

2023

Priorities & Predictions

C-Suite Perspectives
from i4cp's Boards



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FOREWORD



Kevin Oakes

CEO, i4cp, Author of
Culture Renovation®

2023

Priorities & Predictions

I live in a neighborhood that has witnessed plenty of teardowns of older homes that were replaced by larger, modern, and more valuable residences. Whenever I see a house torn down, I marvel at how quickly it happens—just a couple of days to reduce a place someone lovingly called home into a pile of rubble.

Equally I marvel at how long it typically takes to build a new home. I've yet to meet someone who said their new house went up faster than expected, or that the process was so much easier and less expensive than they thought it would be.

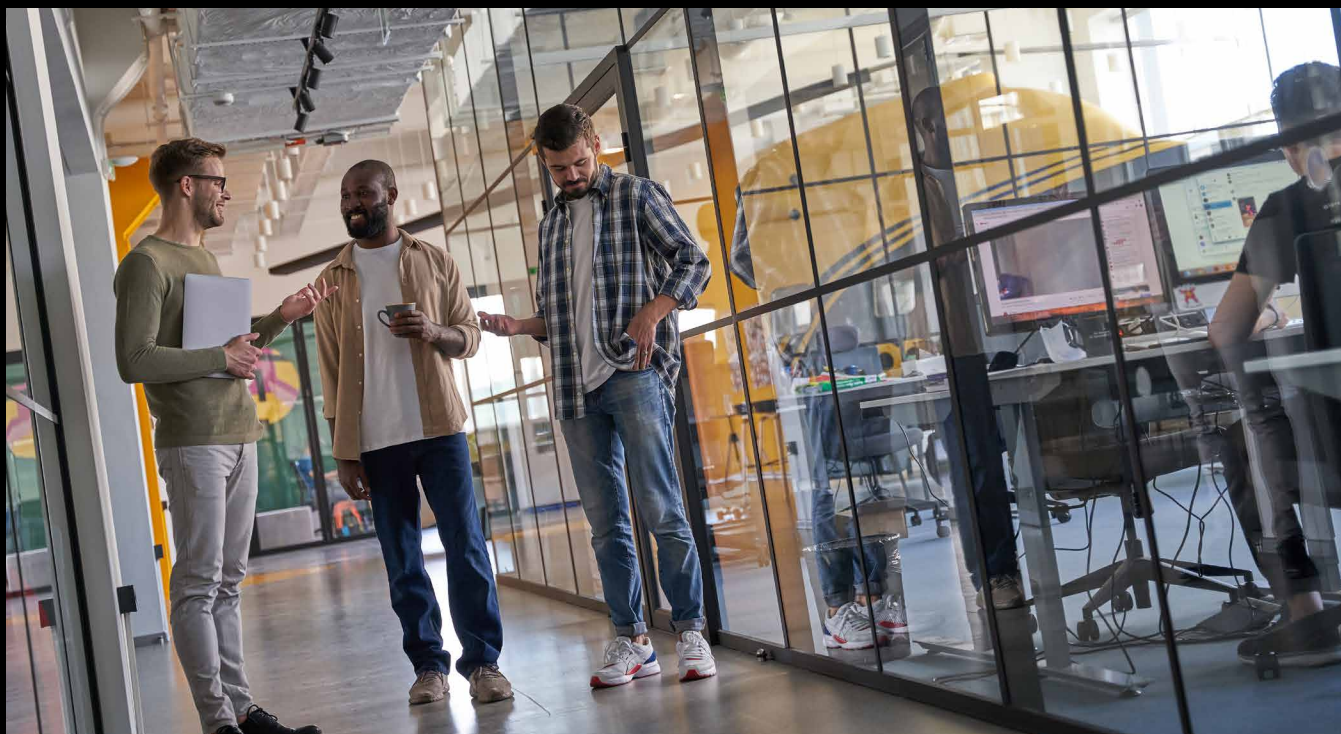
At the end of 2022, an analogous scenario occurred in corporate culture. While we've documented the process that many organizations embarked on to renovate their cultures (an endeavor that usually takes many months or years), it was a bit shocking to see the culture of one of i4cp's member companies—Twitter—publicly deconstructed in a matter of days. For many of the employees involved, it must have felt like being inside the house as the excavator loudly removed large chunks from the outside, all the while trying to avoid collateral damage.

Organizational culture is inextricably linked to organizational performance. In a study we conducted at the end of 2022, we found that high-performance companies (better revenue growth, profitability, and market share than the competition) were nearly **6X** more likely to report having very healthy cultures. Certain traits—most notably *collaborative, employee centered, innovative, learning, and inclusive*—were typically used to describe these cultures by employees within them.

These same traits dominate the priorities and predictions that members of i4cp's six boards provided to us for 2023. As we emerge from the impact of the pandemic, companies are bracing for economic uncertainty that will further impact the well-being of the workforce. Our board members (and presumably most strategic HR executives) understand that no matter what lens we view this through, the success of the organization relies on the holistic well-being of our people...and the culture.

For many companies, there is recognition that the transparency and openness discovered during the pandemic benefited their cultures—in fact, **43%** of those we surveyed said their cultures became even healthier. Companies cited several improvements, such as more flexible work arrangements, leaders who “walk the talk,” employee empowerment, open and honest feedback, and boards that care about culture.

The success of the organization relies on the holistic well-being of our people... and the culture.



Organizations reporting a more toxic environment post-pandemic were **16x** more likely to indicate “lack of trust in senior leaders” as an issue that needs to be addressed.

“To build may have to be the slow and laborious task of years. To destroy can be the thoughtless act of a single day.”

- Winston Churchill

However, 34% of those surveyed reported the opposite; they cited sensing more toxicity in their cultures during the pandemic and were **16x** more likely to indicate “lack of trust in senior leaders” as an issue that needs to be addressed. They were also **10x** more likely to indicate their organizations had developed an “unsafe environment for expressing opinions or concerns.” Descriptors such as *hierarchical, cutthroat, insensitive, disrespectful, and chaotic* were used to depict what their cultures had become.

As the Twitter changes unfolded, I wondered how many current and now former employees would use some of these same descriptors. I also wondered why the link between healthy cultures and financial performance isn’t better appreciated by leaders throughout the business community.

Is the onus on HR to make it so? In many cases, that’s probably the ticket. Our research has found that most of the companies that have successfully renovated their culture possess a very strategic HR team and are usually led by an organizationally powerful chief people officer. But without a CEO who shares the same vision and is willing to put the effort into creating a healthier culture, there’s little even the most impressive CPOs can do to affect real change.

Our boards recognize this. Through these long-running peer-led groups, we are fortunate to glean the insight of some of the most visionary and progressive HR professionals in the world. You can as well. As you read through **2023’s Priorities & Predictions**, I hope you can reflect on what changes need to occur in your own organization to create a culture ready to handle anything the future throws at it.

But remember, improvement is unlikely to happen quickly, although deconstruction can happen overnight. As Winston Churchill wisely forebode over 80 years ago, “To build may have to be the slow and laborious task of years. To destroy can be the thoughtless act of a single day.”

Here’s to a thoughtful and healthier 2023.

INTRODUCTION

Priorities & Predictions

For years, the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) has benefited from the collective wisdom of our six boards—i4cp’s exclusive peer groups of senior executives who collaborate to explore next practices, build evidence-based solutions to critical talent challenges, and drive their respective functions into the future.

Representing HR’s core functions—Chief HR Officers, Chief Diversity Officers, Chief Learning & Talent Officers, Heads of Talent Acquisition, People Analytics, and Total Rewards—these boards meet regularly throughout the year and help shape i4cp’s research agenda.

Annually, i4cp gathers input from these six boards to help the human capital profession prepare for the year ahead. We ask the members of each board to share their top four priorities for the coming year, as well as predictions for their respective functions. In alignment with our ask of them, we proffer four predictions for the HR profession to consider in 2023:

1. A healthy culture creates a recession-proof organization

Financial performance and culture health are inextricably linked. No matter what happens in the global economy, organizations that prioritize building and maintaining healthy cultures—even amidst uncertainty, downsizing, and other cost cutting—will generally see gains in productivity and financial performance, as well as less attrition and more attraction of top talent.





Successful leaders will be those who excel at demonstrating empathy while also achieving high levels of productivity as they manage hybrid teams.

The companies that are more likely to succeed in the future will leverage flexibility as a core talent attraction and retention strategy.

2. Managing perceived paradoxes will define top leaders

Successful leaders will be those who excel at demonstrating empathy while also achieving high levels of productivity as they manage hybrid teams. These leaders will not allow work models to dictate or impeded employees' sense of connectedness to the organization or co-workers, or their ability to collaborate effectively—nor will they permit talent to be subjected to proximity bias. A renewed focus on achieving outcomes (versus where or when someone works) will be the hallmark of these leaders.

3. Experience outside of HR becomes a strategic professional building block

Only 10% of senior HR leaders [surveyed by i4cp](#) indicated that their HR leadership team has significant experience working outside of the HR function. The pandemic showed most organizations that they need stronger alignment between HR and core business units, and it's clear this will be extremely beneficial as market uncertainty continues. As corporate boards look for new directors with human capital expertise, individuals with multiple operating roles throughout the business will be more commonly appointed as HR executives in the future.

