

Artificial + Intelligence? The Future of HR Summit opens a door to the future workplace

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With the aim being to bring both the HR discipline, and the business environment in which it operates, up to speed with the latest innovations in human capital management, close on 300 delegates came together at the third annual Future of HR Summit from 19-20 July.



Held at the Birchwood Hotel in Johannesburg, the two-day event kicked off with an opening address by Marc Privett, Head of Product and Customer Insights at Careers24, on "Supercharging your Recruitment Process" (the summit and ancillary awards were hosted in association with Careers24). He was followed up by workplace culture expert and author Colin J. Browne ("How to Build a Happy Sand Pit"). Amit Ramdath, Founder and CEO of ImpressMe, then took delegates into the realm of mobile talent sourcing before Greg Solomon, CEO of McDonalds SA, outlined the fast-food giant's "Guidelines to Global Success". Solomon commented, during the morning,

"You're either a fast-follower or a trendsetter, and this event allows you to be both."

Day one highlights, from the full roster of [high-powered speakers](#), also included Nicola Kleyn, Dean of the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), speaking on corporate learning in today's shifting landscape, and Trevor Page, Director of Human Capital Consulting at Deloitte, who unpacked the latest global human capital trends. According to Page, "The organisation of the future will be made up of flexible work teams." He also emphasised that today's HR teams need to help drive their organisations to *be* digital, not just "do" digital.

Page's theme reflected a shared sense in the room, of the increased impact of digital disruption on the workplace - the current market for HR tech and tools is estimated to be worth around \$2 billion in total. Such a wave of new development presents both a challenge (to the laggards) and an opportunity (for the early adopters).

Meanwhile, Benjamin Buckingham of HFMtalentindex touched on "learning agility" - it's generally agreed that fostering an "agile" workplace in a time of change and (digital) disruption is the best approach.

The day concluded with well-received focused breakaway sessions by Sun International, Alexander Forbes and Kyocera Document Solutions (the latter also honing in on digital disruption).

Day two highlights included renowned thought leader Lee Naik, CEO of TransUnion Africa, who spoke about rewriting the rules for the digital age. Naik threw down a challenge to delegates: "Are you brave enough to rewrite your HR Future?" Meanwhile, the morning's keynote address came from Italia Boninelli, HR Strategist and Executive Coach (also the 2016 Future of HR Lifetime Achiever Award Winner). Boninelli spoke about a "paradigm shift" in HR, with it now becoming a highly strategic component of any organisation. David Edwards of CEB is now Gartner outlined the need for HR to be strategic within itself - it had to be meticulous in its planning, given that "HR leaders are managing 38 or more activities at any given time of the year." He also talked about the power of data and analytics - two familiar buzzwords for today's forward-thinking companies - to maximise talent acquisition and retention.

Biase De Gregorio of IQ Business had delegates highly engaged with his very visual presentation, which outlined the fourth age of management, best defined as agile and lean: ours is a tradition-demolishing age in which companies can't fall into the trap of saying, "We've always done it this way."

Day two concluded with packed breakaway sessions from Schneider Electric (“Talent Retention and Rewards”) and CEB is now Gartner (“CEO vs HR: Bridging the Gap”).

The Future of HR Summit was watched from afar as it unfolded, particularly on Twitter, which had an overall reach of 1.3 million Twitter users on day one. That’s a lot of people behind their keyboards at lunchtime wondering where, exactly, they might find themselves five years from now.

For video content, galleries and more information, visit www.futureofhr.co.za/summit.

The Future of HR Summit will take delegates back to the future from 25-26 July 2018.

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