

The Definitive HR Data White Paper

7 pillars to unlock your impact
through data



Arnaud Coulon

Foreword

Welcome

HR data exists. It lives in your systems, your files, your monthly exports. **What is missing is not the data. It is the method to unlock it.**

I first noticed this as a young HR professional. The data was there, but **poorly structured**, barely accessible, insufficiently leveraged.

Since then, I have supported dozens of organizations experiencing this very gap. **HR functions that generate data without harnessing it, that reacts when it could anticipate, that endures its systems when it could steer them.**

This White Paper is the product of that fieldwork. It presents my **7-Pillar Framework**, designed to **drive progress through concrete iterations.**

I set myself the goal of helping HR functions better master their data, to better serve the organization, better support employees, and carry greater weight in the decisions that matter. This white paper is a foundational milestone in that journey.

An evidence-based approach

The following document presents the most ambitious study on HR Data practices. It draws **on concrete and complementary data sources:**

- **The semantic analysis of HR job postings :** in partnership with HelloWork, I analyzed nearly 160,000 HR job postings to measure the importance of Data in HR.
- **The Data maturity survey:** I surveyed 151 HR professionals about their practices, tools, and challenges.
- **Testimonials :** professionals from the most mature companies agreed to share their experiences. They are the ones who bring the concepts to life and prove that the HR Data transformation is already underway.

I hope you will enjoy reading this document as much as I enjoyed writing it.



Arnaud Coulon The Data-est HR

Arnaud Coulon is an **independent HR Data & AI consultant** and founder of My People Analytics. He coordinates and teaches in the **HR Analytics, AI & Performance Management program at Sciences Po Executive Education.**

Arnaud **supports the HR Departments of major corporations in their data-driven transformation through three levers:** maturity audits, team training, and transformation project support.

From strategy definition to implementation, his approach rests on a strong conviction: **start small, aim for impact, and advance through high-value iterations.**

Let's stay in touch!



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Situation

84% of HR job postings include a Data component. Yet, Excel remains the dominant tool in 73% of those same postings. Data is **omnipresent** in HR job descriptions. But it still lacks **structured practices**.

This White Paper examines this gap and provides tools to close it. It falls within a modern, business-impact-driven approach to HR data, known as **People Analytics**.

What the data really tells us

Based on a study on 151 French HR professionals, Data is a priority for 74% of CHROs, but only 50% of our survey respondents believe they have a **clear vision of the associated strategy**.

51% of organizations plan to increase their HR Data spending in the next 24 months. Priorities focus on team training, process redesign, and HRIS improvement.

But money alone is not enough. The organizations that progress fastest are not those that invest the most, but those that have followed a methodical approach by **articulating the various possible workstreams**.

Key takeaways

HR Data is advancing and becoming more professionalized. Mentions of People Analytics, AI and automation practices grew by 50% and 53% respectively over two years.

At the same time, **governance and architecture competencies are declining** in relative terms (by 15 and 29 points respectively). The rise in value creation is happening **without strengthening the foundation**, which may minimize benefits and introduce long-term risk.

The framework: 7 interdependent pillars

The My People Analytics HR Data Framework structures the transformation around **7 pillars: Strategy, Culture, Architecture, Governance, Confidentiality, Analytics, Automation**.

Strategy sets the direction, culture and architecture form the foundation. Governance and confidentiality ensure orchestration. Analytics and automation deliver the value.

This White Paper presents **the guiding principles** of each pillar, equips strategic thinking, and illustrates inspiring success stories.

It is designed to offer **concrete, simple, and quick actions** to implement. To achieve **fast and compelling results**.

Maturity is bimodal.

Clustering analysis reveals **two distinct profiles** : 41% of **Visionaries**, who already leverage the entire Framework, and 59% **Emerging**, lagging behind on all pillars.

The two levers creating the widest gap between these groups are **strategy and automation**. Conversely, **the culture and governance pillars show a smaller gap**. These pillars are more homogeneous among respondents.

The key message

HR data is not a technical subject reserved for experts. It is a set of transformation levers accessible to the HR function, provided one knows how to activate them.

The most advanced organizations are those that have been able to **set a vision, build a solid foundation, and advance through high-impact iterations**.

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Clustering	Machine Learning algorithm that identifies homogeneous groups in data. It enabled the identification of 2 maturity profiles among respondents of the HR Data Maturity survey.
Data Catalog	An inventory of all available data in the organization: its name, exact definition, source, and owner. Without a catalog, each team may have a different definition of the same indicator.
Data Literacy	An HR professional's ability to read, understand, question, and use data in their daily work. It is not a technical skill: it is a mindset.
Data Storytelling	Presenting data analysis as a structured narrative to convince decision-makers. Turning a number into a message, and a message into a decision.
Data-driven	Making decisions based on factual data.
ETL (Extract, Transform, Load)	A technical process that extracts data from HRIS, transforms it according to defined rules, then loads it into an operational tool.
Golden Data	The official and unique source of a data point in the organization. When everyone knows where to find the correct version of information, cross-system inconsistencies disappear.
HR Analytics	Using HR data to understand what is happening, explain why, anticipate what will happen, and recommend actions. Goes beyond traditional reporting.
HR Data Architecture	How data is organized and flows between your tools. Good architecture allows access to data without manual reprocessing.
HR Data Governance	The set of rules, roles, and responsibilities that govern the lifecycle of HR data, from creation to archiving. It is the human organization behind the technical architecture.
HR Data Hub	A central tool that collects, organizes, and stores data from all your HR applications. Enables cross-referencing data across domains and historizing information.
HR Data Warehouse	A centralized database aggregating all HR data across the organization. Enables automatic indicator calculation, simulations, and a common language across entities.
HR KPIs	Key indicator for measuring the effectiveness of an HR process or policy. Turnover, absenteeism, and headcount are the most common examples.
People Analytics	Analyzing employee data to inform strategic HR decisions. A practice born at Google in 2009, still a minority in France, but growing rapidly.
Privacy by Design	Integrating personal data protection from the design phase of a project, not as an afterthought. A GDPR principle that applies at every stage of an HRIS project.
Reference Data (Master Data)	A list of reference values shared across all systems: sites, jobs, cost centers... A poorly governed reference dataset is a major source of errors and inconsistencies.
RPA (Robotic Process Automation)	A software robot that replicates a user's actions in an application to automate repetitive tasks. Concrete example: automatic entry of a sick leave in the HRIS from a scanned document.
Semantic Analysis	Automatic technique for analyzing the meaning of words in a text. It enabled the study of 160,000 job postings without manual reading.

Introduction

HR Data: A Historical Misunderstanding

At the heart of the digital transformations of the Human Resources function, **HR Data occupies a unique position**. Leaders have made it a stated priority. Yet we observe a **wide disparity in practices**, and HR maturity on the topic remains low compared to our colleagues in marketing, finance, or operations.

It starts with a vocabulary gap. HR Data refers to all data relating to employees: their career paths, skills, and engagement, as well as the processes associated with managing their employment. **Here we are talking about the content: the data itself.**

The term **“HR Data” is also used to refer to data management and value-creation initiatives:** dashboards, data analysis, predictive modeling... **This is a metonymy.**

The misunderstanding begins very early. It is important to clarify the terms by distinguishing between Data Management and Data Value Creation. Data management involves establishing an organization, methods, and tools to leverage data. Data valorization involves extracting meaning from data to inform decisions. **The advanced analytics approach for HR is called People Analytics.**

The **origins of People Analytics practices are attributed to Laszlo Bock**, at Google with Project Oxygen. In 2009, **he humbly posed the question: “are managers actually useful?”**. All available data (evaluations, interviews, employee engagement surveys...) were used to find the answer.

The study not only demonstrated that managers are useful, it also made it possible to identify **the 8 criteria that make a manager truly impactful**. On the strength of this study, Google overhauled its entire management system.

These practices, while delivering significant value, remain marginal in France.

The lack of time, skills, tools, and a few misconceptions **form a barrier that seems insurmountable.**

Yet, **our era, marked by unpredictability and complexity, makes People Analytics an essential solution.**

This topic is taking on critical importance. The first Heads of People Analytics and Chief Human Resources Data Officer roles are emerging in French companies.

Those who have already begun their transformation have gained a considerable lead: they save time daily, are more credible at the Executive Committee table, and adopt **a true business partner posture.**

These benefits can be grouped into three main virtues:

Improve operational performance: data is the fuel of digital processes.

Make informed decisions through a deeper understanding of organizational phenomena.

Strengthen employee trust through relevant and secure use of their data.

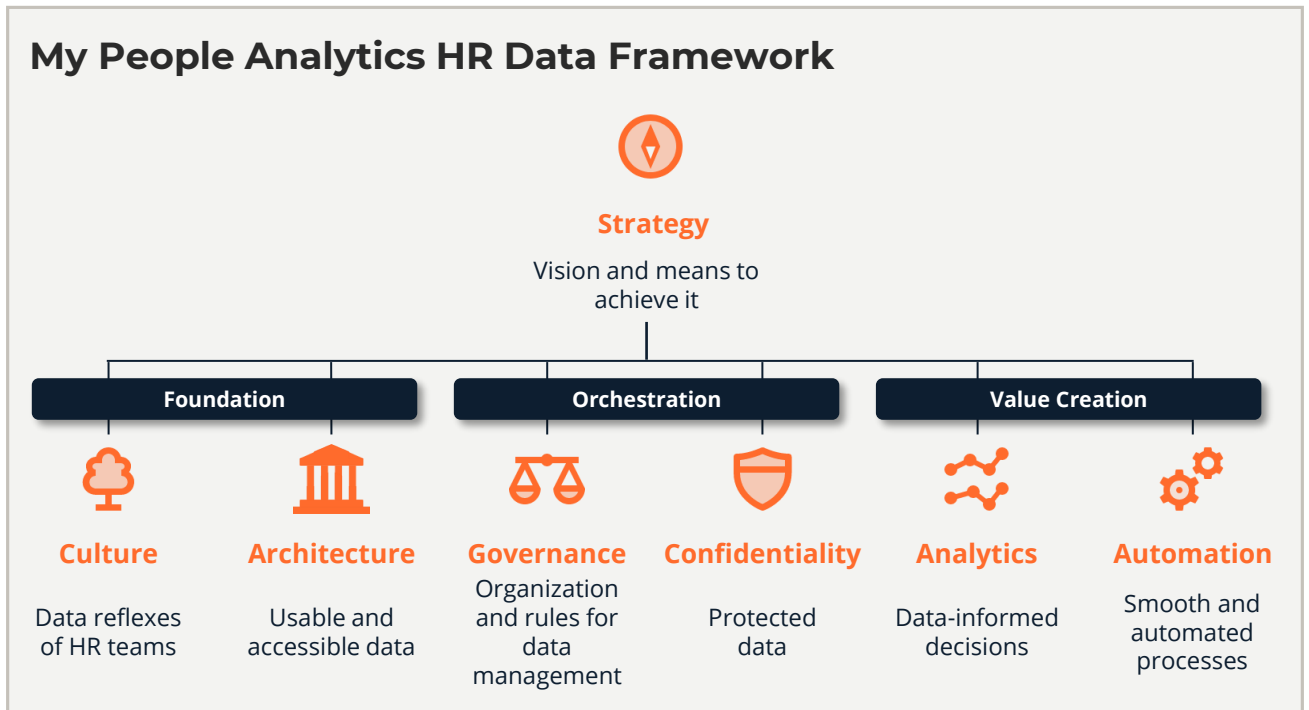
Seizing opportunities to move into action

The HR Data Framework

Here is the **My People Analytics HR Data Framework**. I built this model to **help HR teams act on Data**.

It consists of **7 pillars organized into four blocks**:

- **Strategy**, your vision and your resources. It connects and aligns the following pillars.
- **The Foundation**, essential for building a solid base on which to anchor your projects, it relies on **Culture and Architecture**.
- **Orchestration**, to properly control your data. It consists of **Governance and Confidentiality**.
- **Value Creation**, to maximize the benefits you derive from data, it encompasses **Analytics and Automation**.



Coordinating these various workstreams represents considerable effort. With this framework in mind, you will be able to **activate the various levers at the right moment** to derive maximum benefit:

- **HR roadmap?** Work on the Data Strategy pillar.
- **Building a training plan?** Keep the Culture pillar in mind.
- **HRIS implementation project ?** Develop your architecture.
- **HR function reorganization coming?** Rethink your Data governance.
- **A question about the GDPR impact of a use case?** Rely on the principles of confidentiality.
- **A business question to address?** Strengthen your analytics practices.
- **An upcoming process overhaul?** Rely on automation approaches.

This analysis begins with a question: **where do HR teams stand with Data?** To find out, I conducted a **semantic analysis of 160,000 HR job postings published on HelloWork between September 2023 and September 2025.**

[Discover the methodology by clicking here](#) or by scanning the QR code below.



The following sections present the **My People Analytics HR Data Framework** through a **three-part approach combining theory, quantitative analysis, and real-world experience.**

The preamble lays the groundwork for each pillar: definitions, best practices, and perspectives.

The quantitative analysis confronts these concepts with reality. Over 150 HR professionals shared their practices, tools, and challenges in our survey (thank you all for your responses!)

Finally, **company testimonials** from L'Oréal, Puig, MBDA, TotalEnergies, Think Igo, Renault, Sanofi, France Travail, Clarins, the Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Vieillesse and the Caisse d'Épargne Hauts de France, who share their **experiences, successes, and lessons learned.**

Let's now dive into the heart of the matter!





Semantic Analysis of HR Job Postings



**The Importance of Data
in the HR Function**



HR Data: An Omnipresence That Highlights the Real Challenges

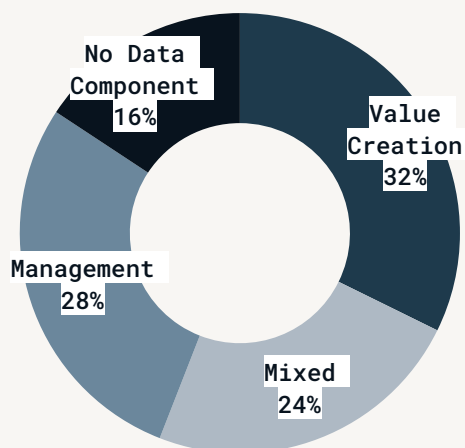
The semantic analysis of 160,000 HR job postings published on HelloWork between September 2023 and September 2025 is unequivocal: **HR Data is omnipresent**.

84% of HR job postings mention at least one Data-related term

There is a balance between data value creation and data management themes (Fig. 1).

The HR function produces and consumes a significant amount of data and organizes itself to ensure data reliability and value.

Fig. 1: Distribution of Data components in job postings.



- **32% emphasize Data Value Creation** : Reporting, Analytics, Automation...
- **28% of postings focus on Data Management** : HRIS administration, data quality, architecture, Master Data management (reference data)...
- **24% are mixed**, with no clear dominance (using a 60/40% threshold)

This omnipresence above all reveals **diffuse and heterogeneous practices**.

What lies behind that 84%?

Data practices that are still manual and process-oriented

For **Value Creation**, the top-cited theme is a well-known tool: **Excel, present in 73% of job postings** (Fig. 2).

Next come **reporting and HR management control**, traditional uses of HR Data **appearing in 40% of postings**. These are established practices, which highlight the regulatory reporting posture of HR data analysis.

People Analytics & visualization, advanced uses of HR data for strategic purposes, **are emerging in 28% of postings**. These include terms such as advanced analytics, Data Storytelling, Data-Driven decisions...

It is still a minority, but it is a strong signal.

Profiles recruited in HR roles must now be able to go beyond the descriptive, **to extract meaning from data and drive action**.

In summary: HR Data is no longer optional. It permeates most roles within the function, with a relative balance between data management and data value creation.

HR Data: An Omnipresence That Highlights the Real Challenges

Fig. 2: Data Value Creation - Excel dominates, People Analytics gains ground.

