

IS **HR TECHNOLOGY** THE NEW NORMAL OF HR?





The HR function has evolved over centuries and decades; from the times people were considered expendable, to when businessmen in the 20th century started embracing the idea of an established connection between a worker's wellbeing and his productivity. Originally termed as 'industrial betterment', human resource management was coined in the 1950s, supported by different legislations which started working towards a concrete enhancement of the lives of workers. The transformation of the workplace began then...

Ever since, the role of HR has complexified, re-invented even, through the adoption of new and emerging technologies which have purposefully shifted the focus from personnel management and administrative tasks to managing employee experience (EX) and strengthening or building company culture. The advent of technology has spurred a new type of human resource management, where the face of HR is rather a portal than a person.

Nowadays, organisations across the world would generally provide access to HR services through technology and web-based applications. Yet, if many have automated basic HR administration and created self-service platforms, the simple automation of HR processes cannot possibly safeguard a competitive advantage. There is more to HR Technology than simple automation...

What does HR technology entail?

The importance of HR technology in the modern organisation has undoubtedly been fueled by the drive and ambition of organisations to transform their HR functions, accelerated by the sudden global pandemic hit, where companies' operations worldwide have had to rapidly adapt and redesigned their activities to ensure business continuity. This has led to a dramatic change of the practice of human resource management, with a definite focus on technology to achieve specific HR business goals:



STREAMLINE

HR processes and reduce administrative burdens.



REDUCE

HR administration and compliance costs.



COMPETE

more effectively for global talent.



IMPROVE

service and access to data for employees and managers.



PROVIDE REAL-TIME METRICS

to allow decision-makers to spot trends and manage the workforce more effectively.

Assessing the state of readiness of the market

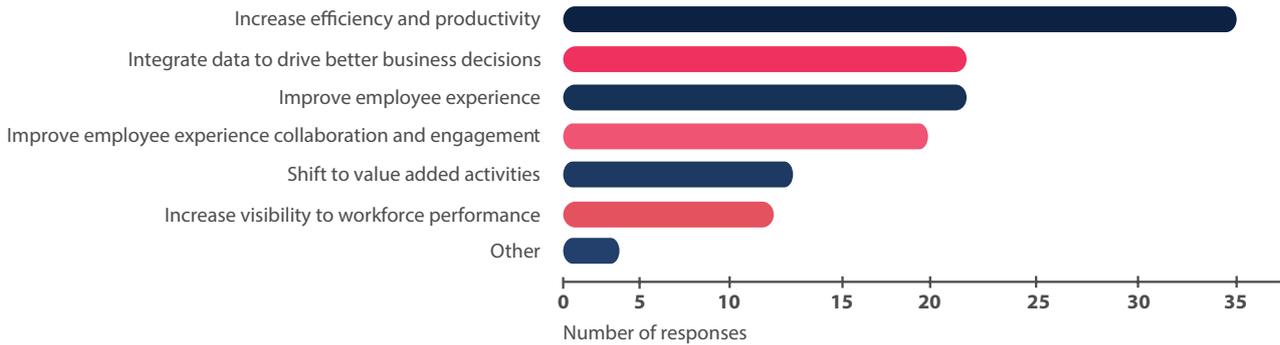
Most HR leaders and experts are unanimous on the fact that the workplace has faced its most drastic disruption, with irreversible impact in terms of people management. And the global pandemic has impeded this area, imposing an overnight obligation for companies of all sizes to operate on a remote basis, practically shifting the focus from HR technology to Work technology.

