# HRIMAN MAY-AUG 2025 ISSUE MAY-AU

A Publication of the Institute of Human Resource Management



# Data-Driven Decisions: How Analytics are Reshaping HR in Kenya

People Before Policies:
Why the IHRM Mandate Matters
More Than Ever





# RIPPIE POUCAST

Stay ahead in the world of human resources by tuning into the Institute of Human Resource Management's podcast, "The Ripple." With new episodes released every month, this series offers invaluable insights, the latest trends, and best practices that can elevate your HR skills and knowledge. Be sure to tune into "The Ripple" regularly and take your career to the next level with its valuable insights!



YOUTUBE @IHRMKenya



SPOTIFY
IHRM Kenya

Powered by IHRM



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER STORY



04

09



HR & DATA

HR PRACTICES



22

29





**PICTORIAL** 

HR & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



33

# EDITORIAL TEAM

Senior Editor Irene Kimacia Photographer and Communications Officer Daniel Nyoike

Copy Editing & Graphic Design: TINDAPIXELS COMMUNICATIONS



# Executive Director's

# **Data-Driven Decisions:**

How Analytics are Reshaping HR in Kenya

Highlighting the importance of HR analytics and workforce data in informing strategic decisions, such as identifying talent gaps, predicting attrition, optimizing recruitment channels, assessing training effectiveness, and understanding employee sentiment.

As we continue to advance the HR profession in 2025, this edition of our magazine zeroes in on a game-changing theme: "Data-Driven Decisions: How Analytics are Reshaping HR in Kenya." In today's increasingly complex and dynamic work environment, harnessing the power of HR analytics is no longer optional, it is essential.

This quarter's focus highlights how workforce data and evidence-based insights are transforming the way we approach talent management, organizational development, and strategic planning. From identifying critical skills gaps and forecasting attrition trends to optimizing recruitment strategies and evaluating training impact, analytics is becoming the cornerstone of effective HR leadership.

In this issue, you will find valuable contributions that explore the tools, methodologies, and success stories driving this data revolution. We delve into how Kenyan organizations are applying analytics to understand employee sentiment, improve retention, and align people strategies with business outcomes. These insights not only inform better decision-making but also position HR as a vital strategic partner at the executive table.

This thematic focus is closely aligned with our ongoing commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD), empowering you with the knowledge and practical tools to thrive in a datadriven era. It also reinforces the goals of our Strategic Plan 2023-2027, particularly in fostering innovation, compliance with the HRMP Act, and advancing the profession through informed advocacy and reform.

I encourage each of you to immerse yourself in the content of this edition and reflect on how data and analytics can elevate your HR practice. Let us continue to grow together as a community of forward-thinking professionals, using insight, not intuition, as our compass for decision-making.

Thank you for your continued commitment to building a smarter, stronger, and more impactful HR profession in Kenya.





ikki Germany is a visionary leader stands the whose career at intersection of human resources. business management, technology; three domains she has expertly woven together to spearhead transformational change as the CEO of Moringa School in Kenya. Nikki's professional journey began in the human resources field, a foundation that instilled a deep commitment to people development, skills growth, and employability. "I had the first phase of my career working in human resources. So now being back and working with the association, you know, makes it feel a little bit like I'm returning to my roots," she reflects.

Her transition from HR to business management unfolded in the tech industry, taking her to global leaders such as Google and Expedia, where she married her passion for people with the dynamism of technology. This unique combination of skills helped shape her vision of digital skills development as a powerful lever for economic empowerment. Nikki moved to Kenya eleven years ago, diving into the local education and technology ecosystem.

She then embraced leadership roles that spanned education, e-commerce, and technology before returning to the education sector to lead Moringa School, a role she describes as "really just the perfect mix of my passion for people development, my passion around technology, and my expertise in business management."

"What really excites me about Moringa School is that it truly brings together everything I'm passionate about: people, business management, and technology," Nikki says. "It's rare to get to work in an organisation where all these elements come together in one place. We've had incredible impact, and it's thrilling to be at the forefront of technology innovation. It's incredibly rewarding to see how our work helps our students launch careers and how we support the industry by delivering the talent and skills it needs to move forward."

Moringa School has evolved into Kenya's premier technology skilling institution, uniquely positioned to serve three broad customer groups with tailored offerings. Firstly, the school provides entry-level learners-fresh out of high school or university-



with the essential tech skills needed to secure their first job. *Secondly,* Moringa supports working professionals seeking to enhance their capabilities in fast-growing fields such as data science, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and software development. *Thirdly,* the school partners with organizations to deliver customized training tailored to their specific upskilling needs, ensuring that companies can build agile, future-ready workforces.

"Our whole reason for being is to develop the tech talent the world needs," Nikki explains. "We offer programs in software development, data science, data analytics, cybersecurity, product design, Artificial Intelligence, and tech leadership. We work hard to keep our courses practical and relevant because we understand what industry demands today and tomorrow. We don't just teach theory; we prepare learners to excel in real-world roles."

In the more than a decade that Moringa has been active, Nikki is especially proud of the breadth of impact the school has achieved. "We've educated over 14,000 people so far, and that has been a huge impact on careers, livelihoods, and the organizations employing our graduates," she notes. "We are also incredibly proud of our partnership with Mastercard Foundation, which has enabled thousands of learners who couldn't afford our programs to attend through scholarships. This inclusivity is core to our mission." Moringa is also the only TVETA-accredited institution offering technology boot camps in Kenya, cementing its leadership in digital skills education.

Looking ahead, Nikki is optimistic about the transformative potential of technology, especially in data and Al. "I'm incredibly excited about where technology is heading. It's going to transform how businesses operate and get things done. I'm glad to see a renewed interest in data because data is the foundation that makes Al work effectively. Al isn't new—it's been around since the 1950s—but generative Al and agentic Al, where Al can create things or perform tasks autonomously, are game changers. Our role at Mooring is to equip everyone, not just tech specialists, with the skills to use these powerful tools to be more productive."

She also highlights cybersecurity as a growing imperative, amplified by Al-enabled threats and new data privacy regulations. "Cybersecurity is a big focus for organizations now, protecting their valuable data in a world of evolving risks."

Nikki's HR roots continue to influence her thinking on the future of work.

"HR is really well-positioned to be a key architect of how organizations evolve technologically and culturally. The perception of HR has shifted; many companies now view HR as a critical strategic function. By leveraging data and technology, HR can become a driving force behind skills gap analysis, recruitment optimization, and workforce planning."

Reflecting on her experience at Google, she recalls, "The people analytics function was one of the most important areas, driving decisions by using data about people. At Moringa, we even offer analytics for HR professionals to build those capabilities."

Nikki emphasizes the importance of data privacy in HR technology. "The technology must be set up to restrict access so only authorized people see sensitive information. Integrity and confidentiality are essential on the human side too. This combination ensures employee data remains secure while unlocking its value for strategic decisionmaking."

Within Moringa School, data and technology underpin every aspect of operations-from marketing and customer care analytics to Alpowered chatbots that improve student support. "We use data extensively to optimize everythingmarketing effectiveness, call response times, classroom learning management systems. Our next big focus is integrating more Al-driven automation to free our teams to concentrate on strategic, valueadded initiatives," Nikki reveals.

Her leadership also extends to partnerships, such as the collaboration with the Institute of Human Resource Management (IHRM) to develop an AI for HR Professionals program.

"It's about practical skills—not coding—but showing HR practitioners how AI can streamline repetitive tasks, improve decision-making, and enable them to take on more strategic roles."

For young people entering the workforce, Nikki offers grounded advice: "Get a strong foundation in your chosen craft—whatever it is—and go deep. Stay curious and be ready to continually upskill. Al and technology are tools; find ones that work for you and master them. Don't get overwhelmed by the noise-pick one or two tools that give you real returns and run with those."

Looking to the future, Nikki envisions HR professionals not just adapting to technology but leading organizational transformation. "Technology change is really about people. A few organizations are merging their HR and Tech departments because

they realize HR understands people best. The HR professional of tomorrow will be a strategic voice driving technology adoption, managing change, and shaping the future workplace."

Nikki Germany's journey-from HR professional to business leader to education pioneer-epitomizes the power of combining passion for people development with technology and strategic vision. Under her stewardship, Moringa School is not just transforming individual lives but rewriting Kenya's digital future, producing a new generation of tech talent ready to innovate on the global stage. Nikki proudly says, "This is my home now; I'm Kenyan at heart, and I'm excited to be part of this incredible story."





# Syour HR firm ready to stand out?

Register with the Institute of Human Resource
Management and take your HR services to the next
level!

# Registration Requirements

- Copy of Registration/Incorporation certificate, CR12,
- PIN/VAT
- Memorandum & Articles of Association/Constitution where applicable
- Copy of title deed or a Registered lease
- Copy of a valid practicing certificate of one partner or principle shareholder





Book Now www.ihrm.or.ke



et's be honest. Obeying quality data when making decisions at work is still a tall order for many organisations, not just in Kenya but across the globe. And while data is everywhere - sitting in office dashboards, HR reports, and systems – many of us still go with our gut or do what we've always done. Why? Yes. Perplexing.

This reality made me think about what Martin Heidegger (1889-1979), a German philosopher, once said about living an authentic life in an inauthentic world. Heidegger said that even if we live a life of the 'crowd', we face the wrath of death 'alone'. Here, Heidegger was persuading people to take responsibility for their choices in life. I think this speaks directly to us as HR professionals. If we want the HR profession in Kenya to evolve, we must truly become data-driven. Becoming fully data-driven in HR decision-making, especially in the face of today's ambient uncertainties, requires authentically bold leadership.

