State of the CHRO Report





iCIMS State of the CHRO Report 2025

Insights from 1,000 CHROs on their top priorities and challenges with additional perspective into how HR is navigating the talent acquisition technology terrain from 500 CIOs.



Table of contents

- 04 Letter from the CEO
- 06 Executive summary
- 08 Key insight 1:

 HR is no longer behind the scenes
- 12 Partner spotlight: Checkr
- 13 Customer spotlight: Konica Minolta
- 14 Key insight 2:

 A disconnect in perception is limiting TA's potential
- 20 Key insight 3:

 HR and IT must move in lockstep to win on talent
- 22 Customer story: BrightSpring Health Services
- 24 Key insight 4:

 Al is both the opportunity and the obstacle
- 28 How to share this data
- 30 Methodology



Letter from the CEO

The role of HR has never been more strategic. As organizations navigate rapid change, CHROs are stepping up to drive transformation — with 88% saying they are leading change within their organizations. This marks a defining moment for the function and its growing role in shaping business success.

The iCIMS 2025 State of the CHRO Report captures this shift. Through insights from 1,000 HR leaders and 500 CIOs, it explores how HR is aligning talent strategy with business strategy, especially as the pace of change accelerates.

Technology plays a critical role in this evolution. From talent acquisition (TA) to workforce planning, CHROs are partnering with CIOs to harness AI and automation, improve outcomes and build more agile, data-driven organizations.

This report offers a clear view into the challenges HR leaders face — and the opportunities they're seizing. I hope it sparks ideas, conversations and action as you shape your organization's future.

Jason Edelboim
Chief Executive Officer, iCIMS

88%

of CHROs agree they are driving strategic change within their organization.

Executive summary

Note: Throughout this report, we use the term "HR leaders" to refer collectively to CHROs, Chief People Officers and other top HR executives.

2025 key insights

HR is the unseen engine accelerating business transformation

Nearly 9 in 10 HR leaders say they're actively driving change, showing that HR is now central to how organizations evolve and grow.

2 A disconnect in perception is limiting TA's potential

There's no clear consensus across the business on what talent acquisition is meant to do. About one-third of CHROs say their company sees TA as a core strategic function (33.8%), another third as a support function (33.2%) and the remaining third as primarily transactional (32.9%).

3 HR and IT must move in lockstep to win on talent

Two-thirds of CIOs (65%) say they're already working closely with HR on TA tech initiatives — a critical move, as 85% of HR leaders say TA tech is now a bigger priority than ever before.

Al is both the opportunity and the obstacle

Al adoption is a top priority for HR leaders, but it's also a top concern. TA teams are expected to move faster and smarter, but doing so requires the right tools, talent and alignment with IT to make it work.





Survey snapshot

- 1,000 U.S. CHROs and Chief People Officers with 1,000+ employees worldwide
- 500 U.S. CIOs with 1,000+ employees worldwide
- 1,000 U.S. consumers aged 18+

Top stats

CHROs

- 88% agree they are driving strategic change within their organization
- 85% say the TA tech is more of a priority today than two years ago
- **75% plan to invest** more into TA in 2025 than last year
- 53% spend more time on TA now than two years ago
- 60% are using AI throughout the entire
 TA process

CIOS

- 89% agree that the IT + HR partnership is key to attracting top talent in 2025
- 65% are highly collaborative with
 HR leaders in relation to TA tech initiatives
- 29% believe TA has only a small impact on overall business outcomes
- 76% believe TA needs a best-of-breed solution and should not be embedded in an HCM/HRIS

HR is the unseen engine accelerating business transformation

CHROs are catalysts for strategic change

What's happening: HR leaders are emerging as key drivers of business transformation, applying their deep workforce expertise to shape strategy — not just support it. They're moving beyond traditional boundaries to lead on critical initiatives like workforce planning, upskilling and internal mobility.

With a holistic view of talent and organizational dynamics, HR is uniquely positioned to align people strategies with business goals. From building more diverse and resilient teams to navigating shifting economic conditions, they are helping organizations stay agile and competitive.

What keeps CHROs up at night?

