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Empowering the Intelligent Workplace

*How HR Can Drive AI Adoption with
Confidence and Care*



HRCI is the premier credentialing and learning community for the human resource profession.

For over 50 years, HRCI has set the global standard for HR expertise and excellence through its commitment to developing and advancing those in the people business. HRCI helps HR professionals and businesses achieve new competencies that drive results by creating and offering world-class learning and by administering eight global individual certifications and three organizational certifications. Today, over 500,000 HR professionals in 150+ countries have achieved HRCI certification as a mark of high professional distinction.



AI Is Not Futuristic— Your Colleagues Are Using It Now

HRCI surveys show HR professionals are ready to use artificial intelligence, but companies must provide more support.

For those wondering just how artificial intelligence (AI) will impact life at work, consider this: A recent HRCI poll of more than 1,500 HR professionals showed that fully 50% are currently using AI at work every day. Another 27% said they use it at least weekly. That means more than three quarters of the HR profession are already putting AI to use on a regular basis.

The takeaway is obvious. AI is not the future. It's here right now.

Yet when it comes to organizational support, a series of HRCI surveys show that HR professionals are perhaps not receiving the training and support needed to use AI to its full potential.

- Almost 60% said they are getting very little or no training at all from their organization. About a third (31%) said they received some training. Only 9% said they received extensive training.
- About 63% said they are at least somewhat on their own to learn about and adopt AI. Roughly one in five (22%) said they get some support and one in six (15%) said they are fully supported by their organization.
- About 41% said they were intimidated by AI and 37% said they are not encouraged by their organization to use AI at work.

Of course, those factors—workplace encouragement and AI intimidation—are also related. Among those who were strongly encouraged to use AI at work, 70% said they were not intimidated by artificial intelligence. Among those not encouraged at all to use AI, that number fell to 49%.

The numbers reveal an HR profession ready to embrace a future driven by technology and learning, even as organizations lag in providing adequate support. The surveys also suggest that when organizations do provide encouragement and training, it has an impact.

The HRCI data mirrors findings in other studies. For example, a recent [McKinsey & Company report](#) shows that employees are eager to acquire AI skills and are more ready to adopt AI than their executive leadership might think. The study found that employees are “three times more likely than leaders realize to believe that AI will replace 30 percent of their work in the next year.” Forty-eight percent of employees say training is the most important factor in AI adoption.

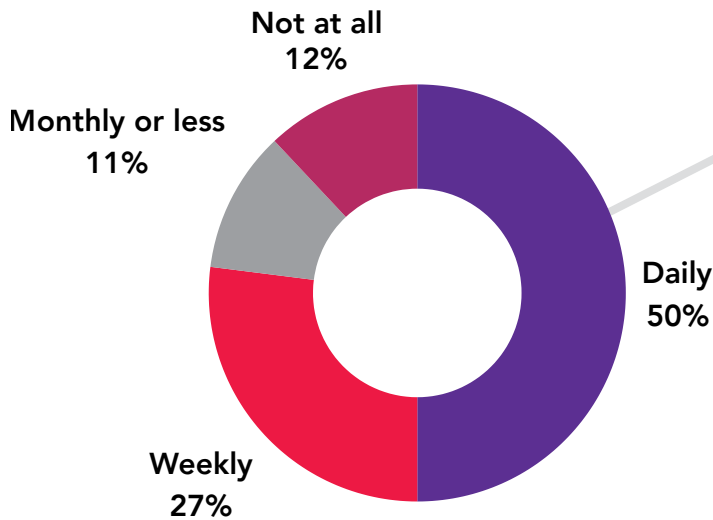
“AI is no longer some futuristic thing. It is here and HR professionals are using it, but organizations need to catch up. A company without an AI strategy is already falling behind. HR professionals can play a leadership role in advancing AI adoption, but they must be trained in order to make it happen.”

