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enterprise.

talent trends 2023

reframe your enterprise  
talent blueprint.

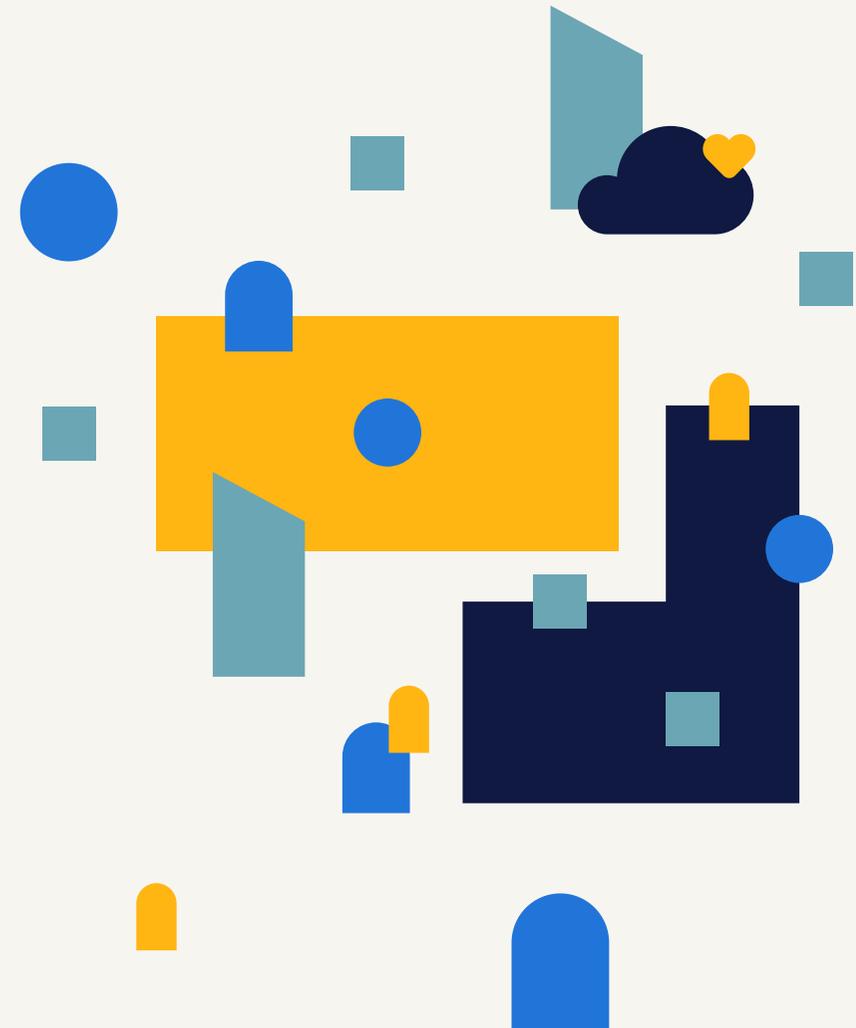


# build a sustainable and supercharged future of work.

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. This age-old proverb couldn't be more resonant to human capital leaders managing today's tumultuous environment. Global economic developments are seriously disrupting their goals and ambitions, especially as resources shrink. But while they face growing adversity, employers are undertaking a massive task in transforming their workforces.

In our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research, Randstad Sourceright — now a part of Randstad Enterprise — surveyed more than 900 C-suite and human capital leaders in 18 markets across the globe. The findings show that talent leaders are still making lemonade. After displaying tremendous leadership during the pandemic and subsequent recovery, they are now working to ensure their workforce is ready for any contingency. They are reprioritizing long-term value and business impact, having come down from the hiring frenzy of 2021 and 2022 that left little time for much else.

What are the signs that their priorities have shifted? Our survey shows 77% of talent leaders say their talent acquisition strategies are more about total value creation for the company than about achieving cost savings, jumping 32 points from just 45% last year. What's more, 80% believe the goal of their talent strategy is to have a measurable impact on business performance: the highest level since before the pandemic and up 17 points from just 63% last year. A focus on workforce agility has also jumped this year to 77%, up 11 points from 66% last year.





Our data indicates that talent experience remains a critical enabler of workforce strategies; 81% say their organizations are more focused on it than ever before. The importance of a highly positive talent journey across the talent life cycle is growing as organizations compete for specialized skills. By unleashing worklife possibilities at every step across the enterprise life cycle, companies are able to make the most of every employee's potential.

Even during this time, many businesses are still hiring for in-demand talent such as AI, data analytics and customer service. To best do this, employers must clearly articulate a compelling employee value proposition, create a seamless and engaging hiring process, and nurture an authentic, empathetic and inclusive culture.

Technology also plays an important role in delivering a highly engaging experience, but it's only an enabler and not the main goal. Companies that put employees first and technology second experience the greatest success with large HR tech projects. Industry analyst [Josh Bersin](#) notes that the employee experience now sits at the top of core human capital systems because of its importance to the enterprise talent strategy. "Every company should be thinking about the talent experience with everything they do around talent. It's really the most effective way to differentiate themselves in today's fierce competition for specialized skills," Bersin explains.



And if the lessons of the past three years have taught us one thing, it's that talent needs can never be satiated, regardless of economic cycles. Nearly half of human capital leaders (42%) tell us that scarcity and people retiring remains one of their greatest pain points or is having a negative impact on their business — the highest reported value in all of Talent Trends history. Yes, hiring has slowed and layoffs have taken place, but the reality is that there is still a shortage of high-demand skills, and many companies are still acquiring talent or retraining existing employees to move into other roles. Continued digitalization is a huge factor in driving this need.

So, in increasingly complex times, how will you build a business advantage from today's market uncertainty to create long-term value? What steps do you need to take to guide your talent to achieve their true potential and build a more sustainable workforce? How will you deliver more meaningful, mission-driven work experiences for your talent to keep them engaged and support your brand? This report uncovers 10 trends that will help you build your enterprise talent blueprint and further develop what it means to be a people-centric, agile organization in which workforce strategies and business strategies are perfectly aligned.



*Mike Smith*

Mike Smith  
chief executive  
Randstad Enterprise



# about the 2023 talent trends research.

Now in its eighth year, Randstad Enterprise's [Talent Trends](#) research has provided insights that human capital leaders need to drive business agility and results with their talent strategies. The 2023 Talent Trends research is a survey of 906 C-suite and human capital leaders at global and regional organizations, across 18 markets worldwide. It is designed to help our clients and the broader business community understand the top HR and talent acquisition trends for 2023, and this year, to help employers look beyond the challenges of today's environment to create a strong, sustainable and supercharged future of work.

Conducted by a third party on behalf of Randstad Enterprise, survey panels are composed of business leaders who influence both strategic and operational decisions for their organizations. Online surveys were conducted via external panels during Q4 of 2022. Interviews were self-administered and could be taken across devices (including mobile phones, tablets, desktops and laptops).

## who participated

- 68% — human resources and talent acquisition
- 24% — procurement
- 8% — other senior leadership roles, including the C-suite

## key industries

- 17% — banking and financial services
- 17% — IT and technology
- 12% — life sciences and pharma
- 4% — high-value manufacturing

Each industry listed here represents a sample size of 30 or more respondents.

## company size

- 27% — 1,500 – 2,999 employees
- 39% — 3,000 – 4,999 employees
- 34% — 5,000+ employees

## 18 markets

### Americas

Brazil  
Canada  
Mexico  
U.S.

### Asia Pacific

Australia  
China  
India  
Japan  
Singapore

### Europe

Belgium  
France  
Germany  
Italy  
Netherlands

### Nordics

Poland  
Switzerland  
U.K.

