



## The future of HR services: Trends and Takeaways from Gartner Reimagine HR

**Host:** Kyle Forrest, Human Capital US Chief Marketing Officer

**Guests:** Chetan Jain, US HR Transformation Offering Leader

**Kyle Forrest:**

Hello, Capital H listeners, and welcome back to another episode from the Gartner ReimagineHR conference. Joining us for this episode is Chetan Jain, Deloitte's US Human Capital HR Transformation leader. He is responsible for 2,000 people around the globe who deliver HR transformation services to our clients. Chetan, welcome to Capital H.

**Chetan Jain:**

Thank you so much, Kyle. It's so good to be here.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Awesome. Chetan, let's just start with a little bit of your background. You've been a

Deloitte leader for 20-plus years. So, share a little bit about your career journey, and also for those listeners who aren't familiar with our HR Transformation practice, let them know what we do for our clients.

**Chetan Jain:**

Absolutely. So, I have about 27 years in the business. Majority of it has been spent in leading large-scale HR transformation programs, which includes all components of it. HR process design, operating model redesign, implementation of technology solutions across different platforms...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

Change management and all of that.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

I've had the fortune of working with 50-odd Fortune 500 organizations in my career across industries. But what's most interesting about my background is I was born and raised in India. I moved here about 22 years ago. But I ran my dad's business, full time, during my undergrad while I was starting.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Wow.

**Chetan Jain:**

And, I've learned so much from him, and the leader I am today is because of what I learned from him. I learned more from him than I did from my MBA. You know, in terms of, how do we make sure that you're taking a customer-focused approach?

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

And, taking care of your people. So, I feel like, that's been a huge part of how I show up as a leader.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah. Well I appreciate you for sharing some of that story. And I think, the ability to have led and worked in a family business brings a lot of insights to how you engage with customers. And then I know as we go through this episode, some of the insights that you've gained from working with 50-plus Fortune 500 clients, that, that's a tremendous wealth of knowledge. So, we'll get into some of that today.

So Chetan, share a little bit about our HR Transformation practice. So, for folks who aren't familiar, what is it that the practice does for organizations? And, it's a practice that serves organizations of all sizes and scales, small enterprise, large enterprise, private, public, different industries and sectors. So, share a little bit about what the team does.

**Chetan Jain:**

Absolutely. So when you look at the HR Transformation practice at Deloitte, to your point, it's about 2,300 people that we have within the practice. And, we have had the privilege of being the leaders in the depth and breadth of HR transformation as ranked by analysts for over a decade.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

This includes our strategy and advisory services relative to all things HR and payroll. So, HR's strategy, HR model design, process design, all components of it. We have very large practices, businesses, focused on implementation capabilities with Oracle

Workday, SAP SuccessFactors, ServiceNow, as well as some of the payroll and workforce management technologies, like UKG, Infor, Dayforce. And then we also have dabbled in net-new emerging technologies, that will get the intersection of talent and AI—like Eightfold, Paradox, Phenom, Moveworks. So, incredibly exciting place to be. And then outside of that we have the full-blown strategy of model implementation capabilities around payroll and workforce management.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

Because we see a pretty significant demand relative to that as well.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

So, all things, for the HR function but also very heavily focused on the employee experience. And the digital experience, essentially.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah. Well, and, and ultimately, tying back to some of the research we've done in our 2024 Human Capital Trends report, delivering on those human outcomes tied to business outcomes for an enterprise that ultimately drive value for both. So Chetan, one of the things, And thank you for grounding folks on the background of the practice.

Today you had the opportunity to share the stage at Gartner with a senior leader from Whirlpool, a client of Deloitte, who shared some of the story that Whirlpool has gone through in collaboration with Deloitte relative to an implementation, and knowing that an implementation is not the end. Right?

Once you implement, you have to operate, run the system, continue to focus on the business objectives tied to the transformation. And how can you then use that platform to innovate, right? And drive net-new value that maybe wasn't originally thought about when the journey transformation journey started. Can you

share a few highlights from the Whirlpool story that was discussed for the session today?

