance, and facilitate instant bulk payments. Also, real-time payment processing means that employees can access their earned wages without waiting for traditional bank processing times. This real-time accessibility fosters trust between business leaders and their workforce while streamlining financial operations.

Ultimately, leveraging technology for wage disbursements goes beyond payroll—it's about creating a frictionless financial ecosystem where businesses operate more efficiently, employees remain engaged, and operational costs are significantly reduced.

How can businesses roll out earned wage access to their employees?

Rolling out EWA correctly means choosing the right technology partner and ensuring seamless payroll integration. But it's not just about access—it's about education, too.

Employees must understand how to use EWA wisely, so they don't become overly reliant on it. The best companies pair Earned Wage Access with financial literacy programs to help employees make informed money decisions.

Faith Adeoye is a representative of Seamless, a technology company dedicated to helping African businesses optimise their resources for greater productivity and success while enhancing the quality of work life for employees across the continent. Learn more about Seamless.

**CHRP (K) Nehemiah
Ngenoh**

BUSINESS PROCESS RE-ENGINEERING IN THE DIGITAL AGE:
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AS A CATALYST

The values, attitudes and behaviours that govern interactions between employees at all organisational levels are collectively referred to as work culture. By connecting these expectations to the organisation's overarching mission, a well-defined work culture gives staff members a sense of direction and helps them to match their actions with the long-term objectives of the organisation. While components of culture vary across industries or geographical boundaries, it adopts both formal and informal identity. Every organisation has its own corporate culture, which is shaped in part by each employee and is a critical component of an entity's make-up that dictates the success or failure in achieving the mission it sets out to achieve.

The adoption and integration of technology can be influenced by the work culture of an organisation. While a more conventional or conservative culture may be resistant to change, one that values innovation and constant development may be more receptive to embracing new technologies. Organisations constantly seek to improve their business processes to optimise efficiency and enhance the quality of products and services they offer. They are always looking for ways to use digital technologies as enablers to improve their business operations.

However, utilising digital technologies to rethink business processes is more valuable than merely replacing an outdated technology with a new one. It means fundamentally transforming an organisation's workplace practices to embrace agility, collaboration, innovation, and a customer-centric approach, leveraging digital technologies to enable rapid adaptation and continuous improvement in a fast-paced, ever-changing digital landscape. This is known as business process re-engineering (BPR).

Hammer and Champ define BPR as "the radical rethinking of the business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance as cost, quality and speed." Implementations of re-engineering of business processes can range from local process re-engineering to a comprehensive organisational restructure. Analytical models for optimising current processes via the use of information technology and simplified procedures have been developed as a result of business process re-engineering for local improvements.

Procedure for Business Re-engineering relies on people, including how they learn their roles, work, and interact with co-workers. Despite their effectiveness, previous industrial breakthroughs

divided labour in the workforce to such an extent that they nearly overshadowed the necessity of human creativity and intelligence. Those processes were often characterised by rigid hierarchies, strict schedules, Limited technology adoption, physical office presence, limited flexibility, focus on top-down communication and strict focus on Individual performance rather than teamwork and collaboration.

The digital age challenges old work culture by encouraging the uptake of remote work approach, adopting collaboration tools, and employee empowerment where access to information and digital tools allows employees to contribute more actively and share ideas, therefore challenging traditional top-down decision-making. An ideal work culture in the digital age prioritises flexibility, open communication, continuous learning, employee autonomy, inclusivity, and a strong emphasis on collaboration, all while leveraging technology to empower employees and foster innovation. Essentially, organisational culture should value both human connection and digital efficiency, allowing individuals to work productively while feeling supported and valued in a dynamic environment. It plays a significant role during BPR by encouraging;

Openness to Change

Organisations with a culture that values innovation, learning, and adaptability are more likely to embrace the disruptive changes that come with BPR. Employees in such environments are more open to rethinking traditional workflows and trying new methods, which is essential for successful process reengineering. On the other hand, in organisations with a more rigid or conservative culture, employees may resist changes, even if those changes are necessary for the organisation's survival. Such resistance can undermine the efforts of BPR, as employees might cling to established processes and approaches, hindering the reengineering initiatives.

Collaboration and Communication

Effective BPR often requires cross-functional collaboration, where employees from different departments or teams work together to redesign processes. A culture that encourages collaboration, open communication, and breaking down silos is essential for fostering a team-oriented approach to BPR. In contrast, a culture of division between departments can make it harder for different teams to come together and analyse processes from a holistic perspective. In such environments, BPR efforts may be fragmented and fail to produce the desired outcomes.

Employee Engagement and Involvement

A culture that empowers employees and encourages their involvement in decision-making can lead to more successful BPR. When employees are engaged, they are more likely to contribute valuable insights, identify inefficiencies, and take ownership of new processes. In organisations where a top-down management approach dominates, employees might feel less involved or invested in the reengineering process. This lack of engagement can hinder innovation and lead to resistance, as employees may not fully understand or support the changes being made.

Focus on Customer-Centricity

Organisations with a customer-centric culture tend to focus their BPR efforts on enhancing customer satisfaction and experience. In such cultures, employees are more likely to align business processes with customer needs, which can lead to more effective and impactful reengineering initiatives.

In Organisations where the culture is more internally focused, BPR efforts may be centred around optimising internal processes without considering the broader impact on customers, leading to suboptimal outcomes.

Learning and Continuous Improvement

Organisations that foster a culture of continuous improvement (e.g., Kaizen or lean thinking) naturally align with the goals of BPR. Employees in such environments are accustomed to regularly evaluating and improving processes, making it easier to implement radical changes. In contrast, a culture that does not prioritise learning or improvement may struggle with BPR, as employees are less likely to question existing processes or think creatively about how to make them more efficient.

In conclusion, work culture is a critical factor in determining the success of Business Process Reengineering. A healthy and adaptable work culture fosters a productive environment where business processes can evolve effectively. Technology, in turn, serves as a tool to enhance these processes, improving efficiency and effectiveness. For businesses to thrive, these three elements—work culture, business processes, and technology—must work together in harmony.

The writer is a Certified Human Resource Professional (CHRP) and Certified Secretary (CS-K). He is a Principal Human Resource Management Officer in the County Government of Bomet.

Institute of Human Resource Management

The Professional Body of HR Practitioners in Kenya

COMPLIANCE WITH THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS ACT, NO. 52 OF 2012

The Institute of Human Resource Management (IHRM) is a Statutory Professional Body established under the Human Resource Management Professionals (HRMP) Act, No. 52 of 2012. Its mandate is to regulate the Human Resource (HR) profession in Kenya, and enhance competencies and capabilities while supporting innovative and transformative HR practices and standards.

The IHRM wish to notify the public that all persons eligible to be registered/licensed under the HRMP Act are required to comply with Sections 19 (1), 22, 23 and 29 (1) of the Act. Section 29(1) of the Act provides "No person shall practice as a human resource management professional unless the person has been issued with a valid practising certificate."

Rule 7 of the Human Resource Management Professionals (Registration and Training) Regulations, 2015 requires any person "who…. performs human resource management duties and responsibilities in an organization" to obtain a valid practicing certificate.

Notice is also given to all employers who intend to employ foreign human resource practitioners within the Republic of Kenya that part of the requirements for a Class D work permit, at the Directorate of Immigration Services, is clearance with the IHRM for HR Professionals. In addition, all our registered and licensed members should note that they are required to renew their 2023 Membership to be in good standing and therefore able to carry on their practice

For any clarifications please contact the undersigned.

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CHAMPIONING MENTAL HEALTH IN KENYA:
AN URGENT APPEAL FOR HR PROFESSIONALS

By Brian Asitwa

As I navigate the bustling streets of Nairobi, I am often struck by the unvoiced challenges many Kenyans face—challenges that extend beyond our personal lives and deeply infiltrate our workplaces. Each day, I observe skilled individuals wrestling with mental health issues, their capabilities stifled by the prevailing stigma. As a human resource professional, I can no longer be a silent bystander. I feel an urgent need to advocate for a transformative approach to health, wellness, and self-care in the diverse work environments across Kenya.

Mental health is not a luxury; it is a fundamental right that demands attention from every organisation, irrespective of its scale or industry. In Kenya, discussions surrounding mental health have long been cloaked in silence. Societal beliefs often perpetuate the misconception that mental health struggles indicate weakness or personal failure. However, this mindset must shift if we want to nurture a vibrant and effective workforce. I believe it is our duty as HR leaders to drive this change.

It's important to understand that mental health influences every aspect of our lives, including job performance. From my observations, employees dealing with anxiety or depression tend to be less engaged, less productive, and more susceptible to burnout. This issue transcends personal struggles; it is a pressing business concern. Companies that neglect mental health can expect higher rates of turnover, increased absenteeism, and reduced team morale. The financial repercussions alone should propel us into action. By prioritising mental health initiatives, Organisations can boost productivity and ultimately enhance their financial performance.

