CHRIS COURNEEN · SVP, GLOBAL HEAD OF HR (CHRO), MSI

HOW LEADING ORGANIZATIONS ARE LEVERAGING AI

in hiring, developing, and retaining talent

HR GANGSTER

JOIN THE ROOM

chriscourneen.com/thegreenroom

THE CUPID SHUFFLE

EVERYBODY UP

THE CUPID SHUFFLE

01

TO THE RIGHT

×4

02

TO THE LEFT

×4

03

KICK

R, L, R, L

04

TURN

all the way around

Then we do it all again.

WHY DID YOU DANCE?

WHY I MADE YOU DANCE

ONE GOAL: THE WHOLE ROOM MOVING AT ONCE



SOME OF YOU WERE READY

Up before the music started.

MOST OF YOU WERE IN THE MIDDLE

Not against it. Zero change just meant staying seated.

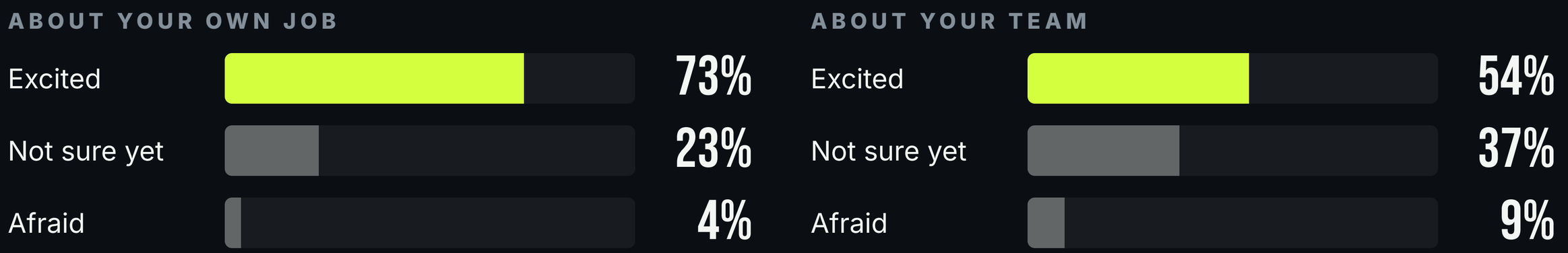
SOME OF YOU DID NOT WANT TO

And in the end, you fell in line too.

THAT IS THE JOB WITH AI. EVERYONE, SAME DIRECTION.

SHRM26 · 294 HR LEADERS · THE SAME TWO QUESTIONS

EXCITED FOR OURSELVES. UNSURE FOR OUR PEOPLE.



THAT GAP IS THE LEADERSHIP JOB.

Live poll, SHRM26 HR Executive Insights panel (Courneen, Dickens, Pearson). Team question: 291 answered.


BEFORE THEY HEAR FROM YOU
THEY ALREADY READ THE HEADLINES

THEY READ THESE TOO

THE FEAR DID NOT COME FROM NOWHERE

#1

The top reason US companies gave for job cuts in 2026.

120,136 cuts through September. About one in five.

Cooling lately: #4 in August, #5 in September.

21,000	**ORACLE · JUNE 2026** *AI deployment "resulted in reductions to our workforce."*
16,000	**AMAZON · JANUARY 2026** *Corporate roles. The CEO: AI means "we will need fewer people."*
4,500+	**PAYPAL · MAY 2026** *Twenty percent, as it moves to "aggressively adopt AI."*
1,000	**SNAP · APRIL 2026** *Cited "rapid advancements in artificial intelligence."*

CHALLENGER, GRAY & CHRISTMAS JOB CUT REPORTS, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2026

THE KEY

WHAT CAN AI DO FOR ME,

NOT ~~TO~~ ME?

BEFORE THE TOOLS

TRUST IS THE FIRST STRATEGIC DECISION

01

KNOW THE TECH

What it does, and what it does not. You cannot trust a black box, or lead what you do not understand.

02

DECLARE IT

Say what you are using it for. Ours: **your job is safe. Your job description is not.**

03

BIND YOURSELF

Count the lines in your AI policy that protect the employee. Most policies have zero.

TRUST DOES NOT JUST HAPPEN. YOU DECIDE TO BUILD IT.

FROM TOOL TO TEAMMATE

AI STOPPED ANSWERING. IT STARTED ACTING.

Predicts

MACHINE LEARNING

Finds patterns and forecasts. It ran website search and demand planning long before anyone called it AI.

Creates

GENERATIVE AI

Drafts, summarizes and answers when you ask it to. You still do the work around it.