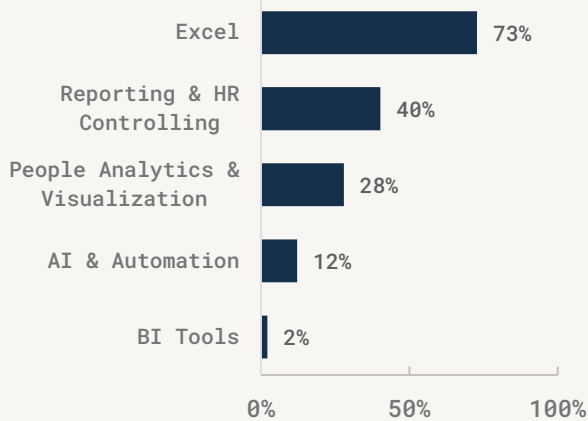
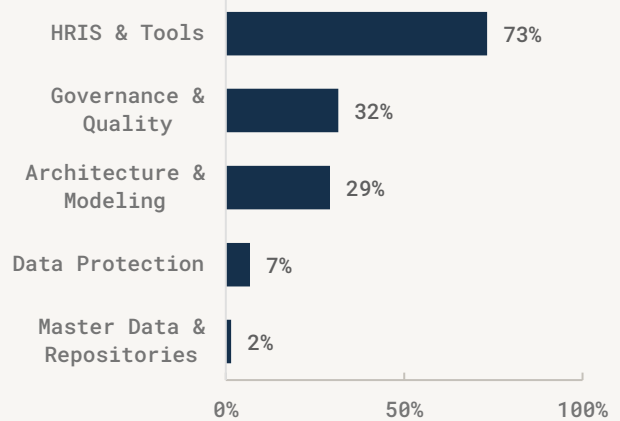


Fig. 3: Data Management - HRIS on the front line, governance and architecture follow.



On the data management side, the HRIS stands out, appearing in 73% of job postings (fig. 3). This reflects its role as the **backbone of HR Data**, supporting most processes and generating the associated data.

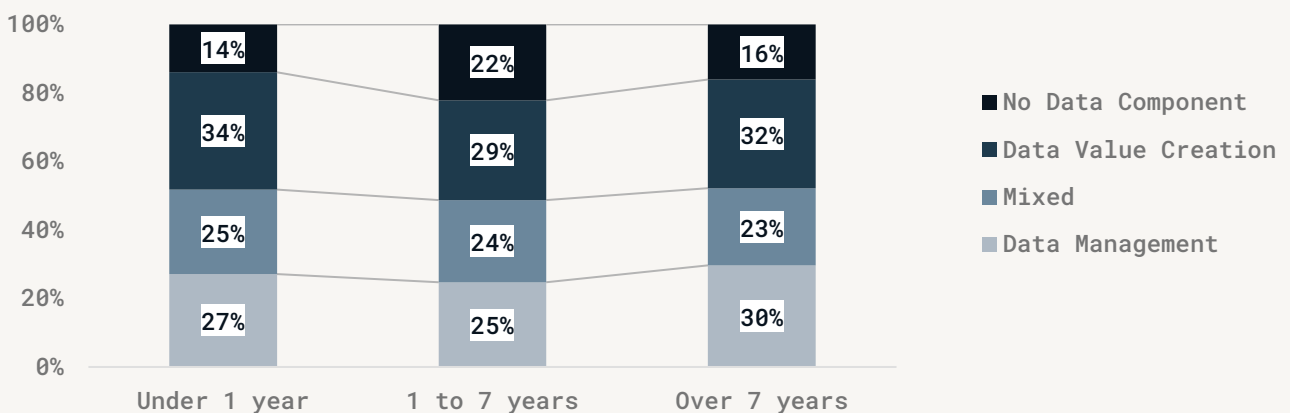
Data governance is referenced in 32% of postings, followed by architecture and data modeling at 29% of postings.

Looking at the importance of Data by experience level (fig. 4), we find that these topics are important for:

- **junior profiles (under 1 year), who are responsible for operational production.** They show an overrepresentation of Excel and HRIS proficiency
- **The most experienced profiles (7+ years), who are responsible for organization and analysis.** They show an overrepresentation of governance and People Analytics topics.

Worth noting: mid-level profiles (1 to 7 years of experience) show an overrepresentation of topics related to artificial intelligence and automation compared to other categories.

Fig. 4: Differences in Data responsibilities by experience level



HR Data: An Omnipresence That Highlights the Real Challenges

Data activities are currently poorly structured, but the trend is reversing.

The number of job postings mentioning Data rose by 6 points in 2 years. The thematic shifts are particularly revealing (Fig. 5).

This growth particularly benefits “modern” value creation practices: Artificial Intelligence and automation (+53 pts), People Analytics and visualization (+50 pts) (fig. 5).

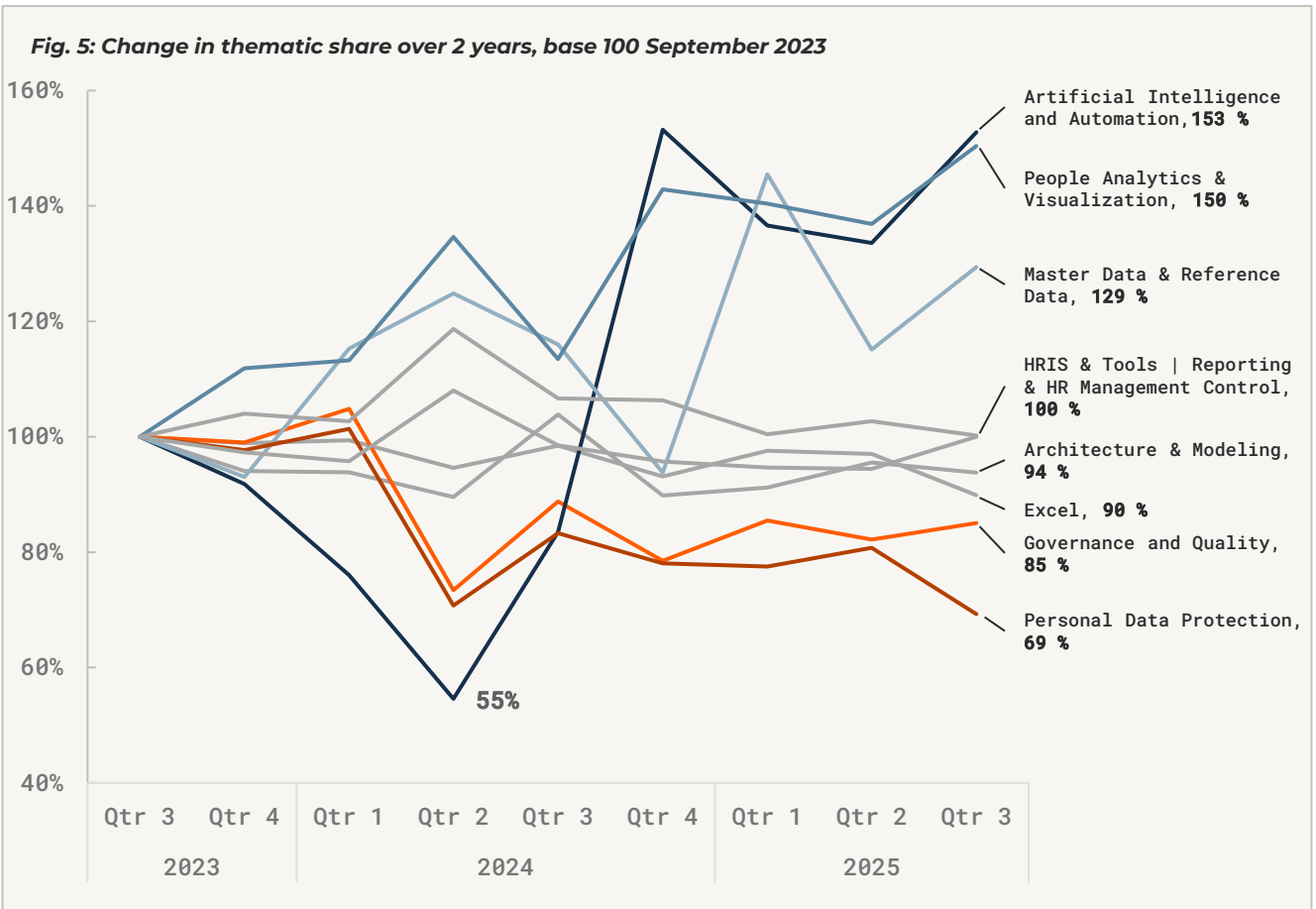
The “AI and automation” topic nonetheless experienced a sharp drop during 2024 (-45 pts in Q2). While People Analytics has enjoyed continuous growth over the period.

We observe a decline in data management themes, which are nonetheless essential : personal data protection (-39 pts), Data governance (-15 pts), architecture and modeling (-6 pts).

Master Data Management (MDM), is also growing strongly (+29 pts), although it remains marginal overall.

The HR function starts from a craft-like, generalist, process-centered approach. It tends to professionalize its practices by specializing its roles with growth in HR Data Analyst, People Analyst, Data Manager, Chief HR Data Officer...

It is also raising its expectations for other roles within the HR function.



The Data Maturity Survey: Two Maturity Profiles



Thank you all for your responses

HR Data Practices and Maturity Analysis

Respondent Overview

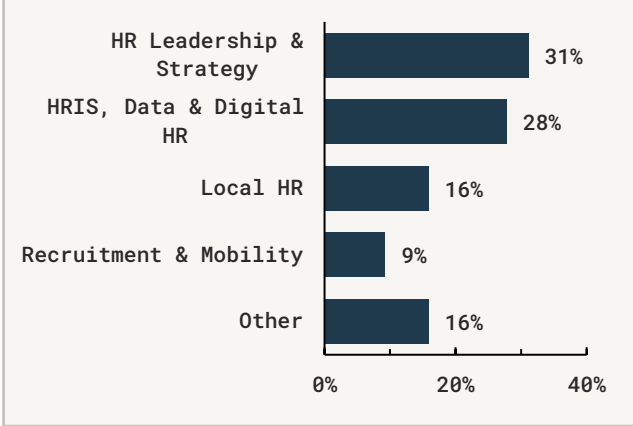
151 professionals responded between September and November 2025

A heartfelt thank you to each of you for the time you dedicated!

Our respondent sample is predominantly drawn from **very large enterprises** (fig. 6). **Financial and insurance activities are dominant** alongside **18 other sectors** (Fig. 7). We therefore have strong cross-sector representation.

Respondents work in roles at the heart of our topic: primarily in HR Leadership & Strategy or HRIS, Digital and HR Data (fig. 8).

Fig. 8: Respondents' Job Functions



All hierarchical levels are represented, and in particular HR Directors at 30% (fig. 9)

Fig. 9: Respondents' Hierarchical Level

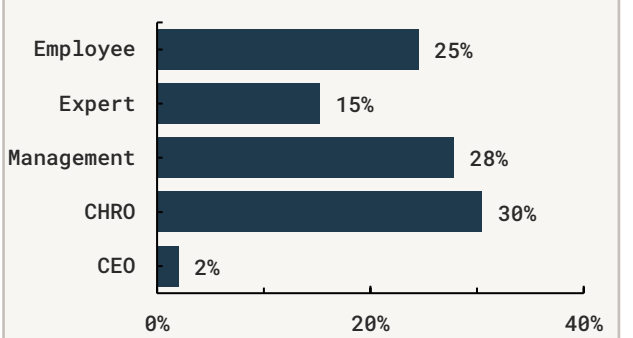


Fig. 6: Company size of respondents

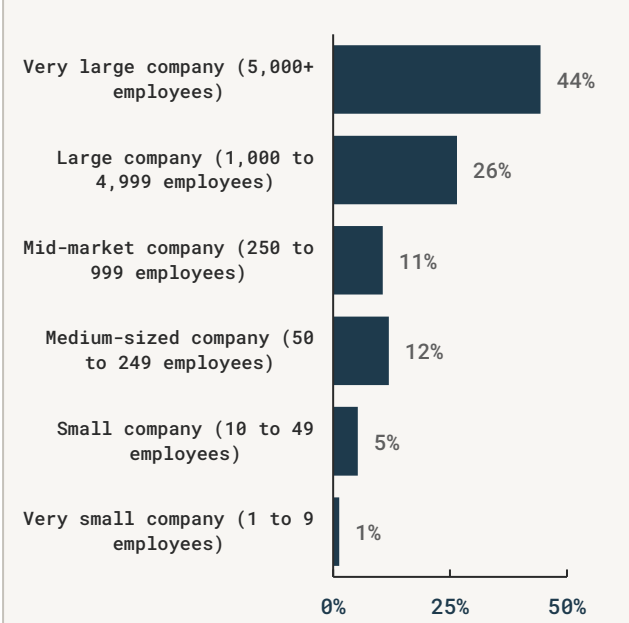
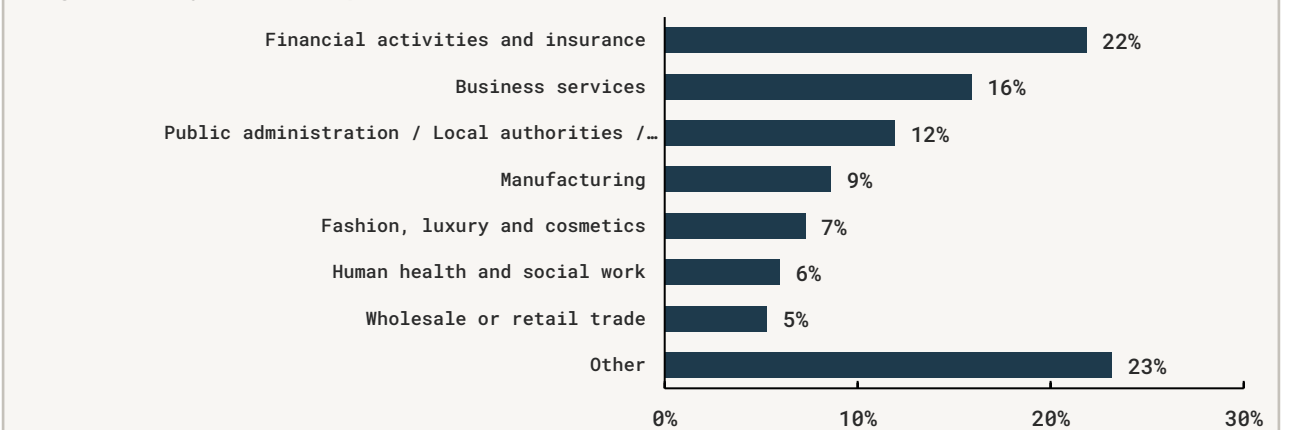


Fig. 7: Industry sector of respondents

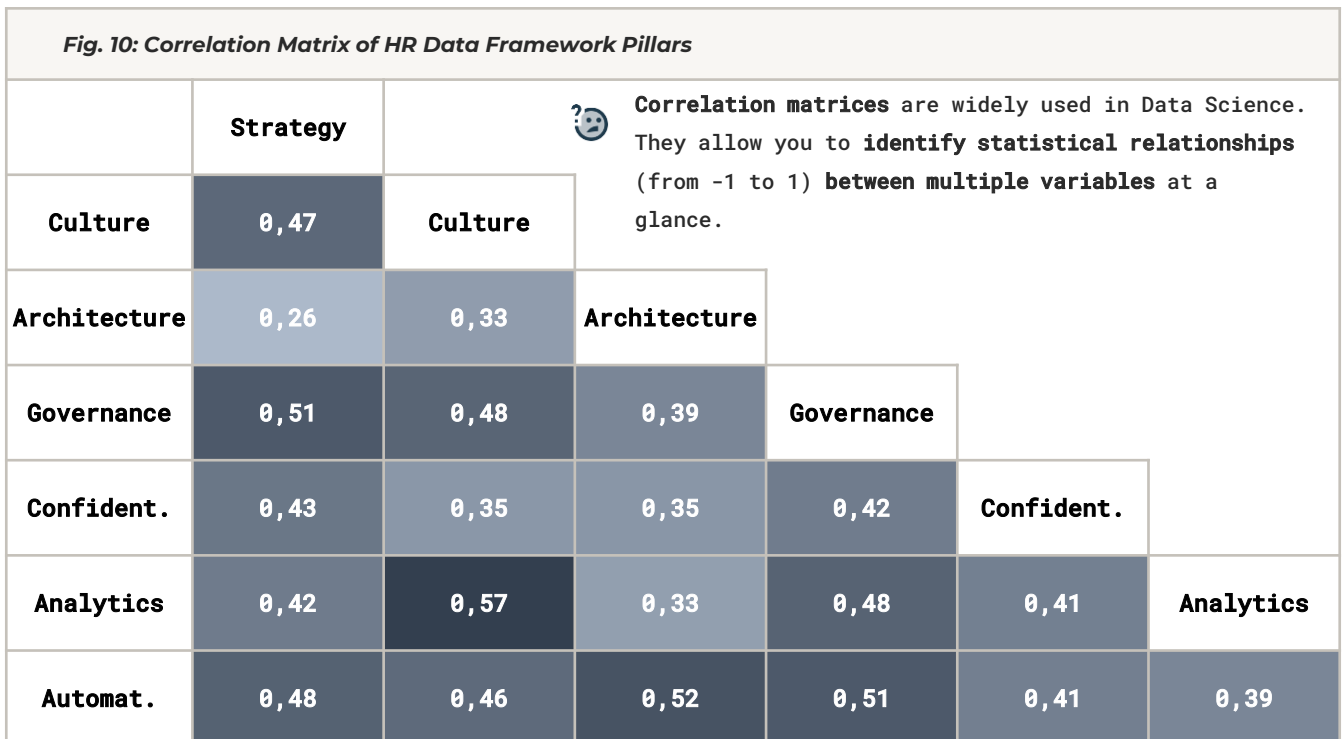


HR Data Practices and Maturity Analysis

Global Analysis

Questions related to the observable performance of Data initiatives allowed me to build scores. These scores enabled to measure the HR Data maturity of a company. A statistical analysis leads to **2 conclusions**:

1. The 7 pillars of the HR Data Framework mutually reinforce each other. From a data science perspective, there appears to be a significant positive correlation between all pillars of the HR Data Framework (fig. 10).



