



People and Workforce Analytics in Switzerland
Challenges and opportunities

2020

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Introduction

Not long ago, HR was viewed primarily as a support function – recruiting employees, maintaining employment policies and HR records, and administering compensation programmes. Today, HR is on its way to being considered a driver and informer of management decisions and a strategic partner of the business. A key difference between HR then and now is people analytics.

*“People analytics is playing a crucial role in navigating the future of work. It is already transforming the way we access and engage talent and curate development experiences,” says **Veronica Melian, leader of the Swiss Human Capital Consulting team at Deloitte.** “Leading organisations across the globe are using people analytics to translate their investments in talent into tangible business benefits. We see great potential in the Swiss market to catch up. Swiss organisations want to ensure that people analytics is used to set the focus on people and support management in bringing valuable initiatives to employees.”*

This holds true in particular at a time of growing shortage of skilled employees, the rise of alternative workforce models, and decreasing employee tenure and engagement. Organisations face the challenge of identifying gaps between available skills and those that will be needed in the future, and predictors of turnover and low engagement. Building on these insights, they need to ensure that HR initiatives mitigate the risks and manage workforce diversity.

However organisations are struggling to realise the potential benefits offered by people analytics. The 2018 Deloitte Human Capital Trends report revealed that 85% of Swiss respondents rated people data as important or very important, but only 3% thought that their organisation made sufficient use of it. This Deloitte Switzerland People and Workforce Analytics study (2020) looks in more detail at the current use of people data in Swiss organisations and their aspirations for the years ahead.

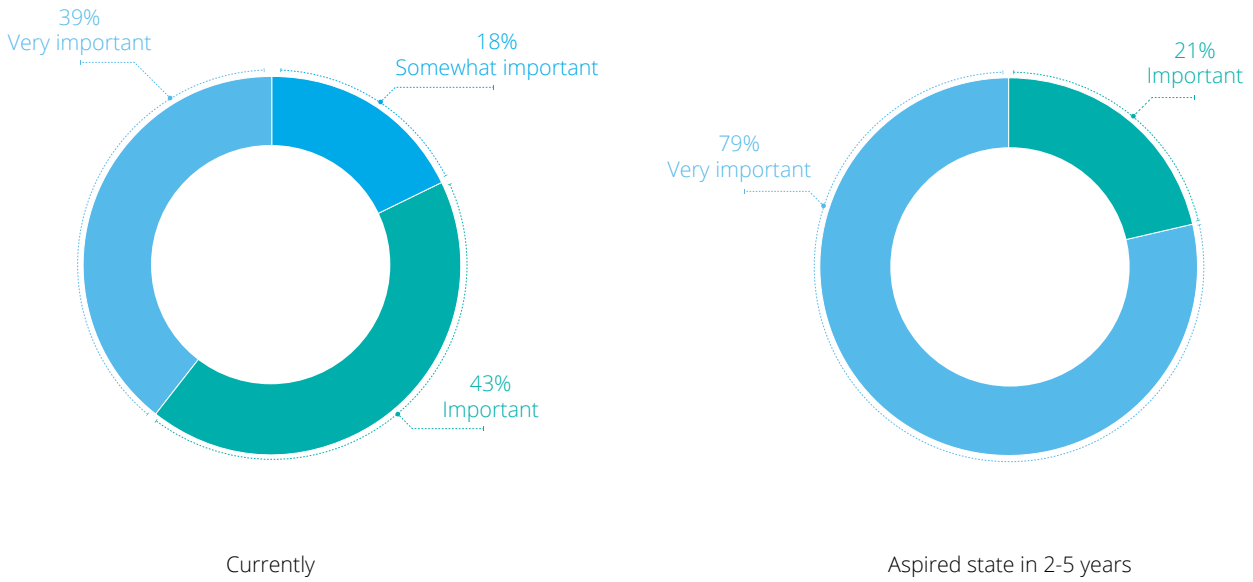
Among the organisations that participated in this study, 82% view people analytics as important or very important, and also expect its importance to grow further in the next 2-5 years. This is reflected in the way they use people data at the moment: most organisations in Switzerland practice either reactive operational reporting (39%) or proactive advanced reporting (29%) of workforce data. But it is also the case that many (57%) aspire to move towards predictive analytics in the next few years.

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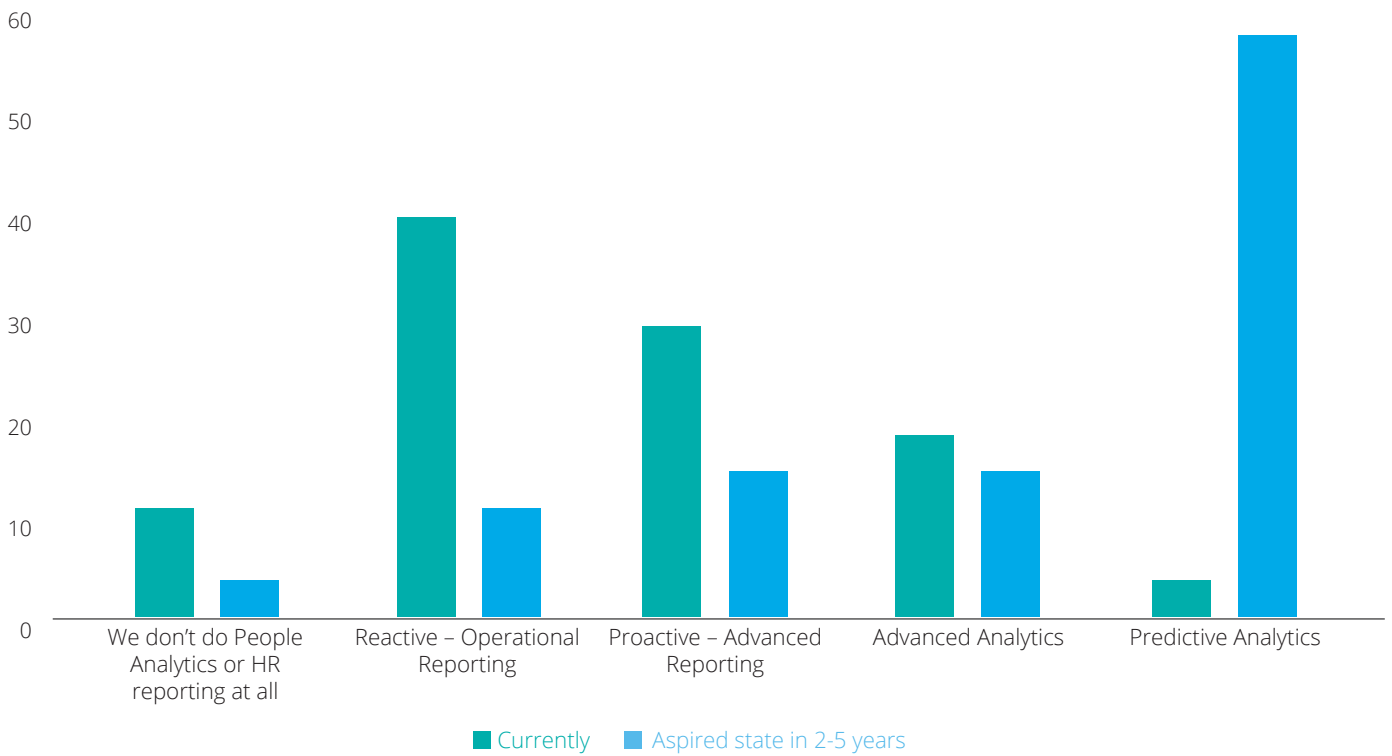
57% aspire to move towards using predictive people analytics in the next few years



Perceived importance of people analytics



People analytics maturity level



The importance of people analytics is universally acknowledged, but although aspirations are high, a big gap remains between current and 'aspired to' practice.

Almost all participating organisations expressed their ambition to use people data for business and HR decisions and to move from an operational to a more strategic, skills-based approach to workforce planning in the next 2-5 years. This includes skill-gap analysis for future roles and the use of robotics and automation as a workforce model. Many plan to take into account diversity-related data for workforce planning and strategic talent decisions. Many also intend to include measures of happiness as well as indicators and causes of attrition risk in the next 2-5 years. To become a more strategic partner to the business, many HR teams plan to share people data with other functions outside HR and also to improve measurements of HR service excellence.

