Top HR Trends for Today’s DIGITAL WORLD

2016 Edition

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If your business is a living organism, then your Human Resources department might well be the heart. HR execs work hard to maintain the strength and efficiency of businesses small and large. But in today’s increasingly digital world, the nature of HR work has begun to shift. An HR team must adapt to the needs of a mobile, efficient workforce that expects potential employers to truly value their time. Today’s job seekers rely on mobile devices to stay in touch personally and professionally. They expect smart, elegant, mobile-friendly processes throughout every stage of the hiring process. Without creative solutions to these tech needs, can HR expect to keep a business pumping at full force? Consider the following:

- In a report from the Society for Human Resource Management, 61% of businesses who use hourly employees still use paper applications. Only 10% of these businesses have mobile-optimized applications for HR processes.

- According to an article in Forbes Magazine, the technological shift has already begun. Approximately 150 million employees now use cloud-based HR systems instead of licensed software, and that number stands to grow.

- Deloitte’s Global Human Capital Trends 2016 report also offers insight into the shifts occurring within Human Resources departments across the globe. Fully 40% of all companies surveyed reported they “are embarking on a replacement of core HR technology with modern cloud systems.”

The data is clear: HR is at a pivotal moment. In order to continue to recruit and onboard top talent, Human Resources professionals must change the manual, paper-based processes that have been the gold standard for decades. But even more importantly, they must shift their philosophy to better understand the values that drive today’s professional candidates.
Shifting Process, Shifting Philosophy

Innovative solutions to improve the efficiency of recruitment, interviewing, and onboarding processes are more available than ever for Human Resources departments. Part of the shift in process must come first as a big-picture change in the way HR professionals view their role.

Moving to a more streamlined, software-supported process shouldn't diminish the role of the HR professional. Instead, by delegating tedious logistical tasks to thoughtfully designed software programs, these staff members will be free to focus on making each human interaction a more meaningful and valuable part of the experience.

Today's job seekers are increasingly mobile. And, as data from the Deloitte study will make clear, they are also more interested in maximizing their productivity through freelance contracts with multiple companies. In other words, today's applicants have a range of choices before them, and they're not simply comparing the best benefits package anymore. Instead, candidates consider every aspect of the recruitment and interviewing process when making their decision to pursue a position.

By leveraging the efficiency of cloud-based technology to schedule interviews, upload resumes and references, and coordinate onboarding meetings, HR departments can show applicants that their time is truly valued. When Human Resources departments place the power of scheduling and communication in the hands of the applicant, they'll connect with motivated, empowered employees who appreciate an employer who respects their time.

The other benefit to this philosophical shift? A major savings in time and energy for the HR professional. With scheduling applications that now allow for two-way calendar syncing, the days of wading through email threads and multiple calendars to coordinate an interview date are over.

The result is a win-win: focused, dynamic communication can take place more easily between the employer and applicant, while delegated logistical tasks run seamlessly in the cloud.
2016 Digital HR Trends: A Study

Deloitte University Press’ 2016 report on Global Human Capital Trends reveals that this philosophical shift is already beginning for HR departments around the world. And what’s more, this shift will greatly influence the next wave of innovation in talent recruitment. Three particular areas of survey findings explain how and why HR departments must ramp up their game.

The Importance of Design Thinking

In Deloitte’s 2016 report, 79% of executives surveyed rated design thinking as “important” or “very important.” But, what is it? As defined in the report, design thinking “mak[es] routine HR tasks more efficient and easy, while improving the employee experience.” Put simply: it’s an approach that focuses on the people interacting with the process, not just the process itself. One concrete example of design thinking is the increasing use of “personas.”

Instead of creating a one-size-fits-all approach, HR departments can create distinct profiles based on the demographics, needs, and strengths of real applicants. This focused, individualized thinking allows HR staff to better tailor all aspects of the recruitment and onboarding experience to engage the candidate as early as possible in the culture of the company.

