UNLEASH

The Digital Adoption Drive

Achieving HR's New Goals in a World of Hybrid Work

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FOREWORD

All industries experienced the unplanned impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet HR leaders quickly realized digital transformation efforts must come first in order to mitigate disruption and help them better prepare for 2021 - and beyond.

HR departments continue to be the driving force behind employee safety as they prepare their organizations for continued hybrid working, even as many countries moot a mass return to the workplace.

As we head into what many hope will be the 'Roaring '20s', entirely new industries are rapidly emerging - but face many challenges around how to manage their operations and dispersed workforces in uncertain times.

Marc Coleman
Founder & CEO
UNLEASH

With the best will in the world, HR was never designed for the level of chaos the pandemic has tipped us into. The tech stack HR flew into the crisis with wasn't up to the task. So, flying out of the crisis, HR leaders are moving to retool their organizations, and maximize the effectiveness of their existing systems to manage and measure the full employee experience lifecycle: from hire to retire.

Emerging technologies such as Digital Adoption Platforms, chatbots and automation are the key to meeting their objectives, and will help ensure now is the time for HR to shine.

Meanwhile, employee data is the new oil ensuring delivery of the best possible services and employee experiences - but HR operations need to refuel.

The pandemic has dramatically accelerated interest in adoption of HR tech, software and productivity tools to boost real-time communication, optimize disrupted workflows, and guide excellence in learning.

Through in-depth interviews with a baker's dozen global HR leaders, this important report explores how organizations are successfully using technology to deliver excellent end-to-end user experiences, and enable their goals, roles and priorities for the year ahead.

INTRODUCTION

HR technology is taking center stage as the world of work reopens following the pandemic. But software will only succeed in reshaping business across the globe if your workforce buys into digital transformation, and uses these new systems at every turn.

Amid all of this opportunity, HR leaders are under pressure to deliver. Employees around the world expect some level of hybrid working from now on: according to Slack, 72% of office-based professionals are demanding a better on-/offsite balance[1]. And it looks like firms may grant their wishes, as a poll of business leaders by 451 Research found 64% plan to allow more home working for employees from now on[2].
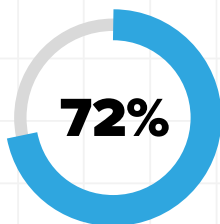
72% 72% of office-based professionals are demanding a better on-/offsite balance[1]
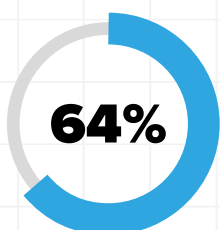
64% 64% plan to allow more home working for employees from now on[2]

So is your current tech stack robust enough to cope with widespread transformation to recruitment and onboarding; HR service delivery; collaboration and communication; and performance management and career development?

And has the urgent need for new solutions been met with smooth and successful software implementation - or is the result disparate digital experiences that risk stalling progress for your employees and wider business?

To understand how HR leaders feel as they face rapid change, UNLEASH conducted in-depth interviews with HR Technology and Operations Directors, Human Capital Officers, Heads of HR Transformation, and others who oversee international delivery.

The result is our report, featuring views from the frontline which will ring true for anyone getting to grips with the 'new normal' of working life - and preparing for the next stage in employment experience evolution, whether that's hybrid working or a permanent return to the office.

We throw the spotlight on live issues, from the future of work to employee engagement, and service digitization. We take a closer look at Digital Adoption Platforms, which are delivering better experiences for employees and more efficient use of software for HR.

We also consider the technologies HR leaders crave to bring consistency to employee experience; fill gaps in service delivery; the data and analytics needed to power new processes; and gaze into a future of AI and machine learning-led operations.

How will the next round of HR digital transformation take shape and what does it mean for employee experience?

Ultimately, this report aims to reframe HR pain points as opportunities - and will hopefully help you and your firm achieve your goal of making software work better for your organization.

METHODOLOGY

UNLEASH conducted interviews via remote video with 13 senior HR professionals, working in a range of sectors, in March 2021. All interviewees were asked similar questions - relating to the future of work and HR technology - about their role, organization, key developments since the pandemic, and current and future HR tech strategy and budgets.

The interviewees were as follows:

Ben Debnath
Global Head HR Operations
Syngenta

Marco Monga
Human Capital and Organization Director
Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia

Lori Durrough
Director, Global Digital HR
Employee Experience
Nissan

Reza Mousssavian
Senior Vice President HR
Deutsche Telekom

Raju Vijay
Vice President Global People Services
Nissan

João Moutinho
Head of Corporate HR
Sonae IM

Daiga Ergle
Chief People Officer
4Finance

Ilze Ogle
Head of HR
SEB Banka

Matthew Hanwell
Head of HR Technology
TietoEVRY

Janet Ramey
Principal
Sourcing Change

Rudy Kelner
VP, Head of HR Transformation,
Technology & Global Solutions
Verisk

Fred Van Wees
Director Global HRIS
ICL Group

Cat Lightfoot
Global HR Operations & Technology Director
Imperial Brands

HR'S NEW PRIORITIES

As working patterns and employee experience demands shift, so do your priorities. If you're pondering how the future of work will shape your HR tech strategy, and how to apply the lessons of the past year to deal with changes yet to come, our interviewees' collective goals should provide inspiration:
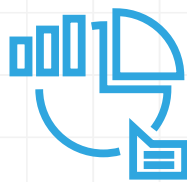
Connecting the workforce with leaders

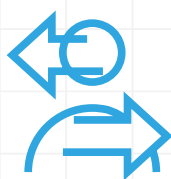**Providing first-class employee experiences**

Improving digital adoption of HR tech

Driving greater value from process data

Delivering seamless digital HR services

Giving HR teams more autonomy

While we've witnessed a rapid post-pandemic pivot to HR systems that support hybrid workforces, the next stage of transformation looks set to be made with a focus on sustainable change.