Dr. Amy Dufrane, CEO of HRCI

HR Speaks

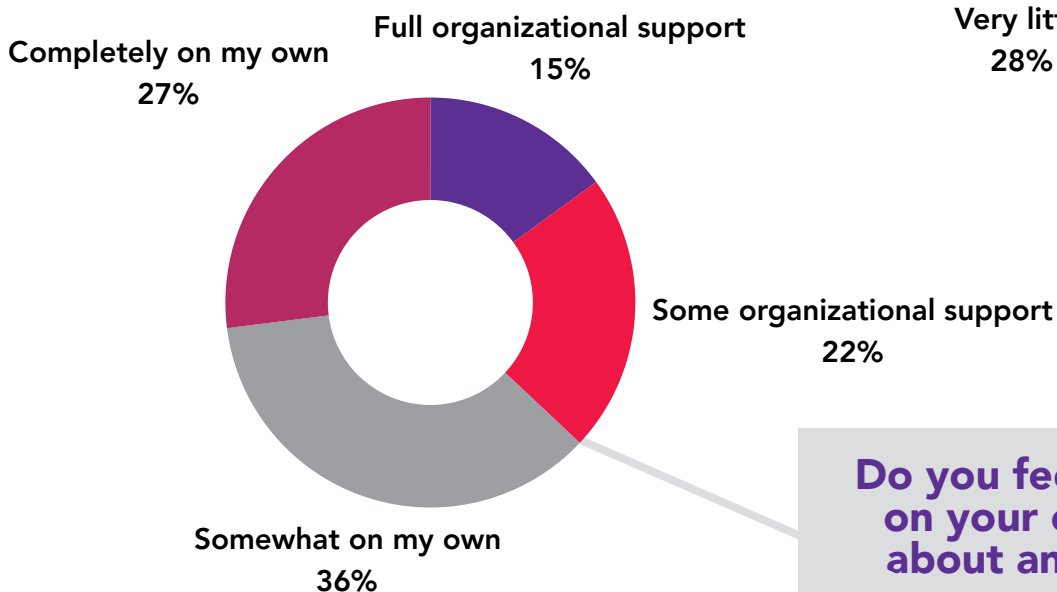
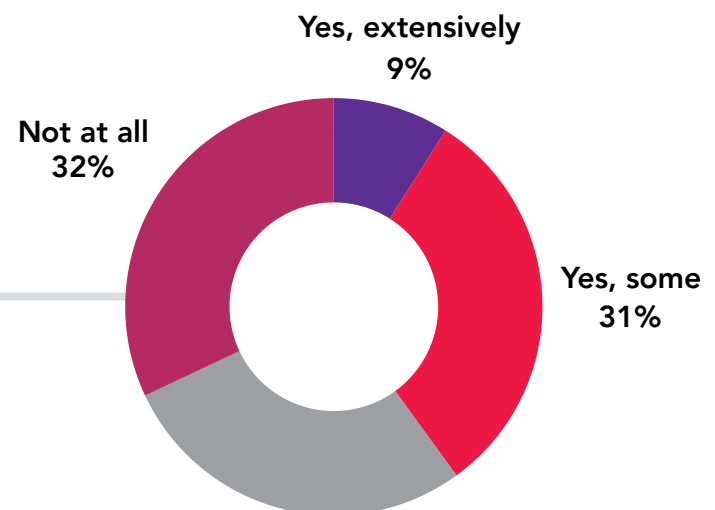
How often do you use AI in your HR work?

Source: HRCI LinkedIn poll, September 2025
1,531 respondents



Is your organization training your HR department to use AI?

Source: October 2025 Alchemizing HR
webinar poll | 1,330 respondents



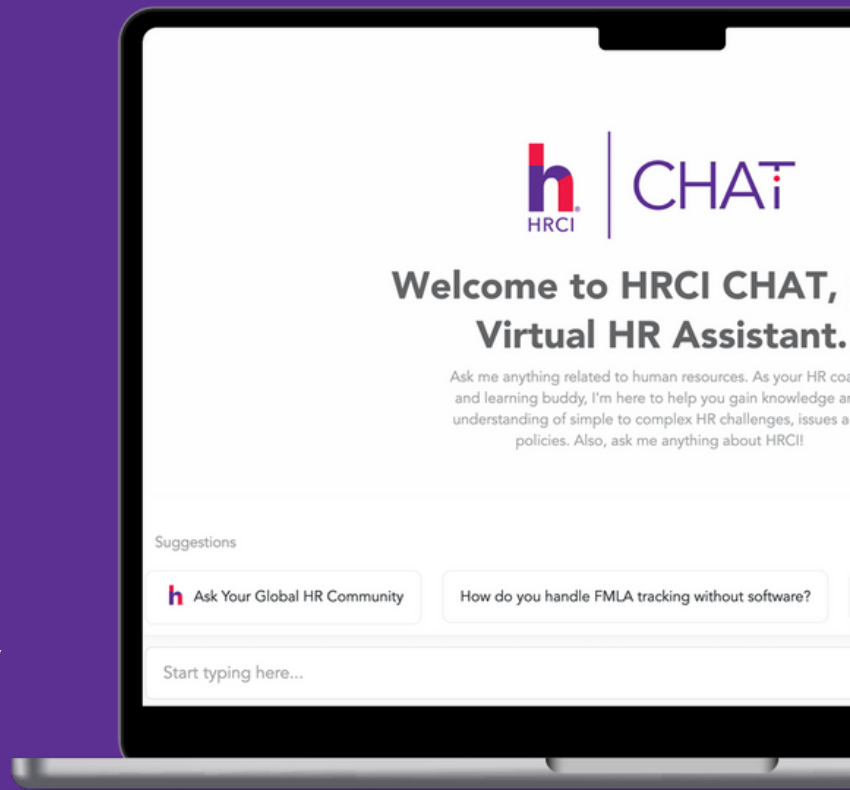
Do you feel like you are on your own to learn about and adopt AI?

