

# Developing a digital culture is 2018's biggest challenge, say HR directors

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Tuesday, 25 September 2018

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Over half (54%) of HR professionals think developing digital culture and employees' skills is this year's biggest challenge, finds research from the HR Innovation Practice Observatory at Politecnico di Milano School of Management.

The researchers interviewed 170 HR executives from medium and large companies on the topic of human resource management and development in the wake of increasing digitalisation.

They found that companies are struggling to integrate new technological roles with those already present (48%), beat competition to attract talent (43%) and plan relevant training to up-skill staff (37%).

Fiorella Crespi, head of the Observatory at Politecnico di Milano School of Management, says: "HR directors must now both source and develop key digital skills in their companies, guiding the process of change and building an organisation for the future. Growing numbers are investing in people with creative, entrepreneurial talents who can help to spread a culture of digital innovation throughout the company."

"Our research indicated that there is a limited level of maturity and awareness about how to create a culture that is truly focused on digital technology. However, encouraging interaction between those with IT skills and those without is becoming increasingly common in businesses, through initiatives based on gamification, like hackathons."

The research revealed that only 35% of companies have already defined a people strategy, while 48% believe it is an important issue to be addressed this year.

Fiorella says: "Retention and the development of current employees' digital expertise are important for the success of an organisation. HR teams must get to know individuals better and map out their qualities, skills and mindset in order to identify 'hidden' talents which, if undetected, may not flourish or be put to use – or even become a source of frustration and loss of engagement."

"Over the next few years, an organisation's ability to remain competitive will depend on it being able to review and transform its processes, products and business models in order to respond to the challenges of this digital revolution."

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