

## The new organization: Different by design

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# This year's 10 trends

This fourth annual survey of more than 7,000 HR and business leaders globally ranks 10 key trends and companies' readiness to respond to them. The report also includes both country and industry analyses, as well as an interactive dashboard and mobile app to explore the survey results.

Four powerful forces are driving change for both HR functions and the organizations they serve, creating talent challenges—as well as potential solutions—radically different from those faced by previous generations of leaders.



## **Organizational design: The rise of teams**

Hierarchical organizational models aren't just being turned upside down — they're being deconstructed from the inside out. Businesses are reinventing themselves to operate as networks of teams to keep pace with the challenges of a fluid, unpredictable world.



## **Design thinking: Crafting the employee experience**

Design thinking takes aim at the heart of unnecessary workplace complexity by putting the employee experience first — helping to improve productivity by designing solutions that are at once compelling, enjoyable, and simple.



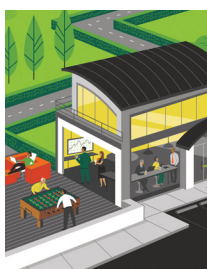
## **Leadership awakened: Generations, teams, science**

Leaders of all ages, genders, and cultures are now poised to take the reins at organizations around the world. How ready will these future business leaders be to take charge in an increasingly complex global marketplace?



## **HR: Growing momentum toward a new mandate**

Good news: This year's Global Human Capital Trends survey shows an improvement in the HR organization's skills, business alignment, and ability to innovate. But as companies change the way they are organized, they must embrace the changing role of HR as well.



## **Shape culture: Drive strategy**

The impact of culture on business is hard to overstate: 82 percent of respondents to the 2016 Global Human Capital Trends survey believe that culture is a potential competitive advantage. Today, new tools can help leaders measure and manage culture towards alignment with business goals.



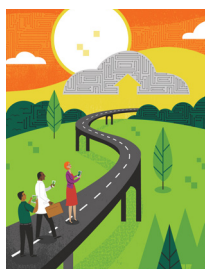
## **People analytics: Gaining speed**

The use of analytics in HR is growing, with organizations aggressively building people analytics teams, buying analytics offerings, and developing analytics solutions. HR now has the chance to demonstrate ROI on its analytics efforts, helping to make the case for further investment.



## **Engagement: Always on**

Employee engagement and retention today means understanding an empowered workforce's desire for flexibility, creativity, and purpose. Under the evolving social contract between employer and employee, workers become "volunteers" to be reengaged and re-recruited each day.



## **Digital HR: Revolution, not evolution**

A new world for HR technology and design teams is on the horizon. Mobile and other technologies could allow HR leaders to revolutionize the employee experience through new digital platforms, apps, and ways of delivering HR services.



## **Learning: Employees take charge**

Corporate learning departments are changing from education providers to content curators and experience facilitators, developing innovative platforms that turn employee learning and development into a self-driven pursuit.



## **The gig economy: Distraction or disruption?**

How can a business manage talent effectively when many, or even most, of its people are not actually its employees? Networks of people who work without any formal employment agreement — as well as the growing use of machines as talent — are reshaping the talent management equation.

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# Organizational design

## The rise of teams

Fast-moving global markets and digital disruption have forced companies to innovate rapidly, adapt their products and services, and stay closer than ever to local customers. This has prompted a resurgence of interest in business organization. Our findings in this area are startling: 92 percent of companies believe that redesigning the organization is very important or important, making it No. 1 in ranked importance among this year's respondents. Companies are decentralizing authority, moving toward product- and customer-centric organizations, and forming dynamic networks of highly empowered teams that communicate and coordinate activities in unique and powerful ways.

- Many companies have already moved away from functional structures: Only 38 percent of all companies and 24 percent of large companies (>50,000 employees) are functionally organized today.
- The growth of the Millennial demographic, the diversity of global teams, and the need to innovate and work more closely with customers are driving a new organizational flexibility among high-performing companies. They are operating as a network of teams alongside traditional structures, with people moving from team to team rather than remaining in static formal configurations.
- Over 80 percent of respondents to this year's global survey report that they are either currently restructuring their organization or have recently completed the process. Only 7 percent say they have no plans to restructure.

**I**N his book *Team of Teams*, General Stanley McChrystal describes how the US military's hierarchical command and control structure hindered operational success during the early stages of the Iraq war.<sup>1</sup> After watching Al-Qaeda disrupt his army and win battles, McChrystal's solution was dramatic: Decentralize authority to highly trained and empowered teams and develop a real-time information and operations group to centralize information and provide all teams with real-time, accurate data about war activities everywhere.