HR professionals are the voice of the people in organisations. But in this data-rich world, we must also be the voice of data. As someone with several portfolios, including HR academic, researcher, and practitioner, I've had first-hand experience with how difficult it is to be a data advocate in decisionmaking. Recently, a close friend told me how, guided by data, he led a rather painful downsizing process.

The employees who were laid off perceived him as the 'devil's incarnate', even though he was acting in the best interest of the company. The interest in saving the company in the aftermath of COVID-19. He diligently carried out the assignment of downsizing, but little did he know that he was the last one to face the chainsaw! True to the word, he was shortly laid off, and the company was wound up.

This was painful. But what I would regard as the most shocking reality was that despite the HR having the correct data, he presumed that he was to be the 'last man standing'. Perhaps, he convinced himself that his role was so important that he would be spared even after the winding up of the company. He was 'living in a fool's paradise' even when all data pointed to an imminent closure of the company. So, I asked myself: Why do we ignore data, even when it's staring us in the face?

The truth is that many of us are used to making decisions based on intuition, experience, or even obsolete principles. And when novel data emerges, especially if it challenges what we know, we panic.

We freeze or we reflexively defend ourselves by reaching for a weapon that we know how to use; old data that we have mastered how to use, even though the battle has changed. We think that new data in a moment of uncertainty would leave us open and vulnerable, for we do not know what flank it might leave exposed. So we grab an old club that we know how to use because we have swung it many times before, and we beat the surprising novel data to death or run away before it can make an indelible mark in our mind. You know, sometimes, we reject novel data not because it's invalid, but because it makes us uncomfortable. It exposes weaknesses in systems we've defended for far too long.

But here's the heart of the matter — if we're always scared and defensive, we'll never learn to use new data in making informed HR decisions within organisations. And if this is the reality, then we'll never move forward. I think it's time we start asking ourselves: As HR professionals, how do we become better at embracing data, especially the kind that's bitter to swallow?

Let's be real: implementing bold, data-driven decisions can be costly. Sometimes, it may be my job, as I have demonstrated earlier, in a company where a friend of mine, who was in charge of the layoffs, ended up being declared redundant. But if a company fails because we refused to act on the right data, shouldn't we take some of that blame too? Riding with the tide or ignorantly pleasing the leadership by sticking to obsolete HR data isn't professional – it's contrary to the Certified Human Resource Professional (CHRP-K) oath that we took to uphold ethical and professional standards as HR practitioners.

Yes. As HR leaders, we shouldn't fear data-driven HR decisions. We are called to leap and take bold, data-driven HR decisions, even if they sometimes expose the worst fate – losing our jobs. To be authentic and make the correct data-driven decisions shouldn't be an option but the guiding principle of an HR professional. After all, if all the data points to an imminent redundancy but for the sake of self-preservation, I give contrary advice, then I'll eventually not escape the wrath of the chainsaw. It's here we're called to be authentic as HR leaders by aligning ourselves with the voice of new data when making HR decisions.

We therefore need to stop treating data as a foe. Instead, we need to see data as a partner that's helping us make sense of the crises facing organisations today. Data isn't mere numbers. It is reflective insights or solutions to the problems facing us. Data in HR decisions acts like a navigational compass, guiding organisations toward the 'True North' even amid ambient uncertainties in the world. Data tries to tell us what to fix, where to focus, and

how to grow. But it can only help us if we're willing to pause, listen, and reflect on its hums beckoning us to change.

Change is hard, especially when it challenges embedded HR processes. But just like Galileo Galilei, whose scientific discovery that discredited the old view of the universe was rejected in his time, facts in data eventually win. Remember, long after Galileo died in 1642, his science was found valid, and he was declared the 'Father of Modern Science'. Similarly, if HR must evolve, then we can't afford to remain stuck in a rigid mindset of 'this is how we've always done it' even when data points to a different course of action.

Being authentic to data-driven HR decisions isn't easy at all. Yes, the top managers may detest being challenged by data that disrupts their status quo. But the solution isn't to ignore that data. It's to use it responsibly, communicate it well, and agitate for change with integrity and boldness.

I see Kenya's HR landscape as full of potential. I believe we can be the benchmark for data-driven HR decisions in Africa, and of course, around the globe. But it won't happen unless we have bold champions — people who are ever ready to firmly but respectfully speak the truth in data, even when it's unpalatable. We've to choose to be HR leaders who are willing to be unpopular, even if it means facing the wrath of the chainsaw while doing the right thing.

Data is humming to us. But, are we ready to listen to the humming data? Being an authentic HR professional in inauthentic workplaces means being willing to stand by what the quality data hums — even when it's contradictory, paradoxical or ambivalent. Be bold. Quality data will validate our bold data-driven HR decisions — even if it's too late. I call upon HR leaders to obey data as our guiding star.

The author is a Strategy Advisor at Humanity Praxis, a Non-Governmental organisation. He's a reviewer for the Cogent Business and Management journal, published by the Taylor and Francis Group. He's a Member of the Editorial Board, British Journal of Business and Psychology Research by Porcelain Publishing International. He's a member of the Institute of Human Resource Management and a part-time lecturer at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Karen Campus. He studied Philosophy, Human Resource Management and became a Certified Human Resource Professional of Kenya in June 2021.



HR often finds itself wedged between two opposing perceptions. To executives, it can seem overly procedural, while to employees, it's often reduced to policy enforcement. Neither view truly reflects the strategic value HR can bring to an organisation. Yet, across industries, talent management remains a top-three priority for CEOs. Paradoxically, confidence in HR's ability to deliver on that priority remains low. This is the gap that data can close.

We, the HR professionals, are no longer just caretakers of processes. HR leaders have access to insights few other functions do: data on absenteeism, internal mobility, training outcomes, engagement, and attrition patterns. When used correctly, this data can be a strategic asset. It can influence decisions around cost, culture, productivity, and performance, giving HR a seat at the strategy table where growth is negotiated. In times of uncertainty, the teams with people insights are the ones influencing strategy. Companies that embed HR into decision-making and empower it with workforce data are, therefore, better positioned to weather disruption successfully.

Kenya is no exception. The post-COVID workplace, economic strain, and a rising Gen Z workforce demand faster and more human-centred responses. This is HR's moment to not only support strategy but to lead it as well.

# Data Is the New Influence

The most forward-thinking HR teams no longer wait to be invited into strategic conversations. Remember, a large number of businesses still view HR as an administrative and procedural function. In the Kenyan context, for many businesses, HR is not seen as a revenue-generating department. That can change when HR shows up with data.

Google is an excellent example of what's possible when HR uses data as a strategic lever. In the early 2000s, Google operated with a famously flat structure. Engineers ruled the roost and managers were almost an afterthought. Then, employee exit interviews raised a red flag: people were leaving because their managers weren't supporting them. This led the people operations team to dig into the data, an initiative named Project Oxygen.

They collected over 10,000 observations across performance reviews, upward feedback, engagement survey scores, and cross-referenced these with productivity metrics to answer one question: Do managers really matter? Data showed they did. Next, they wanted to know what differentiates a great manager. The people ops team reviewed qualitative feedback, identified topperforming managers, and conducted double-blind interviews. They extracted eight core behaviours, including listening, coaching, and empowerment,

and later refined them into eight actionable leadership traits.

Using that data, Google trained managers on those eight behaviours, integrated the criteria into performance reviews, and incorporated them into hiring and promotion decisions. Google saw statistically significant improvements in managerial quality across the board. The credibility Project Oxygen earned opened doors, and people operations became a trusted advisor at Google. That trust led to initiatives like Project Aristotle (to decode team effectiveness), algorithms predicting flight risk, and workplace design tweaks such as adjusting plate sizes to nudge healthier habits. Because they were able to link managerial performance, retention, and culture, people operations earned a seat at the executive table and redefined what HR could achieve in times of disruption.

Kenyan HR teams will most likely not have the budget or the bandwidth that can match Silicon Valley's. But, on the flip side, you already sit on rich sources of workforce data: absenteeism trends, turnover patterns, internal movement, training effectiveness, and more. When HR uses such data to speak the language of the business - risk, cost, performance - it stops being a support function and becomes a strategic partner.

### Going from Admin to Strategy Architect

HR leaders today work with businesses plagued by disruption. Budgets are tighter, organisations are under pressure to become more agile, and Gen Z is bringing new expectations to the workplace. This generation wants more than a paycheck; they're asking for purposeful work, flexibility, accountability, and psychological safety. Employee experience will be drastically different from what organisations are used to. Data, specifically data in the hands of HR, will have one of the biggest influences on whether

organisations move at the pace of these changes or not.

According to a McKinsey report, future-ready companies share three traits: "clarity about what they stand for, a bias for speed and simplicity, and the capacity to continuously learn." For HR, enabling those traits will require data.

### Where Should HR Start?

Gaining executive buy-in to ensure you're at the strategy table won't be easy. However, you can use the data you already have at hand to start building your case. First, change the team's mindset from reporting to diagnosing. Instead of asking, "How many people left?" ask, "Why are they leaving, and how soon did we replace them?" More importantly, collaborate with finance, operations, or IT to validate and strengthen these insights.

Equally important is knowing how to communicate findings. Show what the issue is, what the data says, and what action it supports. This ability to connect data to decisions is what can transform HR into a strategic function. HR is uniquely positioned to lead. However, that leadership won't come from compliance checklists or performance templates. It will come from HR stepping forward with insights that position the organisation to increase revenue and maintain its greatest asset: its people!

