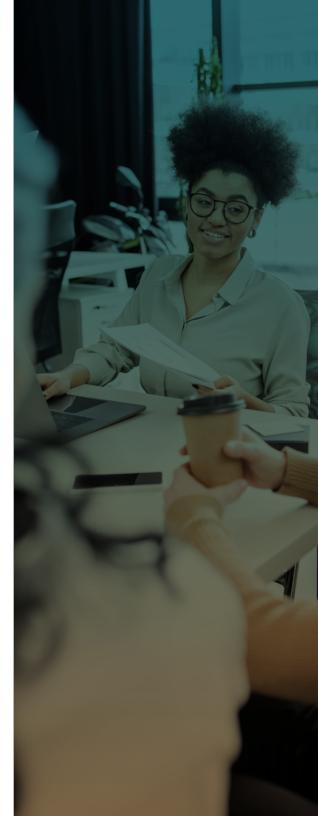


Contents

Introduction
Artificial Intelligence
Trend: Employees are eager to use AI and are more engaged when they do
Trend: Organizations understand the need to address ethics and privacy around Al \dots 3
More Technology
Trend: Talent developers are upskilling to use new technologies
Trend: Ethics and privacy are also issues with non-AI tools6
Employees
Trend: Employee trust in employers is faltering
Trend: Employees want more community at work
Trend: Individuals desire development opportunities
Trend: Employees want to be heard
TD's Role in the Business
Trend: Companies are hiring for and targeting skills in recruiting, learning, and retention
Trend: 2024 is the year of the manager
Trend: Leadership skills need improvement
Trend: Career mapping and workforce planning are crucial wants for employees 13
Trend: Generational shifts in the workforce will transform the workplace
Trend: DEIB will still be important to organizational success
References



Introduction

In the *Inc.* article "Jobs Are Changing in 2024: How Experts Predict Roles Will Fade, Shift, and Grow in the New Year," Sarah Lynch reports, "With the sheer amount of change that employers could start seeing in 2024, the path forward could be bumpy, [professor of business strategy at Columbia Business School Stephan] Meier says: 'There are going to be hard decisions. There [are] going to be some employees who have to change.' This could mean moving away from their current job or upskilling in their current role, Meier adds, 'and that's hard to communicate and facilitate.'"

As we make our way through what will, by all predictions, be a challenging year, what do talent development professionals need to know to best serve their organizations, clients, and employees? We examined the world of work in 2024 as it relates to artificial intelligence (AI), other technology trends, employee-focused developments, and organizational changes.

Employees and Al

The Qualtrics *Employee*Experience Trends 2024 report found that of the employees who are comfortable with AI:

- **53%** are engaged employees.
- **30%** are disengaged employees.

Employees would like to use AI for:

Writing 61%

A personal assistant **51%** Workplace queries **46%**

Source: Employee Experience Trends Report: The 5 trends transforming employee experience; Qualtrics

Artificial Intelligence

Trend: Employees are eager to use AI and are more engaged when they do.

In 2024, AI will gain prominence in the workplace as L&D and talent development professionals better understand how it can assist with mundane, routine tasks; create efficiencies; and help with just-in-time coaching and learning. Other uses will include recruitment and job searching, data consolidation and simplification, and employee engagement and experience.

In its blog laying out 2024 predictions, ALM Benefits Pro reports that CEO and Executive Chairman of Betterworks Doug Dennerline said employees have been quick to catch on to the benefits of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, beyond serving as a search engine. Dennerline continued by saying, "I think in the coming year, we'll see more and more C-suites stepping up and embracing the opportunity to not only help their employees be more productive with AI but harness its power to build more equitable and fair experiences, both in the workplace and for customers."

A CEO analysis conducted by IBM highlights the need for a training plan to better harness the potential of AI: 69 percent of CEOs see benefits in AI that span the entire organization, but only 29 percent say the organization has the necessary expertise for strategic Al adoption.

