**Global people priorities: Survey findings**

Recently the findings on what are the global people priorities, from the latest Creating People Advantage survey, were published:

https://web-assets.bcg.com/c6/3e/a87495e544c4b24061806c9eab92/bcg-creating-people-advantage-2023-nov-2023.pdf. The survey was conducted by the World Federation of People Management Associations and BCG and comprised of 6,893 participants from 102 countries, as illustrated below. Survey respondents ranked 32 people management topics by (1) **future importance** to their organisation and by (2) **current capabilities** of their organisation.
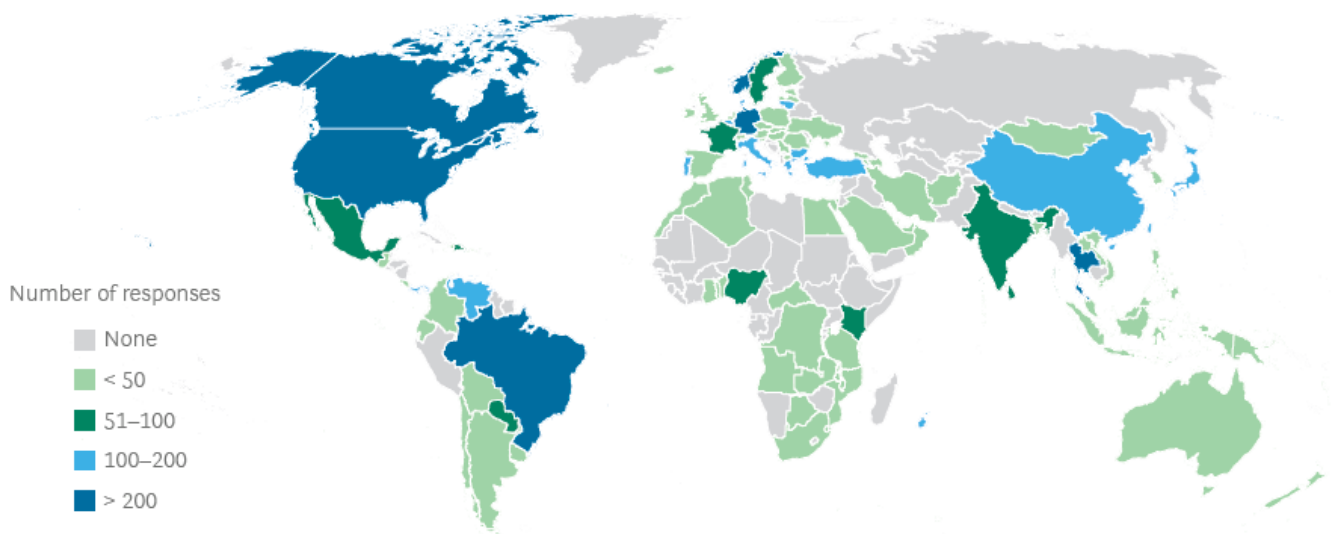
The following highlights were noted in the survey report:

Divided Attention and Short-termism in responses

Companies are better at responding to pressing and present external factors, but less able to look ahead and focus on the people management priorities critical for success in the future. They seem anchored to the present and the pandemic. "Respondents are stronger in topics that were critical during the pandemic— such as employee health and safety, more flexible work models, and policy management—although these are no longer their biggest priorities."

Lagging Digitisation and capabilities

"Digitisation remains a crucial area for people managers, but digital capabilities (including HR IT architecture, operation, and cloud software) continue to lag in many organisations, making this topic an increasingly urgent priority." See the revised HR Technology Standard to position digitation systematically within the broader people strategy: https://www.sabpp.co.za/product-solutions/index

AI Adoption

"AI is gaining traction among people managers, but the vast majority of organisations are still at the earliest stages of adoption. First movers that have started to implement AI-based solutions are seeing tremendous benefits across a range of use cases in people management." For a guide, see the SABPP Fact Sheet on AI in HR:

https://docs.mymembership.co.za/docmanager/8b191c28-797a-4c3d-b249-8b6e5691fe86/00160058.pdf

Core People Priorities

"Although each company must build the capabilities most relevant to its unique context [and their strategy], virtually all companies need to emphasise strategic workforce planning, talent acquisition, upskilling and reskilling, digitisation, and accompanying change management and leadership behaviours." Consider here the good people practices related to these as outlined in the revised HRM Standards, which SABPP launched in 2023 as the People Practices and Governance Standards.

Talent Gaps

Many companies lack all the talent they need. "Talent gaps and shortages represent the top business challenge that companies face, cited by 72% of respondents."