Emmanuel Mutuma is the Founder and CEO of Bridge Talent Management, a leading HR and payroll solutions firm based in Nairobi. With over a decade of experience shaping East Africa's talent landscape, he is known for building high-performing teams, streamlining workforce operations, and driving strategic partnerships across the continent.

### **Contact details:**

+254 721543149 | emmanuel@bridgetalentgroup.com www.bridgetalentgroup.com.









# ARE YOU HARD-FACTS HR?

# THE FUTURE OF HR IS DATA-DRIVEN.

This is no longer a buzzword; it's a shift. Today, every HR professional is expected to be tech-savvy and data-literate. We can't afford to lead with gut feeling alone. Office politics, insider "intel", or business instinct are no longer enough. We must evolve.

HR has always worked with people, not machines, not hardware. Just people. Unpredictable, emotionally rich, and complex. Yet ironically, our decisions have often lacked evidence. We have hired on good vibes, promoted on tenure, or gone with what felt right. It's not unfamiliar; it's how we often vote in Kenya. Not based on data, but emotion. We have the records, the policies, the service history, yet we recycle the same choices. In data terms, that's called "garbage in, garbage out". Poor or shallow input leads to flawed output. In HR, that output affects real lives.

That's where people analytics comes in. Gardner's model defines it as "the collection and application of talent data to improve critical talent and business outcomes." In this article, I use people analytics

and HR analytics interchangeably; they both help us make smarter, fairer, and more impactful decisions. Other sectors like finance, education, and public policy have embraced evidence-based practice for years. HR can't afford to lag behind.

Think of the 2024 and 2025 Finance Bills protests in Kenya. For many, the issue wasn't abstract; it was personal. People saw the numbers (data), felt the impact, and reacted. That's what analytics does. It turns data into meaning. HR must do the same. The best analytics don't remove humanity, they sharpen our understanding of it.

HR is grounded in the social sciences. But today's HR leader needs more than intuition; we need data fluency. This means blending empathy with evidence, aligning values with insight. HR is no longer a support unit. It must act as a strategic business partner, guiding decisions on hiring, retention, engagement, and growth.

# SO, WHAT IS DATA IN HR?

It's everywhere. CVs, performance reviews, leave trackers, exit interviews, engagement surveys, payroll logs, training records. Yet many teams collect and store data without using it. Few ask: What trends are emerging? Are we hiring and retaining the right people? Are we paying fairly? Are we compliant and audit-ready?

If you are in HR today and not leveraging technology, you are already a step behind. Every data-literate HR team should be using or at the very least be familiar with the key tech tools across different HR functions, as each area generates valuable data that informs decision-making and can be linked to HR technology.

- HRIS (e.g., BambooHR, Workday): to manage employee data
- Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) (e.g., Workable, Greenhouse): for recruitment tracking
- Payroll/Benefits Tools (e.g., QuickBooks, SageHR. even Excel): for streamlined compensation.
- **Employee Engagement** Tools (e.g., SeamlessHR): to measure sentiment and recognition.
- Learning Management Systems (e.g., SAP Success Factors): to track skills and development
- Al Tools (e.g., Al-powered chatbots and automation tools): used to automate responses and personalise user experiences.
- Data Visualisation (e.g., Power BI, Tableau): to translate raw data into actionable insights for HR reporting.



These tools don't replace the human; they amplify our ability to understand and support people. And they house the data we need. Still, having the data is step one. *The real value comes from transforming data into insight*. That means cleaning, analysing, and applying it.

And this is where many HR professionals get stuck. Most stop at descriptive analytics, simple reports of what happened. But we need to go further:

- Diagnostic Why did it happen?
- Predictive What might happen next?
- Prescriptive What should we do about it?

This is the shift from reporting to leading.

# START WITH METRICS THAT MATTER

According to AIHR, organisations that leverage people analytics see up to 25% more productivity. The journey begins with understanding the right metrics. While time to hire and turnover are common, here are two often overlooked Strategic HR metrics:

### Cost of HR per Employee

Reflects the organisation's total investment in HR services and operations per employee.

Formula: Total HR Costs : Total Employees

#### HR to Employee Ratio

This indicates HR's efficiency and capacity to support business needs.

Formula: Number of HR Staff ÷ Total Employees

**Benchmark**: Often 1 HR staff per 50 employees, but this varies.

These numbers speak not just to cost, but also to capability and impact.

In conclusion, the best HR leaders today blend heart with hard facts. Empathy without evidence is guesswork, and data without purpose is just noise. People analytics is not just a tool; it's a mindset shift. If HR is to truly earn its place at the strategic table, we must be data-driven, insight-led, and people-first.

The author is a seasoned Human Resource professional and IHRM Member No. 12563 (Nairobi/Central/North Eastern Chapter), with nearly a decade of experience across international NGOs, the private sector, national government, and public institutions. Her work spans development, humanitarian response, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding, supporting organisations funded by philanthropic foundations, government agencies, and multilateral institutions. She is passionate about People Analytics and Talent Acquisition, driving these concepts from strategic vision to practical execution. Fancy has led People & Culture strategy, HR governance, and workforce planning across global and regional settings, with deep expertise in the EMEA region, particularly Africa. She can be reached through:

+254 714 406 725 | fancymutangili@gmail.com www.linkedin.com/in/fancymutangili



Jacob Mutuma

them.

# Analytics Will Turn Kenya Into an HR Superpower

s an anxious, eager and excited attache, in 2021, I began my first HR experience with the Kenya Revenue Authority (Southern Region). I ensured that it would be worthwhile since I understood that the opportunities were rare. I volunteered to learn even in new locations, observed meetings and responded to questions as required in order to learn. That attitude also gave me an additional 11 months as an HR Assistant and a staff of six, which enabled

me to learn how to remain cool when faced with

pressure due to policies or staff issues, as well as the

operations of a large-scale. I remain very indebted to

Being an HR Officer of a company dealing with transportation and logistics in Kilifi County in 2024, I started a new undertaking. One 200-man crew with 70 per cent drivers, 20 percent mechanics, and 10 percent in the office moved at a frantic pace. Each absence made a difference. Every delay had costs. As any other HR officer, I took charge of recruitment, leaves, and grievances. Nevertheless, I did not succeed in getting rid of the feeling that something was missing. I was countering issues instead of controlling them. I did not possess any data. I was not attentive.

And then, almost by chance, a spark came. In October 2024, I attended an HR analytics seminar. Everything was clear. I learned that data could not only be utilised in order to solve problems but also in order to predict them. I began tracking fuel use by the drivers, tardiness and mapping complaints to routes. Programs such as Excel, could no longer enjoy the exclusive use of spreadsheets; now they were windows to performance trends. It was the first time I was not only helping people. Getting them, I was.

It sparked when I read in a Citizen TV article the comment made by CS Geoffrey Ruku on the 25th of May 2025 during the 11th National HR Congress in the city of Mombasa. Drawing on a rather prolific list of use cases, he said, the future of HR is predictive rather than reactive and exhorted HR workers to embrace AI and analytics. I could hear that. My

personal growth could be identified in that national vision and this is my motivation to act at once.

To pursue my higher-level critical thinking skills, I searched for an initiative where I could pursue a master's degree in Kenya. However, I could not find any initiative that would admit a non-technical candidate. That is when I made my decision to go overseas. The first school which met my attitude and allowed me to realise my desires and HR experience was the University of Louisville. Their Master of Science in Business Analytics program was the door that opened a hitherto long-seemingly closed door.

I am about to commence that journey. I believe it is better than studying Python or Power BI. It entails enhanced questioning, linkages between people data and company goals and creation of smart, scalable and deep-human people approaches.

In my opinion, the Kenyan HR sector is at the crossroads. Either we can continue the outdated processes or lead the continent to a smarter and more adaptable future. CS Ruku was right; sight HR must become a tech-enabled strategic partner. This involves embracing analytics, AI, and automation as an instrument and not as an enemy.

Consider the possibilities of identifying the best performers, predicting attrition before the fact or designing wellness programs that rely on live feedback. This is already happening in global HR, hence, is not a mere fantasy. That is where it should be happening.

In the end, my end goal is to establish a consulting company which will help Kenyan firms, especially those in the public sector, logistics, and SMEs, to utilize data to make timely, equal, and effective decisions. However, I need to learn first. That is why I am going to Louisville.

The author is a Human Resource officer based in Kilifi County. He has previously worked with the Kenya Revenue Authority. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resource Management and is preparing to pursue a Master of Science in Business Analytics at the University of Louisville.



**Data and Analytics:** 

# Making a Case for HR Decision-Making



n today's global environment, organisational are undergoing ecosystems significant changes to stay competitive. In this context, Human Resources plays a vital support role, responsible for making many key decisions. This article aims to provide an overview of data and analytics, emphasising their practical use, importance, applications, and challenges in HR decision-making. Furthermore, the article will explore the applications of HR analytics across various areas, including talent acquisition, performance management, employee engagement, learning and development, and retention strategies, while also highlighting data sources relevant to HR analytics.

### Operationalisation

From a historical perspective, using data and analytics to inform decisions is not new. Recently, HR practitioners used simple data to make administrative decisions, like tracking staffing, training, and industrial relations. Nevertheless, with the growth of big data and powerful computers, leaders have shifted from relying on intuition, observation, and suspicion-based choices to a technology-focused, evidence-based approach, utilising quantitative HR metrics to gain valuable insights.