However, looking at the current state of people analytics, it is clear that in reality the journey has only just begun. Technological restrictions such as the manual effort required and poor data quality are important blocks to the development of people analytics. This includes a lack of an up-to-date and role-specific skills catalogue. Analysis can only be as good as its data sources, which is why obtaining timely, consistent, connected and accurate people data – in line with ethical guidelines and data privacy standards – should be a priority for Swiss organisations. But that's only half the truth: another major obstacle appears to be the lack of storytelling and executive support within the organisation. Swiss organisations need to invest in people analytics at a senior level and give full endorsement to the Chief Human Resources Officer.

This study has two purposes. First, it provides more transparency around the extent of the development of people and workforce analytics in Swiss organisations, and secondly it makes recommendations about what they should do.

Results and recommendations are presented for three major challenges that organisations are facing:

Challenge 1

What kind of workforce do we need in our organisation?

This focuses on workforce planning and skills management.

Challenge 2

How do we keep the right people and prevent attrition?

This describes how organisations measure employee engagement and diversity.

Challenge 3

How to realise the full strategic potential of HR and maximise its impact?

This sheds light on how HR functions intend to leverage people analytics, to move from an operational and tactical role to a strategic partner, and how they should measure their own effectiveness.



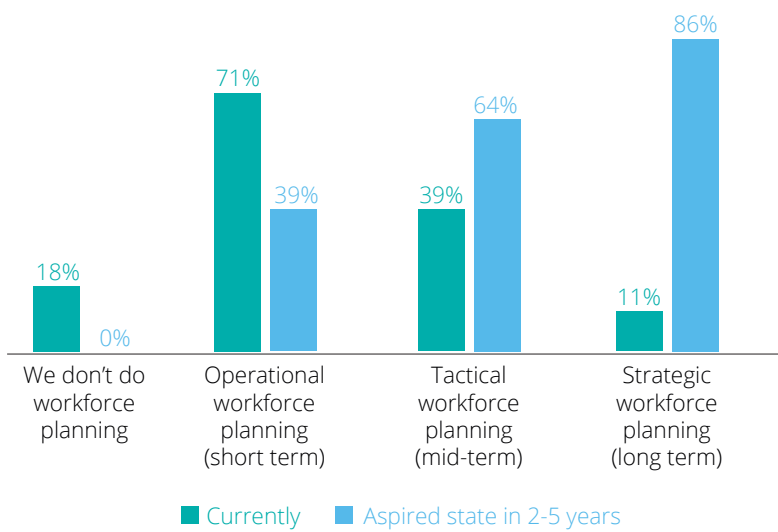


Challenge 1

What kind of workforce do we need
in our organisation?

As digitalisation disrupts industries and changes the nature of work, organisations are experiencing a shift in how work is performed and which skills are relevant. Strategic planning also needs to accommodate demographic changes, alternative workforce models and new career paths. Organisations are challenged to re-think what kind of workforce they need, and holistic workforce planning is crucial.

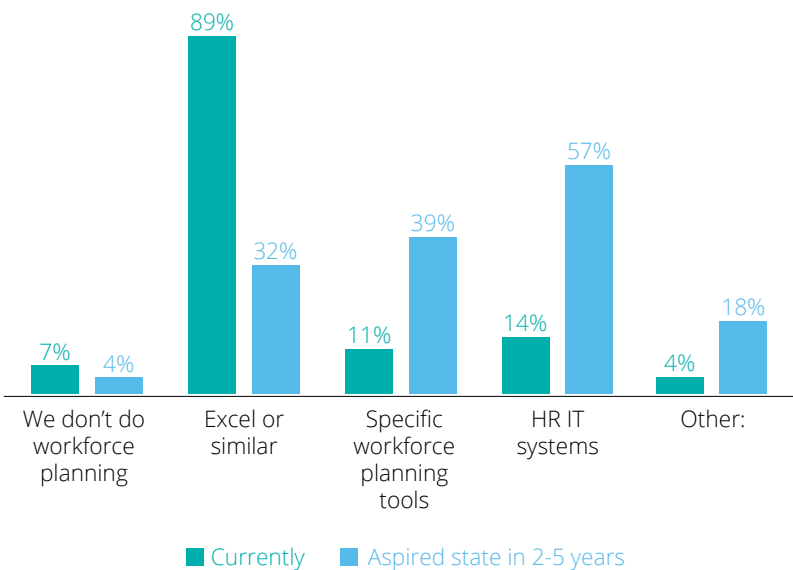
Time frame of systematic workforce planning



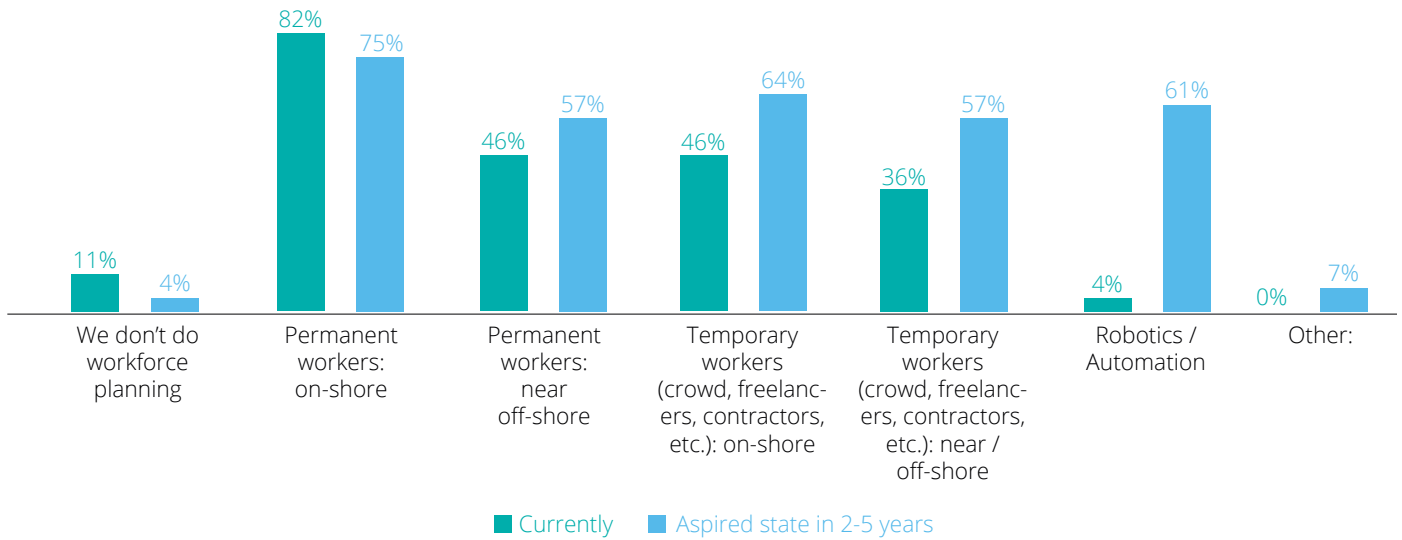
Swiss organisations are struggling to put their workforce planning aspirations into action. Among the organisations that responded to our survey, only 11% engage in long-term strategic workforce planning. The vast majority (89%) still use Excel or similar models for workforce planning, and comparatively few leverage specific workforce planning tools (11%) or HR IT systems (14%). In the next 2-5 years, however, 86% of our respondents aspire to develop strategic workforce planning. 57% intend to use HR IT systems, leveraging reliable data sources. Many HR cloud solutions already offer advanced workforce planning functionalities.

The use of the alternative workforce, such as temporary workers, offshore or near-shore workers, and the use of robotics and automation, are increasingly prevalent in Switzerland. Currently, HR functions in Switzerland mainly consider on-shore permanent workers for workforce planning (82%). At the same time, only 4% of respondents currently consider robotics and automation, but 61% have the ambition to do so in the next 2-5 years. Temporary workers as well as permanent near- and off-shore workers are often managed by functions other than HR, mainly the procurement or IT functions. To truly leverage the benefits of alternative workforce models, HR functions need to make their workforce planning efforts more comprehensive and also include data about the alternative workforce.

