



*4 WAYS DIGITAL*

***TRANSFORMATION***

*WILL CHANGE HR*

# Introduction

The explosion of digital technology and the way that people, businesses and organizations are more interconnected than ever is transforming the HR sector. Digital transformation is helping the relationship between employee and employer become much more of a two-way dialogue, rather than a static, one-way conversation that can leave employees disconnected and disenfranchised.

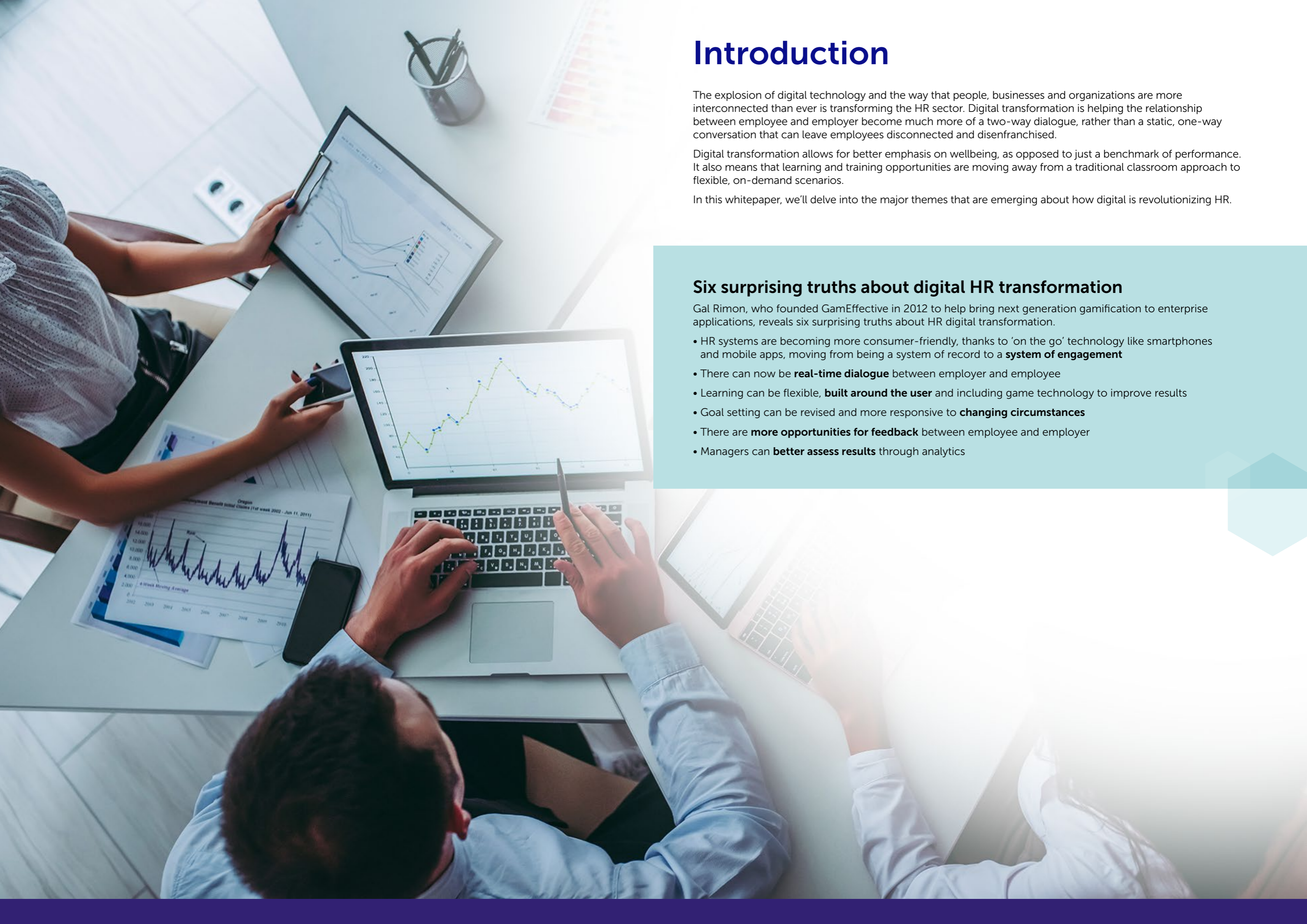
Digital transformation allows for better emphasis on wellbeing, as opposed to just a benchmark of performance. It also means that learning and training opportunities are moving away from a traditional classroom approach to flexible, on-demand scenarios.

In this whitepaper, we'll delve into the major themes that are emerging about how digital is revolutionizing HR.