For a snapshot view of the survey findings, see the tables on pages 5 and 6 of the report on future importance and current capabilities. The below exhibit from the report provides a summary illustration of the findings on future importance and current capabilities. For a regional breakdown see the exhibit on page 9 of the report. The report notes that compared to 2021 the overall survey results for 2023 are more heterogeneous across countries regarding future importance. This highlights the importance of external and internal analysis for strategy formulation, as outlined in the Strategic HRM Standard. Regarding current capabilities companies across regions ranked their current capabilities in Labor and Employee Relations the highest. The report noted that larger companies show different priorities compared with smaller companies.

Exhibit 5 - Sorting the 32 Topics by Future Importance and Current Capabilities Identifies the Most Pressing Priorities for People Leaders
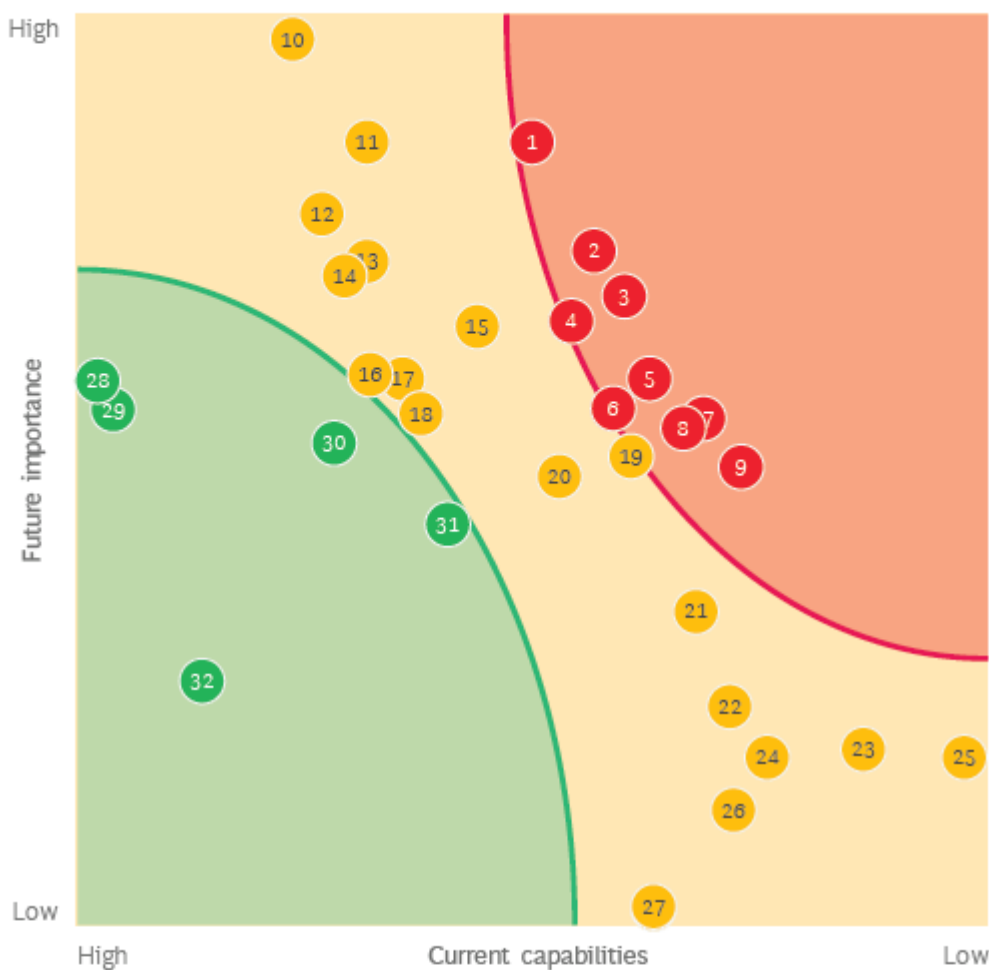
High need to act

1 Leadership behaviors and development
2 Strategic workforce planning
3 Change management capabilities
4 Upskilling and reskilling at scale

5 Top talent management
6 Talent sourcing ecosystem
7 HR IT architecture, operation, and cloud software

8 People analytics and reporting
9 Career pathing

Medium need to act

10 People and HR strategy
11 Employee engagement and well-being
12 Employer branding
13 Recruiting strategy and process
14 Purpose and culture activation
15 Rewards and recognition
16 Onboarding

17 Performance management
18 HR staff capabilities
19 Organizational development and design
20 Diversity, equity, and inclusion management
21 Agile principles
22 Sustainability and ESG standards

23 Employee journey management
24 Staffing and mobility management
25 HR digital solutions
26 Restructuring management
27 HR shared services

Low need to act

28 Health and safety
29 Employee relations

30 Flexible work schemes
31 HR organization and governance

32 Policy management