The State of HR Automation in Today's Large Organizations

Make HR a more strategic business partner by increasing automation

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Contents

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Executive Summary

Today's organizations are asking more and more of their HR professionals. In order to meet those organizational needs, HR is continuously striving to become more efficient and effective. One way to potentially achieve this is through greater automation of administrative tasks.

During July and August of 2018, Iron Mountain and HR.com surveyed the HR community in enterprise organizations (those with 2,500 or more employees) in an effort to better understand the current state as well as the possible future of the automation of HR processes.

About this Survey

HR.com partnered with the global leader in storage and information management services, Iron Mountain, to conduct *The State of HR Automation* survey, which ran during July and August of 2018.

There were 397 usable responses gathered from HR professionals in virtually every industry vertical. The participants represent a cross-section of employers in enterprises with over 2,500 employees.

Below are some of the key findings from this research.

Major Finding One: *HR automation is well under way at some firms, but most are not highly automated.*

- A majority of participants said less than half of their HR processes are currently automated.

- Only about 37% of responding organizations can be considered "highly automated" in terms of their HR departments.

- Fully 98% of participants said their organizations intend to automate more HR processes in the future.

Major Finding Two: *Some HR processes are much more likely than others to be automated.*

- The HR processes most frequently automated represent some of the most mature HR technology solutions available – payroll management (62%), benefits (58%) and time and attendance (56%).

- When asked about what HR functions their firms are most likely to automate over the next two years, the most commonly given answer was onboarding, cited by 46%.

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Major Finding Three: *The need to improve HR effectiveness and efficiency are the primary drivers pushing organizations to HR process automation, but some say they're hindered by a lack of resources.*

- More automation is the option of choice among HR professionals who were asked about the best ways of increasing HR's efficiency. HR professionals were not very supportive of outsourcing HR services as a way of increasing efficiency.

- The single largest perceived barrier to HR automation is "lack of resources." Participants said outdated technology is the next most significant barrier to HR process automation. In some cases, though, respondents may not be aware of cost-effective ways of HR automation through cloud-based services.

Major Finding Four: *HR automation seems to result in a number of advantages, including the ability to spend more time on strategic matters.*

- Respondents from Highly Automated HR departments are twice as likely to say HR enjoys above-average productivity

- HR professionals would spend more time on strategic HR and business initiatives if they could reduce the burden of performing manual administrative tasks. Nearly 70% of the participants said they would have more time for strategic planning and 64% said they could spend more time serving as business partners.
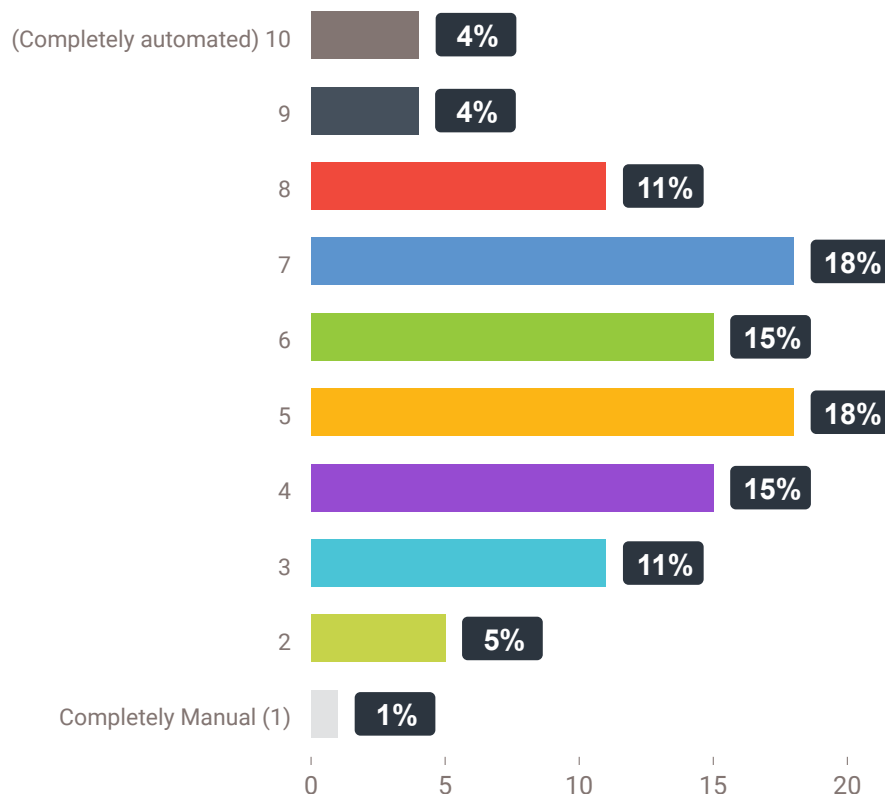
How Automated Is Human Resources Today?

Finding: Only about 37% of respondents said the HR processes in their organizations were highly automated

We asked participants to use a 10-point scale to assess the extent to which HR processes are automated in their organizations. For the purposes of this report, we designated HR functions as highly automated if participants gave scores of seven or higher. Similarly, we designated HR as least automated if participants rated their level of automation as four or lower.

More than one-in-three of our participants (37%) said their organization had highly automated HR processes, but nearly as many (32%) said their HR processes were lowly automated. The rest were somewhere in between. This suggests that most firms can do much more to automate their HR processes.
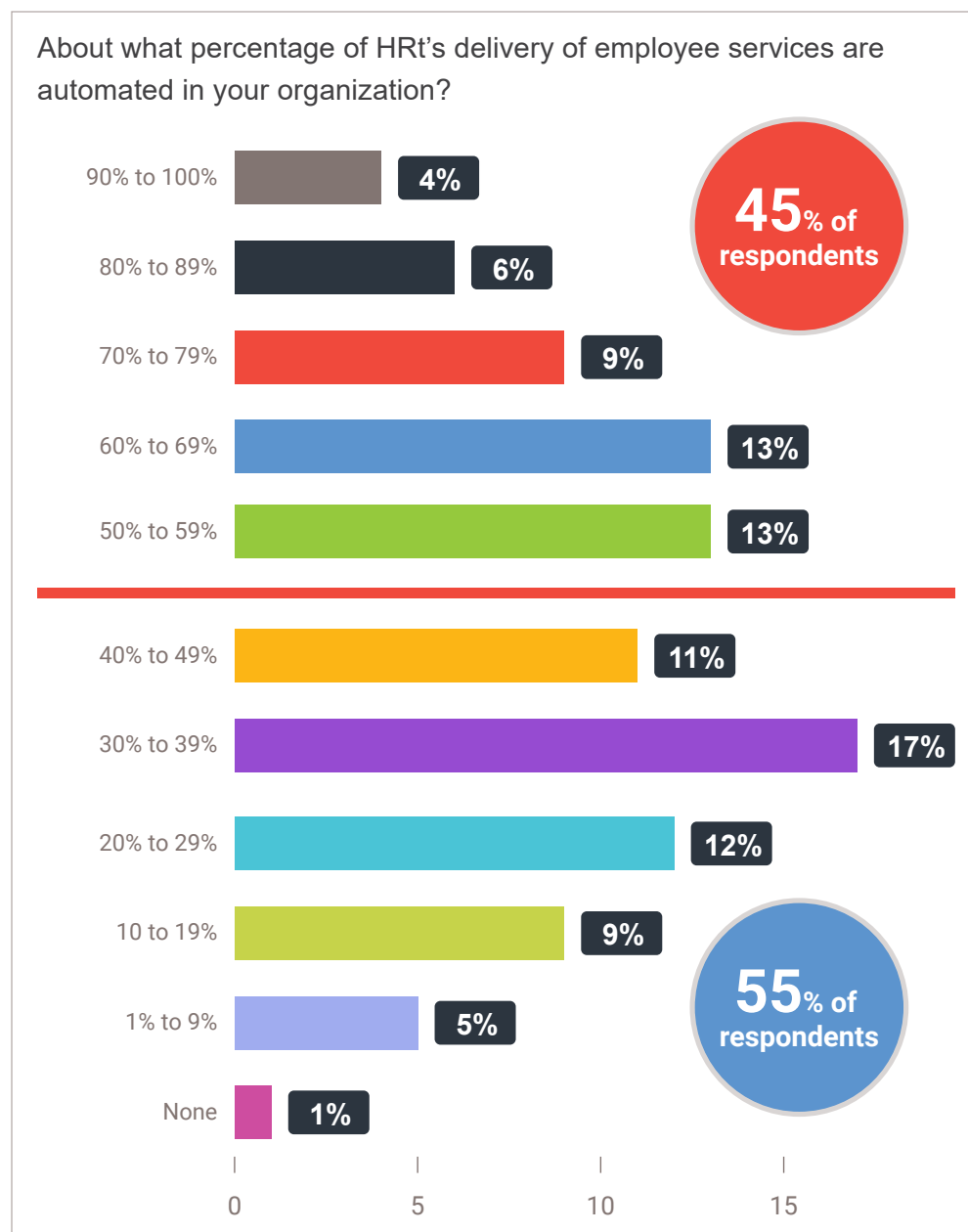
Using the following scale, please rate the degree to which HR processes are automated in your organition. (10 being the highest)

