

Embracing AI Within The People Profession – Interactive Knowledge Session

Nicky Adams

Nicky.Adams@wlv.ac.uk



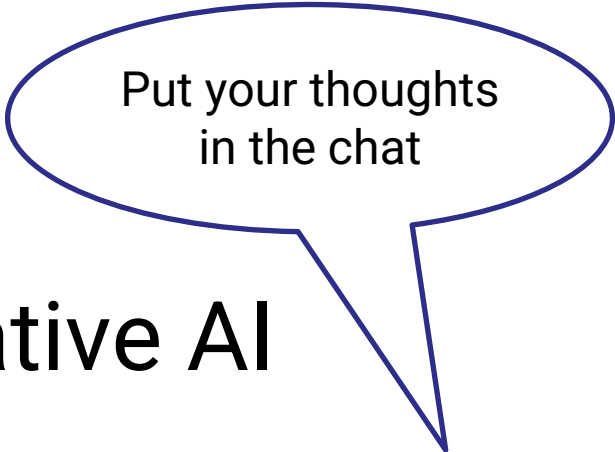
Impact of Technology & AI For People Professionals

- In the session today we will consider
 - What we mean by AI in relation to the people profession
 - The business case for influencing upwards
 - Skills people professional will need to meet the challenges of increased AI in our organisations
 - Risks and benefits of increased AI



Technology, AI and the People Profession

- HR, L&D, ODD
- Technology we currently use
 - E-learning, online portals for recruitment, skills matrices
- AI will refine these, potentially reduce our input and allow everyone to do more value-added tasks – for us this will mean we need to develop our own skills and also understand the impact on our people
- Automation and digital transformation are a significant part of this, but there is more...



Put your thoughts
in the chat



Predictive and Generative AI

- *“Predictive AI has largely been used to free up people's time by automating human processes to perform at very high levels of accuracy and with minimal human oversight. In contrast, the current iteration of generative AI is mostly being used to augment rather than replace human workloads.”*
- <https://venturebeat.com/ai/we-must-perfect-predictive-models-for-generative-ai-to-deliver-on-the-ai-revolution/#:~:text=Predictive%20AI%20has%20largely%20been,rather%20than%20replace%20human%20workloads>
- Whilst predictive AI will doubtless continue to evolve, the biggest changes are being seen in generative AI such as Chat GPT, Bing, Bard and the many free and paid-for alternatives
- What experience do you have of this kind of AI?
- What do **you** see as the risks? The benefits?



Generative AI

- The CIPD asked generative AI to write a policy and then had it reviewed by a range of people professionals
- The verdict: overall a good start, but unable to write all types of policy and in some areas, not in line with best practice

<https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/article/1816027/chatgpt-write-hr-policy>



Vote in the
polls!



Risks for us and the organisation

- What if we source a policy from AI and don't check it properly and it is used to discipline someone or even sack them? Where does the responsibility for this lie?
- What if our recruitment and selection processes are not sufficiently robust and we appoint someone on the basis of an AI written application but in reality they don't have the skills or experience?
- Consider the financial and reputational implications of these kinds of situations



Horizon Scanning

- *“It is a systematic process focusing on detecting the early signs of any potential developments. It helps researchers confirm or discredit existing phenomena as well as identify emerging trends that are on the margin of current thinking”*
- (<https://horizonscan.org/what-is-horizon-scanning>)
- It is about patterns and signals of potential disruptions (Covid anyone?) that could have an impact on wider communities, workplaces and so on
- Using this information, we can decide how best to approach any changes to get the best outcome
- Locating these “early signs” relies on desk research and the Internet is a key tool to help with this



Horizon Scanning

- Its aim is to give a holistic view of the future trends and to do so in a timely way
- It can identify risks, as well as opportunities
- Failing to do so can damage or close even the largest of organisations
 - Eastman Kodak ignored the rise of digital photography
 - Blockbuster didn't see the rise of online streaming services
 - Nokia didn't adopt iOS or Android and is no longer in the mobile phone market
- Whilst some organisations fail to see the pace of change others respond to changes and take advantage of them



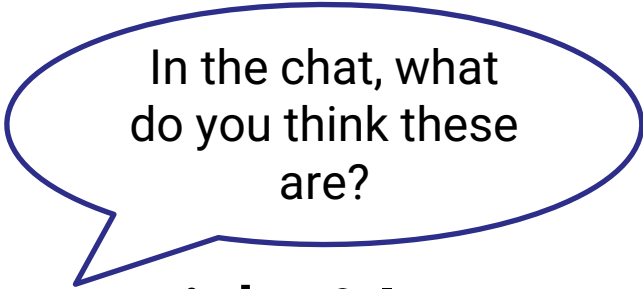
Technology & Commercial Development

- Often the long-term opportunities and implications of technological advances are not anticipated or understood
 - Consumer white goods have enabled women to enter the workplace in significant numbers; this in turn has driven the transformation of gender roles
 - Affordable air conditioning has made it possible to develop knowledge industries in very hot climates
- We have little idea today how AI will impact our organisation and society more widely in the future
- This makes horizon scanning (and similar activities) even more important



