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### Tech adoption key to freeing HR time for strategy

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Personalised, automated L&D recommendations, learning modules delivered via mobile, and automated compliance reminders are just a few ways technology can make HR's role less hands-on and more strategic, experts say.

Technology is already easing the burden of some of HR's more practical, hands-on responsibilities, and enabling more sophisticated strategising, says Tym Lawrence, the Asia Pacific solutions architects director at [SumTotal Systems](#).

HR leaders can, for example, spend considerable time on the area of compliance, especially when managers are often behind and full of excuses, he says.

Giving managers tools, such as "easy dashboards, easy reports, [and] regular notifications about what their team has not completed", can make life easier for both parties.

"It should be all automated and alert-based and exception-based," adds [Skillsoft](#) Asia Pacific vice president and general manager, Melissa Ries.

"That way HR's not having to send emails. It should be all set up so that a manager knows exactly where they're up to. There's the compliance side of it, but there's also seeing progress in your own team if you've got those dashboards or reports that are showing you where your team's up to... and how far through a program or a framework you are."

This approach is already the norm in the IT industry, Ries says, but many organisations in other sectors are yet to take advantage of the technology that enables it.

### Big data = big leaps in personal development

Use of big data to not only analyse overall business trends, but also create more personalised, tailored development plans to aid retention, satisfaction and engagement, is also worth embracing, Ries says.

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"The average [employee] spends about 24 minutes a week learning, so we need to be able to make it convenient to the learner," she says. One size does not fit all; learning needs to be based on the style and modality that best suits the individual.

Learning should also be easy to integrate into everyday routines, Lawrence notes. If it's not, employees won't engage.

Society is "obsessed with recommendations", he adds, citing the way Netflix and Amazon offer viewing and purchase suggestions as an example. If employers start "proactively pushing" learning suggestions to offer personalised recommendations – and use factors such as good reviews from colleagues who have completed various programs to heighten their interest – they'll have far more engaged learners, who are also far more likely to stay.

"You've got to be able to do your own development as well as ones your manager recommends, you've got to be able to also start to use wizards, or visualisation or big data to find development activities both within the learning catalogue and outside that meet your personal goals and desires. And that's where technology can start to allow companies to do individualised development at scale."

Ideally, the personalised experience will start from the beginning of the employment relationship, Lawrence says. "Twenty per cent of new hires leave in the first 45 days... so you've got to give a great personalised onboarding experience which then feeds into development."

The importance of having a tight connection between talent and learning cannot be overstated, he says. If a manager is having a development session with an employee, they should be able to add competency gaps as they go, bring development ideas from a curated set, and pull up a development plan on the spot.

Ries notes that data analysis can quantify the value of talent strategies and put ROI statistics and dashboards in the hands of HR, enabling leaders to demonstrate the impact of L&D on the overall productivity and growth of the business.

Employers that ignore trends in this area run a significant risk. "You cannot hire yourself out of a skills gap, so you must be working hard to give current employees the digital skills they'll need for tomorrow's workforce," she says.

"There are stats that say 40 per cent of roles won't exist by 2020... organisations really need to be looking at how they actually skill their employees, and do it in a way that is going to engage the learner."

## Wearables and SaaS

It's still early days when it comes to the use of artificial intelligence in HR, but Lawrence expects it will be especially welcomed in cases where it's too expensive, dangerous or difficult to do

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something on site, "or where you need to add layers of information in context and you can't do it through any other way".

Wearable technology in the form of mobile phones, however, is already mainstream, and employers shouldn't underestimate its importance from a learning perspective.

The ability to "quickly push out bite-sized learning segments" is already "really powerful", and in the future, a mobile's ability to pick up an employee's location, check them in to a worksite, check their certifications, and enable them to address any gaps by doing additional learning on the spot, has huge potential, he says.