HR INSIGHTS · 2026

HR at the Crossroads

Reinvent yourself or be dissolved.

Why the future of HR isn't about replacing people with AI, but about redesigning work so people and AI create better outcomes together.

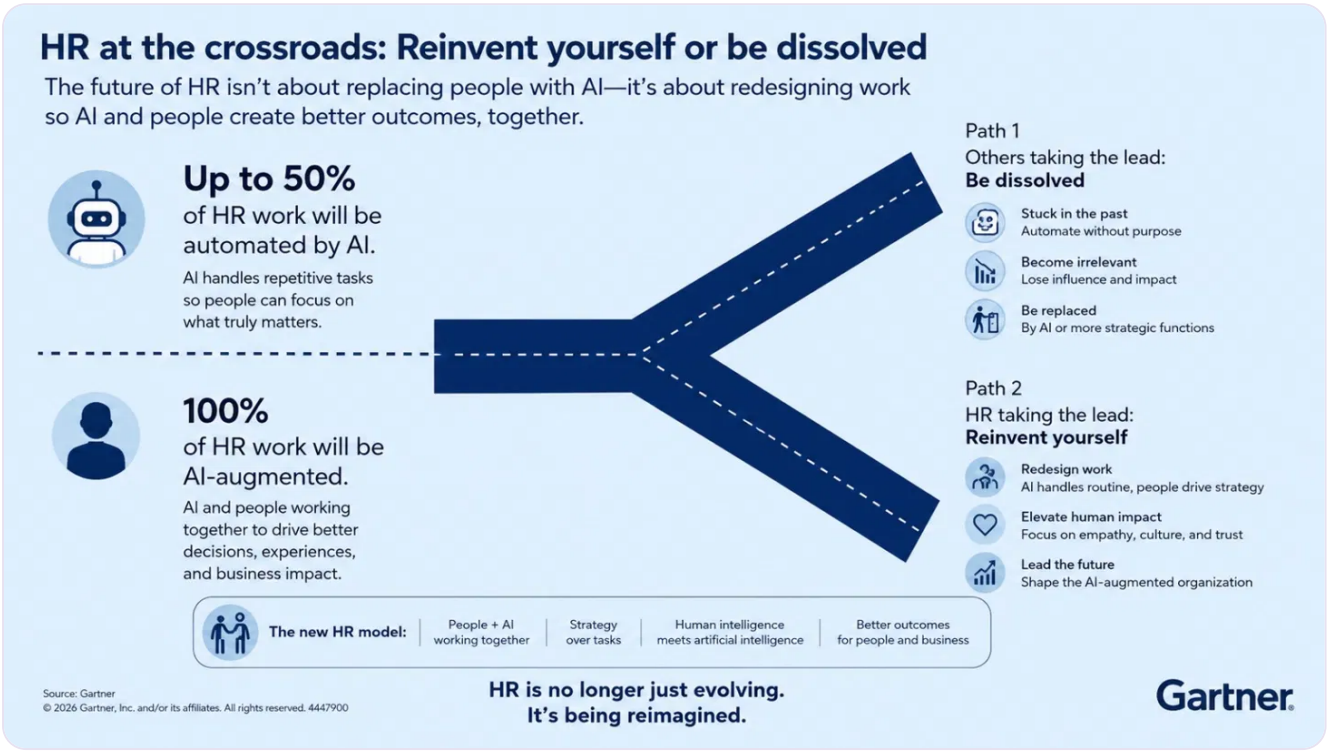
Janvi Mistry
Founder & Managing Director · ProTalent Advisory FZE

Abu Dhabi, UAE
protalentadvisory.net

THE BIG SHIFT

Half of HR work will be automated. All of it will be augmented.

Gartner's latest view says that by 2030, around half of all HR tasks will be performed by AI and the rest will be augmented by it. Every few years HR is told it is about to change. This time, very little HR work stays untouched, and the choice HR makes now will decide its place at the table.



Source: Gartner, "HR at the crossroads: Reinvent yourself or be dissolved" © 2026 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates.

What the numbers really say

Up to 50% automated

Repetitive, rules-based work such as policy questions, paperwork, scheduling and routine reporting is what AI handles best. The goal isn't a smaller HR team. It's freeing people for the work that truly matters.

100% augmented

Even the work that stays human will be shaped by AI: faster analysis, sharper insight, better decisions. HR professionals who learn to work with these tools will do more, and do it better.

Two paths, one decision

Path 1 · Others take the lead → Be dissolved

- **Stuck in the past:** automating without purpose
- **Become irrelevant:** losing influence and impact
- **Be replaced:** by AI or more strategic functions

Path 2 · HR takes the lead → Reinvent yourself

- **Redesign work:** AI handles routine, people drive strategy
- **Elevate human impact:** empathy, culture and trust
- **Lead the future:** shape the AI-augmented organisation

THE NEW OPERATING MODEL

Three shifts that reinvent HR

Gartner's CHRO checklist, *Evolve to an AI-Infused HR Operating Model*, turns the big idea into three practical shifts. Here is how I read them.

1 · HR operations become a digital solutions hub

AI agents will take on most Tier 0 and Tier 1 work: first-line questions and standard transactions. That only works with clean data, systems that can handle volume and AI integration, and processes standardised enough to automate. Larger firms can move this work into an internal shared-services unit or an external managed provider; the team itself needs new skills in prompt design, scenario planning and delivering HR as a product.

2 · HRBPs become strategic talent leaders

Low and middle managers will use AI agents as their first point of contact, and the agent will proactively push HR solutions when they matter. Human HRBPs, working in small pods, step in for complex cases and stay closely aligned with senior executives. Their edge becomes data judgement and critical thinking, including the ability to spot AI hallucinations and bias.

3 · Centres of excellence become HR product designers

With real-time employee data and AI, HR can personalise learning, careers, benefits and wellbeing. COEs stop working in vertical silos and organise around value streams such as attracting employees, retaining employees and HR excellence, measured on outcomes like candidate quality, engagement, turnover and HR productivity.

What this means for UAE and India businesses

Most of the businesses I work with are SMEs, startups and UAE–India-linked companies. They don't need a global services unit to begin. The direction is the same; the entry point is simply smaller.

1. **Diagnose before you automate.** Map where HR time actually goes. Automating a broken process only makes the problem faster.
2. **Fix the data first.** Reliable records, clear policies and a basic knowledge base make AI output trustworthy.
3. **Start with one routine workflow.** Onboarding, leave and policy queries, or recruitment screening. Prove the value, then extend.
4. **Upskill the HR team.** Prompting, data judgement, critical thinking, plus empathy, culture and trust.
5. **Keep humans on the moments that matter.** Performance conversations, difficult cases, Emiratisation and retention decisions need people, informed by AI.

IN SHORT

HR is no longer just evolving. It's being reimagined.

AI handles the routine. People drive the strategy. HR that gets this balance right leads instead of being dissolved.

Let’s build better people systems.

The crossroads is real, but it isn’t a threat. It’s an invitation to move from administration to influence. ProTalent Advisory starts every engagement with a diagnosis, then builds the solution around your business.



Janvi Mistry

Founder & Managing Director · ProTalent Advisory FZE

janvi@protalentadvisory.net

CALL & WHATSAPP

+971 50 932 2912
Call — UAE

+971 54 733 9626
WhatsApp — UAE

+91 96873 64484
WhatsApp & Call — India

+91 99786 84484
WhatsApp & Call — India

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Abu Dhabi, UAE · janvi@protalentadvisory.net

Office: 6th Floor, Building A, Ajman Boulevard, Al Hassan Al Basri Street, Ajman, UAE