

Time to consider the HR Trends for 2018 The HR Trend Institute was founded nearly four years ago. Our first annual HR Trends prediction appeared in December 2014. In this article the overview of major trends we consider relevant for 2018. “Power to the People” and “Employee Intimacy” made the list.

2015: No more performance reviews Our list for 2015 had 9 subjects. No more performance reviews The org chart is fading away Privacy seems to be less of an issue The sharing economy is also entering organisational life Mobile/mobile/mobile Real time succession management Robots in the board room The end of PowerPoint Community management as a recruitment tool The reality is, that only a few of these trends really became mainstream in the past three years. The early adaptors that abolished performance reviews are coming back on their decision. Privacy is becoming more of an issue, not less. Concepts like the sharing of talent across organisations are rare. Robots are kept out of the boardrooms, and PowerPoint is still the corporate standard. Are org charts fading away? Maybe a little bit, but not very fast. Yes, mobile is more and more important, but even in 2014 that was not a very difficult prediction.

2016: HR embraces agile For 2016 our list was extended to 11 items. HR embraces agile Back to the office HR goes soft on performance ratings Individualisation Talent everywhere Artificial Intelligence Detecting and selecting the best Moving away from big systems Rewards: less external benchmarking Maturing of people analytics Keep it simple 2016 looks like a better year with regards to sensing the important trends in HR. HR embracing agile is maybe overstating it a bit, but many HR teams are considering agile ways of working. The scope of talent management is certainly broadening. AI was one of the hot topics in 2016 and 2017 and people analytics is really maturing. Keeping is simple (and focused) is still a challenge for many HR teams.

2017: The consumerisation of HR The 9 subjects we selected as important trends for 2017 were: The consumerisation of HR Performance consulting From individuals to teams to networks of teams Man-machine collaboration Algorithm aversion HR Operations Data ownership The end of open space The battle of the apps 2017 is still in progress, maybe a bit too early for an evaluation. The consumerisation of HR is certainly an important topic, and many organisations are now looking into ways to measure and improve the employee experience. What do we see as the major trends for 2018?

1. From PTB to EI Dave Ulrich’s “Human Resource Champions” has probably been the book with the largest impact on the HR profession in the last decades. Unfortunately, many people did not read the book, but only saw a picture with the four archetypal roles for HR. For many the book was summarised in one key message: you must become a Strategic Business Partner. As strategy was a role of top management, this meant you had to get close to management, or even better, become part of top management! Many of today’s CHRO’s have grown in this area. Therefore, HR has focused too much on pleasing top management, and forgot to develop one of the other key roles Ulrich described: Employee Champion. The tide is slowly turning, from PTB (please the boss) to EI (employee intimacy). Really understanding the wishes, needs and capabilities of employees is getting more important, and this employee intimacy is required to design relevant employee journeys. Read our earlier blog post: To a more human and holistic HR.
2. Renewed focus on productivity In the last years, there has not been a lot of focus on productivity. We see a slow change at the horizon. Traditionally, capacity problems have been solved by recruiting new people. This has led to several problems. When you need many people, it is difficult to apply very stringent selection criteria.

Because you compromise on quality, and because if you grow you generally need more coordination mechanisms (often management), productivity goes down. When focusing more on productivity, the benefits for the organisation and the employees can be big. You need to hire less people, and the potential of the employees is better used. People analytics can help to determine what the characteristics are of the best performing people and teams. The findings can be used in recruitment and in people and team development. Read: 3 reasons to stop counting heads.