The most correlated pillars are :


- **Culture and Analytics (0.57):** a well-developed culture delivers immediate benefits for decision-making and strengthens analytical initiatives.
- **Architecture and Automation (0.52):** a robust data architecture enables automation capabilities, and automation provides tools to improve data reliability of your HR Data Architecture.
- **Governance and Strategy (0.51):** a well-built, embodied, and communicated strategy drives governance around Data. And governance helps illustrate the strategy and embody it for stakeholders.
- **Governance and Automation (0.51):** data governance requires genuine data management, a prerequisite for automation.

Two Distinct Maturity Profiles

Global Analysis

2. Two distinct groups emerge through clustering statistical analysis (fig. 11):

- **Visionaries, representing 41% of respondents** who already fully leverage HR Data.
- **Emerging, representing 59% of respondents** who lag behind across all pillars of the Framework.

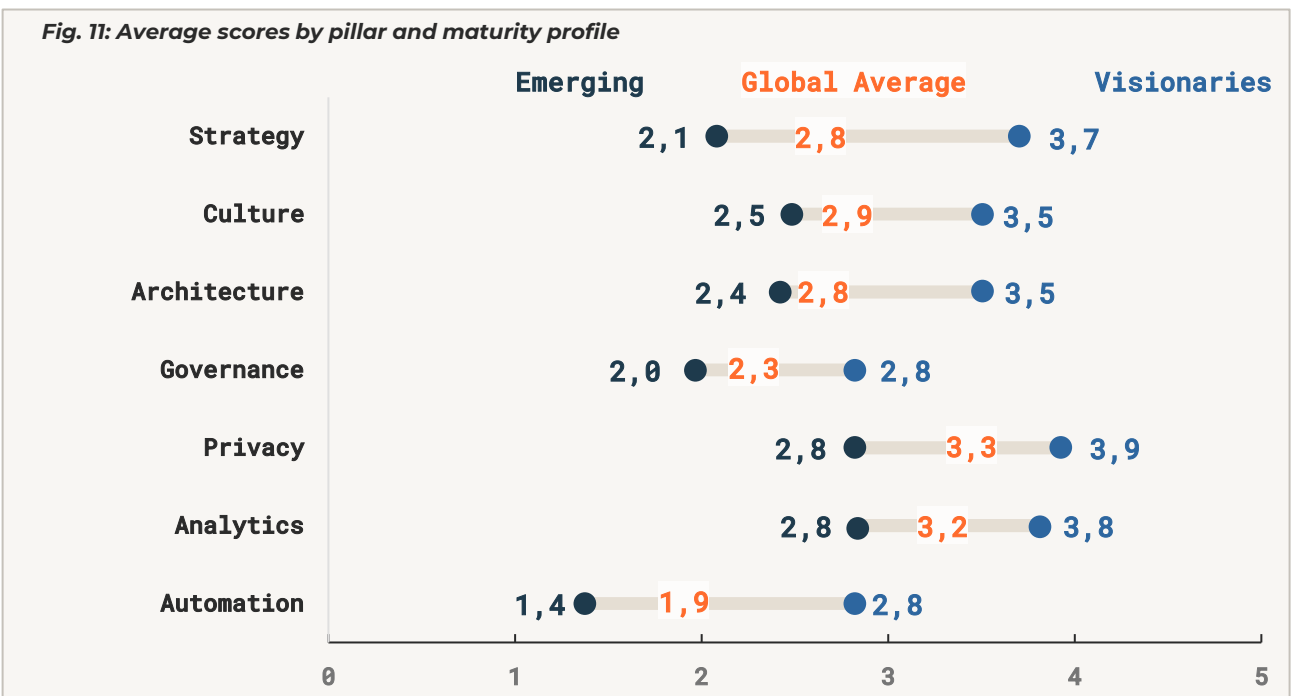
These two profiles guide the entire analysis that follows: which practices make the difference? Look for the «  » in the data analyses to discover the practices of Visionary companies.

The pillars showing the greatest difference between these two groups are **Strategy (1.6 pts)** and **Automation (1.4 pts)**. Conversely, the **Governance (0.8 pts)** and **Culture pillars (0.97 pts)** show the smallest gap.

[Click here](#) or scan the QR code to learn more about the analysis approach



Want to know where you stand? Contact me for your diagnostic assessment!



A deeper analysis (using principal components, to better understand the distinct groups) reveals **2 sub-populations among the Visionaries**.

- **The Strategists** : derive their maturity from Strategy, Culture, and Analytics,
- **The Techs** : derive their maturity from Architecture and Automation.

This once again demonstrates the **heterogeneous nature of HR Data maturity** and the need to **create spaces for sharing best practices to close these gaps**.

Strategy



The compass that guides action

Strategy

The compass that guides your initiatives

Without a strategy, **your HR Data initiatives are like isolated spotlights in the dark.** With a strategy, they become a beacon that guides the entire company.

An HR Data strategy means a direction, priorities, and resources. It is **driven by the company's vision and the HR function's roadmap.**

An HR Data strategy makes all the difference between having data and having impact.

It **provides the impetus and priority for your initiatives.** This strategy should enable you to **secure the necessary financial and human resources.**

The most mature companies in HR Data **have sponsorship that is strong and committed** at the highest level of the organization.

I identify **3 levels of strategic maturity:**

1. No formalized strategy. HR Data initiatives are isolated and deliver value only sporadically. There is a compliance-driven approach to decision-making and processes.

2. Defined strategy but limited resources available. Initiatives regularly deliver value but operate within an unclear framework.

3. Integrated strategy. A roadmap exists with its own dedicated budget. Value is measured against the overall HR and corporate strategy goals.

I **recommend following an iterative approach:** break down your long-term vision into small advances and seize opportunities (new HRIS, new operations leader, new regulatory framework...)

The 5 questions to address:

Vision: where do we want to go? What maturity level are we targeting in 3 years?

Assessment: where do we stand today? Strengths, weaknesses, pain points and opportunities, *see next page.*

Priorities: which workstreams to activate first? Based on which criteria?

Resources: what human, financial and technological resources to allocate?

Topic governance: who leads? On which milestones? With which success indicators?

Building a business case that resonates with the Executive Committee will enable you to align your stakeholders, unlock budgets and transform the organization.

Typical structure:

- **The business challenge :** " We lose our managers 18 months after they take up their post ".
- **Its quantified impact today, the cost of inaction:** we must recruit, onboard and train, plus business loss, costing on average 10 days of the employee average salary.
- **The solution and required resources :** a departure risk prediction tool would identify half of all departures before they happen.
- **The expected ROI and tracking indicators:** time savings, turnover trends, team performance.

To convince your CFO:

Emphasize the gains, the savings, the hidden costs **and be concrete.**








To convince your CHRO:

Position Data as a **credibility lever** with the Executive Committee. Show how to **move from reaction to anticipation** and deliver business impact.

Strategy

Position yourself across the 3 maturity levels

This positioning matrix translates **the HR Data Framework into observable facts**.
Use it to build your strategic assessment and launch your workstreams.

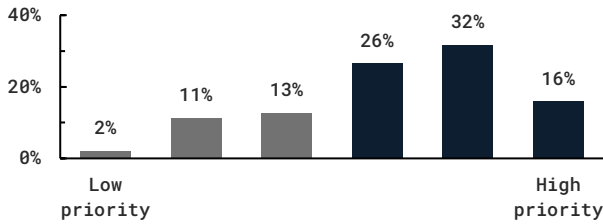
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Strategy 	No strategy; initiatives are isolated and deliver only occasional value.	Formalized strategy but lacking dedicated resources.	Integrated strategy with Executive Committee-level reporting.
Culture 	Sporadic initiatives driven by HR enthusiasts. No company-wide support.	Unorganized community of experts sharing common tools.	Organized and active expert community delivering value across the company.
Architecture 	Siloed HR Information System, no data reconciliation.	Embryonic HR Data architecture that centralizes critical data.	Integrated HR Data Architecture embedded across the company.
Governance 	No data management organization or rules in place.	Ad hoc rules and responsibilities focused on mandatory processes.	Clearly defined and documented rules and responsibilities, supported by a dedicated organization.
Confidentiality 	Data protection supported by HRIS. No dedicated approach.	Reactive data protection approach focused on regulatory compliance.	Preventive approach (privacy-by-design) and risk-oriented.
Analytics 	Analytics focused on regulatory requirements and basic HR KPIs.	Explanatory analytics focused on HR processes.	Prescriptive analytics focused on human and business impact.
Automation 	No or minimal automation, relying on tools such as Excel.	First advanced use cases targeting processes with the best complexity-to-gains ratio.	Systematic automation approach guiding process definition.

Data Speaks Strategy

*Multiple responses allowed

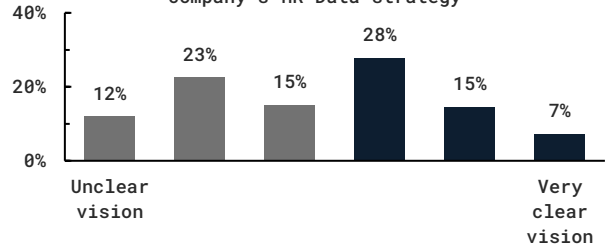
Data is a CHRO priority for 74% of respondents

Data is a priority for your CHRO



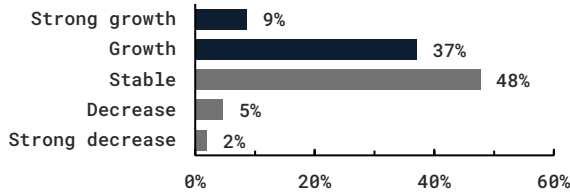
But only 50% believe they have a clear vision of the HR Data strategy

You have a clear vision of the company's HR Data strategy



Investments were growing over the past 24 months for 46% of respondents. They primarily covered tools and training.

Over the past 24 months, you observed that HR Data investments have been

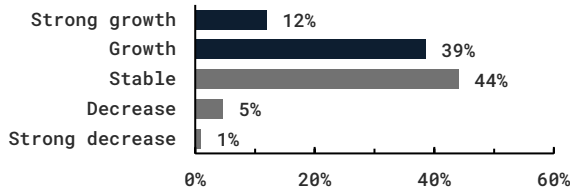


Top 3 investments over the past 24 months*

HRIS upgrade or replacement	52 %
Buying a new BI tool	34 %
Team training	30 %

Investments will continue to grow over the next 24 months for 51% of respondents. Training is the top priority with AI integration, HRIS ranks 3rd.

Over the next 24 months, your investments in HR Data will be

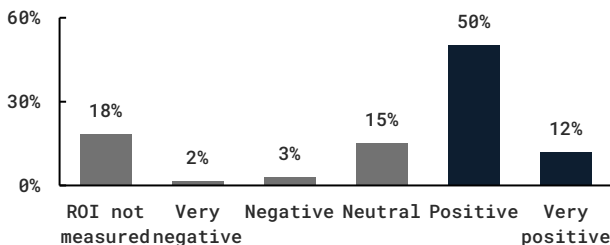


Over the next 24 months, what should be the main investments in HR Data?*

HR Team training	52 %
Overhaul of HR processes to integrate Data and/or AI	49 %
HRIS upgrade or replacement	31 %

18% of respondents do not measure the ROI of their Data initiatives. Among the remaining 82%, 62% consider it positive. The impact of Data initiatives is demonstrated.

What is the return on investment of your HR Data projects?



The main challenges in HR Data concern AI and Data skills.

Quality remains important while measuring impact and HR performance follow.

In your view, what will be the 3 main challenges related to HR Data in the next 2 years?*

Artificial Intelligence integration	69 %
Development of Data skills in HR teams	55 %
Improvement of data quality	51 %
Measuring the business impact of HR policies	31 %
Measuring the performance of HR operations	22 %



Laurent Reich, HR Data & Analytics Officer, L'Oréal

An aeronautical engineer by training, Laurent Reich created L'Oréal's HR Data & Analytics Office from scratch in 2022. He now oversees all HR data for 95,000 employees across 65 countries.

All HR data in one place

When I benchmark against other companies, **two things set us apart.**

First, we were **proactive in centralizing all HR Data on the group platform.** That's very L'Oréal: three years ago we had nothing, but we moved very fast to get everything in place. And we deliver.

The second point is our North Star: **employees trust us** by sharing their data. That data must create value for the company, and for employees. **We call it Data for good.**

Building the Data Office from scratch

We started in 2022, just two of us. We began by **laying the foundations:** methodology, governance, steering frameworks.

Six months later, I hired a Data Quality Lead. **Quality is essential for building trust.**

I then recruited an Analytics Product Owner: she manages our Analytics portfolio **as products** and bridges the **gap between the business world and the tech world.**

Then a Data Product Owner. He digs into APIs and system data flows; **he masters our data model.**

Then, a **Master Data manager** to manage our reference data. Finally, an **HR profile for in-depth business analyses.**

Each time, I made a bet: **recruit the critical skill wherever it exists**, then train on the rest. Because the person who is HR Data, knows L'Oréal, and can code simply doesn't exist.

We use expert Data tools : Snowflake for databases, with Google Cloud Platform and Databricks. Data visualization is in Power BI.

Global scope, strategic reporting

My scope: all HR data, all countries, domains, and systems. I report directly to the Group Deputy CHRO.

The Data function must be connected at the highest level. Our primary challenge for this: **standardization.** For each HR Data object like turnover, there is one single definition. Which we co-created with the countries and regions.

So when our CEO and CHRO visit a country, they have a one-pager in hand with **all HR KPIs based on a common language.**

Transforming 2,000 HR professionals

We have **2,000 HR professionals worldwide.** Our mission: **transform them into a data-driven HR practitioners.**

To achieve this, we have already organized **4 masterclass full-day masterclasses dedicated to HR Data.** We gathered more than 700 HR professionals per session. We also integrated a **Data module into all HR training programs.**

A credibility imperative

Why must an HR function transform through Data? It's about credibility and connecting with the business. It's a shift in the HR function's posture. **Business leaders give credibility when you speak their language :** facts, figures, and measurable trends.

Data to demonstrate the strategic impact of HR



Thomas Morabito, HR Digital & Data Director, Puig

Thomas has navigated every corner of the HR Data universe: HR performance consulting, HRIS at Danone, payroll management then Head of HR Processes and Systems at Chanel, and HRIS Director at Sephora. He has been HR Digital & Data Director at Puig since November 2024.

2005: Workforce Planning before Big Data

My first revelation of the strategic impact of HR Data was a project for a bank. We were trying **to model their employees' career path changes in order to anticipate massive medium-term retirements.**

We brought in a young engineer from the Mines school to build an Excel-Access model. **We concluded that there was no way to fill the departures through internal mobility.**

Our study led them to broaden their recruitment pools: seeking profiles from tourism and retail to increase the number of branch employees.

We finally had the **tools to answer strategic HR questions.**

Chanel: Reconciling HR and Finance through Data

At Chanel, we worked from the outset with Finance on **a shared data model.** The challenge was to match the P&L structure with the HR org chart so everyone was talking about the same thing.

We ensured that **a cost center equaled a department.** It may seem trivial, but it **tremendously simplified all discussions.**

We also interfaced payroll data to give Finance a level of detail they had never had before. We realized our HR data was actually quite reliable, and that **the discrepancies more often came from their side.**

Sephora: Opening the black boxes

When I arrived at Sephora in 2017, we were sending Excel files to the Group quarterly. **Each country had its own definition of indicators.**

Then Covid hit, and precise headcount and cost management became far more strategic for Sephora as for LVMH. **We were able to respond because we had just deployed a Core HR system and strengthened our BI.**

My key takeaway: **start simple to build trust.** Raw data first: headcount, payroll. Only then more sophisticated KPIs.

The CEO's taxi story

There's a story I like. A CEO leaves his strategic plan in a taxi: catastrophe! Now imagine the **CHRO who forgets their HR strategic plan in a taxi.** A catastrophe? Not really.