## **Data Points**

**Workforce planning and acquisition:** This is a strategic process designed to ensure the

organisation maintains optimal staffing levels. Key metrics include analysing past data to identify trends, such as recruitment success rates, sources of successful candidates, and the quality of interviews. The insights presented here can help HR make predictions about candidate availability and develop prescriptive models for recruitment, career advancement, and retention.

**Learning and development:** A critical process that equips employees with the competencies needed for their roles. By analysing employee performance, skills, competencies, and career goals, HR can identify gaps and take a proactive approach to align interventions with each person's career aspirations and work preferences.

**Performance Management:** Performance management systems have often been seen as subjective and judgmental; however, technological advancements have made them more objective and comprehensive. This boosts trust by providing clear key performance indicators, such as completion rates, defects, NPS, revenue per employee, and profits per FTE. Such an approach helps organisations evaluate performance accurately, identify gaps, and plan interventions.

**Employee engagement:** Employee engagement refers to an individual's commitment and willingness to contribute to an organisation's success, as evidenced by their discretionary

efforts. Key indicators include engagement rates, performance review reports, turnover rates, and satisfaction scores. By utilising predictive analytics, HR can identify the primary drivers of employee engagement and staff turnover.

Talent Management: Talent management is crucial for HR success because it focuses on identifying, developing, and retaining future leaders. Metrics such as the Net Promoter Score, which categorises promoters, passives, and detractors, along with the cost per hire and the strength of the slate, provide valuable insights into staff quality and help inform and improve talent strategies.

# **Significance**

Organisations that practice Data-Driven Decision Making might potentially benefit from the following:

#### Strategic Alignment:

HR analytics should align with organisational strategic goals, such as business growth targets. For example, a 10% quarterly increase in new business and 5% organic growth. As such, leaders can align teams and individual KPIs and develop metrics to monitor progress. Analysing these metrics can provide insights into whether the company is on track, thereby enabling necessary adjustments.

### **Cost Management**

Uncontrolled costs can harm an organisation; however, this can be mitigated through effective budgeting, control, and monitoring. For example, HR data can indicate whether to retain or modify specific initiatives, such as wellness programs, reveal how turnover and absenteeism affect performance, and inform decisions on retention strategies and flexible or remote working arrangements.

#### **Employee Experience**

An employee experience (EX) encompasses how employees perceive and navigate their journey within a company. Data from engagement, NPS, and satisfaction surveys can provide valuable insights into employees' reasons for staying, help improve corporate culture, boost morale, and foster a sense of belonging.

# **Risk Management and Compliance**

The HR department must comply with legal and regulatory requirements. For instance, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) go beyond equal employment opportunity (EEO), but are now essential legal and best practices. Such data can help organisations evaluate compliance with laws like the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Articles 27, 41, and 232, which emphasise equality and protection from discrimination, as well as the Persons with Disabilities Act, among others. Additionally, HR analytics can provide insights into whether the company adheres to its own HR policies and standard operating procedures.

# **Challenges and Solutions**

Although the use of data and analytics has been integrated into decision-making, several challenges still exist. Some notable drawbacks include a lack of sufficient data knowledge among HR professionals, ethical concerns related to using personal data outside of data privacy laws, the vital importance of data quality for effective integration, and a lack of executive support. However, as noted by the Society for Human Resource Management (2023) and Workpay (2023), the success of HR analytics depends on HR professionals' ability to interpret and apply data insights. This requires developing skills in algorithms, collaborating with the legal team to establish clear policies for ethical data collection, and investing in HR information systems.

# **Enhancing Data-Driven Decision-Making Journey**

Initiation and Implementation: It is essential to start by identifying the organisation's key pain points. These are areas that leaders recognise as critical, requiring quantitative evidence to justify resource allocation. The data presented will include the rationale, clearly defined problem, and the objectives to be addressed. The data presented here should help in developing an executive management pitch deck that emphasises key points, benefits, and a call to action.

The next step is to identify specific HR-supported business strategic objectives and metrics that will help achieve these goals, such as aiming for 95% business retention. Relevant metrics can include data from quarterly sales, customer service, and individual performance against key performance areas and indicators.

Data collection: Data can be collected internally and externally, depending on the goals and metrics to analyse. Common data sources include performance reviews, HR information systems, engagement surveys, learning management systems, payroll data, and exit interviews.

Limited.

Data integration is also important at this stage to build a complete dataset that includes all data from different sources.

Data analysis: Data analysis can be conducted using statistical and analytical tools. Such tools can help identify specific patterns and correlations within the collected data. Depending on the data type to be analysed, one could choose to use different analytical techniques, such as descriptive, prescriptive, or predictive, and then present data through charts, tables, and graphs.

Results and Implementation: The presented data will require HR to use statistical skills to interpret the results. Based on the data, HR can then make decisions grounded in evidence.

The rise of big data and advanced analytics has allowed HR professionals to gain deeper insights into their workforce. HR analytics, which goes beyond simple data, supports evidence-based decisionmaking aligned with strategic goals. It helps HR shift from reactive to proactive management by analysing data from various sources to identify patterns that inform recruiting, talent development, engagement, and retention strategies. This data-driven approach enhances HR accuracy and elevates its strategic role in driving organisational success.

Dr. Magambo is the Managing Partner at Ceal Consulting 18 | HRM Magazine



# The Case for Health Intelligence in HR

Workplace health and wellness are no longer "soft" HR topics; they're measurable business priorities. In Kenya, the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular conditions continues to rise. According to the Ministry of Health, over 50% of hospital admissions in urban areas are due to NCDs, many of which are preventable or manageable if caught early.

Unfortunately, most employers only become aware of these conditions when productivity drops or absenteeism spikes. That's where diagnostics come in.

Through wellness screenings, annual medical checks, and tailored corporate testing, diagnostic labs are sitting on a goldmine of early health signals. These data points, when analysed and interpreted correctly, can help HR professionals:

- Identify at-risk employee groups
- Monitor health trends across teams or departments
- Proactively implement health programmes or interventions
- Measure the ROI of wellness investments

And most importantly, they allow organizations to shift from reactive to preventive HR health strategies.

# **Turning Lab Results into Actionable HR Insights**

So, what does health analytics actually look like in practice?

At CLK, we work with a growing number of corporate clients across Kenya to provide structured health reporting after routine employee wellness tests.

These aren't just test results, they're healthintelligence dashboards.

For instance, after conducting a full wellness panel (which may include blood sugar, lipid profile, liver and kidney function, thyroid testing, and infectiousdisease screening), we compile anonymised, grouplevel reports that show:

- The percentage of employees with markers in abnormal ranges
- Common risk patterns across departments or age groups
- Year-on-year comparisons for recurring clients

Armed with this data, HR teams can take decisive actions. They may decide to:

- Introduce a nutrition or fitness programme for a team with rising cholesterol levels
- Launch diabetes awareness and screening campaigns
- Partner with mental-health providers where stress-related indicators are climbing

The goal isn't to diagnose individual employees through HR; it's to guide organisational-level wellness strategies with clear, credible data.

# **Real Impact: A Corporate Wellness Success Story**

Recently, a large Nairobi-based logistics company approached CLK to roll out its annual staff-wellness testing. Over 300 employees underwent routine diagnostic screening.

The resulting analytics revealed a startling trend: over 40% of staff aged 30-45 showed early signs of prediabetes or metabolic syndrome, most without symptoms or prior diagnosis. With this data, the HR team worked with CLK to launch a workplace health

campaign focused on diet, exercise, and ongoing monitoring.

Six months later, absenteeism linked to lifestyle diseases dropped by 18%, and the uptake of follow-up clinical care increased. The company had transformed what could have become a health liability into a proactive wellness success, all starting with diagnostic data.

# Why CLK Is the Right Partner for Data-Driven Wellness

Cerba Lancet Kenya brings global diagnostic standards and local healthcare expertise into one platform. Our approach goes beyond testing; we help our corporate partners translate health data into meaningful workforce strategies.

#### We offer:

- Customised employee-wellness packages to match organisational risk profiles
- Confidential health reports with aggregated trends and insights
- Data protection in full compliance with the Data Protection Act of Kenya
- On-site testing, digital-results access, and health-education support

Whether you're managing a team of 50 or 5,000, CLK helps you see the bigger picture and act before health risks become health crises.

#### The Future Is Predictive

As HR continues to evolve into a strategic function, the future lies in predictive analytics and diagnostics can play a vital role.

Imagine being able to:

- Forecast health-related productivity dips during specific seasons
- Anticipate medical-benefit costs based on biometric trends
- Integrate wellness insights into your talentretention strategies

It's all possible when you start treating diagnostic data not as a medical formality but as a strategic HR asset.