3. Power to the people (or: Bring your own everything) Many organisations are still used to work in a top-down way. In those organisations, also HR finds it difficult to approach issues in a different way. Performance management is a good example. Changing the performance management process is often tackled as an organisation wide issue, and HR needs to find the new uniform solution. In line with the trend called “the consumerisation of HR” employees are expected to take more initiative, being tired of waiting for the organisation and HR, and wanting to be more independent of organisational initiatives. If you want feedback, you can easily organise it yourself, for example with the Slack plug-in Captain Feedback. A simple survey to measure the mood in your team is quickly built with Polly (view: “How to measure the mood in your team with Slack and Polly”). Many employees are already tracking their own fitness with trackers like Fitbit and the Apple Watch. Many teams primarily use communication tools as WhatsApp and Slack, avoiding the officially approved communication channels. HR might go with the flow, and tap on to the channels used, instead of trying to promote standardised and approved channels.

4. The end of fixed jobs The slow shift has been going on for years now. The Tayloristic organisation, where everybody has a clearly defined and assigned job, often does not work so well. Especially when the assignments are not so clearly defined, more flexibility is required. The jobs become more flexible, and employees get the opportunity to craft their own job, to make the best fit with their wishes, needs and capabilities. Some organisations go beyond job crafting. When there is an assignment, there is a process to look at the capabilities (qualitative and quantitative) required for this specific assignment. The wishes, needs and capabilities of people connected to the organisation are known, or captured as part of the process. A team is established, where the availability of people and the requirements of other teams must be considered. Teams are not build of people with specific fixed jobs, but of people who have specific skills that are needed to deliver the assignment. People with broad skill sets, can use certain skills in Team A, and other skills in Team B at their next assignment. The leader of Team A, who has specific skills in building new teams, might be the agile coach in Team B, as she is also very good in agile coaching. In this new situation, it is not possible to assign static job names to people. Read: The end of static jobs.

5. Learning in real time The learning domain has been slow in using the opportunities offered by technology. Loads of money is still wasted on classroom training for groups of employees on very broad subjects, often not directed at immediate application, but for possible future use. There are signs this is changing. Big chunks of material are divided in more digestible small pieces (micro learning). Employees will have easy access to learning material when they need it (just in time). Knowledge and skills can be learned in a playful manner (gamification), and VR and AR learning solutions make learning more real (and fun). The learning experience can be tailored to the individual capabilities and needs of employees. A challenge will remain to monitor and measure the performance

of people, to be able to find (or design) the most appropriate learning solution. 6. Hospitality and Service HR operations has been highly undervalued. The last years we have seen an upgrade of HR Operations. Most likely HR can add most value in the HR operations area. The requirements for the people in HR operations are different though, and probably we need a new breed of HR professionals who can run HR as a service organisation. In HR services both IT and hospitality are important. Organisations that measure how employees experience their journey, often find that employees are not very happy with how they can find relevant HR information (often on the intranet). A top-notch HR service centre is very important for a positive candidate and employee experience. 24/7. Friendly chatbots that help employees and managers. High level professionals that can help when the programmed processes do not offer a solution and when the issue is too difficult for the chatbot. Read our posts: "HR Operations in the lift" and "HR, please give me a menu" 7. Shrinking HR teams Most HR professionals will work in HR services. The number of jobs in HR services will decrease, as the level of automation increases. Example: the sourcing work many recruiters were doing, is rapidly taken over by intelligent machines. HR advisors/ assistants/ business partners will become less necessary (see also trends 1 and 3). Read: "Basic architecture HR". HR is certainly a profession. Top HR professionals will be needed in HR services, and on a high-level HR architects can (and should) play an important role in the transformation of organisations. 8. Letting go Earlier this year we published "8 talent management trends for 2018". One of the trends we labelled: "A more organic approach to talent management". This trend is related to trend number three in this list ("Power to the people"). A quote from our article: "Planning and control are overrated. Most talent management programs cost a lot of money, and do not deliver on the high expectations. HR and management are used to design and implement programs, and life might feel empty without. I was speaking about talent management with a friend, who is working at a medium sized multinational, recently. She said she was now advocating a "go with the flow" approach. Talent in their organisation often starts initiatives without any corporate involvement. The main task of the corporate team is to stimulate and not to stop these initiatives, and not to force them to a global approach immediately. An interesting organic approach." Surely this approach can also be applied to other areas in HR.