# 2023's top 10 talent trends.

## create a business advantage from market uncertainty (page 8)

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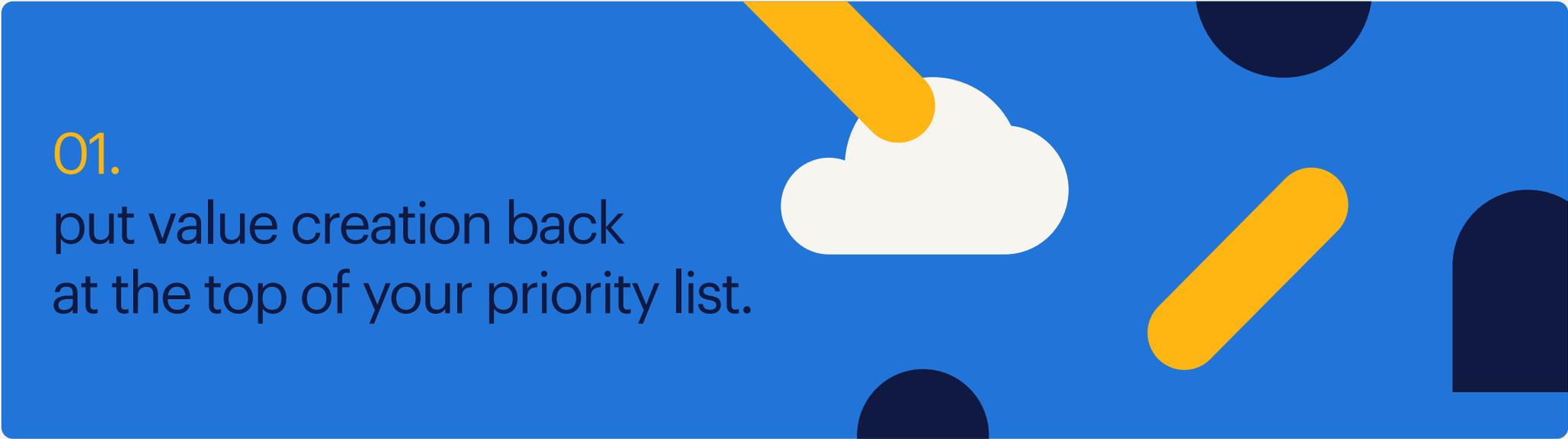
Cisco drives business transformation by focusing on the total talent life cycle (page 33)

# create a business advantage from market uncertainty.

“Our advice to enterprises is not to obsess about the uncertainty of their external environment but instead focus on creating the agility to respond with speed as the situation unfolds. This will require them to strategically leverage global services, human capital, technology initiatives, and delivery models to not only address the upcoming challenges but position the organization to capture upsides as we come out of it. Put another way, don’t miss the forest for the trees.”

Rajesh Ranjan  
partner  
Everest Group





# 01. put value creation back at the top of your priority list.

## are you considering the long-term effects of the talent decisions you're making today?

For the last two years, talent leaders have played a pivotal role in enabling their businesses to operate through unprecedented challenges and the global economic recovery. Demand for their expertise has been intense as companies pivoted to new ways of working, undertook accelerated digitalization and experienced rapid expansion. But as the pace of hiring has moderated considerably, there is a greater opportunity to create long-term value for the business. As new priorities emerge, and leaders can refocus on their foundations, they're likely to see greater outcomes for years to come.

According to our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research, more C-suite and human capital leaders believe talent strategies are becoming more aligned with the business through enhanced value creation, impact and agility. This year, 66% say uncertainty about the economy, labor costs and inflation will impact hiring. At the same time, 77% agree that talent acquisition is more about value creation than cost savings — an increase of 32 percentage points since last year.

The same number (77%) feel their strategy is more focused on agility this year — an increase of 11 points since last year. Eighty percent (80%) say the purpose of their talent strategy is to make a measurable impact on the business — a 17 point increase from 63% in 2022. And 82% believe the role of talent acquisition has been significantly elevated and are expected to think about mobility, development, career pathways and skilling.

77%

feel their strategy is more focused on agility this year — an increase of 11 points since last year.

While clear about their goals, do human capital leaders know how to reach them?

To begin with, HR transformation should be high on the agenda of key organizational undertakings. This reinvention is a continuous journey that has markedly shifted in recent years from a business and process-centered function to a people- and experience-focused one, according to HR analyst [Josh Bersin](#). To be more strategic, a continuous assessment of processes, technologies and policies that impact internal and external talent should be top of mind.

During the hiring frenzy of the past two years, many organizations saw their satisfaction scores among job candidates suffer due to overstretched talent acquisition teams. According to 2022 [Talent Board](#) survey data, the percentage of job seekers who said they encountered a great candidate experience fell globally from the year before. Conversely, the percentage that reported a poor experience rose in three out of four regions (the exception was North America). The impact on companies' employer brands, while difficult to assess, will surely suffer as a result.

With hiring trends slowing, however, companies have an opportunity to adopt changes that will improve talent satisfaction long term. Focus on improving the talent experience and factors that drive loyalty, engagement and career mobility. Create clear remote and flexible work policies, training and development offerings, and internal mobility and career advancement opportunities. Effecting change with an eye on the future — and on the complete talent life cycle, from attraction to employment to offboarding — rather than just next-quarter results is imperative to the long-term health of your workforce.

Most importantly, consider what a sustainable future of work should look like within your organization. Many employers are experimenting with innovative arrangements — from a [four-day workweek](#) to [optimized remote collaboration](#) to [semi-retirement](#) — in an effort to attract and retain great people. More companies are building [cross-functional teams](#) to ensure skills are available to the entire organization when the need arises. By rethinking the enterprise talent life cycle, you can create greater value and drive lasting transformational change in your organization.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. How do we set up a clear channel of communication that drives knowledge exchange with business leaders to ensure our strategies and expectations are aligned?
2. Which touch points along the enterprise talent talent life cycle do we need to benchmark to achieve a clear understanding of gaps that may negatively affect the talent experience?
3. Are we assessing and forecasting what skills we'll need in the future to remain competitive?

## 5 ways to shift talent acquisition strategies to create value

1. Consider creating internal talent pools in addition to external ones to deploy just-in-time resources who can help the business execute according to shifting market conditions.
2. Use talent intelligence to understand where you can make the greatest impact for the business with your talent strategy, whether it's focusing on shortening recruitment times, improving workforce diversity, making better informed decisions about how and where to acquire skills, how to improve productivity, reduce turnover, or manage layoffs with care.
3. Reallocate the talent acquisition team's resources from filling requisitions to building a stronger, more authentic employer brand and a mutually beneficial talent journey.
4. Map out the total talent life cycle for your people to identify the touch points that matter most to them. Establish baseline KPIs so you can constantly track and improve on the journey.
5. Collaborate with business leaders to strengthen hiring forecasts so you can scale up or down as business needs change. This will aid with redeployment and internal mobility planning as well.



Louisa Wilson  
chief growth officer  
Randstad Enterprise

## 02.

## overcome talent scarcity with a purposeful talent experience.

### are your talent strategies aligned with your workforce's personal and professional values?

Earning people's trust is no small task, but it's something every employer must do if they want to build a sustainable workforce. Trust goes hand in hand with attracting and retaining great talent, which remains a highly competitive exercise even in today's uncertain global economy. Companies that connect with employees, contingent talent and job applicants in an authentic way are best positioned to win, but how do they know what will be meaningful to their people?

Since the start of the pandemic, when organizations mobilized to support the safety and well-being of their workforces, a [new social contract](#) has emerged between people and their employers. Fierce competition accelerated the shift, and now both sides have set expectations for each other. In fact, our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research shows 76% of human capital leaders say talent experience has become more important to their organizations during the past 12 months. At the same time, Randstad's [Workmonitor](#) survey of 35,000 workers around the world shows that 77% feel a company's values and purpose (including sustainability, diversity and transparency) are important when selecting an employer.

# 76%

say talent experience has become more important to their organizations during the past 12 months.

Creating a positive experience has been at the center of many HR initiatives, and highlighting the meaning and purpose at work has been a growing priority for all kinds of organizations, in addition to improving how people are managed, heard and compensated. In fact, according to [McKinsey](#), neglecting this important aspect of people management can result in dire consequences, including losing out on talent.

How are companies enhancing their talent experience? Our research shows that human capital leaders are investing in a number of areas, spanning from making diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) a centerpiece of their talent strategy (cited by 74% of respondents) to deploying technology aimed at improving engagement (72%). Some are establishing benchmarks, with 69% investing in internal audits to map the candidate experience, ranging from job search to hire. And others are creating specific talent communities and content plans to engage and nurture future talent (71%).

These measures are designed to create an irresistible organization meant to nurture innovation, foster loyalty, raise retention and elevate the employer brand. Initiatives should be developed with initial talent input and regular feedback and collaboration across all talent types as a relationship building exercise. This is one of the tenets of creating what's known as people experience (PX) and ensures your people feel valued and heard, and the business achieves its intended outcomes. Regular internal surveying provides some insights, but staying current with labor market trends will also inform decisions affecting the talent experience.

For instance, 2023 Randstad Workmonitor research shows that inflation is a top concern for workers around the world, and they are turning to employers for more support. Two in five (41%) say they want a monthly cost-of-living boost, while nearly as many (39%) want an increase in their salary outside of the usual cadence of annual pay reviews. At the same time, an equal percentage of workers (94%) say a good work-life balance is just as important as decent wages. Other priorities include job flexibility and security.

