



LEADING HR | Meeting Recap

Real Conversations from the Summit: The Future of HR



Members of the M1 CHRO and Talent Communities in Breckenridge, March 2026

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There is a different kind of honesty that emerges when leaders step outside their day-to-day environments. In Breckenridge, M1 members gathered not around presentations, but around shared experience over dinners, between sessions, and in conversations that extended well beyond the agenda.

The setting created space for something rare: leaders speaking candidly about what is actually changing, and what they are still trying to figure out. What surfaced was not a single answer about the future of HR, but a clearer picture of the tensions shaping it.



AT A GLANCE

- Leadership is evolving to balance innovation with execution, requiring continuous learning and adaptability
- AI is becoming embedded in everyday workflows, sharpening where human capability adds the most value
- Performance and development are shifting toward impact and continuous learning, replacing static, process-driven models

Leaders are being reshaped, not replaced by AI

Much of the conversation centered on how leadership is evolving alongside AI. Leaders described a growing tension: the need to prioritize innovation while still delivering against immediate operational demands. The challenge is no longer choosing between the two but learning how to hold both at once.

This tension is reshaping what leadership requires. It is less about having answers and more about how leaders operate — continuously learning rather than relying on past expertise, making decisions without complete information, and building comfort with testing, failing, and adjusting in real time.

At the same time, there was strong agreement that AI is clarifying and concentrating where human capability adds the greatest value. As more tasks become automated, the differentiators are judgment, empathy, and the ability to interpret complexity.

Performance and value creation are being reconsidered

A second theme emerged around how the way organizations define value is shifting. Several leaders questioned whether traditional measures — both internal performance frameworks and external market signals — are still fit for purpose. In practice, this is already driving tangible change.

One organization shared that it is moving away from complex performance models toward a single, simplified measure focused on the impact that an individual delivers. At the same time, they are reducing traditional talent segmentation (such as nine-box models) to a smaller set of categories focused on retention and business criticality. The intent is to make performance clearer, more actionable, and more directly tied to outcomes.



AI is moving from concept to operating reality

Across the discussions, it became clear that AI has moved beyond pilots and isolated use cases. It is being embedded directly into workflows. Examples shared included: AI supporting difficult feedback conversations, tools that extend learning programs beyond the classroom, and systems that prompt leaders to follow through on commitments over time.

What stood out was not the technology itself, but how quickly it is becoming normalized. In many cases, adoption is being driven less by mandate and more by usefulness. Once leaders experience the value, they continue to engage with it.

Culture is shifting toward continuous learning

Alongside these changes, there is a clear move away from episodic processes — annual reviews, one-off training — toward systems that operate in real time. Some leaders described environments where feedback is captured continuously and synthesized through AI to create more accurate and actionable insights.

The goal is not just efficiency, but effectiveness. Reducing lag between action and feedback, increasing transparency around performance, and supporting faster, more consistent development is some of the impact that was discussed.



The setting reflected the shift

Interestingly, the format of the summit itself mirrored many of these themes. In a world where work is increasingly mediated by technology, the moments of human connection — the conversations that cannot be automated — are becoming more intentional. It is a reminder that while systems and tools are evolving, the conditions that enable trust, insight, and alignment still rely on how people come together.

What emerged from Breckenridge was not a definitive roadmap, but a shared recognition that HR is moving from supporting the organization to actively reshaping it. The future of HR is not being implemented — it is being worked through together and led by leaders willing to question what no longer fits and experiment with what might.