#### A Call to HR Leaders

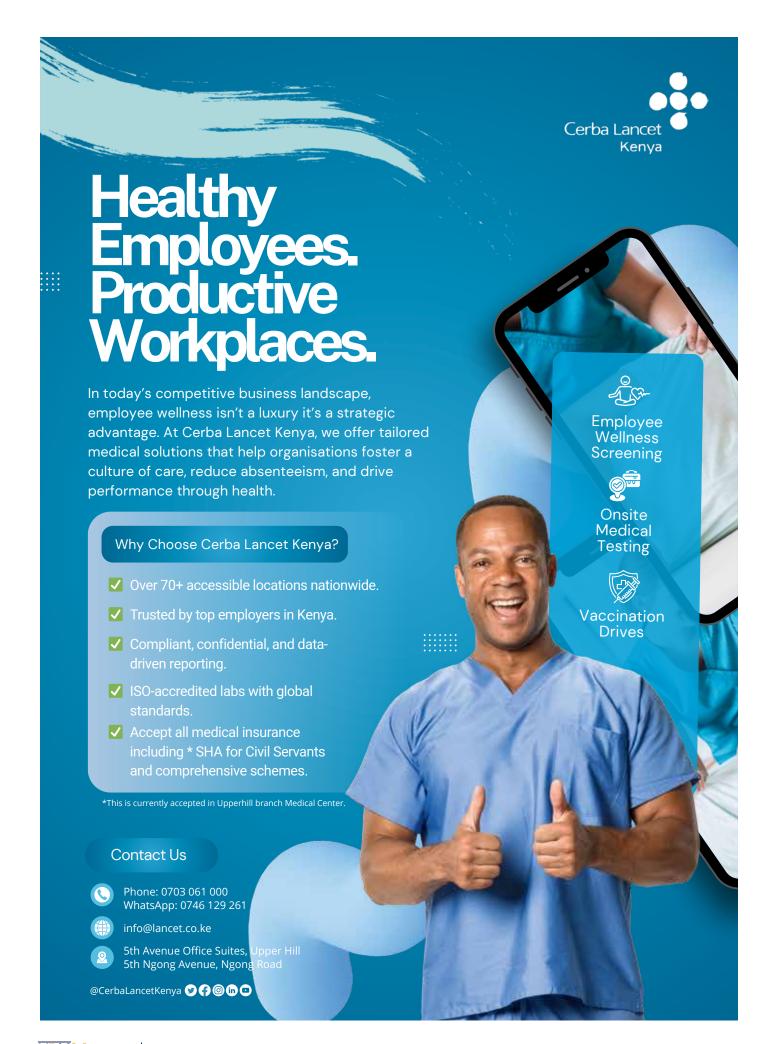
The data revolution in HR is already here. But it's not just about people analytics or performance metrics it's about health intelligence.

Diagnostics provide real, measurable insights into the well-being of your workforce. And in a competitive market where talent is your greatest asset, safeguarding that asset is not just good practice, it's good business.

At Cerba Lancet Kenya, we're proud to support HR leaders in building healthier, more resilient teams one data point at a time.

Contact us: +254 703 061 000 | info@lancet.co.ke







# PEOPLE BEFORE POLICIES:

# Why the IHRM Mandate Matters More Than Ever

HR isn't just about office rules—it's about people, purpose, and potential. Kenya's IHRM is proving that when human resource professionals are empowered to lead with integrity and innovation, the entire community benefits.

# 1. Regulating with Integrity Because People Deserve Fairness

The Institute of Human Resource Management (IHRM) is more than a gatekeeper for the profession—it is the conscience of workplace justice in Kenya. Born under the Human Resource Management Professionals (HRMP) Act No. 52 of 2012, the IHRM holds a unique place in shaping the ethical and legal spine of HR practice. In a society where employment opportunities can be marred by nepotism, discrimination, and exploitation, IHRM's regulatory framework ensures that HR professionals are held to the highest standards of fairness, transparency, and accountability.

Real Story: Take Faith, a junior HR assistant from Nairobi. She witnessed a qualified female applicant being overlooked in favour of a less qualified male candidate who was "more familiar" to the panel. After attending an IHRM seminar on ethical recruitment, Faith championed a revision of their hiring policy. The result? Not only did diversity improve, but productivity and morale also soared.

**Bible Insight:** "The Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favour with Him" (Proverbs 11:1). Fairness isn't just an HR policy—it's a divine principle.

**Science Speaks:** A 2023 Harvard Business Review study found that ethical workplace environments reduce turnover by up to 40%. Ethical regulation, it turns out, is not just good for people—it's good for business.

# 2. Building Capacity Because Everyone has Potential

Certification without empowerment is like a title without a purpose. IHRM's mandate goes beyond licensing to actively nurturing the professional and personal development of HR leaders across Kenya. From CPD workshops to specialised certifications, IHRM creates opportunities for HR practitioners to refine their skills and discover their leadership potential. It promotes the idea that capacity building isn't a one-time affair—it's a lifelong journey.

Real Life: Daniel, a hotel supervisor in Mombasa, struggled with conflict among staff. Traditional top-down methods only worsened the situation. After enrolling in an IHRM training on emotional intelligence and conflict resolution, he changed his leadership approach. The impact was immediate: his team became collaborative, cohesive, and committed.

**Scripture:** "Do not neglect the gift you have... practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress" (1 Timothy 4:14-15).

**Research Data:** The World Economic Forum's 2024 report confirms that companies investing in employee development outperform their peers by 2.5 times in both innovation and growth.

# 3. Supporting Innovation Because the Future is already Here

Al, hybrid work, gig economies—the workplace is evolving rapidly. The IHRM understands this shift and is preparing HR professionals to thrive in an era where agility, tech fluency, and creativity are not optional. It supports members through access to cutting-edge HR tech trends, digital transformation

frameworks, and collaborative research. This positions HR as a strategic driver of business and not merely an administrative function.

**Example:** Esther, an HR manager at a Nairobi-based fintech company, leveraged IHRM's resources to implement a virtual onboarding program during the pandemic. What began as a crisis adaptation evolved into a permanent, scalable model for hiring talent across East Africa.

Biblical Perspective: "See, I am doing a new thing; now it springs up. Do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

Market Trends: A McKinsey study showed that companies embracing innovation in HR processes are 30% more likely to maintain profitability during economic shocks.

# 4. Changing Workplace Culture Because People Carry Work Home

The IHRM believes that HR has the power not only to shape employee experience but to influence societal wellness. Toxic workplaces lead to stress, broken relationships, and poor mental health that spills into homes and communities. IHRM is equipping professionals to prioritise mental health, inclusion, servant leadership, and employee engagement in tangible ways.

Testimony: In Kisumu, a hospitality business launched "Wellness Wednesdays" inspired by IHRM workshops. They included mental health check-ins, fun activities, and open forums. Staff happiness rose. So did guest satisfaction and retention. Most beautifully, workers reported stronger family bonds at home.

Scientific Backing: WHO research confirms that proactive employee wellness programs reduce burnout risk by 60% and improve interpersonal relationships.

**Spiritual Reflection:** "You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others" (Matthew 5:14-16). HR done right radiates far beyond the office.

# 5. Looking Ahead Because HR Is Becoming a Calling

The future of HR is not paperwork—it's peoplework. As routine tasks are automated, the role of HR is transforming into a mission of trust-building, emotional intelligence, and ethical influence. IHRM is laying the groundwork for this by encouraging mentorship, servant leadership, and spiritual intelligence in HR practice. It envisions professionals who don't just manage resources, but steward destinies.

**Emerging Trends:** Deloitte projects that by 2030, 70% of HR admin will be handled by AI. The most valued HR skills will be empathy, communication, and ethical leadership.

Faith Vision: Imagine every HR leader praying for their team, championing fairness, and serving as a bridge between company goals and human dignity. Biblical Reminder: "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" (Colossians 3:23).

# Deloitte projects that by 2030, 70% of HR admin will be handled by AI.

## 6. Final Reflection

So yes, IHRM is a statutory body under the Ministry of Public Service, Performance, and Delivery Management. But more importantly, it is a silent revolution-transforming HR from a bureaucratic necessity to a divine assignment. It regulates. It empowers. It innovates. It heals. And it calls HR professionals to a higher purpose. The IHRM mandate is more than regulation-it's a national movement toward dignity, development, and divine impact, one workplace at a time.



he glory of work in yesteryears lay in the assurance of 'permanent and pensionable', a more like work-for-life scenario. Most of the baby boomers, Xers and Some Millennials still draw pride from the P&P status as popularly known. Retention has for the longest been embedded in the P&P phenomenon. Not anymore, with changing socio-economic dynamics, retention has evolved and taken a shift in its disposition.

Take, for instance, the Gen Zs and Alphas who are currently a significant majority in the workplace. They tend to demand more flexible work arrangements and don't like to overstay either! Their sense of mobility is quite high compared to their parents or generations that preceded them. Moreover, rapid economic, social and technological dynamics have forced organisations to rethink how long they would like to engage employees. The foregoing, coupled with competition and stakeholder awakening that holds employees accountable, has orchestrated a shift in retention. Notably, private sector employees were long accustomed to contractual engagement while the public sector traditionally employed staff on a permanent and pensionable basis.

The only time employees would leave the public sector before the lapse of P&P, would be as a result of gross misconduct, poor performance, employers'

operational requirements or redundancy; breach of fundamental terms of employment contract, hence summary dismal; early retirement, retirement on public interest or medical ground and death. In some instances, public sector employees would resign to pursue personal interests like migration, business, and politics, among others. Erstwhile, employee retention in the public sector was uninterrupted and stable.

The aforementioned was the case until ongoing strategic public sector reforms, driven by a consciousness to deliver services more effectively and efficiently, leaned towards contractual arrangements. Essentially, this decision somewhat altered the trajectory and perception of retention to align with contractual terms. With a highly competitive operating environment, retaining talent must be justified by a compelling value proposition beyond traditional retention plans like P&P. The idea of asking one employee to stay with a single employer for life sounds 'abnormal'. Modern employees often look out for exposure, for fun and a sort of non-familiarity because, as the adage goes, familiarity breeds contempt!