4. Flexibility is not a concession—it's a strategy

It's clear that employees want a more palatable work-life blend versus balance, and many achieved this during the pandemic. Organizations that have ignored data and employee sentiment and opted to put an end to flexibility based purely on the preferences of senior leaders will be challenged to appeal to talent. The companies that are more likely to succeed in the future will leverage flexibility as a core talent attraction and retention strategy, which will lead to improved cultural health and financial performance.

Following is a compilation of the viewpoints of each of i4cp's boards. We found again this year that **talent**—attraction, development, and retention—topped every board's list of challenges in 2023.



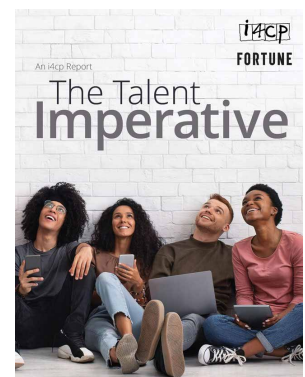
Chief Human Resource Officers

As outlined in i4cp's 2022 report, [The Talent Imperative](#), the ability to find and retain the skilled talent needed for the future, which has been a top concern of CEOs, CHROs, and corporate boards the past couple of years, continues to challenge employers worldwide.

This reality is viewed by 64% of the members of [i4cp's Chief Human Resource Officer Board](#) as a continuing concern—one that poses the greatest potential to disrupt their organizations in 2023.

HR showed extraordinary leadership in helping guide their organizations through the myriad of health, geopolitical, social, and environmental crises of the past few years and will continue to be relied upon to navigate future challenges, most notably economic health (cited by 54% of CHRO board members as a potential disruptor). Employee health and well-being is also a critical concern—especially important in times of uncertainty.

How HR leaders (and the HR function in general) responded and performed in recent years has reframed how strategic the function can be. It's also elevated expectations among organizational leaders and other key stakeholder groups about the level of insight, guidance, and impact delivered by the HR team. Further, 80% of [corporate board directors surveyed by i4cp](#) indicated they believe that HR (as a function) will become even more strategic in the next one-to-three years.



For more, see the i4cp/Fortune study [The Talent Imperative](#)

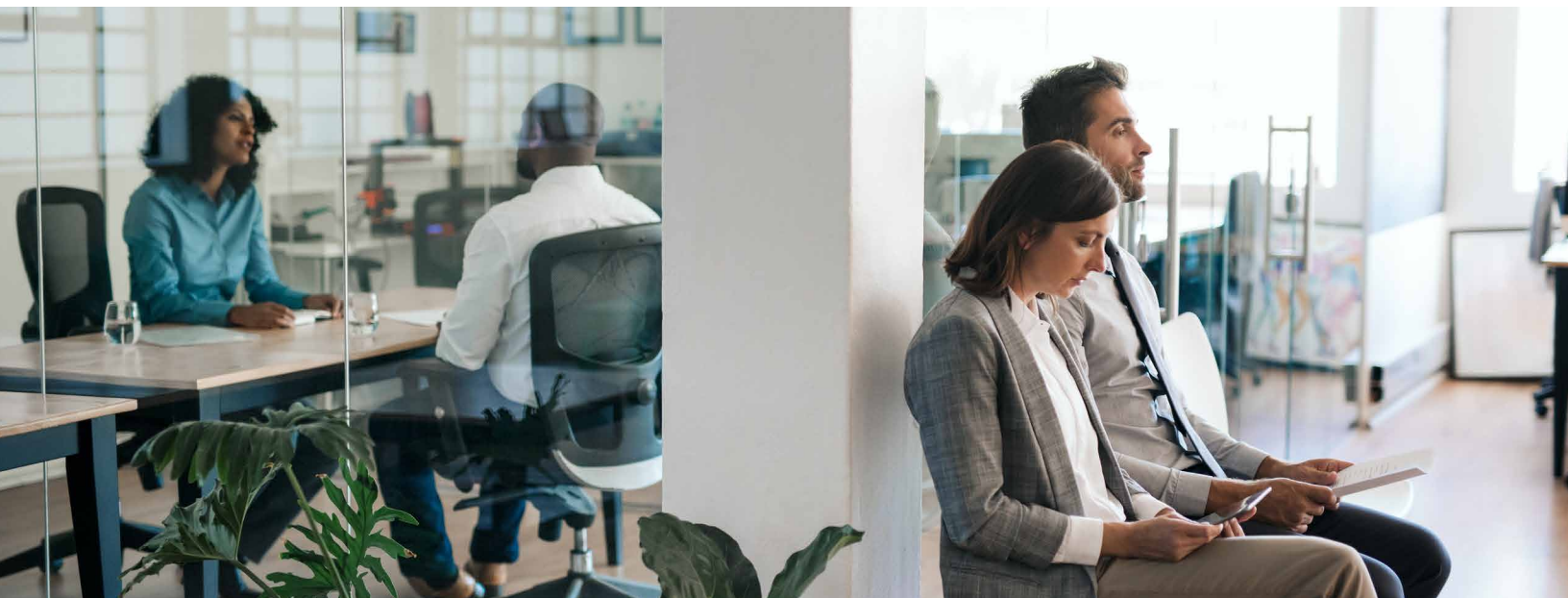
CHROs aim to ensure that their organizations' employee value proposition (EVP) resonates strongly, reinforced by the policies, programs, and interactions that shape employee experience.

This pressure is not lost on our CHRO board members, who are again poised to help their organizations be best positioned to win. To do so, they outlined the following four priorities as top of mind for them in 2023:

1. Staying on the talent offensive and ensuring tight alignment to organizational strategy
2. Refocusing the employee value proposition and reinforcing it via a continually renovated culture
3. Avoiding burnout while also building and strengthening HR's strategic capability
4. Building and rewarding ambidextrous leaders

Many HR leaders will direct their attention on hiring, development, and retention programs in anticipation of tough economic times ahead and staying competitive. These leaders will continue to reconstruct their external talent supply chains and enable greater internal talent mobility to expand access to sources of diverse skills and capabilities, while also ensuring equitable access to opportunities. They will address capability gaps by building comprehensive skills inventories of their workforces and redesign jobs to support a more intelligent workforce design.

Though hiring may slow or stop for some organizations in a down economy, talent acquisition at high-performance organizations never does. As work has been forever altered, so have employee expectations. This explains why CHROs aim to ensure that their organizations' employee value proposition (EVP) resonates strongly, reinforced by the policies, programs, and interactions that shape employee experience.



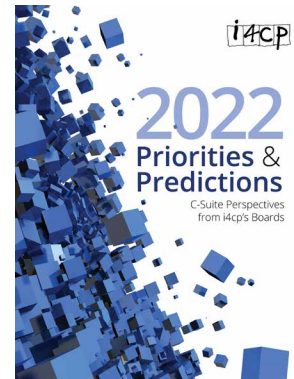
Critical to a superior employee experience is the health of the organization's culture. CHROs are continuing to review and renovate policies, procedures, and practices that have defined their cultures. Top companies reinforce the attributes that keep them competitive and align the mindset of leaders whose behaviors define the organization's culture. Sustaining this requires an ongoing enterprise listening strategy to ensure that employee sentiment is heard and understood.

Emphasis on renovating and refining an organization's culture is especially important given rapid and often unpredictable external change, which can affect corporate culture in ways that are not always immediately apparent. Ensuring the execution of strategy, while building a resilient workforce that is skilled for what's next is a balance that leaders must master.

While caring for the culture and workforce is job number one for HR, it's important for the function to also take care of itself. The threat of burnout within HR that i4cp warned about in last year's [Priorities & Predictions](#) report is real, and was evident in the responses of several HR leaders in this year's survey.

"Fatigue...the people in our field are exhausted and in high demand," one board member noted. Another said "HR is burnt out and largely under-resourced as a function compared to others. We need to continue to upskill as business professionals."

Compounding the requirement that HR continue to deliver in a highly strategic capacity are concerns about [the capabilities](#) needed to deliver the insights and applications that will help ensure organizational viability.



For more, see i4cp's [2022 Priorities & Predictions](#)



For more, see i4cp's [HR Capabilities in the New Era of Work](#)





An important question all HR leaders should regularly ask their teams is: “does our list of HR priorities read more like a grocery list than a set of critical workstreams?”

As one CHRO board member summed it up, the challenge she foresees in the year ahead is “...maintaining the profile of HR in the room post-COVID.” This concern is validated by another board member who is most concerned with the “...inability to generate CHRO/CPO successors due to the tension between the need to deliver strategic insights and stakeholder imperatives, and the actual backgrounds of many rising HR leaders (still very functional).”

Automation can certainly help mitigate some of this (i4cp's research found a strong correlation between inadequate HR technology and burnout in the HR function). Technology can also ensure clarity of how all HR initiatives support key business imperatives. As we highlighted in a short video for CHROs, an important question all HR leaders should regularly ask their teams is: “does our list of HR priorities read more like a grocery list than a set of critical workstreams?” A “yes” to that question is a warning signal that burnout looms and/or the HR function has lost focus on the business.