Trend: Organizations understand the need to address ethics and privacy around AI.

Ethics and privacy issues surrounding AI will be major concerns for talent leaders in 2024. According to ADP, "Given the rise of generative AI, ethics and compliance are increasingly important considerations for organizations. Tactics are addressing how data will be used with generative AI, who will use the technology, and how best to comply with related laws and regulations. Access rights and responsibilities, data types, and AI ethics, policies, and frameworks are also being considered."

Questions to Ask Around Al

In the January 2024 TD at Work guide, "Unlocking the Power of AI," Myra Roldan recommends considering several questions before starting out with AI:

- Who is responsible for the ethical use of generative AI (the AI provider, the AI model training, or the content creator)?
- How are we planning to introduce generative AI into the workflow?
- How will we ensure transparency in our use of generative AI?
- Have we thought about the unintended consequences of using generative AI?

Source: "Unlocking the Power of AI," TD at Work; ATD

Considerations for the Profession

Ethical AI use will require much of the TD function. The significant human implications require TD leaders to be a part of every organizational decision concerning AI implementation.

TD leaders will need to help ensure:

- People are trained to evaluate the quality and suitability of the data and models used to operate AI.
- Education and communication are provided to explain how the system operates when it is used to make consequential decisions about employees.
- Teams that share a process for documenting and auditing operations of Al systems are trained before Al implementation.
- TD experts are involved in the design and operation of AI systems used to make decisions about people.
- There is a widely shared and agreed-upon understanding of when and how an AI system should seek human input during critical situations.
- A robust feedback mechanism is put in place so all employees understand how to report performance issues they encounter.
- Broad cybersecurity and threat-awareness training is conducted annually.

The TD function should actively share with employees all design and development of AI systems and implementation practices that ensure predictable and reliable interoperation. The talent function is positioned to optimize the impact of AI on the organizations it serves. TD can lead the organization in making certain that the use of this technology meets the highest ethical standards.

Source: The Responsibility of TD Professionals in the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence; CTDO Next

Visier, a people analytics software, cautioned that leaders would be wise to consider issues such as bias and hallucinations that can be part of generative AI when using this powerful technology.

Concerns have led US President Joe Biden and other governmental leaders to issue warnings about Al. On October 30, 2023, Biden issued an executive order on the topic, saying that the US government would work to catalyze AI research, including the development of privacy-preserving techniques. The White House noted that it was already working with several leading companies to "drive safe, secure, and trustworthy development of Al."

Gartner conducted a survey to identify HR leaders' priorities for 2024, which showed that 68 percent of executives agree that the benefits of AI outweigh the risks. However, only 22 percent of executives are actively engaged in extensive discussions about Al's use in the organization.

More Technology

Trend: Talent developers are upskilling to use new technologies.

While seemingly the world's focus has been on artificial intelligence, there are many other forms of technology that will increase in usage and importance in 2024.

To best serve their organizations, talent development professionals will need to increase their ability to use available data in an ethical fashion and tell the data's story in the way that best resonates with the target audience. Performance management software provider Mirro advises, "Using people analytics as a tool for efficiency and strategic decision making that propels business growth will become paramount. The critical differentiator for HR success will be harnessing analytics to unlock untapped potential, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation throughout the organization."

And, according to McLean & Company's <u>HR Trends Report 2024</u>, technology can help HR with capacity when they don't have budget or other resources and help HR become more effective at change. For example, more than 40 percent of respondents indicated that upskilling HR around digital and data literacy will enable HR organizations to make wiser choices about existing technology and implementing new tools. Further, the report says that HR organizations that make good use of technology are 1.2 times more likely to be high performing at supporting change.

Talent Developers and Analytics

As to how respondents expected the role of chief human resources officer (CHRO) or chief people officer to change, Mercer found that more strategic managing in the face of greater disruption (79 percent) topped the list, followed by increased use of technology and automation (60 percent) and greater dependency on predictive analytics (54 percent).