Scale	%
(Completely automated) 10	4%
9	4%
8	11%
7	18%
6	15%
5	18%
4	15%
3	11%
2	5%
Completely Manual (1)	1%

About a third of respondents said their HR processes are primarily manual

Finding: A majority said less than half of their HR processes are automated

The ratio of organizations that consider themselves highly automated is only about one-in-three. But what does that actually mean? To find out, we asked what percentage of HR's delivery of employee services was automated. As it turns out, most organizations do not automate even 50% of their HR processes. Moreover, about a quarter (27%) said their organizations automate less than 30% of their HR processes.

About what percentage of HRt's delivery of employee services are automated in your organization?

Category	Value
90% to 100%	4%
80% to 89%	6%
70% to 79%	9%
60% to 69%	13%
50% to 59%	13%
40% to 49%	11%
30% to 39%	17%
20% to 29%	12%
10 to 19%	9%
1% to 9%	5%
None	1%

45% of respondents

55% of respondents

Most organizations have not yet automated at least half of their HR employee services

Finding: The vast majority of organizations plan to automate more HR processes in the future

Fully 98% intend to automate HR to a greater extent in the future. Clearly the move towards greater automation is going to continue unabated.[1] This trend raises at least two key questions:

- Since increased levels of automation loom, which processes are most likely to be automated going forward?

- As HR automates, how will the HR function change? (For additional research on this question, please see HR.com's report *The Advancing HR Function: Strategies for attaining future HR excellence*)

Does your organization intend to automate HR processes to a greater extent in the future?

2%

58%

40%

- No
- Yes, a little
- Yes, a lot
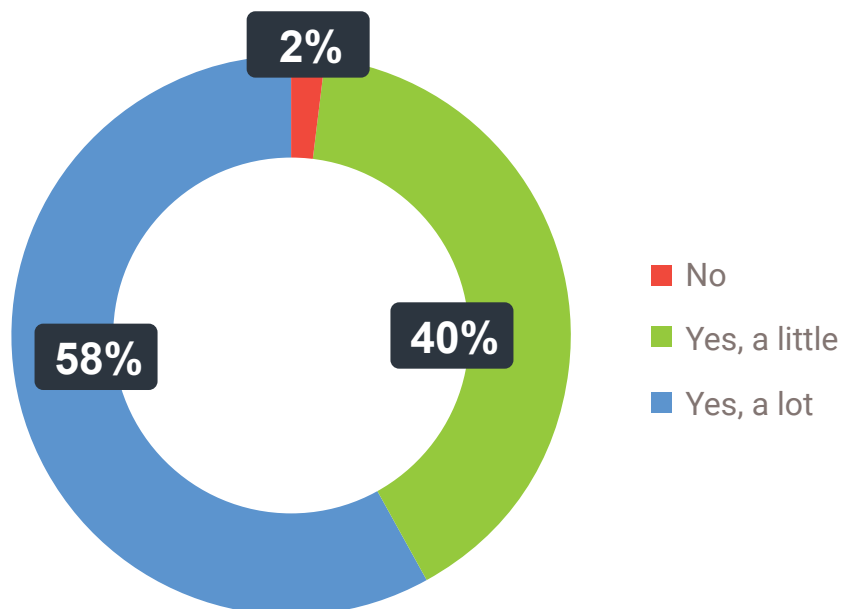
Virtually all respondents (98%) intend to automate HR to a greater extent in the future

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1 For the purposes of reporting data from participants whose answers indicate knowledge of the area, we are not including the "Don't know" responses.

Which Processes Are Most Highly Automated and What Will Happen in the Future?

Finding: The HR processes most frequently automated are transactional processes with more mature HR technology solutions

Payroll has a long history of being an outsourced and/or automated function. Payroll processing organizations have been around for well over half a century and they tend to have highly automated systems. So, it makes sense that this is the most widely automated function, as cited by 62% of respondents.

The other two areas cited by over half of respondents were employee benefits (58%) and time and attendance (56%). These also have a history of automation. Benefits administration has become one of the core functionalities in many early generations of human resources management systems.[2] Time and attendance begged for some form of automation in the late 19th Century and the "time clock" emerged as an answer. By the 1990's, well-automated time and attendance systems were fairly commonplace.[3]

If we placed the processes our participants selected most frequently on a continuum from transactional (simple, rote processes) on one end and strategic (complex processes involving more interpersonal exchanges) on the other end, the three most frequently selected would fall on the transactional end. By and large, the more strategic HR processes have not been automated to the same degree.

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2 See Historical Evolution of Human Resource Information System (HRIS), Scientific & Academic Publishing, 2014.

3 See History of Time and Attendance Systems, https://www.redcort.com/blog/2011/08/history-of-time-and-attendance-systems. August 26, 2011.

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Please select up to six areas that are most automated in your organization.

Area	Percentage
Payroll management	62%
Benefits	58%
Time and attendance	56%
Recruitment and selection	36%
Compensation	33%
Onboarding	33%
Tax documents and forms	32%
Evaluations	28%
Training and development	24%
Records management	23%
Health and safety	17%
Rewards and recognition	14%
Compliance	11%
Succession planning	7%
Organizational development	6%
Employee and labor relations	5%

Procedural or transactional processes are the HR processes most likely to be automated

Finding: Onboarding is the HR process most commonly targeted for automation over the next two years

Looking ahead, onboarding is a clear-cut top choice for automation. Nearly half (46%) of participants indicate it is the HR process they are most likely to automate in the next two years. Records management is the next most widely chosen area, at 33%. It is closely followed by three relatively strategic HR processes – training & development (32%), recruitment (31%) and compensation (31%).

Why is onboarding the top choice? Probably because it includes a range of purely procedural matters such as employment policy reviews, payroll enrollment, user ID assignment, etc. On the other hand, effective onboarding also requires new employees to begin the process of fully acclimating to a new work environment. We can think of these two aspects of onboarding as procedural and developmental.

In the end, successful onboarding should help new employees acclimate to a new job role, learn about the cultural norms of the organization and start building the relationships needed for success in the new job.

