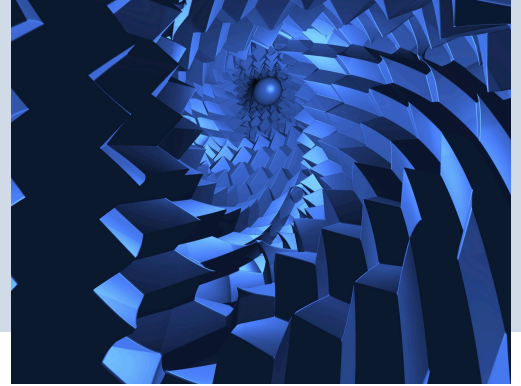




LEADING HR | Meeting Recap

HR at the Center of Enterprise Redesign



3 Min Read

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Across 3 M1 meetings in London, NYC, and Newark, one message came through with clarity: this is not incremental HR evolution. It is enterprise redesign, with HR at the center.

The conversations were not about optimizing existing programs, they were about rebuilding the operating model of the company. And in each case, HR is not supporting the redesign. HR is leading it.

From Headcount Planning to Skills Architecture

Strategic workforce planning has moved decisively beyond FTE forecasts and geographic footprint discussions. The defining priority for 2026 is skills-led workforce planning, infused with AI.

Leaders spoke candidly about the magnitude of change ahead — particularly in engineering, digital, and operational roles. The question is no longer “how many people do we need?” but “what skills will drive value creation in an AI-enabled enterprise?”

This requires:

- Skills taxonomy clarity
- Real-time workforce data
- Forward-looking capability modeling
- Integration of AI into workforce forecasts

Without this shift, transformation stalls. With it, HR becomes the architect of enterprise capability.

AI as Infrastructure — Not Experiment

A year ago, many organizations were piloting AI tools. In 2026, AI is being embedded directly into core HR systems — performance management, engagement platforms, payroll validation, well-being support, and workflow automation.

The tone has shifted from experimentation to normalization.

AI is being used to:

- Improve the quality of performance feedback

AT A GLANCE

- Skills-based workforce planning is replacing traditional headcount models.
- AI is becoming embedded HR infrastructure, not a standalone experiment.
- Culture and data modernization now directly drive enterprise performance.

- Generate manager action plans from engagement data
- Validate payroll accuracy
- Provide scalable coaching and well-being agents

The priority is not flashy innovation. It is integration. AI in the flow of work. AI as infrastructure.

That shift changes HR's mandate. Leaders are now responsible not only for deploying technology, but for shaping adoption behaviors, mitigating risk, and ensuring AI reinforces — rather than erodes — culture and performance standards.

Technology Transformation Is a Change Transformation

Several members are in the middle of global HRIS rollouts — SAP, Oracle, SuccessFactors — often for the first time in the cloud. But the consensus was clear: the risk is not technical failure. It is behavioral resistance.

System transformation without mindset transformation delivers little value.

The real work sits in:

- Leader capability
- Change sequencing
- Clear communication
- Data discipline
- Governance clarity

HR leaders described these rollouts as enterprise change journeys, not IT projects. When executed well, they create a single source of truth for skills, performance, and productivity — enabling better strategic decisions at the top.

Culture as a Financial Lever

Perhaps the most important shift across the meetings was the reframing of culture.

Culture is no longer discussed as engagement or sentiment. It is explicitly linked to sustainable financial performance. Leaders described culture transformation as the mechanism through which digital ambition, AI adoption, and operational discipline become real.

This includes:

- Aligning recognition and rewards to desired behaviors
- Reinforcing digital-first mindsets
- Shifting leadership expectations
- Embedding accountability for “how” results are achieved

Culture, in this framing, is not soft. It is structural.

Data as the Enabler

Underpinning all of this is a renewed focus on HR data capability. Leaders were direct: without accurate, integrated workforce data, skills-based planning and AI integration collapse.

Organizations are prioritizing:

- Clean skills data

- Productivity insight
- Better workforce analytics
- Unified platforms

Data is no longer a reporting tool. It is strategic infrastructure.

Taken together, these priorities signal something profound. HR is not being asked to refine talent processes. It is being asked to redesign how the enterprise works.

- Skills are replacing jobs as the unit of value.
- AI is becoming operational infrastructure.
- Technology transformation is a cultural transformation.
- Data is the foundation.
- And culture is the performance engine.

This is not incremental evolution. It is structural reinvention — and HR is at the center of it.