Tools used for workforce planning

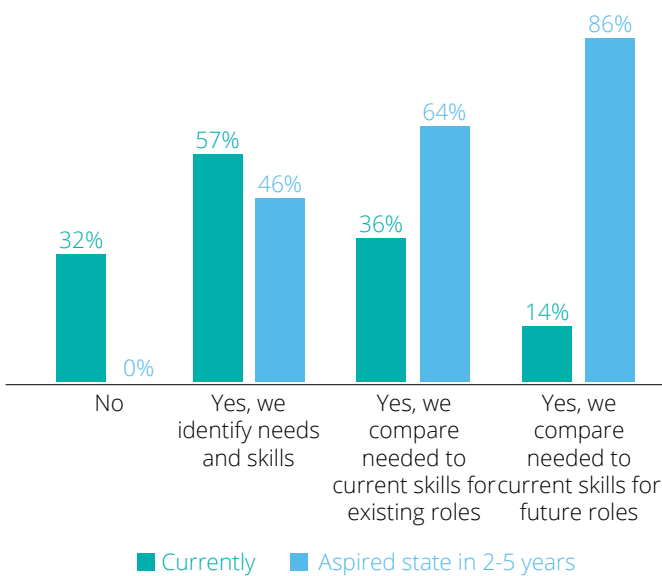


Categories taken into account for workforce planning

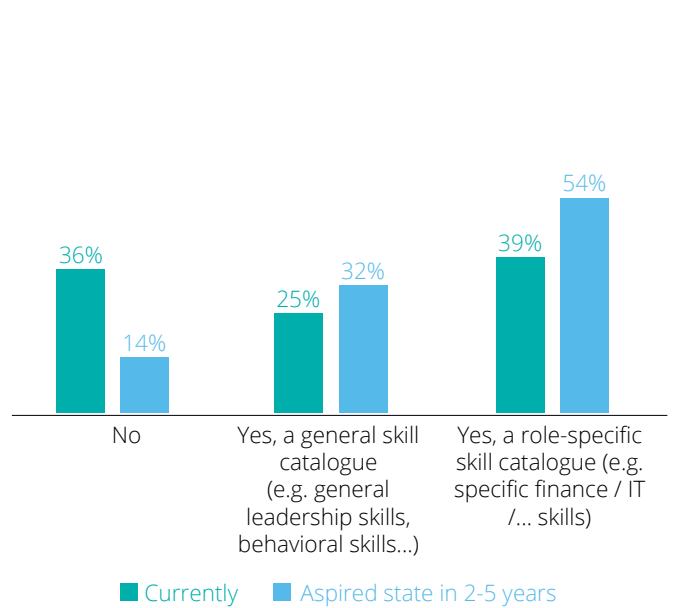


Strategic workforce planning should take into account the type of skills that will be needed in the future. Among our respondent organisations 57% identify needed skills in their workforce planning, and 36% analyse skills gaps for existing roles. Some organisations go one step further and compare needed to current skills for future roles. While only 14% of organisations currently do this, 86% want to do so in the next 2-5 years. However many organisations still lack the basics required for skills-based workforce planning: 36% of respondents do not have a structured skills catalogue, but 64% aspire to have a role-specific skills catalogue in the next few years.

Analysing skill needs/skill gaps in the context of workforce planning

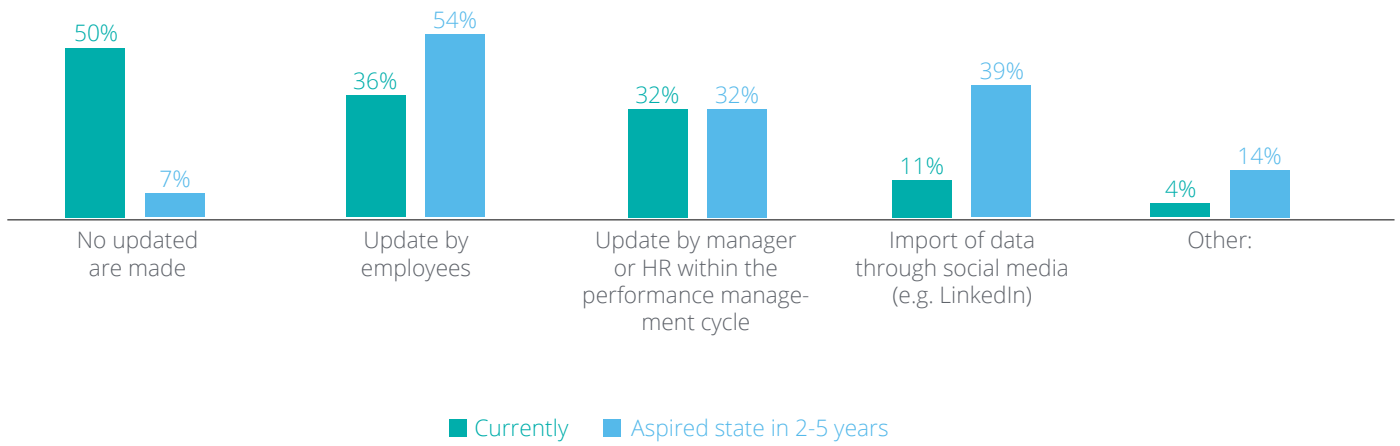


Presence of a structured skill catalogue



Another challenge is to update the skills catalogue regularly: half our respondents do not carry out any updates at all. In the other organisations, updates are either made by employees themselves (36%) or within the performance management cycle by line managers or HR (32%). Going forward, respondents plan to engage their employees more in updating their skills documentation, either directly (54%) or via importing data from social media (e.g. LinkedIn; 39%).

Updated documentation of employee skills



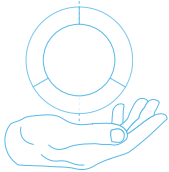
Where organisations can start:



Build a data base.

There can be no workforce planning without accurate and real-time data. Organisations should invest in an HR suite or a specific workforce planning tool that provides relevant insights on FTE numbers, jobs and skills. A reliable HR database will create opportunities beyond workforce planning.

“Rolling out our central HR cloud system will bring us a big step further regarding strategic workforce planning. Our data will be more reliable, and the system will provide planning functionalities as well as skills catalogues, not only for HR but also for line managers”, says one of our interviewees.



Involve HR in hiring alternative workers.

Alternative workforce categories have often been managed by functions outside HR, mainly procurement or IT. HR should be part of this process to ensure that alternative workers, including robotics and automation, are included in strategic workforce planning.

As a global HRBP from a major Swiss bank told us: *“One of our quick wins regarding workforce planning was good collaboration between HR, IT and Finance.”*

For this, a single comprehensive overview of the current workforce, both internal and external, is needed. As a second step, it's important to analyse future work outcomes and identify which workforce category, including automation, can deliver them. A skills access strategy should be defined, to determine whether to build, buy or borrow relevant skills.



Make skills a central part of the employee lifecycle.

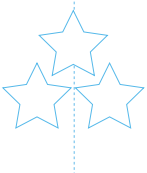
Skills should be at the core of many conversations around talent management. A centralised and standardised skills catalogue can be used as a basis for such conversations, and organisations should ensure that it is continually maintained and that employees keep their own skills records up-to-date. Establishing skills management in this way is vital for strategic workforce planning.

For example, a Swiss insurance organisation places emphasis on *“the need to work closely with line managers when it comes to skills management. They have the expertise regarding the needed technical skills in their area, and we want to enable them to have a more holistic view on their resource planning.”*



Prioritise, test and learn.

Strategic workforce planning should start with the roles that are most business-critical for the future, analysis of the skills needed for these roles, and the extent to which the current talent pipeline can provide them. This should be followed by a plan of how to develop or recruit the needed talent. A pilot study can be undertaken initially that focuses on high-priority roles, before rolling out the approach to other roles. During this testing process, the ambiguity and uncertainty should be recognised and accepted: it is important to start the conversation even though there may not be 100% clarity.