No point trying to sell that HR strategic plan to competitors: we almost all have the same one! That's the real problem. Until we have a differentiating roadmap with specific business impacts, any KPI will do just as well.

The message

HR has always used Data. A CV is a sum of data. Assessing potential is Data. **We must first overcome our impostor syndrome.** Then, how do we step up? Speak the same language as our business counterparts. **Especially since we have much to learn from their management of Product and Customer data.**

Culture



The Bedrock of Your Transformation

Culture

The Bedrock of Your Transformation

Data Scares HR. Too technical, too cold, too far from the human element. **This is a misunderstanding.**

Using data in HR is not the opposite of the Human Touch. It equips HR with arguments the organization understands.

An HR function that masters its data gains credibility. It speaks the same language as the business and gets what it asks for.

HR Data culture develops on 2 levels:

- **Individual: the skills of each HR employee.** Their ability to understand, manipulate, and interpret data in their daily work.
- **Collective: the shared practices within the function.** The common reflexes, team rituals, and standards that make Data a shared language.

These two dimensions feed each other. Skilled individuals without a shared culture create expertise silos. A proclaimed culture without real skills remains wishful thinking.

My recommendation? Start by **supporting individuals** to create beachheads. And to do so, the skill all HR professionals must develop is **a soft skill:**

I'm talking about « Data Literacy. It is the ability to identify, collect, process, analyze, and interpret data. Data Literacy aims to develop an advanced and conscious use of data.

Let us explore what Data Literacy looks like in practice across 4 different stances.

- 1 **I consume:** reading a dashboard, understanding a chart, spotting an abnormal trend.
- 2 **I question:** formulating a business question that can be informed by data. "Why is turnover increasing in this BU?"
- 3 **I interpret:** contextualizing, identifying limitations, cross-referencing multiple sources. Understanding that an absenteeism rate can mask very different realities.
- 4 **I challenge:** questioning a data point, a method, a conclusion. Asking "how was this number calculated?" before presenting it in a meeting.

An HR function that is « Data Literate » understands the link between its processes and the data they produce. It designs its operations and tools with the value of generated data in mind. Its teams take particular care with data entry quality, because they see its value.

How do you know if your HR Data culture is progressing?

Positive signals

- Teams spontaneously ask "what do the data say?" before making a decision.
- Teams understand the importance of quality and the impact of data entry errors.
- Employees ask to join the HR Data community.

Warning signals

- Only "HR geeks" handle data.
- Teams maintain parallel Excel files.
- Turnover among Data profiles is high.

Culture

Developing Your HR Data Culture

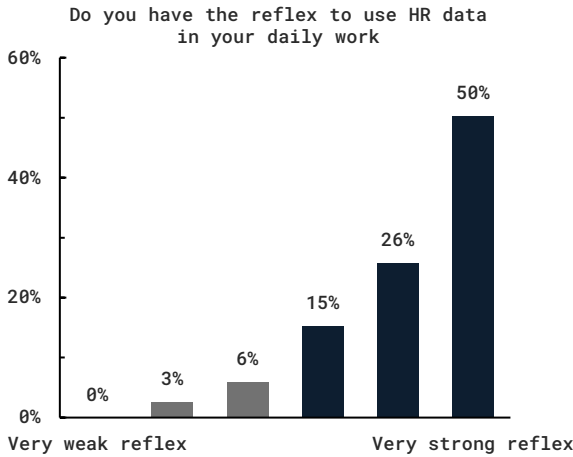
This grid presents the key actions for developing your Data culture at both the individual and collective levels

Phases	Individual approach Follow the natural learning curve of your team members.	Collective approach Bring together and equip the Data enthusiasts in your organization.
1 Discovery 0 to 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual diagnostic of Data skills Training on HR Data basics (Data stakes, GDPR, Data Storytelling) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collective diagnostic of Data practices and expectations Communication of the HR Data vision Delivery and celebration of a first Quick-win
2 Foundations 3 to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced training on your tools (Excel, Power BI...) Training on the HR analytical mindset (see analytics pillar) Supervision of an analytics Data project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of natural ambassadors and creation of an expert community Building a use-case roadmap Building a shared business glossary
3 Practice 6 to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build and maintain a Dashboard Clean and prepare data independently Contribute to HR data governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of Data leads across HR scopes Integration of a Data component into team rituals Collectively define Data standards
4 Mastery 12 to 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement recurring Data quality controls Cross data with business knowledge to produce value Contribute to the HR Data strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of HR Data from the outset of projects Roll-out of HR Data self-service Systematic sharing with other business functions
5 Excellence 24 to 36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to predictive analytics Design Data products: detailed needs specification Lead training sessions for peers Present externally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structuring an HR Data Center of Excellence Positioning HR as a Strategic Data partner Ensure knowledge transfer and sustainability

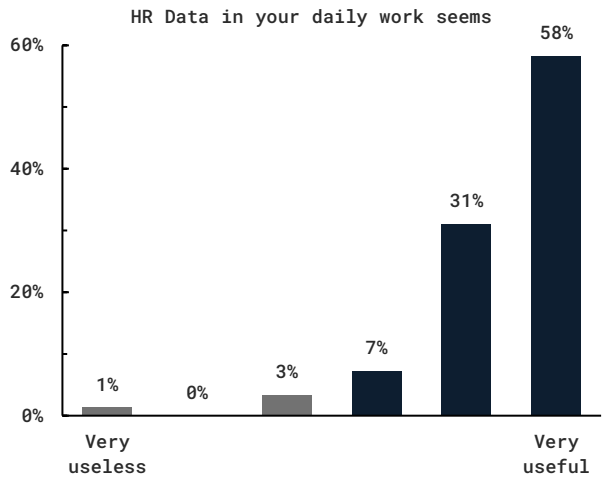
Data Speaks Culture

91% of respondents have the reflex to use data in their daily work.

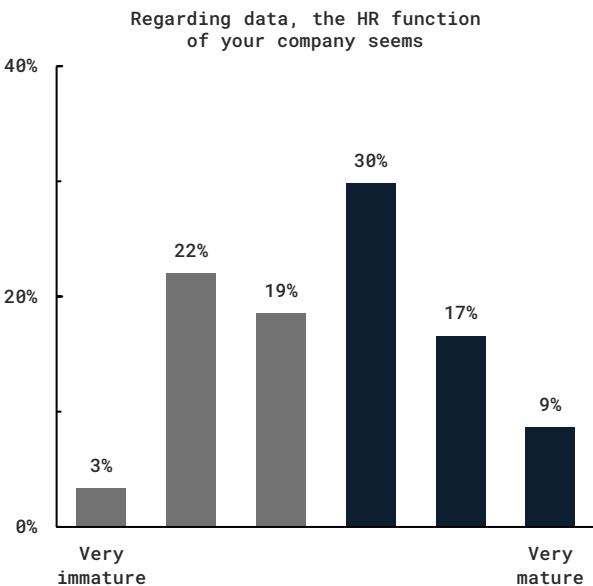
Beyond the importance of data, it is the awareness of that importance that stands out.



Data is **useful for 96%** of them. This reminds us that data serves HR in their daily work: reporting, activity tracking, data analysis. **It is omnipresent.**



But at a collective level, **only 56% consider their organization mature**. There is a gap between practices and the perception of collective maturity. This paradox can be explained by a **respondent bias, as they are more interested in the subject**.



Training is an essential driver of Data culture.

Companies that are pioneers are **30% more likely** to have implemented specific HR Data training programs (comprehensive or targeted).



The HR Geek Who Transforms Her Department



Aurélie Crégut, Head of AI & Data HR Office, MBDA

With 12 years at MBDA, Aurélie has explored every HR role: Talent Management, HR Business Partner, Recruiter, Training Manager, and Data & AI Lead. Her path? A series of dual business-data roles until the breakthrough: "The box I want doesn't exist, so I'll create it."

The HR department geek

From my very first role in Talent Management, I was **"the HR department geek."** There were very few tools, so I built **Excel cathedrals.** We weren't talking about Data yet, but we had real operational needs.

I followed a full Data approach: quality, modeling, architecture, object definition. I **trained myself in Data through Excel.** As an HRBP, I structured HR data to address the business challenges I was managing.

I then spent four years with a **dual hat as Recruiter + "Ms. Data"**. I was in charge of France-level reporting (headcount forecasting, sourcing analysis...)

I then became Training Manager with **always the same Data reflexes:** plan tracking tables, forecasts, session planning... With each role, a little more Data. **Until the breakthrough.**

"The box I want doesn't exist"

At the end of the training tool project (TMS), one thing became clear: the proliferation of existing files and tools represented **a major value creation opportunity for HR and the business because provided data was structured and centralized.**

Drawing on my full journey at the company, I convinced the VP Learning of **the need to shift toward a data-driven approach.** I shared with her a vision of HR transformation centered on **automating our processes through AI integration** and **designing individualized, skills-based career development paths.**

She replied: **"On the Learning side, let's go"** and created the role of **L&D Data Manager.** We went for it knowing it would require **a real change of mindset,** and that it would take time.

Building the L&D Data Office from Scratch

Our goal was to develop **high-value use cases:** skills identification and utilization, learning path design, chatbots, dashboards...

I **broke down our functional needs into blocks,** defined an **iterative project methodology, structured the data and built the team.** With these foundations in place, **the only limit is our imagination.**

In parallel, we are implementing **data governance.** We follow a pragmatic approach tailored to our Data needs and HR organization. Our team is made up of **3 roles: Data Owners** (business), **Data Custodians** (IT), and **Data Stewards** (Data management).

Scaling Up & Expanding

Today, we are building on the work done on the L&D side and **scaling it across the entire HR function.**

In January 2026, the Group CHRO created the HR Data & AI Office, which I now lead. Our role is to **ensure HR data sovereignty, harmonize different sources, and create value from HR data:** this means building a **Group HR Data Platform.**

Our target: **deliver a seamless HR experience** across tools, data, and HR processes, **in service of employee development and company performance.**

Testimonial

In HR Data, No Need to Reinvent the Wheel



Evangelos Chaidacis, Head of Data, Global HR Services, TotalEnergies

Centrale Nantes engineer, 20 years in Data, Evangelos Chaidacis has worked across all support functions: logistics, marketing, finance, and public organizations. For the past 3 years, he has been leading HR Data at TotalEnergies.

HR Aggregates Data Challenges from all other functions

I've always been between business and technology. Business analysis, project management, Data architect, first as a consultant, then on the client side.

I have worked across logistics, supply chain, marketing, finance, public organizations, research, and now HR for three years. This diversity taught me one thing: about data, **the fundamental challenges are the same, regardless of the function.** Source information systems, data quality, reference data management... **in HR, you find all of this at the same time thought.**

Drawing Parallels Between HR and Other Functions

With the necessary caveats, we can draw parallels between HR processes and those of other business functions.

For headcount: we have entities, teams, with a certain number of people. When we talk about counting, we can **draw a parallel with inventory management.** It comes down to counting, tracking trends over time, monthly monitoring. There are similarities.

When someone is missing, the work can't get done. You need to recruit someone, manage internal mobility. We conduct in-depth analyses on internal mobility. The challenge is **anticipating needs.**

Recruitment : when you post an opening, there are needs. We're challenged on hiring timelines. **It's similar to logistics,** like delivery time.

Learning from Our Colleagues' Expertise

I have seen many functions through a Data lens, and **we have much to learn from our colleagues' skills.**

I have two colleagues who were previously financial controllers in finance. They **bring rigor** to reporting, and also a **budgetary and financial perspective** that interests our leaders.

Late Awakening, Rapid Acceleration

The HR function overall has a **low level of data maturity.** But I've noticed a recent catch-up and a **rapid acceleration.**

At TotalEnergies, **you can feel the desire to progress,** needs are emerging. It's more than a desire; it's at the heart of many strategies.

Not all HR professionals have an appetite for data. They may lack data literacy. Yet our central projects require a lot of data. That is why we raise awareness across the entire HR function.

Moreover, AI is playing an increasingly important role in projects. It is **a lever to get HR interested in Data.** And once again, we build on the work done by other functions in the Company.

My Three Tips for HR

Simplify concepts as much as possible, approach them pragmatically. **Adopt an opportunistic approach** and step by step. **Communicate and build Data literacy,** because Data is everyone's business.

Architecture



The pillars on which your data rests

Architecture

The pillars on which your data rests

HR data is fragmented: payroll, time management, talent, training... each tool holds its own data, with no common foundation. Result: inconsistent figures and no global view.

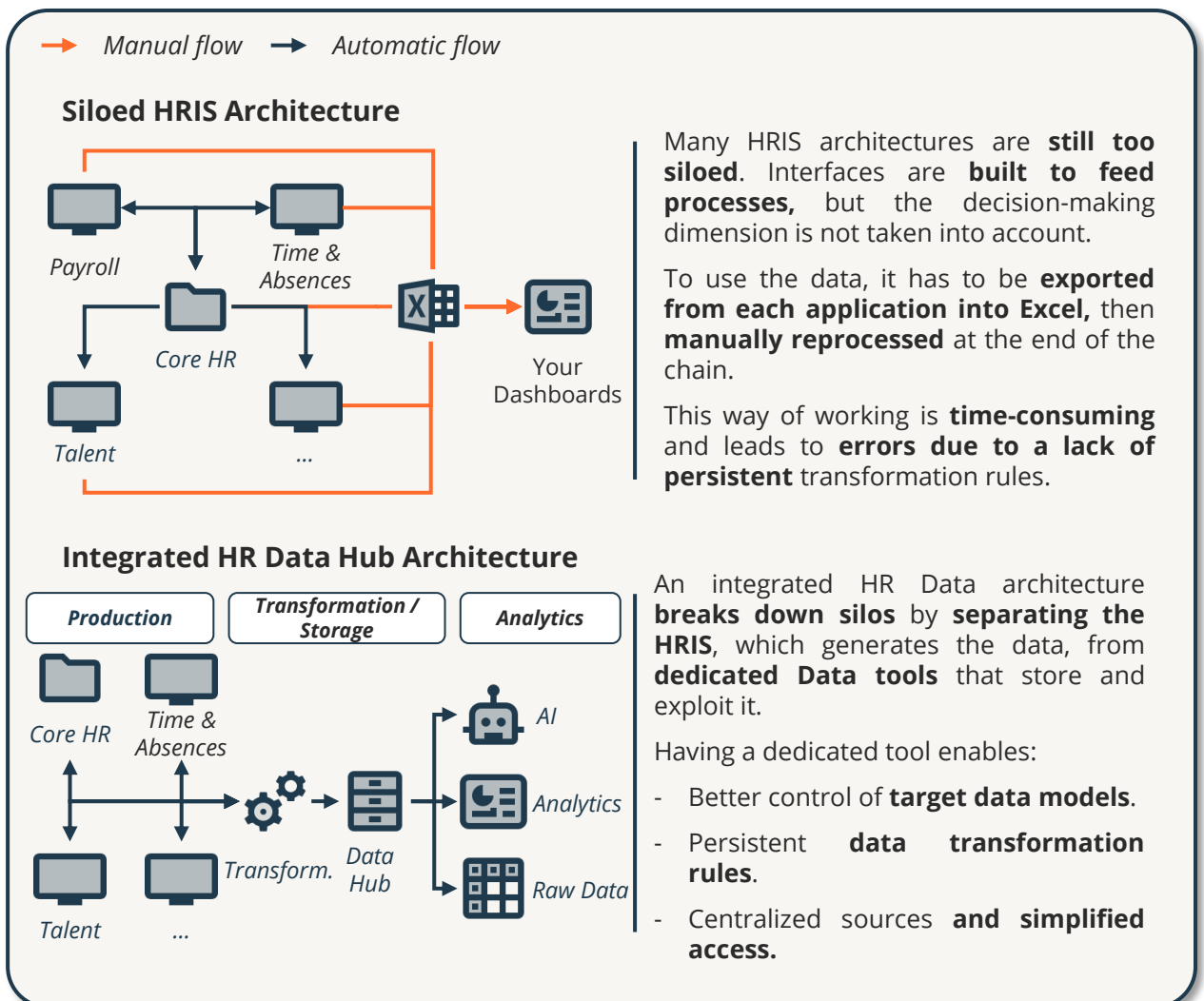
Without a structured data architecture, HR teams spend more time reconciling spreadsheets than making decisions.

Structuring your HRIS means creating a shared framework to unify your sources, ensure data quality, and build dashboards that leadership actually trusts.

The HR Data Hub centralizes all HR data sources into a single, unified layer: one reference point for headcount, talent, learning, and compensation.

Automated flows replace manual exports. Data is transformed, standardized, and made available to all consumers, dashboards, analytics, AI models.

