

INTELLIGENT

WORKPLACE

HOW AI MAKES LIFE EASIER FOR EMPLOYEES AND HR

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## AI in the workplace: from recruiting to offboarding

Technology is touching every aspect of our lives, and the workplace is no exception. In recent years, artificial intelligence has begun to take up an increasingly big part in every step of the employee life cycle: from application, recruiting and onboarding to competence management, daily tasks, and offboarding.

In this e-book, we take stock of **how AI is making the lives of employees and HR professionals easier today, and what we can expect to happen tomorrow**. We'll look at how AI tackles some of the most pressing challenges in HR through real-life cases. And finally, we'll explore how your organization can prepare itself for the AI-driven workplace and make the most of the opportunities it presents.

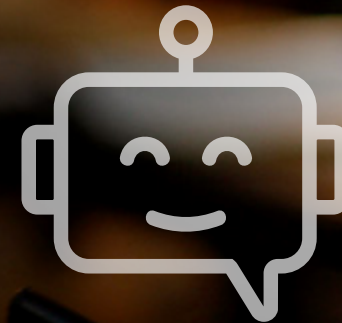


**In 2019, 50% of workers were using some form of AI at work, compared to 32% the year before<sup>1</sup>.**

## CHAPTER 1

# AI-powered application & recruitment

Even before an employee has ever set foot in the workplace, AI can play a role in making his or her life - and that of the HR department - easier. **Intelligent applications** allow applicants to find their dream jobs in no time, while saving HR professionals from tedious early selection processes. The result? A better match between company and employee, and more time for human interaction.



# Frictionless applications to boost employer branding

Applying for a job or hiring a new candidate used to be a fairly straightforward process. Over the last two decades, however, the so-called **'warfortalent'** has forced companies to attract suitable applicants more actively - a trend that sparked the rise of 'employer branding': propagating the organization's reputation as a great place to work.

The application process itself plays a crucial part in **employer branding**. To successfully attract new talent, the process needs to be as **frictionless** as possible. Social media platforms like LinkedIn, for example, cater to this need by enabling one-click applications. Meanwhile, many organizations are experimenting with voice-powered recruiting and virtual assistants to help new talent find the way to their doorstep.



## CASE

# 'HI ACCENT' SETS THE STAGE FOR VOICE-POWERED RECRUITING

## Challenge

As a frontrunner in digital recruiting, House of HR is always looking for new ways to match jobseekers with matching positions.

## Solution

Together with delaware, House of HR developed 'Hi Accent': a state-of-the-art chatbot that allows job-seekers to browse matching job opportunities by talking to their smart device, like Google Home.

## Result

Based on Natural Language Processing-technology and data gathered during user interactions, Hi Accent provides a list of suitable job openings for the candidate.



# AI-powered selection and filtering

From the perspective of HR, the goal of hiring is to 'find the right talent at the right time'. In the past, recruiters would hire people based on the skills and experience that were formalized on paper. Today, the focus lies on 'potential' as a decisive factor. This also includes looking into ways of **unlocking the potential of people** inside the company, something we will discuss at length in [chapter 3](#), when we talk about competence management.

## When it comes to talent acquisition, the HR department faces two big challenges.

- **Time consuming:** The average time to fill in a white-collar job opening is 26 days<sup>2</sup>. A large part of this includes initial screenings and elaborate decision-making processes.
- **Cost of 'bad hires':** The cost of a bad hire in 2020 can be up to 30% of the employee's first-year earnings<sup>3</sup>. More importantly, however, bad hires negatively impact morale and productivity across the company.





**Bad hires don't just cost money,  
they also negatively impact morale  
and productivity across the company.**

For example, algorithms can collect detailed information about candidates from databases, interviews, application forms, and even social media to identify who best fits the job description. In addition, AI can automatically notify people with the right profile about a new job opportunity within your organization.

## More ways in which AI can supercharge the hiring and application process

- Tools like chatbots will soon become effective enough to **conduct initial reviews**, providing an unbiased first screening and filtering of a big pool of candidates before handing over the hiring process to an HR professional.
- The jobsite and overall communication can be **dynamically personalized** based on the candidates profile.
- Based on historical data, AI can even **predict the candidate's likelihood to accept** a job offer, their overall performance, and how long they will stay at your company.
- Via **'deep matching'**, candidates can be matched not just on the vacancy, but also on overall company culture, overall organizational needs and other important factors.
- Last but not least, an AI-driven virtual assistant can **help hiring managers** by reminding them of upcoming interviews and making relevant information about the candidate easily accessible.