Rudy Kelner, VP, Head of HR Transformation, Technology & Global Solutions at Verisk, sums this up:

> **Over the past year we realized transformation is no longer just a point in time, a perfect revolution. Instead, it's now a constant process of progress and adoption - because the HR ecosystem around us continuously changes."**

Rudy Kelner
VP, Head of HR Transformation, Technology & Global Solutions
Verisk

In other words, adapting will take time, resource, and a winning strategy. As your organization gets to grips with the pandemic, HR is perfectly positioned to deliver on a new people-centric approach to employee experiences that will shape successful strategies for years - if not decades - to come.

Learning lessons from the upheaval of the past 12 months will be key if firms are to focus on a better future, rather than returning to the problems of the past.

In the following sections we reveal what the experts told us about their approaches to change, the barriers they've overcome, and how you can begin to adopt some of their successful strategies.
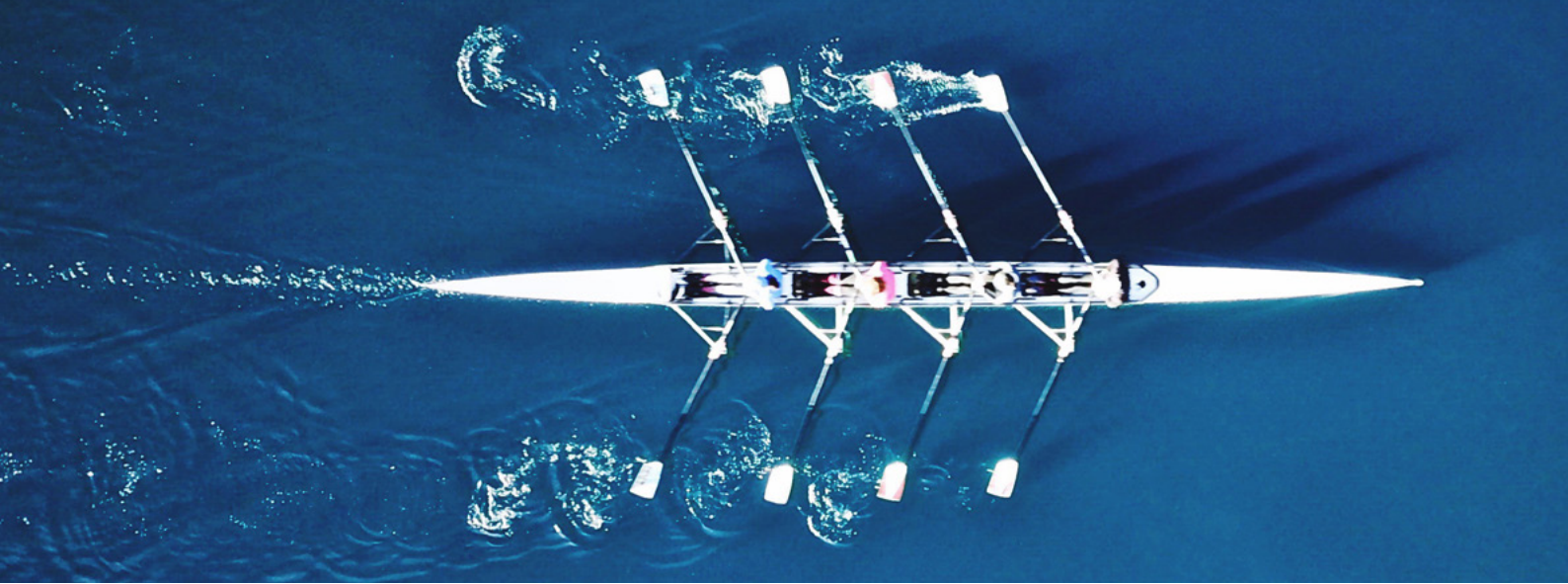
LESSONS FROM LEADERS
HITTING NEW HR GOALS

Let's take a closer look at how the experts we spoke to intend to achieve the goals set out above - and the role they believe HR technology must play.

01 Connectivity

HR leaders are acutely aware of the seismic transformations affecting their workforces. The shift to remote or hybrid roles will make or break many careers depending on personal circumstances, personality type, and provision of the right tools to do the job.

HR departments across the globe have spent the past year transforming multiple aspects of daily working life, at pace and at scale; no mean feat. But with the ship now steadied, attention is being turned to delivering experiences that will 'wow' all employees, whether they are new in post but yet to meet managers and team mates face-to-face, or established members of staff.

Our interviewees shared their thoughts about what employees now want, and the tools they need to meet these expectations. It's neatly described by Nissan's Vice President Global People Services, Raju Vijay, as "a consumer-grade experience". He says:

We're testing Robotic Process Automation, virtual assistants and chatbots for future deployment. We need the ability to provide seamless employee engagement and service that is mobile- and knowledge-enabled, on a par with modern consumer technology."

Raju Vijay
Vice President Global People Services
Nissan

What people demand in their personal interactions with brands and businesses, they expect from their employer - and woe betide those that don't take note.

Better connections

Across the board there is a renewed focus on providing superior employee experiences. This means improving the flow, frequency and quality of communications with dispersed team members; keeping them informed but also engaged.

Ben Debnath, Global Head HR Operations at Syngenta, has tasked his team with the key objective of designing and driving a better experience:

"

Dealing with behavioral shifts [among employees] is the big challenge, it's not just process optimization. I use the analogy of speaking to your utility service provider, where you often get a bureaucratic rather than an emotional response. We need to stop inflicting that on employees."

Ben Debnath
Global Head HR Operations
Syngenta

Dragging behemoth businesses into the new working world isn't going to be easy, but some HR leaders are already making headway. Imperial Brands is devising a new approach to employee experience it dubs 'Modern Workplace'. This is being delivered by a cross-functional working group from HR, technology and procurement.

Cat Lightfoot, Global HR Operations & Technology Director, explains:

"

Employees receive a huge amount of information, from accessing Teams to using learning apps. We're putting it all under one umbrella for a more joined-up experience, particularly as more change will come in the future due to hybrid working."