Here are the top 3 challenges this year, according to our survey:



Preparing the workforce for Al



Navigating compliance and regulatory changes



Retaining top performers

Survey spotlight



of CHROs expect to hire more people in 2025 compared to last year



of people said they will look for a new job in 2025 with 24% still on the fence



of CHROs said their 2024 involuntary turnover rate was below 2%





The strategic shift is here

Last year, 90% of HR leaders anticipated a shift in their role toward becoming strategic talent advisors. In 2025, that shift is no longer aspirational — it's reality. Today, 88% say they are actively driving strategic change within their organizations, signaling a definitive evolution in how HR is contributing to core business transformation.

Al reskilling tops the list of challenges

CHROs are facing a new set of priorities, with one issue rising fast: preparing the workforce for Al. Upskilling and reskilling

employees to adapt to new technologies is now the #1 business challenge on HR leaders' minds, surpassing last year's top concern — navigating compliance and regulatory changes. Rounding out the top three: retaining top performers, cited by 20% of HR leaders as a critical challenge for the year ahead.

Employer branding as a competitive advantage

In today's talent market, employer branding is more than a nice-to-have — it's a business



TECH THAT DELIVERS

ADT showcases authentic stories and fills a high-volume pipeline using iCIMS

ADT's talent acquisition strategy starts by ensuring their team has the tools they need to find and engage job seekers.

One of these tools is Video Studio, which gives ADT's team a way to create and share employee videos across their social ad campaigns, recruitment marketing emails, career site and job postings.

Read full story

imperative. The right brand strategy can elevate recruitment efforts, improve retention, and enhance the overall employee experience. According to HR leaders, the most effective employer branding tactics in TA today include:

- Maintaining a consistent and engaging social media presence (30%)
- Showcasing company culture through video content (22%)
- Highlighting career development opportunities (17%)

THE BOTTOM LINE

No longer seen as a cost center, HR is increasingly recognized as a business enabler. But to sustain this momentum, HR leaders need the right tool s—modern technology, integrated data and Alpowered insights — to make faster, smarter decisions that drive results.

"Our install and service technicians don't sit behind a desk. They're out in the field serving our customers. They can record themselves with iCIMS Video Studio from their parked work van while in their uniform. This showcases the reality of their work experience for candidates and helps us tell our team members' stories at scale."

Kayla Branham

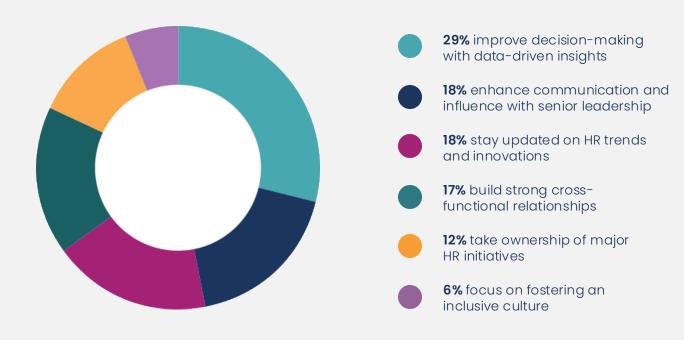
Senior Manager of Recruitment Marketing ADT



Partner spotlight: Checkr

Moves HR leaders can make to become key problem solvers, according to Checkr's <u>2025 CHRO survey report</u>





"In today's complex business environment, HR leaders must harness analytics to guide strategic decisions, identify patterns and measure impact — not just to report, but to influence."



Veronica JacksonSenior Director,
People Partnering & Programs
Checkr

customer spotlight Konica Minolta



When Vicky Ringwood joined Konica Minolta in 2018, the HR function was seen largely as administrative. Since then, she has led a complete transformation of the HR organization into a strategic partner to the business.

Here are three pivotal shifts she made to elevate the function:

REIMAGINING HR AS A STRATEGIC PARTNER

Ringwood began the transformation with a company-wide listening tour to understand employee and leader needs, then built a diverse HR leadership team committed to continuous improvement. Under her leadership, the organization stood up a new, agile HR model with Centers of Expertise spanning HR operations, talent, total rewards, employee services, HR tech and a centralized TA function. Embracing technology helped streamline workflows and ensure alignment with business goals.

BUILDING A SCALABLE, HIGH-TOUCH TA MODEL

She set a vision for the company's transition from a decentralized model to a blended recruiting model, led by Konica Minolta's head of TA and carried out by an in-house team, RPO, and select search firms. This model enables efficient scaling while delivering a consistent, high-quality experience for candidates and hiring managers. A partnership with iCIMS has further expanded reach, accelerated hiring, and improved compliance.

