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PEOPLE OPERATIONS FOR THE AI ERA

Scaling in the Age of AI

A Playbook on how to build, scale, and empower high-performing teams in the age of AI



The old scaling playbook no longer fits the way we work.

By Maja Ninković Shapera, PhD, Lead Advisor, Thrivea People Ops Advisory Circle

When we started putting this playbook together, we knew one thing: the old startup scaling playbook was built for a world that no longer exists.

Most operating models were designed around human constraints. Information moves through people, decisions sit within hierarchies, and work is divided across functions because attention, expertise and coordination are limited. AI changes those constraints in a pretty fundamental way, which means it also changes the operating model itself: how work is divided, sequenced, coordinated and ultimately turned into value.

That is why simply optimising the old model will only get you so far. Mapping an existing process and finding places to insert AI can be useful, but it still assumes the process itself is basically right. The more interesting question is what happens if you start with the outcome instead. What are you actually trying to accomplish, and **if you were designing the work today, with the full range of human and AI capabilities now available, how would you do it?** The answer may look very different. Steps can disappear, work that used to happen sequentially can happen in parallel, decisions can move closer to where the information is, and feedback that once arrived at the end can become part of the process itself.

Take product onboarding. If the goal is to help more customers reach value quickly, the answer is not simply to use AI to write requirements faster, generate designs faster and help engineers code faster. Starting with the outcome may produce a different workmap altogether: customer behaviour is analysed continuously, several explanations for drop-off are tested at the same time, prototypes are created in parallel, and what customers do next changes what the team works on next. The point is not that every step gets faster. **The shape of the work changes because the capabilities available to the team have changed.**

The same is true of jobs. We have traditionally treated the job as one of the basic building blocks of an organisation, but jobs are really bundles of work created for a particular operating environment. A recruiter may source, schedule, write outreach, assess candidates, advise hiring managers and manage relationships. AI can take on some of that work, accelerate other parts of it and create entirely new work around oversight, calibration and judgment. Those bundles are going to become much more fluid, which means **the better question is increasingly not "Do we still need this role?" but "What work needs to happen, and what is the best way to get it done?"**

The organisation also moves from episodic management to continuous sensing. Workforce plans, engagement surveys and performance cycles are periodic because collecting and interpreting organizational information has historically been expensive. AI lowers that cost and makes patterns visible while they are forming: demand shifting, skills becoming scarce, trust deteriorating, capacity accumulating in the wrong places. Scale becomes a continuous act of adaptation, informed by a much richer picture of how the organisation actually works.

All of this changes the nature of knowledge work. Periodic reviews can become continuous sensing. Time spent finding and assembling information shifts towards interpreting what it means. Fixed workflows become more adaptive because they can respond to what happens along the way, and some of the handoffs we have built between functions start to make less sense. **Human contribution does not disappear in that world, but it moves towards the things that become more valuable when information and output are abundant:** judgment, context, relationships, accountability and recognising when the situation in front of you does not fit the expected pattern.

As the nature of work changes, so do the risks. **Human work becomes smaller in volume but denser in consequence, concentrating around judgment, relationships, invention and responsibility.** Excessive cognitive offloading can weaken the very capabilities organisations still need, while automated entry-level work can remove the apprenticeship through which future experts develop. Shared models can flatten ideas toward the statistical average, and distributed human-machine workflows can leave accountability everywhere in theory and nowhere in practice. Scaling with AI therefore requires deliberate protection of authorship, learning, dissent and meaning.

For startups, none of this is theoretical. It affects who you hire, how you structure teams, where decisions sit, what technology you buy and how much organisational complexity you create as you grow. The aim of this playbook is not to pretend there is already a neat, complete method for redesigning a company around AI. There isn't. It is a collection of ideas, examples and provocations to help founders and People teams look at the company they are building with fresh eyes: where value is created, how the work behind it is organised, and which assumptions are worth revisiting now that the available capabilities have changed.

Maja Ninkovic Shapera, PhD

Lead Advisor, Thrivea

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SECTION 01

Current State of AI in the Workforce

AI has moved beyond experimentation and is becoming a regular part of everyday work - but widespread transformation is still in its early stages.



From experimentation to everyday work

Artificial intelligence has moved beyond experimentation and is becoming a regular part of everyday work, but all recent studies and reports show that widespread transformation is still in its early stages. Gallup's latest research shows that half of U.S. employees now use AI at work at least occasionally, while around one in four use it several times a week or more.

Employees largely view AI as a productivity enhancer-helping them complete tasks faster and more efficiently-yet relatively few believe it has fundamentally changed how work is organised. One of the strongest predictors of successful AI adoption is not the technology itself, but leadership and the line managers: employees whose managers actively encourage and support AI use are significantly more likely to adopt it and report positive outcomes.

Despite growing investment, many organisations still lack a clear AI strategy, highlighting that the biggest challenge is no longer access to AI, but embedding it into workflows, developing new capabilities, and leading organisational change effectively.

The World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report* says that by 2030, nearly 40% of workers' core skills are expected to change. According to that report, technological skills are projected to grow in importance more rapidly than any other type of skill.

Among these, AI and big data top the list as the fastest-growing skills, followed closely by networks and cybersecurity and technological literacy. Complementing these, creative thinking and two socio-emotional attitudes-resilience, flexibility and agility, along with curiosity and lifelong learning-are also seen as rising in importance.

50%

of U.S. employees use AI at work at least occasionally

1 in 4

use it several times a week or more

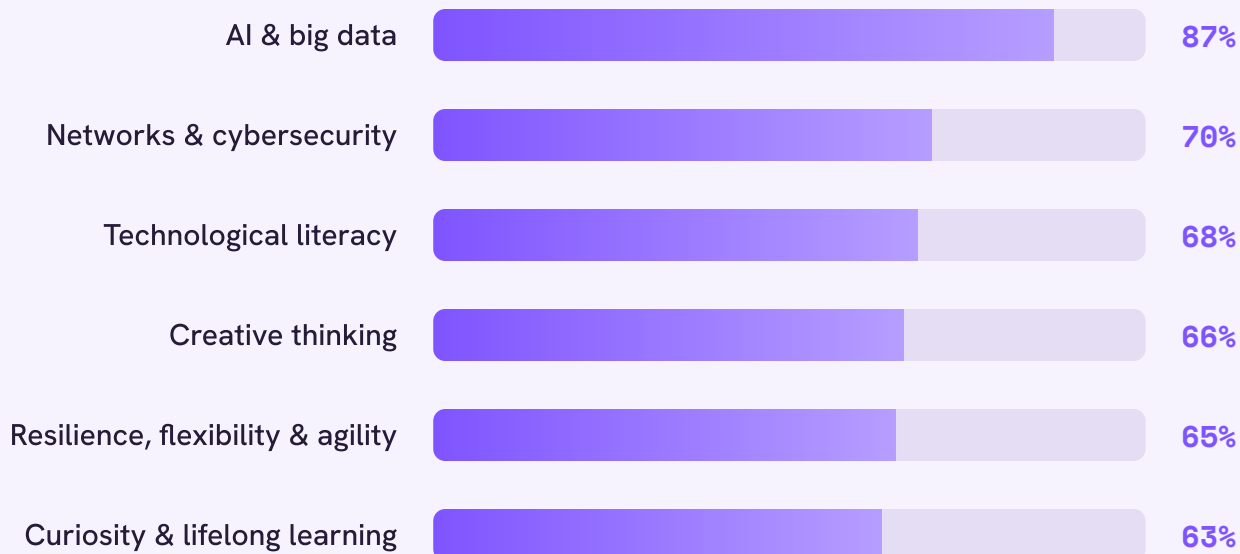
~40%

of workers' core skills expected to change by 2030

GOV UK study shows that people with fewer opportunities to develop digital skills may lack confidence and be less likely to engage with AI training.