To create meaningful experiences, companies must understand the monetary and non-financial motivators most important to their workforce at any moment. While some factors are evergreen, others rise and ebb with market and organizational changes. Most importantly, efforts should be aimed at long-term change spanning the entire enterprise talent life cycle.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. Are we examining key touch points in our organization's talent experience to understand which make the biggest impact on people?
2. Can we clearly define the ROI of people experience investments — in both financial and non-financial terms — to gain the buy-in needed to move forward and drive adoption?
3. Which stakeholders should we collaborate with to continue developing and evolving our employee value proposition?

## 5 ways to make talent experience more meaningful

1. Create opportunities for people to safely share their concerns and feedback at all stages of the enterprise talent life cycle — from job seekers to employees to contingent talent to offboarded talent. Use the input to develop actionable strategies to enhance the experience.
2. Focus on the pillars that make the biggest difference in how talent feels about your business: inclusion, meaningful work, fair compensation and connectedness.
3. Invite your people to help create and evolve initiatives that touch their work lives. Ensure committees that make decisions about these initiatives represent a diverse group of people from throughout the organization.
4. Get top-down support, especially for initiatives that will require culture shifts. Making work meaningful for your people needs to come from actions, not just words, so you'll need their buy-in right from the start. Help those leaders see, understand and effectively communicate the long-term value of employer branding and talent experience initiatives.
5. Always be authentic and transparent. People will value your honesty and directness, especially when communicating any changes that can negatively affect employee morale. Address questions clearly and without the fluff and jargon.



Francesca Campalani  
global head of Talent Marketing  
Randstad Enterprise



## 03. create clarity and drive readiness with talent intelligence.

### how can you use integrated talent data to validate the decisions your organization makes?

The age of analytics-driven decision-making arrived at the doorstep of HR some years ago, but many organizations are still struggling to develop a cohesive strategy or experience difficulty with their execution. With resources even more precious in today's economy, how can human capital and C-suite leaders make better-informed decisions about business needs and workforce planning?

Intelligence and insights are arguably the most important tools human capital leaders have to help with executing their strategies. Examining both internal talent data and external market data can help companies better understand their current and future talent needs, the supply of skills available within and outside of the organization, how to remain competitive through compensation and benefits, and how to predict which roles will be quick or slow to fill. Data can help identify talent who are flight risks and those who would benefit from skills development. But while many companies have built highly advanced data science teams, some are just getting started, according to [analytics consultant Hallie Bregman](#).

In our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research, however, 72% say their talent strategy decisions are fully supported by analytics. Half (50%) say they are investing more in predictive analytics and external market intelligence about talent, and 52% are increasing investments for talent intelligence platforms to address internal mobility. Among companies that are spending more on technology to enhance talent attraction and engagement, 74% are already investing in analytics technologies — the highest level ever recorded in our research. Specifically, 57% report investing in talent intelligence platforms, 58% in market insights, 57% in visualization dashboards and 59% in predictive workforce analytics tools.

# 74%

are already investing in analytics technologies — the highest level ever recorded in our research.

People analytics and [talent intelligence](#) — especially data that provides a view into future behaviors and outcomes — are delivering greater value to organizations that have mastered their utility. This is an important benefit in today's slowing economy, when performance insights are critical for supporting decisions on workforce rebalancing, internal mobility and reskilling. Beyond the needs at hand, longer-term needs enable HR to look for the signals that may precede recovery and growth.

According to [Gartner](#), talent intelligence allows leaders to understand whether it is best to buy or build when acquiring important skills. Insights provided in [Randstad Sourceright's 2022 Global In-Demand Skills Report](#), for example, allow organizations to determine whether employees can be redeployed to higher-priority roles based on the adjacency of their skills. If externally acquiring the appropriate candidates is preferred, market data from aggregators such as [Brightfield](#) or [Salary Board](#) can help accelerate time to fill.

In recent years, market intelligence and insights have helped many organizations enhance diverse and equitable workforce practices as well. Beyond just simple indicators such as diversity of candidate slates or the number of females hired, companies are digging deeper to understand how they can achieve better diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) outcomes, which also result in better business performance. Expanded metrics include career advancement of diverse employees internally, retention rates, hours spent on mentorship, participation in DEI training and the availability of diverse talent, among others. According to [Knowledge at Wharton](#), analytics help companies understand both correlation and causation, yielding valuable insights that enable them to move from practice to outcome.

Beyond DEI, there are countless uses for talent intelligence platforms, which are growing at scale. Powered by AI and built to offer a consumer-like experience, the new generation of intelligence tools are helping companies achieve more clarity and better decision-making than ever before.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. Which key metrics — both internal and external — are most meaningful to our organization? How will we track them and at what cadence (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly)?
2. Are we analyzing our internal talent data alongside external market trends to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting our workforce?
3. How can deep-dive research on hot topics — like remote working trends, talent expectations and compensation — give us a competitive edge?

## 5 ways to drive workforce excellence through talent intelligence

1. Once benchmarks are established, agree on goals with all stakeholders to develop a plan of action to effect change.
2. Identify clear KPIs that matter to your organization's specific business and talent goals. Focus on the metrics that contribute to these goals so you can home in on what to measure.
3. Prioritize data security, data accuracy and data integrity. Garbage in, garbage out. Clean data is key to driving effective change, and secure data is critical to protecting your people and your business.
4. Invest in both data science and data engineering resources so you have the ability to acquire valid data and the expertise to turn that intelligence into action.
5. To get the most insights from predictive analytics, choose the right model for your organization and maturity level from the most common techniques in this space: simple regression and correlation, multiple regression, or structural equation modeling.



Joost Heins  
global head of Intelligence  
Randstad Enterprise

## 04. optimize technology investments to amp up value creation.

have you discovered all the value you can get from deployed technologies before considering new implementations?

One of the fastest-growing segments of the technology sector, HR innovation has drawn tremendous interest from users, buyers and investors alike in recent years. From tools that use AI to automate the recruitment process to entire HRIS platforms, investment growth in this area — as well growth in complexity — has been overwhelming.

On one hand, a growing pipeline of tools that elevate the talent experience, create organizational transparency and minimize bias in the recruitment process have been a gift. Innovation has been a key enabler for optimizing the workforce and driving business performance, which accelerated during the pandemic. On the other hand, embracing new technologies without an integrated strategy may have led to greater complexity or an accumulation of shelfware that distracts HR teams away from value-creation activities.

For example, our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research finds that employers overwhelmingly believe the rise of robotics and machine learning is affecting their strategy; 65% state that HR tech, AI, automation and robotics have had a positive impact on their business. At the same time, 69% believe increasing automation is impacting workforce planning and shifting the talent needed within their organizations to highly skilled roles.

69%

believe increasing automation is impacting workforce planning and shifting the talent needed within their organizations to highly skilled roles.

[Strong growth in the HR tech market](#) indicates companies have been aggressively acquiring technologies in recent years, sometimes more quickly than they can manage. Many organizations lack internal expertise to properly implement this technology, resulting in cost overruns and delays in productivity gains. In fact, it's estimated that [42% of tech projects fail](#) after two years.

According to our research, a majority (51%) of talent leaders agree that digital transformation is moving too fast, and they are not keeping up with the shifts. More than a third (37%) are convinced their competitors are outspending them in AI, automation and robotics, and 43% believe the same about their competitors' investments in talent innovation overall.

But as companies tighten HR budgets in today's uncertain economy, investments in technology are likely to curtail this year. Will the reduction lead to a slowing of digitalization for organizations everywhere? Not if companies optimize their existing investments. Creating a better user experience, integrating disparate tool sets and focusing on the key goals of change can make a measurable impact without spending on new innovations. [According to Deloitte](#), this can be done through design iteration and process simplification.

Often, organizations miss out on realizing the full functionality of their tech investments, and insufficient training can stifle adoption. As companies pull back on spending, they have an opportunity to re-evaluate how to get more out of their tech stacks. Integrating tools for a more holistic experience requires minimal investments but offers big returns.