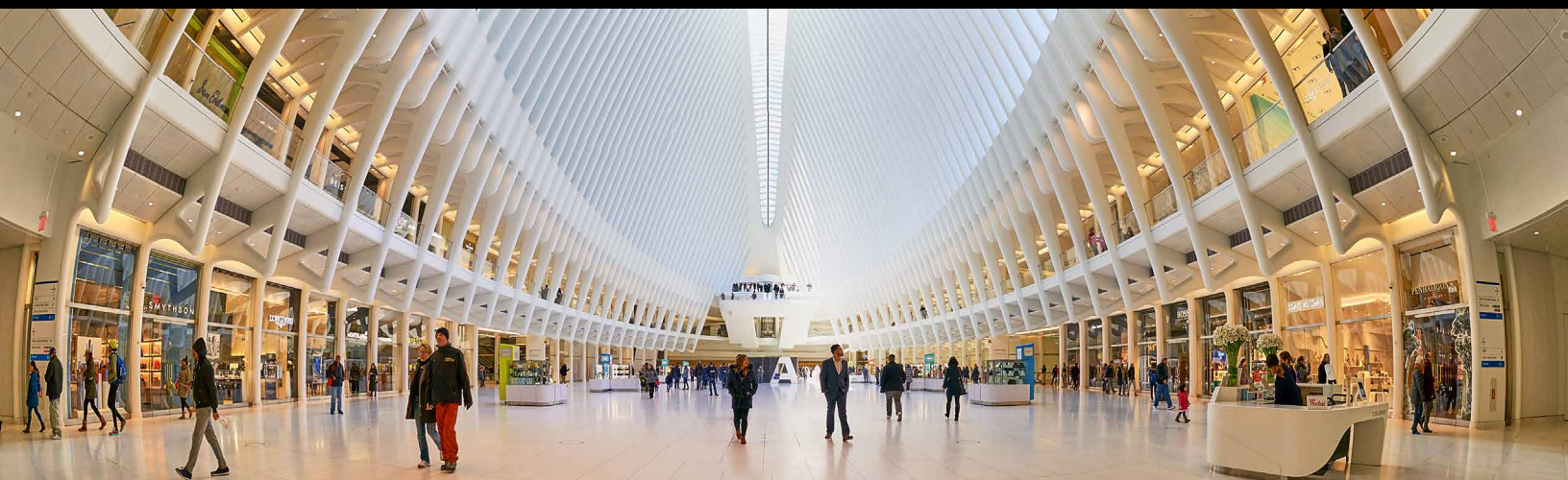
Demonstrating empathy and facilitating a sense of meaningful connection across a distributed workforce, while also ensuring the achievement of agreed-to objectives is imperative. Ambidexterity—the ability to do two or more things equally well—is rare. One CHRO board member spoke for many when they noted, “Raising the next generation of holistic, thoughtful, strategic, and empathetic leaders is what I believe is our biggest challenge.



Sarah Hansen

Vice President, Human Resources, Dutch Bros. Coffee LLC

"Dutch Bros is one of the fastest-growing brands in the coffee industry, but we're ultimately in the relationship business, and that starts with our relationship with our employees. In 2023, we'll focus on strengthening our employee value proposition by evaluating our menu of benefits in light of the economy and the shifting needs and wants of our employee population. We'll also focus on identifying process efficiencies that we can optimize via automation and artificial intelligence without sacrificing our unique culture of personal engagement. Further, we'll be developing and launching a career development and succession planning program that affords leadership easy visibility into high-potential and up-and-coming employees."



UNIBAIL-RODAMCO-WESTFIELD



Christi Karandikar

Executive Managing Director & Group People Officer, Unibail Rodamco Westfield

"As one of the largest commercial real estate firms in the world, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield is focused on the vital role we can play in accelerating urban regeneration and leading the environmental transition of cities to carbon neutrality. This year, we'll be focused on establishing our path forward on this vision while transforming our culture so that it breathes this strategy. Reflecting this purpose in everything we say and do—from our corporate values to our leadership model, into our overall total rewards, and through to our employer branding—will help us attract, retain, and elevate our talent to deliver on this critical business ambition."



United States Steel



Barry Melnkovic

Senior Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer, U.S. Steel Corporation

"Since 2017 when Dave Burritt was appointed president and CEO, U. S. Steel has embarked on a massive enterprisewide transformation. More recently, the company has further refined that transformation to focus on three critical success factors:

- *Moving Up the Talent Curve*
- *Moving Down the Cost Curve, and*
- *Winning in Strategic Markets*

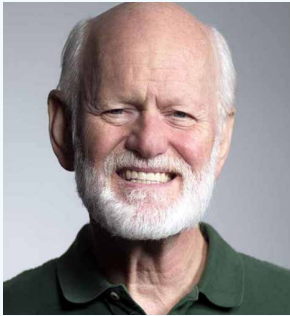
To operationalize that shift and help the company achieve its goal of Moving Up the Talent Curve, a strategic redesign of the HR function, known as Pivot to the People, was developed.

This pivot included three HR-specific areas of focus: creating a culture of caring, talent upskilling/leadership development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The HR redesign did not happen overnight, and its transformation continues alongside that of the company as a whole.

Since 2021, the efforts undertaken in recent years paid off in the following ways: record financial performance for the company, increased employee satisfaction, avoidance of the Great Resignation as evidenced by voluntary quit rate of less than 4% (vs. the Bureau of Labor Statistics' manufacturing benchmark of 26%), achieved and maintained both pay and promotion equity, delivered hiring at or above availability, and earned recognition from numerous third-party organizations."

THOUGHT LEADER PERSPECTIVE

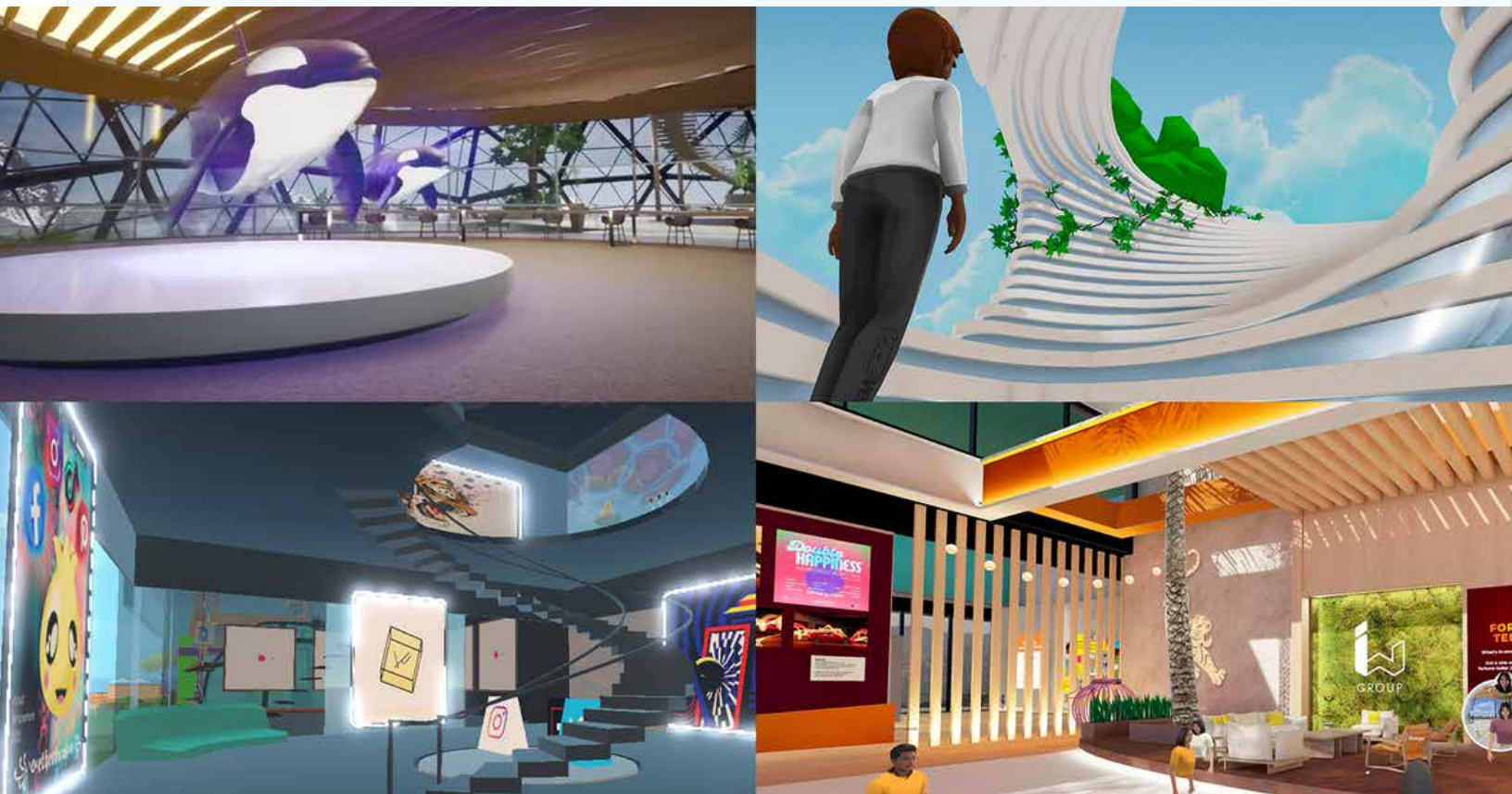
Step Into the Metaverse



Marshall Goldsmith

New York Times No. 1 best-selling author,
globally acclaimed CEO coach, and leadership thinker

Looking into the distant future, the metaverse [defined as a hypothetical iteration of the internet as a single, universal, and immersive virtual world] will have as much or more impact on our lives as the internet. This impact could be dystopian or positive. My colleague, Martin Lindstrom, and I are working together to help understand the potential of it. Major organizations need to understand the metaverse now. This will keep them ahead of the curve, rather than waiting to begin learning until other organizations are far ahead."