"With the proliferation of data and the ability of organizations to access analytics that were previously accessible only by the deepest subject matter experts," explained the report, "CHROs also must increasingly leverage data analytics to guide their decision making, justify funding for their projects, demonstrate their value to their organizations—and even predict what will happen in the future."

Source: <u>Voice of the CHRO:</u> <u>Evolving the CHRO role in a rapidly</u> <u>changing world of work;</u> Mercer

Trend: Ethics and privacy are also issues with non-AI tools.

As with AI, privacy and ethics will play a role in the use of other technology. HR Exchange solicited opinions from thought leaders, with Nuria Requena, talent acquisition manager at Spacelift, predicting that HR teams will introduce more advanced data-protection measures and policies. Requena advised, "This rising priority on data privacy not only safeguards against data breaches but also signals to employees that their personal information is respected and protected, further reinforcing their commitment to the company."

When it comes to HR tech, Gartner recommends that HR professionals and the greater organization create an evaluation framework and also ask questions about ethics, governance, and whether employees are ready to use the tools being considered. The report poses questions such as: Are ethical risks easily mitigated? What is the current vendor landscape—should we wait? Should we stay in beta, educate, and embrace regulation?

Making Data More Equitable and Transparent

Visier explains that talent development professionals need to ensure people leaders have access to understandable data. They can do this by:

- Providing user-friendly data visualization tools, which will allow individuals to make sense of complex data.
- Encouraging a data-driven culture through training, workshops, and regular communication.
- Developing and adhering to data governance frameworks.
- Collaborating across departments. Breaking down data silos will lead to innovation and process improvements.

Source: The New Rules of HR: 10 Workforce Trends for 2024; Visier

How to Gain Employee Trust

In her *Business Record* <u>article</u>, Suzanna de Baca highlights several ways leaders can gain trust from their employees:

- Create a psychologically safe workplace. This means supporting well-being and creating an inclusive environment.
- Optimize your hybrid environment.
 Evaluate your policies around work and ensure that they maximize trust.
- Implement data strategies and confirm the quality and security of your technology platforms and systems.
- Acknowledge and respect the "Great Renegotiation." Different workers want different things; understand that and work with your talent.
- Be open and transparent. Be willing to share your feelings and doubts.

Source: De Baca, S. 2023. "On Leadership: Building trust a top leadership priority in 2024"; Business Record

Employees

Trend: Employee trust in employers is faltering.

In the past 18 months or so, employers have increasingly tried to mandate or lure employees back to the workplace, often with employee resistance. Some workers, who believed their employers understood their capacity to be productive regardless of where they worked, lost trust in leaders who have now argued that workers must return to the workplace.

For this reason and others, relationships between employers and employees in 2024 are somewhat sour and unsettled. In addition to the trust issue around where to work, employer commitment to diversity, equity, inclusivity, and belonging is, in many instances, fading regarding both budgets and staffing. In 2023, we saw employees in car manufacturers, the arts, and coffee shops all pushing back against their employers, which led to some employees walking off the job in solidarity or quitting.

In Jen Colletta's *Human Resource Executive* article "What will HR leadership look like in 2024?," Jacqueline Welch, executive vice president and CHRO of the *New York Times*, recommends that talent development professionals acknowledge the effects that uncertain global situations such as the crisis in the Middle East and the long-term impact of COVID may be having on employees and encourage conversations around mental health to keep the lines of communication open.

Trend: Employees want more community at work.

As the debate over in-person, hybrid, and remote work continues, there's a lot of discussion around employers needing to give employees a reason to make the commute and come back into the office, changing the way they've gotten used to working these past four years. Mirro's blog states, "Fostering a genuine community is taking center stage. People seek something more meaningful in

their professional lives, such as a purpose and valuable relationships." That may be what's required to get people into the office, rather than laying down blanket return-to-office orders.