If your company does prioritize tech investments this year, however, consider tools that amp up collaboration and innovation. Concerns that virtual working [has stifled creativity](#) continue to keep the C-suite up at night, but the right technology can drive [connection](#), [engagement](#), [growth](#) and creativity. To enhance talent attraction and engagement, employers say they're investing in training and development platforms (63%); career coaching tech (57%); workplace culture, feedback and engagement systems (56%); and collaboration platforms (54%), among others.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. Are we missing opportunities to use our existing technologies in new ways? Or can we work with our technology providers to develop new features that would drive efficiencies for us?
2. Are we able to create a better talent experience by integrating various point solutions and providing one interface for users?
3. How are we measuring utilization and return on investment for the technologies we have implemented?

## 5 ways to create more value with technology

1. Regardless of the technology being implemented, focus on making the user experience as seamless and responsive as possible. This will help improve adoption, as well as the benefits you're hoping to realize for the business.
2. Include technology reviews in your greater data strategy. Technology can empower people, but without understanding its full potential through data-derived insights, you can't make effective decisions that affect the most important aspects of people management today: experience, meaning and satisfaction.
3. Identify how tools can amplify, rather than just simply add, value to maximize your investment. For example, consider how you might use AI to enhance candidate engagement during the hiring process.
4. Create user groups to regularly collect feedback on what's working and what's not. Adapt your tech strategy and processes to ensure the technology is enhancing the user's worklife, rather than becoming a burden.
5. Consider the possible negative impacts of new technologies on your workforce; provide reskilling and internal mobility opportunities to those who may be affected.



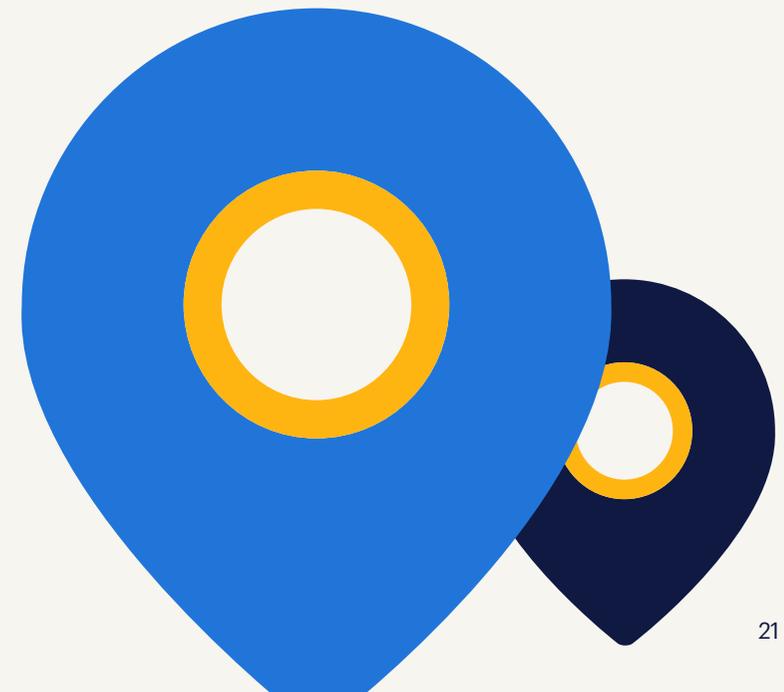
Thomas Jajeh  
chief digital officer  
Randstad Enterprise

## the 2023 business health index.

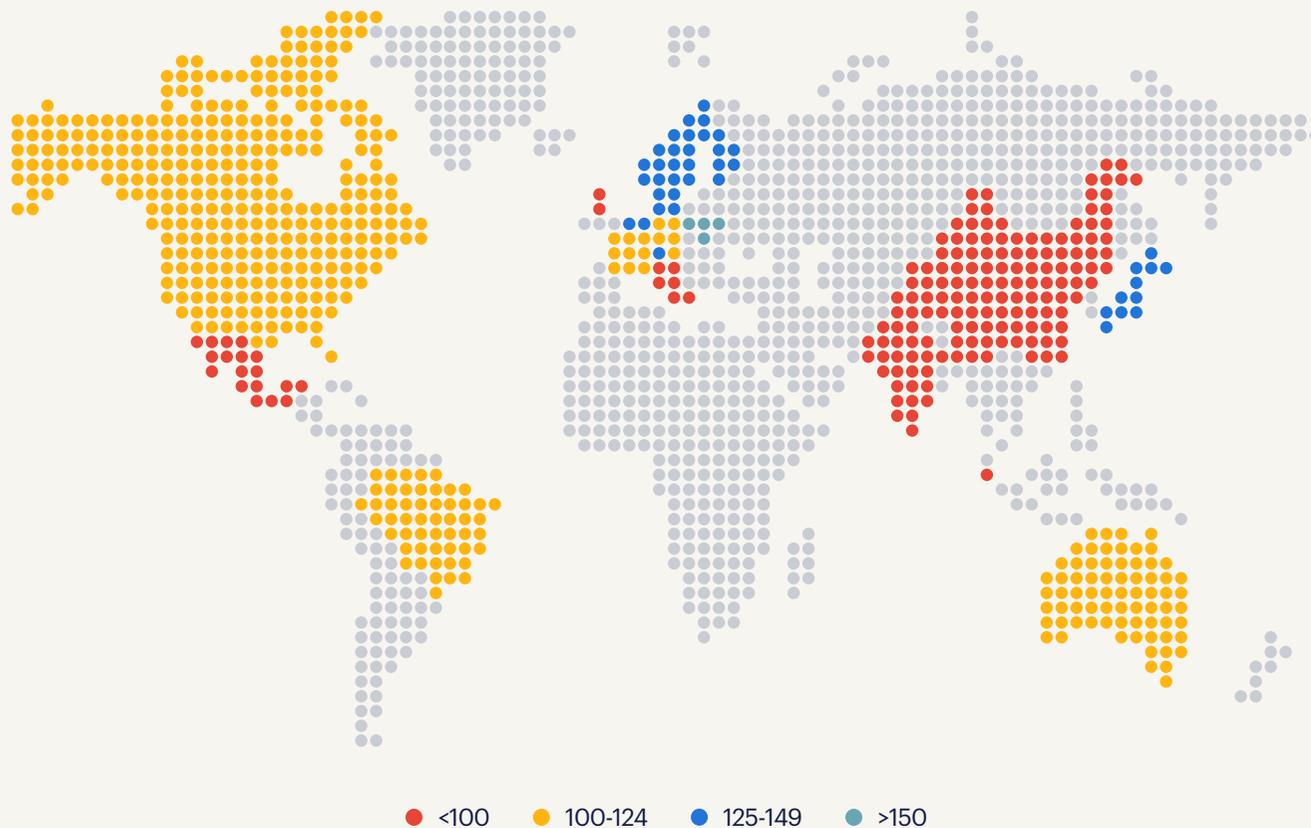
The Talent Trends Business Health Index shows the views of human capital and C-suite leaders in 18 markets based on four factors: reported growth in the last year, reported hiring in the last year, leaders' views on the current political environment, and whether they expect their business to grow significantly in the next year.

Since 2016, our Talent Trends research has collected more than 6,256 responses on these factors. This feedback is normalized and used to determine the business health outlook both globally and locally, providing a basis for comparison. A score of 100 is the baseline global average set in 2016. An indexed value of 80 or lower indicates the market is less optimistic, whereas a score of 120 or higher suggests the market is more optimistic about the year ahead.

The sentiments represented in our 2023 Business Health Index were measured in early Q4 2022, and high market volatility may have impacted expectations since then.



Based on the existing data, this year, scores are similar to pre-pandemic levels. While in 2021, we observed growing optimism in 12 out of 17 markets, last year, those levels dropped significantly in 11 markets. The 2023 data suggests tempered optimism, with most markets scoring above the baseline of 100. Markets such as Poland, Japan, the U.S. and Brazil report growing optimism. While Belgium ranks second on this year's list, its score has dropped significantly since last year, moving from 172 to 136. Other markets with significant drops include Germany and India.



Surveyed markets, ranked by score  
(highest to lowest):

- 1. Poland (159)\*
- 2. Belgium (136)\*\*
- 3. Japan (136)\*
- 4. Netherlands (134)
- 5. Switzerland (133)
- 6. Nordics (130)
- 7. United States (122)\*
- 8. Germany (115)\*\*
- 9. Canada (111)
- 10. Australia (107)
- 11. Brazil (107)\*
- 12. France (101)
- 13. Singapore (99)
- 14. Mexico (96)
- 15. India (93)\*\*
- 16. United Kingdom (87)
- 17. China (84)
- 18. Italy (75)

\*increased more than 20 points since 2022

\*\*decreased more than 20 points since 2022

# guide talent to achieve their true potential.

“Succeeding requires organizations to focus on rethinking TA as a business capability: hiring must be strategic, creative, and deeply human-centered. Companies must go beyond the conventional borders of recruiting and flex new muscles in internal mobility, gig and contract employment, job architecture, and diverse and inclusive recruiting.”