McChrystal did not change the formal structure of the military. Rather, he created a new structure that allowed for dynamism and flexibility within the overall organizational structure. This new structure enabled officers to quickly move from their administrative positions to mission-oriented projects for a set purpose, knowing that they would once again have a home to return to within the larger organizational structure after the mission was completed.

This new mode of organization—a “network of teams” with a high degree of

empowerment, strong communication, and rapid information flow—is now sweeping businesses and governments around the world. It is built on several fundamental principles:

- Move people into customer-, product-, or market- and mission-focused teams, led by team leaders who are experts in their domain (not “professional managers”).
- Empower teams to set their own goals and make their own decisions within the context of an overarching strategy or business plan, reversing the traditional structure of goal and performance management.
- Replace silos with an information and operations center to share integrated information and identify connections between team activities and desired results.
- Organize these teams around mission, product, market, or integrated customer needs rather than business function. (For instance, a health care company might have an “Orthopedic and Rheumatology Institute” to bring together orthopedic surgeons, rheumatologists, and counselors, rather than have them siloed in functional groups.)<sup>2</sup>
- Teach and encourage people to work across teams, using techniques like “liaison officers” (the US military), “hackathons,” open office spaces that promote collaboration (Apple Inc. and Cleveland Clinic), and job rotation to give teams a common understanding of each other.<sup>3</sup>
- Enable people to move from team to team as needed—similar to the way experts come together on Hollywood movie sets or in global consulting firms—and then

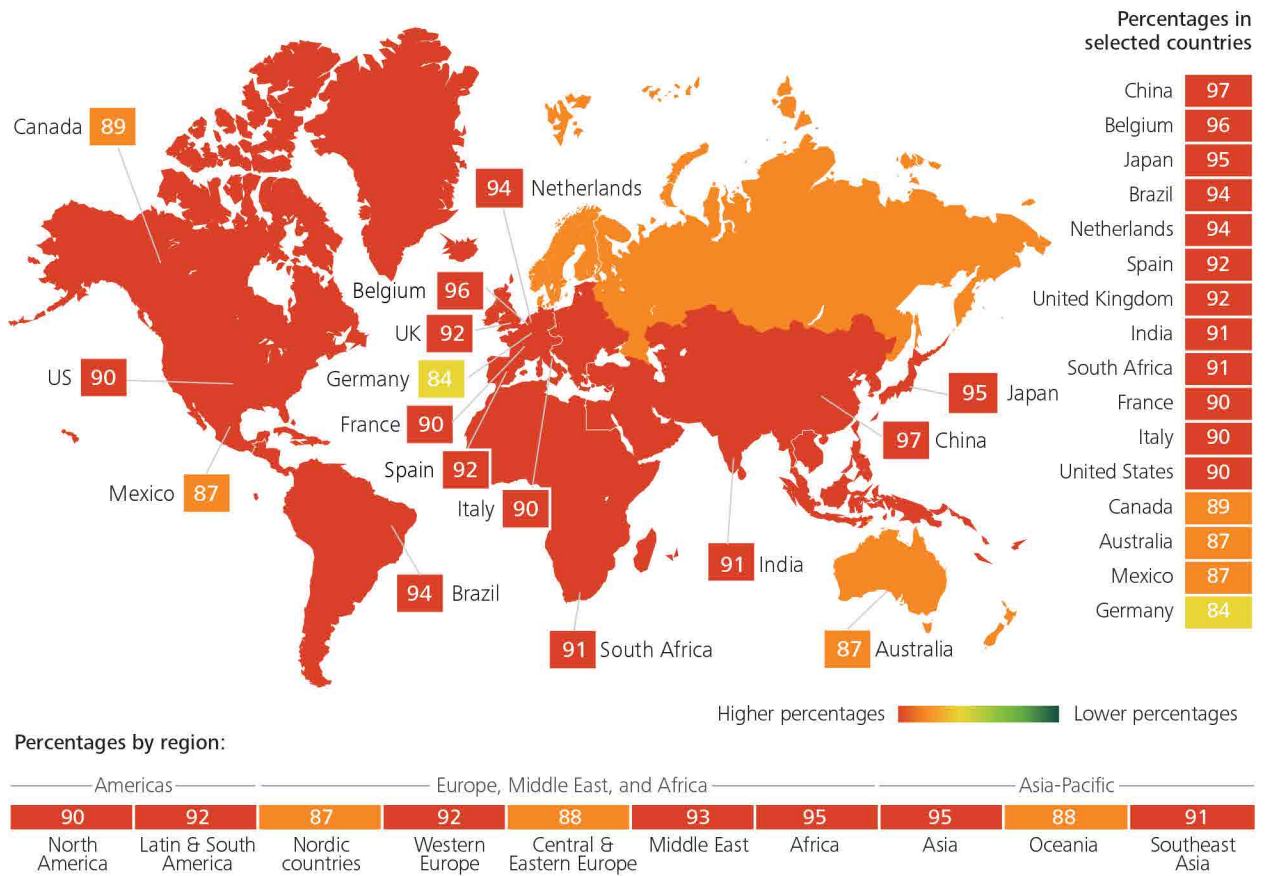
ensure that people have a home to return to once a team-based project is done. This changes the concept of a “job description” to that of a “mission specialist” or “technical specialist.”