**Chetan Jain:**

Yeah, absolutely. First of all, it was such a great honor to share the stage with our client from Whirlpool. Whirlpool is such an iconic brand. And we were actually reminiscing about how Deloitte has been in the business for 180 years, and Whirlpool has been in the business for 115 years.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Wow.

**Chetan Jain:**

So an iconic brand for so long. And they've actually had their own growth journey trajectory with mergers, acquisitions, divestitures essentially. We've actually enjoyed like over a decade-long relationship with Whirlpool. The program started in 2014. And we've had the opportunity to work with Whirlpool around advise, implement, operate.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

And then to your point, innovating at every turn, really. And the HR organization at Whirlpool was incredibly progressive. One of the trends that we have in our Human Capital Trends report this year was the boundaryless HR.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yep.

**Chetan Jain:**

But I feel like Whirlpool was doing that even 10 years ago.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

In terms of how HR was working across the business. Always with the idea of meeting business objectives. Rather than, HR just for HR's sake.

So, figuring out how to create a world-class employee experience, how to really meet business needs, and anticipating what was

yet to happen in the business. And being the role model. HR was actually the role model for the rest of the enterprise...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Wow.

**Chetan Jain:**

...in terms of how they led. So, there was a full-blown HR operating model transformation. They also went through a case for change, in terms of the future of HR, figuring that out, as well as the platform decisions. So, they moved forward with SAP SuccessFactors for the core HR payroll platform.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

ServiceNow for case management, knowledge management. And then they had AD Docs for document management. This was all done in conjunction with setting up of a global shared services...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Okay.

**Chetan Jain:**

And then three regional shared services centers as well.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Okay.

**Chetan Jain:**

Figuring out a redefinition of the role of the HR business partner, having a lean HR operating model that would stand the test of time. And then over the years, they've done a lot of innovation. Around RPA, they have about 17 bots...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Okay.

**Chetan Jain:**

...in and around their platforms to help automate repetitive tasks.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

They've invested in Eightfold, which is, a great example of talent and AI in action. They're doing a lot of cool stuff with onboarding. So, it's just a terrific story around how HR function has actually led the way for the enterprise at Whirlpool.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah. Well, and, and what is really incredible about what you've just shared, right, is there was a journey to get the original foundation in place, right? That global and regional shared services model, changes to roles and responsibilities of other roles in the HR function, the SAP SuccessFactors core, right? And the Whirlpool team didn't rest on their laurels, right?, once that was done. It was a: Let's stabilize, let's make sure we're staying grounded in the workforce experience, employee experience, are we driving business outcomes? You know, anchored on those premises. And as new technology then comes along, what makes sense to explore and innovate and adopt? Where do you leverage existing tech stack versus add net-new to ultimately, again, drive workforce value, human value, business value in new and different ways? So, Chetan, one of the things I think we've seen organizations grappling with is it almost feels like it's a continuous transformation journey now.

Can you share a little bit about where you're seeing the balance of HR organizations, whether Whirlpool or otherwise, with delivering what's been asked, run the business, operate, while having the capacity to still change the business and, and, and transform and innovate?

**Chetan Jain:**

Yeah, absolutely. And, Kyle, just like you said, two-thirds of the Fortune 500 organizations have already migrated to some sort of a cloud platform.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

You know, you can take your pick, whether it's Oracle Workday, SAP SuccessFactors... A core platform is in place. So, the question now is: How do we continue to get value...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yep.

**Chetan Jain:**

...out of those platforms? How do we optimize the value? And that's where this idea of consuming innovation at a rapid and sustainable pace...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

...becomes incredibly important. So, go-live is just day one, really.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

And then instead of resting on your laurels, how do you consume innovation? How do you develop muscle memory within the organization to be able to consume that innovation at a rapid pace?

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yep.

**Chetan Jain:**

And really figuring out: What does that future-state org look like? Each of the cloud providers that I mentioned have multiple releases a year. Some...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Right.

**Chetan Jain:**

Some of them have two releases a year. Oracle had four releases a year. So, how do you capitalize on the billions of dollars that are being invested in R&D...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Right.