Janet Mertens  
vice president of Research  
The Josh Bersin Company



## 05. unlock workforce potential with internal mobility.



do you have a comprehensive career development strategy that excites talent and addresses the company's need for new skills?

There's no question many companies — especially those in the technology sector — will have to contend with constrained resources this year, but that doesn't necessitate a slowdown in innovation. Even as organizations slow hiring, the need for specialized skills has not diminished. If companies fail to evolve their offerings and value proposition, they risk becoming irrelevant in a dynamic and more competitive market. In fact, 23% of 2023 Talent Trends respondents say they're worried they'll fall behind their competitors when it comes to profitability if they need to make cuts.

But what options are available when you can't hire externally due to freezes or talent scarcity? Being successful in today's complex economic environment calls for an internal mobility strategy that redefines work, establishes a robust skills taxonomy, and deploys targeted upskilling and reskilling initiatives to ensure the workforce is prepared for immediate and future business demands.

Our 2023 Talent Trends research reveals that human capital leaders recognize how critical talent mobility is: 1 in 3 expect career mobility and redeployment of talent to play a more important role in their talent strategies this year. That's why — even as they face budget constraints — 56% expect to increase spending on internal talent mobility platforms. Also supporting internal mobility, 76% say they are placing more emphasis on skilling and career engagement.

**76%** say they are placing more emphasis on skilling and career engagement.

That's encouraging because, even as the recent days of limitless hiring budgets have come to an end, companies can still access the skills they need to drive innovation and growth by providing new career paths for their valued talent. The idea that talent should be deployed in siloed jobs or functions is rapidly becoming outdated. More organizations are leveraging people in cross-functional roles that make the most of their skills. Employees have embraced the idea of internal freelancing, choosing projects that excite them and accepting opportunities to learn from various parts of the business.

Also essential to successful career pathing is a robust and comprehensive skills taxonomy, which talent leaders can use to map out the knowledge base of the workforce and how employees can be redeployed to adjacent roles they are suited for. Often, businesses lack visibility on the skills their workforce possesses, resulting in unnecessary acquisition of external resources. A well-defined taxonomy can help identify qualified internal candidates with the right skills and what training and development they will need to move into vacant roles.

Companies may want to invest in an internal job marketplace, where employees can explore new roles without looking externally. This serves two critical purposes: to improve retention and to enrich the talent pool. As [McKinsey](#) found, 80% of talent wants growth and opportunities, and the benefits to them are “massive.” Employers benefit because they can move people around dynamically, which is a factor in outperforming competitors.

To amp up the experience for talent, an internal marketplace, skilling curriculum and coaching should all be well integrated in a company's learning platform system so participants receive a consumer-like experience. Doing this enables you to capture the entire data life cycle for employees while providing them with real-time insights they can use to learn and move forward in their careers.

As companies face economic uncertainty, they must help their workers understand the path forward while building the skills both people and the company need. This not only creates a win for your people, whose skills remain relevant in a dynamic world of work, but helps you build a sustainable, agile and responsive workforce.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. What are the main reasons people leave our organization, and how can we use career development opportunities to improve retention?
2. Are we making coaching, training and development available across the organization to the benefit of our people and the business, or have we only focused on leaders and high performers who may already have greater development opportunities?
3. How can we foster a culture of learning that encourages our people to prioritize their growth and development?

## 5 ways to address the skills gap with internal mobility

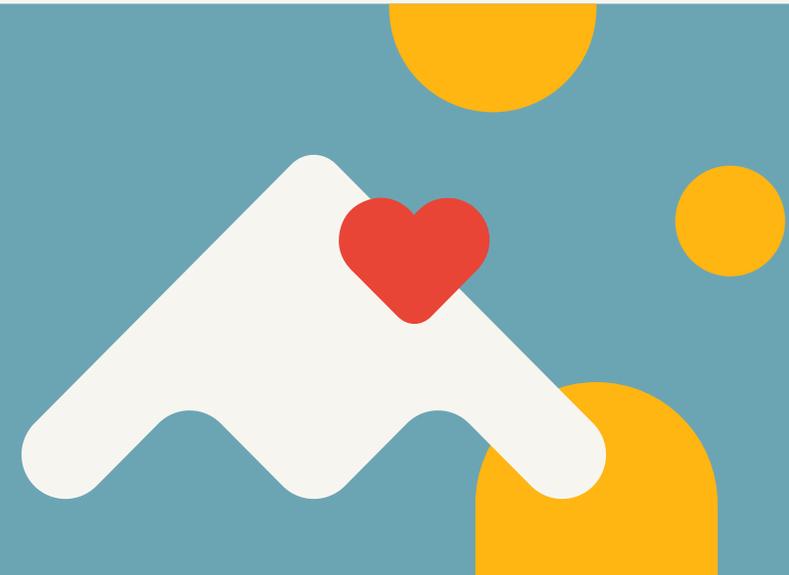
1. Make career mobility paths available to all talent and skilling resources available at every stage of talent's tenure with the company. Ensure your skilling initiatives are equitable and accessible to your diverse talent.
2. Consider investments that facilitate internal mobility, such as a performance assessment platform that covers self-reflections, peer reviews, 360° reviews and other feedback.
3. Create a skills taxonomy, and make sure you have a mechanism to regularly update for new and emerging skills. Offer training opportunities that closely align to the skills your organization will need in the future, rather than broad, untargeted skilling programs.
4. Use your taxonomy to understand the adjacency of skills and how you can help employees acquire those that will be needed to move into desired or high-demand roles.
5. When creating an internal talent marketplace, start small by focusing on the skills needed most; then scale up as adoption gains traction throughout the business.



Kevin Gouden  
chief product officer, Career Transitions and Coaching  
Randstad Enterprise



## 06. build a learning and development engine that elevates business performance.



### are you advancing company performance through lifelong skills building?

Even as organizations slow hiring, the need for specialized skills has not diminished. The pace of digitalization remains relentless, how companies get work done is changing, and workplace culture continues to evolve as talent expectations for their employers have shifted. These transformative forces are also pushing a new paradigm around how companies train and empower their people, resulting in more adaptive workforces.

According to [LinkedIn](#), job skill sets have changed by around 25% since 2015, and will change 41% by 2025. A report issued by the [OECD](#) found that U.S. demand for advanced data analysis skills spread more than 15 times faster between 2012 and 2021 than for the average skills. LinkedIn further found the top three skills — IT, project management and engineering — have changed by 70% since 2015. Sales skills have changed 60% during this time.

Throughout the past several years, many organizations have come to the realization that reskilling and upskilling have become more critical components of their overall talent strategies. While talent acquisition leaders have helped their businesses acquire important skill sets during recent growth spurts, the workforce they have built likely requires significant ongoing investments. This must be done with a sharp focus on skills building, tools to facilitate learning and continual encouragement to help talent embrace learning. Only then can employers keep up with shifting skills needs and markets without massive hiring.

With many companies rebalancing their workforces and redeploying resources from some areas of the businesses to others, now is the time to double down on learning and development (L&D), from leadership building to microlearning. Minimizing layoffs through reskilling is beneficial in many ways: financially, morally and reputationally. Helping talent fit into different roles within their companies through reskilling is a much more expedient and efficient way to fill needed roles than acquiring skills externally when, according to [Gallup](#), it can take new hires 12 months to reach peak performance.

To make the most of L&D strategies during a time of constrained budgets, human capital leaders need to focus on learning that leads to both short- and long-term business results, such as sales and business development, vendor management, project management and others. [Hard skills](#) that can rapidly drive productivity gains include AI, robotic process automation, UX/UI and more.

But adopting this mindset isn't just the responsibility of L&D leaders; today's recruiters must also think several steps ahead. The people they are sourcing and hiring today will need upskilling throughout their career journeys. Our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research reveals that 82% of C-suite and talent leaders believe talent acquisition has been significantly elevated and/or expanded, and that they are expected to think about mobility, development, career pathways and skilling.

Pivotal to L&D advancement is the availability of skilling resources, and companies committing additional budget to this area. Most (76%) are placing greater emphasis on employee skill development and career engagement. Just over half (51%) report using skilling and coaching specifically to address talent scarcity. And L&D initiatives are not just limited to hard skills development; many employers are investing in coaching to develop the [soft skills](#) talent will need in the next step of their careers. In fact, 66% report a positive or transformative experience from implementing or embedding [democratized coaching](#) during the past year.