The result: reliable, up-to-date HR data that teams can trust for strategic decision-making, without IT intervention for every new report.

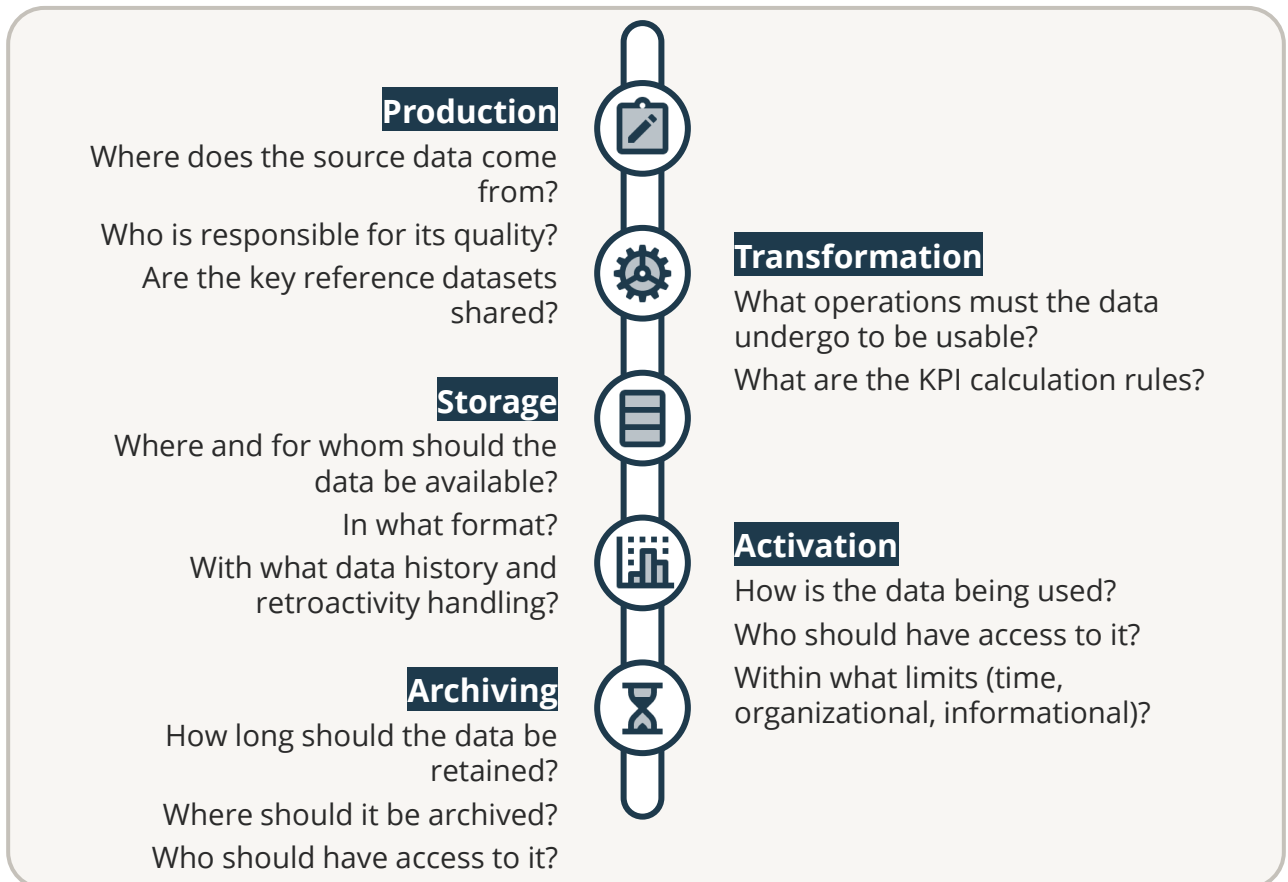


Architecture

Key questions to ask at each stage

Before choosing your tools, understand the lifecycle of your data, from generation to archiving.

Here are the questions to ask at each stage to build a data architecture that secures and maximizes the value of your data.

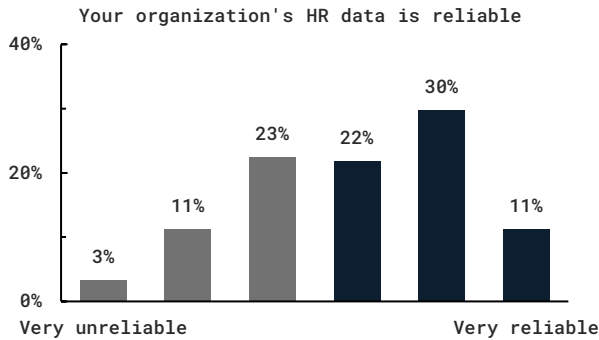


Beyond this lifecycle, **key principles** confirm that your data architecture is robust:

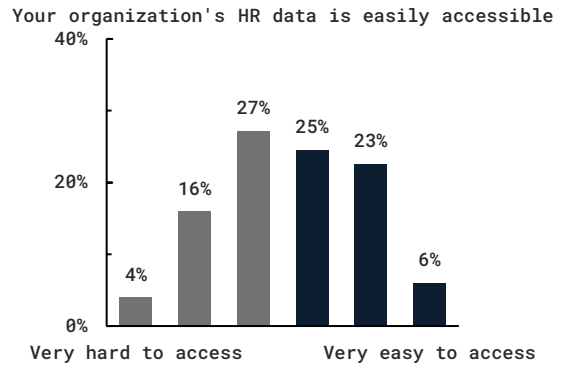
- ✓ A **unique employee ID** exists to identify each employee across all organizational systems. Decide which system is responsible for **creating this ID and propagate it** across other applications.
- ✓ **Anomalies are detected proactively** rather than discovered by users: **develop simple automated checks** (completeness, duplication, consistency) on **the most critical data**
- ✓ Data is **usable without manual reprocessing** by business users: **map out concrete use cases** and develop data objects that reflect the data actually being used.
- ✓ The **architecture is documented** in a way that is understandable to non-experts and updated as changes occur: **maintain a representation of your HRIS** to answer the question "which data in which tool?".

Data Speaks Architecture

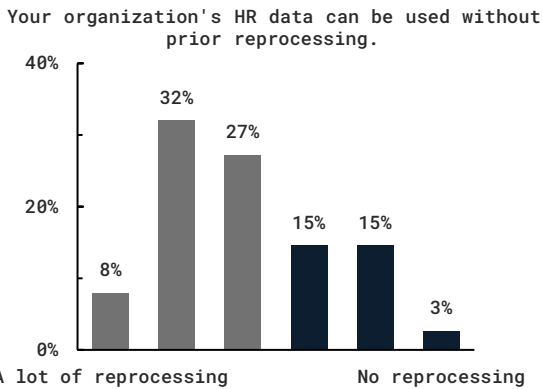
Only 63% of respondents consider their HR data to be reliable.



Only 54% consider their data easily accessible.



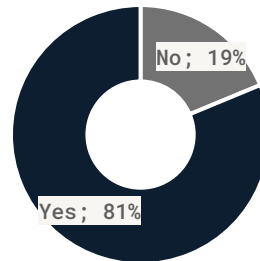
Only 33% of respondents do not need to perform any reprocessing to use the data.



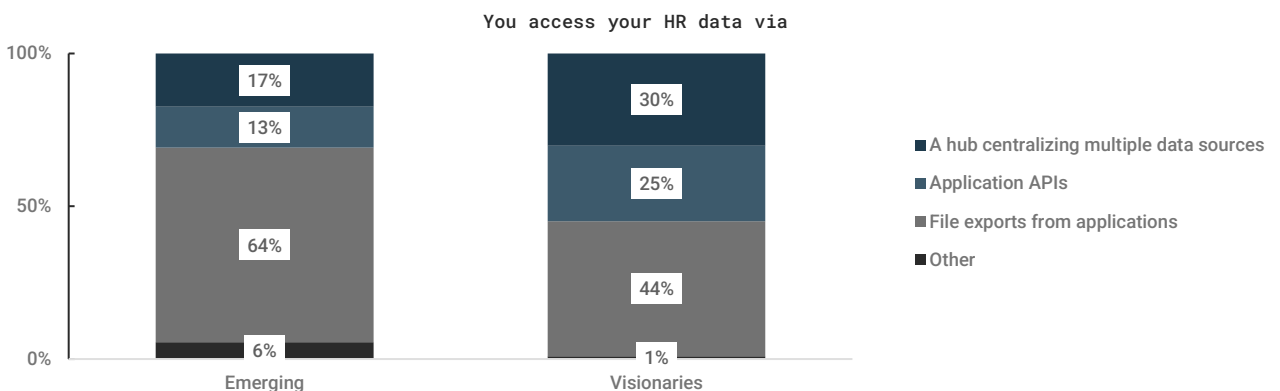
81% already have a unique employee ID.

A key foundation for any solid HR Data architecture.

Do you have a unique ID for each employee, regardless of the HR application or company scope?



💡 What sets **the most mature companies apart is their implementation of a centralized data hub and automated data access** (55% vs 30%), helping to limit exports from applications, which nonetheless remain very common.



Data Is the Fuel of the HRIS



Christian Verhague, HRIS Partner, Think Igo

With 35 years of experience in organizational transformation, Christian has moved from IT to HR via procurement and management control. He led major HRIS programs at Natixis and then BPCE. He now supports his clients through their HRIS transformations.

Where will the data be?

It is the **first question I ask when launching an HRIS project**. It surprises often. Yet if the answer is not clear from the start, you'll quickly spend a lot of money on BI tools that no one will use.

Every HRIS solution comes with its own BI. **Every vendor wants to lock you in**. But if your data needs to live in a Data Warehouse, say so from the start. That changes everything.

A costly example

I supported a client who **wanted to simplify their reference data too quickly** during an HRIS migration. They had 5 categories of support functions. To save time, everything was grouped into "support function".

Today, they want to use their data. Impossible. **The granularity has been lost**. You need to go back to the source, change the settings and re-enter the information.

If the question had been asked when choosing the HRIS, the situation would be very different today.

Identify the golden source above all

At one client, a Core HR had been set up to centralize data. But payroll relied on an old tool unable to lock certain fields.

And poorly governed data produces very concrete problems.

If "Mr. Smith has a new child" was supposed to be entered in the HRIS. But out of habit, the teams entered it in payroll. The data would diverge.

The year the dependent-child verification campaign was launched, the situation became very complicated.

In subsequent years, Data Quality was handled reactively. But the real question was elsewhere: **where is the golden source? And how do you prevent data entry elsewhere?**

From HRIS to Group Data Warehouse

At BPCE, we built **an HR Data Warehouse** for nearly 100,000 employees spread across more than 30 companies.

And that **profoundly simplified our daily work**. By centralizing the data, we could automatically calculate regulatory indicators.

Most importantly, it gave us the critical mass to do things that had been impossible before such as running simulations across 100,000 employees. The time saved, the reliability, the ability to negotiate with social partners on solid foundations.

The Message

Data is like change management. We often think about it too late, when the project is already launched. So we do it under constraint, take shortcuts... and pay the price.

Ask these questions from the definition of the HRIS master plan:

- Where will the golden source be for each piece of data?
- Who truly owns it?
- How do you prevent data entry elsewhere?

Governance



An organization to support your data

Governance

An organization to support your data

"Our data quality is poor."

This is the **most frequent complaint** regarding HR Data. We often blame the tools: poorly configured, ill-suited, poorly tested. They may bear some responsibility. But **the problem is organizational before being technical.**

Who is responsible for a data point's quality? **Who corrects it** when it's wrong? Who ensures everyone uses the **same definitions?** Without clear answers to these questions, even the best tool will produce **unusable data.**

This is precisely the role of **data governance**: defining the rules, roles, and responsibilities that govern the data lifecycle, from collection to archiving, through transformation, storage, and value creation.

Governance is the organizational counterpart of your architecture. But where do you start?

Data governance cannot be decreed; it **is built progressively.** The initial work involves **mapping and documenting the processes and associated data.**

It is a long-term endeavor whose fruits, a common language, **are reaped over time.**

My recommendation: start small. Identify the HR areas that are most **critical to the organization, and most motivated to move forward.**

Governance can then spread organically, **championed by those who have experienced its value.**

The quality of your HR data relies on four key profiles:

- **HR Business:** (payroll, recruitment, etc.) Experts in data meaning and the processes that generate them. Guarantors of their mastery and daily quality. They are **Data Owners.**
- **HR Data Analysts :** Have a cross-functional view of data. Detect inconsistencies and flag anomalies. They are **Data Consumers.**
- **HRIS Department :** Manage data quality in HR applications, the primary data source. They are **Data Steward.**
- **Technical :** Ensures technical compliance and infrastructure security. They are **Data Engineers.**

These profiles will need to work on **documenting your data :**

Data definitions : what is a work schedule? How does it differ from working hours? What is its source?

Indicator calculation rules: how is turnover calculated? Do internal transfers count as departures?

Reference data management: who is responsible for ensuring the reliability of cross-functional value lists? Does the operations department manage work sites?






Based on common rules and clearly defined responsibilities, you can implement **data quality processes in 3 stages :**



Governance

Managing the quality of your data

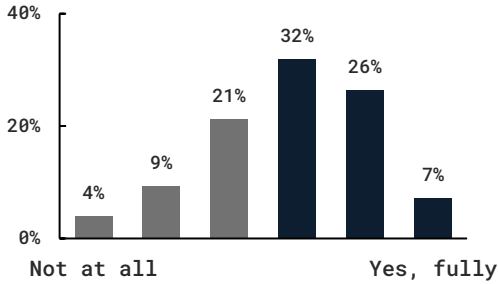
Data Stewards and Data Owners are **key roles** in data governance. They do not necessarily correspond to **specific job positions**. But they embody a level of **responsibility toward data**. Let us explore a **typical data quality management organization** featuring these roles.

	 Data Steward DSIRH	 Data Owner HR Business
Identify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines logical quality rules for data (format, freshness, completeness, consistency...). • Automates anomaly detection using BI tools, based on the defined logical and business quality rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines business quality rules for data (e.g. is a salary of 0 normal to block payroll, or a data entry error?). • Validates the Data Steward controls. • Monitors data quality during daily use of the HRIS.
Escalate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralizes anomalies. • Investigates the technical root causes of anomalies. • Qualifies and prioritizes by impact. • Routes to business teams via a single channel when analysis or correction in the tool is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports anomalies encountered via a single channel. • Takes ownership of anomalies within their scope. • Investigates business root causes. • Engages operational staff when local investigation is needed.
Correct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifies that the correction is effective in source systems. • Documents recurring anomalies. • Proposes preventive actions. • Updates control rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decides on the corrective action: data entry in the tool, loading into the tool, process update. • Mobilizes operational staff if correction is needed in the source application. • Validates the correction of the anomaly.

Data Speaks Governance

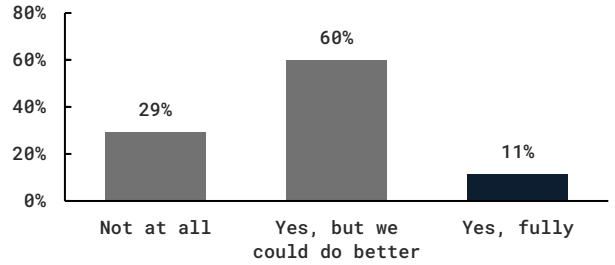
65 % of respondents believe their **data governance enables better management and value creation from data.**

Your HR data governance provides you with better control and better value creation from HR data.



Only 11% feel they have **enough information** to effectively leverage HR data (catalog, definitions, etc.).

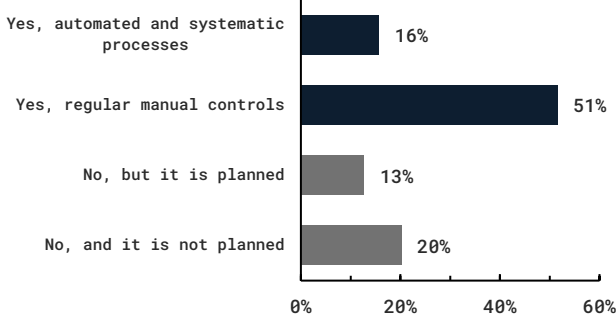
Do you have sufficient information about HR data to effectively leverage it (catalog, definitions...)?



Quality checks are becoming widespread (67%) but remain **overly manual (51%)**.

These practices help build trust in data and reduce the burden of after-the-fact reprocessing.