## CHAPTER 2

# On board with smart onboarding



As soon as a candidate has accepted the job, the onboarding process begins. The goal of HR is simple, in theory: ensuring the new employees get all the training and tools they need to do their jobs successfully. In practice, however, this step in the employee journey is often riddled with roadblocks. Luckily, new tools and technologies like **AI and RPA** help in overcoming them.



**Companies with great onboarding programs report up to 60% faster time-to-productivity.**

# The challenges of onboarding

While they were busy professionalizing the hiring process to win the war for talent, many HR teams forgot they also had to get hired employees up and running. The last few years, however, the growing focus on the **employee lifecycle** also spurred attention for the onboarding process.

Where traditionally the role of HR was to support the business and operations, the new '**employee experience movement**' puts employees center stage and explores how they can be optimally supported during onboarding and, later on, during their daily jobs as well (see [chapter 4](#)).

A number of studies show that this approach pays off: companies with great onboarding programs report **up to 60% faster time-to-productivity**.



## 7 'non-AI' tips for better onboarding

Having employees drop out during the onboarding process is all the more tragic considering the enormous recruitment efforts and resources required. Better onboarding doesn't necessarily require fancy technologies. There's a whole lot organizations can do today to improve the experience for new employees and get them up to speed faster.

### Here are 7 easy tips you can implement today:

1. Create an agenda for their first week
2. Make sure their desk or working environment is set up
3. Give them a warm welcome
4. Send them helpful links, guides and document
5. Set goals and expectations from day one
6. Check in frequently to ask for feedback
7. Pair them up with a mentor



# How AI can improve the onboarding process

## Alleviating the administrative burden

Finding and recruiting the right people is one thing, but getting them set up for their new role can be a daunting administrative task. Luckily, **chatbots and virtual assistants** can boost efficiency in onboarding for both HR professionals and new employees by:

- Automating delivery and receipt of paperwork
- Tracking consulted documents and capturing electronic signatures
- Providing the employees with a personalized onboarding environment, tailored to their needs and roles within the company
- And much more.

Eventually, the unstoppable progress of AI will lead to a **highly personalized employee onboarding experience**. Based on their background, the role they take up, and their habits and behavior, the AI-onboarding process will develop a highly personalized digital workspace to guide them in their new role.

AI-based technologies like robotic process automation (RPA) are famous for reducing manual effort and taking over repetitive tasks in finance departments. But they can do wonders for HR as well, especially when it comes to alleviate the administrative hassle that comes with onboarding. And how about having a digital pair of eyes doublechecking GDPR compliance? Sounds, good, right?





### Gathering valuable insights during onboarding

The onboarding process is also a great moment in the employee journey to collect feedback and find **opportunities for improvement**. Today, there are numerous tools for companies to collect feedback automatically. Insights from these automated surveys allow the HR department to evaluate the efficiency of the onboarding process and give actionable insights in what could be done better.

The key to getting the most of these employee surveys is to not take just one big survey at a given time, but to do it often to monitor progress and trends.

For example, depending on the complexity of their roles, employees can get a survey after one week on the job, three months, six months, etc. These short touchpoints enable a **systematic and continuous review** of the onboarding process, and identify where exactly in the process certain issues reliably occur.

Tools like Qualtrics can help by automatically interpreting unstructured data from open-ended survey questions. In addition, data can be anonymized and sent to managers to give them truthful insights in what's really going on with their team.





**This approach unburdens HR and empowers teams and their teamleads to take matters into their own hands.**

## CHAPTER 3

# Smarter ways to manage talent

Once an employee is up and running, the main goal of the HR department today is to help them reach **their full potential**. The best way to do this, is by creating a great employee experience. Using AI, companies are offering more and more personalized development plans - helping their people grow while also providing important competitive advantages.



Personalized  
Personalized  
Personalized  
Personalized  
Personalized

## Personalized training recommendations

You know how Netflix recommends new content based on what you've watched and liked before? The same AI technology can be used to provide employees with intelligent **training and/or content suggestions** based on their goals, preferences and behavior. These personalized recommendations will help them to strategically grow their careers and unlock their potential while also indicating which skill gaps need to be bridged before making a career shift.



**Through personalized  
recommendations employees can  
strategically grow their careers  
and unlock their potential.**

## Employee performance management and prediction

Employees generate vast amounts of **performance-related data**. AI can provide valuable insights in how, when and why employees are meeting - or not meeting - certain objectives. Armed with these insights, HR professionals can conduct targeted performance reviews that help the employee get on track quickly. Even more, AI can help predict which employees are likely to leave the company. **Data models** based on behavior and historical record can even help determine which employees are best fitted to fill in a certain leadership position.