Cat Lightfoot
Global HR Operations & Technology Director
**Imperial Brands**

How much is too much?

Despite the clamor for more interaction, a balance must be struck between informing and bombarding employees lest they drown in a tide notifications about all the aspects of their job; from team collaboration, to performance updates, and more administrative tasks like annual leave management. While some of our observers believed their employees desire even more communication from their organization, others worry their business overdoes it.

According to research by Constellation[3], more than a quarter (27%) of workers feel they waste an entire day each week on irrelevant emails and messages. This is affecting productivity. While many assumed less time spent commuting would mean more efficient output, in reality productivity levels have only increased slightly, according to the study.
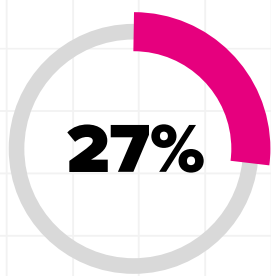
27%   **more than a quarter (27%) of workers feel they waste an entire day each week on irrelevant emails and messages.**

Meanwhile, organizations are seeking ways to ensure even vital communication doesn't impinge on employees' personal time, as more people mix use of work and personal devices outside normal working hours. One expert described his company's current strategy as "clunky" and claimed it risked leaking into people's private lives.

The same strategic issue applies to the amount of different applications an organization uses; disparate platforms that HR is required to oversee, and that employees must access to do their job. As we'll see in the next section, this in itself is a huge task that requires deep thought.

3 Employee Experience: Moving to a Decisive New Model for the Future of Work', Constellation Research, 2021

KEY INTERVIEW TAKEAWAYS
CONNECTING DISPERSED WORKERS

PAIN POINTS

- Keeping connected with dispersed workers

- Understanding optimal frequency and timing of communications

- Short-term solutions vs. long-term strategy

SOLUTIONS

- Communication managed "in one place" is key - as is employee receiving and acting on feedback

- Reshape existing systems as a foundation for future solutions e.g. AI-driven operations

02 HR technology

With rapid transformation a feature of many firms' HR operations during the past 12 months, strategic deployment of platforms and clear instructions on how employees should use them is paramount.

But many of our interviewees point to a frustrating level of complexity that is stalling a slicker roll-out. Their problems are exacerbated by tech stacks that tremble like a Jenga tower as new applications are bolted onto legacy systems, but fail to hide the chinks in HR's armor.

If using multiple solutions presents a headache for HR and IT teams, spare a thought for employees attempting to get to grips with different logins, system designs and user manuals. According to Constellation, the average number of HR systems workers are asked to adopt has increased from eight to 11 during the past five years. Moreover, firms use an average of seven tools for messaging, meeting management, and collaboration.

In a world that has become vastly more complicated for everyone, throwing onboarding for all these tools onto employees' to-do lists represents a roadblock to a better experience.

HR leaders stress the need to design systems that maximize functionality but suit the workforce - rather than imposing the latest tech on them and expecting everything to run smoothly. The key to this is making user-centric rather than software-centric decisions.

Technology shouldn't be a goal in its own right but must underpin business objectives.

> **"**
>
> **If we learn not to expect the perfect product from day one, but engage with end users early to build on their experience, we can avoid surprises when a solution is delivered."**
>
> **Fred Van Wees**
> Director Global HRIS
> **ICL Group**

Simplify for success

Part of the problem, our observers suggest, is the abundance of vendors and solutions in the market. Ben Debnath explains:

"There's been an explosion of HR technologies. It's becoming increasingly difficult to identify the right thing to invest in that will provide the best value for the organization."

That means it's sometimes hard to see the wood for the trees. Reza Moussavian, SVP HR Development, Tribe Lead Employee Journey, Digital Transformation People & Culture at Deutsche Telekom, says: "Let's strip technology down to how it serves employees, not start with the sole ambition of sophistication. HR and employee solutions have to be intuitive - not so complex you can't use them."

Without fully explaining why software is being introduced, and how to use it, functionality may lie dormant - wasting investment and leaving employee experience problems unfixed.

Opinion is also divided over whether to seek a 'one-stop shop' for HR tech - "API integrations for everything" as one expert put it - or a more agile, component-based approach offering "superb experiences".

Marco Monga, Human Capital and Organization Director, Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia, says:

"Like our personal lives, sometimes we just need a simple app that performs one task easily rather than something that does everything. We've introduced this approach to vendor selection."

"

Digitization suits agile ways of working and also gives us the ability to quickly upskill our employees for new customer situations. So being agile is important not just for business development, but for customer service and HR, too."

Ilze Ogle
Head of HR
SEB Banka

While both of these approaches to HR tech are understandable and frequently taken, it's vital to ensure all of the components you use are connected — speaking to each other, feeding data into the process, and providing a simple yet slick employee experience.

Get that right and either approach will lead to consistency that amounts to a one-stop shop, without the need for a cumbersome product roll-out and the huge associated cost.

Making the most of your software

Ultimately - in the short term at least - HR departments might have to make the most of their existing solutions.

> 66
>
> **The challenge for the next two years is getting more value out of what's already there, not throwing money at new technology,"**
>
> **Matthew Hanwell**
> Head of HR Technology
> **TietoEVRY**

> 66
>
> **We still have a way to go to fully realize the potential of investments in our core platform. That will continue to be our main focus."**
>
> **Raju Vijay**
> Vice President Global People Services
> **Nissan**

Covid hasn't completely undermined budgets, however. Employee experience and the pivot to hybrid working cannot be viewed as discretionary spend, as other operations such as marketing often are. Some companies have managed well with the same or only slightly reduced budgets, while others have saved money by building efficiencies into systems.

> 66
>
> **Decisions about HR platforms are made at group level, so that means if we think digitization is required the budget can be allocated through HR, or IT, or even group. Depending on the criteria set by the group, funds can be reallocated if we need to implement something quickly."**
>
> **Ilze Ogle**
> Head of HR,
> **SEB Banka**

This agile approach to HR tech and digital adoption will be vital as firms continue to shift focus on what matters in the here and now. There are sure to be bumps in the road to be navigated as the working world opens up once more.