For HR professionals, this means widening the reach and accessing a palette of innovative solutions to shape how their functions operate and how efficiently and effectively work will get done in a post-pandemic world. It is clear that technology will continue to disrupt and impact HR functions. From that perspective, we wanted to feel the pulse and have more insights about how companies in Mauritius were navigating the

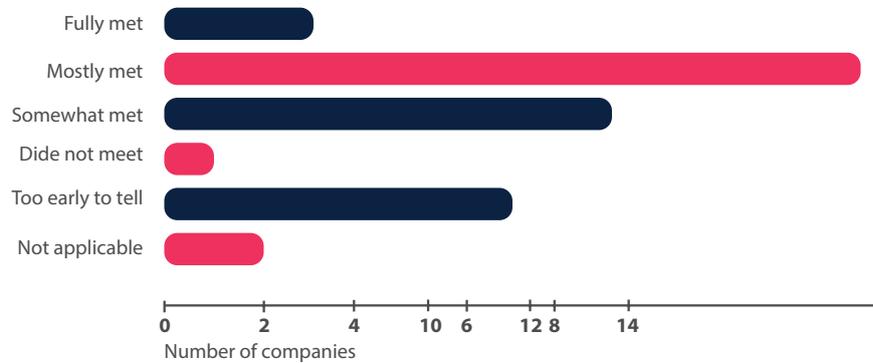
HR technology landscape and the priorities they have set in this particular area. As an exploratory study, the survey aimed to provide a helicopter view of this emerging topic whilst paving the way for further research and investigation.

As we surveyed 36 Mauritian companies across 15+ industries and pulled strong participation from major Top 100 companies, we read the responses as quite promising and positive. 6 out of 10 respondents indicated that they had a clearly defined HR technology roadmap and thought through the strategy. Whilst having a clear roadmap does not guarantee success, it does however help to clarify and set the direction in which the HR function is moving in order to implement and succeed in its functional strategy.

Objectives of investing in HR Technology



Extent to which objectives have been met



Investment in technology is therefore definitely part of the plan in the redefinition of the workplace, more so in a pandemic-induced global environment, but all HR experts agree on a few key crucial aspects :



- Improve the productivity of remote workers for instance



- Upgrade workforce management



- Enhance recruitment



- Build effective learning platforms.

Our pulse survey was spot-on as to the types of objectives Mauritian companies endeavor to achieve. Nearly all of the respondents (94%) indicated that they had identified at least