Wider Impact of AI

- Many organisations have statements on their websites that say their people are their most important asset, but this is not the reality in all cases
- Not being involved in decisions relating to AI means that its impact on our people is either forgotten or considered by others whose expertise/focus lies elsewhere
- The risk is that our people become forgotten casualties of automation and other AI driven changes
- This has the potential to impact our EVP and wider reputation



In the chat, what
do you think these
are?



Ethical Considerations with AI

- Balancing financial with ethical issues
- Replacing people with AI
- Disproportionate impact on different groups (EDI)
- Increasing gaps between low and high skilled roles and pay
- Insufficient training/development for new tasks
- Ability to recruit world-wide and not have to physically move
- Failing to invest in social capital locally
- Reducing head count by re-allocating tasks e.g. 2 roles lose 40% of their tasks, we make 1 role with the remaining 120%
- Backfilling gaps in roles with tasks leading to work intensification e.g. jobs full of higher-level tasks rather than a balanced mix



A Seat At the Table

- If people professionals have a seat at the table, or access to someone who can make their voice heard, these risks can be mitigated for our people and the organisation
- We can present a compelling case to ensure that whatever changes AI drives in our organisation, our people's needs are considered ethically as well as legally
- Ultimately this will benefit the organisation, our people and wider stakeholders such as local communities

Spend a few moments identifying the risks relating to how AI is currently being managed in your organisation

How do you think you might address these internally

Put your thoughts in the chat, or join the conversation



Vote in the poll



Technology & The Workplace

- New technologies can have a disruptive effect on organisations and workers – which can be viewed positively or negatively
- There are five main effects of technology and more than one of these can be the outcome
 - Efficiency - Effect on productivity; changes in skills required (new and redundant)
 - Quality - Significant impact in some areas e.g. medicine
 - Opportunity - New jobs and skills
 - Disruption - Job reduction and even destruction
 - Work location – home working, wider candidate pool

Impact of this disruption

Upskilling of our workforce and ourselves as people professionals is a key impact



Views on Workplace Skills - CIPD

- Soft skills are becoming more important e.g. empathy, respect, social skills
- A wider range of skills are required for workplace automation
- Employees need to be change ready
- We need to ensure that we are not assuming levels of digital and technical knowledge (*digital natives!*)
- Need a greater focus on learning and skills around tech
- Learning approaches will change, and employees' expectations of learning will need to change
- Learning will be accessed differently, requiring skills to be applied differently
- Need to consider learning and skill development outside of the organisation as workers who are displaced by technology may/will need to totally reskill
- Workers should expect a different career model and will need to learn how to navigate it



Views on Workplace Skills – OECD 2030

- *“Social and emotional skills, such as empathy and respect for others, are becoming essential as classrooms and workplaces become more diverse”*
- Cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, which include critical thinking, creative thinking, learning-to-learn and self-regulation
 - Use of language, numbers, reasoning, acquired knowledge
 - Include metacognitive skills such as learning to learn and recognising our own skills and values
- Social and emotional skills, which include empathy, self-efficacy, responsibility and collaboration
 - Patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours to support development of relationships and responsibilities
- Practical and physical skills, which include using new information and communication technology devices
 - Manual skills to engage in basic life skills such as dressing oneself and other skills such as use ICT devices, play sports and instruments,



People Professionals and Skills

- Specific ideas are difficult to predict since it will depend on the pace and type of digital adoption
- Technology and analytics are a key requirement, taking a key role in digital transformation, using analytics to inform people decisions
- There is also a need for people professionals to balance the potential biases in AI and challenge decisions
- Technology and analytics could help us develop better strategies for supporting wellbeing, engagement and productivity
- Developing digital skills for digital world
- Bringing people expertise to digital transformation
- Building reputation in digital transformation
- But equally, relationships with others remain critical



Sought After HR Skills https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/top-9-sought-after-hr-skills-professionals-2022-chantelle-miller/?trk=pulse-article_more-articles_related-content-card

- These from LinkedIn
 - Communication skills
 - Employee relations
 - Onboarding
 - People management
 - Multitasking
 - Teamwork and collaboration
 - Willing to travel
 - Decision making
 - Proactivity



The need for future HR skills

(<https://www.aihr.com/blog/future-hr-skills/>)

- Change management and change consulting
- Risk management
- People analytics
- Stakeholder management
- Management of strategic deals and alliances
- Integrating cultural differences
- Ethics and data privacy
- Critical and systems thinking
- Negotiation skills
- Inter-departmental collaboration
- Resilience
- Project management
- Organizational design



But....