As economic forces ravage organisations, it seems fair to embrace individualised approaches to performance management where accountability

starts at the micro individual level. This means that each person must first carry their crown or cross before going to the team or organisational level. The demand for personal responsibility is aligned with the strategically integrated approach for performance management and HR value chain as a whole. The rise of remote work, flexible schedules, and technology integration is also reshaping workplaces and requiring organisations to tweak their retention strategies for optimal alignment.

No one can assure another of work for life post the COVID-19 pandemic, because life itself has become quite disrupted and so is work. Employee retention is no longer really about how long one stays but about the quality and quantity of their value add. It is about strategic alignment, innovation, partnership, collaboration, teamwork and making sense of the 'why' one has to stay. In other words, retention is tied to its metrics. Even with performance enhancement or improvement plans for gaps in key performance indicators, one should only stay as long as they are highly productive, strategically aligned and within the terms of the set contract.

Suffice to say that organisations currently prioritise the attraction of top talent as shakers and movers of competitive advantage and sustainability rather than just numbers. Currently, retention is more valuable than quantity and quality than not. Attitudes and perceptions towards employee retention, therefore, need to mirror strategic disposition.

staying on the bright side, if retention is aligned with strategic objectives, it could be easier to measure employee input and output. It may also pile pressure for the delivery of set targets, while accruing a sense of temporariness may cause more consciousness about the rapidity of HR value chains in the employment pipeline.

The foregoing speaks to a shift from absolute retention to a sense of continuum retention based on contract periods. This said shift could help employees stay alert in remembering that a time to leave is fast approaching. It could also serve to situate overall work expectations in the knowledge that any continued stay is founded on the ability to deliver on the promise made and signed at the commencement of the contract. This realisation may ultimately lead to increased productivity, improved morale and engagement. In essence, continuum retention can be viewed as a move from transactional to calculated relational approaches in HR, where priority is accorded to strategic alignment, performance cycles and HR retention metrics.

Correspondingly, continuum retention is about deliberate optimisation of investment in talent, and justifying longevity of service term for sustainably thriving organisations.



# HR Analytics and Employee Engagement in the Banking Sector

# By Vincent Otiende Omongo and Dr. Frankline Odayo

he global banking sector is undergoing a profound transformation driven by technological advancements, evolving customer expectations, and regulatory changes. Digital transformation has emerged as a strategic priority for banks worldwide, enabling them to streamline operations, enhance customer experiences, and foster innovation. According to Deloitte (2021), banks are increasingly leveraging digital tools and data analytics to improve decision-making and organisational performance.

A critical area of focus within this transformation is employee engagement, which has become a key driver of organisational success. Engaged employees are more productive, deliver better customer service, and contribute to innovation and improved performance (Gallup, 2021). However, despite the growing recognition of the importance of digitalisation and data analytics, there remains a significant gap in their application to enhance employee engagement, particularly through Human Resource (HR) analytics.

Many banks have invested in digital tools, but the integration of HR analytics to support employee engagement is still in its infancy. One major challenge is the absence of comprehensive frameworks that guide the effective implementation of HR analytics. As a result, banks often adopt inconsistent approaches, making it difficult to compare outcomes or establish best practices (Deloitte, 2021). Furthermore, there is limited academic literature exploring the direct impact of HR analytics on employee engagement, leaving banks without a strong evidence base to justify investments in this area (CIPD, 2021).

Another barrier is the skills gap within HR departments. Many HR professionals lack the analytical capabilities required to interpret complex

data, which undermines the effectiveness of HR analytics initiatives (Davenport, 2018). Addressing this gap requires significant investment in training and development—an undertaking that not all banks are prepared to make. Additionally, concerns about data privacy and ethics further complicate adoption. Employees may be sceptical about how their data is used and whether it could affect their job security, highlighting the need for transparent data governance frameworks (CIPD, 2021).

Cultural resistance within traditional banking institutions also poses a challenge. Many banks still rely on intuition and experience rather than data-driven decision-making, which can hinder the adoption of HR analytics (Gallup, 2021). Overcoming this resistance is essential for successful implementation.

# Regional Context: Africa and Kenya

In Africa, the banking sector plays a vital role in economic development, trade facilitation, and financial inclusion. Countries like South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt have mature banking systems, while others such as Kenya, Ghana, and Tanzania are experiencing rapid growth due to increased access to financial services and a rising middle class (African Development Bank Group, 2019). Despite this growth, African banks face persistent challenges, including regulatory compliance, technological integration, and talent management.

For instance, Nigerian banks struggle with the operational burden of complying with Central Bank regulations (PwC, 2021). Similarly, while banks are eager to adopt new technologies, the high costs and cybersecurity concerns present significant barriers (KPMG, 2020).

Talent management is a pressing issue across the continent. Banks often struggle to attract and retain skilled professionals, especially in areas like risk management, digital banking, and data analytics. A report by the African Development Bank (2021) highlights a severe shortage of skilled workers in the banking sector, which hampers innovation and growth. In Kenya, 45% of banks identified talent management as one of their top three challenges (Deloitte, 2020).

Moreover, the digital skills gap among banking employees is a major concern. A McKinsey & Company study found that only 22% of banking employees in Africa possess the digital skills needed to fully utilize new technologies (McKinsey, 2019). This underscores the need for comprehensive training programs to build digital literacy and support digital transformation.

Financial inclusion remains a critical issue. While progress has been made, a large portion of Africa's population remains unbanked. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 43% of adults have access to a financial institution or mobile money service, compared to the global average of 69% (World Bank, 2021). This highlights the need for innovative financial products tailored to underserved populations.

# Kenya's Banking Sector and HR **Analytics**

In Kenya, employee engagement is a significant determinant of performance in banking institutions. Engaged employees are more likely to deliver excellent customer service, contribute innovative ideas, and enhance organisational culture (Gallup, 2021). However, engagement levels remain low. A Deloitte (2020) survey found that only 43% of employees in Kenya's banking sector felt engaged at work, while 27% reported low engagement.

To address this, Kenyan banks have begun implementing HR analytics to support data-driven decision-making in human resource management (Davenport, 2018). HR analytics involves analysing performance data, workforce demographics, and employee feedback to identify patterns and predictors of engagement (CIPD, 2021).

This enables banks to forecast turnover, understand engagement drivers, and develop targeted strategies to improve employee satisfaction and retention (Odhiambo & Munene, 2019).

A recent study in Kenya investigated the contribution of HR analytics to employee engagement, focusing specifically on the role of data collection methods. The study used a cross-sectional design and was grounded in Social Exchange Theory, which emphasizes reciprocal relationships between employers and employees. The study sampled 278 employees from a population of 1,000 using proportionate stratified sampling. Data was collected through structured and semi-structured questionnaires, and reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.747.

The findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between data collection methods and employee engagement. The unstandardized coefficient ( $\beta$  = 0.551, p = 0.001) indicated that for every unit increase in the effectiveness of data collection methods, employee engagement increased by 0.551 units. This suggests that improving how data is collected-through surveys, feedback tools, and performance metrics-can significantly enhance engagement levels.

# **Recommendations and Conclusion**

The study recommends that banks in Kenya and methods as part of broader HR analytics strategies. addressing ethical concerns through transparent to overcome cultural resistance to data-driven decision-making and foster a culture of continuous

In conclusion, while the global and regional banking sectors are embracing digital transformation, the engagement remains underdeveloped. Addressing banks to improve performance, retain talent, and and customer-centric environment.

The article is a summary of a postgraduate study on the Contribution of Human Resource Analytics Utilisation to Employee Engagement in the Kenyan Banking Industry at the Department of Business Administration, School of Business and Economics in Maseno University.



he integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into green human resource management (GHRM) is a promising development in the pursuit of environmental sustainability within organizations. AI technologies have the potential to revolutionize how companies approach sustainability by automating eco-friendly practices, providing insights into employee behaviour and resource consumption, and creating smarter, more efficient workplaces that minimize environmental impact while maximizing productivity and employee well-being.

Al can significantly impact green office design by monitoring energy consumption, temperature, and air quality in real-time, automatically adjusting settings to optimize comfort and efficiency. Alpowered chatbots can promote sustainable behaviours among employees by providing personalized recommendations and reminders about eco-friendly practices, such as turning off lights or recycling properly. In training and development, Al can deliver more effective and engaging sustainability education through adaptive learning platforms and virtual reality simulations, while also identifying areas where additional support is needed to promote sustainable behaviours.

Moreover, Al can optimize performance management systems for sustainability by analyzing data on employee behaviour, resource consumption, and environmental impact, helping organizations set more accurate and achievable sustainability targets. Al-powered tools can also assist in recruitment and talent management by identifying job candidates who demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability, helping companies build a workforce aligned with their environmental values and goals.

However, the use of AI in GHRM raises important ethical and privacy concerns. Organizations must be transparent about their data collection and use practices, ensuring that employee privacy is protected at all times. It is also crucial to ensure that AI systems are designed and deployed in a fair, unbiased, and accountable manner.

In conclusion, the integration of AI into GHRM strategies offers immense potential for creating sustainable workplaces of the future. By leveraging AI-powered tools and platforms, organizations can optimize their environmental performance, engage employees in eco-friendly behaviours, and build a workforce committed to sustainability. As the world faces the urgent challenge of climate change, the innovative application of AI in GHRM will be critical for driving positive change and creating a greener, more resilient future for all.

"Technology is a double-edged sword; it can be a tool for progress or a catalyst for chaos. The key lies in wielding it with wisdom, responsibility, and a steadfast commitment to the betterment of humanity."

