Thought Leadership

HR Optimization

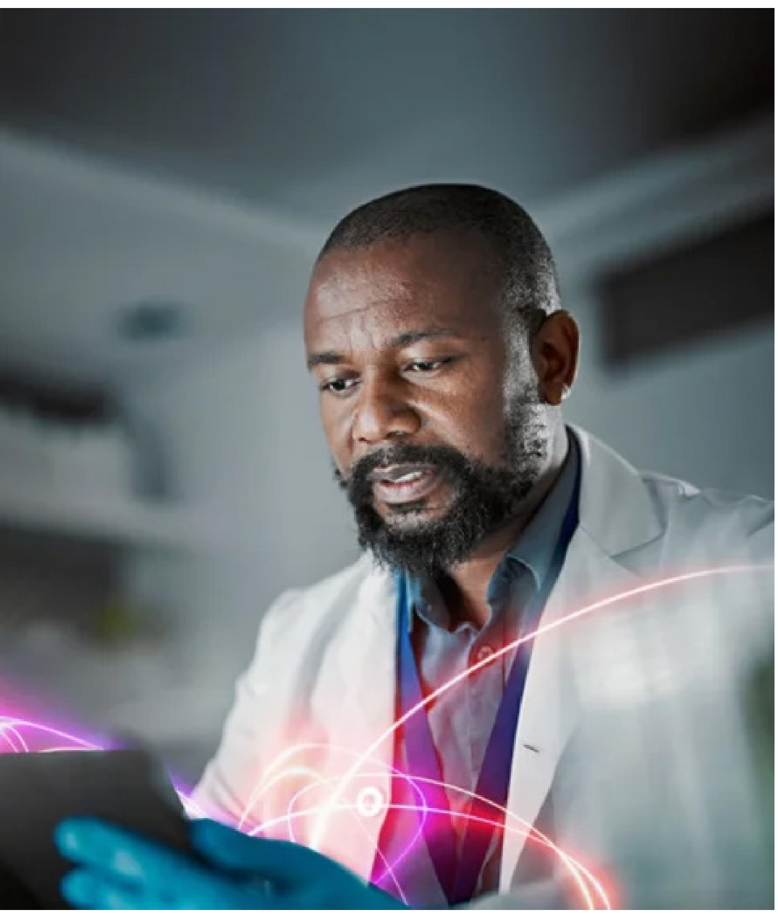
The hidden cost crisis in resources

accenture TrueChoice·Ai

Why Chemicals Companies Are Rethinking How They Spend on Their People

The Chemicals and Resources sector is no stranger to cost pressure. Commodity cycles, capital-intensive operations, and razor-thin margins have trained leaders to scrutinize every line of expenditure. Yet one of the largest cost centers in any Resources company remains stubbornly opaque: the workforce.

HR and total rewards budgets in the sector routinely represent 40 to 60 percent of controllable operating costs. And while companies have invested heavily in optimizing supply chains, equipment uptime, and energy efficiency, most are still designing employee rewards and benefits packages with the same blunt tools they relied on a decade ago: benchmarking surveys, broad demographic assumptions, and gut instinct.



The result? Billions spent on offerings employees don't actually value — and a widening gap between what companies pay and the engagement, retention, and performance they get in return. In an era when AI-driven analytics are transforming every other part of the business, the workforce equation is overdue for the same treatment.

A Workforce Unlike Any Other

The Resources industry faces a unique set of workforce dynamics that make this cost-value disconnect especially painful.

FIFO and remote rosters create fragmented employee populations where one-size-fits-all benefits packages inevitably miss the mark. A geologist on a two-weeks-on, two-weeks-off rotation in the Pilbara values very different things from an engineer at a corporate office in Perth or Houston. Yet most companies offer both the same benefits menu — and the resulting employee experience feels generic to everyone.

An acute talent shortage is compounding the problem. Skilled tradespeople, engineers, and technical specialists are in high demand across industries, and competition for experienced workers is fierce. The cost of replacing a single skilled employee in Chemicals and Resources can run anywhere from 50 to 200 percent of their annual compensation when factoring in recruitment, onboarding, productivity ramp-up, and lost institutional knowledge.

A generational shift is underway in parallel. Younger workers entering the sector place greater emphasis on flexibility, development opportunities, and wellbeing — dimensions of employee experience that traditional Resources compensation models, built around base pay and allowances, often underweight.

The Real Opportunity: Spending Smarter, Not Just Spending Less

The instinct during a cost squeeze is to cut. But in a talent-constrained market, indiscriminate cuts to rewards and benefits carry real risk: higher turnover, lower engagement, and a weakened employer brand that makes the next hiring cycle even more expensive.

The smarter play is alignment — understanding what each employee actually values and redirecting spend from low-value offerings to high-value ones.

This isn't theoretical. When companies use AI-powered analytics to measure individual preferences with precision, they consistently find that 20 to 30 percent of their rewards spend is going toward elements employees perceive as low value. Redirecting even a fraction of that spend can generate substantial savings while simultaneously elevating the employee experience.

