

17to70

Meeting the challenges and opportunities of today's new multi-generational workforce



Welcome to a new, more complex HR landscape

From the razor-sharp high school grad who's entering their first job to the hyper-experienced older employee with decades' worth of professional wisdom, the diversity of worker profiles on offer to today's employers is vast and, to the unprepared, bewildering.

It also presents a unique opportunity to those companies who manage it effectively.

For the first time, **five distinct generations** are in the job market, each with their own worldview, aptitudes, life experience, career vision and expectations of an employer.

Businesses today are navigating uncharted territory, managing workforces comprised of five distinct generations – each with their own needs, preferences and development opportunities.

Adam Hale CEO, Fairsail

Traditionalists. Baby Boomers. Generation X. Millennials. Generation Z.

Add to that the complexities of managing a multinational workforce around the world, and it's clear that the demands facing today's HR executives have never been greater.

To understand the unfolding challenges and opportunities, Fairsail conducted a survey of 250 global HR professionals, from senior management to HR Director level. We asked a variety of questions about their experience in today's HR landscape, their expectations of the future and approach to managing a global workforce.

Here's what we learned.



Key findings: the pros and cons of a multi-generational workforce

If the defining characteristics of today's global workforce are diversity, richness and depth of talent, this outwardly promising reality brings its own challenges.

How do we manage that complexity effectively for the long-term benefit of our organization? How do we ensure that employees of every age and outlook receive the support they need to perform at their best, from **Traditionalists and Baby Boomers** to the newest entrant to our workforce, **Generation Z**?

Respondents cited the following as their most pressing challenges:

29.6%

Recruiting the right talent

Attracting employees with the right skill-set and culture fit is of vital importance **across all five generations**, reflecting the different yet complementary competencies each group offers. **Digital skills** were of particular concern, with **21.2%** reporting difficulties in finding new joiners with the required digital abilities.

22%

Managing Millennials (Gen Y) and the rise of the “gig workforce”

Independence and self-direction are central to Millennials' worldview, as characterized by a growing appetite for contracts that are fixed-term, project-based or time-based. Today's employers are keen to harness this energy and creativity in a focused, joined-up way, but it can be a struggle for many.

Respondents cited the following as their most pressing challenges:

16.4%

Effective training and development

The development needs of a Generation-Xer can differ wildly from those of a Millennial. How do we help everyone do their best work and move forward in their careers?

15.6%

Compliant workforce communications

Each different generation speaks its own "language", responding differently to tone, medium and style. Getting your message across requires a deep understanding of your workforce.

9.6%

Creating leadership pipelines

How do you identify and nurture the leaders of tomorrow when your available workforce is complex and in a constant state of flux?

Respondents cited the following
as their most pressing challenges:

52.8%

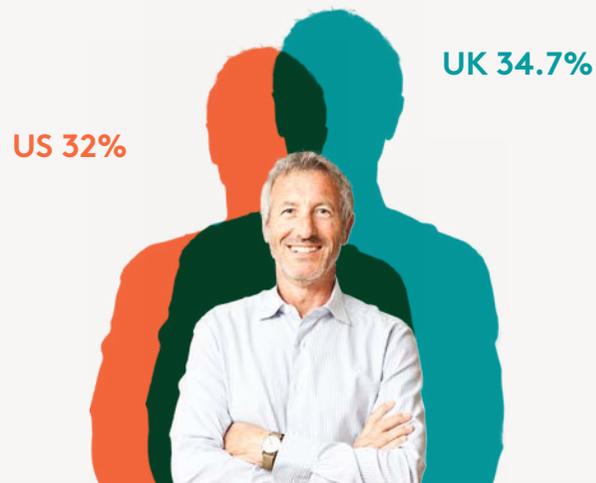
of respondents feel they need greater
visibility of their entire workforce.



Bridging the Digital and Demographic Gaps

According to survey respondents, some generations are more challenging to manage than others.

By a substantial margin, HR Leaders in both the US and UK identified Millennials and Baby Boomers as the two generations that are the most complex to manage.



Baby Boomers



**Millennials
(Generation Y)**

Interestingly, these are **the two largest generational groups** and are close to being at opposite ends of the age spectrum. The rise of new employment models no doubt plays a large part in the perceived challenges, with younger demographics pushing for greater flexibility in how, when and where they work, while Baby Boomers understandably tend towards stability and predictability.*

Given the diversity of age groups, it's also not surprising that companies report a wide variance of digital proficiency among both job candidates and existing talent.

*It's the youngest HR leaders who are most likely to report difficulty in managing this disparity in the workforce models which may simply reflect inexperience.

21.2%

report a high degree of difficulty in recruiting the required digital skills.

5.6%

report little or no difficulty in achieving this.

A common factor: the need for Greater Visibility

The more complex their workforce, the more urgently companies need to establish genuine, accurate, timely visibility over this diverse talent pool.

To coax maximum value from your people, encourage positive behaviours and make their professional experience a rewarding one, clear and usable information is key. Extracting and analyzing that information requires a focused vision and fit-for-purpose tools, as nearly half our respondents readily acknowledge:

42%

rate their current level of workforce visibility as “partial”.



