

Trends and Priorities for Canadian HR Leaders in 2021



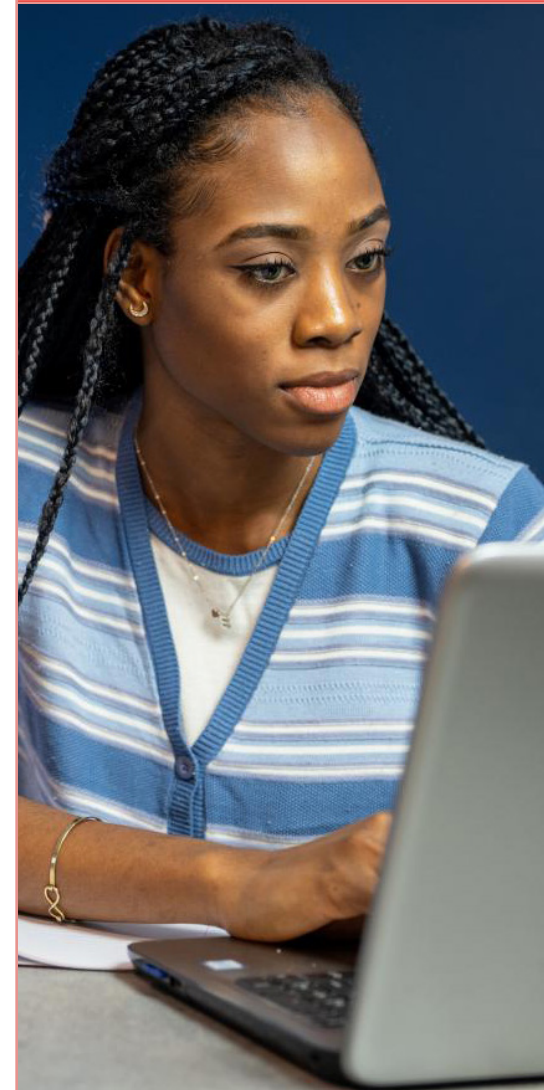
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Introduction

In 2021, we find ourselves in uncharted territory: a global health event, increased virtualization of work, changing regulations and a new commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in our workplaces.

Now is the time you want to be able to rely on expert partners in HR to help your organization flex in response to trigger events and maintain your daily momentum to help your business stay ahead. Wouldn't it be great to be able to not only maintain status quo in challenging times, but position yourself for growth?

What are the trends that emerged toward the end of 2020 and how they will shape the year(s) to come?



1. Employee Experience, Mental Health and Well-Being

The key theme of 2020 for many organizations was “resilience,” which ADP defines as the capacity of an individual to withstand, bounce back from and work through challenging circumstances or events at work. So much of the conversation around work in 2020 has focused on resilience, and with good reason. As ADPRI’s recent Workplace Resilience Study found, approximately 50% of variance in employee engagement can be explained by resilience.

But if we were to choose a theme for 2021, employee experience, mental health and well-being would better serve us. While resilience refers to a reactive response, employee wellness and engagement prepare organizations with a proactive mindset and empower them to take ownership of what they can control.

Tip: Organizations need to focus on their future needs by investing in employee wellness now. That investment bolsters individual employees and the collective workforce, so organizations are collectively prepared to respond with resilience when required.

Resources

[Mental Health & Wellness in the Workplace: Your HR guide to evaluating team mental health and delivering an effective company-wide wellness strategy](#)

[Mental Health and Working from Home: 7 Ways to Support your Team](#)



2. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace are critical to the success of best-in-class organizations. In 2020, the coronavirus, economic uncertainty, and high-profile calls for racial justice informed the direction of corporate DEI initiatives, and these factors will continue to influence DEI trends in the coming year.

There will be an increased number of diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the workplace trends to account for in 2021, and issues stemming from the coronavirus pandemic and social injustice will continue to add stressors to the mix. To position their organizations to tackle these issues effectively, DEI-focused business leaders will need to determine what goals their business should set and what resources they will need to achieve them.

Business leaders will also need to draw on empathy and interpersonal skills to manage employees effectively in 2021. Highly charged calls for social justice show that meaningful change is needed and that organizations must do more to combat racial inequality in the workplace and in the world at large.

Best-in-class organizations can do so by having open and honest conversations with their employees about societal issues that may be affecting them. These discussions can create space for employees to process what's going on and express what it means to them, which can give everyone a chance to connect with on a human level.

Tip: Keep the conversation going. Taking time to ensure that your employees can voice their concerns and be heard is essential to sustaining a culture of equality, inclusion and belonging

Resources

[Toronto Raptors Talk DEI and BLM: Fireside Discussion with John Wiggins, Vice President, Inclusion and Culture](#)

[Canadians Believe Workplaces Still Have Work to do When it Comes to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)

3. Build Critical Skills and Competencies

Strategic planning was top of mind for leaders at the start of 2020, but COVID-19 quickly upended any existing plans. Today, the traditional year-long or years-long approach to strategic planning is less than irrelevant; it's an altogether bad use of time.

But that doesn't mean there's no need to plan. How leaders approach strategic planning has to change. We need to enable teams to plan in shorter chunks of time so they can counter sudden changes with insightful next steps.

As organizations focus on working in the now instead of in the future, adopting a more agile approach to HR will shift the focus away from relying on traditional plans and more toward investing in employees and customers in the present. By doing so, leaders can engage with these important stakeholders at a deeper, more authentic level based on shared experiences in these times.

Tip: To facilitate working in the 'now', employers need to foster agility within their organization. This means identifying and hiring/training for the right skills both inside and outside of HR has an even greater importance.

Resources

[Worried About the Evolving Workforce? Skills are a Good Place to Start](#)

[We Need to Rethink the Normal, not Return to it](#)



4. Digital Transformation

Digital transformation has been trending for decades, but the events of 2020 accelerated the transition. The pivot from office to work-from-home, from status quo to unparalleled change, required a new level of understanding and communication between organization leaders and team members. HCM solutions were and can continue to be core in creating an environment that helps people feel more confident, connected, and resilient as they navigate waves of change. As many of last year's challenges yet remain in 2021, HCM technology trends will reflect these core needs.

Tip: HR's involvement in HR technology is essential. Push to have a seat at the table - as the primary users of HR tech, HR leaders must be part of the selection and implementation process.

Resources

[Trends in HCM Tech for 2021: How Will HCM Technology Continue to Evolve?](#)

[Balancing the Innovation Equation](#)



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