Future Insights

The top trends according to SHRM’s HR subject matter expert panels
About the SHRM Special Expertise Panels’ Trends List
The Society for Human Resource Management’s (SHRM) Special Expertise Panels are comprised of subject matter experts, and their lists of key trends in their subject area tap into these experts’ insights into a wide variety of HR-related topics and trends. The trends submitted by each expert panel assist SHRM in creating forward-looking information and content for our members in forums such as the online HR Focus Areas, research articles, reports and surveys. While the Special Expertise Panels’ trends are used at SHRM primarily as a springboard to more in-depth content ideas, they can also be considered a valuable resource in and of themselves for any HR professional interested in seeing what issues HR subject matter experts believe will have the biggest impact on the workplace today and in the years ahead.

About the SHRM Special Expertise Panels
The SHRM Special Expertise Panels serve as a resource to SHRM by identifying topics of importance to the HR profession. The panels are comprised of a mix of senior HR practitioners, consultants, academics and policy experts possessing advanced HR skills and experience in one of 12 HR concentrations. Each of the 12 Special Expertise Panels is made up of five to 15 SHRM professional members who serve a one- to three-year term.

Panel member contributions play an integral role in reporting emerging trends in specific HR topic areas, providing expert advice on matters of professional significance and offering guidance on public policy issues. Member competencies must include subject matter expertise in the panel topic area, good communication and interpersonal skills, an established professional network with strategic/operational connections, and the ability to participate. Members are identified, reviewed and recommended by the Panel Selection Committee¹ and approved by the SHRM Board Governance Committee.

Acknowledgments
SHRM would like to acknowledge the efforts of each of the members of the 12 Special Expertise Panels. A full list of panel members can be found in the back of this report.

SHRM 12 Special Expertise Panels
- Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability
- Employee Health, Safety and Security
- Employee Relations
- Ethics
- Global
- Human Capital Measurement/HR Metrics
- Labor Relations
- Organizational Development
- Staffing Management
- Technology and HR Management
- Total Rewards/Compensation and Benefits
- Workplace Diversity

¹ The Panel Selection Committee is appointed by the SHRM Board Chair. These volunteers work, with staff support, to identify possible candidates for the panels. The Panel Selection Committee identifies five to 15 members and alternates for each of the panels. The slates for the panels are reviewed and approved by the Governance Committee of the SHRM Board.
Overview

The SHRM Special Expertise Panels were asked to compile their first list of trends in 2005, when they were first formed, as a way for SHRM to tap into the cutting-edge insights from the most experienced thought leaders in the HR field. Since then, the SHRM Special Expertise Panels regularly review their most recent trends and add, subtract or change them as new developments occur.

Though the panels vary widely in the subject matter they cover and many of the trends in their lists reflect these differences, they also have some overlap, indicating that some broader trends are influencing many aspects of HR and the workplace simultaneously.

Some of these broader trends include:

- The impact of the global recession on business strategy and employees.
- The influence of social networking, especially as it relates to recruiting.
- The continuing importance of work/life balance as employees deal with multiple caring responsibilities and, in some cases, multiple paid jobs.
- The need for measurement of results and the development and standardization of key HR metrics.
- The growing need for organizations to demonstrate a commitment to ethics, sustainability and social responsibility.
- Safety issues, particularly workplace aggression and the potential impact of a global disease pandemic.
- The importance of globalization and integrating markets.
- Continued emphasis on performance management.
- The ongoing need for skilled employees and concerns about the ability of the U.S. education system to produce the needed skilled workers of the future.
- Demographic change and its impact on diversity and labor availability.
- The implications of government legislation.