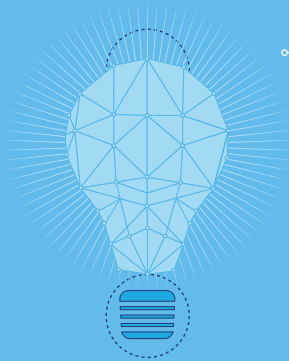
Putting it into practice:

How a global Life Science organisation built a case for workforce planning and alternative workforce models



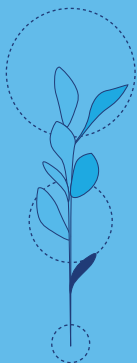
The situation

At our client organisation, the approach to selecting and hiring the external workforce was not harmonised. It was partly managed by the procurement function, but often business functions would circumvent procurement when hiring an external workforce. The process for selecting and hiring external workers was not user-friendly to business customers and there was no visibility of the external workers that were currently working for the organisation. This made it very difficult to carry out workforce planning in a holistic way to make the organisation future-ready.



The solution

A comprehensive role analysis including a business case was carried out to demonstrate the benefits of extending workforce planning to alternative workforce categories. Using the O*NET open source database which describes role characteristics and skill requirements, individual roles were analysed for their potential to be performed by alternative workforce categories. This exercise revealed opportunities for ensuring access to the right skills and also considerable potential for savings.



In a second step, a human capital framework was developed to support decisions around the choice of workforce category to fill a role. Guidelines and processes were adapted accordingly. In close collaboration with HR and integrating the company's talent strategy, an end-to-end governance for external workforce was defined.

The result

The business now has a holistic view of its workforce, and alternative workers are seen as an extension of the internal workforce. The new framework enables faster, more appropriate and more future-oriented external workforce decisions, while making sure resources are used efficiently.

A background image showing a close-up of two business people shaking hands. The image is overlaid with a network of white lines and circular nodes, some of which contain icons of business groups or individuals. The overall color palette is warm, with orange and blue tones.

Challenge 2

How do we ensure to engage and retain the right people?

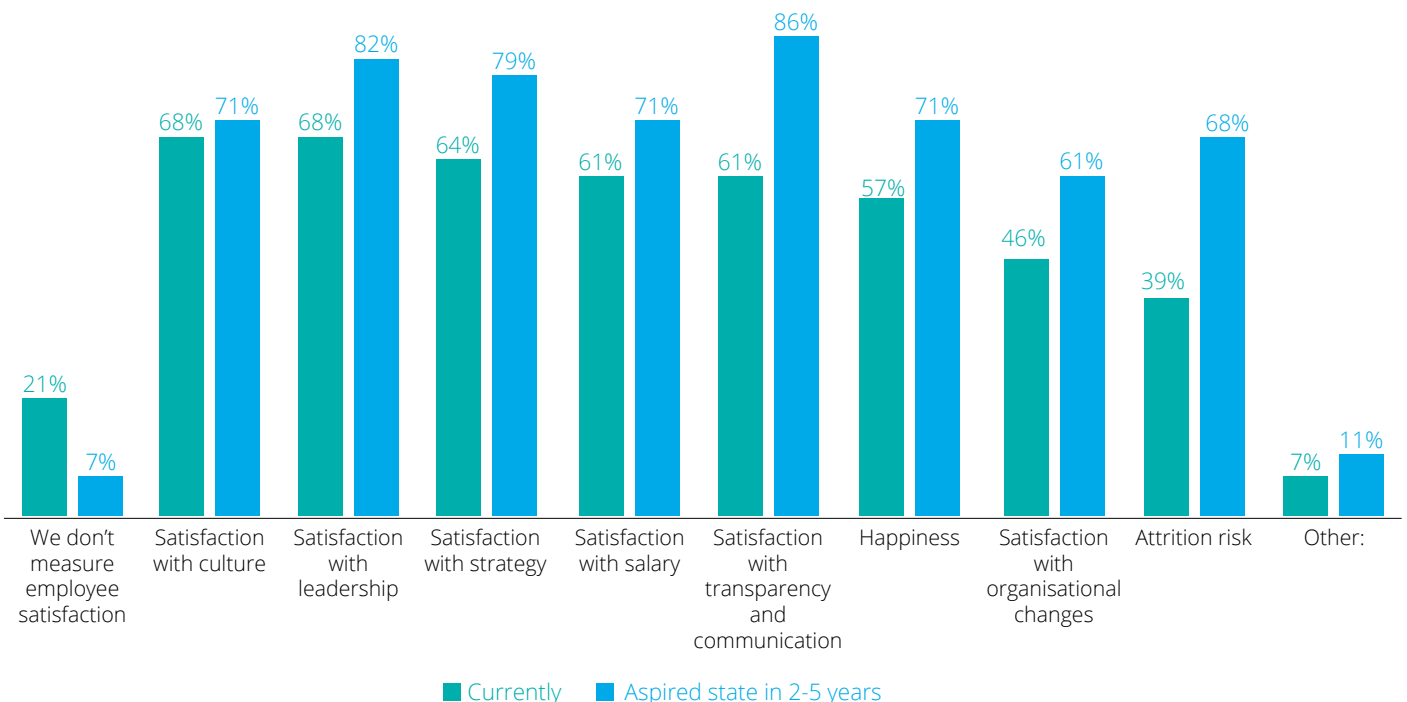
The 2019 Deloitte Human Capital Trends report identified one of the biggest challenges for organisations as improving the ‘employee experience’. Employers look to create a workplace that is inclusive and meaningful and to provide a sense of belonging and trust. As the battle for scarce talent increases, measuring and actively managing disengagement and attrition risk can be key to staying competitive.

A central element in managing the employee experience is continuous measurement of sentiment based on work satisfaction criteria. 32% of our respondent organisations measure employee satisfaction annually and 32% do so every other year. Only 11% measure employee satisfaction more frequently, twice a year or quarterly, and 21% do not measure it at all. There is no intention currently among any of the organisations to increase the frequency of measurements. This is interesting, given the general global trend towards more frequent and shorter “pulse surveys”. The top five topics currently investigated were Satisfaction with Culture (68%), Satisfaction with

Leadership (68%), Satisfaction with Strategy (61%), Satisfaction with Salary (61%) and Satisfaction with Transparency and Communication (61%). In addition, many organisations intend to include measures of happiness (71%) and attrition risk (68%) in the next 2-5 years.

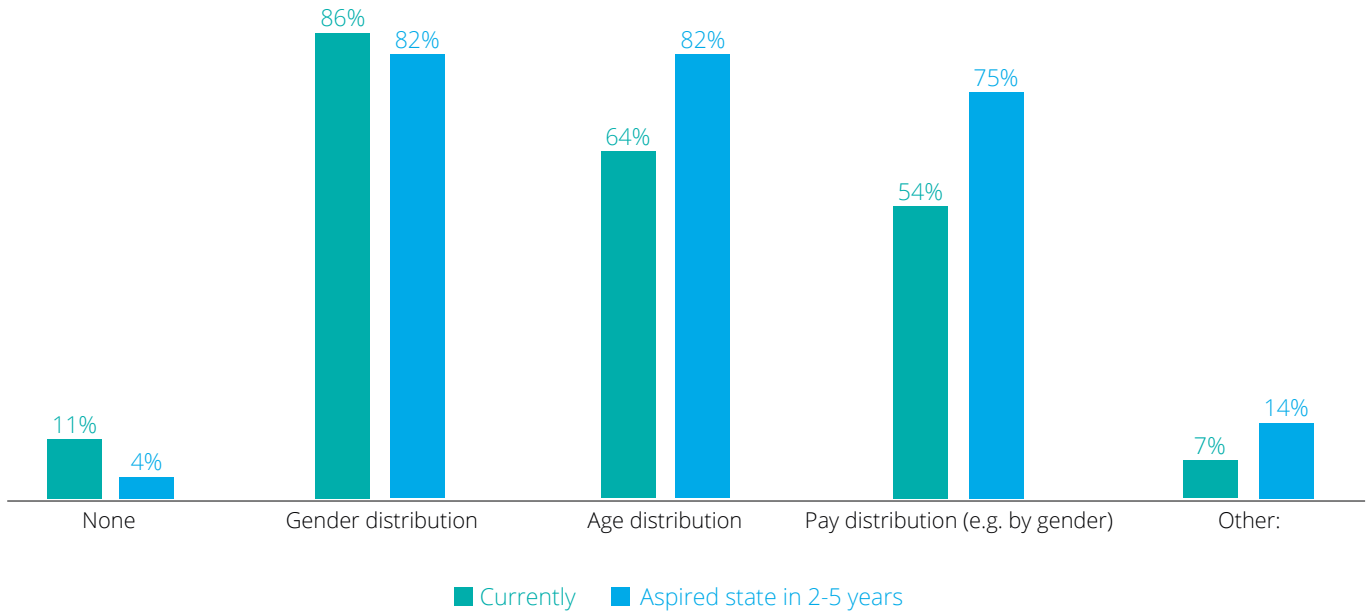
To evaluate attrition risk, some organisations go a step further than satisfaction surveys and analyse attrition rates at organisational level (39%) or at a team level (18%). Interestingly, 75% of respondents aspire to analyse attrition risk at an organisational level (including statistical analysis of potential causes and risk factors) in the next 2-5 years.

