SHRM 2026
TRENDS AND PREDICTIONS

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HR departments must be prepared to adapt to these emerging trends in 2026. Is your organization ready?

AI Hasn't Lived Up to the Hype — but Companies Won't Give Up

Businesses' AI adoption will continue, but leaders will realize that like-for-like replacement of human roles with AI agents comes with its own price tag and management challenges.

I&D Is About Performance, Not Causes

Inclusion and diversity (I&D) efforts will need to be legally compliant, workplace unifying, and business accretive, so organizations can see a return on investment while adapting to policy changes.

Workforce Fragmentation Will Peak

Organizations will move from one-size-fits-all talent models to project-based, outcome-driven structures, creating workplace policies tailored to employee functions and needs.

AI Will Be the Death of Annual Performance Reviews

Personalized AI coaches will provide real-time feedback to workers based on managers' decision-making history and team performance data.

Employees Will Work Harder, Smarter... and Collect Two Pay Checks

Employers will roll out policies defining acceptable parameters for moonlighting, as they recognize that supplemental income improves employees' financial wellness.

Recruitment Is Broken. Automation and Algorithms Alone Can't Fix It

HR will struggle to identify top talent in a flood of AI-generated job applications, while AI resume screening tools will make it harder for some qualified workers to stand out.

Training Is Dead. Long Live Real-Time Upskilling

Learning systems will deliver timely training content, based on AI analysis of project requirements and workflows, to meet new skill requirements for emerging roles.

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