EMBEDDING CO-CREATION INTO HR STRATEGY

To drive alignment and advocacy,
Ringwood embedded stakeholder feedback
into every stage of program design. Initiatives
are piloted in smaller groups to test, refine,
and build credibility before scaling more
broadly – fostering shared ownership and
turning users into champions.

"Reimagining HR wasn't just about structural change — it was about a cultural shift. The real transformation started with listening."

Vicky Ringwood

Chief Human Resources Officer, Konica Minolta



1NSIGHT 02

A disconnect in perception is limiting TA's potential

Talent acquisition's identity crisis

What's happening: TA's contribution to business success remains undervalued. One-third of HR leaders say their organization views it as a core strategic function (33.8%), another third as a support function (33.2%), and the rest as a transactional process (32.9%). The lack of alignment across the business — not within HR — is holding TA back from reaching its full impact.

This perception gap is especially evident in the C-suite. While many HR leaders see TA as a catalyst for transformation, CIOs aren't fully convinced. Their support is often tempered by skepticism around the immediate, measurable impact of HR initiatives like upskilling and engagement — especially when compared to investments in tech or sales. Without buy-in from critical partners like the CIO, HR leaders face an uphill battle to secure resources and drive lasting change.

A disconnect at the top

CIOs remain unconvinced about TA's strategic value. Fewer than a third (27%) believe talent acquisition has a significant impact on business outcomes. A larger share (43%) sees only a moderate impact, while 29% consider it to have minimal influence. This gap in perception poses a challenge as HR leaders seek cross-functional support for initiatives like upskilling, engagement and tech adoption.

HR is doubling down on TA

Despite the perception gap, CHROs are leaning in. Three-quarters (75%) plan to increase their TA budgets in 2025, and over half (53%) are spending more time on talent acquisition than they were two years ago — a clear signal that HR sees TA as critical to driving future business growth.

What's leading the TA agenda?

When asked about their top priorities for TA in the year ahead, HR leaders were nearly evenly split. Leading the list: Integrating Al into hiring processes (22%), increasing the diversity of talent pipelines (21%) and improving TA analytics and reporting (20%). The spread reveals just how multifaceted and quickly evolving the TA function has become.

Survey spotlight

53% of CHROs

spend more time on TA now than two years ago.

75% of CHROs

plan to invest more into TA in 2025 than 2024

76% of CIOs

believe TA needs a best-of-breed solution and should not be embedded in an HCM/HRIS

29% of CIOs

believe TA has only a small impact on business outcomes



Redefining TA success

What does success look like in talent acquisition? For HR leaders, three metrics stand out: Quality of hire (34%), candidate and recruiter experience (30%) and time to hire (29%). These indicators point to a growing emphasis on both outcomes and experience, as organizations compete for top talent in a changing labor market.

THE BOTTOM LINE

This disconnect may stem from the challenge of measuring short-term ROI in people-centric strategies compared to functions like technology or sales. But without strong executive alignment, HR leaders risk facing roadblocks when advocating for the tools and resources they need to lead transformation at scale. Until there's a shared definition of TA's value, its potential remains untapped.



TECH THAT DELIVERS:
Over half (51%) of CHROs believe
TA will become increasingly
data-driven and focused on the
candidate experience.

iCIMS Engage lets you meet candidates where they are with multichannel campaigns across landing pages, email and SMS.
Streamline data analysis and continuously improve your recruitment marketing campaigns with real-time performance metrics.

Check it out

"There's often a gap between how HR leaders value talent acquisition and how that value is perceived across the business. The question, and opportunity, is: What are we going to do about it?

In my experience, it starts with stronger business acumen — using data not just to report activity, but to show impact beyond TA and HR KPIs, focusing instead on outcomes that support business goals.

Here's how we get there: Align our KPIs with business outcomes; partner more closely with HRBPs and business leaders; and use technology to drive meaningful improvements. Most importantly, we must balance data with expertise in decision making.

These are the new foundations of a high-impact TA function — and there's no better time to build them."