Abraham S.Wekesa is the Chairman of the IHRM Western Branch and Head of Human Resource County Assembly of Bungoma.





















Hotel, Machakos







The Employees' Holistic Wellness program, at Kyaka Hotel, Machakos



The IHRM team, led by the Executive Director, paid a courtesy call to the Principal Secretary, State Department for Public Service and Human Capital Development, Dr. Jane Kere Imbunya



delegation from the Association of Professional Societies in East Africa (APSEA)



The Kenya Labour Laws Compliance and Industrial Relations Framework Training













Dr. Jane Kere Imbunya, Principal Secretary – State Department for Public Service and Human Capital Development making her remarks during the Fellows onboarding Dinner













# THE COURAGE TO START **OVER:**

# A HR PERSPECTIVE **ON CAREER TRANSITIONS**

By Faith Gitau

y coffee has gone cold again - the third time today. Across the table sits Sharon, an assistant accountant who's just told me she's planning to leave her stable job to pursue bioengineering. As an HR professional navigating the complex world of career development in Nairobi, I've seen countless career transitions but Sharon's story perfectly captures why organisations need to rethink their approach to non-traditional candidates.

"Everyone thinks I'm crazy," she tells me, nervously fidgeting with her cup. "Four years of building experience in finance, good benefits - and I want to start over as an entry-level biochemist?" The uncertainty in her voice is palpable, but so is the spark when she talks about returning to her bioengineering roots.

As HR practitioners, we often encounter this scenario: talented professionals seeking dramatic career changes. Our traditional recruitment metrics might flag such candidates as "risky" or "lacking relevant experience." But my experience suggests we're missing out on exceptional talent by not looking deeper. The challenge lies not in finding these candidates - they're abundant in today's dynamic job market, but in creating systems that recognise and nurture their potential.

# Breaking Down Recruitment Barriers

The standard hiring playbook often screens out career changers automatically. Requirements like "5+ years of direct industry experience" create artificial barriers. Yet, career transitions often outperform traditional candidates in adaptability

and innovation metrics. In fact, recent industry studies suggest that employees who have successfully navigated career changes show 23% higher problem-solving capabilities and 31% stronger leadership potential than their single-track counterparts.

Sharon's case illustrates why. Her financial acumen brings unexpected strengths to a research setting -- skills in budget management and resource allocation that most entry-level biochemists lack. As HR professionals, we need to train hiring managers to recognise these transferable skills and understand how diverse experiences can enhance team performance.

# Creating Transition-Friendly Policies

Through working with Sharon, I've developed a framework for HR teams to support career transitions:

- Implement skills-based assessment: Focus on core competencies rather than industryspecific experience. Sharon's data analysis capabilities matter more than where she gained them. Create assessment tools that evaluate analytical thinking, problem-solving, learning agility.
- Develop bridge programs: Create structured internships or transitional roles for career changers. Sharon's weekend volunteering at a research facility demonstrates how valuable this exposure can be.
- Design mentorship initiatives: Pair career transitions with experienced professionals to accelerate their integration. These relationships should focus not just on technical skills but on cultural adaptation.

Establish clear progression pathways: Create transparent frameworks showing how career changers can advance within their new field.

### The Business Case

Organisations that embrace career transitions gain several competitive advantages. They access a wider talent pool, enhance workplace diversity of thought, and often find these employees bring valuable cross-industry insights. Sharon's financial expertise could help research teams better manage grant budgets or commercialise findings - a unique value proposition for her future employer.

Career changers typically show higher engagement levels. Anyone willing to restart their career demonstratzs remarkable drive and adaptability. They've proven they can learn quickly and adapt to new environments -- essential skills in today's rapidly evolving workplace. Moreover, their presence often energises existing teams, bringing fresh perspectives to long-standing challenges.

# From Policy to Practice

Two weeks ago, I helped Sharon prepare for her first biochemist interview. Instead of apologising for her financial background, we positioned it as a strength. Her experience with complex financial reconciliations demonstrated analytical rigour. Her invoice tracking showed attention to detail. Her corporate experience offered insights into research commercialisation.

The interview process itself revealed how HR can better support such transitions. If hiring managers can modify traditional technical assessments, incorporating problems that would allow Sharon to demonstrate her analytical capabilities in a new context, this not only give Sharon a fair chance but also helps organisations evaluate her potential more accurately.

As HR professionals, we must champion these non-traditional candidates. This means educating hiring managers about the value of diverse experiences, updating our screening criteria, and creating supportive onboarding processes for career transitions. It requires developing new metrics for success and potentially longer ramp-up periods, but the return on investment often exceeds expectations.

The future of work demands this flexibility. In an era where skills become obsolete faster than ever, the ability to transition careers isn't just admirable -- it's essential. Our role in HR isn't just to fill positions but to recognise the potential in all its forms and create pathways for talent to flourish.

The author is a Human Resource professional with a background in Human Resource Management. Fresh into the field, she brings a unique perspective to talent acquisition and development. Her passion lies in helping organisations build inclusive hiring practices and supporting professionals through career transitions.





Human Resources Information System (HRIS) is a software solution that is used to collect, manage, store and process an organisation's employee information. Essentially, HR teams use an HRIS to work more efficiently and make more data-driven decisions. In most cases, an HR information system includes the basic features needed for end-to-end HR management.

HRIS analysts are highly trained HR professionals with skills in both IT and HR, who are responsible for managing the HRIS and presenting relevant and beneficial data on employee productivity, attendance, training and pay. HRIS analysts also ensure that IT departments adhere to HR regulations, provide necessary resources to employees and arrange for appropriate equipment updates (Ungashick, 2024). Large organisations might employ several HRIS analysts to focus on specific HR tasks, such as employee benefits, compensation or training. HRIS has evolved from early punch card systems to today's highly sophisticated solutions that leverage Al and people analytics. Looking ahead, HRIS will continue expanding in scope with more focus on employee experience, predictive analytics, and

custom recommendations to help HR make even better data-driven decisions.

Astechnology progresses, HRIS serve an increasingly vital role as a strategic platform that empowers HR leaders to advance their organisations. Nevertheless, looking at Comprehensive HRIS which is a full-featured system handling everything from operational to analytical needs, where large enterprises often adopt these extensive solutions, the involvement of the workforce may be minimal, hence organisational job cuts.

In recent years, the popularity of artificial intelligence (AI) has skyrocketed. AI is a branch of computer science that deals with creating machines that can perform tasks that usually require human intelligence, such as understanding natural language, recognising images, and making decisions. Al analyses large sets of data, understands natural language and makes decisions. It can include applications such as data mining, natural language processing and decision support systems (Suresh & Buvaneswari, 2024).

Al capabilities, such as machine learning, natural language processing and computer vision, are now being increasingly implemented to optimise information systems. For instance, Al can help identify and address problems quickly and detect and respond to cyber. The potential for Al to revolutionise information systems is immense and its impact on the field will likely continue to grow (Nawaz, 2024).

Al can be used to automate daily tasks that require the processing of large amounts of data. Al can also offer powerful predictive analytics to help organisations make more informed and effective decisions. Therefore, Al liberates human resources to focus on more complex tasks. It can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources. Al provides detailed analysis and reports on the progress of new employees during onboarding. These insights allow managers and HR to make informed decisions and offer additional support where needed, ensuring that new employees are on the right path to becoming productive and satisfied team members.

It is very clear that AI is essential currently but the challenge may be the survival of human resources in the job market. Currently, the worldwide job market is overcrowded and the trained and untrained workforce is more than the available opportunities. The main fear I have with AI is that it may completely replace human resources by taking over their day-to-day duties. Paradoxically, while task automation offers many benefits, employees sometimes value certain repetitive tasks for the associated "brainless" time they provide, which can spur creativity.

Consequently, finding the right balance in task automation presents a challenge. HR professionals, fearing job loss, may resist, partly due to their limited experience utilising AI in their operations. Furthermore, employees might be reluctant to be monitored or to share personal information regarding their emotions or health due to privacy concerns. Paradoxically, as AI multiplies the options available, users may become overwhelmed by the perception of increased complexity. All of these challenges can lead to employee resistance to Al. The potential inability of workers to transfer their existing skill sets to new job requirements poses a significant challenge, where retraining to acquire AI skills becomes a requirement for employability. Given the rapid pace of technological change, developing an Organisational culture that encourages continuous learning is essential for the successful implementation of Al.

Additionally, Al's impact on workers' psychological health can be either positive or negative, depending on its perception and acceptance; therefore, addressing the challenges that Al presents is crucial. Lastly, the role of employee involvement in organisational general duties is facing more possible changes in the work context and in order to improve their skills in line with these developments, they need retraining to align their skills to current technological change. To conclude, it is prudent to adopt Al in our current organisations with caution, where both employees and the organisation benefit.

The writer is an assistant lecturer in the School of Business and Economics (Human Resource Management) at Kisii University.



# **HUMAN-CENTRIC LEADERSHIP IN THE DIGITAL AGE:**

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE EMPLOYEE **EXPERIENCE** 

By John Cheruiyot

The digital age has irrevocably transformed the workplace, demanding that HR professionals worldwide reimagine their roles. While organisations race to adopt cutting-edge technologies, the essence of human-centric leadership-prioritising employee well-being, equity, and growth-remains critical. This article explores how HR can strategically leverage technology to enhance employee experience while addressing universal and region-specific challenges. Drawing on insights from global research institutions, including the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), World Bank, OECD, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), among other sources, it proposes actionable strategies for HR leaders to thrive in this ever-evolving landscape.