Source: October 2025 Alchemizing HR
webinar poll | 1,298 respondents

Get to Know HRCI CHAT

HRCI CHAT is an AI-powered assistant designed specifically for HR professionals. Available 24/7, it provides instant, reliable support on a wide range of HR topics—from compliance and policy to leadership and strategy. By streamlining everyday tasks, HRCI CHAT helps HR teams save time, boost efficiency, and focus on strategic priorities that drive organizational success.

“At HRCI, we always want to be on the forefront of educating HR professionals, and the best way for us to do that was to directly enter the AI space with a free tool designed just for them,” said **Chris Scandlen**, Chief Information Officer at HRCI.



HRCI CHAT allows HR professionals to perform many different tasks and learn along the way:

- Analyze workforce data such as turnover, engagement, and compensation trends to inform organizational planning.
- Generate leadership-ready reports to support data-driven decision-making.
- Draft tailored job descriptions, offer letters, and onboarding checklists to streamline hiring.
- Build employee training communications, performance feedback templates, and development plans.

The app is available at no charge to HRCI account holders. HR professionals can also learn more about AI using **HRCI ENGAGE**, a global HR community that allows members to ask questions and solve problems collaboratively.

“We’re changing how HR works by delivering instant support, smarter solutions, and the ability to focus on what matters most—people.”

Dr. Amy Dufrane, CEO of HRCI

What's Happening at Work



While HR professionals have discovered AI, the biggest changes are almost certainly still ahead. Roughly 92% of companies plan to increase their investments in AI, according to McKinsey. Yet only 1% of company leaders say their organization is “mature” when it comes to deployment.

Many experts predict a tectonic shift in how work gets done at modern corporations and nonprofits, with AI changing the nature of work and, in some cases, replacing jobs currently carried out by people. That can mean staff reductions—but not necessarily.

One argument for AI is that it allows routine HR tasks, such as onboarding or answering employee questions, to be automated and personalized. It also allows complicated analysis, such as forecasting trends in turnover or productivity, to be done much more quickly. This could have a major impact on how an HR team spends its time, reducing manual work on routine tasks and freeing up capacity for strategic activities such as planning and innovation. But it will require these teams to learn new skills.

Statistics from IBM, which offers AI tools in the HR space, show that HR leaders say as much as 56% of their workforce will need additional skills to accommodate AI technology.

Those same leaders also expect a 2.5% increase in headcount—a finding that runs counter to the displacement narrative—perhaps owing to the need for new roles, such as those in data science and AI operations. The results mirror other, broader studies. For example, a PwC survey of more than 4,700 CEOs globally late last year found that 82% said AI has increased headcount or caused no change.

Similarly, commercially available AI is also in its infancy and its uses and sophistication are poised to explode. Some liken today's landscape to the early days of other profound technological changes.

“Artificial intelligence ... has the potential to be as transformative as the steam engine was to the 19th-century Industrial Revolution,” the McKinsey report said.

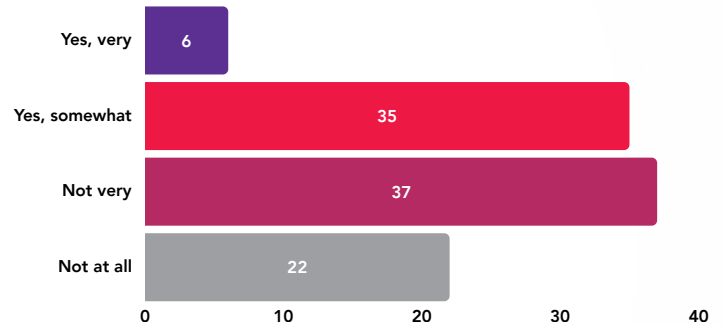
"Over 40 years ago, the internet was born. Since then, companies including Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Meta, and Microsoft have attained trillion-dollar market capitalizations. Even more profoundly, the internet changed the anatomy of work and access to information. AI now is like the internet many years ago: The risk for business leaders is not thinking too big, but rather too small."