- Research found HR activities appear less likely to use AI and automation. Just 14% of employers who had invested in AI and automation had applied them to HR processes, compared to almost half to operations and one quarter to IT processes.



UNIVERSITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

**What People Professionals need to
be able to support everyone in the
organisation including themselves**



A selection of ideas and thoughts

- Continue to be more outward facing
- To reskill selves and others and ensure that provision is made for this reskilling
- A principles-led (rather than policy-led) approach to inclusion and diversity and the need to keep up to date
- Influencing skills for dealing with senior leaders across the organisation
- Digital capability needs to improve across the field, but particularly within L&D
- Qualifications and learning for people professionals need to keep up with the changes



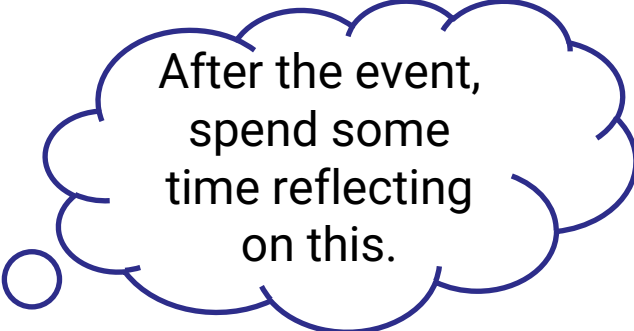
More ideas and thoughts

- Skills to manage a more diverse population such as
 - Adapt skills to meet technical readiness
 - Succession planning
 - Knowledge management
 - Change and project management skills
- The skills to support employees through changing career models
- A consistent approach to people management
- Understanding how AI will change jobs – new tasks, work intensification, cognitive overload
- Sensitivity to changing labour market as a whole
- We need to actually be a partner in the business



So what is the cost?

- What is the cost for your organisation of not embracing AI within the people profession?
- What is the cost of the people profession not being engaged in wider AI/automation decisions in the organisation?
- But also, what are the risks we need to be aware of when we engage with AI in our workplaces?
- What do we need to do to resolve the above issues if/when we see them?



After the event,
spend some
time reflecting
on this.



Three things you could do next

- Check out your digital strategy – think about what the main areas are for your organisation and ensure they are included
- Make sure relevant people professionals are always involved from the start of any automation process (remember this may not just be senior people)
- Ensure you know what all the key skills are in your organisation and who has them – technology may impact on roles not previously affected. You will then be better prepared to support your organisation and most importantly, its people, through future changes



Sources

- People Profession 2030 (CIPD Report) available at <https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/people-profession-2030-future-trends/>
- Work and Employment in a Changing Business Environment by Stephen Taylor & Graham Perkins (2021)
- OECD 230 teaching and learning report available at <https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/skills/>
- A New World of Work? Leader Reflections on the Impact of Covid-19 available at https://icbe.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Leaders-Reflections_ICBE-APS-Research_FINAL.pdf
- Sustainable Leadership for a Post-Digital Age available at https://icbe.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SNN-ICBE-Skillnet-Research-Document_Web-Spreads-130123.pdf



Further Reading

- Report into People & Machines
https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/people-machines-report/?_gl=1*zjj6gr*_ga*ODY5ODQwNDE3LjE2NDAwODY2NTI.*_ga_D9HN5GYHYY*MTY4MzIwOTE1OC4xMTQuMS4xNjgzMjA5NjY0LjUzLjAuMA.
- Article on our attitudes to AI (particularly generative/LLM) and the risks that come with it <https://theconversation.com/evolution-is-making-us-treat-ai-like-a-human-and-we-need-to-kick-the-habit-205010>



Further Reading

- Article about AI increasing cognitive effort
https://techxplore.com/news/2023-05-workplace-machine-accuracy-human-workload.html?fbclid=IwAR3FUBMLjZUBf62_cb-db_Fe58CMAGvF2LvVu7UydPpkz2KbGLgj9QDwh_M
- Examples of the impact on job in firms involved in AI
https://interestingengineering.com/innovation/google-microsoft-amazon-meta-ai?fbclid=IwAR2g0x-_DcwsTMqwqr5_GwVHtwoq66hSwrFfGY3FWYCT75vV5f5ARuVt6MA
- This is an interesting website <http://theautomatedeconomy.com/> - on Facebook they regularly post articles like the two above