Interviewees admit it can be tricky to get HR tech right for today when there is also much to focus on for tomorrow. "The foundation of our cloud-based HR ecosystem must be operational efficiency through process standardization and simplification while also considering next-gen technology," comments Rudy Kelner. "That requires a mindset shift within the operating model."

As painful as taking a different perspective might be, it will be worth it. When systems run like clockwork for employees HR leaders are presented with real opportunities.

KEY INTERVIEW TAKEAWAYS
APPROACHES TO HR TECH

PAIN POINTS

- 'Patchwork quilt' of HR tech is holding back better rates of digital adoption and employee experience

- Budgets are flat at best, so software must be made to work harder

SOLUTIONS

- Design HR tech implementation around the employee - don't force complex software on them, and explain how they can get the best from it

- Some advocate 'one-stop shop' platforms; others believe in a more agile approach. Find a vendor that can help choose the right path for your business

- Step back from transformation to see the bigger picture and hone processes that will be more useful for workers, boosting productivity

03 Digital Adoption

As firms face up to embedding transformative HR processes that stem from the pandemic, they must remember the successful workplace of the future will rely on how effectively employees can use the tools they're given. Raju Vijay calls this Nissan's "number one HR goal".

Wisdom suggests the key to adoption is employee-centric design.

So what are organizations doing to understand which systems and tools they need to provide?

There is no blanket solution, say our experts. Their firms continue to experiment with employee polls and Net Promoter Score feedback, and tinker with survey frequency to get the best response. Other approaches include linking HR KPIs more closely to overall business goals.

Whatever their experience measurement strategy, the organizations we spoke to believe future feedback loops must be made to count. This ranges from "relatively easy metrics" such as HR help-desk interactions - whether responses are human or automated - to measuring "attention"; time spent using apps. Lori Durrough, Nissan's Director Global Digital HR Employee Experience, explains:

> **When we launched particular AppLearn Adopt elements we were able to see how many people used them. We're feeding that knowledge into additional adoption measures to drive further use."**

Lori Durrough
Director, Global Digital HR Employee Experience
Nissan

In other words, a strategy of 'giving employees them what they want' shouldn't fail. The trick is to understand what engages them and makes them access further content, believes João Moutinho, Head of Corporate HR for technology group Sonae IM:

> **For instance, when we send updates about working in Covid, we also encourage individuals to watch the entire course on our HCM. We've monitored the amount of people accessing the HCM and it's increasing."**

João Moutinho
Head of Corporate HR,
Sonae IM

It's a chain reaction; too many moving, unconnected parts will create a 'messy kitchen' HR has no hope of understanding or optimizing.

Turning insights into take-up

Measuring employees' satisfaction with HR technology is a major building block in providing a "consumer-grade experience", leading to increased adoption. Our experts outlined several other ways to boost engagement with platforms:

Anytime, anywhere

Employees now expect convenience, no matter the hour or the device they're using. Cat Lightfoot says:

> **Most of our technology is accessible anywhere. So if you need to check your payslip, book a holiday, or log sickness, you can do that from your mobile."**

Top-down adoption

"[Get] the CEO using it every day and be the role model of digitization," says Matthew Hanwell.

> **If they set their own goals and expectations for the leadership team it sets a great precedent for the rest of the organization."**

Make a game of it

Daiga Ergle, 4Finance's Chief People Officer, says:

> **I'm a big believer in the power of gamification in different HR processes to improve engagement. Competition elements of performance management and communication would be good for engagement and the overall experience."**

Soothe HR skeptics

Ben Debnath suggests building a culture of openness between HR and all employees:

> **The bulk of transactions come from joiners - the average employee in lifecycle is probably not going to touch HR more than once a year. Make it easy for them to adopt systems and processes, so HR jargon doesn't put them off."**

> **We're moving towards employees being able to self-serve, developing a chatbot to support basic inquiries by delivering internal information. The next step is to include sources from the web too, enlarging the data source. And automation also helps HR departments function more efficiently."**

Marco Monga
Human Capital and Organization Director,
Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia

The power of self-service

Just as consumers have begun to take control of the sales and marketing process, pulling information towards themselves from various sources, employees are beginning to prefer self-served HR support.

It's an aspect that has gathered pace during the pandemic while visiting the HR office isn't an option. Workers are keen to find information when it's convenient for them.

In response, firms are building smart self-service systems to automate processes where possible. The benefits are clear: the employee saves time and effort by easily finding what they want, without the need to initially interact with HR; while HR professionals can spend time on other tasks.

One example, says Cat Lightfoot, is a bot that matches exact information - from inside or outside a business - to efficiently answer an inquiry:

> **Digital adoption tools are helpful when you're launching something new. A bot, even though it's automated, can be complex for users so you need a good tool that sits alongside it at the point of adoption. It means they're not having to open an email then download and read a big instruction manual."**

HR leaders know a potent mix of automated support and enhanced human-led services could revolutionize their operation. If they can meet all of the emerging employee experience demands, and do so with "zero defects, zero complaints" as Reza Moussavian puts it, digital adoption drives are more likely to succeed.

KEY INTERVIEW TAKEAWAYS
IMPROVING DIGITAL ADOPTION

PAIN POINTS

- In future, firms will only flourish if their digital adoption programs are successful - too many aren't yet up to the task

- Understanding how to balance traditional but enhanced human-to-human services with cutting-edge automation is vital but vexing

SOLUTIONS

- Seek, understand and use feedback on the range of factors that would improve employee experience

- Adoption requires better use of HR software, which could include automation and first-class self-service

## Getting started with a Digital Adoption Platform

The experts discussed using Digital Adoption Platforms (DAPs) to boost take-up among employees and increase the value of their HR software to the wider business - especially during a new era of hybrid working when dispersed working becomes the norm.