- Shift senior leaders into roles focused on planning, strategy, vision, culture, and cross-team communication.

Examples of this new structure are appearing throughout business and government, in each case dramatically changing the effectiveness of the organization. The Cleveland

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Clinic reorganized its entire hospital network around patient medical problems, moving beyond traditional functional medical practices—which separated surgeons and medical specialists—to combine personnel into patient-centric teams, dramatically improving patient outcomes. Hospitals and health care organizations around the world are similarly reorganizing around patient needs and away from traditional medical specialties.<sup>4</sup> 3M, Nestlé, and other innovation- and service-centric companies are decentralized and use shared service centers and information centers to help teams maintain productivity and alignment with overall business strategy.<sup>5</sup> And companies like GE and IBM now post leaders in regional centers of excellence, dispensing

**Figure 1. Organizational design: Percentage of respondents rating this trend “important” or “very important”**

Graphic: Deloitte University Press | DUPress.com

with the notion that “leaders” only operate out of corporate headquarters.<sup>6</sup>

This new type of organization, which we call a “network of teams,” moves beyond the concepts of the unwieldy 1960s-era matrix organization. Integral to an effective network of teams is to define the mission of each team clearly, delegate responsibility, assign strong team leadership, and build a shared culture and set of information and communication tools that help teams align with each other.

Why is this trend so prominent now, with 92 percent of our survey respondents rating redesigning the organization very important or important? (See figure 1 for our survey respondents’ ratings of organizational design’s importance across global regions and selected countries.) Two major factors are driving change. First, the pressure to get products to market quickly, combined with a generally greater sense of empowerment among the

workforce, is making small teams a more natural and productive way to work. Small teams can deliver results faster, engage people better, and stay closer to their mission.

Second, the digital revolution helps teams stay aligned. Today, teams can easily use web or mobile apps to share goals, keep up to date on customer interactions, communicate product quality or brand issues, and build a common culture. Rather than having to send messages up and down the corporate pyramid, people can access information immediately, with companies using roles like “liaison officers” to make sure teams know what other teams are doing.

Academic research supports this strategy. Sociologist Robert Dunbar proved that the optimum number of people any individual can know well and communicate with is around 150, a phenomenon known as the Dunbar Effect.<sup>7</sup> Smaller organizational units tap into

the human strengths of communication: People simply know each other better. As Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, puts it, “If I see more than two pizzas for lunch, the team is too big.”<sup>8</sup>

To prevent silos from impeding effectiveness and to improve collective thinking, digital information centers help teams share common knowledge and see the relationships between elements. In the Iraq war, McChrystal set up an information center to monitor seemingly random attacks by Al-Qaeda so he could help teams see the patterns. Each team had a “liaison officer” responsible for communicating with other teams when information was needed quickly.

The same principle applies in business. At Nestlé, a digital information center brings

One major health product and pharmaceutical company is completely reorganizing its sales force to sell integrated solutions to meet the needs of its health care clients’ outcome-based organizations.<sup>11</sup> A major IT provider that sells computers and servers is going through the same transition to meet the integrated needs of IT departments that are also now organized by team rather than technology.<sup>12</sup>

Team-based operating practices are part of a larger trend toward new models of management. Hierarchically structured organizations were designed around traditional management thinking in which leaders “tell people what to do, set goals, and create standards.”<sup>13</sup> In contrast, in many new management models, goals are set at the bottom, leaders are evaluated by performance and not span of control, and performance management occurs continuously rather than once per year.<sup>14</sup> (More than two-thirds of the companies polled in our survey this year are redesigning their performance management practices.)