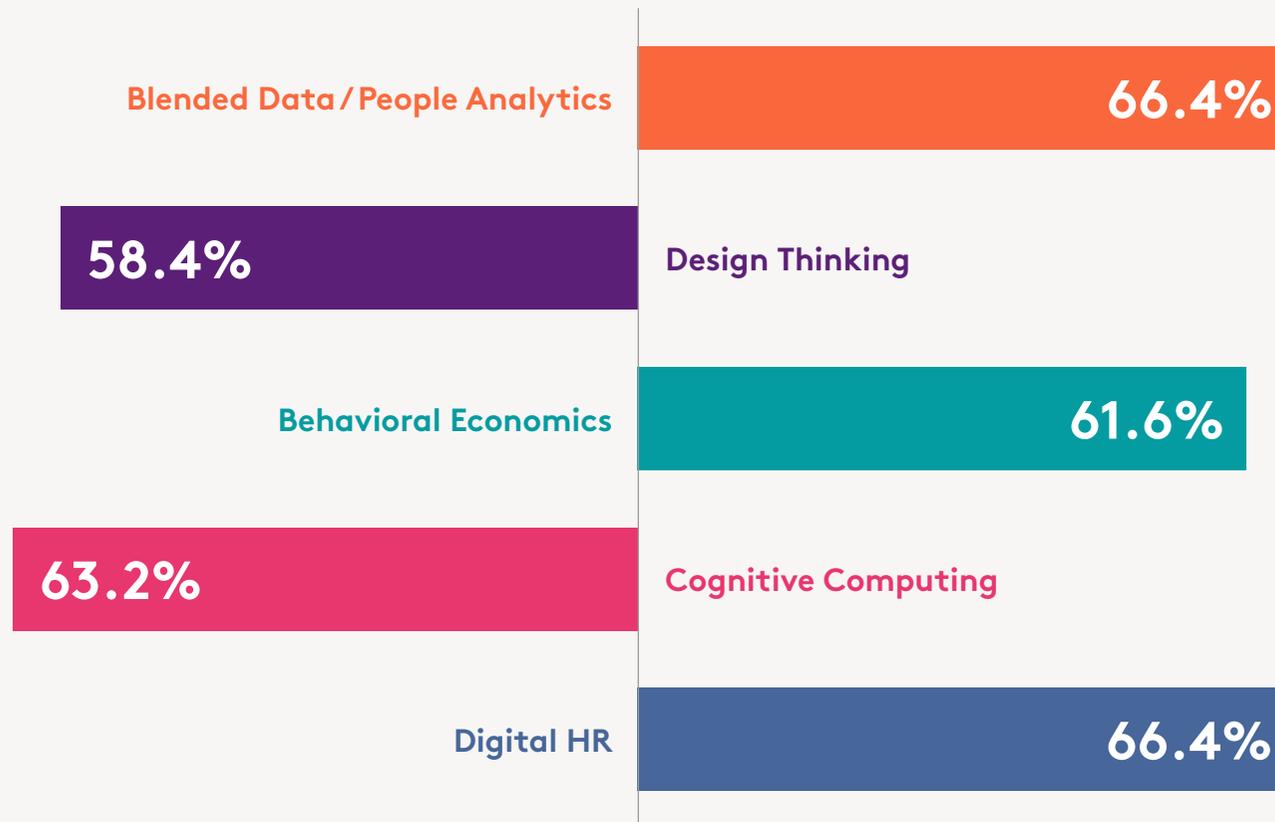
How do you go about improving your understanding of a multi-generational workforce?

Several requirements are becoming more and more central, say respondents. These include the ability to blend people data from multiple internal and external sources, as well as predictive analytics to anticipate future outcomes, and leading visualization tools to help communicate findings, trends and patterns:

29.2%

have already hired data analysts or people scientists to help them gain clarity.

As a result, more and more companies rate the following key concepts as important, and would consider factoring them into their future plans:



The way forward

For the first time in history, business and HR leaders face the challenge of managing people from five distinct generations. Although this is uncharted territory for many, there is plenty that HR professionals and business leaders can do differently to account for this new reality and place themselves at an advantage.

By taking an empirical, data-focused approach, by leveraging tools that can offer greater visibility into their entire workforce, and by hiring data specialists to help them understand the needs and perspectives of each generation, multinational employers can harness the full potential of their multi-generational teams, allowing each person to deliver, and thrive.



About Fairsail

Fairsail enables mid-size, multinational companies to manage modern workforces through its global cloud HRMS, transforming how they acquire, engage, manage and develop their people. Quick to implement and simple to use, this award-winning system increases workforce visibility, HR productivity and provides better experiences across the entire workforce. Fairsail's customer portfolio includes AVEVA, Cobalt International Energy, Huddle, Mitsubishi UFG, PaddyPower Betfair, Sage, SDL, Skyscanner, and SolarWinds.

Source: Based on a survey of 250 HR leaders from the UK and USA, July 2016



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