Greater automation holds the potential for improvements in onboarding outcomes. A structure can be set up with automated tools that provide documents, training, resources, reminders, access to FAQ's, etc. These may reduce the need for new employees to spend hours filling out forms and finishing new hire paperwork. With automation helping them complete these important new hire tasks, everyone can be free to do the more substantial work of socializing, learning norms and building important relationships.

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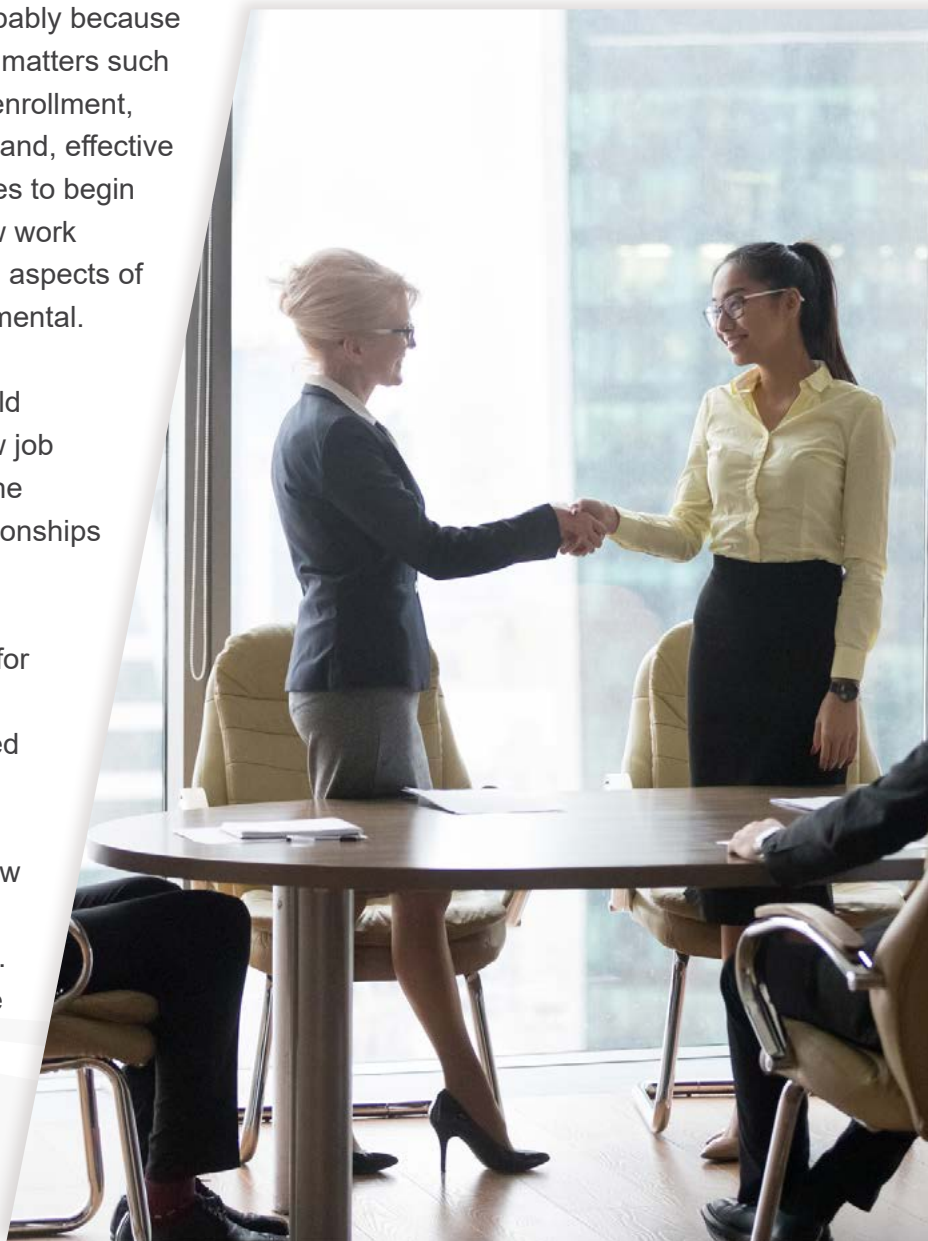
Which of the following HR functions do you think your organization will begin to automate—or increase automation of—within the next 2 years? (select all that apply)

Function	%
Onboarding	46%
Records management	33%
Training and development	32%
Recruitment and selection	31%
Compensation	31%
Performance management	30%
Evaluations	26%
Benfits	25%
Time and attendance	23%
Succession planning	21%
Rewards and recognition	19%
Payroll management	19%
Compiance	17%
Organizational development	16%
Employee and labor relations	14%
Tax documents and forms	14%

Records management is another procedural task that can be taken on via automation

Finding: Processes that are already highly automated are not as likely as some other areas to be further automated over the next two years
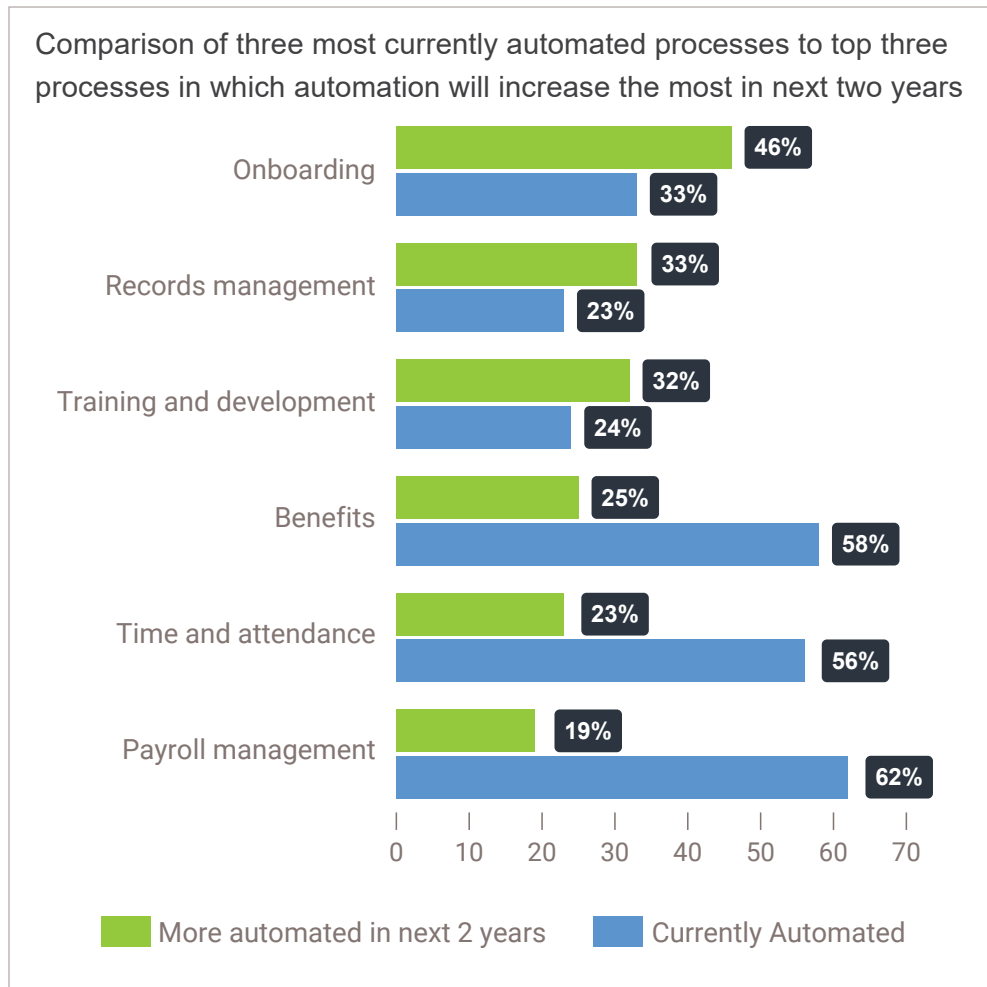
The further automation of areas such as payroll management and benefits will not cease in the future, especially among firms that have not yet automated them. In fact, if we combine both past initiatives and future plans, benefits and payroll management should remain the most automated HR areas over the next few years. However, because they are already more likely to be automated, they are not getting as much *future* attention among firms intent on further automation.