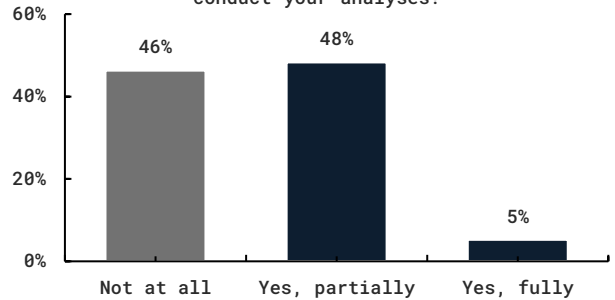
Have you implemented HR data quality control processes?



Access to data from other business functions remains marginal (53%) and **partial (48%)**.

This signals that HR remains siloed within its own function and does not yet play a sufficient role in business decisions.

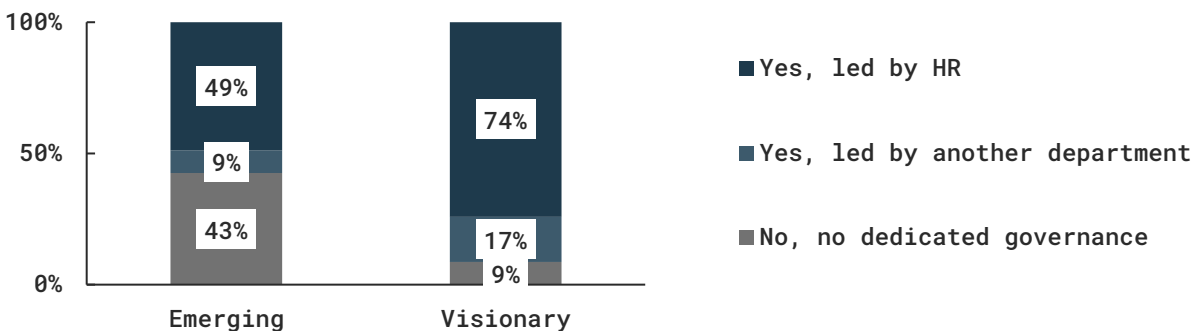
Do you access data from other business functions to conduct your analyses?



💡 What differentiates the **most mature organizations** is the existence of a **dedicated HR Data governance framework (91% vs 57%)**.

74% of Visionary companies have centralized governance within group HR teams.

Is there a dedicated HR data governance framework within your organization?



Testimonial

Bridging the Gap Between Business, Technology, and Legal

Renault Group



Alexis Rouet, Chief Data Officer HR, Renault Group

Alexis held various roles within the Finance Division at both corporate and international levels. He specialized in Data by contributing to the transformation of the Finance function. Today, his work focuses on securing, organizing, and unlocking the value of HR data at Renault.

My Role as Guardian of the Temple

I am neither an operational HR professional nor a Data technician. My role is to **gather business needs and identify the data that will address them.** Business teams often have solutions in mind. IT has a portfolio. The challenge is **reconciling the two.**

I make sure we start from needs and that there is business sense and **regulatory and ethical compliance behind every use case.**

I wear three hats: Data Strategy to optimize processes and architecture, **Data Analytics** on a daily basis, and **bridge to legal.** With HR Data, we are talking about our employees, about people. That is why **privacy stakes are non-negotiable.**

Building a Unified HR Data Product

In Argentina, I experienced the nightmare of 15-20 nested Excel files fed by ERP extractions. **The Data Warehouse project aims to put an end to these practices.** It enables **all people who need and are entitled to access HR data** to do so.

To achieve this, **we work in Agile mode.** We are not trying to build the perfect system. **We start from a concrete need,** and seek to address it. **If value is demonstrated, we industrialize** and then look for the next use case. This now allows us to tackle complex topics such as absenteeism prediction or career path optimization.

Three Levels of Governance

Our governance is structured across three levels:

Strategic governance: what are our Data objectives, which use cases to prioritize, how they fit into the overall HR strategy.

Operational governance: who produces the data, who validates it, what are the business rules, how we document.

Technical governance : how we secure access, how we comply with GDPR, how we ensure confidentiality.

We created explicit roles of Data providers on the HR business side, who are **responsible for the quality and documentation of their data.** And we, the CDO HR team, **lead this governance and ensure it is sustained over time.**

My Advice to Get Started

The real challenge is to **structure the architecture and governance while building a data culture across teams.** Organizations that succeed in making business, IT and legal work together will **extract the most value.**

Start by integrating basic governance elements: **define who is responsible for what** regarding your data, and create a shared business glossary.

Then make sure your data is clean and that **everyone speaks the same language.**

Skills-Based Organization is Data Governance



Guillaume Lavoix, Skills Intelligence Lead, Sanofi

With 10 years as a consultant at Sia Partners specializing in HR Transformation, Guillaume is an expert in skills-based transformation projects. At Sanofi, he leads SkillsPower, the initiative that structures the skills of 75,000 employees.

Skills-Based Organization (SBO): providing visibility by skills

The Skills-Based Organization (SBO) is a way of **thinking about organizations by placing skills at the center of human resources management**. When properly implemented, it delivers benefits both for employees and for the organization.

On the employee side: we provide visibility and transparency on the skills needed for a given role. This allows each employee to take ownership of their career path with greater visibility.

On the company side: we complement the Workforce Planning approach, we still address the same questions: which scenarios will materialise? What are the gaps? But we add the skills dimension that previously did not exist.

We give HR the quantitative and Finance the qualitative thanks to this new data. We even have leaders asking us for skills assessments for their business strategy. They **now integrate the skills dimension** into the study of new products.

The SBO is above all a Data project

The further we progressed, the more we realised that **the SBO is a Data project**. The tools and use cases at the end of the chain, **if the Data is reliable**, are not overly complex. They remain matching algorithms. **What was complex was creating the framework, building the community and governing all of it.**

At Sanofi we have 6,000 jobs. For each one we defined 11 skills. **To build all this, we conducted a total of 550 workshops in three phases** with 40 skills owners and 650 business experts.

The first step was to define how to break down jobs. The breakdown was carried out based on a sufficient pool.

We then defined, with the business units, the critical skills for each job. **It's colossal, but it's the indispensable foundation for seriously pursuing an SBO approach.**

Once this foundation was built, we were able to **collect self-assessments** for each employee.

87% participation: community above all

One of the **biggest efforts was change management**, both for building the skills frameworks and for collecting self-assessments from employees. **We thought big : 100 events in every country worldwide dedicated to skills over two months.**

Result: **87% of employees completed their assessment.** In benchmarks, you typically see around 60%. We were able to count on the **relay network of the expert community we had built and facilitated.** They are not HR, but they witnessed the **culmination of all our work.**

The takeaway

A Skills-Based Organization is first and foremost a Data governance project: structuring and orchestrating skills data. It is a **prerequisite to unlocking high-value use cases:** career path recommendations, training suggestions, Workforce planning...

Confidentiality



The trust contract with your employees



Confidentiality

The trust contract with your employees

Confidentiality means ensuring that **every piece of HR data is processed lawfully and respects individuals' rights**. No abstract compliance: concrete rules, applied daily.

It is typically a component of data governance. However, in the context of Human Resources management, the stakes are so high that it is **essential to treat it as a dedicated pillar**.

This is **not merely a legal obligation** under the General Data Protection Regulation (with penalties of up to 4% of global turnover). **It is a responsibility toward your employees**.

Ensuring the protection of your employees' personal data is **critical to maintaining employee trust in the organization**.

And for good reason, many organizations have experienced **personal employee data breaches**: URSSAF, the French National Education system, Starbucks, Amazon... Anyone can be affected. This data is then resold by hackers on data markets. **The consequences can be particularly devastating**: phishing, fraud, identity theft...

Nevertheless, **GDPR is too often invoked as a veto**, a red flag waved to prevent any use of HR data.

But **GDPR prohibits nothing in absolute terms**. Like the AI Act, **it establishes a framework that questions the relevance** of a given data use and **defines practices** to implement in order to ensure **secure use** of data.

Let us explore together the 8 principles set out by GDPR.

- 1. Lawfulness and fairness** : legal basis for processing and correspondence between the description and the reality of processing.
- 2. Transparency** : individuals concerned are entitled to obtain information about the processing of their data.
- 3. Minimization and relevance** : Data that is useful and strictly necessary in relation to the purpose.
- 4. Integrity**: Implementation of measures to protect data against unauthorized modification.
- 5. Limited retention** : A precise retention period must be set, based on the type of information and the purpose.
- 6. Purpose limitation** : Data is only processed for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes.
- 7. Security and confidentiality**: ensuring that only authorized persons have access to information within a robust system.
- 8. Accountability** : The data controller must be able to demonstrate compliance.

Beyond these truly basic principles, GDPR provides **a framework to assess the risk** of any personal data processing. For each use case, it involves **asking 3 questions**:

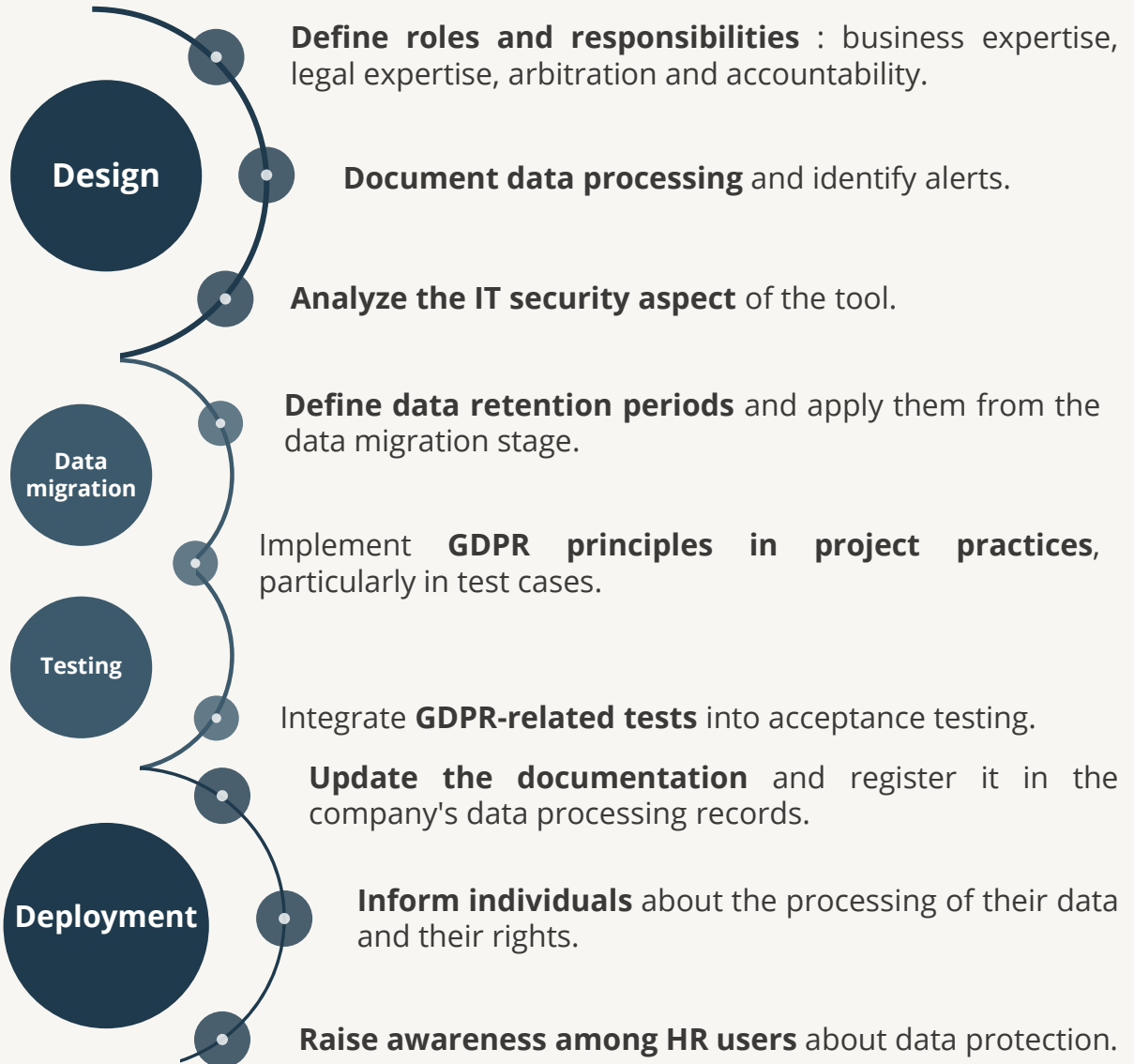
- What data breaches could occur?
- What is their likelihood?
- What is their impact?

These questions enable a pragmatic approach, without being swayed by the emotional reactions that HR data use can sometimes trigger.

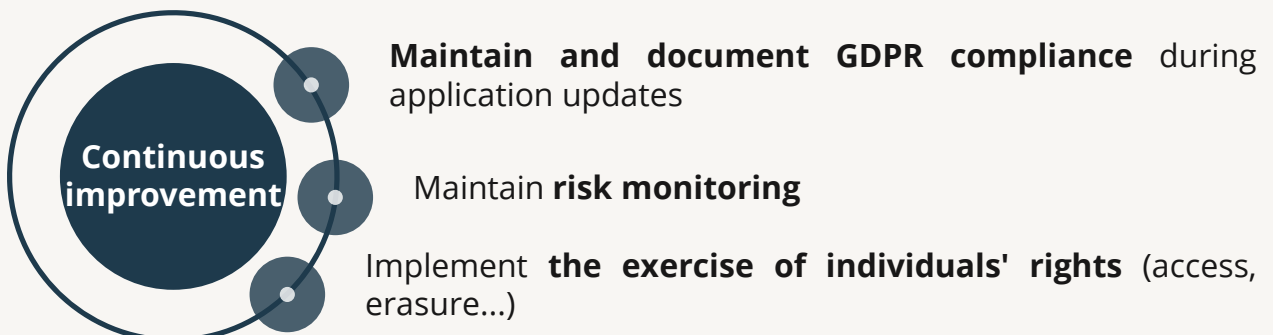
Confidentiality

An HRIS Project Privacy By Design

During the project



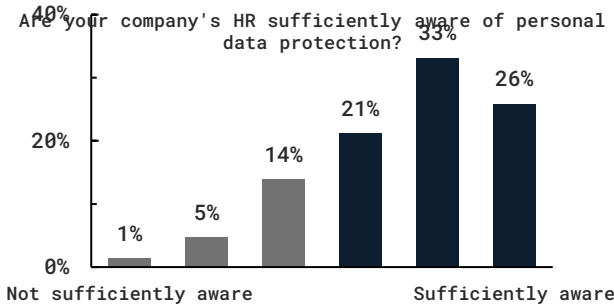
In run mode



Data Speaks Confidentiality

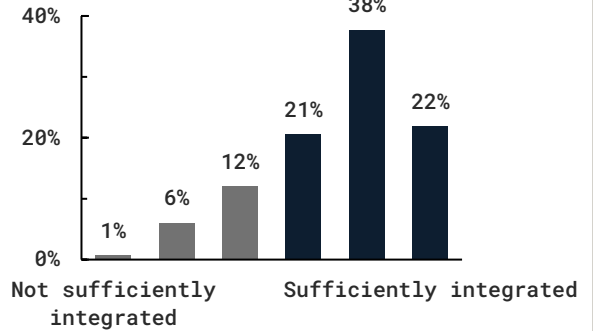
80% of respondents believe that **HR** in their company are **sufficiently aware** of **personal data protection**.

This is an important topic for the HR function.



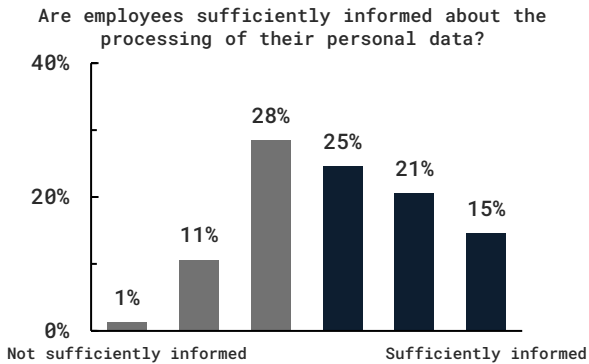
81% of respondents believe that digitalization projects **sufficiently integrate personal data protection**.

Do HR digitalization projects sufficiently integrate personal data protection?



Nevertheless, only **61% of respondents** consider that **employees are sufficiently informed** about the processing of their data.