As SHRM moves forward, the trends contributed by the Special Expertise Panels and their overall themes will help inform the development of the research and resources SHRM offers to its members.
Following is the complete list of the updated trends for 2010, in the order of importance (with the first trend being the most important). Panels are listed in alphabetical order.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability Panel
1. There is a greater acceptance and assimilation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability in businesses, communities and homes, making it part of the cultural fabric and increasing public perception that it is a personal, professional and corporate responsibility.
2. More corporations consider CSR an essential part of the company's policies and procedures and are moving from theory to practice.
3. Organizations increasingly will be subject to internal pressure to embrace CSR; for example, an increasing number of Generation Y employees weigh an organization's CSR commitment as a factor in accepting employment and remaining employed in an organization.
4. Organizations increasingly will be subject to external scrutiny and expectations, leading to a greater separation between companies that implement and embrace CSR as a way of doing business and those that use it only as a public relations tool.
5. Governmental involvement in setting the CSR agenda will increase in both the regulatory and legislative arenas.
6. More companies routinely will engage in systematic scrutiny of their supply chain by auditing vendors' CSR and sustainability policies and practices.
7. More countries will establish a national CSR/sustainability brand and use it as a competitive advantage to attract investment.
8. More academic institutions and training programs will include CSR as a legitimate component of the business and management curriculum, recognizing it, for example, as part of goal alignment and performance management, and adopting a metrics-based focus on CSR in research.
9. An increasing number of organizations will place a greater focus on relationships with stakeholders to understand what they want in terms of CSR and sustainability.
10. More resources will be committed to developing training programs on understanding CSR.

Employee Health, Safety and Security Panel
1. The increased threat of global pandemic issues, such as the H1N1 flu virus, will place greater emphasis on the need for organizational disaster planning.
2. A growth in the incidence of workplace aggression will influence employee safety policies.
3. The ongoing rise in both employer and employee health care costs will sustain and encourage an increase in the use of workplace wellness programs.
4. Workers' compensation claims and litigation will continue to be on the rise, resulting in the need for more proactive management of safety in the workplace.
5. Safety compliance issues will increase and demand more attention from HR.
6. Work/life balance issues will continue to influence employee stress levels.
7. The rising threat of fraud and identity theft will require more employer vigilance in protecting employee data and privacy.
8. An increase in the number of employees using prescription medications and/or illegal drugs will continue to emphasize the need for more proactive monitoring systems and support programs.
9. The rise in workplace violence will lead to an increased awareness and proactive stance among organizations to ensure worker safety and mitigate liability.
10. The rise in mental health issues and illnesses, such as chronic depression, will continue to affect workforce productivity and require increased organizational intervention.

Employee Relations Panel
1. Increased aggression in the workplace, including domestic violence, threats, bullying and theft, will require greater attention on effective hiring practices, problem solving, discipline and workplace safety programs.
2. Work/life considerations will require increased attention from HR to address issues related to employees' overall health, retirement planning, financial health and the effects of the increase in the number of employees holding multiple jobs in addition to their primary employment.
3. Social networking increasingly will affect the work done by HR departments—for example, recruiting and selection, employer branding, innovation initiatives—necessitating the creation of appropriate boundaries between business interests, ethics and employee privacy.
4. Employees’ ability to retire when planned is severely compromised, which requires employers to best utilize longer-term skills and talents while at the same time creating opportunities for newer employees to grow and develop in their organizations.

5. Due to the disappearance of so many jobs, the number of "underemployed" workers will grow, leading to increased underutilization of talent and morale problems in the workplace.

6. Education and job mismatch will increase as employees return to college and graduate school, but for degrees for jobs that are not in demand, i.e., white-collar jobs as opposed to skilled trade jobs where demand may increase.

7. HR increasingly will shift its focus toward operational and compliance-oriented issues as employers aggressively manage costs in an environment of increased employment-related legislation.

8. As HR has been gaining a “seat at the table,” HR professionals as a whole have become less focused on the people and more focused on keeping the business going. Especially in the economic downturn, HR needs to manage outplacement events with respect for the employee.

9. Many laid-off employees have become “unemployable” in the jobs and at the compensation rate they have been used to. Many have been with the same company for decades and advanced through the ranks with limited education.

10. The shift in public and employee social and environmental responsibility places an increased demand on businesses to alter their organizational structures and environmental policies to attract and retain workers.

Ethics Panel
1. The importance of ethics training for employees who are entrusted with access to confidential and other essential information is increasing.

2. There is a growing need to incorporate the ethical values of an increasingly diverse and global workforce.

3. Senior managers take more time to promote ethical culture and recognize the need for an effective ethics program as an essential component of business success.

4. Weak economic conditions are driving increased unethical behaviors in the workplace, creating a need for companies to develop greater skills for dealing with them.

5. Senior managers increasingly include ethical considerations in their decision-making, recognizing ethics as an employee competency in recruitment and retention and as an important aspect of business strategy and problem-solving.

