Guide

Organization Design: A Business Imperative



VISIER®

As AI fundamentally reshapes how work is done in organizations, CHROs and their counterparts in the business are challenged to help shape the way the workforce—and the structures that support it—needs to adapt to the new requirements of an AI-driven era. We're already seeing several indicators that workforce requirements are changing: overall hiring has been declining, while specific domains like Technology, Finance, and Healthcare are experiencing substantial growth.[1] Roles that combine skills such as finance and technology, such as a Financial Systems Analyst, have grown by 338%, while other roles are becoming obsolete due to automation, creating a complex reshuffling of the job market.

For many leadership teams, the pressure to understand how their organizations must adapt to the new capabilities enabled by AI has inspired a renewed focus on strategic workforce planning and organization design. At its core, organization design is a strategic process of aligning an organization's structure, roles and ways of working with its business goals, to ensure the right people in the right roles within the right structure at the right time.

Unfortunately, there are also examples of failures in data-driven and strategic workforce planning, such as photo giant Kodak's inability to adapt to disruptive technologies and its neglect of workforce digital reskilling, which led to its eventual decline and irrelevance in a world where digital photography skyrocketed.[2] Companies that are unable to adapt effectively to disruptive change are sometimes forced to take costly, ineffective measures later. Ironically, without data-driven strategic workforce planning, even cost-saving measures such as layoffs can backfire more often than not, 5% of laid-off staff are rehired, most at a higher cost.[3]



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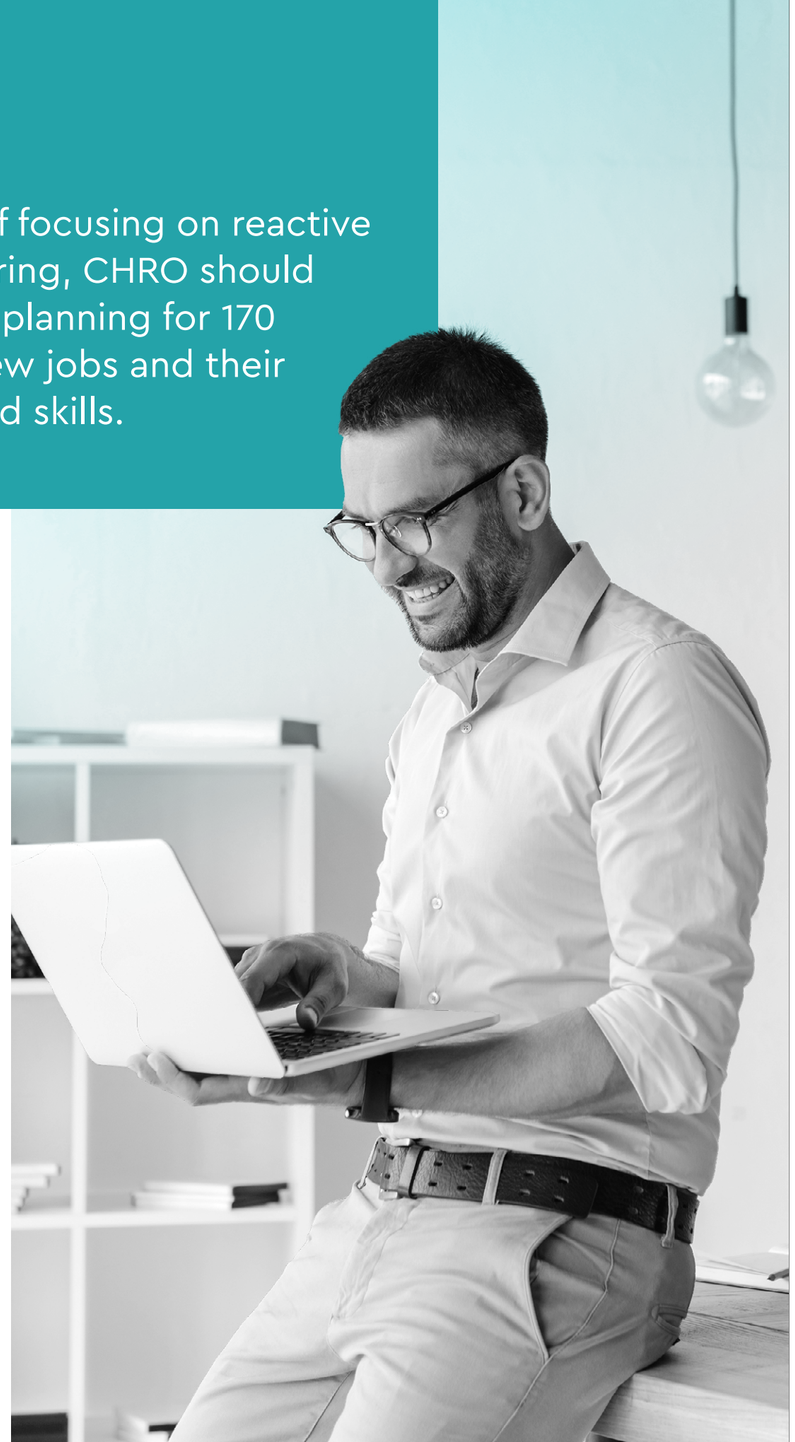


Instead of focusing on reactive restructuring, CHRO should prioritize planning for 170 million new jobs and their associated skills.

How can CHROs position organization design as a strategic lever to support organizational health and prepare the workforce for the AI era?