One of the most impactful strategies to address mental health issues is through awareness and educational initiatives. I have seen how effective training sessions can help demystify mental health challenges, equipping employees with the skills to identify symptoms in themselves and in their peers. Workshops focused on stress management, emotional intelligence, and resilience can empower individuals to take proactive steps towards their mental well-being. As HR professionals, we must advocate for these initiatives and ensure they become ingrained in our organisational ethos.

Moreover, I am a strong proponent of creating environments that facilitate open conversations. It is crucial to encourage employees to discuss their mental health struggles without fear of stigma. Regular check-ins, anonymous feedback channels,

and peer support groups can foster a sense of community and collective responsibility. In Kenya, where strong community bonds are pivotal, establishing an atmosphere where employees feel supported by their colleagues can lead to significant improvements in mental health. When I engage with teams, I stress that vulnerability is a source of strength that can cultivate deeper connections and a more resilient workplace.

Implementing Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) is another essential measure for prioritising mental health in Kenyan Organisations. These programs offer confidential counselling services and resources for handling personal or work-related issues. I strongly encourage businesses to utilise EAPs, particularly in a manner that respects and reflects Kenyan cultural values. Providing access to qualified mental health professionals can profoundly influence employees, enabling them to seek help without the burden of stigma.

Additionally, the importance of work-life balance in enhancing mental wellness cannot be overstated. The rapid pace of our economy often fosters a culture of overcommitment, where employees feel pressured to sacrifice their well-being for productivity. I have witnessed the negative consequences of this culture, leading to burnout and stifling creativity. Organisations must actively promote flexible work arrangements that allow employees to manage their time effectively. Options like remote work and flexible hours can empower individuals to achieve a healthier equilibrium between their personal and professional responsibilities.

As I contemplate the future of mental health in Kenya, I feel particularly passionate about the influence of leadership on organisational culture. Leaders must exemplify healthy behaviours, openly sharing their own mental health journeys and underscoring the significance of self-care. When leadership prioritises mental wellness, it communicates that the organisation genuinely values its workforce.

I encourage HR professionals to collaborate closely with leadership teams to foster this mindset, creating a culture where mental health is recognised as vital to organisational success.

Moreover, I believe that Organisations should integrate mental health indicators into their overall performance assessments. By monitoring employee well-being alongside traditional performance metrics, we can develop a more comprehensive understanding of our workforce's health. This data-driven approach can inform our strategies and help identify areas requiring attention. In my experience, Organisations that prioritise mental health metrics are better positioned to implement targeted interventions that address specific challenges.

In summary, the time for decisive action is upon us. As an HR professional in Kenya, I am dedicated to advocating for mental health awareness, wellness, and self-care in every workplace. We cannot afford to ignore the profound impact mental health has on both individuals and our broader economy. By fostering a culture of transparency, investing in mental health resources, promoting work-life balance, and securing leadership commitment, we can create environments where employees flourish. Let us collectively champion mental health as a priority—not merely for the benefit of individuals but for the overall success of our Organisations and our nation. It is time to break the silence surrounding mental health in Kenya and embrace the necessary conversations that will lead to positive change.

The author is a leading human resource business partner at Teleperformance EMEA.

Rafiki Karisa

THE FUTURE OF WORKPLACE COACHING IN HEALTHCARE

I stood by the glass window of my office, watching the hospital come to life in a way I had never seen before. The front office—once plagued by hesitation and inefficiency—was now a symphony of movement and purpose. Receptionists answered calls with poise, patients were greeted with warmth, and the air buzzed with a newfound confidence. There was no longer a sense of struggle, no overwhelmed expressions—just a team that had finally found its rhythm. I exhaled, a quiet smile forming. This wasn't luck. It was a transformation. And I knew exactly what had sparked it—workplace coaching.

Months earlier, I had taken a risk, stepping away from the rigidity of traditional training programs. Instead of generic workshops and endless memos, I introduced something far more personal: hands-on coaching. I sat with each staff member, uncovering their strengths, guiding them through their challenges, and crafting strategies that played to their potential. Slowly but surely, the shift began. Engagement surged, productivity soared, and team morale became unshakable. What had once felt impossible was now second nature. The hospital had changed— not through policies or protocols, but through the power of people believing in their own ability to be extraordinary.

Hospitals worldwide face an uphill battle in maintaining efficiency, morale, and patient satisfaction. A 2023 study by the World Health Organisation (WHO) found that 64% of healthcare workers experience burnout due to high workloads, administrative burdens, and lack of professional development. Traditional training models, though necessary, often fail to address these challenges in real-time. With rapid technological advancements, shifting patient expectations, and an increasingly diverse workforce, hospitals must rethink how they build capacity. A modern, evolving healthcare environment demands more than periodic training sessions—it requires continuous, hands-on development.

Workplace coaching offers a transformative solution by bridging the gap between training and real-world application. Unlike conventional learning methods, coaching is dynamic, personalised, and directly tied to an employee's role and aspirations. A study by the *International Coaching Federation (ICF)* revealed that 86% of organisations implementing coaching programs reported a positive return on investment, with significant improvements in employee confidence, efficiency, and collaboration. Integrating coaching into daily hospital operations, healthcare professionals receive real-time feedback, sharpen critical thinking skills, and gain the confidence to make informed decisions—leading to a higher standard of patient care.

Beyond performance, coaching is a powerful tool for workforce retention. The healthcare sector suffers from high turnover rates, with research from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) indicating that replacing a single nurse costs hospitals an average of $4,000 due to recruitment expenses and lost productivity. Coaching creates a culture of support, ensuring that staff feel valued, engaged, and motivated to stay. Moreover, shifting from traditional top-down management to a coaching leadership style fosters innovation, adaptability, and problem-solving—qualities essential for navigating today's fast-evolving medical landscape. Hospitals that embrace coaching don't just improve operations; they future-proof their workforce for long-term success.

As HR professionals, we have a crucial role in embedding coaching into hospital culture. Here's how we can make it happen:

Develop a Coaching Mindset
HR leaders must shift from enforcing policies to inspiring growth. Achieving this requires mastering coaching through advanced training, mentorship, and real-world application. Through active listening, constructive feedback, and continuous learning, they cultivate a high-performance culture driven by development and innovation.

Train Hospital Managers to be Coaches
Many hospital supervisors lack coaching skills simply because they've never been trained. HR should design programs to equip leaders with active listening techniques, powerful questioning skills, and the ability to provide constructive feedback.

Integrate Coaching into Performance Management
Instead of limiting feedback to annual performance reviews, embed coaching into daily hospital operations. Encourage regular check-ins, career development conversations, and real-time feedback sessions.

Create a Coaching Culture

Coaching should not be reserved for senior healthcare workers alone. Encourage peer-to-peer coaching and reverse mentoring programs, where younger staff train senior professionals on new medical technologies and patient engagement strategies.

Leverage Technology for Coaching

Digital coaching platforms and AI-driven feedback tools can help scale coaching efforts. HR tech solutions can match healthcare workers with coaches, track progress, and provide data-driven insights to refine coaching strategies.

The future of workplace coaching in hospitals is essential, not optional. As hybrid healthcare models grow, AI-driven coaching assistants, digital mentorship, and virtual support will become integral. These innovations will provide real-time guidance, enhancing both in-person and remote workforce development. Additionally, with increasing hospital diversity, coaching must be culturally responsive, addressing unique challenges to foster inclusivity and equitable growth.