The fastest-growing skills to 2030

Share of employers identifying each skill as fastest-growing. Source: World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2025.



TECHNOLOGICAL

AI & big data, cybersecurity and technological literacy lead the ranking of rising capabilities.

HUMAN

Creative thinking, resilience and curiosity rise alongside them-technology raises the value of being human.

SECTION 02

Meet our Advisory Circle

HR executives, founders and organisational leaders from around the world who have collectively helped hundreds of companies scale through rapid change.



Lead Advisor



Maja Ninkovic Shapera, PhD

Co-founder and CPO, Fusion by HR Week

Maja is the co-founder and CPO at Fusion by HR Week, an AI in HR Tech event and startup accelerator. Maja spent the last decade as the Chief People Officer, running People at fast-scaling companies, building teams across 20+ countries, and most recently, helping build the new wave of AI-powered HR tech that supercharges the people function in the era of AI.

PhD in Social Psychology, HR Tech startup advisor, editor for the HR World professional journal, keynote speaker and a vocal advocate for ethical, responsible AI use in organizations of every size.

Most recently, Maja served as Chief People Officer at Squirro, a GenAI scaleup expanding globally, where she was building the People strategy, culture and operating model of a company where AI is already part of how work gets done. Before Squirro, she led People at fast-growing scaleup Mitto.

Maja is also one of the early and persistent voices behind People Analytics and evidence-based HR, founding the People Analytics Hub and advising organizations on building analytics capabilities, from organizational network analysis and predictive analytics to new ways of understanding how organizations actually work.

The advisors



Emma Miller

AUSTRALIA

Founder & Lead People Partner, The People Collab

Former senior HR executive who helps founders and growing businesses build scalable people strategies. Focuses on leadership development, performance, organisational culture and creating workplaces where both people and businesses thrive.



Michael S. Erisman

UNITED STATES

Principal Consultant, Talent Realized

Former Chief People Officer at Pushpay and Parallels, with senior People leadership experience at DocuSign and Microsoft. With more than 25 years of global HR expertise, he has led organizations and teams across 100+ countries and brings deep expertise in talent strategy, organizational effectiveness and workforce transformation.



Ibukun Igbinosa

NIGERIA

Country Manager, People & Operations, VEGA IT

A People and Culture leader with extensive experience building inclusive, high-performing organisations in emerging and growth markets. Her work centres on talent strategy, employee experience, diversity and organisational effectiveness-helping companies create environments where people and performance grow together.



Shruti Choubey

UNITED STATES

Fractional HR Leader | CPO, BizLeaders

A GPHR-certified People & Culture leader who began her career as a software engineer, Shruti brings over a decade of global HR experience helping scaling organizations build stronger cultures, develop better leaders, and create people systems that support sustainable growth. Her technical background gives her a distinctive lens on HR transformation, AI-enabled people operations, and bridging technology and people strategy in ways few HR leaders can.



Nick Sayer-Gearen

AUSTRALIA

Founder, SHIFT HR

Founder of Shift HR, a Melbourne HR agency. He advises founders and executives on scaling businesses through stronger leadership, organisational effectiveness and strategic execution-bridging commercial growth with people-centred leadership.



Ana Cubrilo

SERBIA

Senior People Development & HR Compliance Consultant

A senior HR professional, consultant and coach helping organisations build sustainable people practices and navigate growth and change. Her work brings together HR strategy and compliance, organisational development, leadership and coaching, with a strong focus on translating people concepts into practical organisational solutions.



Marie Pavlou

CYPRUS

Founder, MPHR Solutions

A Senior People & Culture Strategist and HR Lecturer with 15+ years across FinTech, Tech and iGaming in Cyprus and EMEA. She partners with senior leadership to build talent frameworks and culture initiatives that help companies scale-structured, human, and built to last.



David Hannibal

UNITED STATES

Product Advisor, Wavefront Innovations

A seasoned executive experienced in product vision, strategy and execution across FactSet, IEX, Duco and Knoema. He solves enterprise pain points through organic product innovation and corporate development, and advises early-stage tech companies on driving results with AI.



Ana Minic

SERBIA

Head of People & Culture, AikBank

An experienced Head of People and Culture with a demonstrated history of working in the banking industry. A strong HR professional with a Master's degree in Andragogy (Adult and Continuing Education, University of Belgrade) and a CIPD-certified HR Manager and associate member. Optimistic, enthusiastic and curious, always seeking creative solutions.



Aylia Naqvi

UNITED STATES

Chief HR Strategist, HCM Strategy

A People strategy leader with more than a decade of experience building HR functions inside high-growth, VC and private equity-backed companies. She has led organisations through rapid global expansion, scaling teams from 25 to 300 employees across multiple regions while supporting fundraising, international growth, and organisational transformation. Aylia now helps organisations move from AI experimentation to AI-integrated people strategy across workforce architecture, org design, recruiting, performance management, and people operations.

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SECTION 03

The State of Startups

Investment is recovering, but the rules for building successful companies have fundamentally changed.



A new phase of growth

The startup ecosystem has entered a new phase of growth. After several years of funding uncertainty, investment is recovering, but the rules for building successful companies have fundamentally changed. Artificial intelligence is accelerating innovation, enabling leaner teams, faster execution, and new business models, while sustainability, health technology, decentralised technologies, and alternative funding sources continue to create new opportunities for founders.

At the same time, investors are placing greater emphasis on businesses that can demonstrate resilience, ethical AI practices, and long-term value rather than growth at any cost.

PRODUCT-MARKET FIT

"Do customers want this product?"

Essential-but no longer sufficient on its own.

STRATEGIC FIT

"Is this the right business to build, in the right market, at the right time?"

Increasingly, high-performing founders focus on strategic fit: identifying the right opportunity within emerging market trends, targeting the right customer segment, building a differentiated competitive position, and choosing the right growth drivers before scaling. Companies that establish strategic fit before scaling are better positioned to create lasting competitive advantage, adapt to rapid market changes, and avoid scaling the wrong business model.