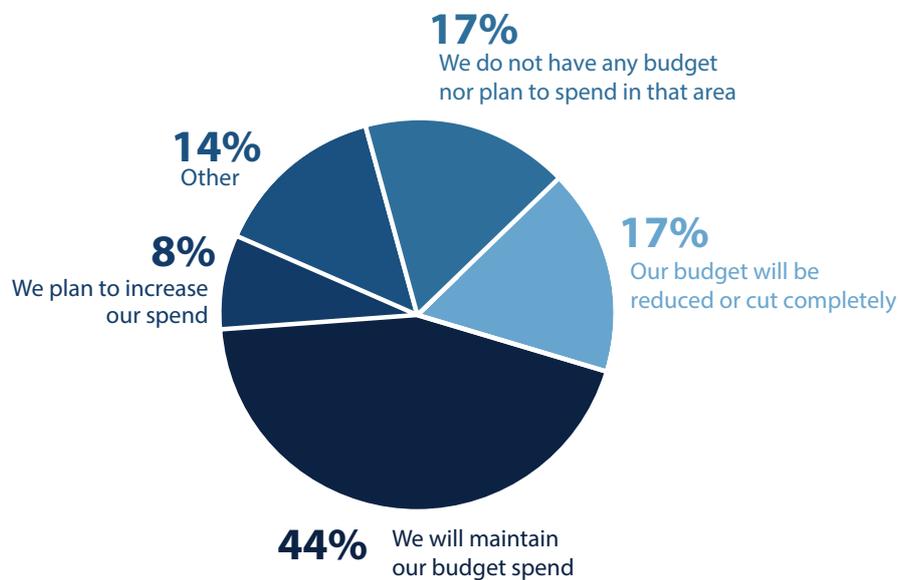
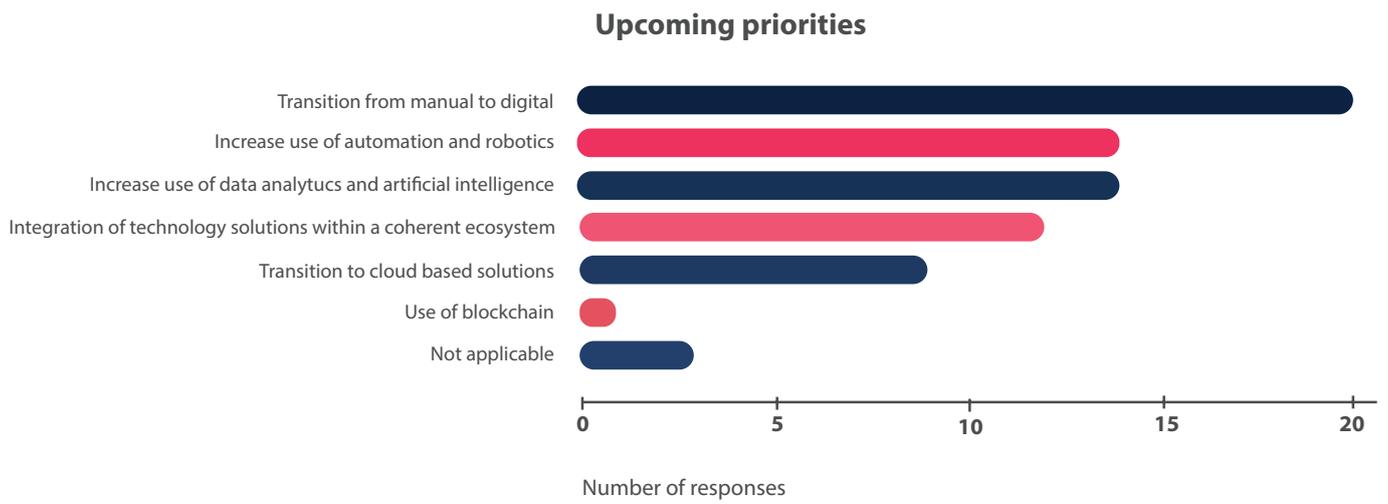
one objective they wanted to achieve prior to making their investment in HR technology, the dominant one being to increase efficiency and productivity. It is undeniable that technology is the best way to increase efficiency where data is recorded more systematically and is readily available for use. The survey also pointed out the desire of organisations to integrate data to drive better business decisions and improve Employee Experience.

People data and analytics is indeed one of the hottest, most in-demand skills for HR professionals and ranks as one of the most important human capital trends for organisations today. Companies are looking at data to inform decisions and answer typical questions such as: Who will leave and when? How do their capabilities compare to competitors? What skills and talent do they need?

A journey – not a final destination

In the end, every organisation’s journey into the HR technology landscape is bound to be different and will be impacted by the immediate priorities that it wants to address as well as the available funding.

As our survey portrayed, for 52% of respondents, the upcoming priority will be to transition to digital solutions. For instance, one out of 2 participants will be looking to leverage more sophisticated solutions such as automation (robotics), data analytics and/or artificial intelligence. On the other hand, whilst 1 out of 2 respondents retain a positive outlook regarding their expected budget spend, a third of their peers expect to face budget constraints.



The pandemic has definitely suppressed new HR technology spending, but pent-up demand and the widespread deployment of vaccines is expected to lead to renewed investment in 2021 as the economy slowly rebounds. HRs around the world have grasped the essence of technology and what were once deemed “nice-to-have” are now absolute priorities.

Whilst having the right solution that works and integrates seamlessly remains an important consideration, evidence and our experience suggest that a focus on people rather on the technology provides the key to unlocking the full potential and value of such investments.

Indeed, a holistic and people-centered approach, grounded in a solid commitment to helping leaders and employees shift their mindset when navigating through change, and equipping them with the requisite skills, goes a long way towards successful implementation and adoption. From that standpoint, it is somewhat apparent that Employee Experience (EX) will take precedence as the environment gets more challenging. And we strongly believe that EX will be achieved only if business heads take the lead, supported by subject matter experts from both typical IT and Human Resource functions.