Hospitals that prioritise coaching will see higher retention, engagement, and performance. Studies link coaching to reduced burnout, improved job satisfaction, and better patient outcomes. Those who neglect it risk workforce instability and declining morale. Coaching is the key to sustaining excellence in modern healthcare, and leaders must champion it to build resilient, high-performing teams.
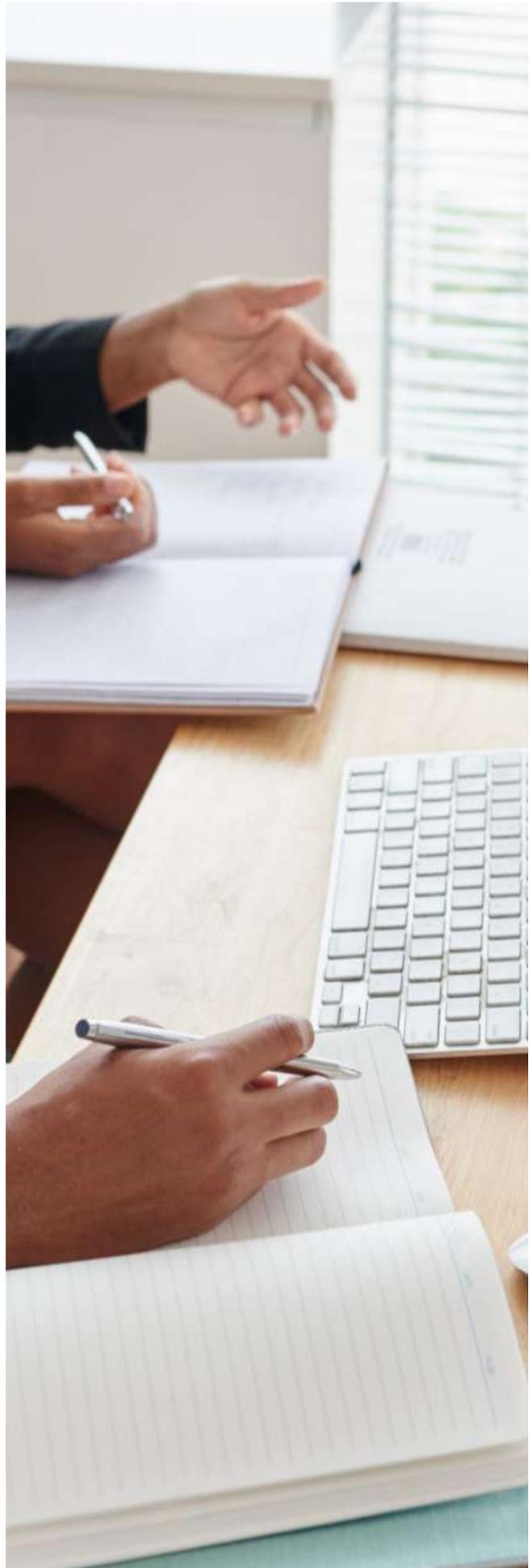
Launch of the Machakos County Government Public Service Policies

IMG_6479

Delegates during the Women Leaders in HR Breakfast

Delegates during the 6th Women in HR Convention in Naivasha

IHRM Executive Director, CHRP Quresha Abdullahi, participated in the 5th Legislative Summit 2025 hosted by The County Assemblies Forum (CAF)

CHRP Quresha Abullahi, Executive Director IHRM and Prof. Washington Okeyo-Vice Chancellor - The Management University, perusing the MoU on Monday, March 17, 2025.

Courtesy visit to the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of, the Human Resource Management Professionals Examination Board (HRMPEB)

CHRP Quresha Abullahi, Executive Director IHRM and Prof. Washington Okeyo-Vice Chancellor - The Management University, during the signing of MoU

Chief Guest Hon. Harriet Chiggai, The Presidential Advisor on Women_s Rights making her remarks during the Women Leaders in HR Breakfast

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Soline Muthua

A FAIR CHANCE FOR ALL: HOW DEI AND ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD BE PART OF JOB POSTINGS

Whenever I apply for a job, my first step is to quickly look for the company's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), as well as check for any accommodations provided for applicants. Specifically, as someone with poor eyesight, I need a large screen when working. During a written interview or assessment, I may require a larger screen or additional time to complete the test. Unfortunately, many job postings, not just the ones I am targeting but also others, do not mention these important aspects of DEI.

One major gap I often notice is that many organisations fail to provide clear DEI information both on their websites and in their job postings. While a company's website may showcase its DEI initiatives, many other companies do not include any DEI commitment on their websites or within their job postings. Job postings that don't mention accommodation details or inclusivity measures can leave applicants uncertain about the organisation's actual commitment. This lack of consistency, or even the absence of any information, between the website and job postings, may discourage qualified candidates, especially those with specific needs, from applying, as they may feel unsupported or unsure about whether accommodations will be made during the recruitment process.

For companies that fail to reflect DEI commitments across both platforms, the result is often a sense of exclusion or lack of trust. Without clear and

consistent communication regarding DEI, applicants may struggle to evaluate whether the company aligns with their values or whether they will receive the support they need. This inconsistency can also inadvertently create barriers, making it harder for qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities, to apply or feel confident in the hiring process.

Incorporating clear DEI commitments in job postings and on company websites is essential. This shows that an organization recognises the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and it helps attract a broader, more diverse pool of candidates. By sharing these commitments upfront, companies provide applicants with an understanding of how inclusive the organisation is and whether their specific needs will be supported.

A job posting could state: *"We are an equal-opportunity employer. We welcome applicants from all backgrounds, including people of all races, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and disabilities. We are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities we serve."*

Additionally, companies should consider including information about accommodations available in the recruitment process. Many candidates with disabilities or specific needs face challenges during job applications or interviews without proper support. When accommodations aren't explicitly mentioned, candidates may feel hesitant to apply

or may not know what adjustments are possible. Including this information in job postings helps make the recruitment process more accessible and inclusive, ensuring that all candidates feel encouraged to apply.

An example of a statement in a job posting could be: *"We are committed to ensuring that all candidates have an equal opportunity to participate in our recruitment process. If you require any accommodations during the application or interview process, please contact [insert name/contact details], who will assist you in making adjustments."*

This approach fosters a more inclusive application process, showing that the company is actively supporting DEI efforts. It also sends a clear message that individuals with diverse needs are valued and supported from the moment they apply.

Furthermore, the principles of DEI align with global frameworks, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 10 – Reduced Inequality – emphasizes ensuring equal opportunities and reducing inequalities in all forms, especially in employment. The importance of inclusivity is also highlighted in Kenya's DEI framework, which encourages organizations to integrate DEI into their hiring practices, policies, and operations.

Kenya's Legal and Policy Framework on DEI
Kenya has made significant strides in its legal and policy frameworks supporting DEI, particularly regarding gender equality, disability rights, and the fair representation of marginalised communities. The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, guarantees equality and prohibits discrimination based on gender, race, disability, or other grounds.

The Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) ensures that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against in the workplace and are provided with reasonable accommodations. The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) plays a key role in promoting gender equality and ensuring the inclusion of marginalised groups in employment opportunities.

However, the absence of inclusive practices in recruitment can hinder progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. This goal emphasises promoting full and productive employment for all, including persons with disabilities.

When accommodations are not provided in the recruitment process, it limits access to opportunities and perpetuates economic inequality and exclusion.

By incorporating DEI into hiring practices and making accommodations more transparent and accessible, companies can help close the gap, creating more opportunities for a diverse range of candidates. In doing so, they will not only attract top talent but also contribute to a more inclusive and equitable workforce.

The writer Soline Muthua can be reached through Email: emuthua@gmail.com

CHRP Ali Abdullahi
Surraw

LEADING WITH EMPATHY IN A TECH-DRIVEN WORKPLACE

The nature of work has changed almost beyond recognition. Technology has brought about changes in the way employees work, communicate, and relate to their organisations. The adoption of remote and hybrid work models, artificial intelligence (AI) and automation of tasks have all brought with them opportunities and challenges that are constantly testing leaders on how to adapt to these changes while maintaining employees who are engaged, motivated, and valued.

At the heart of this shift lies human-centric leadership - a leadership that puts people before processes, empathy before rigid structures and adaptability before tradition.

Technology may improve productivity and efficiency but its greatest power is in enabling employees, forging connections, and creating an environment where people flourish. Leaders who rise to this challenge will drive business outcomes and build a culture of trust, innovation, and well-being.

The Changing Role of Leadership

Leadership is no longer about commanding the workflow and setting rules; instead, it's all about listening, inspiring, and growing with the employees. Gone is the traditional top-down approach to decision-making by a few at the top; in comes a more inclusive, flexible model. Employees want leaders who can collaborate, communicate openly, and create a sense of purpose.

Technology has further reshaped leadership expectations. Today, employees work across time zones in mostly hybrid or fully remote settings. That means leaders should make people connect and engage beyond physical presence. To be sure, digital collaboration tools, virtual town halls, and AI-powered feedback mechanisms have made that easier. But technology is not enough. Leaders need to go beyond emails and virtual check-ins; they need to create cultures where employees feel truly seen and heard.

Moreover, leadership in the digital era is about empowerment rather than control. Micromanagement is ineffective in a world where employees need autonomy to thrive. Forward-thinking leaders focus on setting clear expectations, providing the right tools, and trusting their teams to deliver. They encourage innovation by creating an environment where employees feel safe to experiment, fail, and learn.

The modern leader is also a coach and mentor. As automation has taken over routine tasks, human skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence have become more valuable. Leaders should invest in developing these skills within their teams so that employees will be prepared for the jobs of the future. The best leaders don't just manage change but take their teams through the process with the necessary support and vision to adapt and grow.

Technology as an Enabler, Not a Replacer

As the rapid adoption of digital tools continues to transform the workplace, technology is only as effective as the way it is used. Organisations that see technology purely as a way to increase efficiency often miss the bigger picture—its potential to enhance the employee experience. Communication has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of digital transformation. Video conferencing, instant messaging, and project management platforms have made collaboration easier than ever. However, digital communication also comes with challenges. Overuse of virtual meetings can lead to fatigue, while excessive emails and notifications can overwhelm employees.