In an AI-driven economy where products can be replicated faster than ever, sustainable advantage increasingly comes from strategic decision-making, organisational agility, and the ability to build teams that can learn and evolve as quickly as the market itself. The startups that thrive over the next decade will be those that combine innovation with disciplined execution-aligning their people, technology, and strategy to scale sustainably.

SECTION 04

Hiring & Workforce Planning

As the company grows, every hire changes how work happens-so scaling pressure-tests how hiring gets done.



Every hire shapes the organisation

In early startups, people are often hired to relieve pressure, fill urgent gaps, or keep momentum going. But as the company grows, every hire changes how work happens: roles, decision-making, communication, management capacity, and culture. Scaling creates the need for a more structured, intentional, and tech-enabled recruitment process.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

01 Don't hire only for today's problems-hire for tomorrow's organisation.

In the early stages, it's natural to focus on immediate business needs and hire people who can deliver results quickly. Technical expertise often becomes the primary selection criterion. But as the company grows, hiring decisions made purely to solve today's challenges can create long-term organisational problems if roles, expectations, and structure haven't been clearly defined.

02 Build scalable hiring systems from your very first hire.

Don't wait until you have 40 or 50 employees before introducing structure. Recruitment should include clearly defined roles, success measures, ideal candidate profiles, standardised job advertisements, structured interviews, onboarding, and clear expectations for performance and development. Systems should evolve alongside the business-not be introduced after growth has already created complexity.

03 **Invest in HR expertise early-not just to recruit, but to build the system.**

Whether through an internal HR leader or an experienced consultant, early HR support should focus on creating scalable hiring processes rather than simply filling vacancies. Strong recruitment frameworks help assess technical capability alongside behavioural fit, growth potential, and alignment with the company's culture and future direction. The hiring process itself becomes a long-term competitive advantage.

04 **Use AI to improve efficiency-but keep people at the centre of hiring decisions.**

AI can automate administrative work such as processing applications, organising candidate data, and analysing structured questionnaires. But recruitment still requires human judgement. AI is effective at finding explicit matches, but often misses transferable experience, growth potential, and unconventional career paths. Technology should enhance recruitment-not replace thoughtful hiring decisions.

05 **Companies that scale well don't just build products-they build trust.**

The organisations that scale successfully create cultures built on trust, transparency, and accountability. They communicate change clearly, define expectations, listen to employee feedback, and understand why people stay-or leave. Strong leadership and people practices become as important to sustainable growth as the product itself.

CLOSING INSIGHT

The companies that scale most successfully don't simply hire more people-they build hiring systems that consistently bring the right people into the business. The best time to build a scalable recruitment process is before rapid growth begins.



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One area that is often underestimated is the true cost of replacing a good employee. Many organisations rush to fill vacancies because they believe a candidate is “good enough” and want to minimise disruption.

Hiring should be treated as a strategic business project rather than an administrative task. Investing additional time upfront almost always costs less than replacing the wrong hire later. As organisations scale, recruitment becomes one of the most important business processes-not simply an HR responsibility, but a shared leadership responsibility that directly influences future performance, culture, and growth.

Ana Cubrilo

Senior People Development & HR Compliance Consultant

Hiring & Workforce Planning Audit

A quick audit of whether your hiring approach is supporting-or slowing-your ability to scale.

- 01 Are we hiring for where the business is going, not just the problems we need to solve today?
- 02 Do we have clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and success measures before opening a position?
- 03 Do our hiring decisions evaluate behavioural fit, growth potential, and cultural alignment-not just technical skills?
- 04 Is every stage of our recruitment process documented and consistently followed?
- 05 Do we have a structured onboarding process that enables new hires to become productive quickly?
- 06 Have we clearly defined when managers, HR, and external recruiters are responsible during the hiring process?
- 07 Are we measuring hiring through KPIs such as quality of hire, retention, time-to-productivity, or hiring manager satisfaction?
- 08 Are we using AI to improve recruitment efficiency while ensuring important hiring decisions remain human-led?
- 09 Do we regularly gather feedback from candidates, hiring managers, and new employees to improve our process?
- 10 Are our leaders and hiring managers creating the kind of culture that attracts and retains the people we want to scale with?

SECTION 05

Management & Leadership Evolution

Scaling creates the need for clear ownership of the people operating system-and a shift in what leadership provides.



From doing the work to designing the system

In early startups, People Ops is often managed through spreadsheets, manual processes, and founder judgment. As the company grows, this informal setup breaks: data becomes scattered, decisions become hard to track, and basic processes become inconsistent. Scaling creates the need for clear ownership of the people operating system, with an HRIS at the centre.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

01 Don't wait to support your people on purpose.

Founders in startups wear many hats - they are the product and the tech and the people ops and everything in between. It works - until it doesn't. The real business risk in startups is not compliance - it's how to attract, develop and retain the talent that moves the needle and adds exponential value to a growing business. The biggest challenge for founders and why they need people leaders is to scale the culture. Startup culture is its operating system, it's the invisible architecture of how work gets done. In the beginning this is the first principles, but as you scale, you need to design a system that will sustain it - and help attract, develop and retain people.

02 The right time for your first HR hire is driven by intent-not headcount.

Thirty to fifty employees is a useful rule of thumb, but it's rarely the real trigger. The real trigger is the type of business you want to build. The moment you decide to build the business deliberately is the same moment you should be thinking about managing and supporting your people properly. In practice, founders usually feel the cost of waiting much earlier than they expected.

03

As your team grows, leadership must move from doing the work to designing the system.

Scaling brings diversity of thought, experience, and skill. That's a strength-but it changes what leadership has to provide. As teams grow, clarity has to increase. Standards and expectations become clearer. At the same time, autonomy and ownership become essential because leaders can no longer make or check every decision themselves. Leadership shifts from personally doing the work to creating the framework that helps people do their work at their best.

04

Automate the plumbing. Humanise the experience.

Automate contract generation, approvals, workflows, notifications, and administrative communication aggressively. But be equally deliberate about the moments employees actually experience. Performance conversations, feedback, difficult discussions, and employee relations should remain deeply human. Automation should free leaders to spend more time leading people-not less.

05

The greatest opportunity for AI is to strengthen people-not replace them.

Leadership isn't deciding whether to use AI-it's deciding where to point it. AI can document knowledge, surface information, coach, analyse data, and remove the work around the work that quietly wears people down. As AI becomes part of everyday work, leadership becomes accountable for ensuring people feel skilled, capable, and supported-not threatened.

CLOSING INSIGHT

Scaling changes the role of leadership. The challenge is no longer being the person who gets the work done-it is creating the clarity, systems, and environment that allow everyone else to do their best work.



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The moment you start thinking seriously about doing business properly-building it, growing it, doing it well-is the same moment you should be thinking about managing and supporting your people properly. They aren't two separate decisions.