Instead, HR is focusing hardest on three areas—onboarding, records management and training and development—that represent blends of procedural, interpersonal, informal and compliance-based elements. As previously noted, onboarding blends a wide range of purely procedural elements with increasing emphasis on the socialization of new hires.

The same can be said of training and development. Even with all of the advancing learning technologies in today's learning management systems, T&D still tends to require interpersonal interactions to reinforce learning.

Records management is another hybrid area, though it tends to be even more procedural than onboarding and T&D. On one hand, the archiving of records is clearly process-oriented and well suited to an automated solution. On the other hand, records management requires organizations to assess compliance requirements and make decisions about storage, access, management and privacy. This process can be strongly aided by automation, but some of the decisions must be made by human beings.

Comparison of three most currently automated processes to top three processes in which automation will increase the most in next two years

Process	More automated in next 2 years	Currently Automated
Onboarding	46%	33%
Records management	33%	23%
Training and development	32%	24%
Benefits	25%	58%
Time and attendance	23%	56%
Payroll management	19%	62%

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70

🟩 More automated in next 2 years   🟦 Currently Automated

👍 If we combine *past* automation initiatives and *future* plans, then benefits and payroll management should remain the most automated HR areas over the next two years

Editor's Note: The data in the graph above comes from 2 questions. One question asked participants to select any six processes that are currently automated in their organization. The second question asked HR participants to select as many processes as they wanted to tell us which HR processes they believed would be automated in the coming two years

# What Factors Are Driving or Hindering the Trend Toward Automation?

Finding: The need to improve HR efficiency is the most widely cited driver pushing organizations to HR process automation

HR professionals want to improve their performance, and they told us the two main drivers of the push for automation are the need to boost HR efficiency (73%) and the need to improve HR effectiveness (62%). The need to reduce or hold down costs was selected by about half of the participants; this idea of cost control is, of course, strongly related to the concept of HR efficiency.
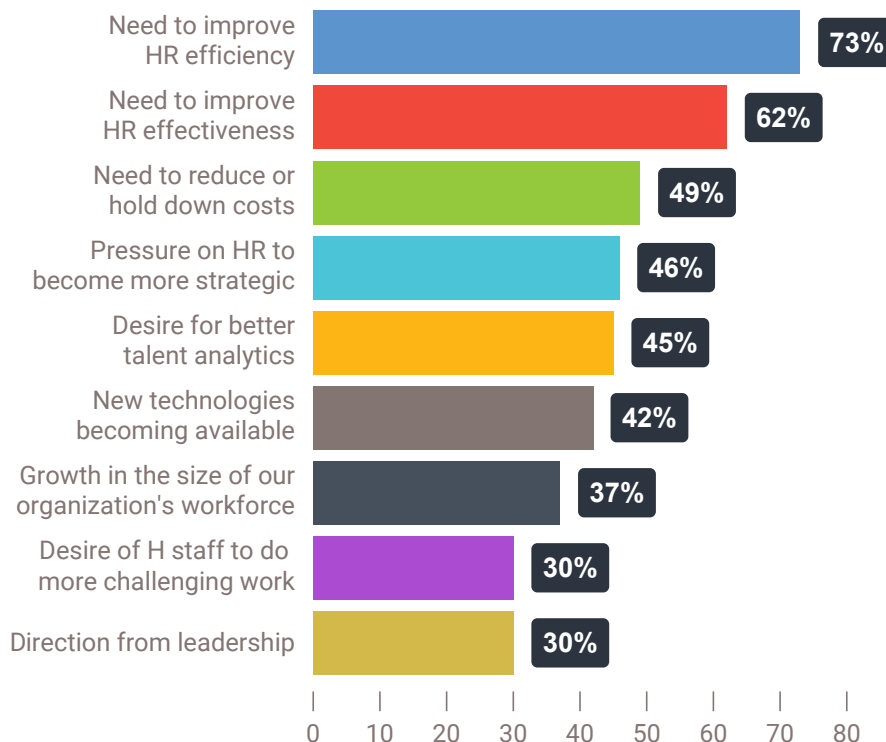
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In essence, HR professionals want to hold the line on escalating costs of operations, even while delivering better results. It sounds like the old "do more with less" mantra. Automation seems like an effective solution to many of these HR challenges, and our participants connect automation to efforts to improve the overall cost structure of HR.

The second most frequently cited driver is the need to improve HR effectiveness (62%). Another driver mentioned by a substantial portion of the participants (46%) was the "pressure on HR to become more strategic." These two drivers, when read together, indicate that there is growing HR pressure to move their operations to a more strategic level.

This is, in fact, supported by other HR.com research as well. In our Advancing HR Function study, we found that half of respondents predicted "HR will be transformed into a much more strategic function as administrative duties are automated or outsourced to others."
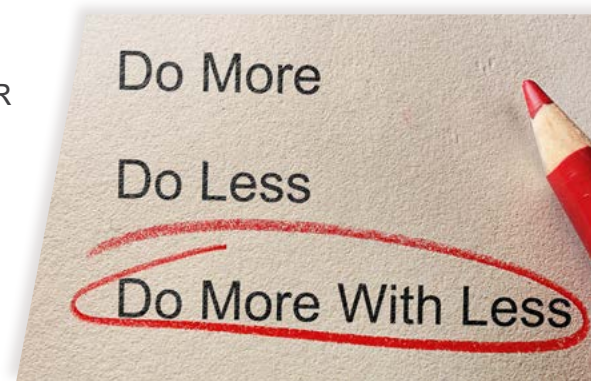
Which of the following factors is driving your organization to automate HR processes? (select all that apply)

Factor	Percentage
Need to improve HR efficiency	73%
Need to improve HR effectiveness	62%
Need to reduce or hold down costs	49%
Pressure on HR to become more strategic	46%
Desire for better talent analytics	45%
New technologies becoming available	42%
Growth in the size of our organization's workforce	37%
Desire of H staff to do more challenging work	30%
Direction from leadership	30%

The need to become more effective and strategic are also key drivers of HR automation

Finding: The single largest barrier to HR automation is "lack of resources"

A lack of resources is cited as the top barrier to further automation of HR processes, followed by "outdated technology." These perceived barriers are probably related in many organizations. That is, managers don't feel they have the funds to improve their technology infrastructures to incorporate greater automation.

This suggests that one of the key challenges for HR professionals is the ability to make a strong business case for automation. This usually boils down to some type of return-on-investment (ROI) analysis wherein the costs of current operations are compared to the cost savings of a new system, process or application.

To achieve this, HR professionals must do their homework, starting with determining the cost of a new system. They may discover that, in the age of cloud-based services, the costs are not as high as anticipated.

They may also discover that the costs associated with their current systems are higher than anticipated (See the text box: *Making a business case: Illustrating the Benefits of an Automation Investment*)

Making a Business Case: Illustrating the Benefits of an Automation Investment

Let's use the example of an HR professional trying to determine whether it makes sense to automate an onboarding system. She begins with the following facts for her organization: 90% of the entry-level hires take an average of 10 weeks to reach full productivity.