Leaders must set clear boundaries, encouraging efficient communication without creating digital overload.

Technology has also changed how employees learn and grow. AI-powered training platforms provide personalised learning pathways, helping employees develop new skills at their own pace. Gamification makes learning more engaging, while virtual mentorship programs connect employees with industry experts across the world. Leaders who invest in these tools show a commitment to continuous learning that will help employees stay relevant in an ever-changing job market.

Balancing Productivity and Employee Well-being

Probably the biggest challenge that has come along with the digital era is to balance productivity against the well-being of the employee. While technology made work flexible, it also meant the boundaries between professional and personal life were no longer there. Many employees feel obligated to always be on and ready; this contributes to stress and eventual burnout.

The human-centred leader knows well that productivity cannot be worth more than the minds of workers. A rested and motivated employee will always outshine an overworked and worn-out one. It is for this reason that leading organisations use technology to support well-being, not to exploit it.

AI-enabled wellness initiatives can empower employees to monitor their stress levels and promote healthy behaviours. Some organisations offer mindfulness and meditation apps, while others use analytics to spot burnout risks and adjust workloads. Leaders must promote these resources overtly so that using them makes people feel supported, not shamed, for taking care of themselves.

Another critical attribute of the modern leader is flexibility in work arrangements. To the extent technology allows employees to work anywhere, technology should also allow them to set boundaries. The best leaders model this behaviour themselves by respecting personal time, limiting after-hours emails, and encouraging regular breaks.

Check-ins and feedback also balance productivity with well-being. It's not just about the performance metrics; leaders need to understand the emotional and mental state of their employees. Such regular one-on-one conversations help in identifying the problems before they scale, hence allowing the leaders to support them when needed. The most successful workplaces are those where employees feel safe discussing their challenges without fear of judgment or repercussions.

The Future of Leadership in a Digital Age

As technology continues to evolve, so too must concepts of leadership. The winners will be those organisations that recognise, quite simply, that digital transformation is about people, not automation and efficiency.

Human-centred leadership will become even more critical as employees seek greater flexibility, purpose, and connection in their work. The future of leadership has to do with adaptability, empathy, and trust. The best leaders will use technology not as a replacement for human interaction but as a tool to enhance it. They will create workplaces that are engaging, supportive, and empowering for the employees.

The digital world may change how we work, but one thing will always be the same: it is the people who make any organisation great. Whoever leads with that knowledge builds stronger, resilient teams ready to move into the future.

The writer is a leading HR consultant with extensive experience in organisational development, talent management and workforce strategy.

HUMAN RESOURCE LEADERSHIP IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

By Dr. Chepkwei Ambrose

*T*he global phenomenon of digitisation has had a significant impact on job markets worldwide. Human resource management has evolved from personnel files stacked in cabinets to a system where these files are digitised and archived in organisational digital registries. digital human resource management has also seen the integration of various communication media including social, mobile, analytics and cloud technologies.

This transformation refers to the digital revolution currently reshaping the human resource industry, driven by advancements in human resource technologies. Innovations in digital tools enable organisations to adapt to a changing workforce, allowing HR departments to become more data-driven in many organisational processes.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the swift digitisation of work across the globe. Organisations had to quickly adapt to digital and online meetings as well as remote working. HR professionals have now embraced these new digital trends in response to global market shifts. The modern HR department now, more than before, utilises a variety of communication channels, including emails, WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, Twitter (X), Skype and Telegram.

Kenya, too, has embraced HR digitisation. The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in the country shapes a pupil's academic future and introduces students to the use of computers early in their education. This early exposure ensures that future HR professionals are familiar with digital advancements from the outset.

Today, various human resource software solutions are available in the market to manage payroll, leave and performance, automate recruitment, and facilitate virtual training. As we look to the future, strategic human resource management will continue to be shaped by digital recruitment, virtual and remote interviews, and online training. Automation in HR frees up valuable time for professionals, while digitisation enhances overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Human Resource Leaders and Digital Transformation

The digital era has created a new concept for leaders to apply essential capabilities and drive organisations to survive. Organisations are competing heavily for skilled human resource leaders who guide their organisations through the change from digital innovations to digital human resource management departments. This new digital phenomenon is highly

agile, vague and ever-changing which entails a shift in traditional practices to focus on human resource digital transformation which motivates employee experience and performance metrics. From digital transformation to artificial intelligence (AI), the human resource industry is increasingly digitised in Kenya.

Human Resource digital leadership has become significant in enhancing organisational performance through employees. The application of AI plays an essential role in uplifting organisational efficiency and innovation capabilities.

In a digitally disrupted world, organisations must embrace continuous innovation and drive digital transformation, especially in human resource processes, to thrive in the digital economy. In the hyper-competitive global marketplace, an organisation's success hinges on its ability to attract, engage, and retain top talent. Employees with innovative expertise play a crucial role in setting the organisation apart from its competitors.

Recent years have seen extraordinary trends in digital transformation, creating both interesting opportunities and significant challenges for human resource leaders. As a result, digital transformation in human resources has become a hot topic of discussion within the industry.

Traditional human resource departments were just responsible for administrative tasks, for example, salary process management, compliance with labour laws, staff recruitment, and staff relations. Human resource processes were traditionally manual and paper-based. Contemporary human resources, however, is about data-driven decisions, personalised learning and developing new human resource opportunities. Human resource digitalisation has taken over routine administrative tasks. This allows Human resource leaders to initiate employee empowerment and enhance organisational culture.

Digital human resource management is essential in attracting top talent, particularly Millennials, who are tech-savvy and Gen-Z employees who expect seamless access to technology in their work experience. Human resource leaders are pivotal in sourcing, evaluating, and implementing digital tools that drive organisational change. This transformation shifts HR activities from static processes to dynamic, strategic functions. Despite the challenges, HR leaders have a unique opportunity to enhance productivity and drive profitability by aligning digital talent with digital tasks and integrating them effectively into the organisational structure.

Improved Employee Management through Digital human resource management

It is agreed that Human Resource digital transformation can improve employee management as follows:

- **Use of Chatbots:** In recruitment and onboarding of new employees, call centre inquiries and other HR transformation process
- **Employee Self-Service:** Digital human resource management transformation enables employee self-service where they can manage leave, update personal details and access tax records for filing taxes.
- **Software for employee onboarding:** The software provides a better experience for the new employees.

Automation and AI play a major role in the digitalisation of the organisation. Human resource leaders should take the lead in the human resource digital transformation as a challenge. Digital human resource management tools include human resource information management systems, artificial intelligence (AI), and human resource analytics. This tool helps to improve employee engagement and provides real-time information about workplace trends.

CHRP Bridget Martha
MBA, CHRA

LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE:
A PERSONAL APPROACH TO ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

I hold a Master's Degree in HRM from the USA and a Bachelor's Degree in Finance from KEMU. A Certified Human Resource Professional Kenya (CHRP-K), a Certified Workplace Counsellor (CWC), a Certified Human Resource Auditor (CHRA), furthering studies in Leadership and Management at Washington University and a 2024 HR Award nominee in Trend Setter of the Year. This diverse background gives me a deep understanding of the key roles Leadership, Management and Governance play in organisational success. These principles are critical for creating transparent, empowering, and effective environments that allow both individuals and businesses to thrive.

In today's fast-paced world, leadership goes beyond titles, ranks, and hierarchies. It's defined not by the position held but by the ability to inspire, influence, and lead others toward a common vision. With my extensive background in Finance, Human Resources, Leadership and Management, I have learned that leadership is more than issuing directives, it's about guiding with purpose, managing for results, and

Beyond Titles

Often, leadership is thought to be linked to senior roles within an organisation. However, I believe true leadership isn't confined to titles. It's about influence, being someone who inspires and motivates others, regardless of their position. Leaders guide through actions, values, and decisions that encourage others to perform their best work. Leadership isn't about control or authority but empowering others to take ownership and act with confidence.

A crucial aspect of effective leadership is emotional intelligence. By understanding and managing emotions, leaders can connect more deeply with their teams, fostering trust and navigating challenges with empathy. As a Certified Workplace Counsellor (CWC), I have seen how emotional intelligence enhances leadership effectiveness, and I integrate this knowledge into my daily leadership approach.

Management: Getting Things Done with Purpose

Management is about execution, setting clear objectives, allocating resources, and ensuring that efforts are aligned with broader organisational goals. Effective management focuses on execution, ensuring that tasks are completed efficiently without being hindered by bureaucracy. Too often, management is seen as a rigid, top-down process, which can lead to inefficiencies and disengagement. I believe management should promote collaboration, accountability, and clear communication, ensuring that all team members feel supported and motivated. In my experience, management also requires balancing immediate needs with long-term goals. This involves implementing strategies, measuring progress, and adapting to changes. Whether managing a department or an organisation-wide initiative, the key to success lies in clear expectations, consistent monitoring, and timely feedback.