Middle management is continuing to thin out. Research shows that US companies today have an average span of control—the number of people reporting to a supervisor—of 9.7, rising as high as 11.4 at large companies.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the massive changes underway, in this new world, formal and flexible structures will continue to coexist. Perhaps ironically, it still takes formal structure to ensure that a structure of teams works effectively. Putting this insight into practice, the ability to quickly build, deploy, disband, and reform teams is a critical skill for today’s organizations.

Functional organizations, then, are not going away, but they are being supplemented by “service centers” and “centers of excellence” to provide scale and consolidate administrative tasks. To enable this kind of operating model, functions like IT, HR, and finance must all be reorganized to support such teams locally.

## Smaller organizational units tap into the human strengths of communication: People simply know each other better.

together social network, TV, and news information about all of Nestlé’s food brands around the world to help product businesses see where a brand is succeeding or failing to gain traction. Corporate headquarters in Switzerland serves as a clearinghouse and strategic planning center, distributing information everywhere and empowering the businesses to grow.<sup>9</sup>

A team-based organization structure can itself enable rapid business disruption. For example, in each new city into which it expands, Uber relies on a three-pronged leadership model consisting of a city general manager, a community manager, and a driver operations manager. The rest of the organization is built out based on the unique needs of the city.<sup>10</sup>

As organizations shift to this new model, so must vendors and consultants who serve them.



**Figure 2. Two types of managers in a network of teams**

Administrative or talent manager	Mission or project manager
Focuses on the individual's career and development goals	Focuses on the project and mission objectives
Measures an individual's achievement against individual goals, capabilities, and potential	Measures an individual against contribution to mission, team, project, and organizational results
Listens to individuals' long-term career goals and helps them reach those goals	Listens to individuals' desires for that mission or project and helps align them with the project or mission needs
Gives the individual coaching and development toward their career capabilities, career goals, and specialization objectives	Gives the individual coaching and development toward their role in the team and the project, focusing on how they can contribute more and how they can work better with the team
Makes sure the individual has "rights of return" to another organization and takes care of "return trip" after each project completes	Focuses on getting the right people into the project or mission, regardless of their individual career journeys at the moment
Tracks and monitors the individual's career progression and patterns of success or weakness	Tracks and monitors individuals' contribution to the project or team and how they can improve their value to that team

What does the "new organization" look like in practice? We envision a management model that draws clear distinctions between two necessary roles and types of management: the administrative or talent manager (reflecting the traditional, formal structure) and the mission or project manager (representing the new, team-based structure) (see figure 2).

Managing two different types of functions in an organization can be challenging, but a few principles illustrate the shift in mind-set necessary to make this work. Companies should view employees fundamentally as resources of the organization rather than as resources of the manager. This is why the military developed the parallel ideas of administrative control and operational control. Administrative control refers to the employee's home structure and to how an employee is developed and supported, the home to which an employee returns when a team-based project is finished. Operational control, by contrast, refers to the process of ensuring that the mission to which an employee is assigned is accomplished successfully. By its nature, it

includes performance management for the employee during that period.

Companies' definitions of the line between administrative and operational control will vary, but the fundamental concept will not. In every organization, an important key to the success of this model is that each employee has a "home" to which he or she can return. Fear that one will not have such a home can weaken strong teaming and lead to perverse incentives for employees—an obstacle to success in a network of teams.

For HR, the implications of such changes to organizational design can be profound. Job titles and descriptions, to cite an example, are becoming more flexible and broad to account for an individual's potential to be deployed to a variety of teams. HR organizations will need to adapt to address the concept of administrative and operational control as companies switch from highly functional and hierarchical models to project-based organizations in which employees are constantly embedded in teams and ecosystems that form teams.