# 82%

say talent acquisition has been elevated and/or expanded, and they're expected to think about mobility, development, career pathways and skilling.

Technology is also helping people prepare for skill demand shifts. More than half (57%) report investing in career coaching technology, 63% are investing more in training and development platforms, and 15% say this technology is making the biggest positive impact on attraction and engagement with talent (second only to talent intelligence tools). Many other training technologies are gaining momentum, including gamification with VR/AR; 45% of organizations report strong investments here. Companies such as [Duke Energy](#) are using VR to reduce risks, such as teaching technicians to vent natural gas on a simulator.

Learning and development is a rapidly growing part of every company's enterprise talent blueprint. Only by offering learning opportunities throughout their people's career journeys can companies achieve the agility they need to compete.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. Are we creating compelling content and articulating a strong value proposition to incentivize our workforce to continually invest their time in learning new, relevant skills?
2. Do we have the right tools in place to provide engaging, fruitful and fulfilling learning experiences that align with our current and future skills needs?
3. Are our learning and talent acquisition teams aligned to ensure a holistic journey that recognizes both candidates' and employees' ability to grow long term?

## 5 ways to encourage a culture of learning

1. Give all your people — whether working remotely or in the office — the support, time and resources they need to develop, so learning becomes part of your company's core workplace culture.
2. Drive greater results through rewards and recognition for completion of learning modules and skills acquisition. Highlight colleagues who have successfully leveled-up to show the benefits.
3. Invest in a learning platform that can customize the experience so users can target the skills most relevant to their needs and the needs of the business.
4. Create specific programs and learning tracks for high-demand and future-demand skills that help people see a clear path to their next role and within your organization.
5. Use hands-on, interactive and collaborative elements for online learning to keep participants engaged with the coursework and their peers.



Wesley Connor  
senior vice president, global head of People Experience  
Randstad Enterprise



## 07. lead with compassion during right-sizing.



### are you planning the appropriate level of financial, coaching and mental health support if managing layoffs?

A stream of recent headlines announcing layoffs has the global workforce on edge. The technology sector, one of the hardest hit, has reported more than 216,000 cuts since the beginning of 2022 and will likely shed additional headcount in 2023. And in our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research, 11% of employers say they expect to downsize select positions due to business strategy. One reason for this is a whirlwind of hiring during the pandemic that led to unsustainable workforce growth, forcing many companies to reassess their resourcing plans.

The widespread reductions in force have proven to be a test of corporate character and values. Some organizations have been stellar leaders in compassionately downsizing. Others, however, have been a lesson in what not to do as their poor execution has caused immeasurable damage to their corporate and employer brands. As companies reassess and rebalance their workforces, caring for both the affected and retained talent must be a priority in any action. There is a corporate responsibility that comes with employing people. Beyond this, it just makes good business sense to compassionately right-size.

By failing to let people go in an empathetic, transparent and equitable way, businesses risk their ability to attract and acquire great talent when demand rises again, and to retain the people who survived the layoff. These actions leave people questioning whether or not they want to work with — or buy from — an organization whose values don't align with their own.

Talent scarcity is not going away. Even among those who have lost their jobs, a majority are [finding new roles](#) quickly. For many, the scars of being laid off are influencing their view of the ideal employer. Good corporate values and job flexibility remain important elements of a job offer, [Randstad's Workmonitor research](#) shows. In addition to a compelling value proposition, a company's reputation is also critical.

According to our research, 70% of employers believe communicating their company culture and employer brand more visibly is an effective way to address talent scarcity. An even higher percentage (72%) say they are making moderate to significant investments in employer branding and talent marketing/attraction initiatives. And nearly all (94%) say they will either maintain or increase spending on employer brand building, despite the economic uncertainty ahead. The top goal for these investments is to attract specific skills (31%), followed by a desire to stand out among competitors as an employer of choice (28%).

# 94%

expect to maintain or increase spending on employer brand building, despite economic uncertainty.

So how can employers facing layoffs avoid long-lasting damage to their brands? For some, it hasn't been easy: 1 in 4 say layoffs have had a negative impact or have been one of their company's biggest pain points recently.

Some businesses have [had honest conversations](#) with their entire workforce about the need to rebalance and why certain roles have been eliminated. They've provided generous severance leave, outplacement and coaching services, extended healthcare coverage, and stock vesting. Others have acted insensitively and severely, making people question why anyone would work for them in the future. Examples recently highlighted in extensive press coverage include damaging actions such as announcing cuts through group emails, threatening employees who discuss their situations externally and locking employees out of systems before they are told of their dismissal.

New research from [Aspect43](#) provides best practice advice, such as using data to support cutbacks, being transparent in employee communications as early as possible, and having a mobility and redeployment platform in place to minimize stress for displaced workers. Career transition services and other offboarding services can also show people you value their service to your organization; 21% of employers say they're offering these services to provide a better talent experience.

Layoffs are a difficult but necessary part of many organizations' development, but how people are cared for in the process speaks volumes about company culture, values and, most of all, leadership. By demonstrating that people are your top priority, you can ethically execute on reductions while still achieving prioritized business goals.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. Do we have a clear course of action to support both affected talent and the survivors before, during and after a planned reduction in force?
2. How can we best support and build trust with our retained workforce, who may be affected in various ways as a result of right-sizing?
3. Have we determined our external communication strategies for social media, the general public, customers, suppliers and shareholders on how the reduction in force will be conducted?

## 5 ways to right-size with care

1. Prioritize the talent experience during the entire process. If putting people first is part of your company culture and values, it should still be true during challenging circumstances.
2. Build trust by being clear and transparent about the reasons layoffs are being made — such as in anticipation of business slowdowns, to bring labor costs in line with revenues or to shift skill sets to where they are needed.
3. Consider what coaching and resources will be most helpful to both retained and transitioned talent during layoffs.
4. Communicate often and directly with all affected employees so there are no surprises or concerns regarding the monetary and non-financial support they will receive. Don't use jargon or ambiguous language.
5. Consider outplaced talent for future roles should opportunities arise. Workers who are compassionately let go are more likely to rejoin your business if given a chance.



Lindsay Witcher  
designate managing director, Career Transitions and Coaching  
Randstad Enterprise



# Cisco drives business transformation by focusing on the total talent life cycle.

As a leader in cybersecurity and networking, [Cisco](#) has a clear mandate. “We have the opportunity — and the responsibility — to leverage the power of technology in this new reality, to continue to drive transformation and to solve some of the world’s biggest problems,” CEO Chuck Robbins stated in the company’s [2022 annual report](#).

The San Jose, California-based company in recent years has benefitted from massive networking growth, and rising demand for cybersecurity and digitalization. At the same time, evolving systems architecture, the proliferation of data and growing infrastructure complexity have pushed the company to innovate more quickly and deliver the kinds of products and solutions its customers expect.

Solving the world’s biggest problems, of course, requires diverse teams of the brightest, most skilled people. During the past two years, the company has had to fill unprecedented numbers of job requisitions leading to record net income, earnings and recurring revenues. Adding key talent has also been pivotal to Cisco’s transformation to becoming a software and subscription-driven business.

For [Zohra Yafai](#), vice president of Global Talent Acquisition, the hiring flurry has been a test of her team’s ability to pivot with the needs of the business, whether it’s for cloud services, full stack observability or sales leaders. Being agile is a critical success factor for Cisco’s talent acquisition efforts, and the company has been able to engage the right people to meet business needs.

“We did a record number of fills last year, on the back of a record number of fills the year before, so scaling and volume, for anybody in talent acquisition, absolutely has been a characteristic of the work for the last two years,” she emphasizes.





## the talent brand as an accelerator

But as the tech sector cools off from the highs of 2022, Cisco is rebalancing its workforce and shifting resources to growing segments. Even as hiring in some legacy businesses has slowed, it continues to add headcount in growth areas such as cloud and security. The pace of external hiring, however, has certainly normalized from the peak of the past two years.

Yafai sees this as an opportunity to channel some of her team's attention and resources to build on initiatives that will have long-term payoffs. Among her priorities is enhancing the company's talent brand, which she sees as a lever for not only talent attraction but also retention. She explains that a compelling employee value proposition (EVP) helps with engagement and excites employees about their next chapter in the Cisco journey. It's part of the company's expanded effort to nurture a highly positive total talent life cycle.