Governance: Leading with Integrity and Fairness

Good governance ensures that decisions are made transparently, fairly, and with respect for all stakeholders. In my experience, governance is essential for cultivating an ethical, inclusive, and just organisational culture. As organisations grow, maintaining a robust governance framework is critical for safeguarding integrity and promoting accountability across all levels.

Effective governance isn't about favouritism; it's about ensuring decisions are based on merit and fairness. As a Certified Human Resource Auditor (CHRA), I have the tools to evaluate organisational policies and practices for fairness. This focus on unbiased decision-making is central to my approach to governance, ensuring that all employees are treated equally and with respect.

A transparent governance structure fosters trust, organisational stability, and compliance with legal standards. Governance is not just for senior leaders; it impacts everyone. A commitment to ethical governance strengthens the organisational culture, from handling promotions to resolving conflicts.

The Intersection of Leadership, Management, and Governance

Through my leadership and management studies at Washington University, I have learned how leadership, management, and governance intersect. Strong leadership without effective management fails to deliver results. Similarly, management without sound governance can lead to unethical practices. Governance provides the structure that ensures leadership and management align with organisational values.

Integrating these three pillars, leadership, management, and governance is key to organisational success. As a leader, I guide and inspire. As a manager, I focus on efficient execution. And as a steward of governance, I ensure fairness and integrity. Together, these elements create a sustainable foundation for achieving goals while maintaining trust and transparency.

Conclusion

Leadership is about influence, not titles. Management is about execution, not mere direction. Governance is about fairness, not bias. Through my professional experiences and certifications, I have embraced these principles and strive to apply them in the organisations I serve. Effective leadership empowers others to succeed, management ensures results with integrity, and governance fosters a culture of fairness and transparency. By integrating these principles, organisations can thrive, individuals can grow, and the future can be shaped with purpose and confidence.

The author is a Certified Human Resource Professional, a Certified Workplace Counsellor and also a Certified Human Resource Auditor, pursuing Leadership and Management studies.

THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION: BUILDING TRUST, DRIVING CHANGE AND CREATING IMPACT

Irene Kimacia

For the past fifteen years, I have worked and observed the communication space giving me a front-row seat to the dramatic impact of leadership communication. I have seen promising institutions falter and even fail, not due to flawed strategies, but because of ineffective communication from the top. Exceptional leadership communication is not a "nice-to-have"; it's the bedrock of organisational success. It's the vital link that translates vision into reality and fuels employee engagement.

Leadership communication is more than just delivering compelling speeches or crafting persuasive emails. It's a multifaceted discipline encompassing everything from daily team interactions to navigating crisis communication. Effective leadership communication rests on three core pillars: clarity, consistency, and authenticity. These pillars ensure that messages are easily understood, delivered reliably, and perceived as genuine.

Specifically, leadership communication involves the structured flow of information, ideas, and directives from leaders to employees. This includes key practices like executive briefings (formal updates and strategic direction sharing), management visibility (leadership accessibility and interaction with employees), and strategic updates (regular communication about organisational progress). These practices create a transparent and informed environment.

Research demonstrates a strong correlation between effective leadership communication and employee engagement. When employees understand the "why" behind the organisational change, buy-in increases dramatically, accelerating transformation initiatives. Often, these initiatives stall precisely because of communication breakdowns. An Organization's transformation efforts gain significant momentum only after leadership prioritises clear, relatable messaging and two-way dialogue.

The impact of leadership communication is universal. It shapes organisational culture, drives innovation, and directly affects the bottom line. Organisations with even mediocre strategies can outperform competitors simply by fostering a culture of trust and shared purpose through excellent communication. Conversely, brilliant strategies can waste away without effective communication to rally the troops and build consensus.

In my practice, I frequently observe several communication pitfalls. One is the **"communication cascade fallacy"** – the mistaken belief that messages flow seamlessly through organisational layers. In reality, each management layer acts as a filter, potentially distorting or diluting the original message.

Another is the **"visibility paradox."** Leaders often become less visible and engage less authentically as they rise in the ranks, precisely when their presence and engagement are most needed. This creates a disconnect with employees and erodes trust.

"Channel overload" is another growing challenge. While digital tools offer immense potential, many leaders overwhelm their organisations with information across multiple platforms, leading to message fatigue and reduced impact. Strategic communication, not just more communication, is the key.

Finally, the **"feedback desert"** – where upward communication is limited or discouraged isolates leaders from ground realities and employee sentiment. This lack of feedback loops prevents leaders from understanding the true impact of their messages and decisions.

To enhance leadership communication, consider these strategies:

Prioritise Face-to-Face Communication:
Even in the digital age, direct interaction builds trust and engagement. Regular walkarounds, informal conversations, and small group discussions provide invaluable insights and keep leaders connected to the organisational pulse.

Master Storytelling: Numbers and data are important, but stories create emotional connections and enhance memorability. Leaders should develop their narrative skills to make complex strategies more accessible and compelling, translating abstract goals into relatable stories.

Create Feedback Loops: Effective communication is a two-way street. Establish multiple feedback channels, from anonymous suggestion systems to regular focus groups and skip-level meetings. Critically, demonstrate action based on this feedback to foster a culture of open communication.

Develop Cultural Awareness: In today's globalised business environment, leaders must adapt their communication style to different cultural contexts. Cultural nuances must be considered, and communication approaches adjusted accordingly.

Invest in Communication Capabilities: Treat leadership communication as a critical business capability. Invest in training and development across all management levels, including executive presence coaching and crisis communication preparation.

Looking ahead, leadership communication will only become more critical. The rise of remote work, generational shifts in the workforce, and increasing expectations to promote sustainability present new communication demands. Organisations that excel at leadership communication share key characteristics: They prioritise communication strategically, invest in developing communication capabilities, foster open dialogue, and understand that effective communication is about creating shared meaning and purpose, not just transmitting information.

Leadership communication is not optional; it's essential. Leaders who master this skill will be better equipped to navigate change, build engaged teams, and create lasting impact. By focusing on clarity, consistency, authenticity, and a strategic approach, leaders can unlock the true power of communication and drive organizational success.

Irene Kimacia is the Head of Corporate Communication at IHRM.

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CHRP Lucy Jerono Mandago

CYBERSECURITY AND EMPLOYEE TRUST:
BALANCING TECH AND PRIVACY

A costly click

One Monday morning, a human resource (HR) officer at a leading regional firm, received an urgent email from what appeared to be the company's IT department. The email warned of a system security update requiring immediate action. Without a second thought, the officer clicked the link and entered the login details. Within minutes, the company's HR system was compromised. Employee records, salary details and personal identification numbers were exposed. The breach not only led to financial losses but also shattered employee trust. How could they be sure their personal data was safe?

This scenario underscores the delicate balance between cybersecurity and employee trust. As organisations digitise HR processes, protecting sensitive employee data is no longer just an IT concern—it is a fundamental HR responsibility.

In an era where organisations are rapidly digitising HR processes, employee data is more vulnerable than ever. As HR leaders embrace digital tools to enhance the employee experience, they must also address growing concerns about data privacy, cybersecurity, and employee trust. In Kenya, where data protection laws such as the Data Protection Act, 2019 regulate the collection and handling of personal data, organisations must navigate the fine line between leveraging technology and protecting employee privacy.

The Digital Footprint of Employees

Modern HR systems collect vast amounts of employee data, including personal records, performance metrics, health information, and digital activity tracking. For example, some organisations in Kenya's banking sector use AI-driven analytics to monitor employee performance and customer interactions. While these tools enhhnce efficiency, employees may feel uneasy about being constantly monitored, leading to potential trust issues.

To bridge this gap, we as HR leaders must take the lead in sensitising employees on the purpose and safeguards of these digital systems. When employees understand how their data is used and protected, they are more likely to trust the technology. This fosters a sense of belonging and enhances overall workplace engagement.

Risks in Employee Management

As HR systems become more digitised, they become attractive targets for cybercriminals. Cybersecurity threats such as data breaches, phishing attacks, and unauthorised access to HR systems can have serious consequences.

In 2023, a leading Kenyan fintech company experienced a data breach, exposing sensitive employee and customer information. The breach not only resulted in financial penalties but also damaged the company's reputation and employee morale.

Such incidents highlight the importance of robust cybersecurity measures, especially for organisations handling large volumes of personal data. HR leaders must work closely with IT departments to ensure that employee data is protected from external and internal threats.

Ethical Considerations in Employee Data Use

Transparency is key in addressing employee concerns about data privacy. We the HR leaders must ensure that employees understand what data is being collected, why it is collected, and how it is protected. The Data Protection Act, 2019, enforced by the Office of Data Protection, requires organisations to obtain consent before collecting and processing personal data. However, many employees remain unaware of their rights, making it essential for HR leaders to provide clear communication on data policies.