A DAP is software designed to help people get the most out of other applications. It does this by simplifying tasks, removing the friction from associated support and measuring adoption across a software suite.

Sometimes referred to as a digital adoption solution, the most visible function of this software is the embedded in-app support offered to end users. This is simply layered on top of the UI of existing applications, and usually consists of step-by-step guidance for key or complex tasks, as well as useful knowledge content.
Having this support available in-app at the click of a button makes software easier to use and task completion more accurate; both key goals of a DAP.

The second crucial component of a DAP is enabling the measurement of digital adoption itself. By going beyond the data and analytics functionality typically provided by software vendors, the unique tracking of in-app interactions makes it simple to track metrics such as engagement with support content, time spent on tasks and the value of software itself.

For application stakeholders, service delivery teams and C-level leaders, this makes it easy to demonstrate software performance and highlight problems to target with interventions.

27%

27% of IT leaders are now employing DAP solutions that can maximize IT uptake and adoption.
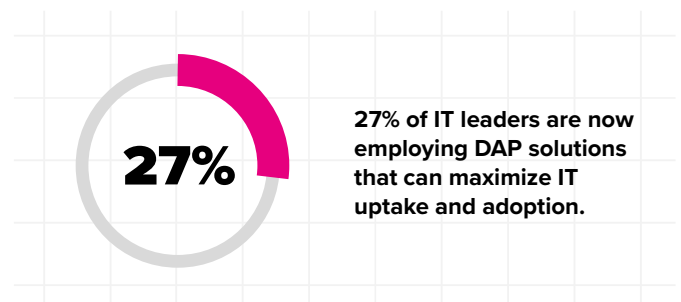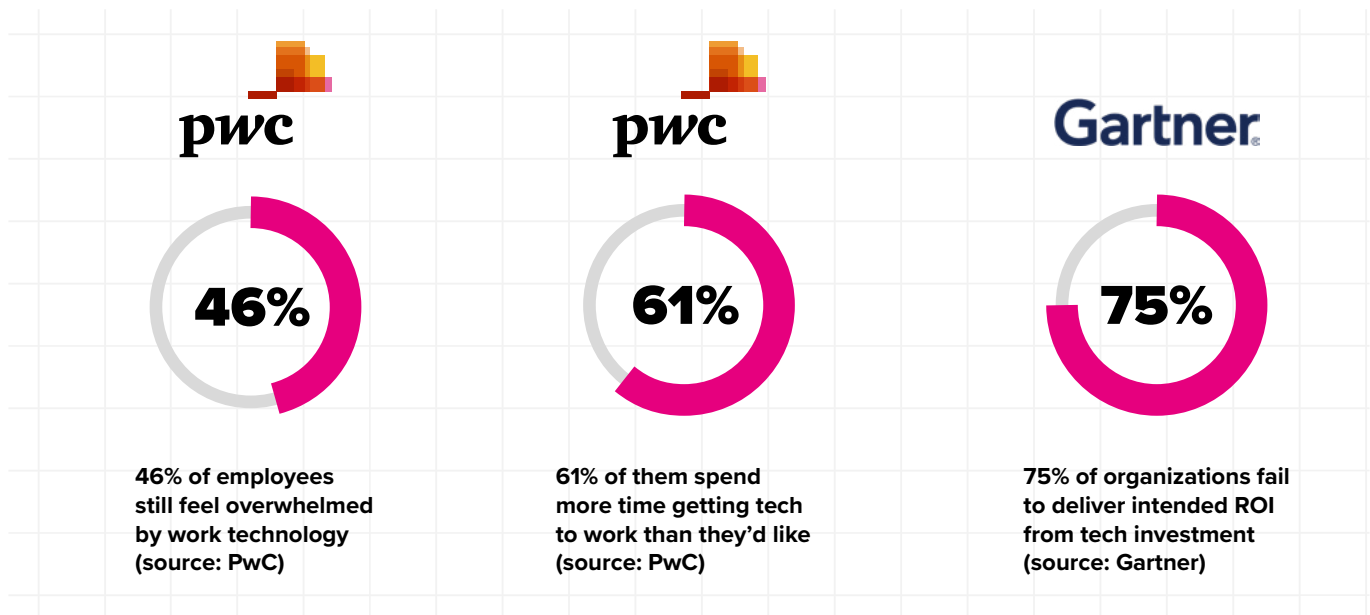
In short, DAPs are a critical element of brilliant employee experiences. Constellation Research's CIO survey found that 27% of IT leaders are now employing DAP solutions that can maximize IT uptake and adoption.

That still leaves lots of room for growth, meaning more firms can build competitive advantage by using DAPs to deliver better employee experiences.

Overcoming Digital Adoption Platform Barriers

While more and more organizations are starting to use DAPs, there are still common barriers that hold some back from investing - and that has consequences. According to research:

46%

46% of employees still feel overwhelmed by work technology (source: PwC)

61%

61% of them spend more time getting tech to work than they'd like (source: PwC)

75%

75% of organizations fail to deliver intended ROI from tech investment (source: Gartner)

One of the most common barriers is the perception that a serious adoption problem doesn't exist. In these instances, it's important to ask whether those involved are really thinking about adoption in its truest sense.

Adoption is about more than just getting people to log in. In fact, it means getting end users and the business to realize maximum value from the solution. It should be looked at as a combination of participation, efficiency and data quality, not just top-level usage.

Another barrier, as with most tech solutions, is budget. Everybody has to go through the process of justifying a business case for a DAP, but focusing on productivity gains and the time/cost savings linked to more efficient employees quickly makes a DAP's value clear and compelling.

Think about support tickets, rework, giving time back to the business — even some basic calculations of these productivity savings will rapidly create a strong business case.

Not having the resource to configure a DAP, and having complex, bespoke processes are also flagged as common hurdles, but the tech itself often addresses these issues. Most HR teams are resource constrained and most organizations have unique ways of working, but if the HR tech supporting these elements isn't correctly used the problems only snowball. A DAP prevents this from happening.