There's an age-old saying that if you look after your people, everything else tends to look after itself. Rapidly scaling businesses often sail straight past the moment they were meant to start thinking about their people. The question a leader should keep coming back to is simple: how do I help my people do what they need to do?

Nick Sayer-Gearen

Founder, SHIFT HR



Leadership Evolution Audit

A quick audit of whether your leadership approach is evolving fast enough to support a growing organisation.

- 01 Is there clear ownership for every core People Ops responsibility, or are important tasks falling between functions?
- 02 Have we started managing and supporting our people deliberately, rather than waiting until we're "big enough" for HR?
- 03 As leaders, have we shifted from doing the work ourselves to designing the systems that enable others to succeed?
- 04 Are expectations, standards, and decision-making responsibilities clearly communicated across the organisation?
- 05 Do managers have the autonomy to make decisions without relying on founders for everyday direction?
- 06 Are we automating administrative work while protecting the human moments that matter most to employees?
- 07 Have we designed our employee experience with the same care that we design our operational processes?
- 08 Are we using AI to remove low-value work and enhance capabilities, rather than simply reducing headcount?
- 09 Are employees receiving the support, coaching, and training they need to confidently adopt AI and new ways of working?
- 10 Do our leadership decisions consistently answer one question: How do we help our people do what they need to do?



SECTION 06

The HR Basics Every Scaling Company Can't Afford to Delay

Core HR processes are the operating basics that either support growth or slow it down.



Replacing the invisible glue

As startups scale, informal handling of employee data, onboarding, time off, documents, policies, and manager requests can quickly turn into chaos, inconsistency, and duplicated work. Instead of giving the company fuel to grow, weak core processes create friction at exactly the moment when the team needs speed, clarity, and stronger retention.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

01 The first thing to disappear at scale is the invisible glue.

In a small team, consistency isn't a system—it's a side effect of one or two people holding everything in their heads. Pay decisions feel fair because the same person makes them all. Expectations are clear because the founder is in every conversation. Culture spreads by osmosis. As the company grows, that shared understanding quietly thins out. The result isn't one dramatic failure, but growing inconsistency, slower ramp-up for new hires, and compliance gaps nobody actually owns.

02 Formalise the processes that create the biggest problems later.

The first processes founders should formalise are the ones tied to money, expectations, and how people join and leave. Build a defensible approach to pay before every salary becomes a negotiation. Create consistent onboarding and offboarding—these are the moments employees remember most. Define performance expectations, and make sure contracts, classifications, payroll, and record keeping are correct from the beginning.

03

Automate the paperwork. Protect the conversations.

Payroll, leave requests, timesheets, contract generation, e-signatures, and record keeping should be automated early and enthusiastically. But don't automate the moments that carry meaning-the offer conversation, the first-day welcome, feedback, difficult conversations, and exits. If a task is repetitive and nobody needs to feel anything about it, automate it. If it's a moment someone will remember, keep a human in it. Organizations should never automate one-on-one conversations, promotion decisions, candidate selection, employee development, conflict resolution, or other important people conversations. In these areas, human judgment, empathy, and trust remain irreplaceable.

04

Onboarding is how culture scales when founders can't be everywhere.

Early onboarding isn't really a process-it's proximity. As the business grows, onboarding becomes the mechanism for transferring culture, context, and expectations at scale. Effective onboarding accelerates employee productivity, increases engagement, and reduces turnover. Weak onboarding shows up as slow productivity, early turnover, and inconsistent standards. Strong onboarding allows the business to teach itself without relying on the founder.

05

Buy systems for the company you are-not the company you imagine.

Early investments should focus on practical tools that reduce administration: payroll, a simple HRIS, leave management, compliant record keeping, and e-signatures. AI is valuable for drafting-as long as humans review everything and protect privacy. Avoid buying enterprise HR platforms before the business is ready. Buy for the next 12 months, not the fantasy org chart.

CLOSING INSIGHT

The greatest HR risk in a growing business isn't a lack of sophisticated systems-it's relying on habits that only work while everyone knows everything. The earlier you replace invisible knowledge with simple, repeatable processes, the easier every stage of growth becomes.



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What earns its place early is a simple payroll and basic HRIS that handles leave, records and payslips and is compliant, plus rostering and time tools if you're shift-based, and e-signature for contracts. An applicant tracking system is worth it only once hiring volume actually justifies it, not before.

AI is genuinely useful here for drafting: position descriptions, first-pass policies, interview questions, internal comms. The caveat is that a human reviews everything for accuracy and tone, and you never feed sensitive employee data into a tool you haven't checked for privacy.

Emma Miller

Founder & Lead People Partner, The People Collab



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If HR is built on solid foundations, with clear processes and a well-defined structure, those processes shouldn't break down. What often happens instead is that organizations become overly administrative, approval-heavy, and formalized.

Employees start feeling that what was once simple has become unnecessarily complicated and slow. For example, managers who previously hired people independently may suddenly find themselves navigating multiple interview rounds, assessments, and lengthy HR approval processes before making a hiring decision.

Ana Minic

Head of People & Culture, AikBank

HR Foundations Audit

A quick audit of whether your HR foundations are ready to support your next stage of growth.

- 01 Are our pay decisions guided by a simple, transparent framework rather than negotiated case by case?
- 02 Do we have consistent onboarding and offboarding processes that every employee experiences?
- 03 Have we clearly defined performance expectations so managers share the same understanding of what "good" looks like?
- 04 Are employment contracts, classifications, payroll, and record keeping fully compliant?
- 05 Have we documented key processes instead of relying on founder knowledge or informal communication?
- 06 Are we automating repetitive administrative work while keeping important employee moments personal?
- 07 Can our onboarding transfer culture, context, and expectations without depending on the founder's daily involvement?
- 08 Are our HR systems appropriate for the business we are today rather than the organisation we hope to become?
- 09 Are we using AI to save time while ensuring all content is reviewed for accuracy, tone, and privacy?
- 10 As we grow, are we intentionally replacing the "invisible glue" with clear, repeatable systems that create consistency?

SECTION 07

Performance Management & Engagement in the Age of AI

The future of performance management is becoming more continuous, adaptive, and intelligence-driven.



Better conversations, not more automation

Most performance systems were designed for stable organisations, not fast-growing companies navigating constant change, hybrid work, and AI transformation. The future of performance management is becoming more continuous, adaptive, and intelligence-driven.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

01 **Keep performance human-led, even when AI supports the process.**

Performance management has traditionally been one of the most dreaded HR processes because of the administrative burden around it. AI creates an opportunity to remove much of that work-documentation, paperwork, summaries, reporting. But the process itself must remain human-led, because performance management is ultimately about people. AI should make managers better prepared for conversations, not replace the conversations themselves.