She is able to demonstrate that the current out-of-pocket, hard costs to onboard each new hire is $5,000. She also demonstrates that, with automation, the costs can be dropped to $4,000 per new hire, a 20% costs savings.
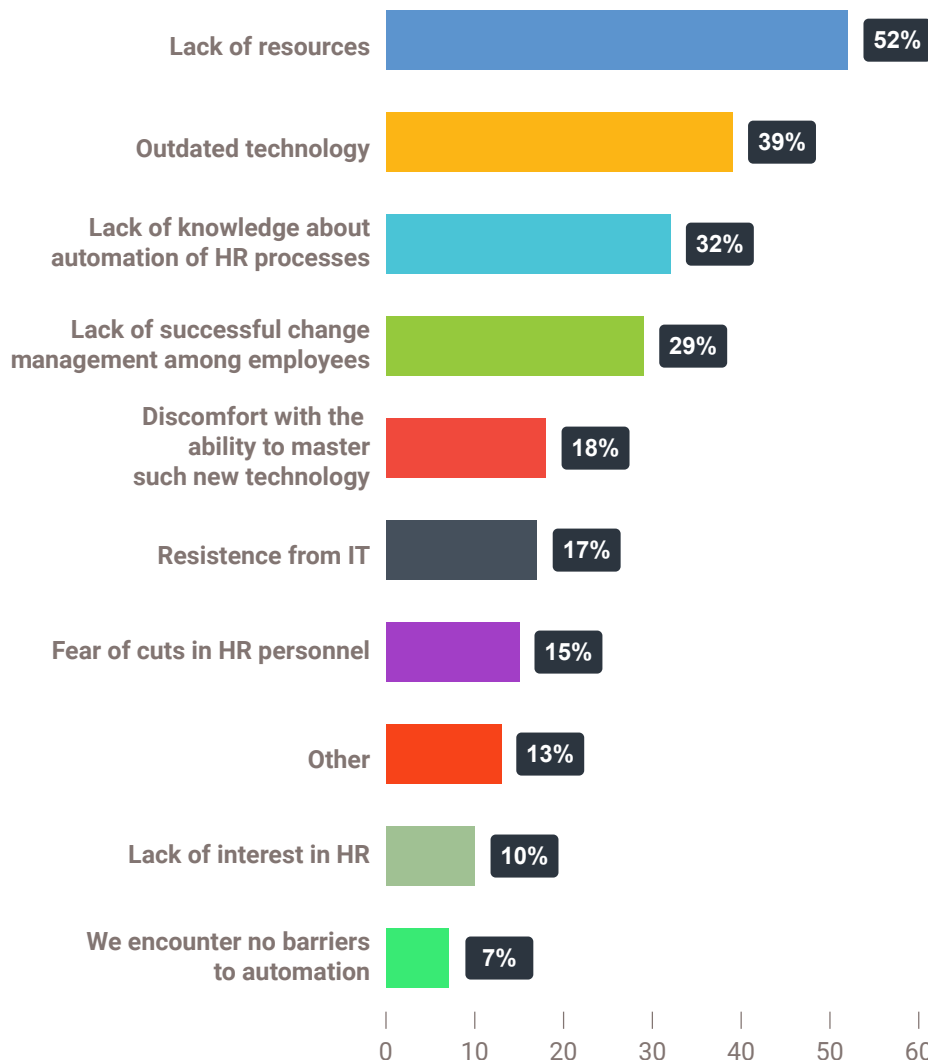
But these savings are before improved productivity is taken into consideration. She also shows that each entry-level new hire generates $10,000 per week in gross revenue when they reach full productivity but only $6,000 per week while they are learning. Let's say the automated system will allow new hires to reach full productivity in 6 weeks as opposed to the current 10-week process. The gains in productivity are $4,000 per new hire per week for four weeks, which amounts to $16,000.

Now the business shows a $1,000 costs savings per new hire, which is good, but it also realizes a gain in productivity of $16,000.

ROI =
Costs Saved per new hire = $1,000
Productivity gained = $16,000
Automation Investment per new hire = ($500)

TOTAL ROI per new hire = $16,500

Which of the following factors are the most significant barriers to increased automation of HR processes in your organization? (select all that apply)
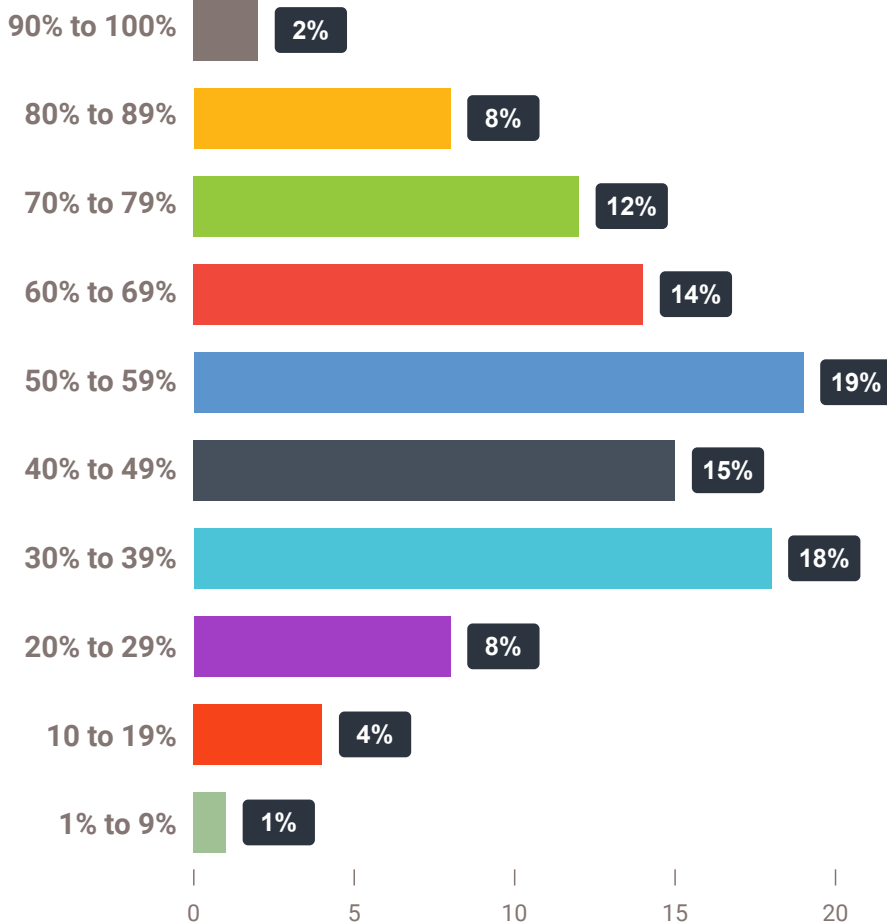
Barrier	Percentage
Lack of resources	52%
Outdated technology	39%
Lack of knowledge about automation of HR processes	32%
Lack of successful change management among employees	29%
Discomfort with the ability to master such new technology	18%
Resistence from IT	17%
Fear of cuts in HR personnel	15%
Other	13%
Lack of interest in HR	10%
We encounter no barriers to automation	7%

Nearly 40% of the participants cited outdated technology as a significant barrier to further automation

Finding: Most HR departments remain bogged down by manual administrative tasks

Over half (55%) of the participants said HR professionals in their organization spend more than 50% of their time on manual administrative tasks. On the opposite end of the spectrum, a scant 13% said HR professionals in their organizations spend less than 30% of their time on manual administrative tasks. This data suggests that HR professionals still tend to be bogged down to a significant degree with manual administrative tasks.