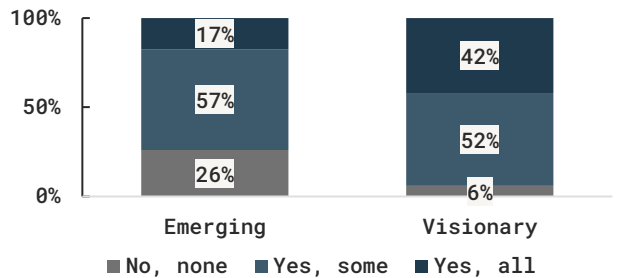
Transparency is a founding principle of GDPR. HR must **reconcile this right** with the **social risk** it can generate.



💡 Visionaries stand out in their **data archiving practices**.

They are **2.5 times more likely to delete all data at end of life**.

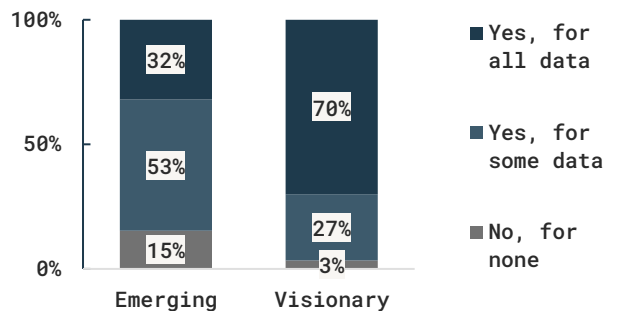
Are your employees' personal data deleted or anonymized once they are no longer useful?



💡 Similarly, visionaries stand out in their **authorization and access management practices**.

They are **more than twice as likely** to have an **authorization policy covering the entire HR data estate**.

Do you have an authorization and access policy for your company's HR data?



Data protection that inspires



Marie Locco, Data Governance Project Manager, France Travail

With a background in communications and digital strategy, Marie held several positions before obtaining her Data Protection Officer qualification. She joined France Travail's HR department to support compliance within an HR transformation context.

Personal Data Protection: a matter of conviction

When I first took on responsibilities in the GDPR field, I never imagined that a few years later... **I would be embedded at the heart of an HR department dealing with such a wide range of HR topics!**

My path wasn't a **"classic" one**, moving from digital social media to GDPR. My current manager, Aurélien Fenard, started by sharing his vision **of an HR transformation that goes hand in hand with personal data protection**. I started asking myself: will HR excite me? Will there be enough to do? Aren't confidentiality aspects already taken care of? How will I be received...?

But his conviction was decisive. It allowed me to look at things with fresh eyes and realize just how much **data protection could even be a lever for rethinking HR practices**.

HR Data: GDPR is your best governance tool

As in all fields, **HR has never produced and processed as much data as it does today**: process digitalization, development of employee services, HRIS deployment, and ever-growing regulatory requirements.

All factors that lead HR departments to collect and process an ever-growing volume of data.

I arrived in that context. My mission was to drive a shift in mindset: **we must not only hold data but know how we are going to govern it**.

And that is precisely where I had to **demonstrate that GDPR truly comes into its own** ! It wasn't easy, but my communications background and openness to the HR field helped me a great deal.

Governing HR Data means first and foremost protecting people

To establish myself, I always **pushed back against the perception of GDPR as a constraint**. I started by demonstrating that our primary goal is to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, **we are very fortunate to have it!**

Data use is never neutral. Data can be a tool for progress, but also for abuse when left unregulated. It is precisely to avoid these risks that Europe established a protective framework. It rests on a core principle, already set out in the Data Protection Act: **technology must serve the individual and not the other way around**.

I am very proud today because we have moved from a "turn a blind eye" attitude to a standard: **data protection by default**. Teams now take a proactive stance, acting as real stakeholders who anticipate risks. We notably implemented this approach as part of a Core HR renewal project at France Travail!

Analytics



The mindset to move from data to action

Analytics

The mindset to move from data to action

Analytics is the pillar everyone can visualize. And it is also the most underestimated in its complexity. It involves **drawing insights from data**. This pillar rests on two foundations:

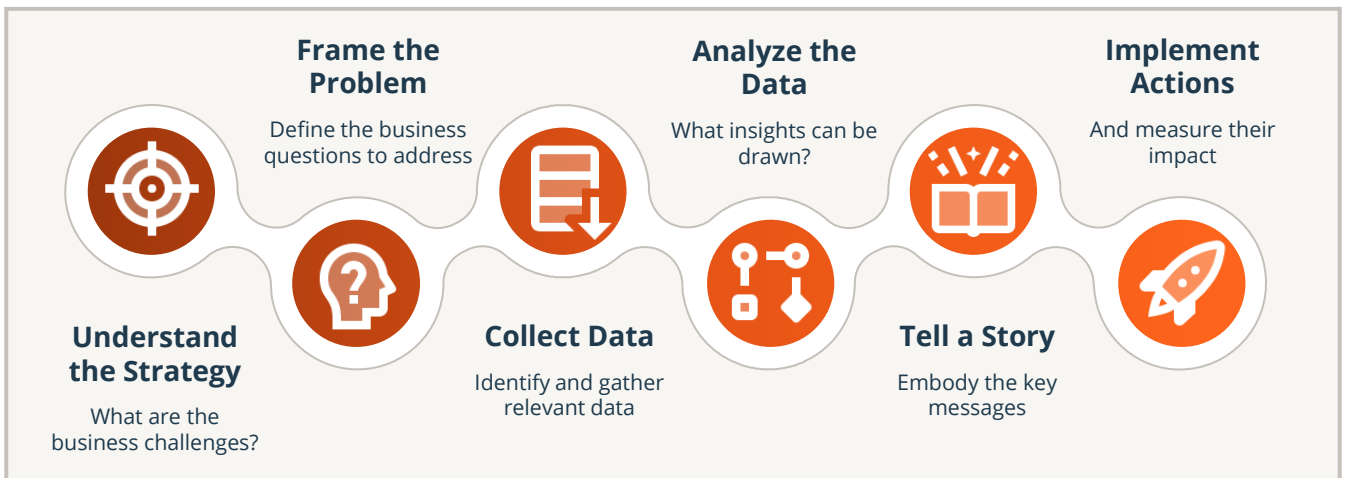
- **your tools**, and the capabilities available to you for leveraging data
- **your mindset**, and how data is used within the organization

Today, **HR teams are well-equipped**. But **HR analytics should not be reduced to a collection of KPIs in a dashboard** using a tool like Power BI.

The essence of data analysis is to **ask questions and answer them through data to inform decisions**.

This is a **discipline**, with its own best practices and specific skills. Above all, it is **independent of the tools** you use. People often **put Excel on trial**, which is often misused. But it is a very good, versatile, and powerful tool. *The visuals in this document were created with Excel.*

To support you in this exercise, here is the **HR Analytics Framework of My People Analytics** :



This Framework can be used for all your HR data analyses.

It will enable you to **multiply your impact tenfold** by integrating the real challenges of your business and presenting your results convincingly.

It is nevertheless **possible to go even further in the HR analytics mindset**. There are in fact **4 levels of analysis** of data.

Note: the difference between these levels is more a matter of mindset than the use of advanced machine learning technologies.

- **Descriptive** : what happened?
The turnover rate increased by 3 points last quarter.
- **Explanatory** : why did it happen?
Our turnover increases for non-augmented managers over the past 2 years.
- **Predictive** : what will happen?
Here is the list of managers who have not received a raise for 2 or more years.
- **Prescriptive** : what should we do?
Here are raise simulations that comply with our budget and minimize the risk of our managers leaving.

Analytics

5 ways to provide context

"Our turnover is 12%."

So what?

This number **means nothing until it is put into perspective** against the industry, geographies, and time trends...

Context transforms data into information and information into decisions. Here are some tips for adding context to your analyses

COMPARATIVE



How do your results compare to similar data?

Can you compare with similar populations, entities, or even comparable companies?

HISTORICAL



How do your results compare to past data?

What are the past trends over the year, quarter, or month? Is there any seasonality?

INFORMATIONAL



What other factors could have had an influence?

Should phenomena not captured in the data be factored into the analysis to explain variations?

EQUIVALENCE



Is it possible to find a more understandable comparison?

When Steve Jobs launched the iPod, he announced "1,000 songs in your pocket", not 1GB.

EXTRAPOLATION



What happens if we continue?

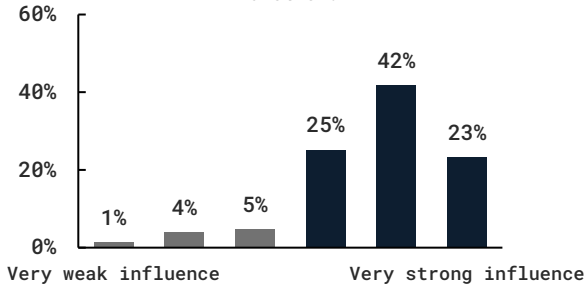
Let us project the trend. What results can we achieve in 3 months? In 1 year? In 3 years?

Data Speaks Analytics

*Multiple answers possible

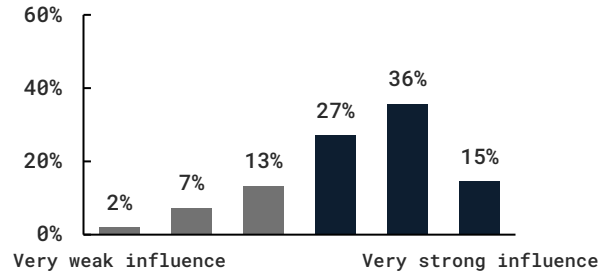
Contrary to preconceptions, **90% of respondents** consider that data influences HR decision-making.

HR data analyses influence decisions made by your HR function.



78% believe that HR data influences **decisions made by other functions across the company.**

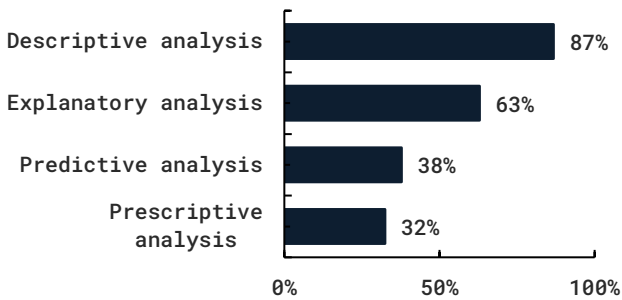
HR data analyses influence decisions made by other functions across your company.



The majority of respondents (87%) perform descriptive analyses.

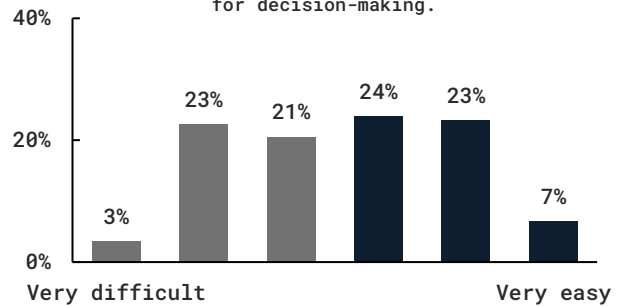
Only 32% offer a prescriptive approach, the one that delivers the most value.

In your HR work, what form(s) of data analysis do you carry out?*



This may be explained by the fact that only **54%** find it easy to access the indicators needed for decision-making.

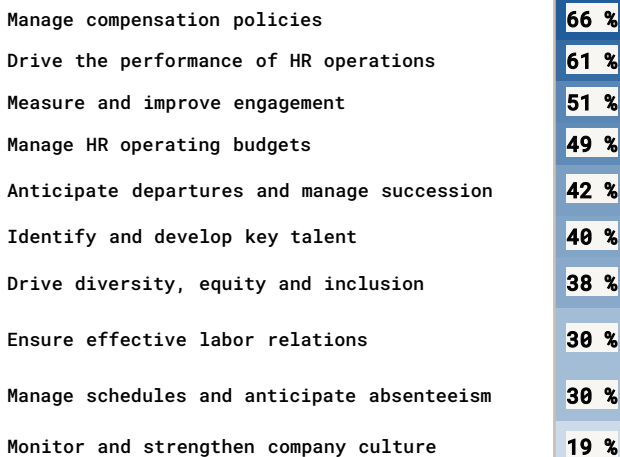
It is easy for you to access the indicators needed for decision-making.



Visionaries are 20% more likely to have **dedicated HR analytics tools and general-purpose BI tools.**

We might have expected a more pronounced difference. **The tool is not everything!**

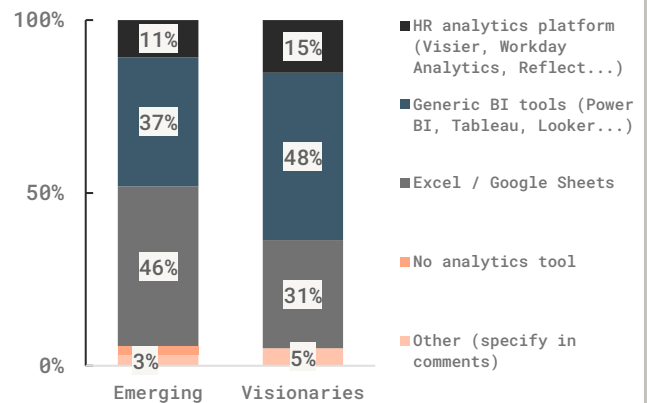
You use HR analytics to



Analyses primarily serve **compensation and HR performance.**

Company culture remains difficult to measure. Remember to survey your employees!*

What tools do you use to carry out your HR data analyses?*



Testimonial

High-Impact People Analytics



An Rycek, Lead People Analytics, Clarins

With a background in industrial and organizational psychology, An worked at Alcatel, Nissan, Cisco (13 years), LivaNova, and now Clarins. Her conviction: "You need to dare, come with the data, and let others decide. You don't always win. But with time and repetition, you do."

Salt Lake City: A Revealing Experience

As part of the global strategy & planning team in Telecom, one of the executives I was supporting had to decide on **opening a new geographic location** for several thousand employees.

I suggested **structuring the thinking around a data analysis**. Over several months, we defined the **truly decisive criteria** for this type of decision: skills availability, economic dynamism, quality of life and attractiveness, competitor presence, cost-sharing opportunities..., along with several internal data points related to the organization.

I cross-referenced this internal and external information to build a **structured comparative analysis of the various possible cities**. Each option was assessed against weighted criteria, using a visualization that made it possible to objectively compare the strengths and limitations of each location.

When the results were presented, the executives **received the analysis with interest, but the final decision was made on other grounds**. Six months later, **the executive acknowledged that I had been right**. The investments had been significant, but the site was struggling to find and retain talent...

That team then became one of my most **engaged internal clients**. Not because data was meant to replace managerial judgement, but because they had seen concretely **the value that structured analysis could bring to strategic decision-making**.

This experience reminded me of a fundamental principle of **People Analytics: we bring the facts, the analyses and the context. The decision always belongs to the business.**

Building Credibility Through Repetition

When an organization runs mainly on intuition, **introducing data is a gradual process**. You have to dare to come with the analysis. Bring the context and accept that the final decision is not yours to make.

You have to **speak the language of business** for data to be **truly useful**. This means two things.

First, **storytelling with data**. Dashboards are not enough. You need to explain, contextualize, connect analyses to decisions.

Second, **understanding business and finance numbers**. HR indicators must be linked to business challenges: growth, productivity, costs, investments. That is why **alignment between HR and Finance is essential**.

The Message

For HR to hold a strategic position, they must also **develop their understanding of data**.

This does not mean that every HR professional must become a People Analyst. But they must **master the basics**: understand indicators, ask the right questions, interpret analyses, and contribute to data quality and governance.

"Data literacy" is therefore a key lever. At LivaNova and Clarins, this translates into **People Data training for teams**.

Testimonial

Steering Social Policy Through Data



Jérôme Friteau, CHRO, Assurance Retraite

Jérôme trained as a lawyer and spent fifteen years in the social protection sector. As CHRO, he innovates around work organization: remote work, the 4-day week, and expanded flexible working arrangements. He always follows the same discipline: measure before deciding, and decide with data.

Moving Beyond “I Think That”

My conviction is that **HR Data will enable us to secure a lasting place in organizations**. It will help us move beyond the image of the soft function, the one that has intuitions and feelings but struggles to demonstrate them.

A CHRO is much stronger when they say “It’s not me saying this, it’s our employees.” No business function can ignore this : **it is tangible**.

Experimenting the 4-Day Week methodically

For experimenting, I always follow the same logic. For example, for **the 4-day week, we started from an intuition**: Post-Covid, there was a real risk of unfairness between white-collar workers who had worked remotely and blue-collar workers, present every day. The 4-day week appeared as an opportunity.

We **started with only twenty volunteers**, for individual monitoring. **We brought in neuroscience researchers to concretely measure and monitor the impacts** : fatigue, work-life balance, mental availability, cognitive load, through interviews.