02 **Performance management is not an event-it is an ongoing conversation.**

One of the biggest mistakes is treating performance as something that happens once or twice a year. Feedback should exist through continuous loops-one-on-ones, coffee chats, pulse checks, and coaching. When these are consistently documented, AI can summarise previous discussions and identify patterns, ensuring employees are never blindsided. Performance conversations should confirm what employees already know-not surprise them.

03

Transparency and manager capability determine whether performance systems succeed.

Performance management starts long before the first appraisal. HR designs the framework, but line managers own the experience. From day one, employees should understand:

How performance is measured

What good performance looks like

How often conversations happen

How it connects to development & rewards

04

AI is most valuable when it turns performance data into better leadership conversations.

While performance decisions remain human-owned, AI can analyse information at a scale managers cannot-helping organisations:

- Identify performance trends
- Detect declining engagement
- Support succession planning
- Visualise performance distribution
- Identify potential flight risks
- Recognise emerging leaders

The value isn't the report-it's the better conversation that follows.



Use AI to increase efficiency while protecting what makes people human.

Employee engagement will always remain fundamentally human because it depends on listening, communication, recognition, trust, and belonging. AI can support the systems behind engagement-gathering feedback, analysing trends, understanding where people may be disengaging-but it cannot replace the human experiences that make employees feel genuinely seen and valued. As organisations become more global and AI-enabled, leaders also need to recognise cultural differences in communication and feedback. The highest-performing organisations will use AI to remove administrative work while allowing people to focus on critical thinking, creativity, innovation, relationship-building, and sound judgment-the capabilities that remain uniquely human.

CLOSING INSIGHT

The future of performance management isn't more automation-it's better conversations. AI should remove paperwork, reveal patterns, and provide better insights, while managers continue to do what technology cannot: build trust, coach people, recognise potential, and create a workplace where employees feel genuinely seen and supported.



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Performance management is not an event. It should be an ongoing conversation. When managers consistently document feedback, AI can help summarise performance and identify patterns-but employees should never feel they are being evaluated by a machine or blindsided during a formal review.

Ibukun Igbinosa

Country Manager, People & Operations, VEGA IT

Performance & Engagement Audit

A quick audit of whether your performance and engagement practices are evolving effectively in the age of AI.

- 01 Is performance management an ongoing conversation rather than a once- or twice-yearly event?
- 02 Do managers conduct regular one-on-one conversations and document performance consistently throughout the year?
- 03 Do employees clearly understand how their performance is measured and what is expected of them?
- 04 Have managers been trained to deliver meaningful feedback and apply the performance process consistently?
- 05 Is the relationship between performance ratings, development, and compensation transparent to employees?
- 06 Are we using AI to reduce administrative work while keeping performance decisions and feedback human-led?
- 07 Are we using AI to identify trends such as engagement changes, flight risks, succession opportunities, and leadership potential?
- 08 Does our performance system evaluate both business results and alignment with our values and culture?
- 09 Have we considered cultural differences when designing engagement and feedback across diverse or distributed teams?
- 10 Are we using AI to create more time for coaching, creativity, relationship-building, and meaningful leadership conversations?

SECTION 08

The Scaling Timing

Most companies don't break because they grow too fast - they break because they keep operating the same way at twice the size.



Knowing when to evolve

Scaling isn't just about hiring more people; it's about knowing when systems, structure, leadership, and technology need to evolve before growth turns into operational debt.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

01 Watch the business metrics-they tell you when your operating model has reached its limit.

The need to scale becomes visible when the business starts falling behind in delivering what it has sold, customer service can't keep up with demand, or product development consistently misses release dates. These operational signals indicate that the current structure can no longer support the growth opportunity.

02 Build your organisation backwards-from the customer back.

Build org charts backwards, from customer back. First ensure that your ability to deliver products and services to customers is in place. Aside from accurate and effective payroll, legally protected onboarding and employee status, and financial accounting, most employee systems are far more flexible, and companies can withstand impacts to employee expectations far easier than customer expectations or business financials. So, prioritize the business first always.



03

You don't need an HR team to scale-you need people systems.

If you have your accounting team running payroll, and managers effectively onboarding strategy, and a base of some policies and guidelines, you can effectively grow a start up without an HR team. In the US for example, there are points at which a whole host of employment laws come into effect, so having an HR generalist is advisable once the company exceeds 50 employees or so. This of course depends on the complexity of your business and workforce, but generally yes, outside of basics like payroll, a company can operate without an HR team for a while.

04

Set the discipline early-before complexity forces you to.

At 20 people, everyone shares the same tribal knowledge and communication happens naturally. At 100, that no longer works. Your best "doers" become managers, new employees don't share the same context, and the lack of discipline around setting, communicating, and updating company goals becomes obvious. Establish regular operating rhythms-clear goals, monthly all-hands, business updates, and performance conversations-early, before they become urgent.

CLOSING INSIGHT

Scaling rarely fails because companies hire too slowly. It fails because operational complexity grows faster than the systems designed to manage it. The earlier you build the discipline, the smoother every future stage of growth becomes.

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The larger a company gets, the more the “curse of knowledge” comes into play. This happens when all of a sudden, you are hiring large amounts of people who don’t walk in with the same tribal knowledge of how things work, and the familiarity and ease of communication, now needs to become a process and done intentionally. The lack of discipline around setting, communicating and updating company goals and metrics really shows up quickly. Set the process and discipline up early. Monthly all hands, or cadence around business results and context for needed work, will help navigate this shift.



It's scary when you have a team where every day everyone wakes up in the biggest job they have ever had. This is common in start-ups, where what is required initially is innovation, and selling your services. In this your best employees need to be great and create and sell your product. However, when the company starts to scale, your best "do-ers" are now required to manage and lead across level and cross functionally. These are completely different skill sets.

Michael S. Erisman

Principal Consultant, Talent Realized



The Scaling Timing Audit

Your answers to these questions provide a quick audit of where gaps may be slowing growth and successful scaling.

- 01 Are customer delivery, service quality, or product releases showing signs that our current operating model is under strain?
- 02 Have we designed our organisation around how value is delivered to customers, rather than simply adding people where work feels busy?
- 03 Are payroll, onboarding, legal compliance, and financial controls reliable and scalable?
- 04 Does every critical people process have clear ownership, even if we don't yet have a dedicated HR team?
- 05 Do managers consistently set clear goals, provide feedback, and manage performance across their teams?
- 06 Have we documented the knowledge and processes that new employees need instead of relying on tribal knowledge?
- 07 Do we have a regular cadence for communicating company priorities, metrics, and business performance to everyone?
- 08 Are we developing managers for leadership responsibilities rather than assuming high performers will naturally become effective leaders?
- 09 Are we outsourcing transactional HR work while keeping strategic performance management and culture-building inside the business?
- 10 Are we proactively building systems for the next stage of growth instead of waiting until operational problems force us to react?

SECTION 09

Building a Strong Company Culture

The same culture that once accelerated growth can later become the reason growth slows down.