Chris Scandlen, chief information officer at HRCI, said AI can be a disruptive technology but today's HR leaders are well suited to adjust.

"We are going to see AI surge in our industry during the next three years. That means HR professionals are headed into an intense period of upskilling and learning. But that is nothing new. We have seen major changes before. The mobile revolution, the advent of social media, and the rise of remote work all happened in the last 20 years, and all are now part of our daily lives. As a group, today's senior HR managers are well suited to manage change."

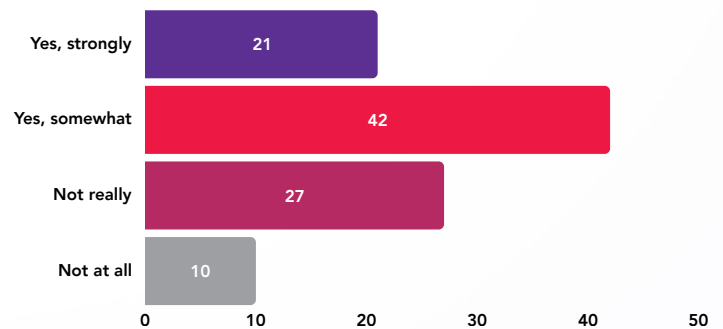
Chris Scandlen, Chief Information Officer, HRCI

Are you intimidated by the use of AI in the HR field?



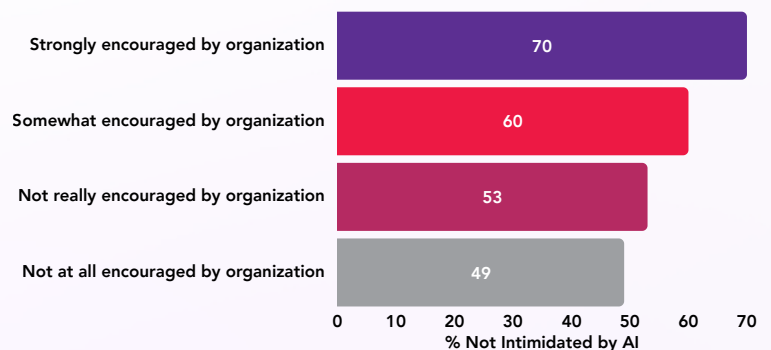
Source: September 2025 Alchemizing HR webinar poll | 869 respondents

Are you encouraged by your organization to use AI at work?



Source: September 2025 Alchemizing HR webinar poll | 846 respondents

AI intimidation by extent of organizational encouragement



Source: September 2025 Alchemizing HR webinar poll

Where AI Impacts HR

Right now, an HRCI survey suggests most HR professionals are using generative AI, which creates content such as written work, images, video, and code. The survey showed that 67% are using AI for content creation such as emails, notes, and documents; 12% are using it for processes like hiring or training; and 7% are using it for slides, decks, or visuals.

AI-driven systems could touch almost every facet of the HR profession before long, especially with the rise of “agentic” AI in which autonomous AI “agents” act independently to carry out tasks without human oversight. Here are some examples of where AI is likely to reshape HR functions:

- **Employee Service:** HR chatbots and virtual assistants use AI to provide instant answers to employee questions about policies, benefits, and procedures. They are available around the clock and can handle a wide range of issues, reducing the burden on staff. They can also learn over time, improving their accuracy and responsiveness.
- **Recruiting:** AI systems can automate the initial stages of hiring by scanning resumes, identifying relevant skills, and using sophisticated technology to rank applicants. Some platforms can conduct video interviews and perform other time-saving tasks.
- **Employee Sentiment Analysis and Engagement:** These systems focus on understanding how people feel about their work environment by collecting feedback through surveys and internal communication channels, then analyzing it to detect patterns. The system can alert HR teams to problems and suggest targeted actions.
- **Learning and Professional Development:** AI can help tailor training programs to individual needs. These platforms analyze job roles and performance data to recommend courses and resources. Some systems can adapt content based on engagement and skills as employees progress.
- **Performance Management:** These systems offer an alternative to the traditional annual review process by tracking employee objectives, feedback, and productivity in real time and identifying trends and areas for improvement. They can also recommend personalized development plans. The goal is to make performance tracking more transparent and actionable.
- **Onboarding Automation:** AI onboarding platforms simplify the process of welcoming new employees by automating routine tasks and customizing the experience. These systems handle orientation, training, and paperwork using chatbots and adaptive workflows that change based on role, location, feedback, and other factors. These systems can be helpful for HR professionals who hire globally or manage onboarding at scale. Similar systems exist for exit management.
- **Workforce Planning:** AI systems for workforce planning help HR professionals anticipate staffing needs and model future scenarios to predict the outcome of hiring, restructuring, or skills development. This allows companies to better align workforce strategy with long-term business objectives.
- **Specialized Analytics:** There are many systems that address specific HR functions, adding new capabilities. For example, retention-focused AI tools analyze employee behavior and engagement data to predict who might be at risk of leaving, allowing HR professionals to take action and reduce turnover. Compensation analysis tools examine internal pay structures and external market data to ensure companies remain both fair and competitive.

