



THE PEOPLE

FACTOR MAGAZINE

March | 2026



PRESS RELEASE

SABPP BOARD ANNOUNCEMENT

SABPP Announces Changes to the Composition of Its 15th Board | 24 FEBRUARY 2026

The South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) is pleased to announce important updates to the composition of its 15th Board, following the resignation of **Mr Lyle Markham** on 4 December 2025 in preparation for his transition into the management role of **Chief Operating Officer**, effective 1 February 2026.

These changes, effective **1 March 2026**, reflect SABPP's ongoing commitment to strengthening governance, enhancing strategic oversight, broadening expertise in emerging areas, and building a Board aligned with our long-term vision for sustainable growth and organisational excellence.

Board Changes

1

Dr Maritsa Grewe has been elected as the **2nd Vice Chair** of the Board for the remainder of the current term. She will continue to serve as Chair of the **LQA Committee**.

2

Dr Debbie Mtshelwane has been **co-opted to the Board**, bringing extensive expertise in the Higher Education sector. She will also assume the role of Chair of the Board's **Higher Education Committee**.

Their wealth of experience, leadership, and sectoral insight will play a vital role as SABPP continues to advance its strategic priorities and strengthen its influence within the HR and people development ecosystem.

Acknowledgement

We extend our sincere appreciation to Mr Lyle Markham for his four years of dedicated service on the Board. His contribution has been invaluable, and we look forward to his continued leadership within SABPP in his new role as Chief Operating Officer.

As SABPP enters the next phase of its journey, the refreshed Board is well positioned to support the organisation's continued growth, strategic innovation, and operational excellence.

Please join us in welcoming our new Board members and expressing gratitude to those departing.

SABPP REGARDS



Xolani L. Mawande
SABPP CEO



Thabo Y. Masad
SABPP Board Chairperson

Dr Maritsa Grewe

SABPP BOARD

2nd Vice Chairperson



SABPP BOARD | 2nd Vice Chairperson

SABPP Committee Chairperson | Learning and Quality Assurance

Dr Grewe is driven by a clear belief: education must make an impact. It should change how people think, how they show up, and how they engage with the world — not merely what they know. Her work centres on designing learning experiences that are relevant, future-focused, and deeply human.

As Head of School in the School of Commerce at Milpark Education, Dr Grewe provides academic leadership across a portfolio of commerce programmes, guiding teams in reshaping curricula for a digital era. Her focus is on industry-aligned programmes, rigorous yet supportive assessment practices, and teaching approaches that develop confidence, critical thinking, and ethical leadership. She is deeply committed to educational environments where people feel a sense of belonging — where staff are supported to lead with clarity and students are guided, challenged, and genuinely seen.

Her academic and research expertise sits at the intersection of Human Resource Management and digital pedagogy. Dr Grewe holds a PhD in HRM, and her doctoral research explored the role of Virtual Reality in Higher Education, examining how immersive learning can deepen engagement and enhance meaningful learning when designed with purpose. She maintains a strong conviction that technology should enable better learning — never replace the human element. A human-first approach remains her anchor.

Dr Grewe is committed to advancing the HR profession through strong professional standards, ethical practice, and national dialogue that balances performance with wellbeing. Contributing to the growth of HR professionals and the educators who shape their futures is a responsibility she values deeply.

Dr Debbie Mtshelwane

SABPP BOARD
Higher Education
Committee
Chairperson



SABPP Committee Chairperson | Higher Education

Dr Debbie Mtshelwane is a Senior Lecturer and Human Resource Management Programme Leader at North-West University. With over a decade of experience in strategic HR education and research, she leads curriculum development initiatives and promotes graduate readiness through industry collaboration and work-integrated learning. Her research focuses on HR competency development, the HR value chain, talent and career development, and professional work-readiness skills. She supervises postgraduate students and has published peer-reviewed research and practical guides in HR and industrial psychology.

She holds a PhD in Human Resource Management and completed an Advanced Human Resource Management programme at Tilburg University. Dr Mtshelwane is a registered HR Professional (HRP) with the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP), where she serves on the Higher Education Committee and as a regional chairperson. She is also a Senior Associate Consultant at FITT Talent, supporting organisations in enabling talent through data-driven people solutions.

Her contributions to the HR profession have been recognised through several awards, including the NWU Emerging Researcher Award (2024), the Faculty Teaching and Learning Award (2023), and the SABPP CEO Recognition Award for her contribution to the HR profession. Through her academic leadership and industry engagement, she actively strengthens alignment between higher education and professional HR standards.

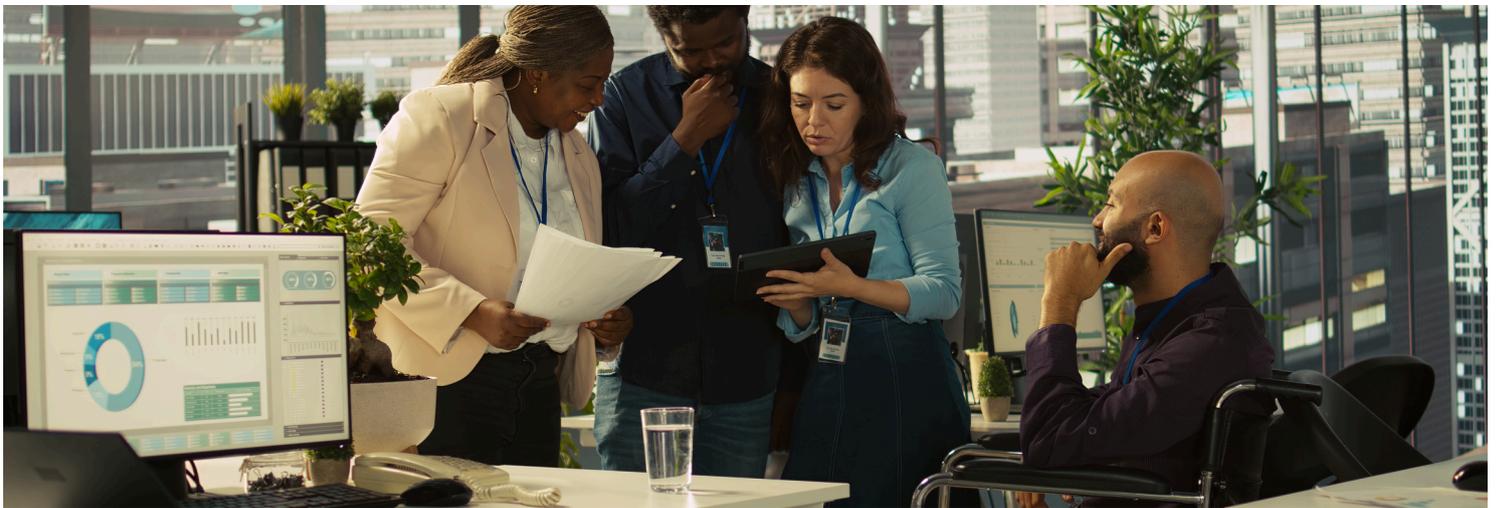
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Inclusion Beyond Compliance: Rethinking HR Strategy for Black Professionals in Cape Town

Author: Pumelele Falita, a member of SABPP HR Citizen Committee



Executive Summary

Despite decades of transformation policy, Cape Town remains a difficult space for Black professionals to thrive. This opinion piece examines the HR implications of cultural exclusion, retention challenges, and systemic bias. It offers actionable strategies for HR leaders to foster inclusive workplaces that go beyond compliance.

Introduction

The SABPP's commitment to ethical and inclusive HR practices is more critical than ever. In Cape Town, Black professionals continue to face barriers that undermine retention, engagement, and performance. This paper synthesizes recent research and proposes HR-led interventions to address these challenges.



HR-Centric Challenges

1. Social Adjustment Neglected

HR departments often overlook the emotional and cultural adjustment required for Black professionals relocating to Cape Town (Tapela, 2023).

2. Informal Networks and Exclusion

Key decisions are made in informal settings where Black professionals are rarely included. This undermines performance reviews and promotion pathways.

3. Coaching and Mentorship Gaps

While coaching is offered, it often lacks cultural sensitivity. Coaches must understand the socio-political context of Black professionals' experiences.

4. BEE Implementation Fatigue

Amoah (2024) highlights inconsistent application of BEE policies, leading to frustration and disengagement among Black professionals.

Strategic HR Recommendations

For HR Leaders:

- **Transparent Onboarding:** Address relocation realities and cultural adjustment openly.
- **Inclusive Networking:** Facilitate access to informal networks through structured mentorship and sponsorship.
- **Culturally Competent Coaching:** Train coaches to engage with identity, history, and lived experience.
- **Data-Driven Equity:** Use analytics to track equity outcomes and hold leadership accountable.

For SABPP:

- **Guidelines on Inclusive Leadership:** Develop frameworks for cultural competency and psychological safety.
- **Certification Updates:** Embed transformation metrics into HR certification and CPD programmes.
- **Research Partnerships:** Collaborate with universities to study retention and inclusion trends.



Conclusion

HR is not just a compliance function—it's a catalyst for transformation. Cape Town's future depends on HR leaders who are willing to challenge norms, listen deeply, and build workplaces where Black professionals can belong and lead.

References

1. Tapela, V. (2023). Unpacking the Challenges Faced by Black Professionals in Cape Town. Accelerate Cape Town.
2. Amoah, C. (2024). Challenges of Black Construction Professionals with BEE as a Procurement Policy. Journal of Public Procurement.
3. Mathenjwa, B.I. (2021). Navigating Black Identity in Corporate South Africa. University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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Dealing with Strikes is a Tightrope Act

By Ivan Israelstam, Chief Executive of Labour Law Management Consulting.

WALKING THE TIGHTROPE VIDEO SERIES

SA Labour Law Made Simple.



By their very nature and purpose, strikes cause damage to the enterprise concerned. As a result, many employers feel the need to crack down on industrial action so as to deter repetitions thereof. Therefore, many employers eagerly make full use of their legal right to fire strikers. **However, the law does not provide a blanket licence to fire illegal strikers. The employer must still prove that the dismissals were merited in the light of the circumstances.**

By their very nature and purpose, strikes cause damage to the enterprise concerned. As a result, many employers feel the need to crack down on industrial action so as to deter repetitions thereof. Therefore, many employers eagerly make full use of their legal right to fire strikers. **However, the law does not provide a blanket licence to fire illegal strikers. The employer must still prove that the dismissals were merited in the light of the circumstances.**



In the case of Benteler South Africa (Pty) Ltd vs NUMSA (Lex Info 30 January 2026. Labour Appeal Court case No: PA25/24) 30 employees were fired for embarking on an illegal strike. The employer justified the dismissal decision on the basis that:

- The strike had cost the company R400 000*
- The employees had previously received a final warning for an illegal strike*
- A formal agreement had been signed with the employees' union which provided that the employees would not embark on strikes*
- The reason that the employees embarked on the strike was not justified.*

The facts of the case are that, during Covid, the employees were desperately waiting for their TERS payments. They had been told by the Department of Employment and Labour that their TERS monies had been paid to the employer. As the employer had denied receiving the money the employees demanded to speak to a Mr Rosini to clear up their confusion. As this demand was refused the employees embarked on a work stoppage for 40 minutes. Mr Rosini then met with them and, despite not getting their TERS money, the employees went back to work after the meeting. They were later fired at a disciplinary hearing.

The Labour Appeal Court found that the dismissals had been unfair because:

- The employer had failed to prove its claim that the 40-minute strike had cost the company R400 000 or that it had cost the company any kind of loss at all*
- The dismissed employees had not been part of the group who had received the final warning for the previous strike*
- The employees had embarked on the stoppage because:*
 - they were desperate to get their money and*
 - they had been told by the Department of Employment and Labour that their money had been paid over to the employer*
 - the employer had unreasonably failed to grant them the meeting they needed with Mr Rosini.*

While the employees ought not to have embarked on the stoppage, the dismissal had been too harsh a penalty under the circumstances. The Court ordered the employer to reinstate all 30 of the employees and to pay each of them 58 months' backpay.

Despite the prevailing case law employers still fire strikers too hastily. The immense cost of such rash decisions can be avoided if employers educate their decision makers as to the heavy protections given to employees in general and to striking employees in particular.



People connected to the school were dying due to Covid. Protective equipment had not arrived at the school and staff members were pressuring the principal to protect them from the Covid danger.

Mr Neumann, the school principal advised parents not to send their children to school. He then disobeyed an instruction from his superior, the Education Department's HOD to inform parents that they must get their children to attend school. Instead, he posted on social media a statement in which he said that his superior was guilty of Baasskap, was unintelligent and reckless. These acts formed the basis on which he was fired for insubordination and bringing the name of the employer into disrepute.

The Labour Court found that:

- Neumann's comments were neither racist nor insubordinate. They amounted to insolence which was a lesser offence
- Neumann had misconducted himself during a situation of extreme pressure
- Disobeying the instruction to get pupils to return to school was not unreasonable under the circumstances where Covid was rife, and people were dying from it.
- Principals of other schools had publicly criticised the HOD and had not been disciplined for it.
- Neumann had an extensive service record
- Those who had worked most closely with him felt that the employment relationship had not been destroyed
- The employer had weakened its claim that the employment relationship had been destroyed by offering Neumann an alternative senior post
- The employer had not considered progressive discipline in this case.

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FACT SHEET JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026

Prof. Ajay Jivan
SABPP Head of Research and Assurance

As we enter a new year, we are greeted by a wave of surveys and forecasts outlining the anticipated people and HR priorities for 2026. These forecasts often present differing priority lists, depending on the source and its assumptions. While these forecasts can potentially offer valuable insights and useful benchmarks, it is essential for HR leaders and practitioners to interpret them in context. We need to evaluate the assumptions and limitations of benchmarking across varied organisational contexts and environments. Additionally, we need to consider how the global and local landscapes shaping these organisational contexts and environments are evolving. As in 2025, we find many HR professional associations and consulting companies increasingly referring to the shifting and uncertain global landscape in their 2026 outlook and priorities. It is important, though, that we evaluate the assumptions that inform these perceptions and understandings of the evolving global landscape.

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The Changing Face of Learning and Development

CHROs under pressure to ensure that L&D investments strike the balance between transformation and social obligations into competitive capability, employability and growth.

Opinion by Anton Visser, COO of [SA Business School](#)

In 2026, CHROs are standing at the crossroads of three powerful forces reshaping learning and development (L&D) and skills development in South Africa:

- Structural shifts in the South African labour market,
- Global AI-driven disruption, and
- Intensifying regulatory and transformation pressures at home.

SA Business school unpacks how these forces will shape how organisations and CHROs develop their skills development strategies and talent pipelines in the year ahead.



Trend #1: Skills, unemployment and the national development agenda

South Africa enters 2026 with one of the highest unemployment rates in the world. Official unemployment sits at around 32.9%, with youth unemployment (15–34) at roughly 46% – meaning almost one in two young people in the labour market cannot find work. This is not just a social crisis; it is a defining mega-trend shaping every serious L&D strategy in South Africa.

Government policy recognises that workplace-based learning is central to solving this problem. The National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030 explicitly prioritises expanding workplace learning opportunities, identifying critical skills at sector and local level, and aligning training investments with economic priorities. The National Skills Fund's 2025–2030 plan reinforces the same direction: more structured pathways into occupations in high demand, supported by occupational programmes and learnerships.

For CHROs, the message is clear: in 2026, learning and development is no longer a “nice-to-have” HR function. It is a strategic lever to:

- Tackle youth unemployment and skills mismatches.
- Support the National Development Plan's vision of “an educated, skilled and capable workforce”.
- Build resilient organisations and people who can compete in a volatile, tech-driven economy.
- Support transformation objectives and B-BBEE.

This is where learnerships and skills programmes are an essential bridge between policy and practice - converting national objectives into real qualifications, real work experience and real employability.