"The strategic function of talent acquisition is now going to be to hire people into Cisco and then support them in their second and third moves within the company. So we have to, from a talent brand perspective, be clear about who we are and why talent should be excited about this company, so that we can attract people that want that journey with us."



**Zohra Yafai**  
vice president,  
Global Talent Acquisition  
Cisco

"Yes, we want them to come and do the job that they've applied to do and the one that we've advertised for, but then they can move on to the next job and the next job and the job after that because, fundamentally, they believe in the vision and the values of Cisco."

She points out her own journey as one she hopes all Cisco employees can experience. Even though she heads up talent acquisition today, she began at the company 15 years ago in a different position. Yafai says she has held eight different roles across two continents during her tenure — a talent experience she sees as ideal.

"This is exactly the kind of journey we would love to provide for anybody coming to Cisco," she says.

## optimize through redeployment

One way of doing this is to provide robust internal career paths. Cisco last summer piloted a program aimed at encouraging employees to redeploy to growth areas of the company. Yafai says it was developed as a cooperative effort with employees, and the company created roles specifically to incentivize workers to consider new opportunities.

It is currently rolling out an enterprise-wide coaching program that enables all employees to receive high-touch coaching services, whether it's to review resumes or to identify skills development.

Yafai notes that some internal candidates explicitly called out career coaching as helpful in allowing them to move into new roles in a recent pilot. These services were also part of the outplacement services offered to those who were affected by the company's reductions.





## focus on the enterprise talent life cycle

While Cisco has always prioritized its people as part of its business strategy — it's perennially on Fortune's World's Best Workplace list — the company is now more focused on enhancing the candidate and employee movement experience. This became challenging to maintain when requisition volumes and pace of hiring were high. Now, however, Cisco aims to assess and improve various touch points that candidates have with the company, so they can experience the high customer service Cisco is known for.

There's no question that the talent experience will remain a centerpiece of the company's talent strategy in the near and long term. Creating an indelible talent experience remains high on the priority list of many C-suite and human capital leaders, Randstad Enterprise Talent Trends research shows; 81% of those surveyed say their organization is more focused on talent experience than ever.

As Yafai points out, even as Cisco rebalances its workforce, the company is constantly reinforcing its touch points with job seekers and employees. This effort will not only help the business acquire external talent but also support its people to develop new skills and grow.

"I think it's important employers offer those pathways because our business leaders know how the type of work they do will transform, and what skills will be valued within the company," Yafai tells us. "I think it's imperative because people are going to be in the workforce longer than ever, so we want to support them to do that in a way that, at the same time, signals that these are the things that we need as well."

Most importantly, she adds, the strategy is built on collaborative efforts with business leaders, talent and her team. Without input from all parties, the company would miss out on critical input. "At Cisco, we say talent acquisition is a team sport," she adds.

As a company that has long excelled in delivering an EVP that is valued by its candidates and employees, Cisco has entered the next phase of its enterprise talent strategy. Focused on the complete talent life cycle — candidate attraction through career transition — the company is making sure all touch points along the way are designed to nurture engagement, development and mobility so its workforce is agile, adaptive and innovative.

# deliver a meaningful, mission-driven work experience.

"Today's workforce wants to bring their full selves to work. For that to be possible, employers have to provide them the tools to manage their mental health and create a true sense of belonging, ultimately creating a workforce that is enabled, empowered, and engaged to do their best work."

Ben Eubanks  
chief research officer  
Lighthouse Research & Advisory



## 08. turn good DEI intentions into impactful actions.

### are you taking the right actions to make diversity, equity and inclusion strategy more than a feel-good exercise?

One of the most effective ways for human capital leaders to make a tangible and meaningful impact on their organizations is to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). In today's talent-centric labor market, a growing number of people believe their employers have an obligation to create as inclusive a workforce as possible so that everyone can be valued and successful. Meaningful DEI actions that are embedded across the entire talent life cycle are critical to executing a successful enterprise talent strategy.

Fortunately, employers agree; in our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research, 81% say that DEI is embedded within their talent strategies and integral to everything they do. Nearly as many (78%) believe their DEI strategy is extremely important to their workforce and is a differentiator when attracting top talent. Two-thirds (66%) say DEI has had a positive impact on their business in the last year. And among companies experiencing talent scarcity, 30% say they are focusing on strengthening their DEI strategy to drive talent attraction.

At the same time, there is a major disconnect between how organizations value DEI and how they are putting it into practice. There is a strong overall year-over-year decline in the strategies that employers use to support DEI. Bias training has decreased 9 points to just 15%, self-managed teams has dropped 13 points to 20%, AI to reduce bias has dropped 8 points to 16%, long-standing DEI training programs has dropped 6 points to 35%, and the use of task forces has dropped 5 points to 26%. Similar drops are clear for social accountability programs, compensation transparency and grievance programs.

What's more, 37% suspect companies may deprioritize DEI this year. This figure is even higher for life sciences employers at 44%. But if human capital leaders are to build the agile workforces their businesses need to thrive, they need to invest in DEI.

Randstad's [Workmonitor](#) survey shows that people expect their employer to be authentically interested in building a diverse and inclusive workforce. Forty-four percent (44%) say they wouldn't accept a job if the company wasn't making a proactive effort to improve its diversity and equity practices. And half (50%) say they would quit a job if they didn't have a sense of belonging. These figures should be a red flag to employers who aren't taking meaningful DEI actions.

# 37%

suspect employers may deprioritize DEI this year, but if companies want to thrive, they'll need to invest in DEI.

How are some employers turning their good intentions into meaningful actions across the talent life cycle? Helping [diverse talent to upskill](#) is an effective way to build an inclusive talent pool. Others, like [Progressive Insurance](#), have made data a centerpiece of their DEI strategies, driving more informed policy-making and practices. It's one reason why the company was named America's [Best Employer for Diversity](#) by Forbes. Others like [Anthem](#) are transforming their management teams to have more diverse representation.

While many companies are acting with intention, there are subtle ways in which bias can creep in to exclude diverse talent. For instance, while women, people of color and those in the LGBTQ+ community are often the subjects of anti-discrimination initiatives, ageism is often overlooked. According to [AARP](#), 1 in 6 adults said they weren't hired for a job because of their age. Further, [Harvard research](#) shows that bias against disabled people has been stubbornly persistent even though attitudes toward other groups have shifted more dramatically. Even in today's virtual workplace, proximity bias may be hindering the growth and opportunities for diverse talent who work remotely, sometimes as a reasonable accommodation.

While unconscious bias may be difficult to change, an abundance of training courses and intelligent tooling can help minimize unfair practices in hiring, rewarding and promoting your people. Organizations should focus on nurturing a culture of inclusion and belonging that ensures fair representation at all levels of the business. Supported by data and tools that provide a comprehensive view of enterprise-wide practices, an outcomes-driven approach is the best way to achieve a truly diverse and inclusive workforce.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. What are the roadblocks to truly embedding a culture of DEI from top to bottom at our organization?
2. Are diverse people involved in the decision-making and steering elements of our strategy to ensure initiatives truly support the people they're intended to serve?
3. What unconscious biases do I currently have as a human capital leader, and how are they impeding our DEI progress?

## 5 ways to achieve meaningful DEI outcomes

1. Make sure your recruitment channels include a wide variety of diverse talent pools, including universities, networking organizations, job training programs and other professional groups.
2. Train managers on unconscious bias that may be built in at all stages of the talent life cycle — from attraction to recruiting to development and even offboarding.
3. Identify how unnecessary job requirements — such as formal education, on-site mandates or physical requirements — may exclude diverse talent. Assess job description language and interview techniques. Consider removing questions regarding criminal records to provide second-chance employment to candidates.
4. Work with social innovation programs to source talent who face greater barriers to employment due to their backgrounds, including disabled people, older workers and the long-term unemployed, for example.
5. Validate AI algorithms used in talent technology to ensure unintended bias hasn't been introduced in their deployment.



Audra Jenkins  
global chief equity officer  
Randstad



## 09. keep prioritizing wellness; it still matters.



### do your people still feel supported at work?

The global workforce has been through a lot during the past three years. From facing down an existential crisis and health threat, to pivoting to remote work that squeezed work and personal life under one roof, to a crisis in Ukraine that threatens the safety of families, to inflation and economic conditions that are creating uncertainty. Along the way, work hours have grown, job demands have intensified and a high cost of living is eating away at paychecks. It's not surprising that worker stress levels reached an all-time high globally in recent years.