From Strategy to Execution

"While many HR tasks can be automated and AI can act independently, human oversight and control are still advisable in these early days," Scandlen said. "It's important to verify and trust in balance, knowing that as AI tools rapidly improve, confidence follows."

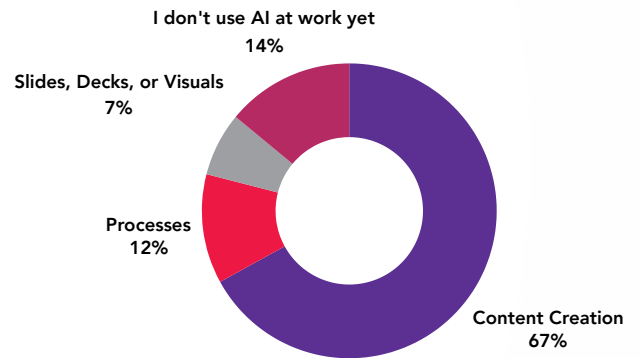
"Many HR positions are augmentable, meaning AI can be used to supercharge those roles. When we add the efficiency of AI to the judgment and experience of seasoned HR professionals, the result will be powerful. Ultimately, AI is going to make HR teams a lot more capable, but we are only at the very beginning of that transformation."

Dr. Amy Dufrane, CEO of HRCI

Choosing AI Systems: Risks and Rewards

While AI has great promise, it also comes with great responsibility. Most HR professionals understand that AI tools have limitations, including the risk of producing inaccurate information or "hallucinating" false results. However, purpose-built HR systems can also pose challenges, especially for organizations that implement them without proper planning or oversight.

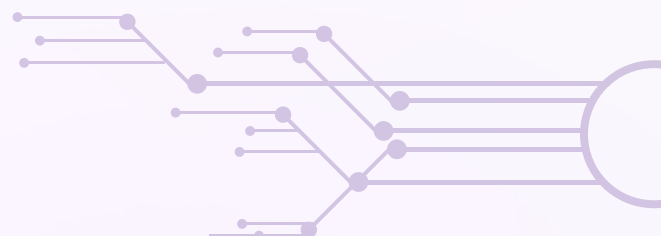
AI has many applications in HR. Which use tops your list right now?



Source: October 2025 Alchemizing HR webinar poll | 1,029 respondents

For example, Amazon developed an AI-powered recruiting tool intended to streamline candidate evaluation but found the system was consistently downgrading resumes that contained language related to women, according to news accounts. The bias stemmed from training the AI with resumes submitted over a decade that reflected a male-dominated hiring pattern. Amazon abandoned the project in 2018, and it was never used to evaluate candidates, but it became a cautionary tale about how biased data can lead to problems.

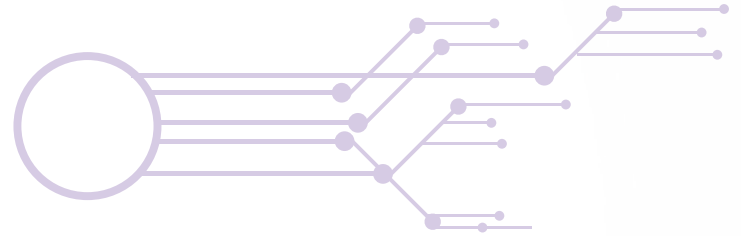
In 2022, Teleperformance, a global outsourcing firm that counts major U.S. companies as clients, came under scrutiny for using AI-powered surveillance tools to monitor remote employees, according to news accounts. The system used video surveillance and collected data, raising questions about privacy and workplace ethics. A backlash led the company to scale back its practices, but the case underscored the need for balance between productivity monitoring and employee rights.