Kyle LagunasFounder & Principal Analyst,
Kyle & Co



"If we want the business to see talent acquisition as a true strategic partner, we have to show up with results — not just activity. That means tying our work directly to business outcomes like growth, efficiency and innovation.

These four strategies help elevate the conversation and prove the impact we're making across the organization."



Laura Coccaro, Chief People Officer, iCIMS

4

ways to showcase your TA organization's strategic impact



Have a defined baseline that supports strategic business priorities: Start by establishing clear goals tied to workforce growth, skill needs or efficiency so your TA tech efforts can be measured against what matters most to the business.



and other key exec stakeholders and tie to ROI: Craft a simple, compelling message — like "We filled 30% more roles, 20% faster" — that highlights cost savings, impact and momentum in terms executives care about.

Build a headline for your CEO



Connect TA metrics to company performance:

Show how hiring speed, quality and candidate experience directly influence outcomes like revenue growth, customer satisfaction or time-to-productivity.



Include outcomes driven by

Al usage: Highlight how
Al-enabled tools improved
recruiter productivity, reduced
bias or helped scale hiring
efforts to meet business
demand more effectively.

INSIGHT

HR and IT must move in lockstep to win on talent

Why HR + IT is the power couple of 2025

What's changed: Recruitment alone won't win the race for talent. Today's top-performing organizations are those where CHROs and CIOs work hand-in-hand, aligning on a shared vision for hiring success. Without that connection, companies risk pouring resources into fragmented tools and workflows that create more problems than they solve.

What's top of mind: Nearly 9 in 10 CIOs say that a tight partnership between HR and IT is now essential to attracting top talent. It's not just about systems — it's about strategy. Collaboration at the leadership level is the secret sauce for faster hiring, better candidate experiences and long-term workforce wins.

Who's driving TA tech decisions?

According to CHROs, tech decision-makers include the full C-suite: 39%

CFOs

36% CIOS

32% **CFOs**

31% **CTOs**







TA tech: The new MVP of hiring

Why it matters: Talent acquisition tech is no longer a nice-to-have — it's a business priority. Eighty-five percent of HR leaders say their team's TA tech is more critical today than it was just two years ago. The payoff? Increased recruiter efficiency (30%), better scalability to meet demand (30%) and improved compliance and security (29%).

What's at stake: CHROs believe deeper investments in TA tech will unlock major gains — including faster, more efficient hiring (37%), quicker candidate matching (36%) and reduced bias in decision-making (36%).

Where it gets sticky: Sixty-five percent of CIOs say they're working closely with HR on TA tech initiatives. But alignment isn't always seamless. CIOs point to strategic disconnects (51%), limited budgets and resources (48%) and a lack of shared understanding around tech capabilities (48%) — plus some resistance to change from HR (42%).

Top priorities: For CIOs, the TA tech investment playbook centers on three big goals: ensuring data security and compliance (46%), adding AI and automation (42%) and improving the experience for candidates, recruiters and hiring teams alike (42%).

85%

of HR leaders said the TA tech their team uses is more of a priority today than just two years ago

Who's steering the ship? Opinions vary.

Thirty-two percent of CIOs believe IT should lead HR tech decisions — with HR support.

Another 26% say HR should drive, with input from IT. Meanwhile, 22% think IT should own it outright, and 20% say HR should go it alone.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Winning the talent race in 2025 isn't just about having the right tools — it's about having the right partnerships. When HR and IT align on talent acquisition strategy and tech, organizations see faster hiring, stronger compliance and a better candidate experience. But without that collaboration, even the best tools fall short. Strategic alignment between CHROs and CIOs isn't just nice to have — it's mission-critical.

3 ways to build a strong HR and IT partnership

"The IT organization is our most critical partner in talent acquisition — we rely on them to integrate the tech stack that powers every part of our recruitment — from applicant tracking and telecom to collaboration tools and recruitment marketing."



Maria Schaefer

VP of Enterprise Talent Operations,
BrightSpring Health Services

Keep communication flowing

Beyond regular check-ins—like weekly project syncs, monthly backlog reviews and biweekly meetings with tech vendors—stay connected through informal channels. Quick texts, emails, phone calls and hallway conversations with IT partners, all the way up to the VP level, help keep the momentum going.

Make collaboration the default

From shaping the business case to contract negotiations, work side-by-side with IT through every step of the procurement process. Co-owning product demos and implementation ensures both teams are invested in the outcome.

