

Everest Group and Cognizant Reveal AI Is Redefining the Chief Human Resource Officer Mandate — But Scale Remains Out of Reach for Most Organizations

New global study finds structural gaps are preventing enterprises from translating HR AI ambition into enterprise-wide impact

May 4, 2026 - Everest Group, a leading research firm, today released *The AI Era: A Defining Moment for Chief Human Resources Officers (CHROs)*, a landmark study examining how artificial intelligence is reshaping the HR function and the expectations placed on HR leadership. What was once the domain of incremental HR optimization has become a strategic lever for enterprise performance, resilience and growth—and this research makes clear that the stakes for HR leadership have never been higher. The report, supported by Cognizant, draws on a global survey of 105 senior HR and transformation leaders across industries, geographies and enterprise sizes.

The research finds that the CHRO mandate is undergoing structural transformation. As AI reshapes how work is designed, governed and executed, workforce strategy is no longer a support function—it is a central enterprise capability. Decisions around skills, productivity and workforce composition are moving to the center of enterprise strategy, yet the challenge is not ambition but integration: the ability to execute at scale remains limited for most organizations.

"AI adoption within HR has moved well beyond experimentation, yet the path to enterprise-wide scale remains elusive," said **Priyanka Mitra, Vice President at Everest Group** and lead author of the report. "The constraint isn't technology — it's operating model coherence. CHROs who align ownership, governance and decision intelligence into a unified system will be the ones who convert pilots into sustained workforce performance."

Key findings from the report include:

- **AI adoption is widespread but shallow.** 77% of enterprises are piloting or scaling AI across HR processes, yet fewer than 2% report AI as fully embedded across HR functions. Most adoption remains fragmented and use-case driven.
- **Four structural gaps are holding organizations back:** fragmented ownership of AI execution, operating model ceilings that limit agility, insight bottlenecks from limited analytics maturity and rising governance pressures as AI moves closer to workforce decisions.
- **The provider relationship is evolving.** Over 90% of enterprises expect increased provider support for AI, analytics and automation initiatives — with expectations shifting from transactional delivery toward strategic co-creation and ecosystem orchestration.
- **HR's role is expanding.** More than 80% of enterprises expect AI-augmented HR and strategic advisory capabilities within the next few years, and 78% anticipate new specialist HR roles emerging, such as AI Trainer, People Data Translator and Skills Architect.

"The findings of this report reflect what we see every day working alongside HR leaders navigating real transformation pressure," said **Putul Mathur, Vice President and Global Practice Head, Employee Experience Services, IOA Cognizant**. "The CHRO role has fundamentally changed — it's no longer about managing HR operations efficiently; it's about orchestrating human and AI-enabled work at scale. Closing that gap requires bold leadership: consolidating ownership of workforce decisions, embedding AI into end-to-end employee journeys, and establishing governance approaches that promote trust, transparency and accountability in governance. As an AI builder, Cognizant goes beyond integration — we build the context-infused platforms, agentic journeys and tools that make AI's potential real for the enterprise, working with clients to help design the governance and trust frameworks that make that scale sustainable."

"The enterprises that will win are those that treat HR transformation as an integrated system — not a collection of parallel initiatives," said **Varun Madan, Senior Analyst at Everest Group**. "Speed of AI adoption matters less than the discipline with which organizations align their operating models, governance and partnerships."

The study surveyed respondents across Healthcare and Life Sciences (HLS), technology, Retail and Consumer Packaged Goods (RCPG), Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI), manufacturing, telecom, logistics, energy and utilities, and professional services. Geographically, participants span the Americas (35%), Europe (30%), the UK (17%), MEA (8%), APAC (6%) and ANZ (4%).

The full study is available [HERE](#).

About Everest Group

Everest Group is a leading research firm helping business leaders make confident decisions. Its deep expertise spans

technology, business processes and engineering through the lenses of talent, sustainability and sourcing.

About Cognizant

Cognizant (NASDAQ: CTSH) is an AI builder and technology services provider, building the bridge between AI investment and enterprise value by building full-stack AI solutions for our clients. Our deep industry, process and engineering expertise enables us to build an organization's unique context into technology systems that amplify human potential, realize tangible returns and keep global enterprises ahead in a fast-changing world. See how at www.cognizant.com or [@cognizant](https://twitter.com/cognizant).

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release includes statements that may constitute forward-looking statements made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, the accuracy of which are necessarily subject to risks, uncertainties and assumptions as to future events that may not prove to be accurate. These statements include, but are not limited to, express or implied forward-looking statements relating to the effects of artificial intelligence on the HR function and HR leadership roles. These statements are neither promises nor guarantees but are the findings of the report discussed above and remain subject to a variety of risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond Cognizant's control, which could cause actual results to differ materially from those contemplated in these forward-looking statements. Existing and prospective investors are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date hereof. Factors that could cause outcomes to differ materially from those expressed or implied include general economic conditions, the impact of technological development and competition, the competitive and rapidly changing nature of the markets Cognizant and its clients compete in, and the other factors discussed in Cognizant's most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Cognizant undertakes no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise, except as may be required under applicable securities law.

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