6. The need for companies to promote an ethical image is increasing.

7. Ethical issues increasingly arise from the use of data from social networks for employment decisions.

8. Pandemic and infectious diseases increasingly will give rise to ethical issues.

9. Demands for ethics training—both mandatory and voluntary—from government agencies and from customers are increasing.

10. There is increasing recognition that elements of compensation structures may motivate inappropriate behavior. This will lead to increased efforts to change compensation strategies.

Global Panel
1. Talent management continues to be a high priority and must be more efficient than before while leveraging cost awareness and monitoring demands for key positions. Finding and retaining quality talent continues to be essential to business sustainability, but is difficult in global markets that may act differently in terms of opportunity and salary movement: Should multinational companies treat everyone equally or deploy different strategies in different countries to pay for and retain talent?

2. The need for global organizations to work virtually across functions and geographies increases and intensifies, with implications for intercultural communication, business ethics and organizational effectiveness. A new approach is needed to develop global workforce cultures, with better understanding of transnational teams, online collaboration, globalization and business process transformation.

3. Global employee engagement is tentative; companies that have implemented multiple layoffs have eroded a sense of security in the global workforce.

4. The economic crisis and fewer existing business opportunities will create a high demand on the global HR function to demonstrate greater agility and contribute strategic guidance.
5. Economic uncertainties fundamentally change the motivators that attract and retain employees.

6. Human capital protectionism will continue to increase in most countries in non-tariff, nationalistic forms (for example, hire-local stipulations for bailouts, quotas for non-immigrant visas and similar restrictions), to the detriment of organization and country competitiveness.

7. The lack of visa availability and lengthy processing times for green cards in the United States prompt highly qualified non-U.S. nationals to seek employment abroad, usually for non-U.S.-based competitors, leaving the U.S. with a less qualified, less competitive workforce.

8. Global mobility of high-value workers continues as multinational companies restrict new hires and relocate talented employees from within their existing workforce.

9. Companies that originated in emerging economies will continue to succeed in the global marketplace (e.g., China’s Lenovo, Mexico’s CEMEX, Peru’s AJEGROUP and others).

10. More government and bilateral investments in conflict or post-conflict zones create challenges for businesses attempting to balance their interest in expansion with the safety of operations and personnel.

Human Capital Measurement/HR Metrics Panel
1. There will be an increasing demand by organizations to measure and assess the value of their human capital and the HR activities, initiatives and practices that support it.

2. Increased demand for HR metrics may bring about a widely accepted set of analytic measures and methods—global standards—to describe, predict and evaluate the quality and impact of HR practices and the productivity of the workforce.

3. The development of deeper levels of analysis to monitor metric outcomes, identify trends, leverage positive outcomes and intervene in or mitigate negative outcomes will lead to better overall human capital management.

4. Increasing use of more sophisticated human capital planning techniques and tools will support a broader review of human capital sourcing—beyond just employees.

5. Broader use of human capital planning and sourcing will require different metrics and different definitions of ongoing metrics.

6. The increasing emphasis on the use of empirical data and evidence-based management tools in people-decision-making challenges HR practitioners and some line management staff to significantly strengthen their business acumen and quantitative analytical skills.

7. The increasing need to use business intelligence, visualization and workforce planning technologies to support data integration, reporting, analysis and presentation challenges HR and HRIS professionals to evolve their HR technology platform and show the return of implementing these technologies.

8. The emergence of differing outcome metrics as a result of economic conditions shows that the metrics landscape is changing—not fixed—and that ongoing internal and external collaboration is needed to have the right metrics and analytic process for an organization’s current and planned business context.

9. The application of risk analysis and risk management to human capital—including the use of tools like failure mode analysis, which can determine the severity and probability of risks—will provide a better understanding of human capital risk/reward.

10. Globalization is driving more impetus toward the use of metrics with greater cultural sensitivity. A measure that is valued in one culture may be irrelevant or inappropriate in another.

Labor Relations Panel
1. Labor relations expertise is diminishing within the HR profession, due to such factors as the retirement of more Baby Boomers and many Millennials/Gen Xers purposefully avoiding the area. Nevertheless, HR professionals’ interest in labor relations and awareness of the importance of general—rather than just specialized—HR have increased as a result of proposed labor legislation.

