

# The AI Revolution Hits an HR Roadblock

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## ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

Supply and Demand Another study by application development firm Reign, based in Santiago, Chile, found that the U.S. witnessed a 21 percent increase in the number of AI jobs, plus a 27 percent increase in AI-related job wages, over the past decade. [...]95 percent of respondents see hiring and retaining AI talent as a challenge. RELX numbers reveal that 39 percent of respondents who think AI has a negative impact on their industry said it is because it requires more training or upskilling of workers.

## FULL TEXT

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Artificial intelligence was thrust into the public consciousness in the late 1960s courtesy of the Stanley Kubrick movie "2001: A Space Odyssey." Now our fascination with AI has broadened to include its potential to revolutionize the business world. We're able to spot changing trends and consumer habits in near real time, automatically detect fraud and anomalous behavior, and help sales and marketing teams fine-tune messaging to hit targeted audiences with laser precision.

No wonder 81 percent of senior executives say their business uses AI (up from 48 percent in 2018) and 93 percent report that AI makes their business more competitive, according to the *Emerging Tech Executive Report* from RELX.

But all is not well in the land of AI. Big HR challenges lie firmly across the path of broad adoption and the realization of AI's potential.

A talent shortage stands in the way of the deployment and full utilization of AI in U.S. companies. Whether through lack of training, difficulties in hiring or headhunters luring away top talent, AI technologists are in short supply. Yet they are needed more than ever, and their skills will be coveted for many years to come.

### Supply and Demand

Another study by application development firm Reign, based in Santiago, Chile, found that the U.S. witnessed a 21 percent increase in the number of AI jobs, plus a 27 percent increase in AI-related job wages, over the past decade. "The demand for workers who can develop AI technology is increasing, as are the effects of AI on workers around the world," said Felipe Silberstein, vice president of strategy at Reign. "Jobs requesting AI or machine-learning skills are expected to increase by 71 percent in the next five years."

The demand is there. So what is choking the AI market and its anticipated expansion? The COVID-19 pandemic can perhaps be partially blamed for slowing the momentum of AI. Yet the RELX survey revealed that the pandemic spurred 48 percent of executives to invest in new AI technologies. The Great Resignation, then, is probably more at fault. With millions quitting their jobs during 2021, companies have been left short-staffed and scrambling for talent. A shortage of resources prevents some companies from maximizing their AI capabilities.

"Companies have scaled up their AI capabilities and are hiring more technologists who are AI-savvy," said Vijay Raghavan, RELX technology forum director. "At the same time, American workers are reconsidering the role that work plays in their lives. This has created a tension that intensified the battle for talent in the tech industry."

Hence, 95 percent of respondents see hiring and retaining AI talent as a challenge. The RELX survey noted a drop among those hiring external talent to assist in building out AI-related projects from 59 percent to 50 percent over the past year. But there may be more to it than lack of supply.

## AI Backlash

Returning to our movie theme: HAL, of "2001: A Space Odyssey" fame, turned nasty and began killing its crew members. In the case of the business world, the negative consequences revolve around loss of jobs and the need to retrain the workforce. RELX numbers reveal that 39 percent of respondents who think AI has a negative impact on their industry said it is because it requires more training or upskilling of workers. That may be one reason why those investing in upskilling of employees to use AI dropped from 65 percent in 2020 to 56 percent in 2021, and those investing in the future AI workforce through educational initiatives fell from 65 percent to 52 percent. The Reign survey came up with similar concerns. Over half (54 percent) of respondents were either moderately or very concerned that AI would negatively disrupt their job.

These are just a few of the statistics that indicate that AI's luster has dimmed slightly over the past year. After three years of increasing adoption and enthusiasm according to executive responses, 2021 saw fewer executives than the previous year agreeing that AI helps them to be more competitive and a drop in concern about being left behind by other companies and countries being more advanced in AI.

### Upskilling Needed

It may be uncomfortable to face the prospect of upskilling the workforce (or at least portions of it). But it has to be done. And there is willingness among a good portion of the workforce. Silberstein noted that 44.8 percent of people said they were very likely to consider learning tech skills related to working with AI in the near future. Among Millennials, the numbers are even higher.

But stiff job competition means those with the deepest pockets have a definite advantage now. Many companies are reluctant to retrain workers as they have either experienced, or expect to experience, them being snatched up by rivals.

"Some companies are hesitant to invest in upskilling their employees on the basis that they're liable to be lured away after a year or two by a rival company, a hesitancy which ultimately results in less effective AI systems," Raghavan said.

That hesitancy will have to be overcome and a great deal of training and upskilling will be required if the true promise of AI is to manifest in the real world.

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