Global architecture, design, and planning firm Gensler predicts that "the new workplace is a compelling destination with a choice of experiences where people desire to be. Office workers want everything the office has traditionally offered (colleagues, technology, mentorship, socialization) and everything they have become used to at home (privacy, acoustic control, fresh air)."

Trend: Individuals desire development opportunities.

For many employees, continued rapid change is leading to a desire for upskilling and career mapping. Attaining new skills is foremost on their minds. Betterworks' 2023 Global HR Research Report: The State of Performance Enablement found that career growth was more important to employees in 2023 than in 2022. Thirty-five percent of respondents said that career goals and purpose could make them consider moving to another organization, versus 20 percent in 2022.

As Amy Leschke-Kahle, vice president of talent insights and innovation at ADP, states in ADP's trends lineup, "Employees aren't following a traditional career path anymore—they rarely exist. This means leaders need to evolve and redefine how they think about careers so they can meet employees where they are." It's a theme that Gartner echoes, suggesting that talent development leaders create career paths that are in line with their employees' needs and desires while at the same time consistent with business goals.

Finally, Samelane notes that "upskilling equips employees with advanced skills and broader knowledge for their current roles, often through courses and training that expand their competencies. This enables them to handle greater responsibilities or achieve vertical promotion. It also helps to fill the skill gap."

Trend: Employees want to be heard.

Apart from professional development, employees want leaders who are empathic; they want to be heard in the workplace. A Top Employers Institute article about the company's World of

Why Is Community an **Important Component** of Work?

Indeed's editorial team offers these reasons, saving that a sense of community:

- Supports networks
- Provides opportunities for growth
- Encourages personal investment
- Promotes collaboration
- Boosts productivity
- Allows for more efficient communication.

Source: "How To Build Community at Work (And Why It's Important)"; Indeed

Work Trends 2024 report found that staff want leaders who are open to talking about current events. Employees want a two-way dialogue, and they want to see that their input has an impact on business decisions.

To meet employees where they are, to engage them, and to retain top talent, employers are beginning to use the customer experience model for employee experience. HR Curator notes, "The realms of customer experience and employee experience will continue to overlap. Orgs will preemptively manage both, recognizing that enhanced employee engagement directly translates into improved customer satisfaction and loyalty."

What Does It Mean to Feel Heard?

- 1. Encourage employees to communicate. Make sure there's a channel where employees can make their voices heard.
- 2. Respond to employee concerns. It does no good to ask employees to share if you then ignore them.
- 3. Treat people like people. Allow staff "autonomy in certain areas, such as offering flexible scheduling, remote work options, or employee growth opportunities beyond mandatory training."
- 4. Finally, lead by example. Leaders should demonstrate vulnerability and use their emotional intelligence to help employees feel heard and to cultivate positive behaviors in employees.

Source: "How to Help Your Staff Feel Heard"; American Society of Association Executives

How Will Employee Learning Take Place?

ATD's 2023 State of the *Industry* whitepaper reports that a live, instructor-led traditional classroom was the most-used training delivery method, regardless of company size, among respondents to its research survey. This was followed by live, instructor-led virtual training. Other formats included asynchronous e-learning, hybrid, and blended, which varied in use depending on organization size.

Further, the study investigated forms of on-thejob learning and found that on-the-job coaching was most frequently used, followed by mentoring and job shadowing.

Source: 2023 State of the Industry whitepaper; ATD Research

TD's Role in the Business

Trend: Companies are hiring for and targeting skills in recruiting, learning, and retention.

A recent human resources <u>study</u> by Deloitte indicates that "90 percent of executives are implementing skills-based practices." A skills-based approach—organizing and managing workers based on their skills and abilities rather than their qualifications and experiences—will change the way a company hires, trains, and develops its employees, which will create a more diverse workforce and open more available talent.

According to Deloitte, "Skills-based organizations are 107 percent more likely to place talent effectively, 98 percent more likely to retain high-performers, and 52 percent more likely to innovate."