Topics assessed during Employee Satisfaction surveys



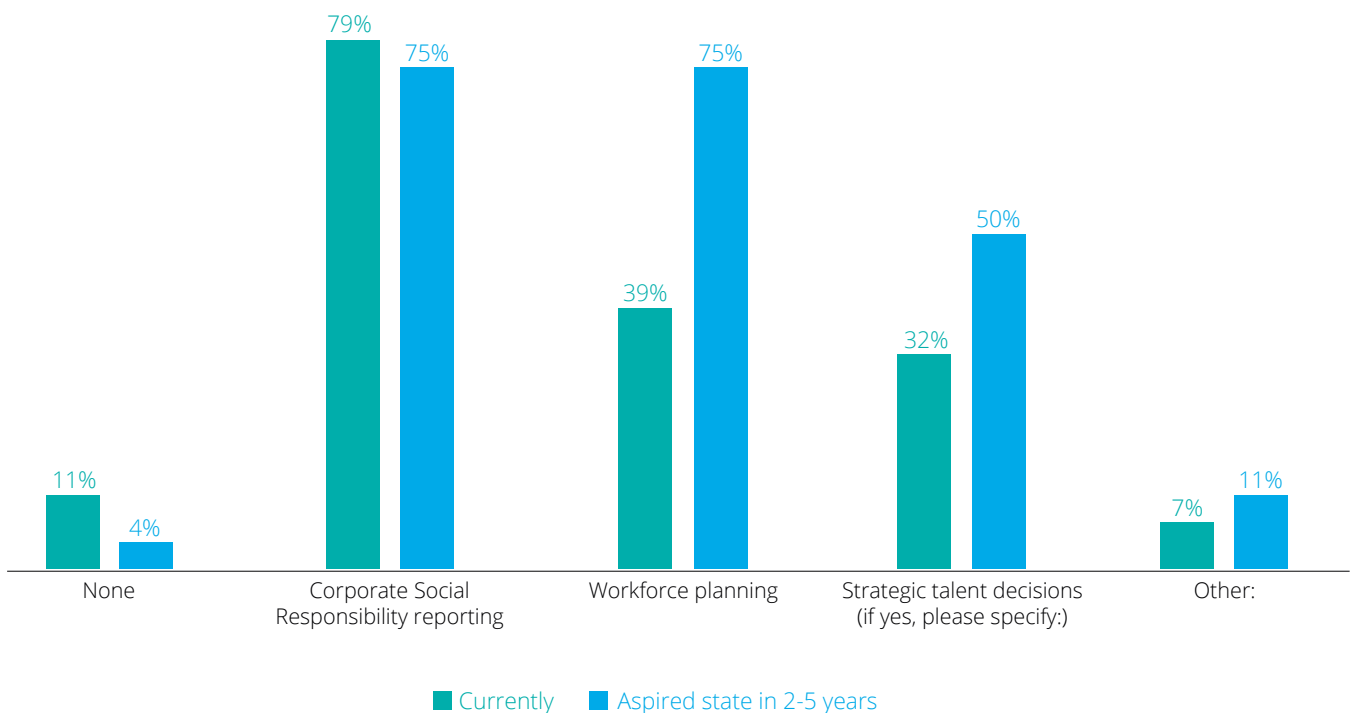
Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) remains a highly relevant topic in this context: many organisations currently analyse diversity of gender (86%), age (64%) and pay (54%). It seems that diversity is increasingly understood as a topic that goes beyond gender: in the next 2-5 years, organisations plan to increase measures of age distribution (82%) and deepen their analysis of pay distribution (75%). Some also plan to analyse data on nationality and promotions.

Diversity-related measures



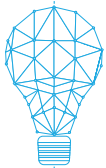
The main reasons for measuring diversity-related data are corporate social responsibility reporting (79%), strategic talent decisions (32%, e.g. promotions, D&I Strategy and programmes) or workforce planning (39%, e.g. leadership pipeline, new hires). In the next 2-5 years, 75% of respondents plan to include diversity-related data in their workforce planning.

Purpose of diversity related data analysis



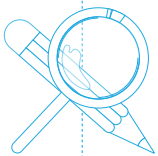


Where organisations can start:



Clearly define the purpose of assessment.

Before conducting an employee engagement survey, the specific purpose of the endeavour should be defined and questions should be tailored accordingly. Questions should be specific and relevant to the organisation, rather than general in nature. Shortening the survey can increase the response rate. It is often difficult for workers to self-diagnose the reasons for their low engagement, and the best approach is to ask about factors that have been shown by research to affect commitment and motivation, such as the desire of employees for a sense of purpose in their work and for leaders who 'walk the talk', set clear goals and give regular actionable feedback. This will make it easier to take action on the results, and develop targeted, fact-based talent management solutions to address the challenges.

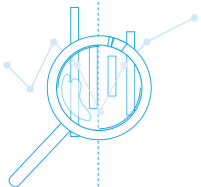


Vary and develop methods.

Engagement measurement is often an extensive project resulting in survey fatigue. An alternative could be the use of quarterly surveys of a different pool of employees each time. This would avoid the effort of a large firm-wide assessment while checking the organisation's pulse more regularly. Short surveys would also make employees more willing to respond. We observe another important trend: greater refinement of engagement measures.

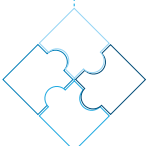
As one interview participant told us: *"We had yearly firm-wide employee surveys but we've suspended the initiative. Clearly, employee engagement needs to go along with employee experience, so we will need to refine what we are aiming for."*

This observation is well in line with a finding from the Human Capital Trends 2019 report: when thinking about employee experience at work, organisations should move beyond perks, rewards or support, and focus instead on job fit, design and meaning.



Understand reasons behind attrition numbers.

Moving from attrition reporting to meaningful retention interventions is a big step. To manage attrition risk effectively, an understanding is needed of why employees decide to quit. Anonymous exit surveys (potentially from an external provider to increase perceived anonymity) can help to discover who leaves the company and for what reasons. Another approach is to analyse the relationship between leavers and diversity-related data, in order to identify patterns. Identifying the risk factors for attrition – for example low engagement due to dissatisfaction with the leadership – makes it possible to address these issues with targeted interventions.