One common trait of a modern employee persona is their use of mobile devices to accomplish both personal and professional communication tasks. When an HR team takes this employee need seriously, they can deliver a better experience. And a better experience is one in which the applicant feels validated and appreciated.
Incorporating cloud-based technology to accomplish recruitment and onboarding tasks as opposed to relying on paper-based manual processes can expand your company's HR reach to younger employee personas. In turn, this can result in a larger and more engaged pool of talent. And, starting off with high engagement leads to greater productivity once the candidate is hired. As the report goes on to state: “done well, design thinking promotes a virtuous cycle, generating higher levels of employee satisfaction, greater engagement, and higher productivity for the company.”

**Digital HR Building Steam**

The next section of the Deloitte report is all about staying mobile. According to the report, only 13% of companies surveyed have mobile-optimized systems in place for recruitment and onboarding. This means that nearly 90% of surveyed companies are missing out on opportunities to position their company as an innovative, modern leader. But — and this is important for thought leaders in nearly every industry — this across-the-board lack of mobile optimization will be changing, and soon.

Smart Human Resources leaders know that the time has come to bring their processes up to speed. They plan to update their systems with cloud-based software that allows candidates to engage with their company in real time. A whopping 72% of executives surveyed consider mobile optimization an important issue, with 32% of that same figure counting it as a “very important” issue. The future of HR is right here, just waiting to be tapped into the next applicant’s smartphone.

The time to create a custom plan for digitizing HR processes is now.

In other words: it’s an equal technological playing field, but it won’t be for long. With HR executives quickly adopting streamlined software for a range of recruiting tasks, companies with manual HR processes will stick out like a sore thumb to today’s job seekers.
The move from manual processes to digital is a frontline opportunity to think creatively and bring innovation to the table. Creating real-time solutions and using cloud-based technology for recruitment, interviewing, and onboarding will move your company from business as usual, to a business that top talent will want to pursue.

The Gig Economy

The Deloitte study also offers insight into the shifting nature of work for today's job seekers. According to the report, one in three U.S. workers are freelancers, and that number is expected to grow 40% by 2020. The executives surveyed seem to be on board with this trend as well: 51% of respondents anticipate an increase in the hiring of freelancers, and only 16% anticipate a decrease.

There are a number of benefits for both employees and companies when it comes to using freelance talent to book “gigs,” but it's important to first acknowledge that this type of applicant is even a part of the playing field. Communicating and scheduling with applicants who are already working with a host of clients while seeking work at your agency can be challenging, but that's not a reason to ignore them. If you take time to consider how to make your recruitment process more freelancer-friendly, you won’t let talented individuals slip through the cracks.
In addition, some of the new digital tools available to a Human Resources team can work to better capture insights about these non-traditional employees. The study takes a fairly dismal view of today’s tracking systems, and for good reason: “Many of today’s applicant-tracking systems are in some ways merely automated filing cabinets,” it states. “Without these insights, though, no one is truly managing the workforce. Companies face a new and far more subtle competition for talent, especially as unemployment falls in some markets and voluntary turnover rises. Organizations will need new technologies, new ways of measuring costs, and even a new language of talent management for the 21st century.”

HR execs would do well to adopt systems that engage applicants with key personnel as soon as possible. This means no more long email threads about schedules, no more phone tag, and no more making endless calls to confirm the hiring team's availability. These manual processes eat up time, and they send a message that the candidate is not worthy of a swift response.

Adopting software that streamlines candidate scheduling, and fosters the quick and easy booking of interviews and onboarding sessions, is a powerful step towards digitizing your HR department. Doing so also prioritizes meaningful engagement for today’s most in-demand applicants.

The Future of HR Automation

Digitizing your HR department can increase efficiency, reduce costs, and help you attract and engage the best candidates first.

Appointment scheduling software is one tool that can make a big impact on your digital HR makeover. The solution is a Software as a Service (SaaS) application that completely automates the scheduling process. It allows individuals to self-schedule online at their convenience, eliminating the back-and-forth hassle of scheduling by phone or email. The most powerful scheduling applications are mobile-optimized, cloud-based, and elegant to use for both applicants and HR execs.