**Chetan Jain:**

To move and propel your function forward, really?

And that's where we've come up with this equation, where we talk about discreet investments...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yep.

**Chetan Jain:**

...that organizations need to make. You know, whether it's coming from the HR budget, finance budget, IT budget. Essentially of course this idea of symphonic C-suite...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

Boundaryless HR really comes into play there.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

And then how do you have sustainable business practices?

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

So, discreet investments plus sustainable business practices, then leads to value realization.

For the HR function, but more importantly for the business.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah, yeah. I think that concept, Chetan, yesterday afternoon in a session that I had around boundaryless HR here at Gartner, the heads were nodding. Right? It was this full agreement of the audience that, there's no such thing as one-and-done anymore, right? But what is an acknowledgement is every single year, whether fiscal year, calendar year, performance year, there's gonna be a new priority, whether for the function or for the business, that gets asked that turns into a one-time thing.

There's your discreet investment, right? But there's this huge focus of saying, "How do we make sure that one-time thing is not one-and-done?" Right? And that gets into your point around the sustainable practices, right? And so, linking those two together to ultimately, to your point, realize value. And I know, Jessica Britton, Carrie Bolt, you know, other leaders have done some of that research with you and brought that story to life in our HR Valued Realization

series that folks can read into. So, Chetan, I think in, you know, here towards the end of 2024, we have started to see some of these kinda trends in the market, especially with the topic of AI, around the C-suite and the board really wanting to understand: How is the enterprise realizing the value of its investments? Which is timely for this new equation. So, can you speak a little bit about, where do you see certain trends, at the end of 2024, and what you might see as the focus for HR organizations, whether for the function or for the enterprise in 2025?

**Chetan Jain:**

Yeah, absolutely. We are in the midst of a massive shift across workforce, and workplace as we continue to see the integration of AI and advanced technologies, especially in the HR function. AI is definitely revolutionizing HR...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yep.

**Chetan Jain:**

...by automating repetitive tasks, enabling data-driven decision-making, enhancing talent acquisition processes, enhancing talent management, as a function. As we look ahead, the future of HR will likely be characterized by increased digitalization...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

...and HR playing a more strategic role in driving business outcomes. So, when we think about HR professionals, they'll need to be agile, they need to be data-savvy, they need to be hyperconnected...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yep.

**Chetan Jain:**

...and then capable of leading change initiatives that align with organizational goals. So of course we've already talked about the boundaryless HR...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

...but the future of work requires HR to evolve from being a siloed function to a boundaryless discipline...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

...integrated with people, business, and the community that it serves. And then of course we are also seeing the conversation shifting from productivity to unlocking human performance.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

So, instead of like, the traditional focus on outputs...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

...there's focus in human sustainability and human outcomes, really.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

We're also seeing a shift towards skills-based economy, where people are matched to work based on dynamic skills and interests rather than fixed roles. So, as I think about looking ahead, the challenges that our clients face vary by industry. But of course talent shortages...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

...continues to be a significant trend. Cost pressures, needing to do more with less, the supply chain disruptions. And HR can play a pivotal role in enabling organizations to stay ahead of this curve, and thrive in the midst of these challenges. There's obviously, significant focus on integrating workforce experience with technology.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

When you look at the workforce today, they have access to one, one-click opportunities.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

Whether it's their banking app —

**Kyle Forrest:**

Right.

**Chetan Jain:**

Whether it's on Amazon, and they're clamoring for such experiences at work.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Right, right.

**Chetan Jain:**

So they're expecting employers

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

...to provide that. And then finally, as we look ahead, just continued focus on: How do HR organizations optimize the investment...

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

...that they've made in HR technology.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah. Well, Chetan, I think you, you covered a fair bit. And some HR professionals might hear that and say, "I've already got a lot on my plate. Right? Some of those things you mentioned might already be there, some might not. How do I tackle more?" And one of the things that we were chatting about here at Gartner is where some of the messaging is also, how do you make sure that you focus on the foundation or focus on the things that can immediately drive business value?