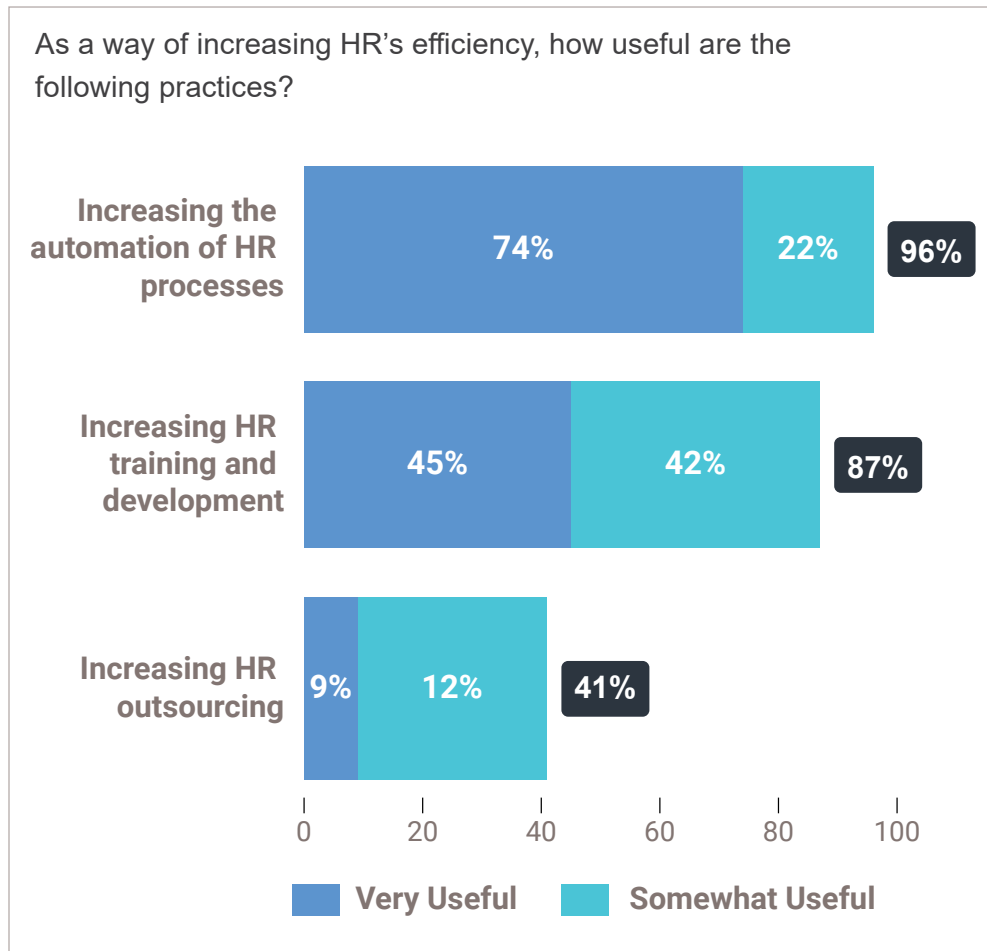In your organization, about what percentage of time do HR professionals spend on manual administrative tasks?

Percentage	Value
90% to 100%	2%
80% to 89%	8%
70% to 79%	12%
60% to 69%	14%
50% to 59%	19%
40% to 49%	15%
30% to 39%	18%
20% to 29%	8%
10 to 19%	4%
1% to 9%	1%

The large majority of HR professionals spend at least 30% of their time performing manual administrative tasks

Finding: More automation is the option of choice among HR professionals when they are asked about the best ways of increasing HR's efficiency

HR professionals believe increasing automation (96%) and delivering more HR training and development (87%) represent solid opportunities to drive gains in overall HR efficiency. They are not nearly as supportive of outsourcing HR tasks (41%).

Perhaps HR wants to stay in control of HR processes, feeling that they are the best judge of what could make them more efficient and effective. Compared to automation and increased training, outsourcing largely takes away HR's ability to control and improve HR processes and services.

As a way of increasing HR's efficiency, how useful are the following practices?

Increasing the automation of HR processes
Very Useful: 74% | Somewhat Useful: 22% | **96%**

Increasing HR training and development
Very Useful: 45% | Somewhat Useful: 42% | **87%**

Increasing HR outsourcing
Very Useful: 9% | Somewhat Useful: 12% | **41%**

0 20 40 60 80 100

■ Very Useful ■ Somewhat Useful

Most participants do not see outsourcing HR functions as a useful means to boost efficiencies

How Would HR Respond to Greater Automation of Work Processes?

Finding: Respondents would spend more time on strategic HR if they could reduce manual administrative tasks

If HR professionals could reduce the time they spend on manual administrative tasks, where would they spend more time? The most widely cited response (70%) is they'd spend it in strategic planning, followed by serving as business partners (64%).

The inference is that respondents do not believe they spend enough time in these strategic areas. The time it takes to engage in manual administrative processes clearly takes a toll on HR's ability to function in more strategic and—we would assume—more value-added roles.

If you could reduce the time you spend on manual administrative tasks, what would you spend that time on? (select all that apply)

Category	Percentage
Strategic planning	70%
Serving as business partners	64%
Providing HR consultation	53%
Organizational development	45%
Training and development	38%
Talent acquisition	26%

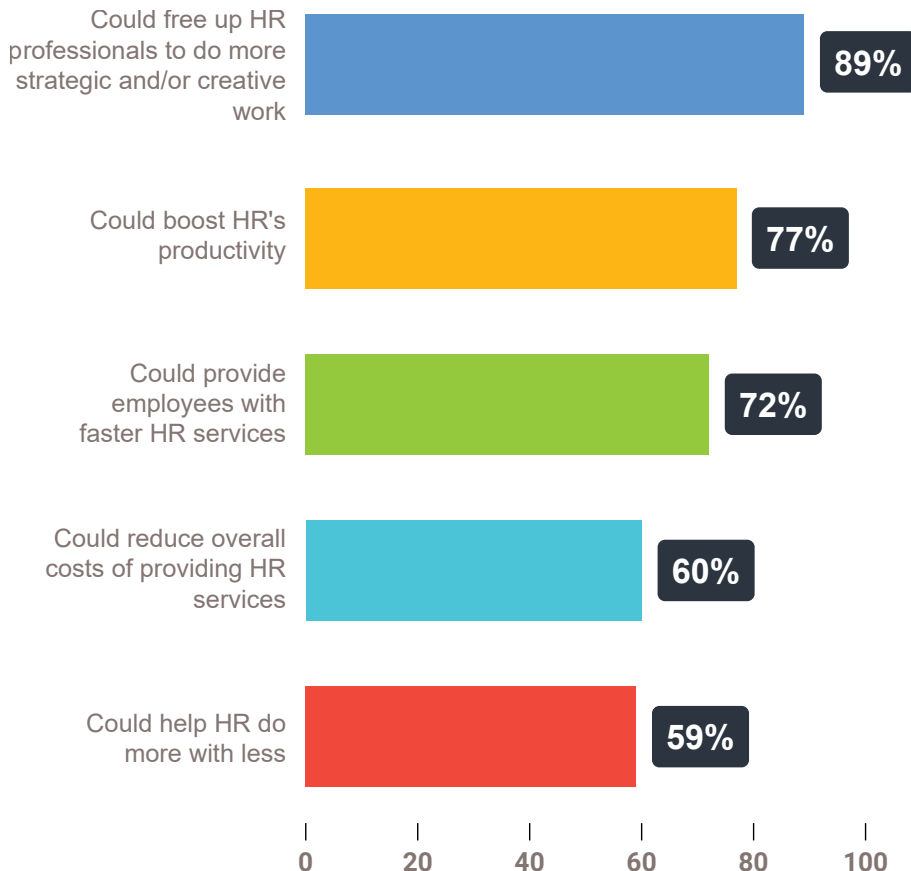Scale: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

> HR would spend more time as business partners and internal consultants if they could reduce administrative tasks

We also asked about the potential benefits of HR automation. The findings here are consistent with those above. That is, the main benefit—selected by nearly nine-in-ten participants (89%)—is that further automation could free up HR to work more strategically or creatively.