Culture becomes a leadership discipline

Culture is often what helps companies grow in the beginning—creating speed, trust, loyalty, and alignment. But the same culture that once accelerated growth can later become the reason growth slows down. As organisations scale, culture must evolve alongside structure, leadership, technology, and workforce complexity.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

01 The culture that gets you to 50 people won't get you to 100.

Fast decisions, everyone talking to everyone, close relationships, and founders involved in everything—eventually stops working. Founders and HR leaders often realise too late that they're still making decisions the same way they did when the company was small, but those decisions no longer reach the people who need to act on them. Culture needs clear ownership of decisions, predictable communication, and leaders willing to let go of being part of every conversation.

02 Build communication systems with the same discipline as hiring systems.

Companies invest significant effort into designing structured recruitment processes, yet rarely apply the same thinking to how decisions are made and communicated. Healthy scaling requires regular communication rhythms, clear decision ownership, and involving HR leaders in strategic conversations so they can respond to real business challenges rather than react after problems emerge.

03

AI adoption is becoming part of organisational culture.

Some employees use AI every day while others have barely started, and many organisations still lack a shared understanding of what good AI use looks like. Left unmanaged, this quietly creates two different workplace cultures. Organisations handling AI well treat it like any other capability: they provide access to the tools, train people, encourage experimentation, and create shared expectations so employees learn together rather than individually.

04

Hybrid work doesn't weaken culture- assuming old habits still work does.

Culture can remain strong in remote, hybrid, and AI-enabled organisations, but only if leaders stop assuming culture will hold together on its own. Once people are no longer sitting together, culture has to be built deliberately through consistent habits, regular access to leadership, clear communication, and ensuring important knowledge doesn't remain in one person's head.

05

Engagement problems are usually clarity problems.

Burnout typically appears first in managers, who absorb the confusion of a growing business without the authority to resolve it. Disengagement follows when people don't understand priorities, aren't included in decisions that affect them, and experience a growing gap between what leaders say about the culture and what employees experience. Culture becomes healthier when leaders create clarity-not simply engagement initiatives.

CLOSING INSIGHT

Culture is no longer the by-product of everyone sitting in the same room. As organisations scale, it becomes a leadership discipline-built through deliberate communication, clear decision-making, shared expectations, and everyday behaviours.



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What cultural indicators matter most?

- How long people stay under each manager-this shows exactly where things are breaking down.
- How often people move into new roles internally.
- How engagement survey results change over time, rather than a single score.
- How quickly new hires become productive-which quietly shows how well onboarding and culture work together.

Marie Pavlou

Founder, MPHR Solutions

Culture Audit

A quick audit of whether your culture is evolving alongside your company's growth.

- 01 Have we adapted our decision-making and communication processes as the organisation has grown?
- 02 Does every important decision have clear ownership and a consistent way of being communicated?
- 03 Can the organisation operate effectively without founders being involved in every conversation or decision?
- 04 Are HR leaders involved early enough in business discussions to help shape people decisions rather than react to them?
- 05 Have we established shared expectations for how AI should be used across the organisation?
- 06 Are employees receiving the tools, training, and support they need to confidently adopt AI in their work?
- 07 Do our remote or hybrid teams have consistent access to leadership, information, and opportunities to stay connected?
- 08 Are managers equipped to lead distributed teams and maintain culture across different working environments?
- 09 Do we regularly measure manager retention, internal mobility, engagement trends, and time-to-productivity?
- 10 Are we intentionally building culture through clear communication and shared expectations rather than assuming it will happen?



SECTION 10

AI in HR

Successful AI adoption in HR is not about choosing the right tool-
it's about building capability, governance, and judgment.



From literacy to fluency

AI is no longer experimental in HR-it is already shaping recruiting, screening, onboarding, performance evaluation, workforce planning, and employee engagement. At the same time, regulations such as the EU AI Act are forcing companies to rethink accountability, transparency, compliance, and human oversight in every AI-assisted people process.

01 AI literacy isn't enough. HR teams need AI fluency.

Literacy means someone can name the tools and talk about AI intelligently. Fluency means understanding how AI works, when to trust it, when to push back, and how to apply it meaningfully. For People teams-where data is sensitive and decisions affect livelihoods-capability should build across three layers:

Foundational fluency

What AI is, what it isn't, how data flows through it, and why that matters in a people context.

Functional application

How AI applies to specific HR roles-recruiting, People Partnering, workforce planning.

Critical judgment

Evaluating outputs, questioning recommendations, recognising when the tool is wrong-the layer most organisations skip, and where the greatest risk lives.

NOTE: People leaders are in a unique position right now-their mandate is to re-architecture how work happens in an organization. The challenge is not to bolt AI on top of existing processes but to reimagine and rethink people processes from the ground up. This is the strategic opportunity and a capability that people leaders in the AI era need to develop and own. It's a new way of thinking, new people operating systems that need to be created in the hybrid workforce future.

02

AI governance needs clear ownership-not committees.

No single function should own AI alone, but someone has to be accountable-and "the committee" is not an answer. A cross-functional model where HR, Legal, IT, Privacy, and Finance all bring perspectives before any AI tool is approved works best, particularly when it touches people's data. HR needs to be involved from the beginning-not as a rubber stamp, but as the function that understands what these tools do to people. Governance also doesn't stop at approval: it means regularly auditing how AI is used, what it produces, whether outcomes remain equitable, and having a clear escalation path.

03

AI should automate transactions-not replace human judgment.

AI creates immediate value in high-volume, low-judgment work: scheduling, onboarding, compliance tracking, workforce reporting, benefits administration, and candidate sourcing. The risk begins when AI becomes the final filter rather than the first one. Human recruiters still own who progresses and who gets hired. Compensation decisions, promotions, disciplinary actions, grievances, accommodations, layoffs, and terminations should always have AI as an input-never as the final decision.



04

HR owns trust when AI influences people's decisions.

Employment-related AI applications-recruiting, screening, promotions, performance management, workforce planning-are increasingly recognised as high-risk because they directly affect livelihoods. HR cannot outsource responsibility to Legal or IT and consider the work complete. HR needs to understand:

- What criteria the AI system is applying
- How it treats employment gaps or non-linear careers
- Where human oversight happens
- What data it was trained on
- Whether it introduces bias
- How decisions can be explained if challenged

Transparency is equally important. Employees and candidates should know when AI is being used in processes that affect them. The organisations scaling AI successfully build cross-functional review into procurement, document risk assessments, maintain audit trails, and treat compliance as a complementary investment-not a competing priority.



05

HR's value shifts from organising information to exercising judgment.

Technical capabilities are table stakes. Every HR professional needs enough fluency to evaluate AI tools, craft effective prompts, interpret outputs, and recognise when an output is wrong-prompt engineering is now an HR skill. But the judgment layer matters even more. As AI makes information more accessible, HR's value shifts from gathering data to evaluating and contextualising it, asking:

What context is this AI recommendation missing?

Whose experience might it be overlooking?