## Six surprising truths about digital HR transformation

Gal Rimon, who founded GamEffective in 2012 to help bring next generation gamification to enterprise applications, reveals six surprising truths about HR digital transformation.

- HR systems are becoming more consumer-friendly, thanks to 'on the go' technology like smartphones and mobile apps, moving from being a system of record to a **system of engagement**
- There can now be **real-time dialogue** between employer and employee
- Learning can be flexible, **built around the user** and including game technology to improve results
- Goal setting can be revised and more responsive to **changing circumstances**
- There are **more opportunities for feedback** between employee and employer
- Managers can **better assess results** through analytics



# 1. Learning and the digital workplace

## Key research

Towards Maturity: [‘Three ways technology can help build business agility’](#)

Towards Maturity: [‘Unlocking Potential: Releasing the potential of the business and its people through learning’](#)

Strategic HR Review: [‘Learning and the digital workplace: What? So what? Now what?’](#)

## Key takeaways

- Learning at work is moving away from classroom-style formats to on demand
- Learners are more geared to mobile tools than employers, which implies employers should amend their style of engagement
- Social media-style tools can help, given that employees have become increasingly used to using them outside of work

It may be a fact that there are more digital tools available to Learning and Development (L&D) professionals than ever before, but why is that important?

The answer is that this technology is enabling workforces to demand more from their employers, fuelled by changes in society and the economy. Employees no longer accept the handed-down approach to learning and training – they want more of these opportunities, and they know the tools to help them are out there.

There are a variety of factors to consider when implementing technology:

- The information explosion, with vast quantities of information being created and being made available. It's vital to know what to use in L&D to stay relevant
- Flatter structures in the workplace lead to less of the traditional 'them and us' divide between management and employees, with more collaboration
- People are increasingly working in digital environments, physically separated from colleagues, working on the move or at home
- The generational mix is evolving – there are fewer baby boomers

at work, Generation X are a long way down the career path and millennials are becoming a larger and larger part of workforces. L&D opportunities for one group will not suit another.

## “Employees no longer accept the handed-down approach to learning and training”

### Why technology is important in helping learning at work

Technology is moving learning at work away from the traditional model such as team building and away days – providing opportunities to spend a department budget more wisely and with a specific and targeted objective. Enterprise networks and platforms like Yammer help colleagues share ideas and

information, and build relationships across the organization in an environment that's familiar from non-work related social media forums.

Those who are learning are prepared to use technology to help them – Towards Maturity's [Learner Voice report](#) found that 48% of learners use work-related apps to help them. But in the same report, only 18% of L&D teams were using native apps to support learning. Employees appear to be ahead of the curve. It's a gap that businesses need to close.


### What technology should be used?

Few L&D teams are utilising work-related apps as an opportunity to help their employees learn more. But in addition to apps, websites need to be optimised for use via mobiles and tablets; a site that hasn't been upgraded can look badly out of date. Towards Maturity's that 50% of L&D practitioners were planning to tie their learning management system to a mobile app, much higher than the 17% who were currently doing so.

There is an array of platforms that can be used effectively to encourage learning. Yammer is one example of an in-house social network, while Slack is another that is used for information exchange and file sharing. Skype for Business and Google Hangouts are popular video conferencing tools that also feature messaging and screen-sharing.

### What does the future hold?

L&D will be driven more by people sharing their knowledge and collaborating with their colleagues, a scenario some way removed from traditional 'top down' learning methods. Leaders in L&D will help facilitate this by enabling different digital methods that allow learners to connect with each other.



“48% of learners use work-related apps on their smartphones to help them”

## 2. Providing a better digital experience

### Key research

Strategic HR Review: [‘Providing a better digital experience for employees’](#)

### Key takeaways

- Good UX will help with employee digital engagement
- L&R practitioners must consider why good websites and apps work and apply best practices
- Consistent look, feel, language and tone are vital

All aspects of an employee’s relationship with their workplace have an online aspect, from their application for the role, through to details of their ongoing performance, their pensions and much more.

But if employees are struggling to access their online profiles or are reluctant to use the tools their HR teams have made available, it’s highly likely that a poor digital user experience with UX design is to blame.

### Why is good UX important in HR?

Employee engagement is vital to how HR teams operate. The emphasis is shifting away from system of record to a two-way relationship where employees expect that:

- Their HR teams will have detailed knowledge of all aspects of their employment
- They can access these details themselves, as and when they need them

Employees may have access to their profile through an intranet or a HR system portal, however it’s down to UX to drive ease of use. It’s worth analysing sites like Amazon and Facebook to look at how the experience they give is so user-friendly, and why they get repeat visits.