So, what does scheduling software look like in action?
Recruitment

The challenge of recruitment is getting the best candidates for the job as early into the process as possible. 2015 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) makes clear that job openings, new hires, and voluntary quits are all on the rise. According to a recent summation of findings: “There was an average of 4.6 million job openings each month in 2014, the highest monthly average for any year in JOLTS history.”

This data confirms similar findings in the Deloitte study. Today’s workers are more mobile, and more willing to seek new opportunities as they come. There are increasingly more job openings than talented applicants, so HR recruiters must understand that their role is to engage the candidate from the very start, with clear, smooth processes that respect the candidate’s time.

Using an appointment scheduler means that the candidate is free to consider their schedule and options, and choose when they’d like to meet. They can make this choice from their mobile device, from their home, or from the couch at 3 am. Appointment scheduling software shifts the HR team from the role of gatekeeper to one of welcoming committee. By freeing up the logistical task of scheduling, HR executives can spend their time on meaningful communications with the candidates they’re most interested in pursuing.
Interviewing

Scheduling even a single interview can be a logistical nightmare; scheduling round after round for a top management position adds unnecessary stress to the candidate, and takes precious time away from the HR team.

Appointment scheduling is a rules-based, set-it-and-forget-it system that allows candidates to take a more active role in the process. Candidates simply review the available appointment times, then choose the slot that works best for their schedule. This approach is especially appealing for freelance workers operating in the “gig economy,” who might manage a busy schedule that doesn’t necessarily fall into the traditional 9-5 paradigm.

When an applicant arrives for an interview, they do so without first having to clear the gauntlet of several rounds of emails and phone calls to confirm and reschedule. Instead, the candidate and the hiring team can both focus on what matters most.
Onboarding

Appointment scheduling software can continue to make the onboarding process run smoothly once a new hire has accepted a role with your company. Instead of having to delay a start date until the next orientation or benefits briefing occurs, HR reps can create more individualized approaches to getting a new hire the information they need in the most efficient manner possible.

As a recent article in Harvard Business Review made clear, the most successful onboarding programs focus on workplace culture, not a dizzying list of policies and procedures. Treating the onboarding process as a chance to model workplace values of efficiency and productivity sends a clear message that a company truly values each employee's time. Not to mention, it also communicates to new hires that innovative approaches are the norm — not the exception — when it comes to giving employees the information and support they need to do their jobs well.
Next Steps

The evolving role of a Human Resources team can feel overwhelming at first glance, but the need to innovate and update is clear. To be blunt: manual processes are a waste of time for busy HR professionals, and the time lag and logistical hassle they create can be a turn-off for today's mobile workers. Adopting innovative technology to solve these problems is a great first step towards digitizing your entire HR approach.

When your applicants' time is valued and they are empowered to take action on their own, an organization starts establishing trust and respect even before the first phone interview. This leads to more meaningful interactions with your team members, not to mention a positive big-picture outlook: stronger workplace culture, increased retention, and more efficient employees all around.

Ready to take the next step and learn how AppointmentPlus® software can bring your HR Team to the forefront of the digital economy?

In a 15-minute phone call, one of our Scheduling Software Experts will walk you through options to find the AppointmentPlus plan that's right for your scheduling needs.

Schedule a demo
About Kendall E. Matthews

As Vice President of Global Marketing and Communication at AppointmentPlus, I understand the challenges of recruiting. After interviewing hundreds of candidates, I’ve found that the qualities I most appreciate are conciseness and consistency.

About AppointmentPlus

AppointmentPlus scheduling software is a configurable, rules-based, pure SaaS product. Our software — combined with our deep product integration knowledge, customer experience focus, and amazing ability to both analyze synergies and synergize analogies — has made us the vendor of choice for many Fortune 500 companies.

Just want to talk directly to a Scheduling Software Expert?

In 15 minutes, we can help you find the plan that’s right for your team.

Call 800.988.0061 or Schedule a consultation

References:


