

# Berenschot



## HR Trends 2020-2021

Survey

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## Attribution and justification

The content of this report is based, unless explicitly mentioned, on Performa's HR Trends Survey 2020-2021, hereafter named HR Trend survey. This annual survey among HR professionals is an initiative of Performa Uitgeverij, executed by consulting firm Berenschot and supported by AFAS Software as well as HR professional associations.

The purpose of the HR Trend survey is to investigate the developments in the field of HR Strategy and execution, labour market communication and legislation concerning employment. The invitations to join the survey were sent in February 2020 by e-mail. We also made use of various internet sites and communities to draw attention to the survey. Participation in the survey was possible in the period February - March 2020. Participation was anonymous; results are not traceable to individual respondents.

1959 respondents completed the online questionnaire, of which 1084 entirely. 109 of the respondents are freelancer. The others are on the payroll. More than 30% of the respondents had participated in previous editions of the HR Trend survey.

The results have been validated and exceptions eliminated. In addition to the main survey in-depth research was conducted which focused on the impact of Covid-19 and the measures taken. Participants of the main survey could join the in-depth survey in the period end March – begin April. 155 respondents took part in the in-depth survey of which 126 completed the questionnaire entirely.

Where we write "average" we address the arithmetic mean. The analysis stipulates differences between different business areas as well as different job families. Where relevant and/or significant we address the differences. It is important to keep the correct peer group in mind when applying the outcomes of our survey.

## 1. HR's alignment with the Strategy

### 1.1 The vision of HR

The fourth revolution has arrived, with repercussions for the strategy definition of most organisations. Digitalisation and innovation are emerging as the most important topics in the boardrooms. Many organisations and companies that originated and grew in an analogue world realize they must set their course within the current digital transformation, in a rapidly changing and increasingly transparent world. A new basic model is inevitable and digital is the norm. In addition, the constantly changing environment requires a different way of making choices. This includes the need to explore many more agile scenarios and to adjust strategy accordingly.

A clear HR strategy stemming from the organisational goals and objectives addresses management choices regarding workforce, HR policy and service delivery by the HR department as the framework conditions for forthcoming success.

### 1.2 Link with the Strategy Trends

It is crucial to align the HR Strategy with the strategy of the organisation. The Berenschot Strategy Trends study shows the challenges faced by the Dutch business community, which choices CEOs, entrepreneurs and directors make, and what determines the success factors of today and tomorrow. That fact that there is a great deal of interest in this subject is clear: more than 750 organisations participated in the study, representing around 1 million Dutch employees, or about 14% of the national workforce.

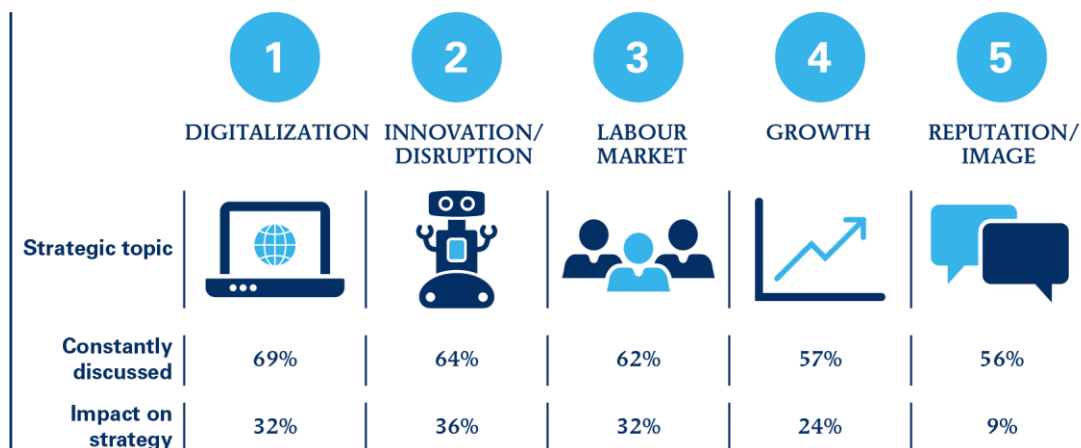


Figure 1. What is going on in the boardroom? (source: Berenschot Strategy Trends 2020)

Digitalisation, innovation and the labour market are the most important topics in the boardroom and have the most impact on the strategy of organisations. There are, of course, differences between organisations and sectors.

Changes in the labour market have a major impact on strategy. This relates to the fluctuating degree of labour shortage, as well as the flexibility, age structure and level of education of employees.

### 1.3 Link with the HR Trends

Looking at the ranking of the HR priorities, we notice that the strategic issue Labour Market is well-addressed; aspects like employee retention, training & development as well as recruitment and selection are the top priorities for 2020 and 2021. Several other high-ranked themes like Absenteeism & working conditions (3), Employee Experience & Employee Engagement (6) and Strategic Workforce Planning (7), contribute to the need to attract and retain enough qualified staff.

At the other hand there seems to be no firm connection with the other strategic subject, digitalisation and innovation. The theme Impact of robotisation and automation on human resources policy is still not high on the 2020 priority list, despite the fact that robotisation is changing tomorrow's world and the growing need for better trained and technologically savvy staff.

The good news is that it also enables us to optimize processes, products and services while increasing job satisfaction at the same time. It is very important that HR also focusses on the challenges of the Future of Work and starts taking action. The future starts today!

### The core of HR is and remains...



Managing the staff mix:  
That means, taking care of...

*"...the right numbers of the right types of People in the right places at the right times doing the right things right"*  
(Dyer and Ericksen, 2006)

*..at the right costs* (Hans van der Spek 2015)

## 2. HR Topics

For the twelfth time in a row we ran this HR Trend survey among HR professionals. One of the most important research questions is to find out how HR finds alignment with real changes and developments. The respondents were asked to choose the five most relevant HR themes for their organisation out of a provided list of 15 themes and to state their expectations for this and next year.

### 2.1 Ranking the “stars”

The 2020 top three HR policy issues:

1. Development/ Education/ employability/ talent management
2. Recruitment and selection/ labour market communication / ‘employer branding’/ ‘onboarding’
3. Absenteeism/ working conditions/ health policy

Recruitment and selection/ labour market communication / ‘employer branding’/ ‘onboarding’ and Development/ Education/ employability/ talent management changed places compared to 2019. Absenteeism/ working conditions/ health policy is a steady number three on the ranking.

## 2.2 Priorities 2020

What are the five most important HR-theme's for you and/or your organisation?	Ranking 2020	Change	Ranking 2019
Development/ Education/ employability/ talent management	1	+	2
Recruitment and selection/ labour market communication / 'employer branding'/ 'onboarding'	2	-	1
Absenteeism/ working conditions/ health policy	3	=	3
Digital support of HR processes	4	++	7
Reward policy/ modernisation/ harmonisation	5	-	4
'Employee experience'/ Engagement/ Retention	6	-	5
Strategic Workforce Planning	7	+	8
Jobstructure / job- roledesign	8	+	9
Performance management/ evaluation	9	--	6
Availabilty of HR-keyfigures	10	+	11
Privacy and dataprotection	11	-	10
Diversity/ inclusion	12	+	13
Execution of reorganisation or merger	13	-	12
Mobilitycenter/ career counseling/ outplacement	14	+	15
Impact robotisation and automation on human resources policy	15	-	14

Figure 2. HR priorities 2019-2020

We notice a trend break since last year with much more focus on improvement of the incumbent workforce instead of searching for and hiring new staff. In comparison with last year Digital support of HR processes made a remarkable rise from 7 to 4. Performance management/ evaluation moved in the opposite direction(2019:6, 2020:9).

The Impact of robotisation and automation on human resources policy was added to this list in 2017. This year it came in at the lowest position, down one place from 2019. This is quite amazing, or even alarming, as the impact of new technologies on our lives and work today is still rising.



## 2.3 Forecast 2021

When we look forward, the respondents' expectations of the top three priorities on the 2021 HR agenda are unchanged. Training and development and keeping employees motivated will still be the top priority. Recruitment will stay at number two, with the more health and working conditions aspects at number three.

Respondents expect both Strategic Workforce Planning and the Impact of robotization and automation on human resources policy to become higher priorities. 2020 seems to be the year of digital support of HR processes; as mentioned earlier, we saw it jump from 7<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> place in 2020, but for 2021 the respondents expect it to fall back to 6<sup>th</sup> place.

It seems that privacy and data protection only attracted attention due to related legislation (GDPR). In 2018 the theme topped the priority list but 2019 saw it fall into 10<sup>th</sup> place. It was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in 2020 and is expected to fall to 13<sup>th</sup> position in 2021.

What are the five most important HR-theme's for you and/or your organisation?	Ranking 2020	Change	Ranking 2021
Development/ Education/ employability/ talent management	1	=	1
Recruitment and selection/ labour market communication / 'employer branding' / 'onboarding'	2	=	2
Absenteeism/ working conditions/ health policy	3	=	3
Digital support of HR processes	4	-	6
Reward policy/ modernisation/ harmonisation	5	-	7
'Employee experience' / Engagement/ Retention	6	+	5
Strategic Workforce Planning	7	++	4
Jobstructure / job- roledesign	8	-	10
Performance management/ evaluation	9	+	8
Availabilty of HR-keyfigures	10	+	9
Privacy and dataprotection	11	-	13
Diversity/ inclusion	12	+	11
Execution of reorganisation or merger	13	-	15
Mobilitycenter/ career counseling/ outplacement	14	=	14
Impact robotisation and automation on human resources policy	15	++	12

Figure 3. HR priorities 2020 - 2021