This is exactly where Accenture's TrueChoice.AI platform changes the equation.

How TrueChoice.AI Is Helping Chemicals Companies Unlock Hard ROI

TrueChoice.AI is not another employee survey or HR analytics dashboard. It is a patented preference analytics platform that captures individual employee preferences through a dynamic, personalized digital dialogue — one that takes just five to eight minutes to complete and works on any device, in any language. That last point matters enormously for global Chemicals companies managing workforces across multiple countries and remote sites, where employee experience can vary dramatically site to site.

The platform's 460+ patented algorithms go beyond asking people what they prefer. They quantify the perceived monetary value each employee places on every component of their rewards and benefits package — creating a precise, individual-level map of where the company is generating real value, and where it is effectively leaving money on the table.

For Chemicals and Resources companies, the results have been striking. Across engagements, TrueChoice.AI has delivered:

Cost Savings per employee per year, often exceeding 5% of total rewards spend

$1,800-$4,500

Engagement and satisfaction increases of up to

20%

Retention improvements of

15-20%

Performance gains of

5-14%

These are not soft metrics. In a recent engagement with a major US manufacturer — a sector with workforce dynamics that mirror many of the retention and cost challenges seen in Resources — TrueChoice.AI helped reduce HR costs by $3,500 to $6,700 per employee annually while decreasing churn by 16 to 18% and lifting engagement by 13 to 19%.

For a Chemicals company with 8,500 employees, comparable impact could translate to $29 million to $57 million in annual ROI.

AI for Analytics: Turning Preference Data Into Decisions

What sets TrueChoice.AI apart is not just the data it captures, but how AI turns that data into action. The analytics engine applies machine learning to millions of preference data points to surface patterns no traditional survey could detect: which benefits drive retention in FIFO populations versus corporate offices, which rewards combinations correlate with the highest engagement among early-career engineers, and where small reallocations of spend produce the largest gains in perceived value.

Instead of waiting for a quarterly report, HR and total rewards leaders get a continuously updated, AI-driven view of the workforce — broken down by site, role, generation, tenure, and any other lens that matters for the business. Scenario modeling that used to take weeks of consulting work now runs in seconds, letting leaders test the financial and engagement impact of design changes before committing budget.

An AI Agent for Easy Access to Results

Even the best analytics platform fails if leaders can’t get answers quickly. That is why TrueChoice.AI includes a built-in AI agent — a conversational interface that gives executives, HR business partners, and site leaders on-demand access to insights in plain language.

Rather than navigating dashboards or filing requests with an analytics team, a regional GM can simply ask: “Which benefits are most valued by my underground crews in Western Australia?” or “What’s the projected impact on retention if we shift $2 million from cash allowances to wellbeing programs?” The AI agent answers in seconds, with the underlying data, charts, and recommended actions a click away.

This conversational layer democratizes the analytics. It puts data-driven decision-making in the hands of every leader who shapes the employee experience — not just the central analytics team — and accelerates the path from insight to action.

Elevating the Employee Experience

Cost savings are only half the story. The other half is what happens to the workforce when rewards finally align with what people actually value.

When employees see that their employer has invested in understanding them as individuals, the experience shifts from transactional to personal. Frontline workers who once felt overlooked report that the benefits menu finally reflects life on a roster. Younger employees see flexibility and development weighted appropriately. Senior technical specialists feel their wellbeing and family priorities are recognized.

The result is a workforce that is more engaged, more loyal, and more productive — the leading indicators behind every retention and performance metric the platform tracks.

From Insights to Action in Weeks, Not Months

One of the persistent barriers to HR transformation in Chemicals and Resources has been implementation complexity. Operations leaders are understandably wary of lengthy consulting engagements that consume internal resources and take quarters to produce actionable recommendations.

TrueChoice.AI was designed to address this directly. The platform can be configured and deployed in six to eight weeks — or as few as four to six when timelines are tight. It integrates with existing HRIS systems, delivers real-time AI-powered analytics through an intuitive dashboard, and requires minimal time from client teams. The fixed-fee structure means the investment is predictable, and the measurable cost savings typically make the engagement self-funding within the first cycle.

Coupled with the AI analytics engine and the conversational AI agent, leaders aren't just receiving a report — they are gaining an always-on decision-support capability they can interrogate in plain English whenever a workforce question arises.

The Bottom Line

Chemicals and Resources companies have spent decades getting better at extracting value from physical assets. The next frontier is extracting more value from every dollar spent on people — not by cutting, but by understanding what employees genuinely value and aligning spend accordingly.

The data, the AI-powered analytics, the conversational AI agent, and the proven track record exist today. Accenture's TrueChoice.AI platform is already helping organizations across industries turn workforce analytics into measurable financial impact and a meaningfully better employee experience.

For Resources leaders facing simultaneous pressure to reduce costs and retain critical talent, the question is no longer whether to act — but how quickly they can start.

Accenture partners with **TrueChoice.AI** *on preference analytics and portfolio optimization for B2B companies. If you're wrestling with portfolio complexity, pricing pressure, or investment prioritization, we'd welcome the conversation.*