A Proven Digital Adoption Strategy

Our expert commentators had the following advice about DAP deployment for firms that are not already investing in creating this competitive advantage:

1) Assess and build

Take an organization-wide view of where users are struggling; consider the potential impact of DAP on productivity and costs.

"

We're at an early stage, reconfiguring and adjusting the platform to define how it's used across the enterprise. For example, people don't need bells and whistles for payroll; a good experience there is just getting paid on time. But we can start to deliver a better employee experience, a personalization layer, in many other areas."

Rudy Kelner
VP, Head of HR Transformation,
Technology & Global Solutions,
Verisk

2) Run and measure

Choose initial use cases, try them out, and measure the business impact.

"

We're in our infancy with AppLearn Adopt, proof of concept stage. They've been a pleasure to work with thus far and I think we'll have a lot to gain from the platform, driving the ease of use and intuitiveness into some of our systems that don't have it today."

Lori Durrough
Director,
Global Digital HR Employee Experience

3) Expand and improve

Test and learn: hone your strategy; establish best practice; expand DAP use to more tasks, processes and apps.

"

What we're not doing as an organization is dictating 'we have this wonderful technology, you have to use it'. It depends on the structure of your organization and the teams within it. You have to adapt and deploy the platform based on those needs and not look at it as a blanket approach."

Ben Debnath
Global Head HR Operations
Syngenta

Data-Driven Digital Adoption

The data made available through your DAP is crucial to understanding who in your organization is using the software, how often - and how well - they engage with it, and how you can make improvements to both the employee experience and commercial outcomes.

Measuring digital adoption comes down to having two things: an understanding of what genuine digital adoption is, and the ability to measure the metrics that matter.

While a digital adoption solution is ultimately required to access the data that proves whether an application is being used, and used well, this data is only as useful as what's being tracked, and for how long.

For a measure of true digital adoption, it is not enough to get a high-level snapshot on the number of logins or visits to particular sections and equate this to success. Instead, it is vital to have an ongoing view on the usage of essential features, completion rates of key tasks and number of associated support tickets. Organizations should go further and track how this impacts the business outcomes of their technology, or enables a desired target operating model.

"

AppLearn Adopt has very strong analytics. When we launched particular elements [of our HR tech] we were able to go in and see how people used it. We can track where people are having issues in the system and use that knowledge to put in additional adoption pieces to help drive engagement."

Lori Durrough
Director, Global Digital HR Employee Experience
Nissan

THE DIGITAL ADOPTION DRIVE

The Benefits of a Digital Adoption Platform

The real benefit of a DAP is being able to ensure tech is useful, not just used. This includes valuable data that provides evidence of time and cost savings, not just logins.

Meanwhile, DAPs have the potential to span multiple applications and bring a consistent experience across different functions. In this way, HR could be the shining example that inspires the rest of the business to pay greater attention to digital adoption and the employee experience.

The outcomes of a DAP include better productivity, experience and engagement, all due to improved adoption of HR software. DAPs are also capable of improving software that has been embedded for some time, not just new tools.

According to **AppLearn**'s Business Impact Assessment, its Adopt platform offers outcomes like those illustrated to the right.

For all of these reasons, CIOs and HR Tech Directors are making a strong business case for investment.

AppLearn's digital adoption platform has been proven to:

Maximize employee self-service, doubling first-time task completions

Increase productivity, with a 40% task completion time reduction

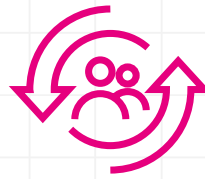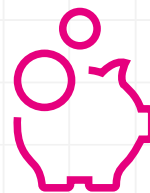**Reduce IT support costs, with 30% reduction in support cases**

The Growth of Digital Adoption Platform

According to the DAP State of the Market Report 2021 from Everest Group, the DAP market grew by around 50% despite the pandemic. Moreover, the study predicts growth of up to 80% in the next few years.

However you look at it, organizations are beginning to understand the importance of DAPs as a solution to providing agility, consistency and resilience across their key applications.

And, as we'll see next, they are also realizing the power of digital adoption software to enhance employee experience, through the invaluable data and analytics the platforms provide.

+50%
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80%
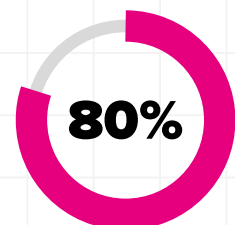
04 Data

An abundance of opportunity awaits HR leaders as they attempt to understand the future of work. Harnessing cutting-edge HR software to transform operations, build efficiencies, and provide market-leading experiences to all employees are the prizes up for grabs. To claim them, all of the experts agree better use of data is essential.

As we've seen, DAPs are a key source of this information - so it's no wonder budget is expected to be poured into installing platforms and getting the best out of them.

FORTUNE

$65m

a 10% increase in data accessibility can result in an increase of more than $65m in net income for Fortune 1000 companies

The business case is clear. Analysis shows that just a 10% increase in data accessibility can result in an increase of more than $65m in net income for Fortune 1000 companies. But that is only achievable if the enterprise achieves widespread digital adoption.

Quality in, quality out

A revolution in understanding enterprise data has arrived, as advanced analytics, data science platforms, and the emergence of AI begin to dominate HR leaders' agendas. Digital transformation creates huge volumes of data that can be captured, measured, and scrutinized - aiding HR's understanding of productivity, engagement and business outcomes.

HR can now focus on employee experience in a more holistic and dynamic way. Raju Vijay says: "We've set the stage for a different way of thinking, which is data and insight driven. It will inform development and retention strategies - we're going to blaze some trails."

With a huge amount of data at their disposal, HR leaders need to sift the signals from the noise. That's prompting the rise of data analytics and insight within HR teams. Cat Lightfoot states:

"We've got six years of great historical talent, performance and retention data. We've spent the past 18 months really looking at how to drive value from everything we've amassed. We're doing it to deliver efficiency and also drive decision-making."