Trend #2: The rise of skills-based organisations and AI-powered learning

In South Africa and globally, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) has made e-learning more accessible. At the same time, with human beings as the undeniable priority, the focus is on long-term, sustainable L&D. Trends that are influencing L&D include:

- A shift from instructor-led training to hybrid digital solutions - AI, gamification, microlearning, adaptive learning, social learning, using AI to personalise learning, surface relevant micro-content and provide performance support in the flow of work.
- Recognising the importance of learner-centric and personalised learning that allows learners to take ownership of their development journey, while giving them relevant, timely, and contextualised feedback and support.



- Integrating learning into the flow of work, by embedding opportunities and resources into daily tasks and workflows.
- Using data and analytics to measure and improve outcomes.
- Aligning learning with business strategy and goals, to ensure that it contributes to KPIs and ROI.

Technology has unlocked a new era. For one thing, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are gaining traction, offering immersive learning to simulate real-life scenarios.

Trend #3: Meeting Regulatory Demands and Driving Transformation

In the context of skills, unemployment and the national development agenda, technology and innovation in L&D have huge potential. Consider increased accessibility, data-driven insights, and a culture of inclusive learning and the impact it has on skills development in the context of the B-BBEE scorecard:

1. Increased accessibility and reach

Blended learning methods like e-learning modules, webinars, and video tutorials can overcome geographical barriers, allowing companies to train employees and learners across diverse locations, time zones, and schedules.

2. Enhanced data tracking and reporting

Learning Management Systems (LMS) can log participation, assess progress, and generate the reports that are essential for B-BBEE verification and audits. Tracking and reporting on training activities, workplace experience and outcomes strengthens compliance.

3. More inclusive learning cultures

Employees with different learning styles - and those who are differently abled - can access content that suits them, in manners that suit them, when it's possible for them. This promotes more egalitarian participation and opportunity.

4. Building diverse, engaged workforces

Ongoing L&D empowers individuals to adapt to changing business needs and to contribute more powerfully.



5. Talent acquisition and retention

A robust and flexible learning culture helps employer brands to attract and retain top talent. This benefits overall business performance, obviously, but it also contributes B-BBEE points towards skills development and employment equity.

For CHROs, this means 2026 is not just about “spending the skills budget” to tick compliance boxes. The real value lies in integrating your L&D investment into a coherent workforce and transformation strategy, where:

- SDL and B-BBEE spend are used as investment capital in scarce and critical skills
- Learnerships are designed and sponsored to feed real jobs pipelines – contact centre roles, supervisors, data analysts, artisans, finance and risk professionals, and so on.
- Skills programmes are deployed surgically to close gaps in existing teams and support career mobility and growth.
- All L&D investment must start with skills diagnostics and pipeline mapping: What are the roles and capabilities your organisation will need in three to five years, and how can L&D programmes be combined to build those capabilities in a cost-effective, compliant way?

What CHROs should watch for in 2026

Zooming in, several micro-trends will show up in the day-to-day decisions of CHROs and L&D teams in 2026 and beyond.

1. Learnerships as a core youth employment strategy – not a side project

Research consistently shows that structured, work-integrated programmes like learnerships help young people gain skills faster and improve their chances of employment. In a labour market where youth unemployment trends above 45%, CHROs can expect growing internal and external pressure to scale youth-focused learnerships as well as absorption.

In practice, this means:

- Designing multi-year learnership pathways that move youth from entry level roles to supervisory and specialist roles.
- Linking learnership cohorts to real vacancies and absorption – not “train and hope”, but “train for placement”.
- Leveraging learnerships as part of an integrated early-talent development strategy.



2. The strategic use of skills programmes for rapid reskilling

Skills programmes - shorter, focused interventions - are becoming the CHRO's favourite tool for agility:

- Quickly reskilling teams for new technologies and addressing specific skills gaps that hold back career progression.
- Building transversal “power skills” like communication, problem-solving, digital fluency, customer centricity and change management.
- Supporting internal career mobility - for example, moving high-potential agents into team leader and management roles or operations staff into data-enabled roles.

3. Proving value: L&D under sharper scrutiny

There is renewed focus on demonstrating the value and impact of learning. In 2026, CHROs can expect:

- Boards asking tougher questions on the ROI of learnerships and training
- Greater emphasis on completion rates, progression, promotion and retention of learners as well as absorption.
- Closer tracking of performance metrics before and after interventions

This is where partnerships with professional and accredited training providers matter. Providers are no longer only expected to bring accredited L&D programmes, but also data, dashboards and evaluation frameworks that help CHROs tell a credible value story – to executives, regulators and verification agencies.

4. Human skills in an AI world

Even as AI upskilling accelerates globally, employers and learning platforms report that “soft” skills – critical thinking, resilience, adaptability, collaboration and curiosity - remain in strong demand. For South African organisations navigating uncertainty, these human capabilities remain essential. The implication is that every skills development programme needs a human-skills layer:

- Learnerships that include modules on problem-solving, emotional intelligence and building resilience.
- Management development that equips leaders to coach, give feedback and lead hybrid, AI-enabled teams.
- Skills programmes that explicitly address change resilience and learning agility to fill evolving and critical skills gaps.

2026 is the year CHROs must connect the dots:

- Between transformation imperatives and day-to-day talent decisions.
- Between global trends (AI, skills-based organisations, value-driven L&D) and local socio-economic realities (B-BBEE and high youth unemployment)
- Between building formal talent pipelines and agile interventions that keep the workforce relevant.

The organisations that win in 2026 and beyond are those that treat skills development not as an annual compliance exercise, but as a strategic L&D operating system that converts regulatory and transformation compliance and social obligations into competitive capability, employability and growth. For CHROs, the challenge, and opportunity in 2026, is to design that L&D operating system deliberately, with the right partners, programmes and metrics in place.

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People Risk: The Emerging KPI Equally Important as Financial Risk

By Jenny Reid, Founder

In the ever-evolving landscape of business management, the focus on various forms of risk has expanded significantly. Traditionally, organisations heavily emphasised financial risk assessments, which have been seen as the linchpin of operational and strategic decisions. However, a new dimension of risk, People Risk, is rapidly gaining prominence and must be treated with equal importance. Effective employee screening policies are integral to managing this emerging risk, ensuring both the integrity of the workforce and the safety of organisational operations.



People risk refers to the potential for losses arising from employee actions, behaviours, or inadequately qualified individuals occupying critical positions within an organisation. This encompasses a range of issues, including:

- Hiring Incompetence: Employing individuals who lack the necessary skills or qualifications for their roles can lead to operational inefficiencies and affect overall business performance.
- Employee Misconduct: Engaging in unethical behaviours, harassment, or fraud can create a toxic workplace culture, undermine team morale, and lead to substantial legal and financial consequences.
- Lack of Cultural Fit: Employing individuals who do not align with the organisational values can disrupt team dynamics and lead to conflicts, ultimately affecting productivity and employee retention.

In a global job market where talent is increasingly mobile and competition is fierce, organisations must proactively manage People Risk to safeguard their reputation, operational integrity, and financial health.

As businesses navigate complex challenges, integrating People Risk into the KPI framework is essential. Just as financial risk management influences strategic foresight and decision-making, understanding and addressing People Risk can yield substantial benefits:

- 1. Informed Decision-Making:** By assessing the potential risks associated with hires, organisations can make strategic decisions that enhance operational efficiency and employee engagement.
- 2. Enhanced Company Culture:** Proactively managing People Risk emphasises the importance of hiring individuals who fit within the organisation's values and culture. This alignment fosters a positive work environment, increases retention rates, and boosts overall productivity.
- 3. Mitigation of Legal Risks:** An effective screening policy helps organisations reduce potential employment-related legal liabilities. Conducting thorough background checks can prevent potential misconduct and safeguard the organisation from lawsuits or reputational harm.
- 4. Real-Time Risk Assessment:** Incorporating People Risk into regular performance reviews and assessments promotes ongoing attention to the human element of the organisation, i.e., identifying potential issues before they escalate.

An effective employee screening policy is crucial for comprehensively addressing People Risk. Here are key components that organisations should consider:

- 1. Comprehensive Background Checks:** Conduct thorough background checks to verify candidates' qualifications, criminal history, and employment history. This ensures that hiring decisions are based on reliable information and reduces the chance of embedding potential disruptions within the workforce.
- 2. Role-Specific Screening:** Tailor the screening process to the specific requirements and risks associated with each position. For sensitive roles—such as those in finance, healthcare, or security—employers should be more stringent in their screening processes. Understanding the risks associated with each role allows for more effective evaluation and increased safety.
- 3. Psychometric Assessments:** Implement psychometric testing to gauge candidates' traits, emotional intelligence, and cultural fit. These assessments can provide valuable insights into the integrity of individuals as well as how they may perform in various situations and how they might interact with existing team members.
- 4. Skill Assessments:** Incorporate skills-based assessments to verify that candidates possess the practical competencies required for their roles. This approach ensures that new hires are not just qualified on paper, but can effectively contribute to the organisation's objectives.
- 5. Continuous Monitoring:** Establish ongoing screening processes for existing employees to enable real-time assessment of risks associated with long-term employee engagement. Regular assessments can help identify any emerging issues related to employee behaviour and performance.



6.Transparent Communication: Ensure that candidates and employees are informed about the screening processes and their implications. Transparency fosters trust among employees and reinforces the organisation's commitment to ethical hiring practices.

As the business landscape shifts, including People Risk as a crucial KPI is essential for organisations committed to sustainable success. By recognising that effective employee screening practices are integral to managing People Risk, businesses can safeguard their operations and foster a positive workplace environment.

Investing in a comprehensive employee screening policy not only helps identify potential pitfalls in hiring but also ensures that the right individuals occupy positions aligned with the company's mission and values. As such, understanding and addressing People Risk serves as a fundamental pillar of organisational integrity and resilience.

In embracing a proactive approach to managing People Risk, companies position themselves as forward-thinking, responsible employers ready to navigate the complexities of the modern workforce, ultimately leading to enhanced performance and strategic advantage in a competitive market.

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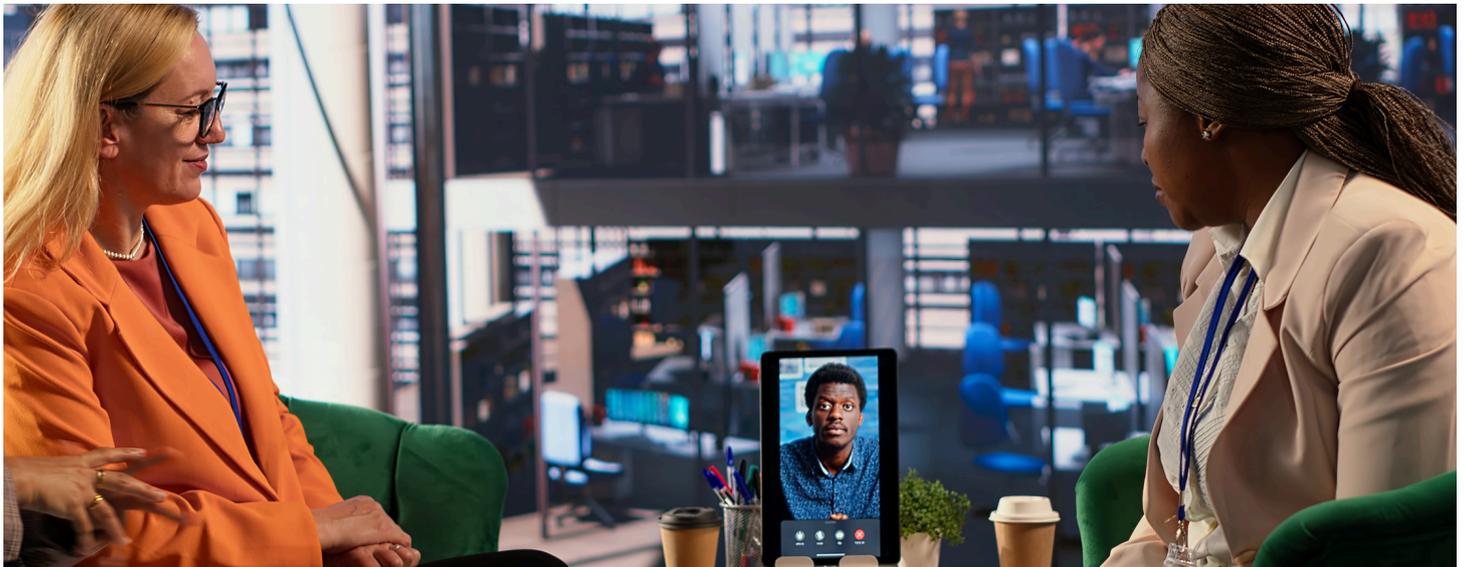
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Recruitment and AI in the Workplace: Balancing Technology with Human Insight

By: Zenovia Manuel

Over the years, recruitment has changed dramatically. The rise of technology—particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI)—has promised faster, more efficient hiring processes. While AI can undoubtedly support recruitment, especially with administrative tasks, I have seen first-hand how an overreliance on technology can unintentionally undermine the very purpose of hiring: finding the right people.



A candidate's first interaction with an organization is often the job advertisement. This moment matters. A job advert is more than a list of requirements; it is a reflection of a company's culture, values, and tone. Yet many adverts have become formulaic, generic, and uninspiring. If organizations truly want to attract the right talent, job adverts need to be engaging, clear, and authentically written for people, not algorithms.

AI is now widely used to screen CVs and shortlist candidates. While this can reduce administrative workload, it raises an important question: how many capable candidates are excluded because they do not fit a rigid AI profile or fail a so-called "killer question"? I have seen strong, high-potential candidates overlooked simply because their CVs did not tick every predefined box—despite their creativity, adaptability, and drive.

Candidates are human beings, not data points. They bring soft skills, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving abilities that AI cannot accurately measure. This is why competency-based interview questions must be practical, relevant, and aligned with organizational culture. Soft skills cannot be automated; they require human judgment, observation, and understanding.

It is also unrealistic to expect any candidate to meet 100% of a job description. A more constructive question is whether organizations are willing to hire someone who meets 70% of the requirements and has the capacity to grow. In my experience, this approach builds confidence, loyalty, and long-term capability. Probation periods play a critical role in this process, yet they are often poorly managed or overlooked altogether—leaving new employees without direction or support and setting them up for avoidable challenges.

Another recurring challenge is the interview process itself. Untrained line managers, or managers who have already decided on a preferred candidate, often waste time and resources by conducting interviews without objectivity. This is frustrating for HR professionals and deeply discouraging for candidates. When internal employees are being considered for advancement, organizations should proactively use talent management tools to prepare them through coaching, mentoring, and structured development. Promotions should be intentional, earned, and supported—not rushed or assumed.

AI is a valuable tool, but it cannot replace human judgment. Recruitment is not about matching keywords on a CV; it is about identifying potential, nurturing talent, and building teams that reflect an organization's values. Technology should support decision-making—not replace empathy, insight, or critical thinking.

From my perspective, a balanced approach is essential:

- Use AI wisely by allowing it to handle administrative tasks while maintaining human oversight for competency and culture fit.
- Hire for potential rather than perfection by creating space for learning and growth.
- Prioritize soft skills through interview questions that assess adaptability, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving.
- Invest in internal talent with structured development, mentoring, and coaching.
- Train line managers to interview effectively and manage probation periods properly.
- Reflect organizational culture from the outset through authentic job adverts and recruitment messaging.



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- Train line managers to interview effectively and manage probation periods properly.
- Reflect organizational culture from the outset through authentic job adverts and recruitment messaging.

Recruitment is, at its core, a human endeavour. AI can enhance efficiency, but it cannot replace discernment or the ability to recognize potential. By putting people first and integrating technology thoughtfully, organizations can build recruitment processes that are fair, effective, and genuinely human.

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