How do you find out the state of play? Evaluate the UX of your system’s interfaces by surveying your employees on their experience, with a formal usability test that will give you data to act upon. Some tests include video. A video of employees using your systems may help to persuade that change is needed.

### How to improve UX

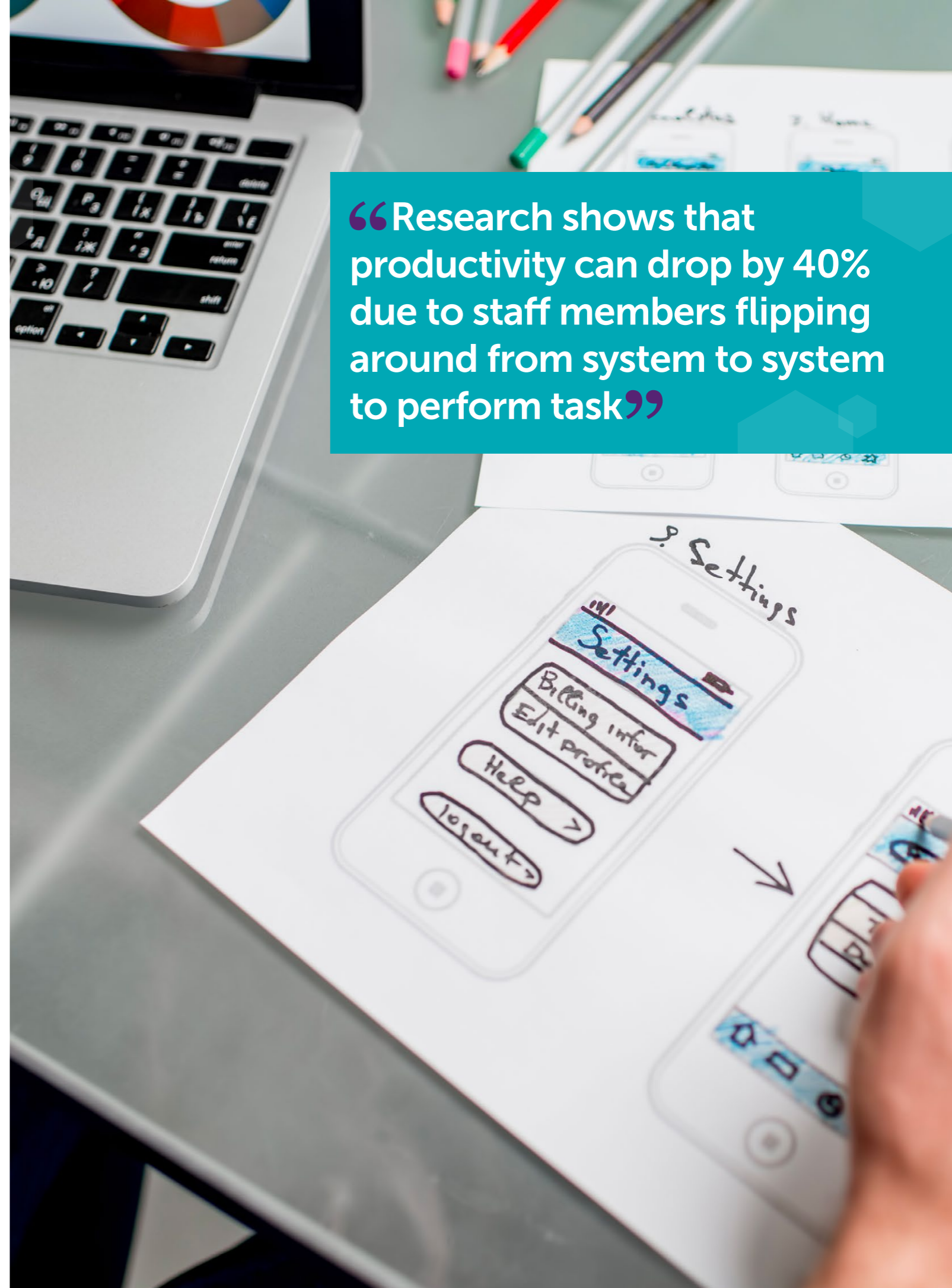
Following on from the usability test, ask staff what changes they would like to make or what would make your systems easier to use. [Research](#) shows that productivity can drop by 40% due to staff members flipping around from system to system to perform tasks, so try to think about bringing these together. Even using similar logos, buttons, fonts, consistent language and tones of voice across your systems could help make using them easier and save time.