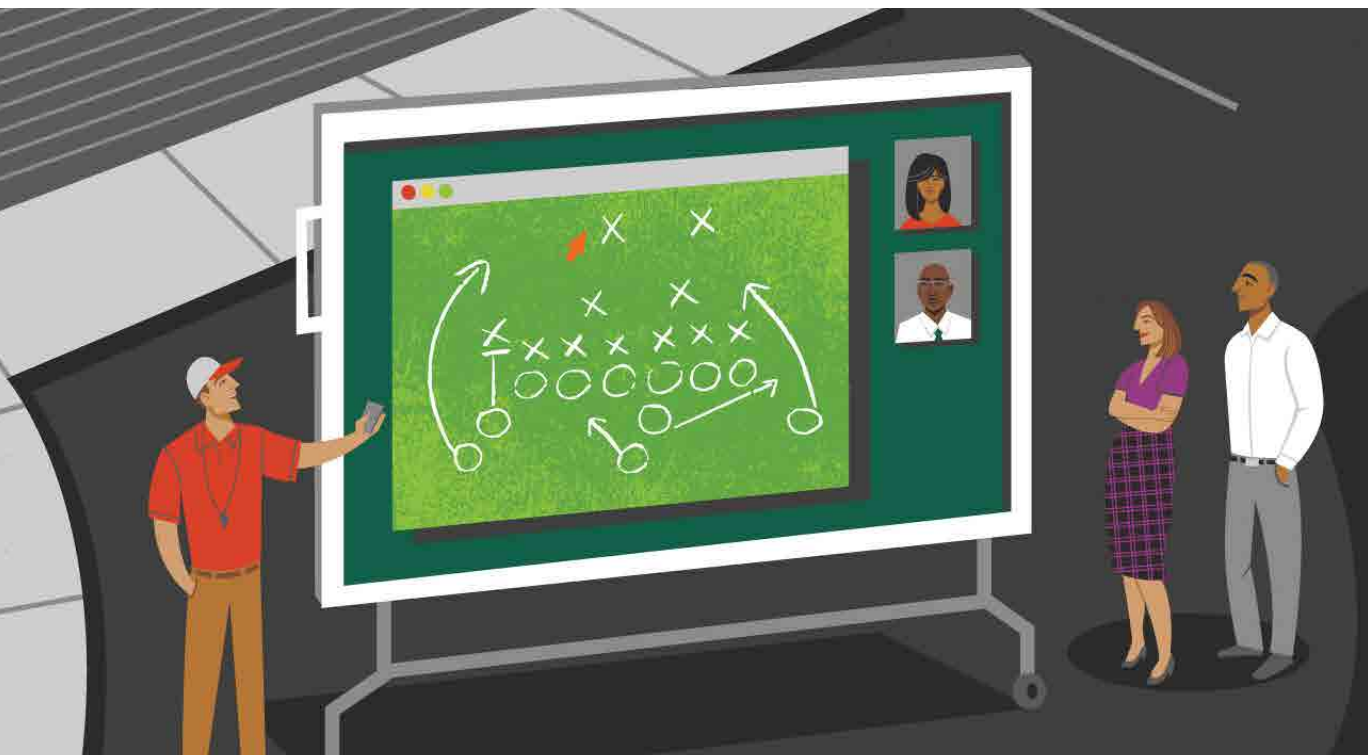
Performance management in an organization designed around empowered teams also

looks significantly different. Traditionally, managers rate employees with little input from others, but this is not a sufficient test of performance under a team-centric approach. The critical question now, with all team members invited to weigh in, is: “Would we want this person on our team again?” It is not, “Did you make your manager happy?” In such an environment, engagement can improve as well, because employees generally feel more connected to their “team” than their “organization.”<sup>16</sup>

### Lessons from the front lines

Cisco, one of the world’s most successful and enduring technology companies, sees a team-based organizational model as fundamental to its strategy. According to John Chambers, executive chairman and former CEO, speed and time to market are central to the company’s success: “We compete against market transitions, not competitors. Product transitions used to take five to seven years; now they take one to two.”<sup>17</sup>

To address this continued disruption and the highly competitive nature of its business, Cisco has set up a new talent organization, Leadership and Team Intelligence, focused entirely on leadership and team development, team leader selection, performance management, and intelligence-gathering for Cisco teams and their leaders around the world. Ashley Goodall, the senior vice president who runs this group, is leading a wide-ranging redesign of Cisco’s talent practices and technologies to focus on the optimization of team performance, team leaders, succession management, and talent mobility between teams. He plans to use real-time performance conversations, ongoing pulse surveys, and text analytics to monitor and benchmark team performance. The intent is to build information about how the best teams work together and how they drive results, and then embed these insights into the company with a direct focus on employee engagement, strengths, and empowerment.<sup>18</sup>