Transitioning to a skills-based approach is easier said than done for many organizations. The skill sets needed for jobs change constantly. Better understanding what skills your organization needs now and in the future will help your workforce handle change and tackle future challenges.

In a <u>June 2023 *TD* article</u>, Tiffany Poeppelman wrote about the three qualities that skills-first organizations have in common:

- They understand the skills they have and need as an organization.
- They embrace skills-first hiring and development practices.
- They foster employees to grow their careers within the company.

L&D professionals play a major role in creating a skills-based strategy. Identifying critical and future skills, classifying skills, and building a skills taxonomy can help an organization become future focused, Darren Nerland wrote in a July 2023 *TD* magazine article.

Top Reasons for Skills Gaps

61% of TD professionals said the skills of their current workforce don't match anticipated changes in their company strategy, goals, markets, or business models.

54% noted insufficient bench strength in the company's leadership ranks.

Source: <u>Bridging the Skills Gap:</u>
<u>Workforce Development in</u>
<u>Changing Times</u> whitepaper;
ATD Research

How Companies Are Evolving to Operate as Skills-Based Organizations

From:

- Competencies based on formal qualifications alone and a mentality of needing people who can fill certain jobs.
- Organizational structure based on functional hierarchy with jobs attached and with work organized across functional silos.
- Limited to no L&D technology infrastructure and limited interoperability to support an organization-wide skills strategy.
- Technology and access to "qualified" candidates are the barriers.
- Nice-to-have competencies for job clarity.
- Organizational competency framework updated once every few years.

To:

- A skills-based focus derived from learned knowledge, experiences, and competencies, and a shift to needing people who have certain skills.
- Organizational fluidity with projects that can be delivered by leveraging a skills portfolio and with work organized across skills groups.
- Integrated L&D technology stack to support a skills strategy, with interoperability across the broader tech environment.
- Practices, processes, and organizational inertia are the barriers.
- Must-have skills for organizational scalability.
- Skills framework that is constantly evolving and being adapted.

Source: 2024 Global Learning & Skills Trends Report: Top Trends for the Future of Work; **Udemy Business**

Trend: 2024 is the year of the manager.

This year more emphasis will fall on the development and care of managers.

Manager burnout is at an all-time high. According to a Gallup article by Ben Wigert, "In 2023, managers were more likely than nonmanagers to be disengaged, burnt out, and job hunting. They were also more likely to feel like their organization doesn't care about their well-being and to say that they're struggling with work-life balance."

Data from the Predictive Index

shows a disconnect between executives and managers when it comes to communication. "Nearly six in 10 executives (58 percent) are very confident middle managers' concerns are heard when they approach them about important issues, but 58 percent of middle managers claim they are not very confident their concerns are heard when approaching executives about an important issue."

The Predictive Index data also showed that 25 percent of middle managers wish they'd receive more support from executives regarding inadequate staffing, while only 17 percent of executives see this as an issue.

The expectations for managers can be overwhelming. Along with doing their own work, managers are expected to help their team with their work, keep up morale, and increase team engagement and performance. "More than one in four middle managers (28 percent) say low morale in the workforce is the foremost hurdle keeping them from being more productive, while only 17 percent of executives see it that way," noted the Predictive Index report.

According to ATD's <u>New Manager Development: Building a Foundation for the Future</u> research report, 24 percent of talent development professionals indicated that they had a practice of identifying new managers who were having challenges in their role, and many offered coaching or mentoring to help these struggling managers.

According to the Betterworks <u>2023 Global HR Research Report: The State of Performance Enablement</u>, managers need help with coaching and career conversations for professional growth. "Forty-six percent of managers don't feel confident coaching for career development," noted the report. "Managers expressed confidence in their ability to have effective conversations around performance but said they need more tools and support—particularly from HR—to coach for career growth and advancement."

Trend: Leadership skills need improvement.