With employees willing to use on-the-go technology to help with workplace learning, it’s also worth extending improved HR-related access away from the traditional ‘sat behind the desk’ model. Optimising an intranet portal for mobile and tablet access will help, as could making your systems available via a smartphone app.

Changing the digital experience for the workforce will entail a lot of work, and cost to go with it. But if it improves the employee-employer relationship, boosts job satisfaction and – crucially – productivity, then the effort has obvious engagement benefits.

“If employees are struggling to access their online profiles or are reluctant to use the tools, it’s highly likely that a poor digital user experience with UX design is to blame”

“Research shows that productivity can drop by 40% due to staff members flipping around from system to system to perform task”



# 3. Using data and analytics

## Key research

*Human Resource Management International Digest*: 'Transforming HR in the digital era: Workforce analytics can move people specialists to the center of decision-making'

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 'HR Analytics'

## Key takeaways

- HR can access data to track employment information in more depth than before
- Analytics can help HR employee relationship be more adaptable
- Visual representation can help data be communicated quickly and effectively



The increasing use and availability of data via analytics means HR professionals can track and predict changes through employment, which will help to guide their employment strategy.

According to Prerna Lal in *Human Resource Management International Digest*, analytics "help HR to move from being an archaic, conventional function to playing a more dynamic and fluid partnering role".

## “Analytics help HR become dynamic and less static in the changing modern workplace”

Why would this be useful to a HR professional? Workforces can be geographically spread apart, yet connected through digital technology, resulting in an increasingly flexible approach to the working day. A broad age range in a workforce can mean different demands for a HR department, but having accurate data to hand can provide insight and help manage the modern workforce in a much-changed environment.

Data is available from a range of sources, and in different formats. There will be quantitative data such as someone's age, or their results in a test, as well as qualitative data such as how they rate their job satisfaction. It needs to be made available in an easy to digest format, to turn it from raw data into valuable insight. This is achievable through visual means like infographics, bar charts and graphs, showing HR teams trends to help them guide their strategy.

## Areas where analytics can help HR

### 1. Workforce planning

Data will help HR assess an employee's time with the organization, from hiring to departure. Roles can be analysed to identify where gaps are, then the data can show if people from the rest of the workforce can fill them.

### 2. Better business performance

Data and insights can help HR managers on recruitment policies and getting staffing levels to a place that works better for the business. The balance between a low head count and being able to deliver a service can be found through analytics, as can assessment of paying overtime or recruiting more people.

### 3. L&D Opportunities

Use of data can help guide on which L&D opportunities are suitable for different levels of employees. Insight can be gained on who has taken up internal programmes, and how they have fared.

### 4. Retention

Long term success can hinge on the retention and loyalty of employees. Analysis of available data can provide insights, see where and why people are moving within the business or leaving it. Strategies can be developed on the development or retraining of employees.

### 5. Compensation

Payroll, expenses and overtime can be accessed via data analysis. Compensation can be assessed alongside performance, and strategies to reward those working consistently well can be developed.

HR needs to be adaptable and aware of the modern employment environment, intelligent use of analytics can help with this to improve the workplace for employer and employee.

“Workforce analytics for HR have changed the name of the game of talent and employee management”

# 4. Rethinking and enabling digital engagement experience

## Key research

[Strategic HR Review: 'HR's new role: rethinking and enabling digital engagement'](#)

[Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal: Designing employees' training by immersive serious games? A study of digital natives' satisfaction, perception and expectation in corporate training practices](#)

## Key takeaways

- Employees want their managers to engage with them more
- Messaging and cloud-based file sharing can help bring workforces together
- The diverse modern workforce can be unified

The way digital communications technologies are changing relationships between employers and employees has been called "a new industrial revolution." Employees expect their managers to engage with them on a personal basis, but despite the myriad of tools available to help in this, it seems that the revolution is proceeding slowly.

A study by Willis Towers Watson in 2016 found that 56% of employees felt their employers should understand them as well as they are expected to understand their customers. Only 39% considered this to be happening, and at the start of 2018 Willis Towers Watson made "being more tech savvy" one of their top five priorities for HR professionals for the year.

## How digital engagement helps

The tools are there to help with engagement – email is long-established, but tools like Slack and Google Hangouts can perform similar functions. It can go beyond just messaging, with file and content sharing working in the same, familiar way as email. But it can also help get the job done, taking people out

of customer actions like checking a bank account and freeing them up to focus on complex, higher-value parts of their job.

## “Employers should understand them as well as they are expected to understand their customers”

## How to implement digital engagement

There are other ways in which adopting technology can improve digital engagement. It can improve wellbeing and improve work-life balance by enabling remote working – removing the grind of the daily commute is just one aspect that employees will respond to positively.