## Where companies can start

- **Revisit your organization's design:** Look at ways to bring functional experts into “mission-driven” teams focused on customers, markets, or products.
- **Set up a real-time information network:** A successful network brings together disparate information on customers or products to give team members integrated data on performance in real time. Look at how people seek and find information today using [design thinking](#).
- **Eliminate organizational layers:** Departments whose mandate is to fix or service other parts of the organization should be converted to shared-service groups. Question the role and the need for middle managers.
- **Rethink your rewards and goals:** Optimize performance management around “team performance” and “team leadership” rather than focusing solely on individual performance and designating individuals as leaders simply by virtue of their title or role. Reward people for project results, collaboration, and helping others.
- **Adopt new team-based tools:** Put in place tools and measurement systems that encourage people to move between teams, and share information and collaborate with other teams. Consider performing an organizational network analysis.
- **Let teams set their own goals:** Teams should be held accountable for results—but let them decide how to perform and socialize and communicate these goals among the team.
- **Communicate shared vision and values from top leaders:** Encourage senior leaders to focus on strategy, vision, and direction, and teach them how to empower teams to deliver results.

### BOTTOM LINE

The days of the top-down hierarchical organization are slowly coming to an end, but changing the organization chart is only a small part of the transition to a network of teams. The larger, more important, and more urgent part is to change how an organization actually works. Now, more than ever, is the time to challenge traditional organizational structures, empower teams, hold people accountable, and focus on building a culture of shared information, shared vision, and shared direction.



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# Authors



**Tiffany McDowell, Deloitte Consulting LLP** | [tmcowell@deloitte.com](mailto:tmcowell@deloitte.com)

Tiffany McDowell is a principal in Deloitte Consulting LLP's Human Capital practice and serves as the national leader for the Organization Strategies practice. She has 16 years of business and consulting experience, delivering operating model, organizational design, talent strategies, decision optimization, and change management solutions. Her focus is on helping executives in health care effectively lead their organizations through transformation. McDowell holds an MBA and a doctorate in industrial/organizational psychology.



**Dimple Agarwal, Deloitte MCS Limited** | [dagarwal@deloitte.com.uk](mailto:dagarwal@deloitte.com.uk)

Dimple Agarwal is the global leader of Organizational Transformation and Talent for the Human Capital practice. She consults at the C-suite level on operating model and organizational design, HR and talent strategies, leadership strategies and development, merger integration, and major transformation programs. Her 20-plus years of consulting experience includes working in the United Kingdom, Netherlands, France, Switzerland, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, and the UAE.



**Don Miller, Deloitte Consulting LLP** | [domiller@deloitte.com](mailto:domiller@deloitte.com)

Don Miller has more than 15 years of industry and consulting experience. In his current role, he serves on the global leadership team of our Organization Strategies practice, which focuses on helping clients improve performance by building organization structures to execute new capabilities through their people and on aligning a business's capabilities, metrics, processes, and culture with its structure, leadership, roles, and talent. Miller also helps clients solve some of their top business challenges by creating tailored workforce transition, strategic change management, talent, and leadership development solutions.



**Tsutomu Okamoto, Deloitte Tohmatsu Consulting LLC** | [tsokamoto@tohatsu.jp](mailto:tsokamoto@tohatsu.jp)

Tsutomu Okamoto has almost 20 years of consulting experience with Deloitte Tohmatsu Consulting Human Capital. He leads the Talent Management and Workforce Planning and Analytics practice in Japan and has delivered HR consulting services in areas including HR management and strategy planning, headcount/labor cost management, talent management, organization design, restructuring, and simplification.



**Trevor Page, Deloitte Africa** | [trepag@deloitte.co.za](mailto:trepag@deloitte.co.za)

Trevor Page is the global leader of Organization Design for the Human Capital practice and is leading its organization design methodology and global capability development. As a partner in Deloitte's Human Capital consulting practice in Africa, Page focuses on business transformation in large companies and on improving the effectiveness at people at work. He has directed projects related to HR strategy, process, and technology; strategic organizational change; and large-scale organizational redesign.