Chief Diversity Officers

Fostering a culture that will attract and retain diverse talent is the top priority for CDOs in 2023.

Non-stop disruption, be it positive or negative, has served to raise the profile and prominence of chief diversity officers and diversity, equity, and inclusion functions. Despite this, complex challenges continue to mount and are reflected in the top four 2023 priorities of [i4cp's Chief Diversity Officer Board](#):

1. Recruitment and retention of diverse talent
2. Increasing buy-in enterprisewide and refining governance of DE&I efforts
3. Implementing behavioral and competency models to increase inclusive thinking and leadership
4. Developing a structural response to equitably support reproductive rights benefits

Not surprisingly, all of the CDO board members surveyed cited aspects of diversity recruitment, retention, and development as priorities in 2023. Some are redefining and communicating their organizations' employee value propositions, while others are building more inclusive cultures and turning attention to shoring up listening

strategies to encourage greater psychological safety. And others are refining metrics and accountability around representation aspirations, expanding their diverse recruiting partnerships, and focusing on specific goals such as gender parity at leadership levels and making open roles more accessible to employees with disabilities.

And all CDOs are dealing with the rapidly changing hiring environment; while the number of job openings remains high compared to pre-pandemic numbers, pressure has decreased somewhat due to the cooling of the economy. While layoffs have ticked-up, they are still well below pre-pandemic levels. Skilled, diverse talent is at a premium and job seekers have options, even as economic conditions trim expansion plans for some companies.

Progress toward diversity goals continues to be a challenge in part because highly sought-after diverse talent is often the first to job hop in a market ripe with opportunities. As recent i4cp research has shown, diverse talent—particularly women, people of color, and those with disabilities—favor employers that offer greater flexibility and remote options. This makes it difficult to maintain diversity goals in organizations that either have roles that don't lend themselves to flexible options, or that have chosen not to embrace flexible work models.

The inability to attract and retain diverse talent has been made more pressing in light of increased scrutiny of diversity and culture metrics by investors, savvy job seekers, and mandated [data disclosures by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission](#) as well as other governing bodies worldwide.

As i4cp research has shown, diverse talent—particularly women, people of color, and those with disabilities—favor employers that offer greater flexibility and remote options.





Leaders who feel comfortable and competent discussing DE&I issues are ready champions when it comes to making decisions about policies and resource allocation.

More than two-thirds of i4cp's CDO board members said they are spearheading efforts to maintain DE&I as a priority and deepen the level of buy-in throughout their organizations. Structural changes are one way this is being done, with some citing expansion in ERG/ BRG offerings with a more strategic focus, the launch of governing councils, creating and executing on objectives and key results (OKRs), and even complete overhauls of governance and structures supporting DE&I.

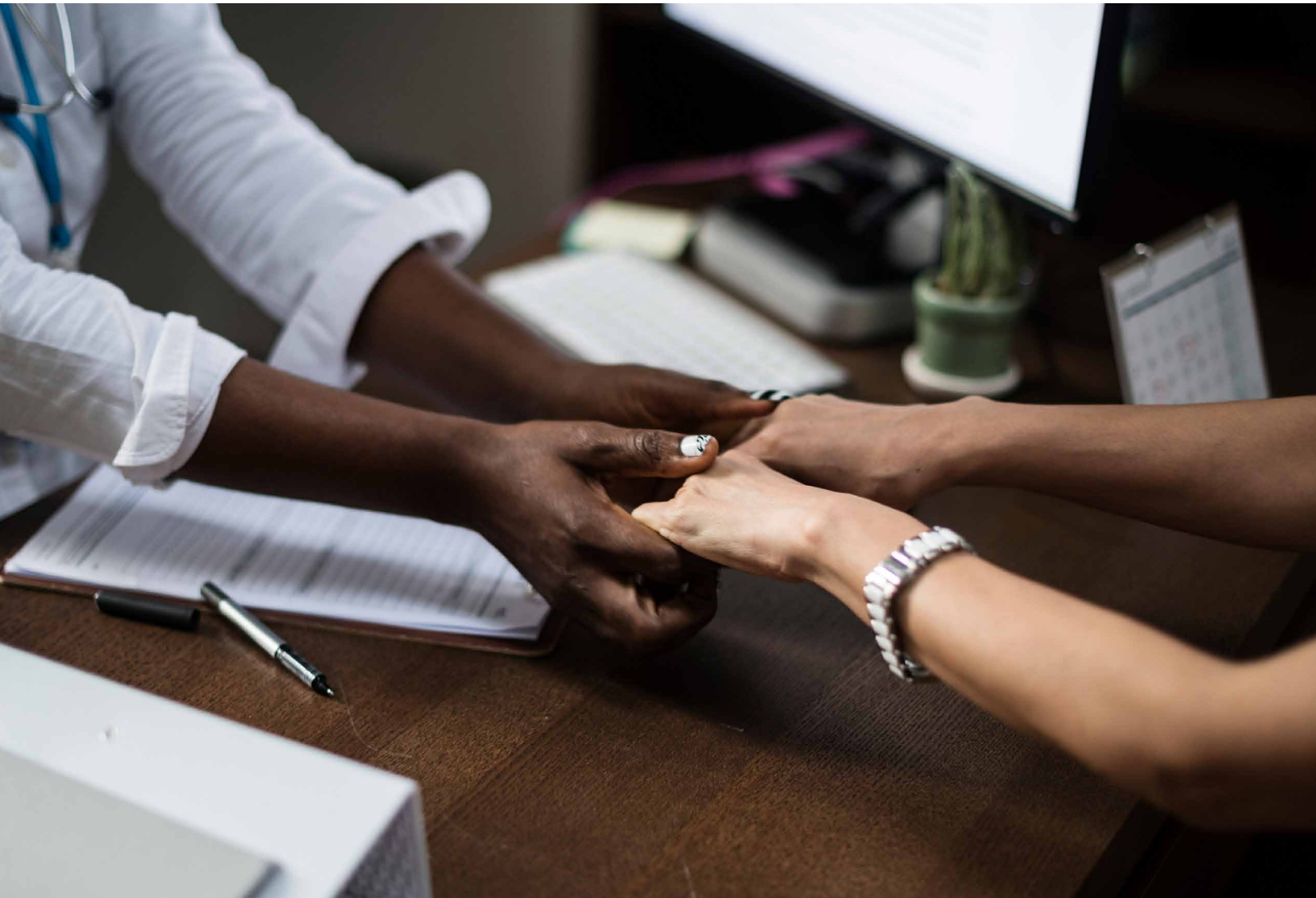
While DE&I remains a top concern for most organizations, economic conditions also create inroads for naysayers who don't fully grasp (or appreciate) the importance of an inclusive talent brand now that will be appealing to future talent markets. The same could be true for those who also don't yet recognize the positive impact on market performance resulting from advancing their ESG agendas. These are hurdles many CDO board members are accustomed to, and ones they intend to confront with enhanced data, a sharpened eye on bottom-line business results, and raising the visibility of the positive impact their efforts make to the overall culture of their organizations.

Well over half of i4cp's CDO board members are addressing cultural challenges with training to enhance inclusivity in the culture, particularly aimed at leadership (leaders who feel comfortable and competent discussing DE&I issues are ready champions when it comes to making decisions about policies and resource allocation). Enlisting leaders across the business who embrace and convey the DE&I and ESG story is crucial to keeping those concerns at the forefront when discussing new strategies and policies.

Culture, however, continues to be amorphous. Since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe vs. Wade* in June 2022, abortion rights have become one of the most challenging issues CDOs in the U.S. have confronted. Beyond the long-term impact the ruling could have on women in the workforce, organizations have had to address immediate challenges related to equitable employee medical benefits, privacy, and other thorny issues. Several have expanded women's health care policies to contend with individual state bans on abortion services to include travel and lodging in other states where needed.

Medical providers have shared challenges about other aspects of this debate, specifically that doctors and nurses working in states with the most far-reaching bans, now have concerns about legal liability and that some are choosing to relocate outside of those areas. Combined with the disparate impact this has on economically challenged communities and communities of color, the reproductive rights debate in the U.S. is poised to create even greater challenges to business in light of proposed national abortion ban legislation.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe vs. Wade*, abortion rights have become one of the most challenging issues CDOs in the U.S. have confronted.





ManpowerGroup™



Guillermo Gutierrez

Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity, ManpowerGroup

"We are planning to conduct focus groups with the top three levels of leaders in 2023 to better understand retention needs, talk about career planning, and uncover what might be getting in the way for underrepresented talent to advance in their careers. This is part of our employee listening strategy and it's not a single event, but an ongoing exercise in asking what matters to our employees so we can take action."

MillerKnoll



Cheryl Kern

VP of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, MillerKnoll

"While a consistent focus, one of MillerKnoll's targeted objectives in 2023 is not only to maintain DE&I as a priority, but to increase greater buy-in across multiple organizational levels. Embedding structures that enable us to develop new relationships with associates who often feel unseen or unheard is one way we're doing this. We are committed to amplifying these associates' voices and conveying that we desire everyone to become an "insider" and ultimately an advocate. We believe that everyone can help to elevate our impact in this area, while also augmenting our employer brand and reputation to help position us for success in the war for talent."