# The Global HR Context: Challenges and **Opportunities**

HR's evolution from an administrative function to a strategic partner is uneven across regions. In emerging markets like East Africa, HR is achieving boardroom credibility, while in mature markets, professionals grapple with advanced challenges like Al ethics and workforce fragmentation.

Globally, however, common threads emerge:

Digital Inequity: While developed economies adopt Al-driven HR tools, many regions face infrastructural gaps. For example, only 22% of African businesses have integrated cloud-based HR systems (World Economic Forum, 2023).

**ESG Pressures:** Stakeholders now demand accountability for employee welfare, diversity, and sustainability-issues amplified by social media and global supply chain scrutiny.

Skills Mismatch: Rapid technological change has widened the skills gap. CIPD's People Profession 2023 report reveals that 67% of HR professionals globally feel ill-equipped to address digital transformation.

Identity Crisis: HR struggles to balance automation with empathy. Korn Ferry notes that 74% of employees fear AI will depersonalise workplaces, eroding trust.

## Emerging Global HR Challenges

Al and Ethical Dilemmas: Automation threatens jobs but also promises efficiency. CIPD's Ethical AI in HR (2023) warns that biased algorithms could exacerbate discrimination without oversight.

Hybrid Work Complexity: Remote and hybrid models strain inclusivity. Harvard research (2023) finds that 52% of remote workers feel excluded from critical decisions.

Mental Health Crisis: Post-pandemic burnout persists. The WHO estimates \$1 trillion in annual productivity loss due to depression and anxiety.

Generational Divides: Generally, and globally, Gen Z demands purpose-driven work, while older employees resist digital upskilling.

# Human-Centric Solutions for a Digital World

To reconcile technology with humanity, HR must adopt the following strategies, informed by global research:

# 1. Prioritize Ethical Technology Integration

Use Altransparently, CIPD advocates for "algorithmic accountability," urging HR to audit AI tools for bias and involve employees in design (CIPD, 2023).

Example: Unilever's AI recruitment tool reduced hiring bias by 16% through continuous feedback loops (I4CP, 2022).

# 2. Bridge the Digital Divide with Inclusive Upskilling

Partner with governments and NGOs to provide subsidised digital literacy programs. For instance and as reported, Kenya's Ajira Digital Initiative has trained 1 million youth in remote work skills.

Adopt microlearning platforms (e.g., LinkedIn Learning, Coursera) to democratise access to global certifications.

### 3. Reinvent Employee Experience (EX) with Data

Use analytics to personalise EX. Microsoft's Viva Insights platform, which nudges managers to check in on overworked teams, increased productivity by 12% (Harvard, 2023).

CIPD's People Analytics guide (2023) emphasises translating data into narratives that resonate with C-suite stakeholders.

# 4. Champion Psychological Safety

Normalise mental health support. For example, Accenture offers free counselling via AI chatbots in 40 languages, reducing stigma in conservative regions.

Train managers in empathetic leadership. INSEAD's

Leading with Heart program reduced attrition by 18% in participating firms.

## 5. Advocate for Strategic HR Leadership

Align HR goals with ESG metrics. CIPD's Sustainability and HR report (2023) links employee well-being to long-term organisational resilience. Build business acumen through certifications like SHRM-SCP or CIPD's Level 7 Diploma, which blends HR strategy with financial literacy.



## Global Insights from the World Bank, OECD, and UNGPs

World Bank: The World Bank's World Development Report 2023 highlights the importance of digital infrastructure in bridging the skills gap. It emphasises public-private partnerships to fund digital upskilling initiatives, particularly in low-income countries.

OECD: The OECD's Employment Outlook 2023 underscores the need for inclusive labour markets. It recommends targeted policies to support vulnerable groups, such as women and youth, in accessing digital skills training.

UNGPs: The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) provide a framework for HR to address human rights risks in the workplace. This includes ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and non-discriminatory practices, especially in global supply chains.

# Reference Charts and Tables

Table 1: Global Digital Skills Gap Outlook

Region	% of Workforce with Digital Skills	Key Challenges
Sub-Saharan Africa	15%	Limited infrastructure, low literacy rates
Europe	65%	Resistance to upskilling, aging workforce
Asia-Pacific	40%	Rapid technological change, uneven access
North America	70%	High costs of training, generational divides

Source: World Bank, 2023



#### The Path Forward

HR's future hinges on its ability to harmonise technology with human needs. By adopting ethical AI, closing skill gaps through inclusive learning, and leveraging data to humanise decisions, HR can cement its role as a strategic leader. As CIPD CEO Peter Cheese asserts, "Technology should amplify human potential, not replace it." In a world where 43% of CEOs cite talent shortages as their top threat (PwC, 2023), HR's mission is clear: to build workplaces where innovation and empathy coexist.

Mr. John Cheruiyot is a Human Resource practitioner and member of IHRM.

# **LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY** TO ENHANCE **EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE** WITHIN **ORGANISATIONS**



uman-centric leadership depicts how organisations perceive and engage with their employees - the most notable assets in the organisation. Technology in this day and age is looked at as a means to an end in driving a successful employee experience. Technology helps to build relationships amongst employees by promoting collaboration as well as supporting a safe working environment for employees. Nelson and Doman (2017) outline that employee experience is a wholesome process which involves employees in recognising the strengths present in an organisation as well as mapping and moulding the culture of an organisation while also helping staff in identifying organisational strengths. In addition, employee experience supports an organisation in discovering the situations in which people learn and perform best.

Norman, Donald A., 2023, presented foundational thoughts on addressing technology's presence to the interests and purposes of an organisation, which should be questions addressed in supporting technology to enhance employee experience. In essence, the interests and purposes of an organisation should be wholly geared towards producing successful outcomes by embracing the need for technology in driving employee experience.

As organisations look to gain a competitive edge, technology takes centre stage in ensuring these organisations remain at the top. Packaging technology within organisations includes looking at the systems in place for successful recruitment management, performance management, employee relations, compensation and benefits management, payroll management, learning and development, as well as compliance, where we look at employee data storage. Malik, A., Budhwar, P., Mohan, H., & N. R., S. (2023) note that there are six vertical HR themes outlined as Growth and Career, Team and Unit, Reward and Recognition, Health and Wellness, Voice and Talent and Passion.

Technologies used to foster successful experiences encompass the above cores in order to get a feel of what the employees are experiencing. For example, surveys such as the annual Great Place to Work have provided channels for organisations to understand the levels of employee engagement in a discretionary manner that allows diverse responses. Malik, A., Budhwar, P., Mohan, H., & N. R., S. (2023) also note that internal staff surveys facilitate the co-creation of organisational values by the senior management team and human resources.

These surveys help to promote retention within the organisations by acknowledging the issues raised through the survey, addressing them and solving the challenges raised, as well as appreciating the positive bits raised through the surveys. This is key, as highlighted by Abhari et al (2008), who state that organisations must view their employees as internal customers by delivering the right experiential needs.

To get an all-round picture of how employee experience can be boosted to an all-time high in an organisation, surveys play a key role in encouraging employees to build their voice on some of how the present technology in an organisation is bridging the gap from less efficiency to more seamless employee practices within the organisation as well as what the organisation may be lacking technologically as these employees heavily interact externally with the people around them including their families, friends and professional colleagues and some of their discussions focus on how technologically advanced their organisations are in terms of their work tools, the systems they use in their departments as well as the general software which all staff use. This is why surveys are the key to unlocking greatness with regard to how an organisation leverages its technology to enhance employee experience.

Technology that promotes seamlessness in conducting work tasks for different departments promotes a cohesive work culture where each employee understands their scope of work. It enhances value addition in the work output of an organisation while creating synergy, leading to the enhancement of employee experience within the organisation. Case in point for this is the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a total lockdown in many, if not all, countries globally and organisations had to figure out how to function without having to go to work. In this case, user-friendly technology ensured that employees were able to work seamlessly from different locations and produce results.

Human Resource Cores such as recruitment and selection were able to be facilitated as there were systems that supported the hybrid working mode, thus improving the employee experience by boosting the employee morale and productivity. McKinsey employees; J Emmett, G Schrah, M Schrimper, and A Wood (2020) note that a McKinsey's survey done on more than 800 employees based in the US on diverse topics related to employee experience found that employees in hybrid work mode see

more positive effects in their day to day work, are better engaged and these employees also have a stable sense of well-being compared to those who commute to work. The success of the hybrid work mode is due to the present technology that facilitates working remotely or working a few days at the office and some days at home without any glitches.

In Conclusion, organisations that learn to promote the usage of technology enhance their compliance and safety practices, where all data is stored within these systems. The technology within an organisation plays a large role in shaping the culture of an organisation and building the organisational reputation as a best practice that other organisations can benchmark. Olivia Hector and Rory Cameron (2023) highlight that engaged and satisfied employees are highly likely to achieve successful performance. In essence, organisations that choose to heavily invest in their technology have better outcomes on employee experience and as the famous phrase goes, 'disrupt or be disrupted.'

Leveraging technology for enhanced employee experience is truly the only way to go in this digital age.

The author is a human resource practitioner with over 12 years of experience in the Corporate, Humanitarian and SRHR sectors. She is also a Global HR Business Partner.





Institute of Human Resource Management
Prism Towers, 24th Floor,
3rd Ngong Avenue

P.O. Box 6132 -00300 Nairobi,

Mobile: + 254 727 792 001

Email: info@ihrm.or.ke

Website: www.ihrm.or.ke