Other benefits selected by 70% or more of our participants were a boost in HR's productivity (77%) and the ability to provide employees faster HR services (72%). It's important to recall that the main drivers for automating HR processes were to increase HR's efficiency and productivity. Again, the data is consistent.

What do you view as the potential benefits of automating more HR processes? (select all that apply)

Benefit	Percentage
Could free up HR professionals to do more strategic and/or creative work	89%
Could boost HR's productivity	77%
Could provide employees with faster HR services	72%
Could reduce overall costs of providing HR services	60%
Could help HR do more with less	59%

HR thinks it can deliver on the promise of a greater strategic role if more HR processes can be automated

Finding: Most view HR automation as a necessity

HR professionals are asked to fill a growing number of roles in today's organizations. In fact, world-renowned HR thinker Dave Ulrich has published research about the critical HR competencies for high-performing HR professionals. According to Ulrich's data, there are nine HR competencies and roles critical for high-performing HR professionals in today's environment, and this number has grown over the decades. The three "drivers" are: strategic positioner, credible activist and paradox navigator. The three organizational enablers are: culture and change champion, human capital curator and total reward steward. The three tactical and foundational roles are: technology and media integrator, analytics designer and interpreter and compliance manager.

But how can they effectively assume all these roles and tasks? A large majority (87%) of our respondents believe HR automation will be necessary in order to handle all the tasks asked of it. This helps corroborate the previous findings, which indicated that HR could engage in more value-added roles if it could be freed from more manual tasks.

This finding also suggests that the automation of HR processes may not lead to a reduction in HR staffing levels. In fact, as HR professionals are able to function in more strategic roles that deliver greater business benefits to their organizations, the value of HR teams and individual professionals should rise. Of course, this will hinge, to some degree, on senior leadership's willingness to support HR professionals in such roles.

In your organization, HR will need to automate more processes in order to handle all of the tasks being asked of it.
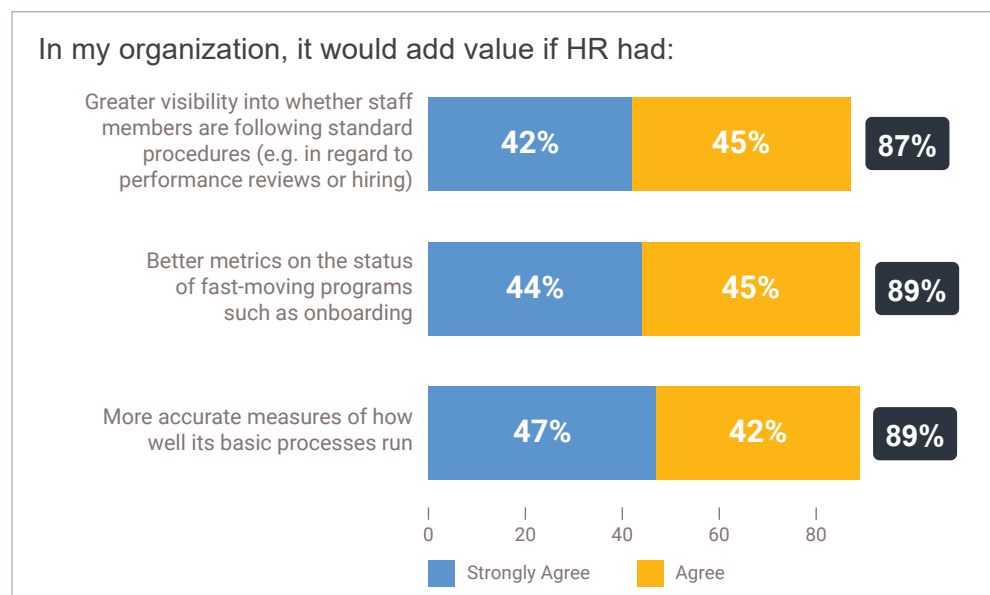
- 2%
- 14%
- 37%
- 47%

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Neither agree nor disagree
- ■ Disagree
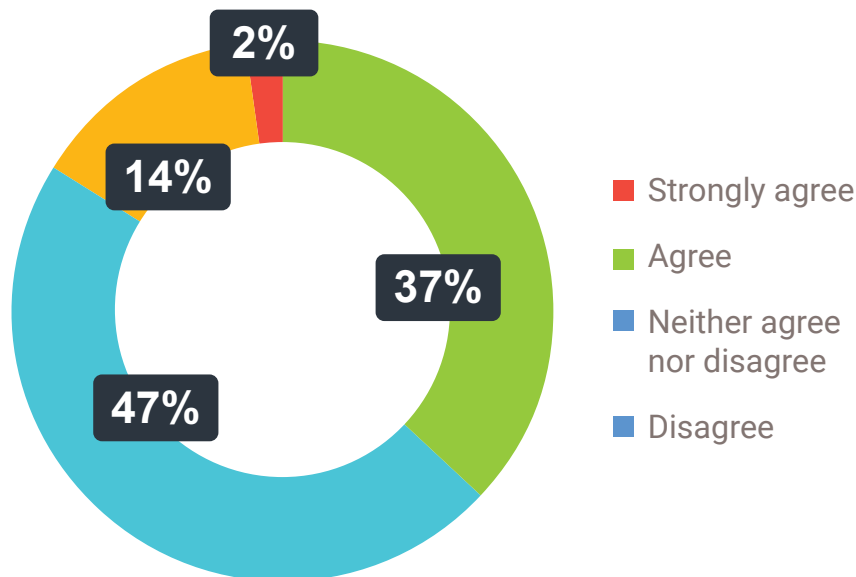
Automation will probably play a key role in allowing HR to fulfill its growing number of business obligations

Finding: Better data and metrics might be one welcome side effect of more HR automation

One of the virtues of HR automation is that it tends—if set up properly—to result in rich data as it tracks processes and events. That isn't always the case with manual processes.

This virtue of automation serves the needs of many HR professionals. The large majority (89%) of respondents said it would add value to the organization if HR had "better metrics on the status of fast-moving programs such as onboarding" and "more accurate measures on how basic processes run." Nearly as many said it would add value to the organization if HR had "greater visibility into whether staff members are following standard procedures" in areas such as performance reviews or hiring.

Why can automation result in better metrics? Because adding metrics data can become just another automated part of the process. Whereas busy human beings do not always have the time or inclination to document and measure every step in their process, automated computer systems have no problem if the algorithms are set up properly.

In my organization, it would add value if HR had:

Greater visibility into whether staff members are following standard procedures (e.g. in regard to performance reviews or hiring): 42% Strongly Agree, 45% Agree — 87%

Better metrics on the status of fast-moving programs such as onboarding: 44% Strongly Agree, 45% Agree — 89%

More accurate measures of how well its basic processes run: 47% Strongly Agree, 42% Agree — 89%

0   20   40   60   80

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree

Better data should lead to better HR performance

How Do Organizations With More Automated HR Functions Benefit?