 RITE AID



Texanna Reeves

VP of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Rite Aid

"We're reexamining what our associates' expectations are so that we're positioned now and in the future to deliver an enhanced employee experience for every area of the talent cycle. We also want to ensure that beyond just compensation, our rewards and recognitions are meaningful and authentic. Other areas of focus include flexibility execution that supports our wellness efforts, total rewards communication, and management enablement. We want to ensure that everyone feels empowered."

THOUGHT LEADER PERSPECTIVE

To Best Position Your Organization for 2023: Foster Wisdom

Sanyin Siang

Sanyin Siang is a CEO Coach, author, professor at Duke University's Pratt School of Engineering, where she leads the Fuqua/Coach K Center on Leadership & Ethics (COLE).

To unleash unlimited people potential in the year ahead, leaders need to lift their gaze from the bottom line to the individuals and their networks that make up their organization's talent ecosystem.

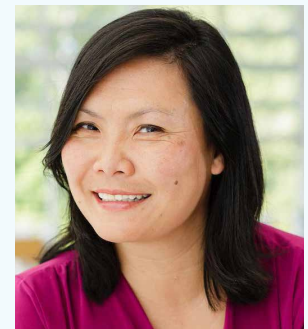
They need to build and foster wisdom.

We don't talk about wisdom enough. When was the last time you heard it mentioned in a board room or performance management discussion? Perhaps, it's wisdom's fuzziness, idyllic, and seemingly unquantifiable meaning that has kept it off the menu of high-demand competencies and desirable workforce outcome.

But it's worth exploring, as wisdom is a timeless practice for youth and elderly alike. In most stories, superheroes and underdogs rarely triumph without first acquiring wisdom. Moreover, it's a practice that organizations and individuals can cultivate through three components: context, courage, and care.

Context: Understanding the role external forces play to influence outcomes is critical. Just picking out what to wear in the morning requires you to identify hundreds of complex contextual factors apart from the weather, including who you'll be meeting and how to balance their expected rules of attire with yours. Knowing the context of your day allows you to act accordingly to get the outcomes you want. The same can be said for employees, whom if well steeped in their organization's norms, values, and expectations, can more effectively achieve wins for themselves and the entire company.

Duke
UNIVERSITY



Wisdom is a practice that organizations and individuals can cultivate through three components: context, courage, and care.



If anything, the pandemic has taught us that it's those unquantifiable competencies, like agility, emotional cohesion creation, and wisdom, that reap the most benefits.

Courage: Having the courage to look unflinchingly at who we are at this moment and our successes and failures is also key. Inviting others to help us see and bringing all of that for others to see require bravery and provides clarity of sight beyond the surface to identify systemic, root problems.

Care: The final component of wisdom is what I describe as care, which is about empathy, relationships, and the power that both can bring. Our youngest generation of workers may lack experience but through authentic care, they can build networks and ask for perspectives from those more seasoned to obtain indirect experience, which can be just as valuable as lived experience if applied in the proper context and with courage.

I work with the leaders of top companies and organizations regularly to help them implement a superpowers-oriented leadership framework towards building resilient high performing super teams. As I write about in my [Leadership Playbook Superpowers newsletter](#), it rests on a fundamental belief in the value of the individual and their innate and instinctual strengths that make them inimitable. A superpowers framework prompts leaders to acknowledge that every single teammate has a differentiating capability and consequently, as a collective, there exists a distinctive competitive advantage of superpower combinations. Cultivating those capabilities in the individual and as a collective alongside wisdom can amplify those superpowers to help achieve optimal gains.

If anything, the pandemic has taught us that it's those unquantifiable competencies, like agility, emotional cohesion creation, and wisdom, that reap the most benefits. Harnessing new ways of learning, recognizing, and rewarding them will give companies the edge in 2023.



Chief Learning & Talent Officers

The past few years have brought dramatic shifts in the ways people work—and work model strategy remains unsettled for many employers. In line with i4cp's other five boards, when asked about the greatest potential disruptors to their organizations in 2023, the top concern by far (88%) among the members of **i4cp's Chief Learning and Talent Officer Board** was attracting, retaining, and development talent. A key factor in this is work model strategy; many organizations are still experimenting with the best approaches to remote, hybrid, and flexible work options, and most expect this to continue in the year ahead.

Another challenge cited by CLTO board members is a continuation of one that has been prominent the past few years—employee well-being. More specifically, leaders are concerned about burnout of the workforce. Talent and learning leaders must address this issue in 2023, as the best efforts to drive talent attraction, development, and retention will be for naught if employees can't work at their best.

Many organizations are still experimenting with the best approaches to remote, hybrid, and flexible work options.

As we collectively enter a new age of work, the expectations of leaders and how organizations prepare and support them will also need to change.

There's also been a subtle shift in the expectations of leaders as many companies move toward renewed emphasis on performance and outcomes.

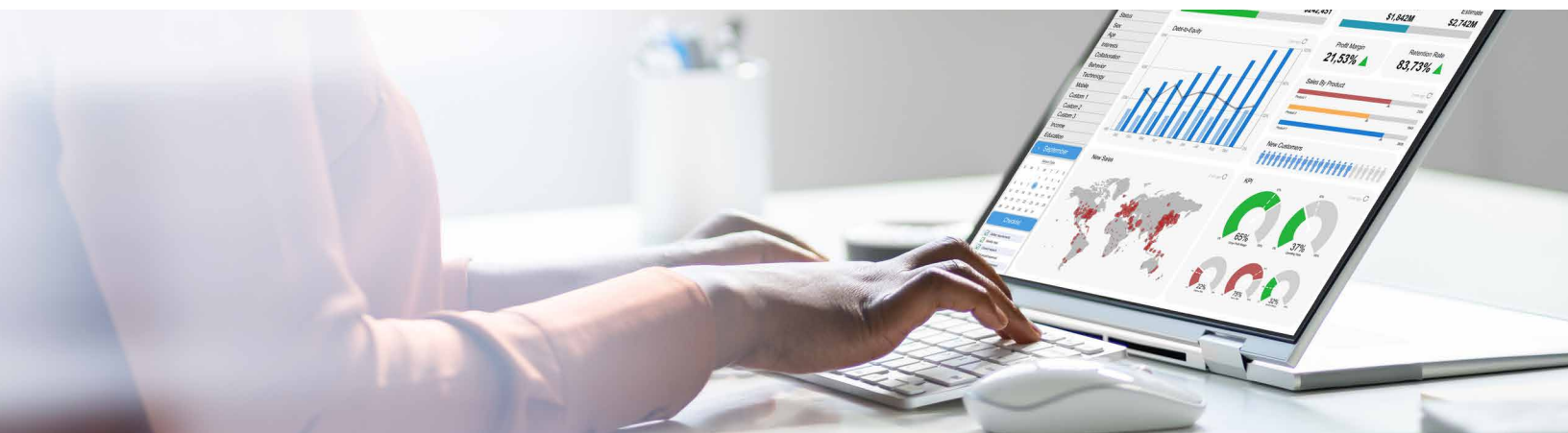
Reflecting these concerns, the top 2023 priorities of i4cp's Chief Learning and Talent Officers Board members are:

1. Developing leaders for the new world of work
2. Renewing focus on performance and outcomes
3. Creating a culture of learning that enables upskilling
4. Achieving measurable diversity, equity, and inclusion goals

Over the past three years, people managers dealt with more sudden changes than is reasonable to expect to experience in a whole decade. Expected to effectively manage remote (and now hybrid) workers, juggle work with childcare or eldercare needs, manage respectful conversations on polarizing topics such as abortion and gun control, and staying productive in one of the tightest labor markets in history were just some of the challenges people leaders faced.

The next three years will offer more challenges. As we collectively enter a new age of work, the expectations of leaders and how organizations prepare and support them will also need to change. Leaders will flounder if leadership behavior models and the development initiatives that align with them—including training, mentoring, coaching, and more—are rooted in the past, not updated for this new world, or supported by their talent and learning partners.

There's also been a subtle shift in the expectations of leaders as many companies move toward renewed emphasis on performance and outcomes. Organizations that shift attention away from shallow issues such as who is in the office or not, and instead define and hold employees accountable for achieving goals and objectives, are more likely to achieve higher performance. This seems simple on the surface, but it's remarkable how many organizations drifted from traditional management by objective during the pandemic and are now reengaged in discussions on effective performance management.



These discussions inevitably morph into better understanding the skills that exist in the workforce today and how to better leverage them. Almost every organization has or is evolving its approach to a skills-centric model, but where they are on this journey varies. The need to move forward thoughtfully but also quickly will keep talent and learning leaders focused on reconsidering job roles and descriptions, [identifying and cataloging employees' skills](#), determining future skill needs and, where gaps exist, providing targeted upskilling and reskilling opportunities.

But i4cp's research has found that [only 12%](#) of those we surveyed perceive their organizations' upskilling programs as highly effective. One reason for this is lack of a strong, foundational culture of learning. In 2023, increased attention will be paid to developing and maintaining an organization-wide learning culture in which continuous learning is encouraged and rewarded. A true learning culture positively affects employee attraction, engagement, and retention in addition to individual and business performance. Some key trending approaches include enabling greater talent development and [talent mobility through internal talent marketplaces](#), and reimagining and redesigning career path opportunities.