Additionally, organisations should develop ethical guidelines for AI-driven decision-making in HR processes. For instance, if AI is used for recruitment or performance evaluation, employees must be assured that the system is fair, unbiased, and does not violate their privacy.

Role of HR Leaders in Protecting Employee Digital Identity

To build trust, we the leaders should implement cybersecurity best practices such as:

- *Regular Cybersecurity Training:* Educating employees on recognising cyber threats and protecting their personal data.
- *Data Encryption and Secure Access Controls:* Ensuring only authorized personnel can access sensitive employee data.
- *Clear Data Retention Policies:* Defining how long employee data is stored and when it is deleted.

Building Employee Trust in a Tech-Driven Workplace

Trust is built through transparency, accountability, and ethical use of technology. Kenyan organisations that integrate cybersecurity into their HR strategy can enhance employee confidence. For instance, in my company, the HR department has been proactive in ensuring compliance with data protection laws while using AI-driven insights for employee engagement.

For instance, in my company, the HR department has been proactive in ensuring compliance with data protection laws while using AI-driven insights for employee engagement. Employees are regularly informed about data usage policies and have access to support channels for data protection concerns. This approach fosters a sense of trust and ensures that employees feel valued, rather than just monitored.

To further strengthen trust, HR leaders should:

- *Involve employees in cybersecurity discussions—seek their input on how digital systems affect them.*
- *Create open channels for reporting concerns—so employees feel safe raising issues related to data privacy.*
- *Encourage leadership accountability—leaders must set an example by following data protection guidelines.*

As HR continues to embrace technology, balancing cybersecurity with employee trust is paramount. Kenyan organisations must align their digital transformation strategies with data protection laws while fostering an open and ethical workplace culture. By doing so, they can leverage technology to enhance the employee experience without compromising privacy.

By investing in cybersecurity training, transparent data policies, and ethical HR technology, companies can leverage technology to enhance the employee experience without compromising privacy. A secure and trust-driven workplace benefits both employees and organisations, ensuring that innovation and integrity go hand in hand.

The writer is a seasoned Human Resources Professional with over 13 years of experience in both the public and private sectors. She is the Group Head of Human Resources & Administration Services at CPF Financial Services Ltd.
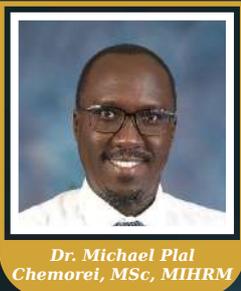
*Dr. Michael Plal
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THE IMPLICATIONS OF AI ON TALENT MANAGEMENT: HOW READY ARE YOU FOR THE DISRUPTION?

"Opportunities *multiply* as they are seized."
Sun Tzu

There is a broad agreement among scholars and practitioners that talent management can be described as actions and methods that are aimed at systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of talented employees who are of value to an organisation. Talent management creates methodical processes of identifying, assessing, developing and retaining people with critical knowledge, skills and competencies. It is therefore incumbent upon organisations that seek to win in a very competitive environment to explore fully implementing talent management.

Talent management, which is the thrust of strategic human resource management, serves the purpose of ensuring the organisation has the right employees, at the right time with the right skills to successfully execute its business strategies by performing their jobs in a particular manner. Talented employees bring to the table unique abilities, that when effectively harnessed provide a degree of certainty that employee effort, behaviour and activities contribute to the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals/objectives.

Effective talent management is heavily dependent on the automation/digitalisation of its processes.

This is achieved through putting in place an HRIS that integrates key employee data throughout the employee lifecycle. Over time, advances in HR technology have aimed to support HR's strategic role in organisations. These advances have matured recruitment systems to enable them to search for suitable candidates on the internet, deploy online assessments to screen potential candidates and onboard successful candidates suitable for their roles. Thus, ensuring the organisation has the right individual with the right competencies at the right time to enable the organisation to achieve its objectives.

Deployment of performance management systems that facilitate communication, measurement and tracking of individual performance, and their contribution to the organisation's strategic goals through cascading and alignment during the goal-setting process.

These advancements have also seen the integration of critical employee data to give real-time information on employee performance, qualifications, compensation levels and succession planning bench strength among others. The advancements too have supported people's development by providing learning management systems that provide tailored or targeted courses to meet the organisation's strategic, operational, and tactical needs.

For talent management, the world is changing fast and there is a need to adapt, or risk being encumbered with obsolete approaches, practices, and technologies. The workplace has seen seismic

shifts in ways of working with the post-pandemic workplace embracing remote and hybrid working approaches, an increase in diverse demographics working together co-located or virtually and new hiring trends based on increasingly informed and skilled workers with job options/opportunities. Of all these changes, the one with potentially disrupting capabilities that are currently unfolding is the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and its potentially infinite capabilities. This infers using technology to execute tasks that require a degree of intelligence to be undertaken.

The emergence of Big Data and innovations in the power of computing have unlocked new possibilities for AI. AI can yield amazing results by enhancing performance management, workforce planning, people analytics, virtual assistants for employee self-service, career pathing, leadership, and coaching. AI creates precise and reliable databases by making possible rapid access and transmission of data, thereby boosting human resources. AI technologies such as machine learning and natural language processing have been adopted in various processes in HR to enhance performance and create efficiencies and effectiveness of these processes. For instance, chatbots and natural language processing (NLP) can be used to enhance candidate experience by engaging in communication and addressing candidate queries. Additionally, the immense value that AI can bring to the data mining process in recruitment, by enabling the recruiter to access meaningful and insightful information about candidate(s). AI also facilitates knowledge management and learning thus building capabilities of human resources, improving performance and employee engagement.

You may already be interacting with AI in your day-to-day usage of your desktop applications. For instance, Microsoft 365 has deployed MyAnalytics which leverages AI to analyse your work patterns and help you work smarter, enhance your efficiency by helping you map out your areas of focus and optimize collaboration with your various stakeholders. All this is based on how you utilize Microsoft 365. Additionally, you can leverage another AI application; Cortana, to effectively manage your meeting schedules and Power BI, which facilitates informed decision-making by leveraging data analytics and insights. Or Open AI's ChatGPT the generative AI app that enables workers to find answers to questions on demand and aid in tasks such as creating interview screening templates, composing emails, essays and sample test questions among others.

Driving organisational effectiveness and employee productivity necessitates the adoption of digital personal assistants to optimise decision-making, free up time for higher level thinking and innovation or may see deployment of AI technologies in areas such as coaching. For instance, the AI application can harness machine learning, algorithms, voice recognition and generation of potential solutions/provoke insightful reflection and generation of cerebral perspectives based on various permutations derived from big data to provide a personalised and digital coach to enable leaders to gain clarity on their decisions and cause of actions. Coaching models such as GROW can be integrated into AI with voice command and recognition features to allow for verbal communication between the individual leaders and the app, such as demonstrated in Apple Siri with its voice command features or Android deployment of Google Assistant. For instance, LinkedIn Learning has deployed AI-powered coaching, that provides advice and tailored learning content suggestions, that are informed by the user's job title, career goals, and skills of interest.

Every strategic HR leader should therefore be asking themselves the following questions:

A) Are We Well Prepared?
1. How can my team and I leverage AI to effectively and impactfully contribute to the organisation's strategic imperatives?
2. How can I build a business case for investment in progressive technologies to optimise the management of the organisation's talent?
3. Which AI tools are best for driving your business and employee effectiveness?
4. How can I leverage AI to drive efficiencies?
5. What is the readiness level of our talent to embrace AI?

B) What Skills and Structures Will We Require?
1. How can we leverage AI to attract the right talent, identify their development needs, and provide talent retention interventions?
2. What are the various talent needs (skills and capabilities) across various demographics in the organisation and in different geographies that we operate in?
3. What jobs or roles are likely to be impacted by the advent and evolution of AI and how can I get my organisation ready for this change?
4. How can we foster continuous learning?

These and many more questions should be at the top of the minds of all strategic HR leaders and Talent managers. Much as when computers came to the workplace, AI would disrupt our approach to work and the nature of jobs. Yes, the change will impact the nature of jobs and the way we work, but what matters is how ready are we to embrace these new impending changes, seize the opportunities they present and contend with their implications on the war for talent. As in any global change event, such as the continuing war for talent, time waits for no man/organisation, it is therefore incumbent on strategic talent managers/leaders to be aware and be cautious not to wonder as in the words of Dr Seuss, *"How did it get so late so soon? It's night before it's afternoon. December is here before it's June. My goodness, how the time has flown. How did it get so late so soon?"*

This article is an excerpt from soon-to-be-published book titled How They Win: A Practical Guide to Implementation of Talent Management authored by Dr. Michael Plal Chemorei. Dr. Chemorei is a transformational, strategic, and innovative leader with 19 years of multifaceted professional experience in Human Capital Management and Development across Aviation, Banking, Manufacturing, Humanitarian and International development sectors.