Prediction  
Prediction  
Prediction  
Prediction  
Prediction



## CASE

# PREDICTING SURGES IN ABSENTEEISM AT ESAS

## Challenge

Connected device specialist ESAS was looking for a reliable method to **predict surges in unexpected absenteeism** at the company.

## Solution

Together with delaware, the company developed a machine-learning model that looks for correlations between unexpected absenteeism and potential causes.

## Result

Based on the model's findings, ESAS discovered a variety of factors that contributed to surges in absenteeism, including overtime and commuting distance. These insights allowed the management to **take strategic actions** to lower their impact, for example by putting a cap on the maximum allowed overtime.



## CHAPTER 4

# Smarter every day

### How AI makes daily work easier

At the end of the day, the key to any successful AI implementation in the workplace is finding ways in which this new technology can **improve employee wellbeing** while **increasing efficiency**. Of course, how this is done in practice depends on the department and role. The common thread, however, is AI's ability to take over repetitive tasks and free up time to focus on tasks with a higher impact.



# AI support on 4 levels

Overall, there are **4 levels** where AI optimizes daily work and boosts workplace wellbeing for employees.

- 1 Staying well-informed without being overwhelmed
- 2 Tackling tedious administrative tasks
- 3 Fostering smooth collaboration
- 4 Managing knowledge and information





## 1 Staying well-informed - without being overwhelmed

Employees are bombarded with information from various sources inside and outside the organization. But here's the catch: a major part of that information, is not relevant to their jobs. Based on historical and behavioral data, AI can **curate content** for each employee individually, ensuring he or she is exposed to crucial information only. This is already happening today - for example in Microsoft Teams, where bots can automatically filter announcements depending on user and content.

## 2 Tackling tedious administrative tasks

A large part of any employee's workday consists of repetitive administrative tasks, like time registration, filling out forms, invoicing, etc. Technologies like AI and RPA are increasingly well-suited to take over these tasks, creating a more **streamlined experience** and freeing up time for more valuable and rewarding activities.

## 3 Fostering smooth collaboration

AI can boost collaboration between colleagues in various ways. One example is a Microsoft Teams' meeting bot, which automatically transcribes calls, translates conversations, and even identifies tasks and conclusions with the help of **natural language processing (NLP)** technology. When setting up a meeting, AI can also help align calendars in a straightforward and transparent way.

## 4 Managing knowledge and information

It's not an exaggeration to count knowledge among many companies' most valuable assets. Due to the rise in digital tools, however, knowledge is often dispersed and siloed across the organization, making it difficult to obtain and secure. Powered by NLP capabilities, AI can **detect and label content** across different sources and channels. In this way, it makes knowledge that was previously confined to a specific department or team automatically accessible to anyone with the right credentials. This includes, for example, messages, questions and responses on the intranet.

Interestingly, it also works the other way around: AI can offer or **recommend certain pieces of information** it has captured around the company in function of the task someone is working on.



**By taking over repetitive administrative tasks, technologies like AI and RPA create a more streamlined experience and free up time for more impactful work.**

## CASE

# RPA-DRIVEN PROCUREMENT AT BEKAERT

## Challenge

Every year, the procurement team at Bekaert needs to renew over 3,500 contracts with suppliers across the globe: an arduous **routine task** that demands lots of time for a large number of people.

## Solution

As part of a DEL20 innovation project, Bekaert started exploring the possibilities of robotic process automation (RPA) for administration. The main goal is to **reduce the manual effort** of comparing supplier info.

## Result

Every month, RPA bots check the supplier contracts in SAP and run a set of reports that list vendor and contract details. This data is compiled into a single Excel sheet the procurement team can easily study, adapt or approve. As a result, buyers **can focus on outcomes** and negotiations instead of preparation and administration.



# Chatbots and virtual assistants

For many employees, the most obvious way in which AI manifests itself in daily tasks is through a **chatbot or virtual assistant**. These technologies can be deployed across every step of the employee life cycle: from application and onboarding to offboarding.

In essence, chatbots and virtual assistants are nothing more than a **new type of user interface** that leans heavily on voice and text recognition. Instead of navigating buttons and screens, an employee can simply 'talk' to a bot to initiate specific actions or obtain a piece of information. The key here is the bot's ability to accurately capture the user's intent through core AI technologies like NLP.

One important advantage of chatbots and assistants is that they can be deployed **across various channels and devices**. For example, an assistant can exist in Microsoft Teams, in a web browser, or on a laptop or mobile device. This can help employees deal with a growing number of digital tools, as they can access information and perform tasks through a single assistant. In addition, it allows HR departments to connect to users in a meaningful and personal way.