Cultures of learning also ensure there is adequate emphasis and effort on the diversity, equity, and inclusion goals that are now a key element of most talent strategies and systems. For most organizations, DE&I has evolved from a siloed function to an integral part of how business gets done. Talent and learning leaders in some cases have stepped up to lead and own the organization's DE&I strategy, and at the very least play an important supportive role by providing an ever-expanding library of educational resources, facilitating authentic conversations among peers, to monitoring behavior, processes, and outcomes for bias.



For more, see i4cp's [Creating a Skills Database Guidebook](#)

i4cp's research has found that [only 12%](#) of those we surveyed perceive their organizations' upskilling programs as highly effective.



For more, see i4cp's [Talent Mobility and Internal Talent Marketplaces Guidebook](#)



Karen Clay

Vice President, Product & Channel Learning, Johnson Controls

"We won't be able to solve the talent gaps that are already emerging with the interventions we have used in the past. We need to develop a new leadership mindset and new competencies. We must reimagine career paths for key roles and rebuild our entire skills architecture."



Teri Hart

Chief Learning Officer, Zurich NA

"Work is growing increasingly complex as we explore new models for how work will be organized and accomplished. We'll need more talent, more skills, and leaders who can excel in new ways."



Humera Malik Shahid

Vice President, Talent Development, Intuit

"Career growth remains the top reason employees leave the organization. The events over the last few years have led our employees to evaluate what matters most to them in their life and at work. We are prioritizing career growth for our employees and will focus on how to build skills in their current role, discover new opportunities through internal mobility and support advancement through promotions. Our biggest focus will be on encouraging employees to make lateral moves across the company to develop a broad set of experiences that will support their career aspirations."



Dianne Holman

Chief People Officer, Virgin Pulse

"At a time when so much is at stake, the need for good leaders—and therefore the need for leadership development—has never been more important. The challenges we faced over the past three years, the changing external talent environment, and the uncertainty we face over the next century requires empathetic, inclusive, and adaptable leaders who can help us redefine the workplace of the future."

But as much as leadership is about setting a path forward, it's also about creating a culture where employees can grow, contribute to meaningful work, and feel empowered that they belong. This can only happen if companies make an investment in building the skills and capabilities of their leaders ... to do the right thing, in the right way for all to succeed."

THOUGHT LEADER PERSPECTIVE

Volatility and Uncertainty Require Agile Work Design



Dr. John Boudreau

Senior Research Scientist and Professor Emeritus,
University of Southern California.

"We don't know what the future of work is" will be the necessary starting point for future work design. This requires that HR support work design and work relationships that are constantly being upgraded or rendered obsolete. Rigorous experimentation will increasingly replace the traditional search for HR policies, scalable programs, and top-down decision making. Work, workers, and learning will continuously "melt" and "refreeze," requiring a new mindset for HR, work systems, and the leaders and workers who use them.





People Analytics Leaders

Demand for analytical capabilities to improve workforce planning and business outcomes is at an all-time high.

As employers explored new workforce models and arrangements the past three years, members of **i4cp's People Analytics Board** can attest that people analytics (PA) has stepped into the role of lead investigator of this great experiment. Analysts have big questions to answer and more than a few hypotheses to test as they seek to understand how hybrid and remote work affects varying industries, populations, roles, and workforce outcomes.

They are doing so as people analytics gains increased attention from the C-suite. Demand for analytical capabilities to improve workforce planning and business outcomes is at an all-time high, primarily due to a hypercompetitive labor market. Increasingly, regulators and investors also demand more disclosure of human capital data from public, but also some private, companies.

In response, organizations are building analytical capability for HR stakeholders through purpose-driven dashboards, integrating data from across the enterprise, and delivering insights, not just reports. To accomplish this, organizations must keep a finger on the pulse of the exploding HR tech market—a field in which competitors feel little compulsion to share lessons learned.

Members of i4cp's People Analytics Board arrived at the following four priorities for 2023:

1. Determining the impact and return on investment of emerging work arrangements
2. Enhancing organizations' workforce planning capabilities
3. Increasing speed and agility to turn data into insights to support business strategy
4. Scale analytical capabilities across HR and the organization

As organizations experiment with novel approaches to find the right mix of flexibility and connectivity across their workforces, PA leaders are concentrating on understanding how these approaches impact people and performance. This isn't an easy task. The top leaders in this field are sometimes negotiating executives' interests in monitoring individual employee productivity, while balancing privacy regulations and employees' real concerns about how and what is monitored when they work.

PA leaders are also prioritizing optimized and more accurate approaches to workforce planning to help attract and retain talent. This need has pushed workforce planning to evolve from an art to a science. Having an accurate and up-to-date skills inventory is only part of the equation. Analysts will rely more on predictive analytics to understand what skills will be needed, what the labor market will yield, and what can be developed internally. They are also using historic data to forecast labor shortages or gaps in coverage.

Analysts will rely more on predictive analytics to understand what skills will be needed, what the labor market will yield, and what can be developed internally.





For more, see i4cp's [HR Structure in the New Era of Work](#)

i4cp's research has found that analytical capability—an important component of strategic thinking—is HR's weakest link, and the top competency they need to build in the next three years.

PA leaders will continue to be relied upon to provide managers with the data they need to understand how their leadership influences attrition, engagement, productivity, and employee well-being (among other workforce outcomes). This data also helps to produce innovative ways for organizations to hold leaders accountable for those talent outcomes.

Lawmakers and organizational stakeholders are increasingly calling for the disclosure of human capital data on everything from culture to turnover, compensation, and contingent worker expenses. PA is working closely with executives and HR leaders to understand expected forthcoming regulations and numerous human capital reporting frameworks to collect and share the most accurate data. The good news is that this effort will improve HR's ability to connect talent strategies to revenue, market share, profitability, and customer satisfaction, among other business outcomes, and further elevate the importance of HR in the organization.

Due in part to the expanded role and elevated profile of HR the past few years, i4cp found that 75% of large organizations worldwide (those employing >1,000 people) have recently or are in the process of **restructuring HR**. Much of this transformation is due to technological advancements that allow shared services to take on much of the administrative and transactional work that has historically been done by HR business partners. While this frees HR business partners to be more strategic, i4cp's research has found **that analytical capability**—an important component of strategic thinking—is HR's weakest link, and the top competency they need to build in the next three years. PA leaders understand this and are working with HR and business leaders to create intuitive dashboards and other data visualization products that clearly tell the story behind the data. This is being accomplished through the deployment of new platforms and greater partnerships with finance, general managers, and other HR functions to understand their data needs and develop solutions that work.



Heidi Binder-Matsuo

Member Co-Chair for i4cp's People Analytics Board

Senior Director, People Experience, Strategy & Analytics, Vertex

"People want and need flexibility, and we also recognize the need for meaningful in-person interaction to foster connection, belonging, and for certain activities to be most effective. People analytics functions now have the opportunity to provide research-backed insight on the purpose of in-person interaction for our organizations and various roles to support manager effectiveness, optimize flexible working designations, and guide policy."



Michael Page

HRIS Executive Director, AdventHealth

"Some of the challenges we're thinking about are how working remote, working hybrid, and the gig economy are going to impact the workforce going forward. We're exploring how to do people analytics with an increasingly diverse and distributed workforce. The whole concept of our current labor model is changing for us and that is going to affect the way we do people analytics."



Patti Phillips

CEO, ROI Institute and Chair, i4cp's People Analytics Board

"The people analytics function has become increasingly important to business strategy. These leaders are no longer thought of as transactional report compilers. The growing sophistication of PA talent and advancements in HR technology has liberated people analytics leaders to more easily explore the costs, benefits, and predicted outcomes of specific workforce interventions."

They can show the influence of behaviors on business outcomes, how organizational networks affect innovation and productivity, the impact of employee sentiment and well-being on attrition, and more. Most important, the work of people analytics enables leaders across the organization to make better decisions about their people and, thereby better decisions about their business. It is becoming just as critical to business strategy as research and development in designing and prescribing innovative solutions that deliver bottom-line value."



Talent Acquisition Leaders

The enticements that lured some talent in 2022 haven't necessarily engaged employees in ways that ensure retention.

If talent acquisition (TA) leaders expected (or hoped for) a return to some semblance of equilibrium as the pandemic crisis abated, they know that things have been anything but. That's not to say that the many challenges that arose in 2022 were wholly unwelcome or weren't beneficial to the function—like their colleagues in HR, TA's role has inarguably evolved in many organizations from transactional to strategic.

TA has been called upon to support cultural change, manage abrupt workforce expansions and contractions, and oversee shifts of strategic priorities, all while continuing with the standard activities of engaging with potential candidates, developing new talent pools, and responding to hiring managers' needs and expectations.

Competing for talent remains complex and nuanced. As much as stratospheric salaries, surreal sign-on packages, and other perks lured some talent in 2022, these enticements haven't necessarily engaged employees in ways that ensure retention. As quickly as some people jumped ship to join other organizations, they were soon off to their next employers, often because they realized that despite the tempting incentives, the culture simply wasn't for them.

Organizations that have positioned themselves to compete on culture, flexibility, and connectedness will have an easier time attracting and retaining talent. Embracing flexibility as a way of life and **permanent part of the culture** will continue to be a best practice. So, too, is making sure that there is consistent and clear messaging about commitment to **employee experience**, and opportunities for development and advancement.