Align on strategy early and often

Mutual understanding of each other's goals, capacity and operations sets the stage for smarter decision-making. When HR and IT are aligned from the start, it's easier to identify shared priorities and accelerate tech-driven hiring solutions.





The Hackett Group®

"As HR leadership continues their elevation to strategic advisor for business success, tight coordination with the rest of the C-suite is critical. The incredible impact of technology on talent acquisition outcomes makes partnership with IT leadership a strategic imperative if businesses want to win in the war for talent."

Matthew Merker Senior Research Director, The Hackett Group



Al is both the opportunity and the obstacle

HR can't win the talent race without Al

What's happening: The race for skilled talent is only getting tougher — and HR leaders are turning to AI to stay ahead. By using AI to make smarter decisions, streamline the candidate experience and build agile, future-ready teams, they're positioning HR as a true driver of business value.

Why it matters: As HR steps further into a strategic role, its ability to harness AI and emerging tech will directly impact business growth and workforce planning. But success hinges on tight alignment with CIOs and IT — this transformation can't happen without tech at the table.

Survey spotlight



61% of CIOs

actively
monitor
TA software
performance
and make user
data-driven
adjustments
to ensure ROI.

Still going strong:

Al investment remains a top priority for HR leaders — 22% say it continues to be their number one focus in talent acquisition, just as it was <u>last year</u>.

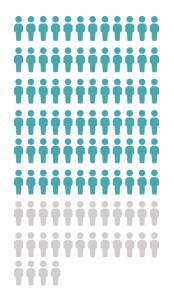
Al in action: Six in 10 HR leaders say they're using Al across the entire TA process. Top benefits include improved recruiter efficiency (30%), better scalability (30%), stronger compliance and security (29%) and enhanced DEI outcomes (29%).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Al isn't just a future trend — it's already reshaping how HR teams hire, scale and compete. To drive real impact, HR leaders must move beyond experimentation and make Al a core part of their talent strategy, in full partnership with IT.

Top 3 ways CIOs see AI changing the hiring process:

- Improving job matching
- Automating repeatable workflows
- Leveraging bots and agents to help TA teams scale and manage increasing candidate volumes



72% of CIOs plan to implement agentic Al in the next 1-3 years.



13% of CIOs plan to implement agentic Al in less than 12 months. "There's no doubt that AI is going to transform talent acquisition. It will reshape how TA functions operate, how they engage with candidates and hiring managers and how success is measured. AI gives TA a chance to become a more strategic, influential voice within the organization — and that's exciting.

But to fully capitalize on this shift, TA leaders need to step into a more influential role, align their goals more closely with business outcomes and make sure they have a seat at the table when AI strategy is on the agenda.

They must lead the charge on AI — not simply react to it.

That's a big mindset shift, and one that's long overdue."



Jo-Ann Feely,
Chief Innovation Officer, AMS

A|M|S

AMS is a global talent solutions business that partners with organizations to build, reshape, and optimize their workforce through outsourced talent acquisition, workforce consulting, and technology advisory services.

"In our research with top TA and HR teams, the best ones see AI as a way to serve more candidates, deliver more value and reestablish TA as a strategic force.

Strategic teams are nearly twice as likely to say AI saves recruiters five-plus hours a week. Incredible.

It's been said that AI will 'let humans do the more strategic work,' but as a researcher and former recruiter, I was a bit skeptical. Then we discovered what's really true.

That time savings is being reinvested in C-level stakeholder relationships, hiring manager partnerships and proving TA's value to the business.

That's the real win and where the real value of AI comes into play."