Leaders within an organization can be seen as remote from the workforce, but blogs or intranet posts can establish a conversation.

Employees may have multiple options regarding benefits or training

opportunities from their employer, but emails flagging these up may be forgotten about as they drop down an inbox list. So, an online portal with each worker's unique profile, containing benefits, courses taken or available, annual leave days available and more can keep this kind of information in one place.

HR need to assess what needs to be done in their organization, and what tools may help. They also need to consider the more diverse modern workforce – a mixture of full-time employees, contractors and freelancers. Tools like Slack and Yammer can help remove barriers between these different groups and instil a sense of 'one team'. But the resources must be made available to all, down to the kind of level where a worker knows where they can source equipment, like a headset needed for Google Hangouts, on the company intranet.

The changing blend of workforces and the training required for them can also be catered for with digital technology. As time passes, more and more new employees will become 'digital natives' –

people who have grown up in the digital communications era. Their expectations around training will be different to previous generations and can be met by game-based solutions to L&D challenges.

The amount of digital options available to organizations can appear baffling, but HR can be the calm in the eye of the storm, providing trustworthy solutions to help the business change and improve.

## “HR need to assess what needs to be done in their organization, and what tools may help”



## A final thought...

A common theme that emerges from looking how digital technology can and will transform HR is that the traditional employer-employee dynamic is altering forever. The static, top-down approach to information and learning from HR is being replaced by a fluid, dynamic dialogue.

Employees expect more from their HR teams, and thanks to the omnipresence of mobile technology, they can, potentially, be in constant contact. As James Larkin says in *'Strategic HR Review'*, technology is "putting the HR department in every employee's pocket".

Technology along the lines of social media, along with information that can be accessed and stored in the cloud, can be used by both employees and their HR teams. And with headcounts swelled by a generation that has been digital savvy for its entire life, change is not around the corner, but happening now.

HR leaders need to embrace this change and pitch their departments as digital leaders in their organizations. Digital is not a separate department of its own – it permeates at all levels, and smart, flexible use of its possibilities can see HR teams lead the way.

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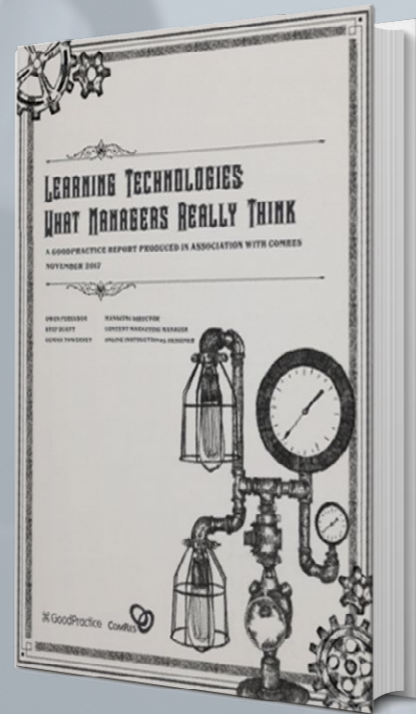
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- How do managers view workplace learning technologies in comparison to the technology they access in their personal life?



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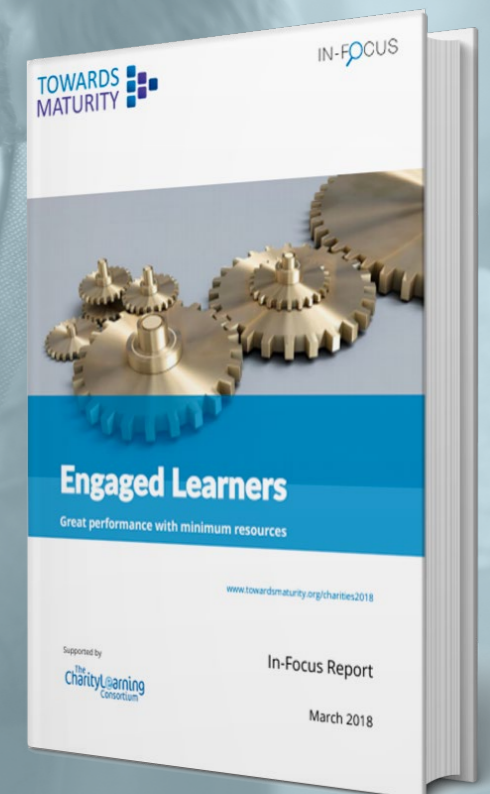
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