Selecting and Measuring Systems

This year, McDonald's faced a major data security incident involving its AI-powered "Olivia" chatbot, developed by an outside vendor for use on the McHire website. The system was made accessible using default administrative credentials, with both the username and password set to "123456," according to news accounts. Doing so exposed the personal data of millions of job applicants, raising questions about the security practices behind AI-driven recruiting tools.

To avoid problems, experts say HR teams looking to invest in AI-based systems must conduct a rigorous procurement process. While this might look different at every organization, here's an example of a basic process:



- Create a Team:** Start by forming a diverse group of stakeholders who will guide the evaluation process. This team should include HR professionals, IT and technology experts, a data privacy officer, a representative from finance, and some end users. Their combined expertise ensures both technical and practical needs are considered and that integration into your existing tech stack is seamless. A collaborative team also helps build early support across the organization.
- Hire a Consultant:** If your internal team lacks experience with AI systems, bringing in a consultant may be smart. A knowledgeable advisor can help interpret product claims, compare platforms objectively, and guide you through technical evaluations.
- Draft a Requirements Document:** Before selecting a solution, clearly outline your organization's needs. This document should list essential features, integration requirements, security expectations, and user experience goals. A well-crafted requirements document acts as a blueprint for your evaluation, can help you create an RFP, and will keep your team focused.
- Take the Trial—Always:** Most solutions offer a trial period or demo environment—use it to your advantage. Assign team members to test the software using realistic scenarios, such as screening candidates or generating performance reports. Pay close attention to how intuitive the interface is and whether the AI feature delivers on its promise. This hands-on experience is crucial for spotting limitations and confirming the tool's value.
- Have Tough Conversations:** AI in HR raises important questions about issues such as fairness, transparency, privacy, and bias. Make space for open discussions about how the system handles these issues and how decisions will be explained to employees. These conversations may be uncomfortable, but they're essential for building trust and ensuring ethical use of the technology. Involve legal and compliance teams early to help shape responsible policies.
- Create a Matrix:** Build a comparison chart that allows you to evaluate each offering side-by-side. Include categories like functionality, ease of use, cost, and customer support. This structured approach helps your team stay objective and makes it easier to justify your final selection.
- Don't Forget Support:** Even the most advanced software can fall short without reliable support. Look into each solution's onboarding process, training resources, and customer service options. Ask about help availability, response times, escalation procedures, and update management. Strong support ensures a smooth rollout and long-term success, especially when your team encounters challenges.

How to Get Smarter on AI

Dufrane's advice to HR professionals who want to adapt to a future that includes AI tools is simple:

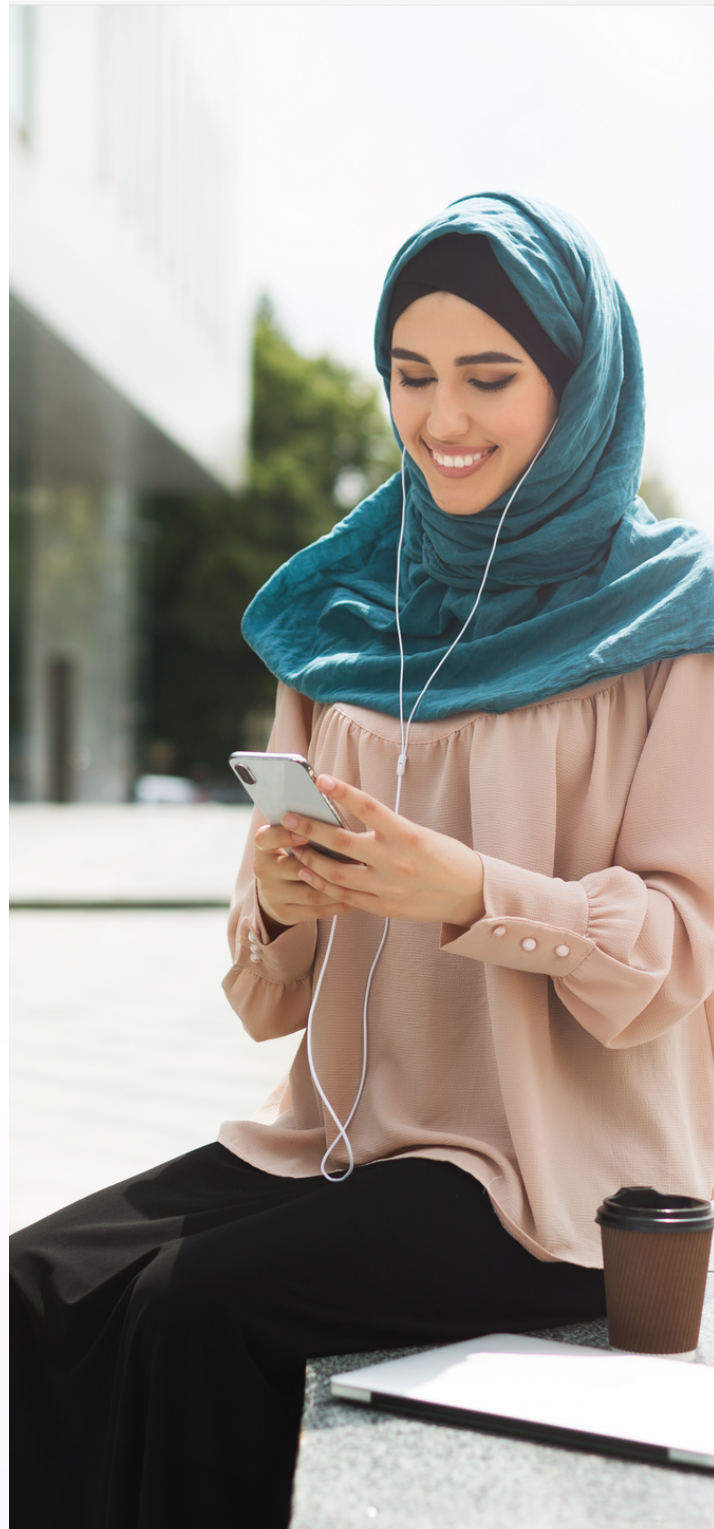
Start your learning journey now.

