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Elevating HR with AI

Scaling support, strengthening culture, and creating more time for people.

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Executive summary

HR leaders are being asked to do more than ever: recruit top talent, onboard effectively, foster engagement, and strengthen culture.

Yet daily demands still pull teams into repetitive tasks, leaving less time for the strategic work that shapes employee experience and long-term retention. The pressure is rising while resources lag behind, creating a widening gap between HR's mandate and its reality.

AI offers a way to close that gap. By handling routine tasks and making knowledge easier to access, AI gives HR leaders the bandwidth to focus on the work that matters most. Early adopters are already seeing results – from faster hiring and smoother onboarding to fewer tickets and higher employee satisfaction.

This paper explores where AI is delivering the most impact in HR: recruiting, onboarding, compliance, and frontline support. It also outlines the foundation needed for successful adoption and shows how solutions like Glean give HR teams the ability to scale with confidence while creating a better employee experience.

The time to act is now. HR teams that embrace AI today will be better positioned to deliver measurable value, strengthen their role as strategic partners, and build workplaces where employees can thrive.

Why traditional HR models can't keep up

57% of HR professionals report working beyond their limits, and more than half say they don't have the time or staff to meet priorities.

HR leaders carry a wide and growing set of responsibilities: recruiting, onboarding, employee engagement, and retention, all while being asked to create a stronger employee experience. Yet the gap between what's expected and what HR can realistically handle keeps widening. According to recent research, 57% of HR professionals report working beyond their limits, 56% say they are short-staffed, and 58% point to limited time or personnel as a top barrier to meeting their goals.[1]

Take onboarding for example. It's one of the most critical moments in an employee's journey, shaping how supported and valued people feel from day one. Unfortunately, many new hires don't get the training they need. Over half of employees say they feel undertrained during onboarding, and 37% believe they are only somewhat prepared to take on their role.[2] This disconnect can damage confidence and increase early turnover, especially in industries like retail, hospitality, logistics, and healthcare where churn is already high and consistent coverage is essential.

Compliance compounds these challenges. HR teams are responsible for navigating a complex and evolving regulatory landscape. New regulations, evolving labor laws, and industry-specific reporting demands draw an increasing amount of HR professionals' time and attention.

Meanwhile, rising employee expectations for fast, personalized support add more pressure. People now expect real-time, personalized support from HR. Delivering one-to-one answers at scale is nearly impossible, and traditional portals rarely provide the seamless experience employees need. Delays, repeated emails, and outdated information lead to frustration and weaken engagement.

Traditional HR models were not designed to meet this level of demand. To support employees at scale while freeing up HR staff time to focus on strategic priorities requires a new approach.

1 SHRM, 5 Key HR Executive Challenges for 2024

2 Paychex, The Effect of Poor Onboarding on New Hires

How HR can deliver more strategic impact

Generative AI adoption is already outpacing past technologies, giving HR a chance to rethink how services are delivered.

When HR teams are bogged down by repetitive tasks, they have less time to focus on the areas where they add the most value: building culture, supporting employee growth, and maximizing retention.

To help lighten the load, many HR leaders are turning to AI.

According to The Hackett Group, 66% of HR teams have already started adopting generative AI – at a faster adoption rate than with previous technologies. Many are now moving past pilots into broader use.3 This shift offers an opportunity to rethink how HR services are delivered, using technology to simplify support and improve access.

Implementing AI brings more than just efficiency gains. It improves the employee experience and allows HR teams to deliver on more strategic priorities. Forward-looking HR leaders are reshaping their service models in three important ways:

Shifting from reactive to proactive support
Instead of waiting for questions to come in, HR teams are embedding guidance where employees need it most. This is especially important for frontline, contingent, and seasonal workers who may not have consistent desktop access.

For example, HR can share benefits information by text message before open enrollment or send shift-specific instructions through chat. AI supports this shift by spotting patterns in engagement, performance, and turnover giving HR the chance to address issues before they escalate.[4]

Moving from manual to automated workflows
Tasks like onboarding, compliance tracking, and training confirmations are often handled manually, which introduces delays and errors. Automation removes that burden, especially in organizations with high-volume hiring or short-term contracts. Generative AI can save 15–20% of overall HR labor time, with HR operations seeing up to 35% time savings.[5] That means faster ramp-up, fewer mistakes, and more time to focus on higher-value work.

