

RE-DEFINING
HR & BEYOND

A Newsletter By


RethinkHR

India's Most Widely Read HR Newsletter



From the Editorial Desk



At RethinkHR, we are committed to empowering HR leaders with insights, strategies, and tools to navigate India's rapidly evolving workplace. Today, organizations face a dual challenge: economic uncertainty and workforce disruption. Hiring freezes and layoffs are becoming increasingly common, affecting morale, engagement, and organizational culture.

This edition explores how HR leaders in India, a major hub for tech and startups are responding. We provide in-depth analyses, actionable strategies, and practical tips to help you lead with confidence during times of uncertainty.

Whether you are managing attrition, implementing cost optimization measures, or sustaining engagement, this issue equips you with insights, frameworks, and actionable approaches to rethink HR strategy.

Understanding the Hiring Freeze & Layoff Landscape

India Workforce Trends 2025



IT & Tech Sector:

Major IT firms are implementing selective layoffs; AI, cloud, and cybersecurity roles continue to see hiring.



Startups:

Cost optimization and focus on revenue-critical functions are driving temporary hiring freezes.



Retail & BFSI:

Retail is preparing for festive hiring spikes; BFSI is cautious due to regulatory pressures.



Employee Sentiment:

Stress, anxiety, and disengagement are rising, highlighting the importance of transparent communication and wellbeing programs.

Why HR Leaders Must Act?

Layoffs and freezes impact trust, productivity, and engagement. Proactive strategies—reskilling, redeployment, and communication are essential to maintain organizational resilience.

Emerging Patterns in Workforce Management



Transparent Communication

- Employees expect honesty, clarity, and frequent updates.
- Methods: Town halls, pulse surveys, and Q&A sessions.



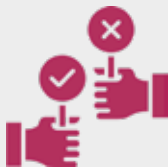
Reskilling & Redeployment

- Internal mobility reduces attrition and retains institutional knowledge.
- Upskilling in AI, cloud, fintech, and digital roles is critical.



Employee Wellbeing

- Mental health, financial planning, and flexible leave policies are key to maintaining engagement.
- Counseling and support services increase trust during uncertain times.



Data-Driven Decision Making

- Use predictive analytics to anticipate attrition, identify redundant roles, and plan workforce strategy.



Protecting Employer Brand

- Transparent exit processes and alumni programs help maintain long-term reputation.

Leading Through Uncertainty

Strategies to Implement Immediately:



Communication

- Hold weekly updates to explain business rationale.
- Establish open channels for employee questions and feedback.



Reskilling Programs

- Offer rotational projects and cross-functional opportunities.
- Use online learning platforms for upskilling at scale.



Wellbeing Measures

- Introduce wellness days, counseling, and financial guidance.
- Encourage managers to check in regularly with their teams.



Data & Analytics

- Map skills, roles, and criticality to make evidence-based decisions.
- Predict teams at risk of disengagement or attrition.



Internal Mobility

- Redeploy impacted employees to high-growth areas instead of layoffs.



Employer Brand

- Structured severance, transparent communication, and alumni networks protect long-term trust.

Survey Highlights:



Employee Priorities Amid Uncertainty

Priority	Percentage
Transparent Communication	72%
Job Security	64%
Career Reskilling	55%
Wellbeing Support	50%

Key Insight: Employees respond positively to proactive leadership, empathetic communication, and skill-building opportunities.

Bengaluru Highlights

- **Selective Freezes:**
Non-critical roles paused; critical tech and fintech roles continue.
- **Reskilling & Redeployment:**
Internal mobility programs reduce layoffs.
- **Wellbeing & Engagement:**
Counseling, mental health support, and flexible policies are essential.
- **Communication:**
Townhalls, pulse surveys, and Q&A sessions reduce uncertainty.

Tips for HR Leaders

- **Workforce Contingency Plan**
Map critical roles and identify redeployable employees.
- **Transparent Communication**
Frequent updates and FAQs to address employee concerns.
- **Reskilling & Mobility**
Online courses, rotational projects, and skill-building initiatives.
- **Employee Wellbeing**
Mental health, counseling, financial guidance, flexible leave policies.
- **Protect Employer Brand**
Fair severance, alumni networks, transparent exits.
- **Scenario-Planning Workshops**
Prepare for multiple economic scenarios and workforce contingencies.

HR Trends (2025)

Focus Area	Trend
Hiring	Freeze in non-critical roles, growth in AI/Fintech
Attrition	Moderate rise due to uncertainty
Employee Engagement	Prioritizing wellbeing, flexible policies, reskilling
Leadership Action	Transparency, scenario planning, empathy

Takeaway: Strategic planning, transparency, and proactive reskilling help HR leaders navigate workforce disruption while retaining trust and engagement.

How to Prepare Your Organization?

Strategies to Implement Immediately:



Leadership Alignment

- Conduct scenario planning and align leaders on priorities, messaging, and engagement strategy.



Employee Listening Loops

- Quarterly feedback forums, pulse surveys, and focus groups to capture concerns early.



Policy Revisions

- Redesign leave, hybrid, and wellbeing policies to build resilience and trust.



Performance Management Adjustments

- Move from rigid annual appraisals to continuous feedback, especially for employees in critical roles.



Talent Pipeline Management

- Identify critical roles and maintain succession planning to avoid disruption.



Communication Playbook

- Prepare standard templates, FAQs, and escalation paths for transparency and consistency.

News India HR Roundup | Aug–Sep 2025



IT layoffs:

- ~12,000 employees impacted; AI/ML roles remain in demand.



Retail hiring surge:

- Women-focused festive hiring up 60%.



Employee engagement:

- 68% seek reskilling and career guidance amid freezes.



AI adoption:

- Caution around performance monitoring during workforce restructuring.



BFSI slowdown:

- Selective critical role recruitment only.

Hiring freezes and layoffs challenge HR leaders to combine empathy, strategy, and data-driven decisions. Transparency, reskilling, internal mobility, and wellbeing are essential pillars to maintain trust and engagement.

At RethinkHR, we remain committed to supporting India's HR community with actionable insights and frameworks to navigate disruption while keeping people at the center.

We'd love to hear from you. How is your organization managing hiring freezes or layoffs? Write to us and share your experiences.

Next Stop

RethinkHR Conclave | Mumbai Edition

23rd January 2026

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for Being Part of the RethinkHR Community

Together, we are building a vibrant network of forward-thinking HR leaders who are redefining workplace strategy not just for today, but for tomorrow.