Today **we have surpassed one hundred participants** across varied roles: retirement agents, accountants, HR staff, IT professionals, managers. **The recommendation score exceeds 9/10**. And many employees say they would only leave Assurance Retraite for an organization offering the same schedule.

It has become an **attraction lever greater than compensation** for certain profiles.

Continuous Sentiment Measurement

We have two measurement pillars. The factual : turnover indicators, absenteeism, headcount, salary policy; **and sentiment**: measured continuously with Octomine (*White Paper partner*) since 2018.

Previously, we ran traditional surveys : 60 to 80 questions, every two years, with a polling institute. Useful for executives wanting a macro view, but unusable by managers.

Today, it’s the opposite : 5-minute surveys, at least twice a year, with a results dashboard per manager. And we also launch **targeted surveys** on a specific population when the need arises, for the experimenters for example.

Our golden rule: always share the results. When managers share summaries, participation rates soar. When they don’t, they collapse.

5 People for 4,000 Employees

My HR Data team is 5 people: a former IT profile (the tinkerer-hacker), a career-switcher from recruitment, a research analyst, a headcount and payroll specialist, and a statistician leading the team.

Five radically different and complementary profiles to understand the business, leverage data and do Data Storytelling.

The Message

Too many HR professionals still say that numbers are not their topic. **The 21st century HR function is the reconciliation of the qualitative and the quantitative.**

Automation



Unlock Your Human Potential

Automation

Unlock Your Human Potential

Data is not only for making decisions. **It can also work for you.**

To automate is to entrust a machine with what a human should not have to do manually.

This principle has guided the evolution of humanity, **from the earliest tools such as the wheel to the most advanced algorithms.**

It is a complex topic. It is more easily **defined by its results** than by its means. I therefore include in the automation pillar: the HRIS, Excel files with Macros, Robotic Process Automation, no-code / low-code, and discriminative and generative Artificial Intelligence.

Your **HRIS is your primary automation lever.** That is why it is also your **main data engine.** It is all the more important that this data is of high quality.

However, HRIS systems **do not have the capacity to cover all the specifics of HR processes.** It is possible to fill these gaps with targeted automations.

My first Data project was an automation. I was an HR apprentice at BNP Paribas retail banking. To order meal vouchers, we counted absence days by hand from a printed schedule. **I proposed a VBA-coded tool in Excel** that calculated the days to deduct from the time management extract. **We went from 4 days of work to 30 minutes each month.**

The tools are numerous; they are no longer a limitation. To automate your HR processes, you need to **have the right skills.** You'll find them in your HR Geek, your IT department, or service providers. And above all, **identify the activities that deserve to be automated.**

Before automating, ask yourself two questions. Is there sufficient volume? Is the process structured enough to be delegated to a machine?

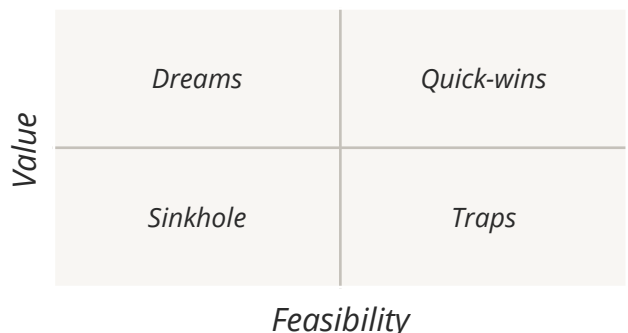
Answering "yes" to both questions makes the use case eligible for automation.

The most common automation use cases:

- **Robot that reads administrative documents** and enters the content into the HRIS (CVs, ID documents, sick notes, expense receipts...).
- **Chatbot for employee assistance on your HR regulations** to answer your employees' questions.
- **Generative AI to produce content** (communications, training resource emails...) from the syllabus and related content.

Steps for launching an automation initiative:

1. **Collect business pain points**
2. **Prioritize them on the matrix below**



1. **Focus on high-visibility quick wins**
2. **Support these new practices** (change management and training)
3. **Maintain active listening to field needs**

Automation

Unlock Your Human Potential

Generative AI is kicking the door wide open on automation possibilities. In this context, a new question emerges. **What collaboration should we build between AI and humans?**

Using generative AI without a method creates cognitive debt. Every use implies a delegation and an effort to reclaim ownership. At a time when these tools are primarily covering personal productivity, we must **develop healthy AI usage habits** to maintain and develop one's human uniqueness.

I therefore propose strengthening your use of AI by **developing your awareness and clear-sightedness**.

	Before AI, 3 steps to complete a task.	With AI, disruptions to integrate
Plan	Define the intent, objectives, and steps to achieve them	An extra effort to clearly formalize expectations and provide context to guide AI in execution.
Monitor	Measure objective attainment throughout execution	⚠️ AI handles end-to-end production and delivers outputs that appear final. Ongoing monitoring disappears.
Evaluate	Retrospection on success and feedback	Evaluation becomes all the more critical. Expertise is essential to verify the relevance of AI's work.

Here are my tips for **maintaining a healthy collaboration with your Generative AI and preserving your human uniqueness**:



Clarify the intent

What do you need?
Why? What information should you draw on?



Prompt well

Clear language and the basic principles of prompting are enough



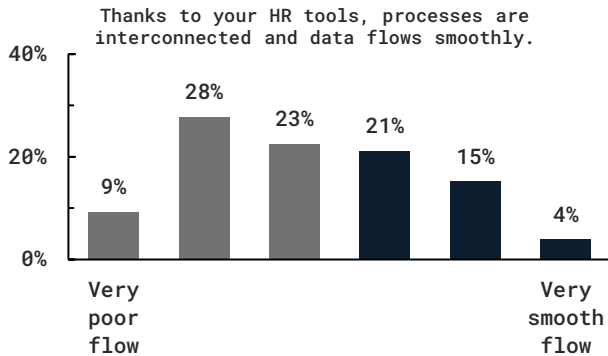
Always verify

Facts and context, always, before sharing or publishing

Data Speaks Automation

Only 40% of respondents consider their tools make processes **interconnected and allow data to flow smoothly across processes.**

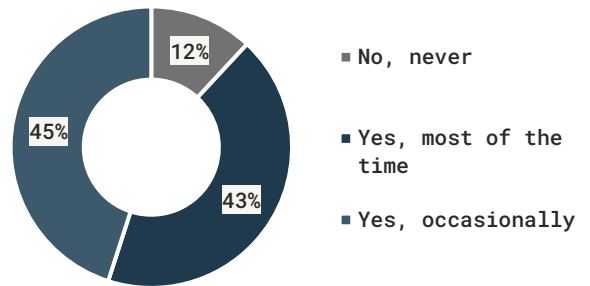
This figure says one simple thing: **the tools are not keeping up with actual usage.**



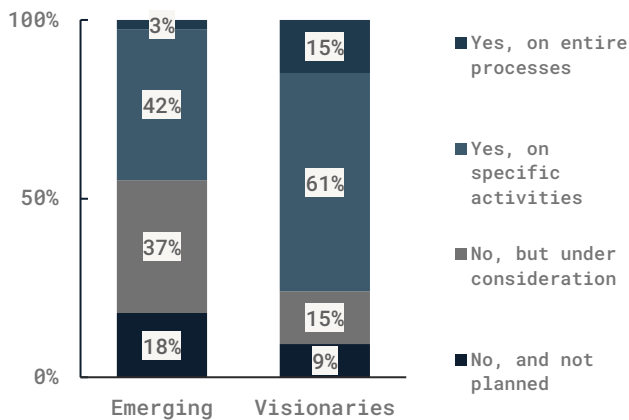
88% of respondents report having to enter at least occasionally **the same information in different tools.**

Manual data entry is a major source of anomalies. It creates inconsistencies, on top of wasting valuable time.

Do you need to enter the same information multiple times in different tools?



Have you implemented automation tools to complement your HRIS (RPA, automated workflows, orchestrators)?

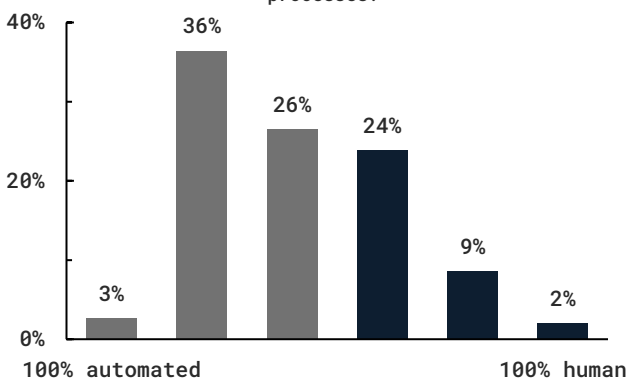


🔦 Visionaries are 5 times more likely to have implemented automation across entire processes.

And 20% more likely to have implemented automation on specific activities.

These approaches are only possible with a holistic view of the data landscape, existing tools, and above all, the actual business needs on the ground.

Ideally, where would you place the slider between full automation and human intervention for your key HR processes?



When HR professionals are asked to position the cursor between **100% automation and 100% human for their key processes, 34% favor the human approach.**

This may seem paradoxical! When explored further with respondents, this metric reflects **a desire to focus on the human side of the profession, as opposed to processes that are a necessary evil and should be automatable.**

Data in the Service of Employee Experience



Yalcin Avcioglu, CHRO, Caisse d'Épargne Hauts de France

Former Chief Data Officer, then Director of Customer Experience, Yalcin drives the strategic transformation of HR policy with a vision centered on people, inclusion, and employer excellence. His role is both operational and strategic.

From Customer Experience to Employee Experience

I was Director of Customer & Employee Experience for two years. As guardian **of a customer-centric** organization, internal voice of the customer, I drove the customer strategy and fostered a customer culture at every level of the company.

We carried out transformation projects with new methodologies, driven by excellence indicators. This is the vision I now apply as CHRO. **Employee experience is customer experience applied internally.**

The CRM, an Essential HRIS Component

We have an off-the-shelf HRIS that each client can customize by creating their own items, such as employee profiles with essential data.

Employees can update their own data. **It is an excellent way to ensure data quality and freshness.**

Just like in customer experience, we personalize our relationship. To do this, **we built what we call an HR Business Partner CRM.**

It enables data quality management, but above all **automated HR marketing**: Congratulating an employee on their first anniversary, their children starting secondary school.

With Power Automate, the CRM sends notifications to managers, allowing us to **highlight life moments.**

Exactly as we do in customer experience: **being there at the right time with the right information.**

Making All Agreements Readable in Monetary Terms

In banking, we have an issue of **making all compensation elements visible.**

We created a Power Automate to decode company agreements and go further than a chatbot.

We provide a monetary equivalent of all benefits : compensation trajectory, helmet and bicycle purchases, CESU vouchers.

With this information in hand, the HR Business Partner can prepare their meeting with up-to-date and engaging data. **Like a bank advisor who knows their client and product portfolio.**

Ensuring Adoption: The Symmetry of Care

At first, **teams feared the tool would be used to monitor them.** Today, when the tool is unavailable, teams miss it. We worked on both **the value of our initiatives and the Data culture of the teams involved.**

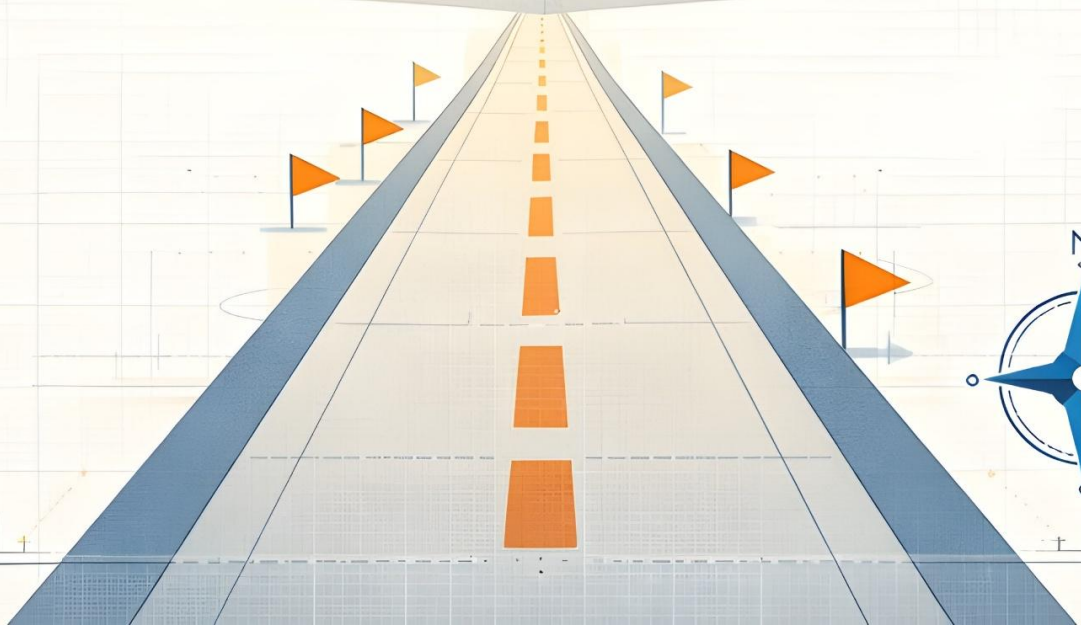
The Message

Data is not there to spy. It's there to **personalize, support, and empower.** Just like in customer experience, we use data to **be there at the right time with the right information.**

Employee experience is customer experience applied internally. With the same methods, the same excellence indicators, the same ambition. **In symmetry.**

In Conclusion

Data, the Foundation of the New Era for
the HR Function



In Conclusion

Data, the Foundation of the New Era for the HR Function

Data is omnipresent in the HR function.

Investments are growing. Awareness is real. **And yet, practices lag behind.** Analyses are **time-consuming and contested.** HR Data projects depend on a few **isolated enthusiasts.**

Cultural barriers, inadequate tools, poorly calibrated approaches continue to limit our ability to get the most from our data.

This White Paper offers a simple conviction: **to move forward, you need small iterations and celebration for every win.** Concrete, visible progress **build trust and free up the resources to go further.**

A Framework to Structure Your Transformation

The **My People Analytics HR Data Framework** offers you the method to identify your priorities and structure your progression:

- **Strategy** to set direction.
- **Culture** to bring teams on board.
- **Architecture** to make information flow.
- **Governance** to ensure data reliability.
- **Confidentiality** to guarantee trust.
- **Analytics** to inform decisions.
- **Automation** to free up time.

These **7 levers, activated according to your context and maturity,** enable building an HR function truly enriched by data.

Why Now?

The transformation is already underway. Companies committed to this transformation are gaining a head start.

In a context of AI, economic turbulence, and workplace transformation, the CHRO can no longer navigate blind : anticipating departures, detecting weak signals, objectifying decisions, defending positions with facts.

Only data can help manage complexity at scale. Only data can confirm intuition or contradict it in time.

In short, mastering your data means giving yourself the means to focus on what truly matters: **people.**

Take Action

This White Paper is built as a guide to support you. **Here are three actions you can take right now to get started:**

- 1. Assess your position:** use the strategic maturity table to identify where you stand on each of the 7 pillars. Be honest. This is the starting point.
- 2. Pick one battle:** don't try to transform everything. Identify a priority pillar, a concrete pain point, and deliver a first visible win.
- 3. Find your allies :** HR Data is a team sport. Identify the enthusiasts in your organization, potential sponsors, and partners (IT, finance, legal) who can help.

The HR function of the future will be hybrid: profoundly human, equipped to strengthen its capacity for listening, analysis, and decision-making. Its processes will be made reliable because they are mastered upstream, no longer endured.

It will evolve from an administrative service provider to a true strategic partner.

The prerequisite is professional data management and value creation.

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Data has made its way into 84% of HR job postings. Yet most HR functions still manage their activities in Excel, without structured data architecture, defined governance, or real analytical capability. **This gap is not a lack of will. It's a lack of method.**

The Definitive White Paper on HR Data is based on **two original studies** : the semantic analysis of 160,000 HR job postings and a **maturity survey of 151 professionals.**

It draws on **testimonials from practitioners in the most mature HR functions** : L'Oréal, Puig, MBDA, TotalEnergies, Think Igo, Renault, Sanofi, France Travail, la Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Vieillesse, Caisse d'Épargne Hauts de France, proving that **transformation is already underway.**

It offers a **structured framework around 7 interdependent pillars**: Strategy, Culture, Architecture, Governance, Confidentiality, Analytics, and Automation. A coherent system **to evolve from an HR function that endures its data to one that masters and leverages it.**

This White Paper is aimed at CHROs, HR IT Directors, and People Analytics professionals who want to make progress methodically, through high-impact iterations.



Thank you to my partners



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