2. The National Labor Relations Board is expected to become more activist through rulemaking as well as reverse prior Bush Board decisions.

3. Unions are consolidating and collaborating to increase political leverage and market density.

4. Unions have an increased stake in many businesses as a result of the government’s intervention in the financial crisis, and unions will position themselves to regain concessions made once the economy turns around. The recession also has increased the role of bankruptcy law, dramatically affecting labor relations.
5. Union organizing is intensifying among automotive technicians and in the health care, nursing home, hospitality and child care service sectors. The noticeable relocation of many manufacturing jobs to the South is likely to result in increased organizing initiatives.

6. There has been a decline in union apprenticeship programs, prompting a need for alternatives.

7. State legislatures and governors are paying more attention to labor relations areas not preempted by the National Labor Relations Act and increasingly are targeting employers for misclassifying employees as independent contractors.

8. Labor law is increasingly influenced by globalization, trade agreements and global labor standards. In addition, there is pressure to include labor-friendly provisions in standardized trade agreements and discourage offshoring through proposed tax changes.

9. Unions are more involved with health insurance and retirement accounts, becoming brokers of record or acting as brokers, which can be lucrative.

10. Unions of federal government workers are poised for additional gains in the scope of bargaining matters, and unions are seeking to broaden their penetration rate among state and local employees.

Organizational Development Panel

1. Technology and virtual communication increasingly affect the way individuals and organizations interact and collaborate.

2. Turbulence and ambiguity increase the need for employee/organizational agility and adaptability as well as improving/upskilling while maintaining day-to-day work levels.

3. Companies are making selective investments in strategic areas: products, people, geographies; one example is executive coaching.

4. Economic challenges have disrupted workforce demographics (delayed retirement, lack of new skilled workers, etc.) and affected employee engagement.

5. There is a renewed focus on performance management and on performance and process improvement.

6. There is an increased focus on engagement and development without a great deal of “upward mobility,” i.e., finding alternative ways for employees to develop their careers and continue to learn in the absence of promotional opportunities.

7. Employees are becoming increasingly responsible for their own career development—for example, preparing for economic changes that will make job changes possible.

8. The importance of measuring the value and business impact of organizational development interventions is increasing.

9. There is an upswing in corporate social responsibility as an integral part of culture and organizational development; employers and employees are focused on survival/sustainability.

10. A growing uneasiness about unionization is driving increased focus on culture, engagement, basic employee relations, management skills training, union avoidance and union decertification activities.

Staffing Management Panel

1. As Baby Boomers return to the workforce or remain in it longer than expected and are faced with the challenges of being a sandwich generation, employers must find ways to maximize their engagement.

2. There are many available workers applying for many jobs (some they aren’t qualified for), and at the same time, there are hard-to-fill jobs that require a very comprehensive and competitive recruitment strategy to find few potential candidates.

3. Succession planning strategies will become imperative, balanced against fewer individuals retiring.

4. Workforce planning will be affected both by the education system’s ability to produce qualified workers and by changes in retirement patterns.

5. The housing market and other economic pressures are resulting in workers’ reluctance to relocate.

6. HR needs to build competency in finding, selecting, utilizing and effectively managing third-party products and services such as HR outsourcing, temp services, job postings, background checking, etc.

7. Sustaining the employment brand is critical for recruitment and retention regardless of the employment market and economic business conditions.

8. The employee-employer relationship, including loyalty, engagement and retention, may be further affected by employers’ actions such as withholding salary increases, laying off workers and slowing career growth.
9. Higher education system is challenged to prepare the future workforce in a manner that is successful, affordable and measurable.

10. Employers are being more cautious about finding the right candidates and are increasingly using multiple selection measures, including panel interviews, reference checks, personality assessment, skills assessment, as well as requiring work samples and writing samples.

**Technology and HR Management Panel**

1. Information and actions are increasingly portable via mobile applications.

2. The availability of various social media and the increasing complexity of intellectual property are increasing the need to establish and improve technology governance and policies.

3. The use of cloud computing (reliance on online applications for various technology needs) is increasing.

4. Organizations increasingly are adopting viral recruiting and social media for employer brand messaging (e.g., Facebook, Twitter).