Ben Eubanks, Chief Research Officer, Lighthouse Research & Advisory





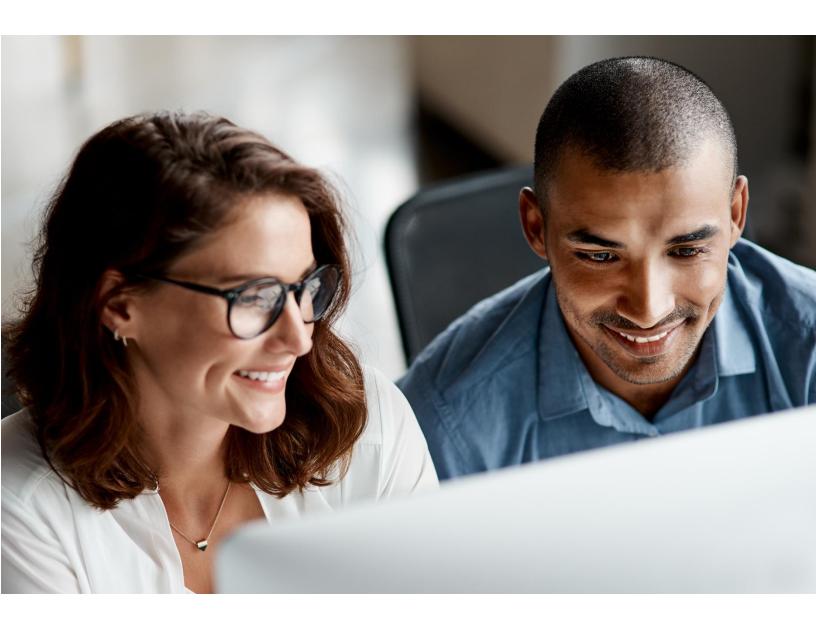
TECH THAT DELIVERS:

60% of CHROs are using AI throughout the entire TA process.

From job description optimization and role matching to candidate ranking and skills recommendations, iCIMS' award-winning AI is embedded throughout the hiring journey.

Check it out

How to share this data



Whether you lead a business, a function or a team, this report is designed to help you understand the evolving role of HR — and how cross-functional collaboration can unlock better business outcomes. Here's how to make the most of it based on your role:

For the CEO

Use this report to understand how your CHRO is driving growth, not just supporting it. Focus on where HR is delivering measurable business impact — from talent strategy to tech adoption — and where executive support can help remove barriers.

For the CIO

Think of this as a blueprint for better partnership. The report highlights where IT and HR alignment is strongest — and where it breaks down. Use it to spark conversations around shared priorities, smarter tech investments and driving ROI from AI and automation.

For the CHRO

This is your playbook for leading change. Use the insights to benchmark your strategic progress, advocate for resources and tighten alignment with IT and executive leadership. It's also a guide for how to empower your TA teams to work smarter, not harder.

For the TA leader

This report shows how tech is transforming talent acquisition — and where your team fits into the bigger business picture. Use it to push for the tools, skills and partnerships you need to compete for top talent in a fast-moving market.

For the recruiter

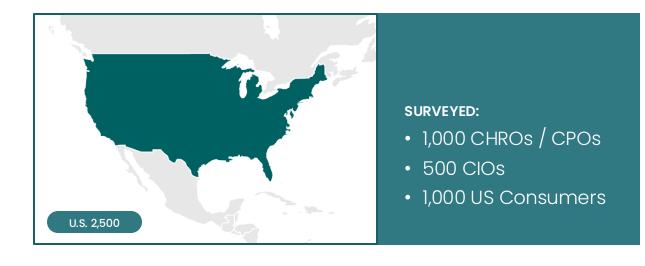
Think of this as a window into the future of your role. Use it to better understand the direction your organization is headed, how AI can support your daily work, and why your voice matters when tech, tools and strategy are being shaped.

Methodology

The iCIMS CHRO survey was conducted by Censuswide among 1,000 Chief Human Resource Officers (CHROs) and Chief People Officers (CPOs) in the U.S with 1,000+ employees worldwide between February 27 and March 3, 2025.

The iCIMS CHRO survey was conducted by Censuswide among 500 Chief Information Officers (CIOs) in the U.S with 1,000+ employees worldwide between February 27 and March 3, 2025.

iCIMS also conducted an online survey with Dynata on March 27, 2025, of 1,000 U.S. consumers, aged 18+.



Workforce data is vital to driving business forward.



iCIMS Insights Workforce Reports

monitor monthly labor market activity based on hundreds of millions of applicants and millions of users.

Organizations can use this data as a measuring stick to anticipate and adapt to ever-changing workforce dynamics.

See the full archive

iCIMS Insights data derived from:



3.3M+
global platform users



630M+ candidate profiles



223M+ applications in 2024



5.4M+ hires in 2024



Data Breakthrough Awards:

2025 Business Intelligence Solution Provider of the Year