What would it mean if it is wrong?

Beyond that, HR will increasingly need change-architecture skills-designing how AI-driven change lands on people in ways that maintain trust and dignity-and workforce-redesign capability: breaking jobs into tasks, evaluating which tasks AI handles well, and restructuring work accordingly.

CLOSING INSIGHT

Successful AI adoption in HR is not about choosing the right tool. It's about building the human capability, governance, and judgment to use AI responsibly.

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For HR teams, I would layer it in three tiers. First, foundational fluency for everyone: what AI is, what it is not, what data goes in and what comes out, and why that matters in a people context. Second, functional application: a recruiter needs to understand AI screening; a People Business Partner needs to understand how AI-generated performance summaries can introduce liability if no one reviews them. Third, critical judgment: the ability to evaluate AI outputs, question them, and know when the tool is wrong.

The People team cannot credibly lead AI adoption across the organization if they have not built this fluency for themselves first. We need to go first, not catch up last.

Shruti Choubey

Fractional HR Leader | CPO, BizLeaders

AI in HR Audit

A quick audit of whether your organisation is building AI capability responsibly while protecting trust, fairness, and compliance.

- 01 Have we developed AI fluency-not just awareness-for HR teams and managers who use AI daily?
- 02 Do employees receive practical, role-specific AI training that includes human review and critical judgment?
- 03 Is there clear accountability for approving, governing, and monitoring AI tools across HR, IT, Legal, and Privacy?
- 04 Do we regularly audit how AI tools are used, their outcomes, and whether they produce fair and consistent results?
- 05 Are we using AI primarily for administrative, low-risk activities while keeping people decisions human-owned?
- 06 Have we clearly defined which HR decisions should never be made solely by AI?
- 07 Do employees and candidates know when AI is being used in hiring, performance management, or other people processes?
- 08 Do we have clear policies defining approved AI tools, prohibited uses, sensitive data handling, and required human review?
- 09 Are HR professionals developing prompt engineering, AI evaluation, change leadership, and workforce redesign skills?
- 10 Does every AI-enabled people process clearly answer: Where is the human accountable for the final decision?

SECTION 11

AI Adoption, Ethics & Management

AI transformation has no obvious natural owner-but HR is well placed to be in the driving seat.



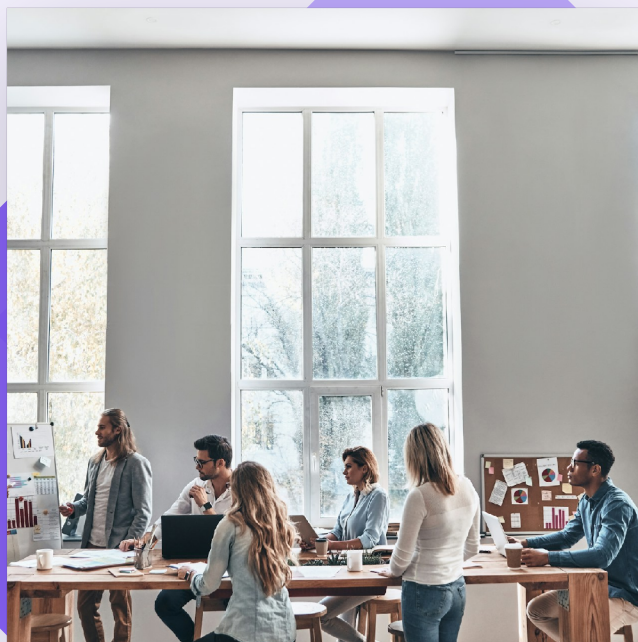
Who owns the transformation?

AI transformation is too strategic to sit only with IT, too operational to be left only to founders, and too cross-functional to belong to one team in isolation. As AI starts changing workflows, roles, skills, and accountability, HR is well positioned to lead: to ensure adoption, set ethical guardrails, and keep AI useful, responsible, and aligned with the company's mission.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

01 **AI transformation shouldn't belong to technology alone-it should become a people strategy.**

Responsibility often begins with the CTO to increase velocity, then shifts to the CEO as conversations turn toward workforce redesign. This is exactly where HR should step in—uniquely positioned to manage the human-capital implications of AI adoption, preventing unnecessary brain drain, maintaining trust, and ensuring organisations don't demoralise their workforce during transformation. Rather than reacting to technology decisions, HR can lead workforce strategy for the next decade.



Most AI initiatives fail because organisations chase speed before building foundations.

The dominant mistake is buying before diagnosing. Companies invest in tools before anyone has mapped where the expensive, repetitive, high volume work actually sits, or asked how roles should evolve over the next two years. The right sequence is inventory first, then workflow, then tooling. Reversed, you end up with a stack nobody uses and a team that has concluded the whole thing was theater.

The second mistake is treating AI as a headcount reduction lever in the earliest phase. In a scaling company, that trades a permanent capability loss for a temporary margin gain. You cut the people who were about to become your senior bench, and you buy that bench back later at a premium. A few others show up consistently and get less attention. Companies pilot where it is easy rather than where it is expensive, so marketing content gets six experiments while the workflow burning two hundred hours a month gets none. They deploy without a baseline, so cycle time, cost per unit of work, and quality were never measured beforehand and ROI can never be proven afterward. Shadow AI spreads while there is no policy, which means company and candidate data is moving through consumer tools nobody has vetted. And almost nobody plans the redeployment of recovered capacity, so freed hours get quietly absorbed into more meetings and higher volume rather than into customers, quality, or growth.

Underneath all of it is one confusion: enablement is not adoption. Distributing licenses and running a Lunch & Learn is enablement. Adoption is a redesigned workflow with new success measures attached. Most companies are automating tasks. Very few are redesigning work, and that gap is exactly where the return disappears.

03

Communicate AI with clarity-or employees will create their own narrative.

One of the biggest leadership mistakes is assuming employees understand why AI is being introduced. Different generations experience it differently-mid-career professionals often see AI as a way to optimise their work, while younger employees are more likely to fear replacement. Leaders need to answer one question clearly: is AI being introduced to improve productivity without reducing jobs, or is it part of a workforce reduction strategy? When organisations avoid that conversation, uncertainty fills the gap. HR should lead these conversations-shaping a transparent workforce strategy employees understand and trust.

Publish what AI will and will not be used for in hiring, performance, compensation, and monitoring. Explaining which tools you bought while staying vague about how they will be used in decisions about people reads as spin, and employees are good at spotting the difference.

04

Build the Right Foundations Before You Automate.

Successful AI adoption begins with understanding your workforce before automating it. Organizations need a clear picture of existing skills, capability gaps, how work is performed, and how performance is measured-otherwise automation decisions become guesswork.

Before introducing AI, leaders should apply three simple filters to determine what should remain human-led:

- **Consequence:** high-impact, difficult-to-reverse decisions should always stay with people.
- **Relationship:** moments where human connection creates value, such as feedback, offers, conflict resolution, and exits, should never be fully automated.
- **Apprenticeship:** protect the work that helps junior employees build judgment and experience, rather than automating away future leadership development.