She cites the example of data gathered and analyzed during the first 12 months of the pandemic, which showed an unexpected 11% drop in employee sick days. This has led to greater understanding across a range of factors, from resourcing to business-critical skills planning.

-11%
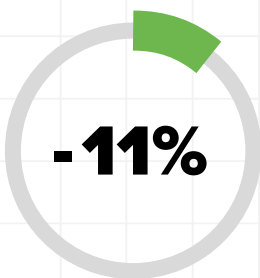
Unexpected 11% drop in employee sick days during the first 12 months of the pandemic
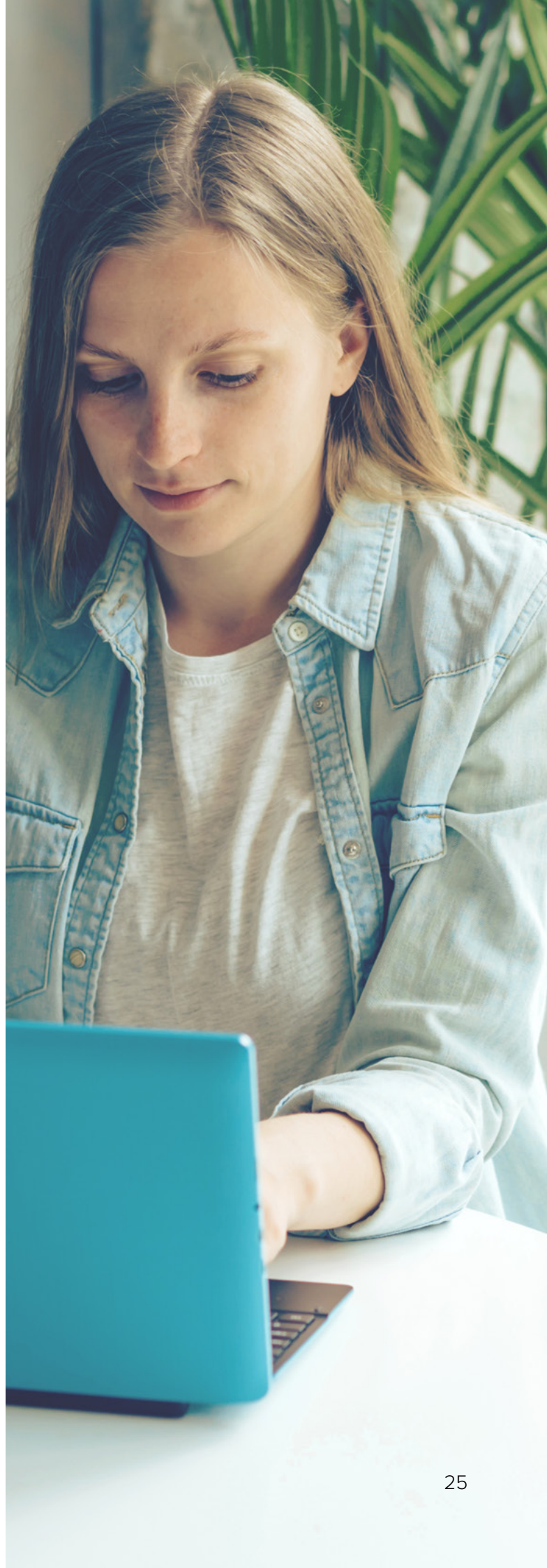
Using data provided by DAPs and other HR tech platforms is crucial to understanding and driving productivity, our experts concurred. João Moutinho believes: "If we dramatically improve the user experience, that brings value for employee engagement but also productivity. For example, being able to take a performance assessment or training while you are commuting is really important."

Meanwhile, Matthew Hanwell ponders the ultimate conjunction of technology and productivity:

> **Work has become more pixelated - there are more little aspects to it. Could people work more, contribute to wider things, and add value to the company outside of their job description and cost center? And how do you have an organization agile enough to allow that fluidity?"**

Matthew Hanwell
Head of HR Technology,
TietoEVRY

Data and analytics techniques are also becoming ever more sophisticated. For example, Sourcing Change analyzes employee engagement through Cisco video meetings. Principal Janet Ramey says:

> **The platform's chat pane allows for lots of real-time sentiment analysis. During Covid the platform has been used for regular executive leadership engagement with employees. Chat is well used and actively monitored - it's invaluable."**

Janet Ramey
Principal
Sourcing Change

Other firms are at an early stage of structuring data but acknowledge the need to make it work harder. Fred Van Wees says: "It's taken a while to move from Excel, and now we need to integrate all our solutions - payroll, time, attendance - to improve the quality of data. You need to invest in ensuring a really strong foundation before you move on to the next stage."

To infinity and beyond

The benefits of a bespoke data strategy for HR, driven by cutting-edge technology and expert analytics, are almost endless. Here are some initiatives our interviewees are instigating through smart use of data:

- Candidate experience
- Employee experience
- Personalization
- Self-service
- Critical skills analysis

- AI-led learning
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Wellbeing
- Performance and compensation management

Software and the data that surrounds it can propel organizations to meet all of HR's new priorities. To move closer to realizing the opportunities provided by digital transformation - not least excellence in employee experience - firms need to firstly boost digital adoption, then make greater use of data flowing through to them from all employee platform touchpoints.

66

That's the full digital experience, collectively across the business."

Matthew Hanwell
Head of HR Technology,
TietoEVRY

"We don't just look across our HR tools, we consider all the key ones like CRM tools and reporting tools, so we have a comparison between HR and other functions, such as finance and procurement," attests Matthew Hanwell.

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Our focus is on increasing the HR team's autonomy..."

João Moutinho
Head of Corporate HR,
Sonae IM

For HR itself, all of this points to an exciting future. João Moutinho concludes: "Our focus is on increasing the HR team's autonomy; the ability to configure processes themselves. When we can improve the integration between the team, the HCM and our organization's other databases, we'll have a streamlined and dynamic solution."