"We can expect companies to provide more education and training on AI over time, but successful HR professionals are not going to wait around," said Dr. Dufrane. "They are going to do what they can right now."

HR professionals interested in using AI ethically and responsibly have many options, from low-cost education to hands-on experimentation with AI tools.

Here are some ideas:

- **Look at Your Existing System First:** If your organization is already using an AI-powered HR software (or if AI is now embedded) in one of your legacy programs), start there. Learning more about its capabilities is a sensible, and often straightforward, step. Ask your supervisor or IT staff what training and support were included in your contract. Then, contact the provider and see what additional resources are available. You may find a range of options, from personal sessions and classes to conferences and user communities that offer ongoing support.
- **Use AI for More Sophisticated Tasks:** One of the best ways to learn about AI is to use it in new and advanced ways. For example, if you use AI tools to summarize meetings and documents, try it for writing and analysis instead. Create low-stakes experiments that aren't tied to your day-to-day work.



- **Open ChatGPT, Microsoft's Copilot, HRCI CHAT, or the tool of your choice:** Ask it to draft a job description for a position you filled in the past, including some basic parameters. Evaluate the output, compare it to your original description, and ask the tool to make improvements. Another exercise is to paste in spreadsheet data (use data you already understand) and ask the tool to analyze and draw conclusions. Ask follow-up questions and compare its responses to what you already know. Performing several experiments like these will greatly increase your AI fluency and confidence. You'll also gain a clearer understanding of what free or general-purpose AI tools can do effectively.
- **Explore product demos:** To learn more about HR-specific systems for recruiting, employee engagement, performance management or other HR functions, register for software demonstrations. Companies offering these systems are eager to showcase their capabilities through videos or self-guided tours. Others offer live demonstrations or even limited-time trials. Most will be eager to help, and you can learn a great deal.
- **Take advantage of low- and no-cost education:** The internet is full of video tutorials. The HRCI Learning Center has an AI course (see sidebar). Professional associations have webinars. Major consultancies have detailed trend reports. If you are looking to enhance your AI skills or competencies, there are many low-cost options. Approach it like a lunch buffet: Try some options that interest you, and then return for more of what you liked most.
- **Champion AI in your organization:** Position yourself as someone who's both curious and proactive about AI. Get involved in your organization's AI-related initiatives.

If there's a committee or working group focused on AI policy or buying decisions, volunteer to join and provide an HR perspective. If someone is leading AI education at your organization, ask them how you can participate. You can also take initiative by advocating for more AI education in HR. Perhaps you can request training funds, send staff to a conference, or initiate a lunch-and-learn with internal and external experts.



“HR professionals are going to do what it takes to get smart on artificial intelligence. They're going to experiment, read up, take classes, and get actively involved. HR can lead the way in the age of AI, but we must first educate ourselves—and now is the time to do it.”