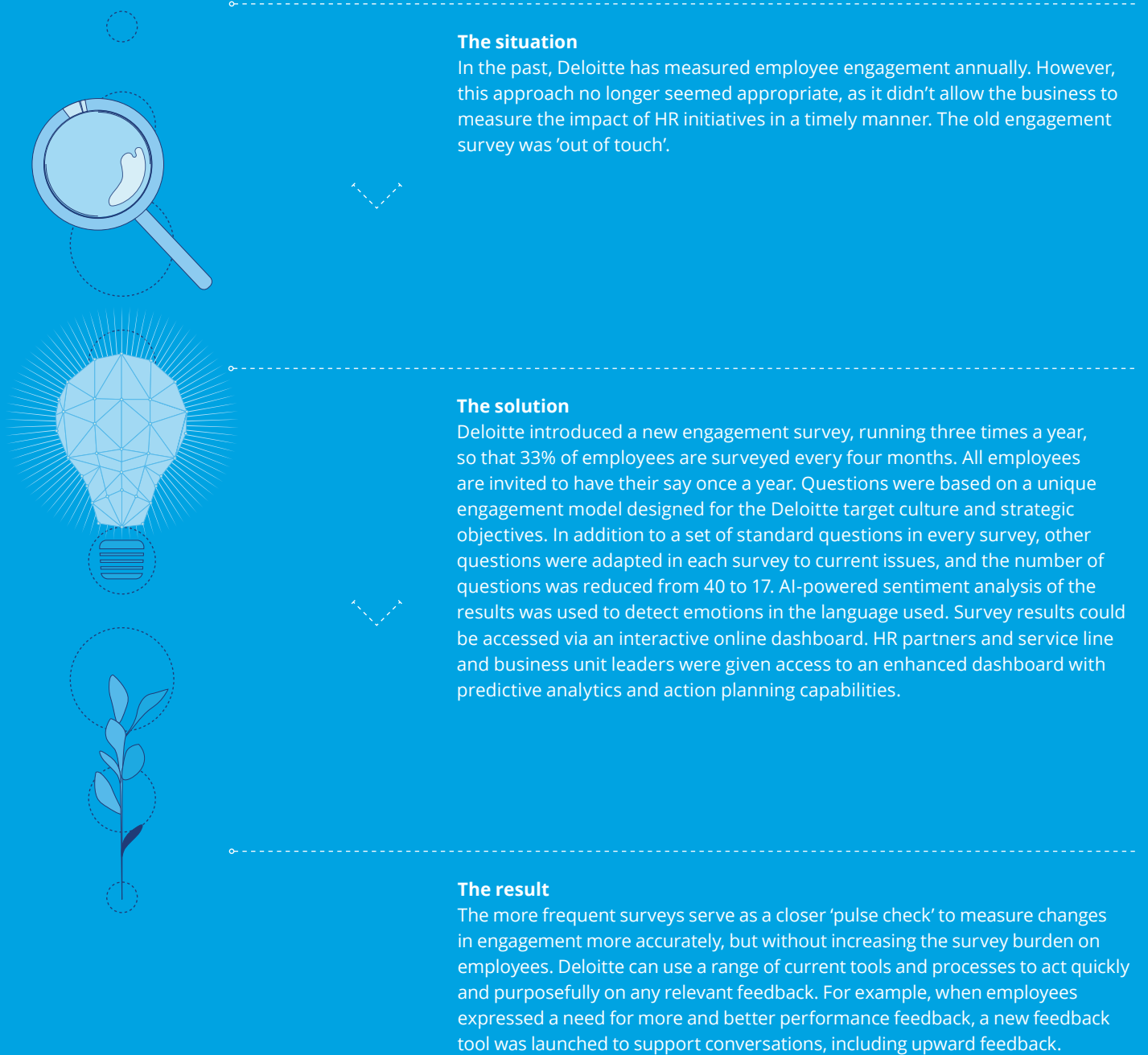


Understand diversity.

Analysing diversity of gender and age is a good first step – but then it is time to dig deeper. Diversity-related data can help remove bias from beliefs about certain parts of the workforce. As an example, a U.S. music production studio is using data to support its efforts to increase diversity among performers. Data analysis revealed that the organisation was homogeneous – employees were white, middle class, working in the same city and university educated. The studio accumulated enough data to gain an understanding of who was (and, importantly, who wasn't) applying for the opportunities created. These findings were used to support a strategy to broaden the range of people the studio works with. Ultimately, it sees the need to understand how the different parts of the workforce can best complement and benefit each other.

Putting it into practice:

How Deloitte Switzerland uses pulse surveys to measure employee engagement



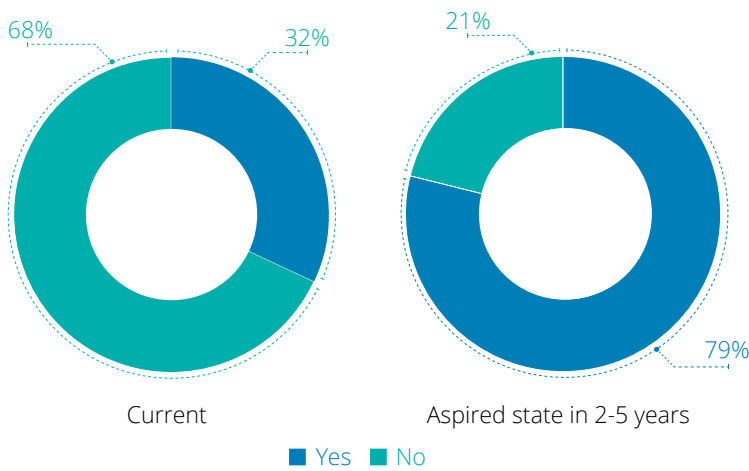
Challenge 3

How do we realise HR's full strategic potential and maximise its impact?



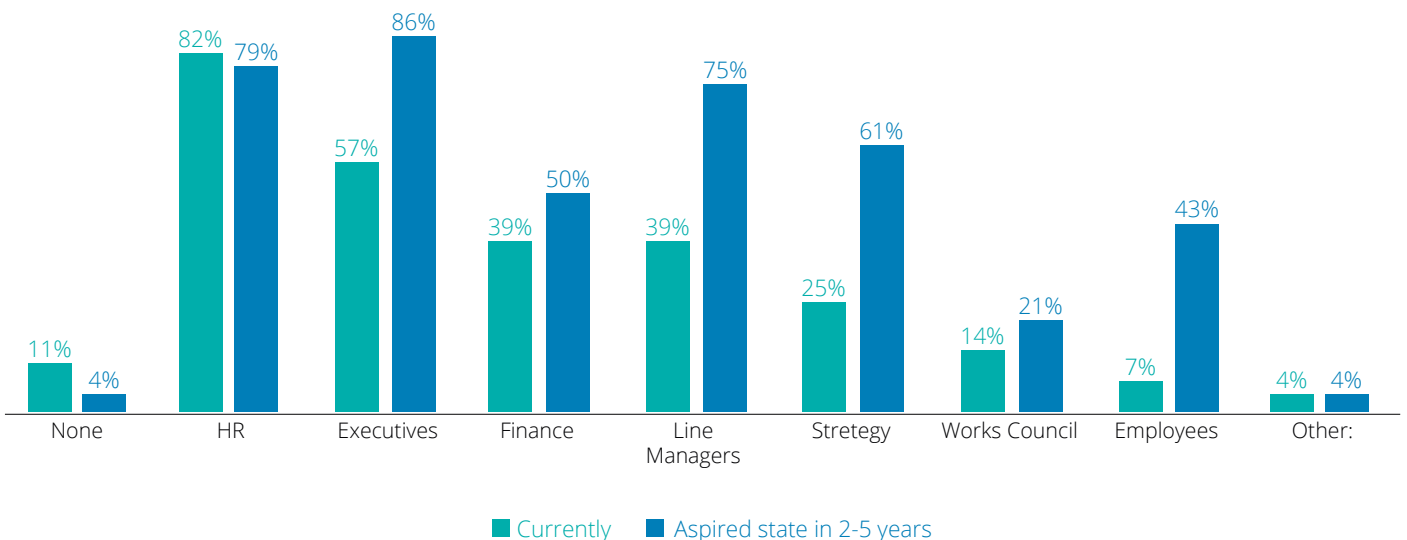
HR functions with well-developed workforce planning use people analytics to support business decisions throughout the organisation. They adopt a data-driven, fact-based approach and foster a data-savvy culture. They also track data and KPIs to measure the effectiveness and impact of HR services and initiatives.

Use of people analytics to solve business issues



Issues in business vary widely, and might range from declining sales performance or unsuccessful tool implementations to attrition of key staff. 32% of our respondent organisations say that they already use people analytics to solve business issues, and 79% aspire to do more in the next 2-5 years. One way of doing this will be to involve more functions outside HR in discussions about people analytics. Respondents aspire to widen the circle of recipients of people analytics to executives (86%), line managers (75%) and employees (43%) as well as Strategy (61%), Finance (50%) and the Works Council (21%).