KEY INTERVIEW TAKEAWAYS
DATA STRATEGIES FOR HR

PAIN POINTS

- Joining up data from legacy systems with additional sources such as new apps can be massively complex

- Huge volumes of data can cause headaches - but only if the right experts aren't in place to maximize value

SOLUTIONS

- Call on experts and cutting-edge platforms to analyze data to spot - and fill - gaps in HR strategy

- At global firms, data can be used to develop frameworks for standard processes that are adaptable for local regulation and culture
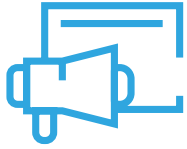
CONCLUSION:
DELIVERING ON YOUR PRIORITIES

The pandemic has changed the employee experience for good, so the future of work now looks very different. This is leading to new priorities for HR leaders, in four areas of focus:

Enterprise-wide communication

HR Tech for service delivery

Boosting digital adoption

People data and analytics

Firms have had to react quickly to keep pace with enforced change - but must also continue to adapt for the long term.

Against a backdrop of flat budgets and complex technology decisions, this means driving more value from the software you use.

The goal is to ensure your whole enterprise accesses and uses powerful HR technology to complete all of the tasks required for a productive and profitable operation - which has only been made more complex by the widespread switch to hybrid working.
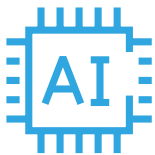
HR tech and digital adoption are now front of mind for organizations due to the disruption of the pandemic. Implementation of new tech that deals efficiently with enforced changes to the workplace is already under way.

To build access to unrivalled levels, smart firms are investing in Digital Adoption Platforms that boost engagement and use of software; achieving priorities and delivering excellent employee experiences. This is a huge opportunity to optimize your HR operation.

Despite the challenges this brings it's a huge opportunity for your HR operation - if your business is ready to invest and support you through the journey.

A new era of digital transformation is unfolding.

UNLEASH customers - from Nissan to TietoEVRY, and Cisco to DT - are investing in Digital Adoption Platforms to boost learning experiences and accelerate tech adoption. If you are looking to leverage decision science and people analytics in your organization for better, faster, and more cost-effective ways of working, you need all of your employees to adopt technology that helps HR to effectively underpin critical business outcomes. Now is the time to invest.

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# HELPING A FINANCIAL LEADER TRANSFORM ITS GLOBAL SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Problem

At the time of planning, the company's plan to transform its employee service experience was the only technology project to be rolled out globally in their 148 years of existence. This meant that along with the goal of streamlining processes through digitalization, it was doubly important to mitigate against the risks associated with change.

To meet these ambitions and standardize their outdated, inconsistent solutions, the organization selected ServiceNow to deliver a consolidated front-end portal. This would then connect with other new tools for vertical functions, such as Workday® for HR. Taking this layered, phased approach was undoubtedly the right method, but it also added an extra dimension of change.

After realizing that user adoption was the key to both achieving their goals and avoiding the risks, the company identified two key challenges. The first was to ensure their 50,000+ users embraced the new tools and self-service approach across 60 global locations, and in different languages. The second was to demonstrate the technology was enabling their target operating model.
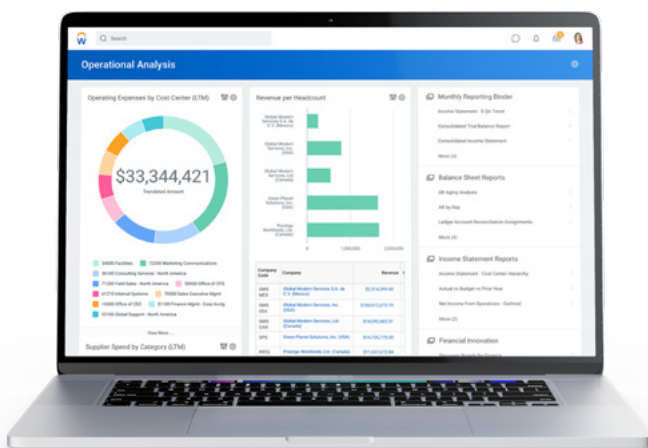
Solution

From the beginning, AppLearn and the client agreed that establishing short-and long-term measures of success was critical. Before worrying about the functions of the companies applications and supporting their users, AppLearn focused on the available data, how it connected and what metrics mattered to their target operating model.

After combining the unique adoption data made accessible by Adopt with platform and call tracking data, the team drilled into all the sources connected with the project and created the companies objectives and key results (OKRs). With 10 OKRs and Adopt's Advanced Analytics in place for launch, as well as the previously inaccessible in-app interactions being tracked by Adopt, the company is now able to see how its technology is enabling its vision and operating model.

With measurement established, AppLearn distributed targeted enablement content to ensure the company's worldwide userbase were equipped to embrace self-service. Delivered in line with existing change initiatives, both in and outside of application, this increased engagement and confirmed users' readiness for change.

Results

AppLearn Adopt

95%	150%	50% time saved	200%
The day one results showed that 95% of people used Adopt on their first session, with 61% actively seeking support in-app.	Users who engaged with targeted enablement content were 150% more likely to successfully complete tasks.	Drove a 50% time saving on core tasks	Improved task completion rate by 200%+

THE DIGITAL ADOPTION LEADERS MAKING SOFTWARE WORK BETTER FOR EVERYONE

AppLearn is a digital adoption vendor and creator of the Adopt Digital Adoption Platform. We are on a mission to make software work better for everyone (so everyone can work better with software).

By embedding in-app support and user analytics into any application, Adopt makes sure software benefits the people and organizations that use it. This not only makes any task or process easier to complete, analyze and optimize, but ensures users and organizations are as productive as possible.

Get in touch with AppLearn to find out more about how the Adopt platform can help you achieve your goals and realize the full potential of your HR tech.

applearn.com

linkedin.com/company/applearn-adopt/

twitter.com/applearn

marketing@applearn.com

+44 (0) 8455 20 20 80