## CASE

# AT DELAWARE, NEXUS FINDS RELEVANT INFO WHILE CRACKING JOKES

## Challenge

If there's one thing we like to do at Delaware, it is spreading knowledge. The downside, however, is that a lot of information is spread across a plethora of sources. Enter Nexus, our very own **virtual assistant**.

## Solution

Built on **Azure**, Nexus combines a number of NLP-technologies. It can be reached through voice or text, and lives in Google Assistant and Microsoft Teams. Not only does this digital colleague give us easy access to all relevant info across the company, it also helps us with boring administrative tasks like filling out timesheets.

## Result

In a process called 'handover', Nexus can also detect when a question would be better handled by a real person. During this whole process, however, the bot stays in the loop by providing relevant data and recording new input that could be useful in the future. And for those who like some humor at their desk, rest assured: Nexus is the reigning champion of nerdy puns in the office.



## CHAPTER 5

# Offboarding

### Bridging the experience gap with AI

By now, it's clear that organizations (should) spend a lot of time and effort onboarding new employees and helping the people who are at cruising speed to maintain their momentum. Nevertheless, it's inevitable that a percentage of hires will sooner or later leave the company – for numerous reasons. While **staff turnover** is a major problem in many organizations, data and AI can help predict which employees are likely to leave, and why.



**Data** and AI can help predict **which**  
**employees** are likely to **leave,**  
and **why.**

# The impact of exiting talent

High employee turnover has a huge impact on organizational efficiency and growth opportunities. **But why do employees leave?** The reasons are manifold: to explore new opportunities, because of lack of recognition or challenge, an arduous commute, too much pressure...

Knowing the **key reasons** why employees decide to go elsewhere is therefore one of the most valuable insights a company can have. For one, it shows which strategic actions you can take to retain top talent: from improving internal

communications and keeping overtime to a minimum, to implementing more flexible remote working policies, etc. In addition, it also allows you to predict which employees are likely to leave, and when - enabling you to a) take timely action to persuade them otherwise, or b) make plans to soften the blow to your team and overall performance.



# Predicting employee turnover with AI

Maybe you've already heard about telecom companies and training centers deploying AI and machine learning to predict and counter customer churn. The same principle can be applied to **employee turnover**. And just as with customer churn, employee turnover can be a key measure of how well your company is doing. Another interesting parallel: it almost always costs more to hire a new employee than to keep an existing one.

**In essence, you'll want to find answers to these three questions:**

- What are the main reasons employees leave?
- Based on that knowledge, which employees are most at risk of leaving?
- Which actions can be taken to improve their experience and/or safeguard our performance?



# How to turn turnover around

**In short: the ability to predict why employees leave your company can help you take strategic actions to improve the employee experience - which will ultimately impact your overall performance and the experience your customers have when interacting with your staff.**

**Just as with customer churn, countering employee turnover requires four steps:**

- 1 Gathering insights:** In this stage, you'll gather as much historical data as possible about employees who are leaving or planning on leaving the company. This can be done through pulse surveys and exit interviews.
- 2 Determining the key reasons for leaving:** Based on that information, data scientists can determine which drivers have the biggest impact on employee turnover: time since last promotion, commuting distance, years spent in current position, overtime worked, etc.

- 3 Creating a predictive model:** By mapping employee data onto the insights into the main drivers, data scientists can build a predictive model that determines the statistic correlation between both. For example: employees who haven't been promoted in the last 5 years are among those most likely to leave. Or: employees who live more than 50 kilometers from the office generally leave after two years. And so on.
- 4 Identifying actions:** These insights can be used to take proactive measures, like introducing a more flexible remote working policy, keeping closer tabs on employees eligible for promotion, etc.



# About /a.i.

When it comes to improving the employee experience and unburdening HR departments, AI holds a lot of promise. And as the technology becomes more performant and sophisticated, the opportunities and possible applications will undoubtedly continue to grow.

At delaware.ai, however, we firmly believe that **AI for HR is a facilitator, not a substitute** for people. While new technologies can make us smarter, more efficient, and more empowered, they lack a key characteristic that defines only the best places to work: **empathy**.

By enabling AI to take over cumbersome administrative work, provide us with key insights into wellbeing, and giving us access to crucial information in straightforward way, we can increase the time employees spend on meaningful, human interactions and other valuable tasks. In this way, AI for HR can play a key role in **improving the employee experience** in your company - and thus indirectly increase productivity and efficiency.



# Learn how to seize the opportunities of an **AI-powered** workplace.

Chances are you are already benefitting from some form of AI in the workplace. What if you could leverage that power more precisely and use it to advance your unique HR goals? Talk to our team of HR and AI experts.