Given this environment, the top priorities identified by members of **i4cp's Talent Acquisition Board** in 2023 are:

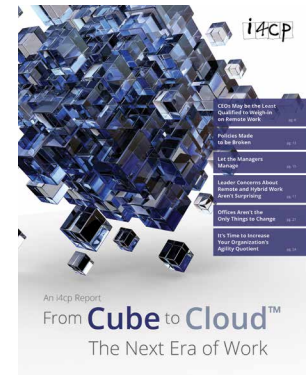
1. Regrouping, reimagining, and rebuilding
2. Connecting with both external and internal talent
3. Building capacity and gaining insight through technology and data
4. Thinking globally

Talent scarcity for hard to recruit roles demands operational effectiveness in TA. Transforming how talent acquisition is structured and performed—from the basics of recruiting and selection to the strategic attraction and engagement of talent pools—is a priority in 2023.

Some TA board members are looking at their operating models and pondering new frameworks that could better equip their function to sense and respond quickly to shifts in the market. This involves scrutiny of foundational systems, data collection, and reporting to confirm that TA is set up to consistently attract and hire talent with the skills and capabilities necessary to meet business objectives now and well into the future.

TA board members also anticipate that their function will be affected to some degree by the slowing global economy (if they haven't been already). Will we see a complete flip from the heady candidate-driven talent market of 2022 to an employer market in 2023? Some say maybe, and some say definitely, depending on the industry. But they agree that regardless, TA must find ways to reduce costs and become more efficient.

Rates of burnout and increased turnover have resulted in reduced tenure in TA the past few years. As a result, many professionals now working in the field are early in their careers and/or haven't worked in HR before their current company. The need to invest time in training and increasing capacity in talent acquisition is too often at odds with expectations that speed is everything (and everything is a priority). Smart organizations



For more, see i4cp's *From Cube to Cloud™: The Next Era of Work*



For more, see i4cp's *The Employee Experience Continuum*

TA board members anticipate that their function will be affected to some degree by the slowing global economy (if they haven't been already).

Smart organizations know that training and upskilling the TA team—and building pipeline for future TA leaders—is a priority in 2023 and beyond.

Other priorities include partnering with HR and communications to create targeted marketing campaigns and initiatives geared towards key talent segments.

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Some organizations are shifting their efforts to internal recruitment and retention as external hiring slows in response to an economic slowdown. Attention will be on build versus buy in those organizations through internal mobility initiatives, including embracing gigs.

In addition to investment of time and resources on internal talent marketplaces, some TA board members are working closely with their colleagues in total rewards on pay transparency and other equity issues. They are also looking at innovative methods to increase employee referrals, and the introduction of new roles such as dedicated internal recruiters.

Amplifying employer brand both externally *and* internally, as well as raising the bar on experience for prospects and candidates, also tops the list of priorities. One TA board member noted that their data shows that candidates who aren't ultimately hired nevertheless have a positive impression of the organization if their experience was a positive one.

There is also increased emphasis in TA on retention—for example, by making sure that the transition from candidate to employee is a smooth one rather than an abrupt severing of the tie established between TA and the candidate during the hiring process.

“We have post-hire retention touch points at 30-60-90 day intervals—sometimes more often—to maintain the relationship with the candidate as they onboard, and we work closely with the HRBPs to do this” one board member told us.

Other priorities include partnering with HR and communications to create targeted marketing campaigns and initiatives geared towards critical talent segments. One board member said that her global organization has had success with old-school tactics such





as using billboards in certain markets to attract talent. Others are having success with identifying and hiring underutilized talent (for example, those without college degrees) by offering community training, development, and coaching programs.

Despite creative efforts, workforce planning has been a challenge for most, but utilization of data, analytics, and evidence-based insights can help tremendously. It can also provide clarity (even raise alarms) on the existing workforce and **their well-being**.

“We’re spending a lot of time on this; our data shows that some people are on [Microsoft] Teams at all hours—working averages of 13+ hours per day, multitasking, etc. It’s important to understand what’s happening and to normalize prioritizing well-being,” one board member noted.

Modernization of the talent acquisition function through adoption of new technology is a 2023 priority. New tools and technology that increase efficiencies by streamlining and speeding processes through automation will also improve candidate experience, as will conducting a review and refresh of career sites and landing pages—also a priority for some TA leaders. At the same time, there is acknowledgement that while automation of tasks is great, the risk of disconnection is real. Maintaining person-to-person contact must always remain a priority. While data-led decision making and building competitive and talent intelligence can help, there is also interest in understanding the implications of AI on the function.

Global harmonization—operating as a unified, consistent talent acquisition function—is also a priority in 2023. So is ensuring that their operating models connect to the broader HR function for optimized global bottom-line results.

But there are worries; uncertainty related to global threats (war, pandemic, famine, the economy, energy concerns) challenges leaders to consider all the changing variables that impact so many elements of their work, not the least of which are culture and well-being.

While automation of tasks is great, the risk of disconnection is real. Maintaining person-to-person contact must always remain a priority.



Melissa Thompson

Global Head of Talent Acquisition, Ford Motor Company

"As HR gets better at workforce planning, talent acquisition will need to ingest the information, and quickly turn it into actions for TA. It should be used to determine how many recruiters we need to build proactive talent pools against critical roles, and to provide feedback to HR around whether the workforce planning information matches the realities of requisitions opened and worked quarter-over-quarter."

servicenow



Sarah Tilley

Senior Vice President, Global Talent Acquisition, ServiceNow

"Supply/demand of talent will remain the number-one challenge for talent acquisition in 2023, followed by the ability to operationalize hiring for potential at scale and to open up new pools. Using skills-based talent strategies in alignment with talent acquisition will also be big in the year ahead."



Grace Niwa

VP of Global Talent Acquisition, Talent Intelligence & Early Career, Vertex

"There will be continual talent scarcity for hard to recruit roles in 2023. TA operational effectiveness and efficiency will be a focus, as well as the evolution of TA from a transactional function to strategic talent advisors."



Total Rewards Leaders

Record-breaking inflation, worry about a global recession, which many believe is already underway, and an aggressively competitive talent market made 2022 a challenging year for members of [i4cp's Total Rewards Leaders Board \(TRLB\)](#). Looking ahead, setting competitive and resonant compensation and benefits in a continuously fluctuating and uncertain economic future remains a complex challenge. The top four priorities cited by members of our TRLB for 2023 are:

1. Responding effectively to the ongoing challenges of an uncertain economy
2. Assessing equitable compensation and pay transparency
3. Customization of compensation and benefit strategies
4. Focusing greater attention on workforce well-being

Looking ahead, setting competitive and resonant compensation and benefits in a continuously fluctuating and uncertain economic future remains a complex challenge.

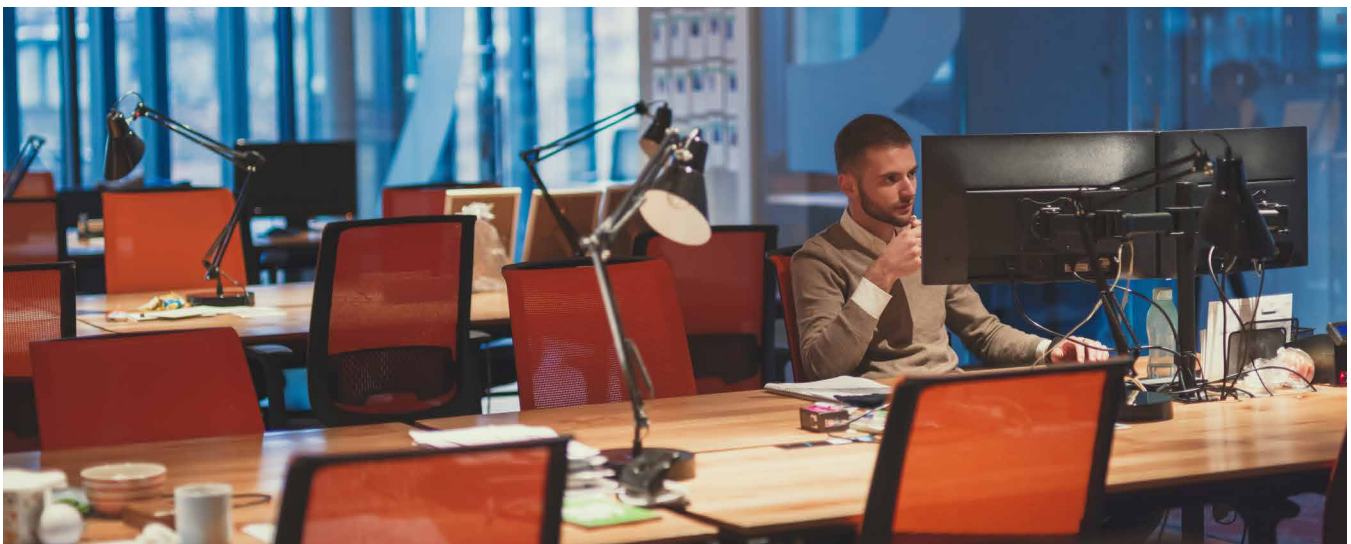
Doing more with less—driving more impact and efficiencies with fewer people resources—is a clear mandate for total rewards leaders in the year ahead.