Recipients of people analytics



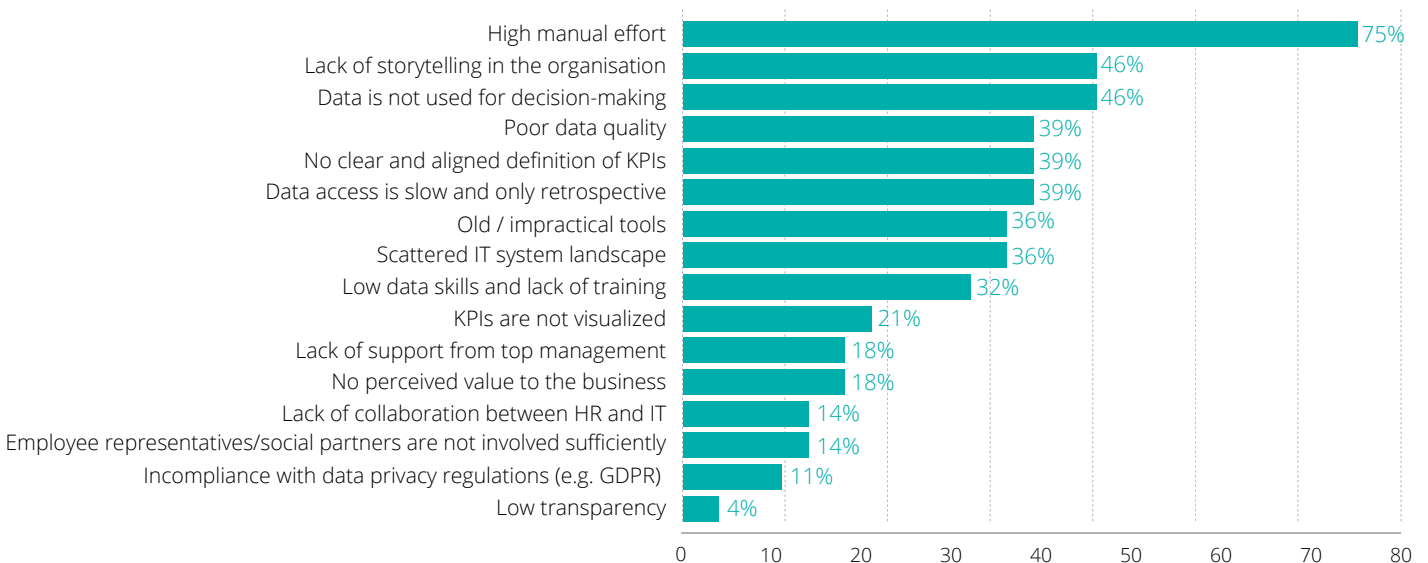
So what are the main business issues that Swiss organisations aim to solve with the help of people analytics? Respondent organisations say that they want to improve forward-looking strategic planning (86%) and gain a better overview of the workforce and improved planning (64%). People analytics will also be used for HR initiatives such as improved talent programmes and interventions (68%) and assessment of leadership effectiveness and cultural topics (54%). Importantly, many organisations aim to use people data for more effective and efficient business decisions (68%).

Key advantages aimed to tackle with People Analytics



Given the high ambition among HR functions to engage in business-wide conversations around people data, what is it that often prevents them from doing so? It seems that some of the main impediments are technology-related: the large amount of manual effort (75%), poor data quality (39%) and slow and only retrospective access (39%) are the most common problems. But it's not only the technology: organisations also report a lack of storytelling in the organisation (46%), decision making that does not leverage data (46%) and a lack of clear and aligned definitions of KPIs (39%). As an interview partner from the financial sector explains, "Data literacy and data privacy savviness are especially crucial for sensitive people data, to make sure that no incorrect conclusions are drawn."

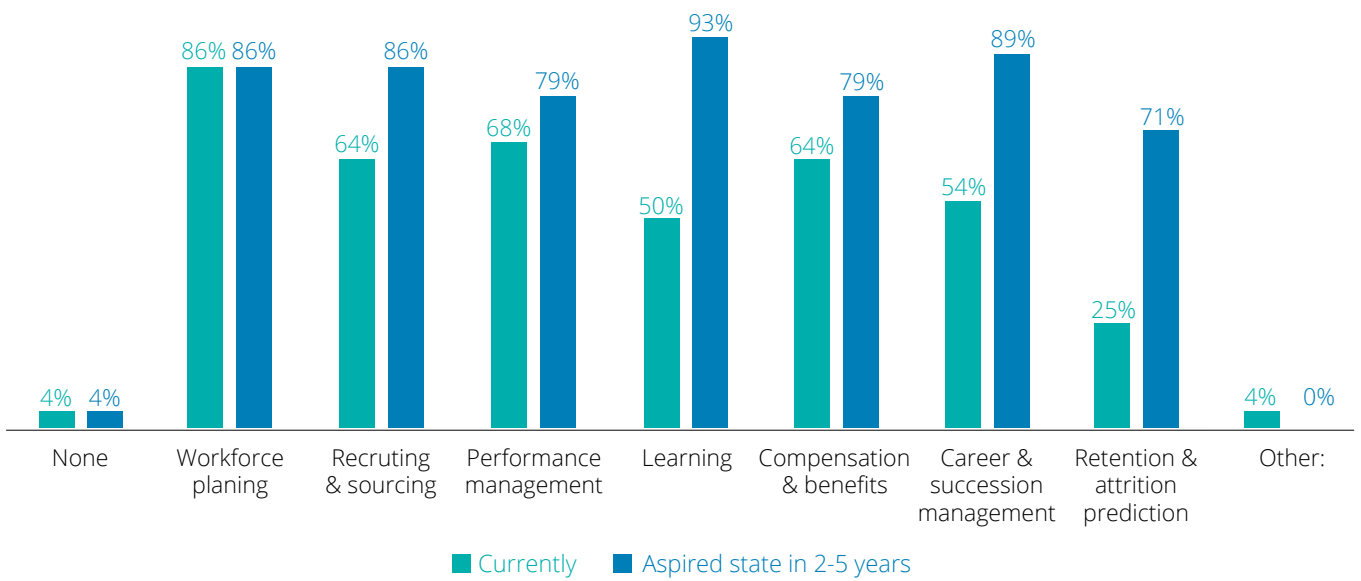
Most prevalent blockers organisations are facing regarding People Analytics



In addition to boosting the strategic position of HR in the business, people analytics also makes it possible to measure HR service excellence, process efficiency and effectiveness, and the return from investment in HR initiatives.

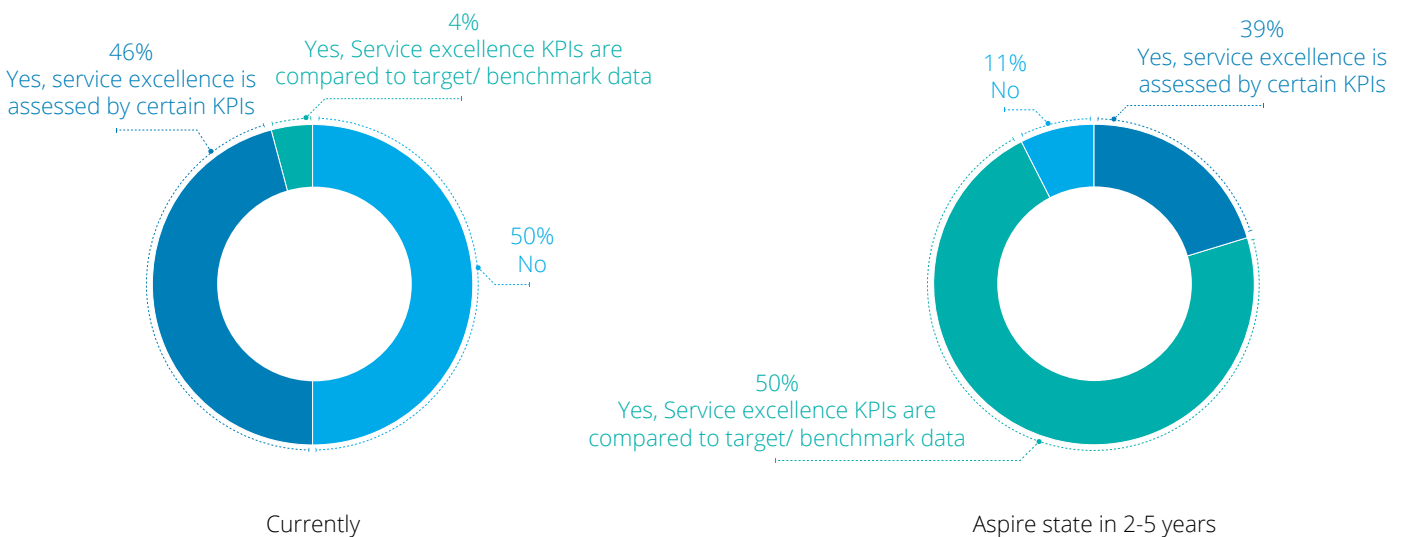
Swiss organisations measure the effectiveness of HR processes mainly in the areas of workforce planning (86%), performance management (68%), recruiting and sourcing (64%) and compensation and benefits (64%). In the next 2-5 years, many respondents aspire to analyse further the effectiveness of learning (93%), career and succession management (89%) and retention and attrition prediction (71%).