All leaders in an organization, including managers and supervisors, play a vital role in organizational performance.

According to Udemy Business's <u>2024 Global Learning & Skills Trends Report: Top Trends for the Future of Work</u>, "organizations and their leaders must:

1. Understand how to navigate the skills landscape and why it is essential to assess, identify, develop, and validate the skills their teams have, don't have, and need to remain innovative and competitive.

79% of middle managers say they're at risk of burnout from the stress of managing people.

Source: <u>Survey Says Middle</u> <u>Managers Don't Like Managing;</u> The Predictive Index

New manager training was offered at **37**% of organizations.

Source: <u>New Manager</u>
<u>Development: Building a</u>
<u>Foundation for the Future;</u>
ATD Research

- 2. Adapt to the rise of AI, including how generative AI and automation are disrupting the way we work as well as their role in supporting the move to a skills-based approach.
- 3. Develop strong leaders who can lead through change and build resilience across their teams."

Coursera's <u>Job Skills Report</u> highlights the need for improved leadership skills. "Leadership skills increased in rank due to changing macroeconomic conditions and emerging technologies such as AI," an <u>article on HR Dive</u> said. "Learning leaders will need to increase their focus on cultivating skills such as empathetic leadership, team building, and team management. The fastest-growing leadership skills included people management, negotiation, influencing, employee relations, and people development."

TD professionals are aware of the importance of leadership development, and according to ATD's <u>Leadership Development: Preparing Leaders for Success</u> research report, "78 percent of talent development professionals indicated that their organization was somewhat or extremely likely to make changes to their current leadership development activities or programs and, of organizations that didn't currently have any leadership development program, more than half said that they expected to develop one in the next year."

Trend: Career mapping and workforce planning are crucial wants for employees.

Workers want to know if there is a chance for advancement at their current employer.

While pay, culture, and flexibility are top reasons people stay at their companies, "three in four employees would prefer to advance within their companies instead of leaving for a different position, but only 48 percent of workers see a path for advancement in their current company and only 46 percent feel supported in their career aspirations," according to the Betterworks 2023 Global HR Research Report: The State of Performance Enablement.

77% of organizations offered leadership development programs and activities.

Popular leadership development topics included communication skills (98%), goal setting (95%), and teamwork (94%).

Source: <u>Leadership Development:</u> <u>Preparing Leaders for Success;</u> ATD Research Other reports echoed the sentiment for better career communication. "A recent survey of 1,000 UK employees by <u>Lattice and YouGov</u> found that only 15 percent said they have regular career growth conversations (at least once a quarter) and 13 percent said they have clear career growth paths," according to a HowNow L&D <u>article</u>.

One of the top HR priorities for 2024 is internal mobility. In Gartner's <u>Top 5 HR Trends and Priorities for 2024</u>, 66 percent of HR survey respondents said that career paths within their organization are not compelling for their employees.

A <u>report by TalentLMS and Vyond</u> underscores the importance of training in career development. "Seventy-two percent of respondents said they have progressed in their careers thanks to the training they've received from their companies, and 71 percent feel more prepared for the future of work because of the training they have received."

Organizations spend a lot of time and money on upskilling employees and onboarding new ones, so internal mobility is valuable for both the employee and the organization.

Trend: Generational shifts in the workforce will transform the workplace.

Generation Z will overtake boomers in the workforce.

Gen Z is expected to constitute a quarter of the workforce in 2024, and these numbers are expected to steadily increase. Along with being tech savvy, this generation is innovative and ethnically diverse.

Members of this generation are more comfortable using AI and machine learning, and they care deeply about community connections, having their voice heard in the workplace, and diversity and inclusion. Organizations must be ready to accommodate these expectations.

Employees who are satisfied with career and development check-ins are up to **750%** more likely to see a path for advancement.