Dr. Amy Dufrane, CEO of HRCI

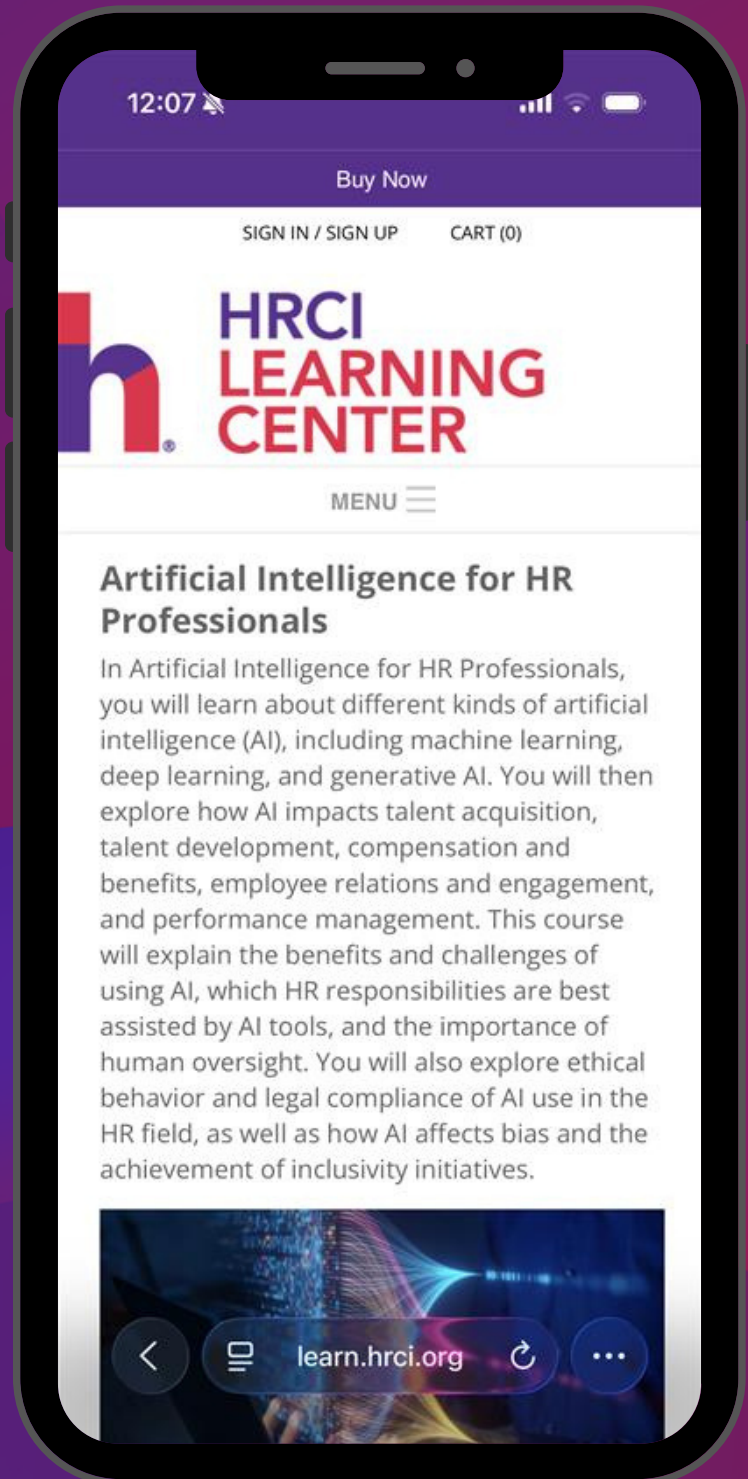
Course: AI for HR Professionals

HRCI offers a course on Artificial Intelligence for HR Professionals, which covers a variety of basic topics surrounding the use of AI.

The course covers how AI impacts talent acquisition, talent development, compensation and benefits, employee relations and engagement, and performance management. It also explains the benefits and challenges of using AI, which HR responsibilities are best assisted by AI tools, and the importance of human oversight.

Ethical behavior and legal compliance in the HR field are covered, as are how AI affects bias and the achievement of inclusivity initiatives.

The course offers three HR recertification credits.





Methodology

HRCI data was collected via multiple surveys using our LinkedIn community and Alchemizing HR webinar polls. The LinkedIn polls of HR professionals took place in September (n = 1,531) and October (n = 1,029) of 2025. The Alchemizing HR webinar polls, also among HR professionals, took place in September (n = 846) and October (n = 1,298) 2025.

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