Clear guardrails are essential. Critical decisions around performance, promotions, compensation, and exits should always have a named human accountable, AI use should be transparent, and emotionally sensitive communications should never be sent without human ownership.

Finally, organizations should decide in advance how the time saved through automation will be reinvested. Whether it's improving customer service, increasing quality, supporting growth, or developing employees, AI should create greater value-not simply more work for the same people.

05 Successful AI transformation begins with business goals-not AI tools.

Transformation efforts rarely fail because of the technology itself-they fail because organisations start without a clear hypothesis about what they're trying to improve. Begin with an ROI analysis rather than selecting software: identify where highly paid employees spend significant time on repetitive work, quantify those workflows, and determine which tasks AI can realistically automate. Only then choose tools that fit those needs. Think through access permissions, integrations, governance, and ownership before launching pilots. Increasingly, organisations will adopt templatised AI solutions with pre-built workflows and department-specific use cases that deliver measurable value much faster.

On the other hand, Aylia addresses that job architecture will shift from role based to skills based. Job descriptions have a shortening half life, and capability clusters plus internal mobility become the more useful operating unit. Expect fewer, more senior, more expensive people per unit of output, which puts real pressure on leveling and compensation structures.

Also, regulation is rising unevenly and most startups have no visibility into it. Illinois amended its Human Rights Act effective January 1, 2026 to prohibit AI use that discriminates in recruitment, hiring, promotion, discipline, or discharge, and to require notice to employees and applicants. Colorado amended its AI law in May 2026, narrowing employer obligations and moving the effective date to January 1, 2027, with requirements for clear notice, a structured adverse action and human review process, and record retention of at least three years. In the EU, the high risk regime covering employment systems moved from August 2026 to December 2, 2027, while most transparency obligations remained on the original 2026 timeline.

CLOSING INSIGHT

The organisations that succeed with AI won't necessarily have the most sophisticated technology. They'll be the ones that combine clear business goals, thoughtful governance, transparent leadership, and workforce strategy. AI transformation isn't about deploying tools-it's about redesigning how people and technology create value together.



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HR has an opportunity to move from being a reactive support function to leading workforce strategy. AI transformation isn't just about technology. It's about preventing brain drain, maintaining trust, redesigning work, and deciding how people and organisations evolve toward 2030 and beyond.

David Hannibal

Product Advisor, Wavefront Innovations



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Transformations fail at the manager layer, and the reason is usually a misdiagnosis of the skill required. Managers treat AI like any other software rollout, or assume it is a technical skill they can pick up. It is neither.

The durable skills are analytical and editorial: decomposing a problem, writing clear instructions, detecting output that is plausible but wrong, and translating machine language into human language calibrated to a specific audience. That last one requires empathy and judgment, not prompt templates. A manager who has not built these skills personally cannot coach a team through them.

Aylia Naqvi

Chief HR Strategist, HCM Strategy

AI Transformation Audit

A quick audit of whether your organisation is building AI as a sustainable business capability-not simply introducing new technology.

- 01 Is AI transformation being led as a business and workforce strategy rather than only a technology initiative?
- 02 Have we clearly defined why we are adopting AI and what measurable business outcomes we expect?
- 03 Do employees understand whether AI is intended to improve productivity, redesign work, or reduce headcount?
- 04 Have we established governance, role-based access, approval processes, and oversight before deploying AI solutions?
- 05 Are we applying the 80/20 principle-AI automating repetitive work while humans stay accountable for complex decisions?
- 06 Do we have clear ownership for monitoring AI agents, workflows, and organisational impact over time?
- 07 Are we measuring AI success through practical outcomes such as hours saved, workflow efficiency, and ROI?
- 08 Have we identified which business workflows should be automated before selecting AI tools?
- 09 Are HR, IT, Finance, and business leaders working together to shape AI transformation from the beginning?
- 10 Are we preparing our workforce for the next stage of AI adoption instead of simply responding to today's technology?

The Big Lessons from Our Advisors

Successful scaling is rarely about hiring more people. It's about building better systems before growth exposes the gaps.

After speaking with founders, HR strategists, People leaders, AI experts, and organisational advisors across industries, the same themes emerged again and again.



01

Growth exposes weaknesses-it doesn't create them.

Operational bottlenecks, hiring mistakes, inconsistent leadership, cultural breakdowns, compliance risks, and disengagement usually don't appear because a company grows. They appear because the systems that worked at 20 people were never redesigned for 100. Scaling is the moment when invisible weaknesses become visible.

02

Every successful scaling company becomes more intentional.

In the early stages, companies rely on founders, relationships, speed, and shared understanding. As they grow, those informal habits must gradually be replaced with intentional systems:

Clear ownership

Structured hiring

Consistent onboarding

Leadership development

Repeatable communication

Transparent performance

Documented processes

Measurable outcomes

The companies that scale best don't become more bureaucratic. They become more deliberate.

03

AI is changing how work gets done-but not why people matter.

Every advisor agreed that AI should automate repetitive work, improve insight, and increase productivity. None argued that AI should replace human judgment. AI consistently appeared as something that should remove administration, improve decision support, strengthen managers, increase organisational capability, and free people to spend more time leading, coaching, communicating, and innovating. Technology becomes most valuable when it gives people more time to be human.



04 Leadership changes more than the organisation does.

Perhaps the biggest transition isn't organisational-it's personal. Founders stop making every decision. Managers stop supervising tasks and begin developing people. HR stops administering policies and begins shaping organisational capability. Leadership becomes less about doing the work and more about designing the environment where great work happens.

05 Culture stops happening by accident.

Early culture happens naturally. Scaling culture must be designed. Communication, decision-making, feedback, onboarding, learning, accountability, and AI adoption all become intentional management systems rather than informal habits. Culture becomes an operating discipline.

06 The companies that scale best prepare before they need to.

Don't wait for 50 employees before building HR. Don't wait until managers struggle before developing leaders. Don't wait until onboarding breaks before documenting it. Don't wait until AI creates risk before establishing governance.

The best scaling companies build tomorrow's systems while today's systems are still working.

We are building for the company you are becoming.

Thrivea is a company of builders, operators and people thinkers creating the operating foundation for a new kind of organization.

We built Thrivea from the same reality explored in this playbook: growth outpaces structure, work becomes fragmented, and AI enters the workforce before companies have decided how it should belong.

Our ambition goes beyond building a better HR platform. We are building the operating system for how modern organizations understand, organize and evolve work-across people, AI and the systems connecting them.

For companies that want to grow without losing clarity. Adopt AI without losing accountability. And build structure without losing speed or humanity.

From London, Belgrade and New York, we are building toward one future:

Not a system of record for the company that was.

A system of direction for the company it is becoming.

thrivea.com