Source: <u>2023 Global HR Research</u> Report: The State of Performance Enablement; Betterworks Gen Z is expected to influence organizational culture. "Gen Z will play a much bigger role in organizational culture in 2024, and according to PEW, 25 percent of the current population is Gen Z and they are on track to become the most ethnically diverse and educated generation in US history," Anika Rahman, CEO of National Diversity Council, said on a December 7, 2023, Human Resource Executive webinar. "Gen Z prioritizes transparent companies that show a commitment to hiring a more diverse workforce. Seventy-nine percent of Gen Z rank diversity as an important value."

Gen Z workers want their organizations to care about their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) values. They also view pay equity and transparency as critical, along with a people-first culture and work-life balance.

Work-life balance includes flexibility at work, and the broader cultural discussion has included rumblings about a four-day workweek. A global trial of a four-day workweek produced positive results. A survey conducted by <u>4 Day Week Global</u> shows that 97 percent of the 495 respondents want to stay with a four-day workweek, and so do the 27 companies that responded.

Will a four-day workweek catch on in the US? Will it be used as a tradeoff to incentivize employees to return to the office? Whatever happens, it is just one of many potential changes that organizations will face with the generational shift in the workforce.

According to a <u>recent Forbes article</u>, Gen Z is not satisfied at work. They rank, on average, their satisfaction at 5.2 out of 10.

"Organizations with a multigenerational workforce will see increased demand from internal stakeholders for demonstrable action on areas that align to purpose and values (social issues, the environment, and DEI). This will be particularly pronounced with Gen Z and millennial employees. External stakeholders (like customers) will also increasingly make buying decisions on whether organizations are responsible corporate citizens on issues like DEI and social impact, increasing the opportunity cost of not making DEI progress," said Farren Roper, head of diversity, equity and inclusion at Qualtrics, in Qualtrics' *Employee Experience Trends* report.

40% of organizations provided a dedicated DEIB education budget.

At organizations that offered DEIB education, **52%** said organizational leaders were very supportive and **42%** said they were somewhat supportive.

Source: <u>Diversity, Equity, Inclusion</u> <u>and Belonging Education</u>; ATD Research

Trend: DEIB will still be important to organizational success.

Even if budgets aren't showing it, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging will still play a major role in creating a strong workplace culture in 2024.

Data is showing a decline in organizational DEIB investments and in leadership buy-in, but with an increase in Gen Z employees—who are the most diverse and educated in the history of the US—organizations need to keep DEIB initiatives at the forefront for strategic and business success. "Seventy-nine percent of Gen Z employees rank diversity as an important value," said Rahman, CEO of National Diversity Council, on a December 7, 2023, Human Resource Executive webinar.

DEIB training will continue to evolve in 2024.

A <u>December 2023 Forbes article</u> by Julie Kratz showed that "DEI is at an inflection point. There is a mixed bag of evidence showing continued slow support of DEI:

- Job postings for DEI are down.
- Most employees perceive DEI as positive, yet there is a significant political divide.
- DEI investment is steady and projected to double by 2026.
- Investors and legislation are continuing to pressure organizations to prioritize DEI.
- Younger employees see DEI as nonnegotiable."

Prioritizing a skills-based hiring strategy can help diversity. It opens the talent pool and allows for a more diverse group of candidates. TD professionals need to continue to spotlight their diversity and inclusion training efforts.

2024 Chief Diversity Officer Priorities

- 1. Strengthening DEI strategies to ensure alignment to business goals—from global talent needs to helping guide leaders as they navigate workforce divisiveness and geopolitical challenges.
- 2. Fostering inclusion for all, starting with emphasis and ongoing education on inclusive leadership.
- 3. Building more inclusive and collaborative cultures by ensuring psychological safety throughout the employee experience.
- 4. Expanding tools and resources to enable and support accountability for DEI initiatives enterprise wide.

Source: <u>2024 Priorities and</u> <u>Predictions: C-Suite Perspectives</u> <u>from i4cp's Boards</u>; i4cp

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