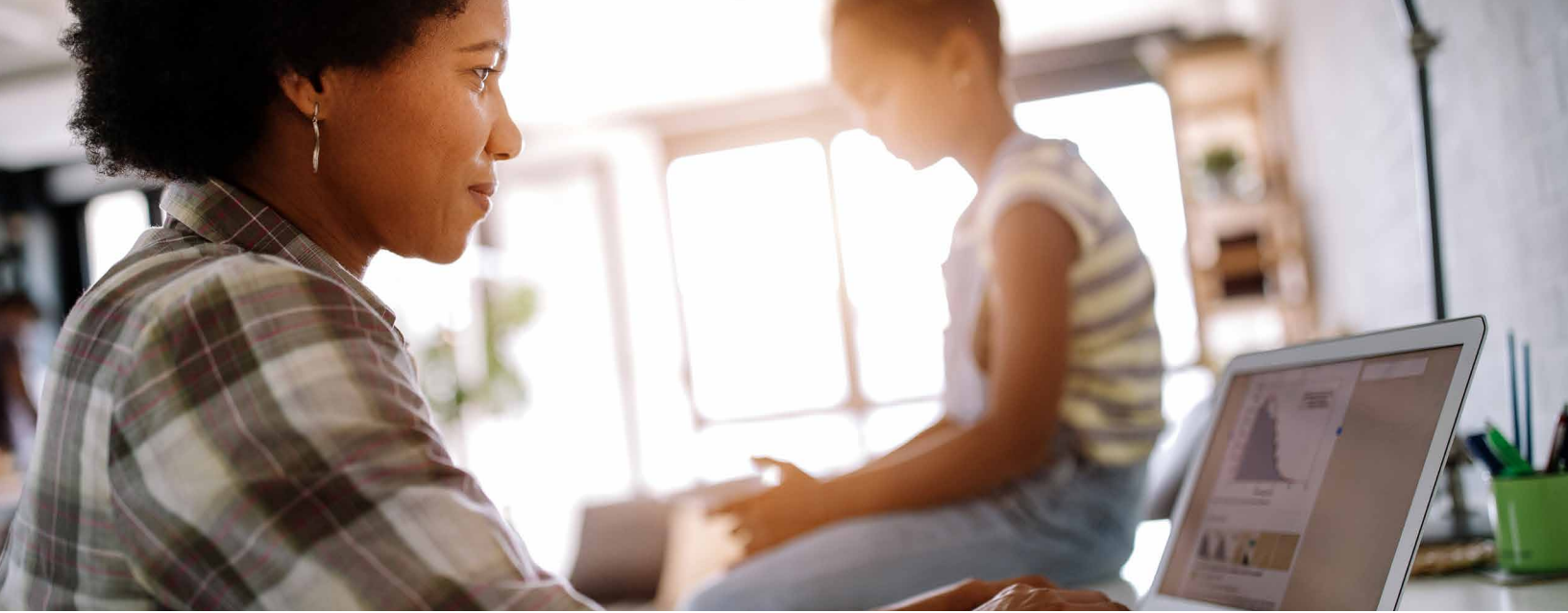
The total rewards function plays a significant role in an organization's ability to field a skilled workforce now and into the future. Staying competitive demands close attention to external economic trends, responsiveness to shifts in the market and respective industry, and keenly understanding what is valuable to candidates and employees.

Wise total rewards leaders also keep close tabs on the practices and strategies of other organizations, to include compensation, bonuses, recognition, workplace flexibility, and career development opportunities. As one TRLB member noted: "Our most pressing priority is to ensure that we are aligned to market practice as it relates to our peer company responses to inflation and the impact it has on salary budget planning, unplanned off-cycle increases, and the use of lump-sum payments or other allowances."

Dealing with the volatility of the economy (or multiple economies in the case of multinational or global companies) calls for agility, as well as the tricky balance of adjusting rewards offerings and strategies to attract and keep talent while, as the edict goes, "preserving profits and cash." The idea of doing more with less—driving more impact and efficiencies with fewer people resources—is a clear mandate for total rewards leaders in the year ahead.

Another TRLB member described prioritizing her function's "readiness for pay transparency, improving governance and structure to facilitate attraction and retention, and enhancing global total rewards programs to ensure comprehensive and highly competitive offerings for all demographic groups." Her 2023 plans also include partnering internally to enhance and align marketing and communications related to the company's total rewards offerings.





Adjusting to **changes in work models** (onsite/remote/ hybrid) have some total rewards leaders considering, or reconsidering their geographic strategies and the effects of greater work flexibility on compensation policies. This has sparked heated debate about the need for greater customization in compensation based on location, and greater focus on pay transparency, which, as one TRLB member noted is “changing the conversation between manager and employee, [so] we need to feel comfortable and confident in our training and approach.” Another noted that pay equity and transparency is an essential part of successful DE&I initiatives, and this should factor into pay transparency considerations going forward.

i4cp's 2022 study, ***The Talent Imperative*** found that nearly half (49%) of those surveyed reported that their organizations are conducting pay/compensation equity audits in response to the competitive labor market. But staying competitive is not entirely about compensation. All members of the TRLB recognize that individual wellness and well-being are integral to employees' abilities to accomplish their work, drive workplace innovation, and contribute to the accomplishment of organizational missions and goals.

In some cases, this simply means following through on groundwork total rewards leaders have laid already. In 2023, said one surveyed leader, “...we will be taking a much deeper dive into overall well-being (physical health, mental health, financial well-being, career development, etc.) to build on the investments we have made over the past year.” Part of this work will undoubtedly entail new well-being and mental health solutions to help prevent burnout and build resiliency.

As total rewards leaders rise to the challenges that await their organizations in 2023, it's clear that there is much work to be done. In the total rewards space, leaders' priorities speak to their dedication to support the business, to take the function's value propositions to new levels, and to maximize resources in ways that deliver supportive, personalized experiences to employees.



For more, see i4cp's ***Flexibility or Flight: Hybrid Strategies to Attract and Retain Talent*** series

Individual wellness and well-being are integral to employees' abilities to accomplish their work, drive workplace innovation, and contribute to the accomplishment of organizational missions and goals.



Michael Horne

Head of Global Rewards, Dow, Inc.

"I believe total reward leaders are facing an environment where employees are asking more of and from organizations' pay and benefit programs; not just a summary of existing policies or high-level references to 'the market,' but more openness around all matters related to pay and more flexibility in benefit programs to support the uniqueness of the workforce. In my view, this creates two key priorities: Amplified and candid communication with employees around pay, and increased focus on inclusive benefit offerings—both of which have broad scopes and expectations that can vary by employee."

The challenge and opportunity for TR leaders in 2023 to address these is to consider the following through the lens of pay transparency and inclusive benefit offerings: (1) (Re)establish and anchor your programs in a holistic total rewards philosophy that reflects the employees you support to serve as your point of reference as the TR landscape continues to evolve. (2) Prepare to better educate your employees on the principles behind your pay programs, how you set pay and benefit priorities, and the overarching value proposition they offer (3) Intentionally define and prepare for where the next evolution(s) of your programs are going to occur in the area of pay transparency and inclusive benefits. I believe those organizations that are out front in these three areas best position themselves for what lies ahead for 2023."



Kelley Elliott

Vice President, Total Rewards, Delta Air Lines

"I think one of the biggest challenges we are all facing is how to manage through this economic and labor environment without going too far and locking ourselves into something we can't reverse in the future. The war for talent is real, but we don't know what's going to happen in the next three-to-six months. As compensation and total rewards leaders, we do not want to be what hinders the business, but we need to be a bit conservative as well. It's a really tough balance that requires a great amount of flexibility and creativity. I fully expect that this will continue into 2023. Our focus at Delta will certainly be on understanding more from our people about what drives them and what they value the most. We've never had such a seismic shift in our population as that we have just had, so we have a chance to reset. Employee feedback must be at the heart of that reset."



Brit Wittman

Vice President, Total Rewards, Applied Materials

"As we head into 2023, priorities for me as a leader of total rewards are a combination of new and old. The most urgent situation seems to be the return to campus or the new normal (it's definitely new, but are we ready to say it's normal yet?)—what will work look like in the near future?"

Employees want flexibility; leaders want productivity. Another issue is pay transparency laws in the U.S., and the expected ensuing kerfuffle (that's a technical term) that will result from employees gaining access to their pay range. On the executive compensation front, the SEC has finally finished implementing all the SOX provisions (only 15 years later...). How companies will comply with pay vs. performance and claw back rules will be keeping some people up at night.

Despite the global macroeconomic headwinds, the labor market is TIGHT; so retention, even as some companies lay off, will be important and controversial. On the benefits side, the continuing push for wellness, especially mental wellness as burnout continues to impact workforces, will continue to be a hot topic. And lastly, though certainly not least, the pipeline of total rewards people is on my mind—it seems there is a ton of competition for hiring TR professionals."



Fay Manolios

2022 Member Co-Chair for i4cp's Total Rewards Leader Board

Former Head of Total Rewards at Capital One

"The pandemic was the moment that propelled HR, as a strategic function, to the forefront of solving critical people and business challenges. What I experienced was the power of tremendous collaboration across HR functions and the executive team. We need to utilize that momentum as we again face market conditions we haven't seen in decades—competing dynamics between economic and workforce challenges.

In the short term, the challenge is stabilizing financial results while balancing the right investment in people because in the long term, the winners in the persistent competitive talent market will be those who continue to push the boundaries of what it means to be a great workplace for people to thrive and grow their careers. Competitive and equitable rewards are table stakes. For total rewards leaders it's most imperative to understand what is market competitive; work alongside business leaders to identify where it's most critical to win vs. compete; harness data to measure effectiveness; and use employee insights to shape a resilient, diverse, and compelling total rewards portfolio."

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