5. The economy is having a slowing effect on enterprise projects, which, in turn, affects technology—both now and when things shift back in recovery: transformation projects are decreasing, new projects require longer decision times, cost-cutting initiatives are increasing, organizations are breaking larger projects into a series of smaller ones, globalization efforts are on hold, software and implementation prices are lower.

6. Talent management platforms are undergoing product consolidation, shifting away from siloed applications toward total solution suites that support a holistic view of talent management.

7. There is growth in the area of both candidate management and employer management tools.

8. The availability of dynamic collaboration tools is altering the importance of organizational knowledge versus social hierarchy.

9. As more companies produce various kinds of sustainability reports, e.g., carbon disclosure (CDP) reports, employees will require training in the use of sustainability software, carbon impact database development, calculations of waste resource use into carbon impact statements, as well as overall employee training in process changes, governance, risk and compliance.

10. Organizational and individual information is increasingly transparent (e.g., profiling of hiring managers, Japan’s mega-database of all potential employees).

**Total Rewards/Compensation and Benefits Panel**

1. Health care is undergoing a transformation, which includes efforts to provide universal coverage and to take technology, systems and standardization to the next level, with an overall emphasis on better controlling costs.

2. There is an increased government intervention in employer-provided compensation and benefits through expanded regulations that affect private-sector compensation, paid time off, health benefits and retirement plans.

3. Organizations are increasingly focused on rebalancing of long-term and short-term business strategy and on making total rewards a strategic factor in driving overall business strategy.

4. There is a differentiation of rewards among different employee segments, as increasingly one size will not fit all, given several generations in the workforce and increasingly diverse ethnic and cultural demographics.

5. Retirement is being redefined—increased workplace flexibility, telecommuting and phased retirement make it possible for employers to take advantage of the expertise of older employees who do not want to or are unable to leave the workforce.

6. Cost, risk and responsibility in health care, career development and retirement benefits are shifting away from the employer. The role of employers will be transformed to aid employees in bearing more of these burdens.

7. Wellness (health promotion and well-being) programs continue to grow in popularity and importance, with employees expected to increasingly share responsibility for their health maintenance and employers providing the means for them to do so (including screenings, education, group programs and incentives). Wellness initiatives also will increasingly encompass work/life balance issues as part of maintaining employees’ overall well-being.

8. Executive pay (base and variable) is being reevaluated in light of public and government focus on perceived excesses.

9. Organizations increasingly are implementing total rewards approaches that include helping employees to better understand and value their pay and benefits, and managing employee expectations in a slow-growth economy.

10. Organizations are reevaluating the effectiveness of long-term incentives throughout the organization as stock options lose their luster and management seeks more effective means to motivate and engage the workforce.
Workplace Diversity Panel

1. There still is a need for increasing the understanding of the inherent value of diversity and inclusion, complemented by lack of understanding of cultural implications.

2. The aging of the workforce increases the need for employers to deal proactively with disability, elder care, religious differences and the needs of those dealing with both elder care and child care.

3. Workplace flexibility policies are becoming more critical in addressing recruitment and talent management issues, such as flexible schedules, work/life balance, on-ramping and off-ramping, etc.

4. Younger generations of workers quickly embrace diversity—but only on the surface; they lack the skills and competencies to truly explore and appreciate differences.

5. The consumer base is changing rapidly across the globe with an emerging middle class, increasingly diverse population and generational trends within key markets.

6. Information and communications technology has greatly expanded the ways employers and job seekers can assess each other in the recruitment process (e.g., video resumes, online work samples, online job previews, online screening tests). The new technology can open particular opportunities for international recruiting by reducing recruitment travel costs. Yet, employers’ recruitment processes continue to rely mostly on traditional processes, such as resumes, then face-to-face interviews, or use the new technology in unimaginative ways (e.g., use an online resume as simply a fast way to transmit a document that will be read as a paper document).

7. With the increase in globally dispersed work teams (working across borders), there is a need for greater communication and cultural competence-building to ensure greater efficiencies and employee productivity.

8. Economic stress and the regulatory environment increase the risk of employee backlash and employee disengagement.

9. Pioneers among diversity and inclusion practitioners will be retiring soon, creating a need to replenish the field with qualified professionals and a corresponding risk of throwing inexperienced people into this work.

10. Globalizing the leadership pipeline through leadership development for women in Asia—specifically India and China—is an essential area of focus for global corporations in order to tap into a growing talent pool.
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