Evolving from gatekeepers to strategic partners
As AI takes on more routine work, HR can prioritize initiatives that drive employee engagement and retention, improve organizational culture, and support leadership development. Deloitte characterizes this as HR becoming a boundaryless discipline, where the function works across silos as a more connected, strategic partner. While 72% of organizations see this shift as critical, only 11% have made meaningful progress,[6] leaving significant room for HR leaders to establish a more connected, strategic role.

By embracing these changes, HR can create a model that is resilient, responsive, and capable of supporting employees at scale while expanding its impact as a strategic function.

3 The Hackett Group, HR Leaders Rapidly Adopting Gen AI to Advance Human Capital Objectives

4 ADP, AI in HR: The Power Duo Shaping Tomorrow's Workplace

5 Bain & Company, Better, Faster, Leaner: Reinventing HR with Generative AI

6 Deloitte, From function to discipline: The rise of boundaryless HR

Where AI is making the biggest impact in HR

Teams that use AI in recruiting have cut cost-per-hire by up to 30% while hiring faster.

AI is already helping HR teams work smarter. The most impactful uses reduce repetitive work, improve employee experience, and give leaders more time to focus on people instead of paperwork.

Recruiting and hiring
Recruiting teams often face bottlenecks, especially in industries with large employee bases and high turnover like retail, hospitality, and logistics. Manual resume reviews, scattered interview scheduling, and repetitive candidate questions slow the process.

AI helps by:

- Improving shortlists and surfacing overlooked candidates with AI-powered sourcing and skills matching.
- Reducing coordination delays through structured interview guides and automated scheduling.
- Giving candidates real-time status updates and answers to common questions via self-service tools.

These improvements shorten time-to-hire and reduce costs. Organizations that embed AI in recruiting and HR workflows have cut cost-per-hire by up to 30%, while improving overall efficiency and candidate fit.[7]

Onboarding and productivity
AI strengthens onboarding by ensuring consistency, reducing confusion, and helping new hires ramp up faster. Assistants can guide employees step by step, answer common questions, and remove bottlenecks around form completion, policy acknowledgments, and system access.

Digital buddy programs make new hires feel supported from the start, while frontline workers benefit from essentials delivered by SMS or chat – from clock-in instructions and safety checklists to location-specific procedures. Even without desktop access, employees can ramp faster and with fewer frustrations.

Reducing administrative burden
HR inboxes fill quickly with questions about benefits, policies, or time off. AI can handle many of these requests instantly through chat assistants, giving employees accurate, real-time answers.[8]

Self-service FAQs and dynamic knowledge tools reduce ticket volume by making information easier to find. That's especially important in fast-moving sectors like logistics and retail. The result is faster answers, less back-and-forth, and a smoother employee experience – no matter the workforce size or location.

7 SHRM, The Evolving Role of AI in Recruitment and Retention

8 ADP, AI in HR: The Power Duo Shaping Tomorrow's Workplace

Improving employee engagement and retention
When employees can find clear and accurate information, they trust HR more and feel less frustrated. AI-powered support, whether in chat assistants or built into collaboration tools, makes answers available when and where employees need them.

Volkswagen Australia shows how this can play out in practice. By creating a unified platform that gave managers and employees access to shared data, the company improved dealership investments and saw stronger workforce experience and retention scores.[9] Reducing daily friction not only drives engagement but also supports long-term retention.

Managing compliance and regulation
Managing compliance documentation and audit readiness is a heavy lift for many HR teams, particularly when rules vary by location or role. AI reduces the load by generating documents, maintaining version control, and producing audit-ready reports.

AI agents can also monitor regulatory changes and keep policies current. In industries such as manufacturing, construction, and logistics, they generate fact sheets, flag safety or equity concerns, and deliver reports aligned with requirements like GDPR and HIPAA. This level of automation helps teams stay compliant without last-minute scrambles.

9 Deloitte, From function to discipline: The rise of boundaryless HR

Building the right foundation for AI

To get the most value from AI, HR leaders need to build a strong foundation that supports smooth adoption and lasting impact. The right groundwork makes it easier for employees to trust the tools, engage with them, and benefit from the results.