In this section of the report, we compare two different groups of respondents:

- **Highly Automated HR Departments:** We designated HR departments as highly automated if participants gave scores of seven or higher when asked to rate, on a 10-point scale, the degree to which HR processes are automated in their organization

- **Least Automated HR Departments:** We designated HR departments as least automated if participants rated their level of automation four or lower on the 10-point scale

Finding: Highly automated HR departments tend to be more productive

Overall, 38% of participants said their organizations perform above average in terms of HR productivity. Respondents from Highly Automated HR Departments were twice as likely as respondents from the Least Automated HR Departments to say that the HR productivity in their organization was above average (50% to 25%).

This finding further supports the idea that greater HR automation exerts an influence in raising HR productivity. In fact, we've already seen findings and data that support this connection. For instance, 77% of all participants told us further HR automation would boost HR's productivity. It's important to note that the data does not prove a direct causal link between automating HR processes and productivity, but it does suggest some connection or influence.

Please rate your organization's HR productivity in the most recent fiscal year compared to competitors in your industry.

Highly Automated HR Departments	15%	35%	50%
Least Automated HR Departments	7%	18%	25%

0   10   20   30   40   50

- Far above average HR productivity
- Somewhat above average HR productivity

Respondents from Highly Automated HR departments are twice as likely to say HR enjoys above-average productivity
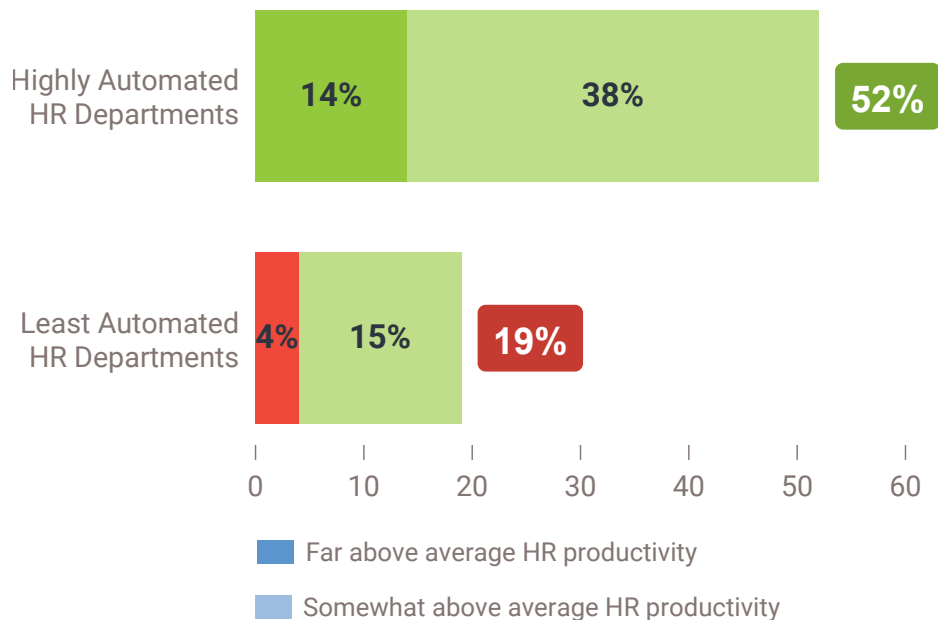
Finding: Highly automated HR functions tend to be more effective

Overall, 36% all participants said their organizations perform above average in terms of HR effectiveness. Respondents from Highly Automated HR Departments were more than twice as likely as those from the Least Automated HR Departments to say they enjoyed above-average HR effectiveness (52% to 19%).

This finding supports the idea that greater HR automation can be linked to higher-quality HR. Again, it's not possible to prove a causal relationship here, but it does suggest that organizations with higher levels of HR process automation may have HR teams engaged in higher-value-added practices. For example, HR may be operating in more strategic areas such as planning, serving as business partners, providing HR consultation, engaging in organizational development, etc. This may well be leading to higher overall levels of HR performance.

Please rate your organization's HR effectiveness in the most recent fiscal year compared to competitors in your industry.

Highly Automated HR Departments
14%   38%   **52%**

Least Automated HR Departments
4%   15%   **19%**

0   10   20   30   40   50   60

■ Far above average HR productivity
■ Somewhat above average HR productivity

Respondents from Highly Automated HR departments are over twice as likely to say HR enjoys above-average effectiveness

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Key Takeaways

Given the research findings above, below are some recommendations for how HR professionals might leverage automation in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their departments.

1 **Ensure foundational HR processes are effectively automated before moving to more complex processes.** Payroll, benefits and time and attendance are the three areas that most organizations currently automate when it makes sense to do so. Audit the state of HR effectiveness and efficiency in each of these areas. If there are more gains to be made from additional or further automation, then consider proceeding to other areas.

2 **Evaluate HR processes to determine which ones are ripest for automation.** It's not usually practical to look at automating every possible additional HR process at once. Be selective and strategic. One method is to look at strategic goals. For instance, if recruiting skilled workers more quickly is a crucial goal, then automating aspects of the recruitment process may be a priority. As you evaluate, build a step-by-step process flow chart for every element. Which elements are currently automated? Which ones are not? For those elements not yet automated, what would you gain by automating them?

3 **Take a hard look at onboarding.** Based on this research, onboarding will become one of the most commonly automated HR functions in the near future. See if that makes sense for your organization. For instance, there may be numerous documents to sign and complete for both employee and HR professionals throughout the new hire onboarding process. Can these effectively be moved to an automated process so that valuable interpersonal time with new hires can be used for organizational cultural orientation, introductions to key team members, training, etc.? Moreover, can that interpersonal time be effectively tracked so that HR has an accurate idea of what the new employee does and doesn't know?

4 **Build a business case for automation.** While costs savings are always important, it's easy to get bogged down in a cost analysis and forget about measuring the business benefits of HR automation. Without overpromising, illustrate the bottom-line benefits of automating specific manual administrative processes. Show the value of the contributions HR professionals will make in strategic areas with the time they gain. For example, if your HR team can demonstrate that they will spend more time on increasing employee training, career growth and engagement, then requests for greater automation will probably be more persuasive to senior leaders than costs savings alone.

5

Boost the digital and technical literacy of your HR team. Automating HR processes requires greater use of technology and digital tools. As your HR team looks to add automated tools to the HR function, it's going to be crucial that your HR practitioners have the digital and technical skills to effectively use these tools. Find ways to improve the digital and technical skills of HR professionals through training, experimentation and demos of automation solutions.

6

Use a systematic approach to making technology purchase decisions. It's easy to get swept up in the exploration of new technologies, and there's nothing wrong with that. In fact, building enthusiasm for adoption of a new technology tool is a good thing. But, do so in ways that help you understand the potential benefits and costs associated with each option under consideration. Ask questions, get a product demo, perhaps take advantage of a free trial, and get training and education for your team. Ask for references and do your own research through your network about potential vendors. Find out about contract terms such as renewals, notices and service level agreements. Look for industry analyst reviews of solutions under consideration. Finally, ask around and look for proof that any solution under consideration will—if necessary—effectively integrate with your current suite of HR technology tools.

7

Find ways to use automated tools to develop and deliver meaningful analytics. Organizations generally make better decisions when decisions are data-based. As you work through your automated processes, learn as much as possible about the reporting capabilities of your tools, both currently in use and ones under consideration. Good data usually facilitates good decision making. Most technology solutions in today's HR technology space offer reporting capabilities, and you need to make sure you are getting the most out of each automation tool your HR organization uses.

8

Make sure you implement new technology effectively. You will only get one chance at an initial implementation. So, it's important to get it right. This means you have to make an honest and good faith evaluation of your HR team's capabilities to either implement a solution or to assist the vendor and/or third parties with implementation. And don't forget to engage your internal IT professionals. In some circumstances they will have to be involved and in others they might want to be involved—if you ask. In either case, your internal IT resources can be invaluable as you implement and integrate new technology tools into your HR technology solution suite.

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