There is no question people feel pressure on many fronts. Will the crisis persist? Will the cost of living outpace their salaries? Will their skills remain relevant in a changing world of work? Will the flexibility at work that they've come to value suddenly disappear? With continuing pressure weighing on people's lives, employers should continue to help employees manage personal wellness to the benefit of their people and the business overall.

Economic uncertainty is just one factor that has increased anxiety levels in the workplace as layoffs have many worried about their futures. Randstad's 2023 [Workmonitor](#) finds that 52% of 35,000 people surveyed in 34 markets are worried about the impact of economic uncertainty on job security, and 25% say they're seeking supplemental income to help with the rising cost of living. As companies reduce their workforces, a leaner headcount may mean more work and stress for retained employees. People are also experiencing residual stress from the pandemic, ranging from increased [loneliness to sleep disorders](#).

Our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research finds that business leaders are also feeling the stress of these factors. More than one-third (35%) cite economic uncertainty as having a negative impact on the business. Thirty-six percent (36%) say the same of inflation, and 29% cite the negative impacts of geopolitical uncertainty. These are the top-cited pain points following talent scarcity. This may be why wellness continues to be a focus for HR leaders; 54% report they are spending more on well-being and safety programs this year.

**54%** report they are spending more on well-being and safety programs this year.

One indicator of rising interest in employee well-being is the [growing ranks of chief wellness officers](#). Companies such as Aon, EY and others are investing in these roles as a business imperative. Workforce productivity is [falling at the fastest rate in 40 years](#). Part of the reason for this is declining engagement, which typically isn't integrated into wellness programs. However, engagement and productivity are closely correlated to mental and physical well-being, and companies are keen to improve these metrics.

Burnout remains a concern at many companies, and pressure to return to the workplace is taking a toll on people's daily lives. The loss of remote work options also means spending more on commuting, meals, childcare and other related expenses. At a time when inflation is soaring and wage growth is slowing, financial well-being is increasingly a challenge for workers. As a result, companies are earmarking more funds for retirement savings matching, providing more consultative services and improving financial literacy.

They're also using data to better understand the needs of their workforces. Aon, for example, is using employee survey data to help personalize support for various needs. Through programs such as the [Human Sustainability Index](#) — which measures well-being, resilience and sustainability at the individual, team and organizational level — users can manage their wellness strategy in a data-driven way.

Wellness will continue to be an important business imperative throughout the months ahead as the working population faces an uncertain future. Keeping them physically and mentally fit will be one way for companies to sustain productivity and engagement going forward.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. Are we correlating changes in productivity and engagement to the stress and mental health of our workforce?
2. Do we need to adjust the frequency at which we survey employees, based on stressors that impact our workforce, and do we have a clear plan of action based on the results?
3. How can we better promote and encourage greater adoption of our organization's wellness programs to the benefit of our people and our business?

## 5 ways to nurture well-being during challenging times

1. Regularly communicate benefits offered through your benefits, wellness and employee assistance programs, highlighting different offerings each time.
2. Personalize approaches to well-being to maximize program adoption. Offer programs that support different lifestyles, ages and interests to be as inclusive as possible.
3. Make health education a centerpiece of your wellness program, and offer additional resources for participants to learn more about common challenges.
4. Encourage participation in retirement savings and other financial wellness programs to help talent prepare for any contingency or retirement.
5. Consider adding more mental health days or paid time off to your calendar to help people adequately recharge, particularly after periods of high demand and stress that may occur in your business.



Cindy Keaveney  
chief people officer  
Randstad Enterprise



## 10. stand out with your sustainability (ESG) practices.

are you ready to showcase the ways your organization is building a more equitable and sustainable future of work?

One of the most effective ways for organizations to keep their workforce engaged is to instill a sense of purpose, meaning and achievement in their jobs. There are few better ways to do this than helping them see their achievements realized in their employer's sustainable contributions to the global economy, the environment and society at large. That's why organizations are increasingly leveraging their environment, social and governance (ESG) strategies to keep people engaged and attract job seekers. After all, is there any greater mission than to make a positive impact on the world?

The pandemic led many people to reassess their jobs and careers. Wanting better pay and more purpose in their careers, millions of people quit their jobs and found new employment or left the labor market entirely. Even now, with uncertain economic conditions ahead, the job market remains strong and talent still longs to do purposeful, mission-driven work.

Randstad [Workmonitor](#) research shows that people want their organization to align with them on a number of sustainability issues: 77% say an employer's purpose and values regarding sustainability, diversity and governance are important to them. And employee engagement has been falling in markets such as the U.S., which saw levels drop in 2021 for the first time in a decade, [according to Gallup](#). Just one-third of those surveyed said they are invested in their work, and about 1 in 6 people are actively disengaged.

**59%** may deprioritize Green initiatives if there is an economic downturn.

Even though more than three-quarters of surveyed workers say ESG issues are important to them, employers underestimate its importance. Our 2023 [Talent Trends](#) research shows that only 22% believe providing details about their company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability programs is important to the candidate experience. More than half (58%) say that while they understand the importance of sustainability practices, they worry it will negatively impact profitability, and 59% may deprioritize Green initiatives if there is an economic downturn.

Similar to DEI initiatives, there is also a year-over-year decline in the ESG actions employers are taking. The number of companies rewarding their workforce based on sustainable practices has dropped 10 points to 33%, those that report using more sustainable materials has dropped 12 points to 35%, and those that report a carbon footprint reduction policy is in place has dropped 9 points to 37%.

Ironically, a majority (72%) say they will prioritize vendors and partners who can demonstrate sustainable practices, and 60% say they would stop working with vendors and partners who are not making efforts to be sustainable. Almost one-quarter (22%) recognize the need to improve messaging about their CSR programs to create a better journey for job seekers.

Growing concerns about climate change and its disproportionate impact on poorer communities are prompting more people and organizations to vow action. These include efforts to meet Net Zero mandates on emissions and energy consumption. The acceleration of social justice movements has also led many companies to commit support and funding to causes that benefit marginalized communities through development grants and training initiatives.

Supervisory and executive boards are increasingly expected to advance governance initiatives as well, especially regarding ESG issues. These pressures are not only coming from shareholders but also talent. When it comes to Gen Z specifically, management is aware of this driver; 71% say that demonstrating sustainable and ethical practices helps them to attract this generation of workers.

More than just a way to attract talent, a company's sustainability practices can keep its workforce engaged, focused and fulfilled. Highlighting how their work positively contributes to the environment, customers and society is a powerful motivator and inspires great work. It is also an effective way to reverse declining engagement, and build workforce loyalty and productivity gains.

## 3 questions you should ask

1. Are we regularly communicating our sustainability efforts and achievements to our workforce, our candidates and the public?
2. Does our ESG strategy align with our employees' values, and is our organization achieving measurable gains to keep our people engaged and focused?
3. Are we working with vendors, suppliers and other partners that also value sustainability and help us drive our goals forward?

## 5 ways to build outstanding sustainability initiatives

1. Highlight how your sustainability strategy is making a difference with individuals and in the world by creating and sharing genuine success stories.
2. Appoint internal and external ambassadors who can articulate why your organization is embracing specific ESG programs.
3. Democratize how your company approaches sustainability initiatives. Survey and engage your talent on topics such as climate change, DEI, social justice and socio-economic initiatives.
4. Invest in initiatives that align to your organization's strengths, and find ways for your people to use their unique expertise to make a difference.
5. Strive for progress not perfection. There will always be more ways that your organization can practice greater sustainability. If you feel overwhelmed, start small and make incremental changes over time to reach your goals.



Anthea Collier  
managing director, RPO and MSP, APAC  
Randstad Enterprise



## about Randstad Enterprise.

Randstad Enterprise is the leading global talent solutions provider, enabling companies to drive business agility by putting people at the center of their business strategies. As part of Randstad N.V. — the world's largest HR services provider and driven to become the world's most valued “worklife partner” with revenue of € 27.6 billion — we combine unmatched talent insights and innovative technologies with global delivery capabilities.

We are uniquely positioned to support the world's leading enterprises with the inflow, crossflow and outflow of all talent — whether full-time, part-time, temp, freelance or gig. We believe that driving these intentional and inclusive talent-centric strategies will create sustainable business value and support people to unleash their worklife possibilities.

Randstad Enterprise's subject matter experts, thought leaders and delivery professionals continuously build and evolve our integrated talent solutions — talent acquisition, talent management, talent transition — to solve critical talent challenges and enable organizations to deliver on the power of talent marketing, talent intelligence, talent mobility, talent technology optimization, and diversity, equity and inclusion.

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