## Contributors

Andrea Derler, Ben Dollar, Amir Rahnema, and Yves Van Durme

# Global Human Capital leaders

**Brett Walsh**

Global Human Capital leader  
Deloitte MCS Limited  
[bcwalsh@deloitte.co.uk](mailto:bcwalsh@deloitte.co.uk)

**Dimple Agarwal**

Global Organization Transformation &  
Talent leader  
Deloitte MCS Limited  
[dagarwal@deloitte.co.uk](mailto:dagarwal@deloitte.co.uk)

**Michael Stephan**

Global HR Transformation leader  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
[mstephan@deloitte.com](mailto:mstephan@deloitte.com)

**David Foley**

Global Actuarial, Rewards, and Analytics  
leader  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
[dfoley@deloitte.com](mailto:dfoley@deloitte.com)

**Nichola Holt**

Global Employment Services leader  
Deloitte Tax LLP  
[nicholt@deloitte.com](mailto:nicholt@deloitte.com)

**Jeff Schwartz**

Global Human Capital leader, Marketing,  
Eminence, and Brand  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
[jeffschwartz@deloitte.com](mailto:jeffschwartz@deloitte.com)

# Human Capital country leaders

## Americas

**Americas & Chile**

**Jaime Valenzuela**  
Deloitte Audit y Consult.  
[jvalenzuela@deloitte.com](mailto:jvalenzuela@deloitte.com)

**United States**

**Jason Geller**  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
[jgeller@deloitte.com](mailto:jgeller@deloitte.com)

**Canada**

**Heather Stockton**  
Deloitte Canada  
[hstockton@deloitte.ca](mailto:hstockton@deloitte.ca)

**Mexico**

**Tomas Fernandez**  
Deloitte Consulting Mexico  
[tofernandez@deloittemx.com](mailto:tofernandez@deloittemx.com)

**Uruguay, LATCO**

**Verónica Melián**  
Deloitte SC  
[vmelian@deloitte.com](mailto:vmelian@deloitte.com)

**Argentina**

**Leonardo Pena**  
Deloitte & Co. S.A.  
[lepena@deloitte.com](mailto:lepena@deloitte.com)



## Americas (cont.)

### Brazil

**Roberta Yoshida**  
Deloitte Consultores  
[royoshida@deloitte.com](mailto:royoshida@deloitte.com)

### Colombia

**Beatriz Dager**  
Deloitte Ases. y Consulto  
[bhdager@deloitte.com](mailto:bhdager@deloitte.com)

### Costa Rica

**Arturo Velasco**  
Deloitte & Touche S.A.  
[arvelasco@deloitte.com](mailto:arvelasco@deloitte.com)

### Dutch Caribbean

**Maghalie van der Bunt**  
Deloitte Dutch Caribbean  
[mvdarbunt@deloitte.com](mailto:mvdarbunt@deloitte.com)

### Ecuador

**Roberto Estrada**  
Andeanecuador Consultores  
[restrada@deloitte.com](mailto:restrada@deloitte.com)

### Panama

**Jessika Malek**  
Deloitte Consultores  
[jmalek@deloitte.com](mailto:jmalek@deloitte.com)

### Peru

**Alejandra D'Agostino**  
Deloitte & Touche SRL  
[aldagostino@deloitte.com](mailto:aldagostino@deloitte.com)

### Venezuela

**Maira Freites**  
Lara Marambio & Asociados  
[mfreites@deloitte.com](mailto:mfreites@deloitte.com)

## Asia Pacific

### Asia Pacific & China

**Jungle Wong**  
Deloitte Consulting (Shanghai) Co. Ltd,  
Beijing Branch  
[junglewong@deloitte.com.cn](mailto:junglewong@deloitte.com.cn)

### Australia

**David Brown**  
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu  
[davidbrown@deloitte.com.au](mailto:davidbrown@deloitte.com.au)