Seamless integration
AI should fit naturally into the systems HR already uses. That means working smoothly with HRIS platforms, collaboration tools, and ticketing systems without adding complexity. For frontline and mobile workers, integration is even more important.

Mobile-first experiences, role-based access, and connectivity to workforce management (WFM) and scheduling platforms such as Workday, UKG, and Kronos ensure employees get the right information when and where they need it. Gartner's 2025 Workforce Technology report emphasizes that a mobile-first approach is essential for engaging a distributed and frontline workforce effectively.

"Mobile-first, role-based access ensures people get the right information when and where they need it."

Data privacy and role-based permissions
Because HR teams manage sensitive employee information, any AI solution must meet strict data privacy and security standards. Role-based permissions ensure the right people have access to the right data while limiting unnecessary exposure. Compliance with regulations such as GDPR and HIPAA is non-negotiable. Building robust privacy protections and transparent governance into AI systems is also essential for maintaining employee trust.

Change management and employee adoption
Even the best technology falls short without adoption. HR leaders should communicate early and often about how AI supports employees as well as the organization. By showing clear benefits – such as quicker answers, less administrative work, and more time for meaningful HR initiatives – leaders can build trust and reduce resistance. Thoughtful change management helps employees embrace new tools and ensures the benefits of AI last.

By focusing on these priorities, HR leaders lay the foundation for AI to deliver real, lasting value. The result is a stronger HR function that reduces administrative burden, makes information easier to access, and frees teams to focus on strategy and culture.

10 Gartner, Future of Work Trends 2025

Empowering HR teams with Glean

Glean is reshaping how work gets done across the enterprise – including HR. With more than 30 ready-to-use AI agents, including HR-specific options, Glean makes it easy to customize and deploy solutions that improve employee experience and reduce manual workload, all with minimal ramp-up.

Here's how HR teams use Glean to deliver more value with less friction:

With more than 30 ready-to-use agents, Glean helps HR reduce manual work and improve the employee experience.

Instant, self-service answers in Slack or Teams
Glean integrates with platforms like Slack and Microsoft Teams, giving employees immediate access to answers without disrupting their workflow. This reduces HR tickets and helps employees get the information they need faster, creating a smoother employee experience.

Centralized policies, benefits, and compliance information
Knowledge in HR is often scattered across systems like Workday, Greenhouse, and Confluence. Glean connects it all, providing HR teams, recruiters, and employees with a single, searchable platform for all policies, benefits, and compliance resources.

Automated onboarding and compliance workflows
Routine steps like onboarding checklists and compliance confirmations can slow teams down. Glean automates these processes, reducing employee ramp-up time, helping new employees ramp faster and reducing manual effort. Some customers have seen up to a 40% improvement in time-to-productivity.

Tailored support for every employee
Whether supporting office staff, field technicians, or seasonal crews, Glean enables HR to provide role- and location-specific guidance through lightweight chat and mobile-friendly access. Every employee has access to the right information exactly when and where they need it, even without a desktop.

Proven results

Customers are already seeing measurable impact with Glean:

- A hospitality provider reported an 86% boost in HR team productivity alongside a 67% drop in HR tickets.
- A leading SaaS company increased employee satisfaction with benefits access by 31%.
- A data intelligence company used Glean AI to handle employees' requests surrounding an upcoming equity event, processing 8,000 requests from 2,600 employees with ease.

By simplifying access to information and automating repetitive tasks, Glean helps HR teams scale efficiently while delivering a better employee experience at every touchpoint.

Elevating HR's strategic impact

HR's role is evolving from handling compliance and administrative tasks to shaping culture, engagement, and career growth. Meeting today's challenges requires moving beyond manual, reactive processes and adopting smarter approaches that support a complex workforce.

AI plays a central role in this shift. By automating routine work and delivering instant, personalized answers, AI frees HR teams to focus on their strategic priorities. When integrated with existing systems and guided by strong governance, it creates seamless and scalable employee experiences.

With solutions like Glean, HR leaders can simplify access to information, streamline onboarding and compliance, and provide role-specific guidance for every employee – whether in the office, in the field, or on the frontline. These improvements drive measurable gains in productivity and employee satisfaction.

The future of HR lies in combining human expertise with AI. Together, they position HR as a strategic partner that not only supports employees but also drives long-term business success.

Ready to see how Glean can help your teams work smarter and move faster? Request a demo today.