By Salame Leah, AMIHRM

A *HUMAN* TOUCH IN THE DIGITAL ERA

HR is among the many professions undergoing rapid transformation, driven by technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), chatbots, and cloud-based platforms. IBM's former CEO, Thomas Watson, famously said, "Good design is good business." In HR, good design means prioritising people. While these tools promise—and to a great degree, deliver—efficiency and better decision-making, one key question remains: how do we maintain the human connection, so central to this profession while embracing technology?

We hold two critical elements in each hand, neither of which can be dropped. On one side, we must fully leverage digital tools. Conversely, we cannot lose sight of empathy and human connection.

HR software solutions, thankfully, help automate workflows, but real success lies in balancing technology with a human-centred approach. Technology in HR isn't just about speed—it's about intelligence. AI-driven chatbots and cloud HR platforms automate mundane tasks, such as answering employee queries or processing payroll, allowing HR teams to focus on strategic activities like leadership development and talent management.

Take AI-driven chatbots for onboarding, for example.

Having a 24/7 HR assistant to guide new employees through paperwork and policy information sounds like a dream. However, as helpful as chatbots are, no bot can tell a new hire an office joke, grab them a coffee, or keep them company during their first lunch at the office. AI streamlines processes, but it cannot replace human interaction when it comes to making employees feel truly welcomed. The question, then, is where to find the balance between efficiency and genuine connection.

Kenya's HR tech landscape is growing, with software solutions tailored to local workforce needs. These platforms comply with labour laws while enhancing the employee experience. SeamlessHR, for instance, is a popular cloud-based platform offering solutions for everything from recruitment to performance management. Despite being powered by technology, it emphasizes human connection by helping HR teams personalize employee experiences—from the first interview to ongoing feedback sessions. Similarly, Wagemaster focuses on HR automation, particularly in payroll and compliance management. By handling technical work, the system allows HR professionals to engage directly with employees to resolve issues and improve satisfaction. These platforms do an excellent job of streamlining HR workflows without eliminating the human touch.

They serve as tools to complement human skills and empathy—not replace them.

While AI makes HR processes more efficient, people remain a business's most valuable asset. Technology is a means to an end, not the end itself. The true essence of HR lies in human relationships, thoughtful conversations, and genuine connections. A friend of mine once shared an experience about her company implementing a chatbot for performance reviews. Initially, employees were excited about the speed and efficiency. However, one high-performing employee received a generic comment: "Good performance. Keep it up." Despite his significant contributions, the chatbot failed to acknowledge his specific efforts in a meaningful way. He felt unseen, as though his contributions were just another data point rather than a valued effort recognized by real people.

This story highlights a critical issue: AI-driven assessments must be paired with real human feedback. No algorithm can replace a manager's ability to recognise an employee's unique strengths, offer encouragement, or have an in-depth conversation about their career growth. Performance feedback is more than just a data summary—it's about listening, engaging, and supporting employees in a way that drives motivation and commitment. When feedback is impersonal, employees may feel disconnected, which ultimately impacts productivity and morale. Let's face it—AI and automation tools are here to stay. But the core of HR must remain people-centred. Our responsibility is to enhance the employee experience, not replace real human interactions.

A chatbot may process a leave request, but it won't remember an employee's favourite coffee order. A digital performance tracker may generate reports, but it won't mentor an employee through a tough project. These are the moments that define company culture and employee engagement. Striking the right balance means using AI to streamline processes while making time for meaningful, personalised interactions. Technology can monitor performance and employee satisfaction, but HR professionals must approach these insights with empathy. Administrative tasks like training scheduling can be automated, but employees still need real mentors guiding their development.

Digital tools may help assess engagement, but a strong workplace culture is built through human connection, regular feedback, and shared experiences.

The future of HR is not about choosing between technology and human interaction— it's about blending the two effectively. The best HR teams will be those that use digital tools without losing the personal touch that makes workplaces thrive. After all, businesses don't run on algorithms alone. They run on people.

To navigate this evolving HR landscape successfully, HR leaders should adopt a few key strategies. First, prioritise personalized engagement. While AI tools can handle repetitive tasks, HR teams must create space for one-on-one conversations and meaningful check-ins. Second, humanize data insights. Use technology to monitor employee performance, but analyse those insights with a focus on empathy, context, and individual needs. Third, foster continuous learning. AI can automate training schedules and offer e-learning options, but real development happens when employees have access to mentors and leaders who provide guidance and support. Finally, invest in culture-building initiatives. While technology can track engagement metrics, culture thrives on in-person interactions, shared goals, and a workplace environment that fosters collaboration and trust.

By implementing these strategies, HR professionals can ensure that technology enhances, rather than replaces, the human aspects of their role. AI can optimise operations, but it cannot replicate the emotional intelligence, creativity, and personal investment that define great HR leadership. The real challenge—and opportunity—lies in finding ways to merge digital innovation with the timeless values of human connection and care.

As HR continues to evolve in the digital age, one truth remains: employees are not just numbers or productivity metrics. They are people with aspirations, challenges, and contributions that deserve recognition beyond an algorithm. A workplace that integrates technology while staying rooted in human connection will not only be more efficient but also more fulfilling for both employees and leaders.

Technology will continue to shape the future of HR, but the defining factor will always be the people behind the systems. In a world of automation, the human touch remains irreplaceable.

The writer is a Human Resource Officer at Ichiban Tax and Business Advisory.

BALANCING INNOVATION AND COMPASSION:

HOW THE REFUGEE CONSORTIUM OF KENYA **INTEGRATES TECHNOLOGY** FOR **A BETTER WORKPLACE**

*I*n an era defined by rapid digital transformation, organisations must adapt to new ways of working while maintaining a human-centred approach to leadership. At the R**efugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK)**, where advocacy, legal aid, and humanitarian work intersect, the need for technology-driven yet human-centric leadership is more crucial than ever. As RCK continues to navigate its strategic priorities, leveraging digital tools to enhance employee experience can drive efficiency, engagement, and overall well-being. This article explores how human-centric leadership, integrated with technology, is improving workplace culture, streamlining operations and supporting employees in delivering impactful work.

My Understanding of Human-Centric Leadership in a Digital Context

Human-centric leadership focuses on placing people—employees, partners, and beneficiaries—at the heart of decision-making. It prioritizes empathy, inclusivity, and employee empowerment while fostering innovation and adaptability in a digital landscape. In the humanitarian sector, where burnout and emotional fatigue are prevalent, ensuring a supportive and engaging work environment is critical. Leaders at RCK must leverage technology not just for efficiency but also to create a workplace culture that promotes well-being, collaboration, and professional growth.

1. Digital Collaboration & Communication

Effective communication is the backbone of any organization, especially one with field workers, legal aid teams, and advocacy staff operating in different locations. Digital collaboration tools can bridge communication gaps and enhance teamwork.

- **Virtual Platforms for Connectivity:** Platforms like Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Zoom facilitate real-time communication, virtual meetings, and team collaboration. These tools help remote and on-ground staff stay aligned, reducing communication silos.
- **Asynchronous Workflows:** Project management tools like Trello, Asana, and Monday.com can improve workflow transparency, ensuring teams track progress on projects, case files, and advocacy initiatives.
- **Interactive Digital Town Halls:** Leaders can use live streaming, Q&A sessions, and digital forums to engage employees, provide updates, and foster organizational transparency.

By adopting these tools, RCK can cultivate a more connected and efficient workforce, ensuring that employees feel valued and heard.

2. AI & Automation for Operational Efficiency

The humanitarian sector often faces resource constraints, making efficiency a key priority. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation can alleviate administrative burdens, allowing employees to focus on strategic and high-impact work.

- **Legal Aid Automation:** AI-powered tools can assist legal teams in case research, document review, and drafting, reducing workload and enhancing accuracy.
- **Chatbots for Routine Queries:** AI chatbots can handle routine HR inquiries, IT support requests, and FAQs, freeing up human resources for complex issues.
- **Automated Reporting & Data Analysis:** AI can help process large datasets for case tracking, refugee demographics, and advocacy impact assessments, enabling data-driven decision-making.

By integrating AI into operations, RCK can empower its workforce to focus on its core humanitarian mission while improving efficiency and service delivery.

3. Employee Well-Being & Mental Health Support

Given the emotionally demanding nature of humanitarian work, prioritizing employee well-being is essential. Digital tools can support mental health initiatives and foster a culture of care.

- **E-Wellness Programs:** Apps like Headspace, Calm, or Welltory can offer stress management, meditation, and mental health support.
- **Virtual Counseling & Peer Support Networks:** Online therapy sessions and peer-to-peer support groups can provide employees with professional and social support.
- **AI-Powered Sentiment Analysis:** HR departments can leverage AI tools to analyze employee feedback from surveys, identifying trends related to job satisfaction and burnout risk.