CHROs are in a unique position to help their organizations avoid costly problems of poor planning. One part of the solution is to make organization design a strategic imperative. Instead of treating organization design as a reactive restructuring exercise, leaders should prioritize planning for the 170 million new jobs and their associated skills because according to the World Economic Forum, "skill gaps are categorically considered the biggest barrier to business transformation."[4]

Also related to the solution is investing in the right human skills development as we adapt to AI's transformative impact. The strategic identification of uniquely human skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, or emotional intelligence in an AI-immersed environment is critical, and employees must be supported by structures that enable continuous development, including human-AI collaboration.





CHRO ACTION PLAN

How to Make Organization Design a Strategic Lever

Design structures that reflect how work is changing

- Audit existing organization structures for alignment with AI-driven workflows and emerging hybrid role types.
- Build design flexibility into the organization so it can evolve without full restructuring.
- Establish metrics to identify structural misalignment and prioritize interventions to close them.

Integrate organization design into the strategic workforce planning ecosystem

- Champion cross-functional collaboration in organization design decisions, including Talent, Finance, HR, Technology, and Strategy.
- Develop a unified framework to connect structural design decisions with business objectives and technological advancements.
- Ensure organization design efforts are as an always-on discipline, not a one-time event, aligned with broader business goals.

Embrace always-on organization design

- Lead the adoption of ongoing, adaptive organization design reviews informed by real-time workforce data.
- Leverage advanced analytics to identify structural misalignments early and make swift, targeted adjustments.
- Champion a pragmatic "progress over perfection" approach for proactive, flexible decision-making.

SPOTLIGHT

How a Financial Services Company Drives Business Results Through Integrated, Data-Driven Workforce Planning

A financial services company with 8,000+ employees reduced its manager population from 30% to 15% and cut layers from 10 to 8 following a $10 million consulting review. To sustain these gains without ongoing consultant costs, they implemented Visier People to track organizational health metrics monthly—span of control, layers, and admin-to-manager ratios. Monthly and on-demand access enabled leaders to make staffing decisions aligned with efficiency targets. Three years later, the company maintained its 15% manager population and 10:1 admin ratio while reducing another layer and decreasing voluntary turnover, demonstrating how continuous organizational monitoring prevents costly regression.



> “Quite honestly, without Visier, we wouldn't have been able to monitor our spans and layers in a way that contributes to our broader organizational efficiency goals."
>
> — SVP of HR Administrative Management

Endnotes

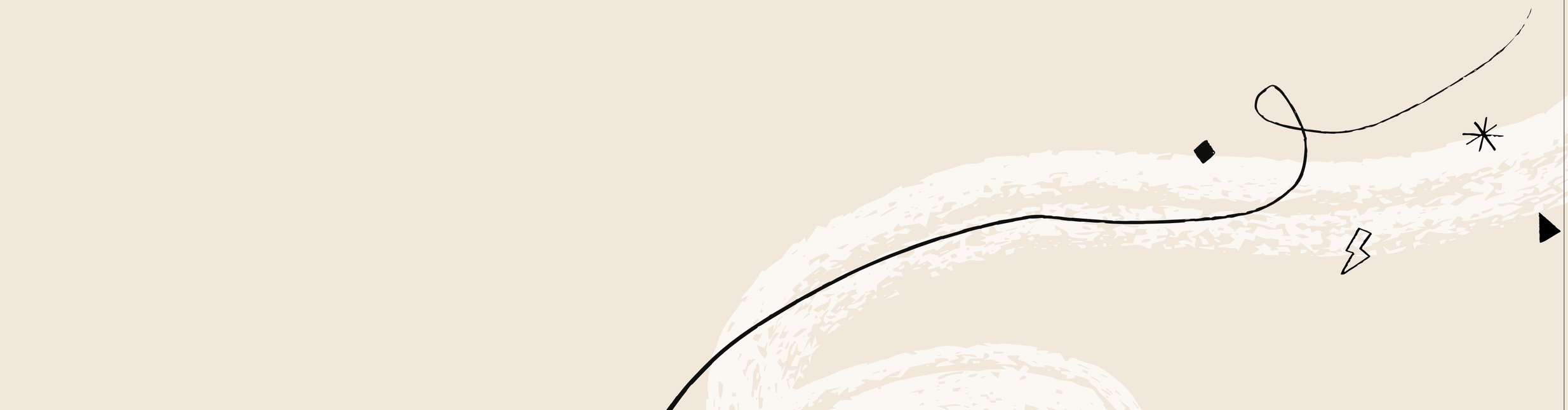
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2. Mui, C. (2012, January 18). How Kodak failed. Forbes. forbes.com/sites/chunkamui/2012/01/18/how-kodak-failed
3. Visier (2025). The Layoff Boomerang: Industry Trends, Employee Profiles, and Cost of Rehiring after Layoffs. Unpublished Manuscript.
4. World Economic Forum. (2025). The future of jobs report 2025. weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/digest



About Visier

Visier Workforce AI is the context foundation for talent management. The Visier Workforce Intelligence Platform turns scattered, sensitive people data into one governed understanding of the entire workforce, so organizations can understand, plan, and activate all of their talent priorities in one place. More than 85,000 of the world's most complex organizations, including Ford Motor Company, eBay, Experian, and Domino's Pizza, rely on Visier's over 16 years of workforce domain expertise, ranked #1 in vendor satisfaction and user experience for three consecutive years by the Sapient Insights HR Systems Survey.

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