### India

**Sanjay Behl**  
Deloitte India  
[sxbehl@deloitte.com](mailto:sxbehl@deloitte.com)

### Japan

**Akio Tsuchida**  
Deloitte Tohmatsu Consulting Co. Ltd  
[akitsuchida@tohatsu.co.jp](mailto:akitsuchida@tohatsu.co.jp)

### Korea

**Kihoon (Alex) Jo**  
Deloitte Consulting  
[kijo@deloitte.com](mailto:kijo@deloitte.com)

### New Zealand

**Hamish Wilson**  
Deloitte  
[hawilson@deloitte.co.nz](mailto:hawilson@deloitte.co.nz)

### Southeast Asia

**Nicky Wakefield**  
Deloitte Consulting Pte Ltd  
[nwakefield@deloitte.com](mailto:nwakefield@deloitte.com)

## Europe, Middle East, and Africa

### EMEA

**Ardie Van Berkel**  
Deloitte Consulting BV  
[avanberkel@deloitte.nl](mailto:avanberkel@deloitte.nl)

### United Kingdom

**Anne-Marie Malley**  
Deloitte MCS Limited  
[amalley@deloitte.co.uk](mailto:amalley@deloitte.co.uk)

### Africa

**Werner Nieuwoudt**  
Deloitte Consulting Pty  
[wnieuwoudt@deloitte.co.za](mailto:wnieuwoudt@deloitte.co.za)

### Austria

**Christian Havranek**  
Deloitte Austria  
[chavranek@deloitte.at](mailto:chavranek@deloitte.at)

### Belgium

**Yves Van Durme**  
Deloitte Consulting  
[yvandurme@deloitte.com](mailto:yvandurme@deloitte.com)

### Central Europe

**Evzen Kordenko**  
Deloitte Advisory s.r.o.  
[ekordenko@deloittece.com](mailto:ekordenko@deloittece.com)

### CIS

**Christopher Armitage**  
CJSC Deloitte & Touche CIS  
[carmitage@deloitte.ru](mailto:carmitage@deloitte.ru)

### Cyprus

**George Pantelides**  
Deloitte Ltd  
[gpantelides@deloitte.com](mailto:gpantelides@deloitte.com)

### Denmark

**Ylva Ingeborg Brand Beckett**  
Deloitte Denmark  
[ybeckett@deloitte.dk](mailto:ybeckett@deloitte.dk)

### Finland

**Kirsi Kemi**  
Deloitte Oy  
[kirsi.kemi@deloitte.fi](mailto:kirsi.kemi@deloitte.fi)

### France

**Philippe Burger**  
Deloitte Conseil  
[phburger@deloitte.fr](mailto:phburger@deloitte.fr)

### Guy Aguera

Deloitte Conseil  
[gaguera@deloitte.fr](mailto:gaguera@deloitte.fr)

### Germany

**Udo Bohdal-Spiegelhoff**  
Deloitte Consulting GmbH  
[ubohdal@deloitte.de](mailto:ubohdal@deloitte.de)

### Greece

**Petros Mihos**  
Deloitte Business Solutions S.A.  
[pmihos@deloitte.gr](mailto:pmihos@deloitte.gr)

### Ireland

**Cormac Hughes**  
Deloitte & Touche  
[cohughes@deloitte.ie](mailto:cohughes@deloitte.ie)

### Israel

**Zohar Yami**  
Brightman Almagor Zohar & Co.  
[zyami@deloitte.co.il](mailto:zyami@deloitte.co.il)

### Italy

**Lorenzo Manganini**  
Deloitte Consulting SRL  
[lmanganini@deloitte.it](mailto:lmanganini@deloitte.it)

### Kenya

**Kimani Njoroge**  
Deloitte Consulting Ltd  
[knjoroge@deloitte.co.ke](mailto:knjoroge@deloitte.co.ke)

## Europe, Middle East, and Africa (cont.)

### Luxembourg

**Basil Sommerfeld**  
Deloitte Tax & Consulting  
[bsommerfeld@deloitte.lu](mailto:bsommerfeld@deloitte.lu)

### Middle East

**Ghassan Turqieh**  
Deloitte & Touche (M.E.)  
[gturqieh@deloitte.com](mailto:gturqieh@deloitte.com)

### Netherlands

**Petra Tito**  
Deloitte Consulting BV  
[ptito@deloitte.nl](mailto:ptito@deloitte.nl)

### Nordics

**Eva Tuominen**  
Deloitte Oy  
[eva.tuominen@deloitte.fi](mailto:eva.tuominen@deloitte.fi)

### Norway

**Eva Gjovikli**  
Deloitte AS  
[egjovikli@deloitte.no](mailto:egjovikli@deloitte.no)

### Poland

**Magdalena Jonczak**  
Deloitte Business Consulting S.A.  
[mjonczak@deloittece.com](mailto:mjonczak@deloittece.com)

### Portugal

**Nuno Portela Belo**  
Deloitte Consultores, S.A.  
[nbelo@deloitte.pt](mailto:nbelo@deloitte.pt)

### Spain

**Enrique de la Villa**  
Deloitte Advisory, S.L.  
[edelavilla@deloitte.es](mailto:edelavilla@deloitte.es)

### Sweden

**Jonas Malmllund**  
Deloitte Sweden  
[jmalmllund@deloitte.se](mailto:jmalmllund@deloitte.se)

### Switzerland

**Sarah Kane**  
Deloitte Consulting Switzerland  
[sakane@deloitte.ch](mailto:sakane@deloitte.ch)

### Turkey

**Tolga Yaveroglu**  
Deloitte Turkey  
[tyaveroglu@deloitte.com](mailto:tyaveroglu@deloitte.com)





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