Investing in digital well-being solutions ensures that employees remain motivated, resilient, and mentally equipped to handle their responsibilities.

4. Digital Learning & Professional Development

Continuous learning is vital for employee growth and organizational success. Digital platforms provide accessible and personalized learning opportunities.

- **E-Learning Platforms:** Platforms like LinkedIn Learning, Coursera, and Udemy offer courses on leadership, humanitarian law, refugee rights, and digital skills.
- **AI-Driven Personalized Learning:** AI-based systems can recommend training modules based on individual career aspirations and skill gaps.
- **Gamification & Microlearning:** Interactive quizzes, case simulations, and short video lessons can enhance engagement and knowledge retention.

Encouraging digital learning ensures that RCK employees remain well-equipped to navigate evolving challenges in refugee rights advocacy and humanitarian aid.

5. Data-Driven Decision-Making for Employee Experience

Using data analytics to understand employee engagement and workplace dynamics can inform better leadership decisions.

- **People Analytics:** HR dashboards can track trends in productivity, job satisfaction, and employee turnover, guiding strategic workforce planning.
- **Pulse Surveys & Feedback Tools:** Regular digital surveys can gauge employee sentiment, allowing leadership to address concerns proactively.
- **Predictive Analytics:** AI can analyze patterns in employee engagement, helping prevent burnout and attrition.

By making data-driven decisions, RCK leadership can foster a more responsive and adaptive work environment.

6. Cybersecurity & Digital Literacy

As RCK adopts more digital solutions, ensuring cybersecurity and enhancing digital literacy among employees is critical.

- **Cybersecurity Training:** Regular workshops on phishing, data protection, and ethical tech use help employees safeguard sensitive information.
- **Secure Cloud Storage & Case Management Systems:** Using encrypted cloud platforms ensures that legal and advocacy documents remain secure.
- **Multi-Factor Authentication & Access Controls:** Strengthening security measures protects against cyber threats and data breaches.

Prioritizing cybersecurity ensures that digital adoption enhances, rather than compromises, organizational integrity and effectiveness.


A Balanced Approach to Digital Transformation

Human-centric leadership in the digital age is about leveraging technology without losing sight of the people it serves. At RCK, integrating digital tools into leadership and operations can significantly enhance employee experience, promoting collaboration, efficiency, and well-being. However, technology should be an enabler rather than a replacement for human connection, empathy, and organizational culture.

As RCK embarks on its next strategic phase, a well-planned digital transformation strategy—anchored in human-centric principles—will empower employees to drive meaningful change. By adopting the right balance of technology, leadership empathy, and data-driven insights, RCK can continue to thrive as a leader in refugee rights advocacy and humanitarian support.

This approach will not only enhance internal operations but also improve the overall impact of RCK's mission, ensuring that both employees and the communities they serve benefit from a progressive and responsive organization. The future of leadership in the digital age is not just about adopting new tools, but about fostering an inclusive, empowered, and resilient workforce.

Alex Kakungi
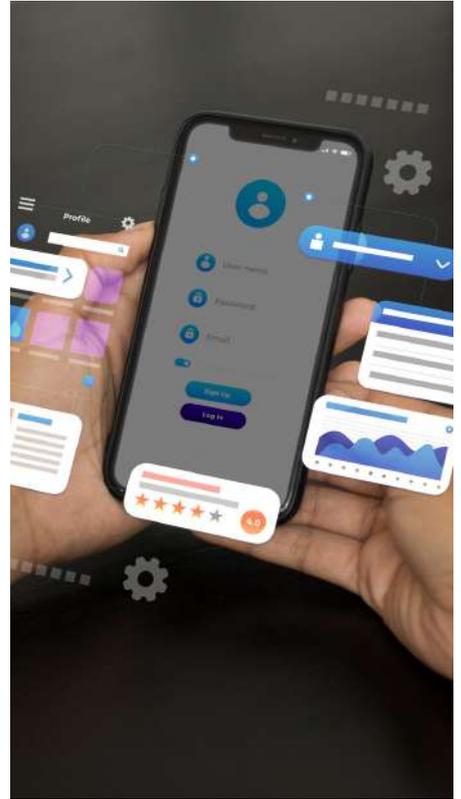
THE TRAGEDY OF RETIREMENT IN THE GIG ECONOMY

*I*n many ways, the evolving gig economy is beckoning a new yet gloomy reality of unprotected workers who may forever hustle to their old age. The traditional retirement workers have cherished for far too long is taking a new twist that scares the elderly while disillusioning young people who feel they've been over-delayed in the job waiting queue.

In Kenya, for example, workers take a perpetual leave from stable employment after reaching the age prescribed in the country's labour laws. Upon reaching the age of superannuation, which is 60 years, public officers in Kenya are expected to exit formal employment. Private sector players also follow the retirement age threshold prescribed for public servants in Kenya. Notwithstanding, the dawn of the rising gig economy is inevitably posing a silent crisis to the stable traditional employment tenure. I am apprehensive about the future of gig work especially if its core component- the digital platform- is outside the scope of the country's labour laws.

The labour market is experiencing a tectonic paradigm shift from stable, pensionable, and long-term orthodox employment to flexible and short-term gig work facilitated by digital platforms. Soumya Vadavi and Jekka Chandrasekaran Sharmiladevi described the gig economy as a short-term and flexible contract whereby digital platforms match labour supply with client demand. Some of the digital platforms setting up shops in Kenya include Uber, Bolt, Taxify, Glovo, Jumia, and Ajira Digital, just to mention a few.

In an online survey of 314 Kenyan gig workers by Tom Kwanya and Kutoma Wakunuma, it was revealed that gig workers were involved in multiple gigs in Kenya. This shows that the gig economy has expanded the labour participation market. However, the survey by Tom Kwanya and Kutoma Wakunuma found that there were no specific labour laws in Kenya to protect gig workers who are often treated as independent contractors with no entitlement to any long-term benefits. As such, gig workers are precariously exposed to labour exploitation as they are expected to solely navigate their retirement savings thus making them vulnerable to financial insecurity, more so, in old age.

I wonder, where is the place of retirement in the gig economy in Kenya? There is fear that if all factors remain constant, the future of gig work is a tragedy in waiting. I may be a pickle in the cake or rather sound pessimistic but I feel there is an urgent need for an honest discourse on the widening gaps in gig workers' well-being. I think the trend of encouraging young people graduating from middle-level colleges and universities to get into gig work can be appreciated more if there are necessary measures to protect the well-being of the workers.

I am worried about the cold shoulder given to dying conventional work as the gig economy takes over the labour landscape. I feel that the flare of gig work is overshadowing the looming crisis of workers losing financial security upon retirement. Moreover, the reality of perpetual gigging spells the silent unfolding crisis of a future retired generation hustling to their graves. I am afraid to present such a gloomy future instead of a joyful and comfortable life upon retirement. But when all is said and done will the policymakers, especially those in HR, it is vital to recognize the harsh reality of disrupted well-being of workers who may be embroiled in a lifetime hustling gig work before it's too late.

This is why I believe there is a need to embark on the daunting discourse on the frightening demise of workers' well-being caused by the harsh reality of gig work. I trust that such a discourse can brighten the impending dark days after getting weary of gig working life. I am not offering a panacea to the silent crisis of the imminent death of gig workers' well-being upon retirement. But, I believe that the discourse will point to a promising direction that provides formidable financial safety nets to workers during and after exiting the gig labour market.

In my view, HR professionals can play a critical role in spearheading the discourse to salvage gig workers' well-being. As HR professionals, I would expect that we, in this industry, prioritise this concern by empowering gig workers to navigate the dynamic contemporary labour landscape. Although it may be a bit late, it is worth noting that gig workers deserve legal protections similar to those enjoyed by employees in stable and pensionable employment. Gig workers should be protected from outrageously greedy owners of capitalistic digital platforms purporting to create flexible and desirable jobs. And this is our patriotic and professional duty as HR champions.

Isn't it time to establish a legal framework to safeguard the well-being of gig workers, similar to the protections that traditional workers receive under Kenya's labour laws? Isn't it time to bridge the gap between the protected but dying traditional employment and the evolving unprotected gig work in Kenya? Isn't it time to discuss the tensions between huge profit-driven digital platforms and the well-being of gig workers in Kenya? The answer is, "Yes it is time!" Therefore, in light of the rapid rise of work-driven digital platforms, strong and gig-specific laws are essential to shield gig workers from further exploitation. It's crucial to elevate the conversation around gig work before it's too late, especially to safeguard workers in Kenya from a looming crisis— particularly after retirement. Gig work is here to stay and we must act now to protect workers.

The author is a Certified Human Resource Professional of Kenya transitioning to a research position at Humanity Praxis, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

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