HR processes - tracking and data analyses

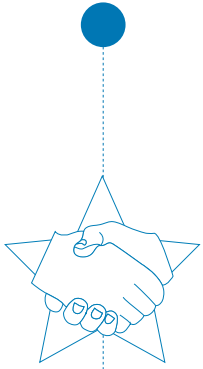


Formalising the measurement of HR performance requires a definition of HR KPIs. Currently 46% of our respondents assess HR service excellence by selected KPIs, and 50% want to compare KPIs to a target or benchmark within the next 2-5 years.

KPIs to measure HR service excellence

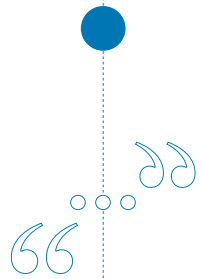


Where organisations can start:



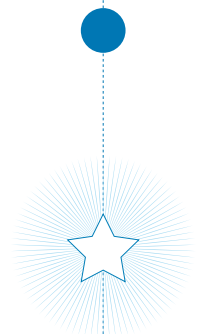
Create a HR business case.

A tangible 'HR business case' can be built by showing the positive impact of HR involvement in conversations with other functions. The impact should be demonstrated as clearly as possible. How do talent initiatives by HR increase performance, tenure or diversity? How does HR contribute to meeting financial targets through training people? A major Swiss bank we interviewed recently developed a dashboard to track the implementation of HR strategy in a multidisciplinary effort. Organisational initiatives like these can help bridge the gap between HR's current qualitative judgement-based approach and the data-driven approach it needs to adopt.



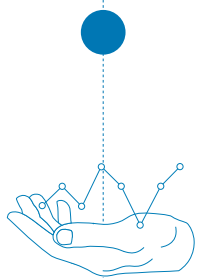
Pursue consistent internal definitions.

Working cross-functionally requires a shared understanding of key HR metrics. Cross-functional efforts (for example through cooperation with Finance and Operations) toward creating consistent organisation-wide definitions for key HR metrics (e.g., headcount, attrition rates) help to establish a 'single source of truth'.



Put worker experiences first.

A service excellence approach by HR should always put employees at the centre, treating them as customers. HR should work with leaders from the organisation's product, marketing, and customer experience units to understand and enhance worker experiences. It should build expertise in design thinking as a powerful way to develop compelling worker experiences. For example, HR might conduct interviews or run focus groups with recent job applicants (ideally, both successful and unsuccessful), and based on that create personas and user journeys and find concrete solutions for pain points.



Foster data fluency and a data-driven culture.

Basic data literacy skills should be improved among the entire HR function by means of in-house curricula, vendor-led courses, and communities of practice. Experimentation should be fostered using new tools, models and approaches to study employee behaviour. Senior HR leaders should communicate and showcase the importance of data-driven decision-making across the organisation.

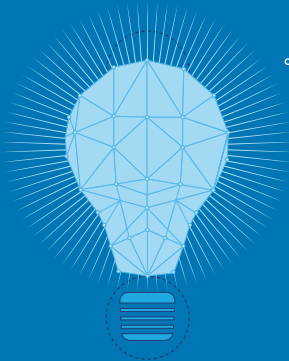
"Our data landscape is fragmented, we do not have enough resources to understand our numbers and connect them with our strategic imperatives" said one of our interviewees, and our survey indicates that this experience is symptomatic of the situation in Switzerland generally.

Putting it into practice: How a Swiss Insurance organisation developed people analytics



The situation

Our client was establishing a self-service solution for HR metrics within the HR function, to promote the use of people data. For the existing HR reporting and analytics team, this resulted in a need to extend current skills and acquire new skills. However both the current skills levels as well as business expectations regarding future skills levels were unclear.



The solution

The needs and priorities of internal customers for people analytics (business leaders and HR business partners) were evaluated, as a basis for customising the people analytics service offering. A customised skills assessment framework was developed and the ability of the HR team to deliver these services was assessed. To complement the picture, HR business partners were assessed as well. Based on that, a transformation roadmap was produced for ways to further develop the team's capabilities and skills. In addition, a blueprint was drawn up for the future composition of the HR Reporting & Analytics team.



The result

The team structure and roles that were developed enables the team to specialise (e.g., data analyst roles vs. business-facing roles) and thus provide more and better analytics services, eventually leading to better people and business decisions. Using this approach, the HR Reporting & Analytics team continues to up-skill and professionalise its services.

Conclusion

Employees are the most crucial resource of an organisation, and people-oriented decisions need to be 'right'. To improve such decisions, Swiss organisations are continuing to develop their use of people data for workforce planning, employee engagement and HR excellence. To do this, they need to improve the availability and quality of people data, as well as their own skills regarding data fluency, storytelling and endorsing the business.

The use of people analytics improves problem-solving through sound measurement, appropriate research methods, systematic data analysis, and technology to support organisational decision-making. As Swiss organisations increasingly look to people data to help them improve their workforce composition and manage their employees' experience, it is important to remember that this does not simply mean having more data or better charts. It is about using data to make better decisions: to hypothesise, experiment, measure and adapt. Becoming an insight-driven (HR-) organisation is not easy. But through collection and analysis of the right data, investing in the first steps and 'starting small', a major transformation in the use of data can become a little less daunting.

Methodology

Data for this study was collected through an online questionnaire filled out by Swiss organisations across a range of sectors, including **Banking (14%), Insurance (29%), Manufacturing and Industry Products (11%), Life Science and Health Care (7%), Consumer Business (7%), Public Sector (4%), Professional Services (4%), Energy & Resources (4%)** as well as **Technology, Media & Telecommunications (4%)** and **Other (18%)**.

Firm sizes ranged from less than **5,000 employees (25%)**, between **5,000 and 10,000 employees (21%)**, between **10,000 and 50,000 employees (21%)**, and more than **50,000 employees (32%)**.

Most of the individual respondents were associated with the HR function of their organization with **32% of respondents being HR Professionals, 18% working as HR Executives** and **21% as HR People Analytics Experts**.

The quantitative outcomes provided by the study were complemented by qualitative insights from follow-up interviews with organisations that had previously participated in the survey.



Further reading

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Definitions

People analytics

The use of data about people to analyse and solve workforce and business problems. The data used can be from HR IT systems, other business IT systems, employee surveys and other sources.

Operational workforce planning

A short-term plan to deliver on immediate customer and business demand. May be referred to as “scheduling”.

Tactical workforce planning

A plan which sets out the long-term future for the workforce in relation to the strategic direction of the business (12 months to five years). Conducted alongside wider business forecasting, budgeting and planning as well as skill needs analysis.

Strategic workforce planning

A formal record of the skills of employees within an organisation. This should be updated continually to keep the information relevant.

Skills catalogue

A formal record of the skills of employees within an organisation. This should be updated continually to keep the information relevant.

FTE

“Full time equivalent”. 1 FTE is equivalent to one employee working full-time or to two employees working half time.

Alternative workforce categories / external workforce

Workers who are not permanent and internal (or “on-balance-sheet”), for example outsourced teams, contractors, freelancers, gig workers (paid for individual tasks) and the crowd (engaged for micro-tasks).

Near-shore workers

Workers who work in a neighbouring country of the organisation with no more than two hours’ time difference.

Off-shore workers

Workers who work in a different region or on a different continent from the organisation.

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