

THE MINDSET OF THE CHRO



Senior Editor, **Bridgette Hall** speaks to the Criticaleye community about the skillsets, mindsets and capabilities they believe are essential for CPOs to stay abreast of emerging trends, adapt to an ever-changing business environment and drive high performance



One are the days of the CHRO as simply the keeper of personnel files and payroll. Today's CHRO is a strategic powerhouse, a trusted advisor to the C-suite and a champion for the entire organisation. This transformation reflects the evolving needs of businesses in a competitive and ever-changing landscape.

This shift necessitates a new skillset for CHROs. They must be strategic thinkers, able to translate business objectives into actionable HR initiatives and leverage data to identify talent gaps, measure the effectiveness of HR programmes and inform strategic decision-making.

In this article, Members from Criticaleye's Community assess the mindset, capabilities and skills that people leaders need to be a future-ready, high-performing CHRO.

This is what they have to say:

Grace Palombo
Executive Vice-president
and CHRO
Great-West Lifeco



My mantra and way of keeping things simple is to return to my role's purpose, which is to increase the organisation's performance. If I narrow it down, my role is to grow and support the CEO and executive team's performance. When I went into one of my first leadership roles, I thought if I could increase the performance of the CEO by just one percent, such as to help them be a more effective communicator, or help them

“My role is to grow and support the CEO and executive team's performance”

Grace Palombo

build a high-functioning executive team, then there is a tremendous ripple effect.

The senior HR leader has three critical areas of responsibility. The core one is making sure you have a high-performing HR function. I make sure I have the best talent, that I'm developing talent in the function and that I have succession.

It's also about ensuring HR has the proper and necessary programmes for the business. I call it being a 'business relations person', whether to the CEO, the executive team, the Board of directors and even the regulators. It's ensuring that they get the advice, direction and a little oversight to help them perform as well as possible.

The third aspect of my job is the strategic, proactive part. That's being an ambassador and champion for the organisation on behalf of its people; being the culture keeper and the individual constantly focused on employee experience and engagement. Being a successful HR leader is having experience in all three areas and quickly moving from one area to another without letting any of them drop.

Jamie Wilson
Managing Director
Group Services
Criticaleye



Today's high-performing CHRO is a strategic architect, not just an administrative leader. They possess a multifaceted skill set, pivotal for nurturing an agile mindset within the organisation. This evolution is essential for staying ahead in a talent landscape that is continuously shifting, marked by rapid technological advancements and changing workforce expectations.

At Criticaleye, we've worked with many businesses on leadership capabilities and fostering a high-performing mindset, over the years. In my experience, an effective CHRO drives the organisation's growth by promoting a culture steeped in continuous learning and development. This not only empowers employees but also ensures that the organisation remains adaptive and innovative.

High-performing CHROs also excel in communication, adeptly conveying >



Increasingly, I think data-driven and informed decisions are going to be key. So, HR needs to be more comfortable and confident in using data to make decisions. You must be trusted and strategic in your thinking and views. If you remain too operational, you're missing an opportunity.

Chin Seng Lee
NED, Fei Yue
and Board Mentor
Criticleye



If the last few years were about wellness and authenticity, 2024 marks a new era of BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear and Incomprehensible) which calls for a change in our world view. We're currently experiencing choppy economic conditions, from the tech sector slowdown to China's economic deceleration, geopolitical uncertainties and multiple 'significant' countries having elections in 2024. There are also local and regional conflicts affecting global trade and economic decoupling or sanctions, plus the deafening hum of Generative AI.

From an HR perspective, CHROs are figuring out what the new leadership models and human capabilities will be that will re-define a company's competitive advantage.

In terms of human capabilities, CHROs are already working on building digital capability and competency. The next piece of work is to map out the 'current use' of GenAI to 'near-term future use' and 'long-term future use' in your specific organisation, layering this lens on the value chain. CHROs can then

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Chin Seng Lee

articulate a transformation glide path to steer the organisation and narrate positive future.

Many Boards are moving beyond their traditional focus on governance to look into talent and capabilities. Some Boards have renamed their 'Nomination and Remuneration Committee' to 'Nomination and Talent Committee' to reflect this new focus. There is no better time to be a CHRO in the evolution of the HR profession.

CHROs who can educate, elevate and facilitate talent development and succession planning conversations in the Boardroom and embed this practice into the Board's DNA (versus a once-a-year conversation) will be well appreciated. ■

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