And you have mentioned also this exploding interest in payroll and workforce management. Which, some folks might say, "Why payroll? Why workforce management?" Right? But ultimately, those are things that you as an organization need to get right,

because that's where employees or workers don't wanna see problems. So, can you share a little bit about like, why payroll and workforce management has also become such a significant trend for what we're seeing at organizations?

**Chetan Jain:**

Yeah. So, when you think about payroll, payroll costs are typically number two or number three on the balance sheet for the CFO.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

So, it's something that keeps everybody up at night. Nobody will ever thank you to pay them correctly, but as soon as someone's paycheck is wrong, you know, someone will get a phone call, really.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Yeah.

**Chetan Jain:**

So, it gets like, a significant amount of attention. And there's a lot of focus on: How do I reduce my payroll costs? How I'll, how do I reduced the operational costs associated with running payroll?

So, a lot of our clients are grappling with that. While a lot of organizations have already done their HR op model transformations, clients are not quite there yet from a maturity scale perspective relative to payroll.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Okay.

**Chetan Jain:**

Relative to their payroll function as well as relative to their payroll costs.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Okay.

**Chetan Jain:**

Questions around insource versus outsource keeps coming up.

How should I design my payroll organization? How many people do I need to have? Should it be a part of finance? Should it be a part of HR? It always comes up. And then,

really figuring out like, what platform are you going to use. Like all of the platforms that I talked about before have integrated payroll solutions with HR.

So, there's a lot of value that you can get out of it, but there's also cost benefit analysis, and that's where you have to make insourcing versus outsourcing decisions. Now, coming to workforce management, the focus on frontline worker productivity is more than ever before.

And, to your point, they are the brand ambassadors of the organization. When you look at a health care organization, how a patient interacts with the nurse practitioner will drive, you know, the reputation of that health care organization.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Absolutely.

**Chetan Jain:**

For a retail, organization, "How do I engage with my grocery clerk? How do I engage with the cashier at the register?" will be a defining moment essentially.

So there's a lot of focus on figuring out: How can you make sure that the frontline workers are focused on serving clients, customers with distinction—rather than spending a lot of time with the administrative activities. And outside of that, there's also a lot of issues relative to leakage.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Sure.

**Chetan Jain:**

Cost leakage, you know, in terms of overtime, double time, shift differentials and all of that. So, it's an opportunity for organizations to really assess their operational costs associated with payroll and workforce management.

And this is where platforms like UKG, Infor, Dayforce, ADP can play a pretty pivotal role in figuring out an ideal future state for organizations—depending on their industry, depending on risk propensity. But that's where we are seeing a lot of demand currently coming from the CFO's office.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Chetan, thank you for sharing those insights relative to why payroll and workforce management has become such a top-of-mind topic for not only CHROs but also CFOs, right? And just at the C-suite at large. I think given that, to your point, payroll as a top-three item on a balance sheet, anything that can be done to help executives address cost leakage, better manage the workforce in that ecosystem—full time, part time, contingent, digital, you name it—is gonna be critical for what we've seen with organizations relative to the market at large, focusing more on margin, cashflow, certain other metrics.

So, Chetan, I just wanna say thank you for joining us here on the Capital H podcast at the Gartner ReimagineHR conference. I know there's been tremendous energy in the halls. We've seen a ton of organizations who are just really sharing their stories back and forth, inspiring others, knowing that there's a lot still to come in the journey ahead to drive impact for the function and for the enterprise. So, any last parting thoughts for our listeners that you wanna leave them with?

**Chetan Jain:**

I would just say to all of the HR professionals listening out there, it's a great time to be in HR. It's a great time to be in the midst of driving evolution of the function, from a boundaryless perspective. You know, going from a siloed function to an integrated discipline with other parts of the business. So I wish everybody good luck. And then, look forward to coming on again.

**Kyle Forrest:**

Thank you again, Chetan, for joining us on another episode from the Gartner ReimagineHR conference. Capital H listeners stay tuned for more coming from the podcast as we continue to bring you market insights from events, research and other areas at Deloitte that we're helping to bring stories forward to you all to continue to elevate the impact that you are driving within your functions within your organizations, and in the workforce at large.

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