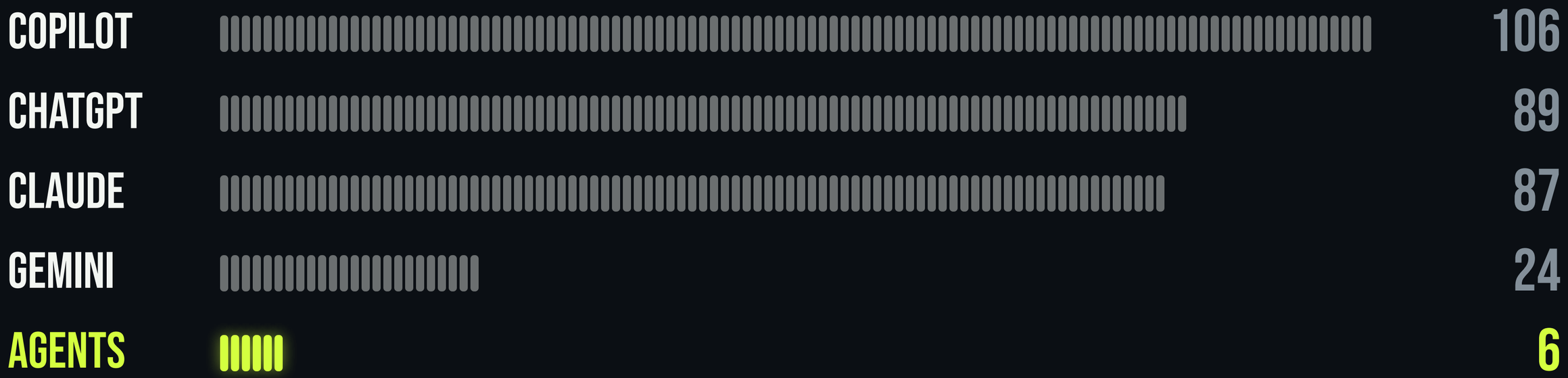
Acts

AGENTIC AI

Takes an outcome, works across your systems to reach it, and hands back to a human when it is unsure.

SHRM26 · 269 HR LEADERS · "WHAT AI ARE YOU USING TODAY?"

MOST OF US ARE STILL CHATTING.



HUNDREDS OF US CHATTING. SIX OF US HANDED IT A JOB.

One dot per mention, ~280 open answers, SHRM26 live poll. One answer can name several tools.

GENERATIVE VS AGENTIC

YOU ASK A CHATBOT. YOU ASSIGN AN AGENT.

GENERATIVE

YOU ASK, IT DRAFTS

A person prompts, reviews, copies, pastes and carries the work to the next step. That person gets faster.

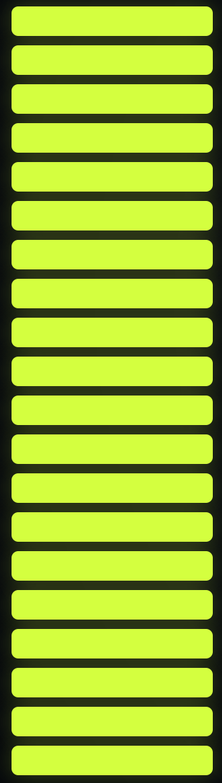
AGENTIC

YOU ASSIGN, IT ACTS

It works in your ATS, HRIS, calendar and LMS toward an outcome, and escalates to a person when it is unsure. The process gets faster.

ONE MAKES A PERSON FASTER. THE OTHER MAKES THE PROCESS FASTER.

WHAT IT HAS BEEN WORTH AT MSI



$20M

in value from our AI initiatives

0

LAYOFFS. EVER.

Six recessions, no furloughs, and AI has not changed it.

Built in-house: AI developers report to HR, down to the hardware layer.



01 · HIRING

THE AGENTIC RECRUITER

HIRING AT MSI

THE AGENT BOOKS THE INTERVIEW. NOBODY TOUCHES IT.

~18,000

INTERVIEWS

scheduled by AI in eight months

2 MIN

TO SCHEDULE

down from two days

<3 DAYS

PROFILE TO ONSITE

down from fifteen

20%

OF RECRUITER TIME

was scheduling. All of it gone.

CANDIDATES APPLY BY TEXT, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.

CANDIDATE PROFILE TO ONSITE INTERVIEW

15 DAYS BECAME UNDER 3



AT LEAST 12 DAYS FASTER TO AN ONSITE, PER CANDIDATE.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PEOPLE

WE RETIRED A JOB LEVEL, NOT THE PEOPLE IN IT



TALENT ACQUISITION

RECRUITING COORDINATOR: RETIRED

Six months of reskilling into phone screens and resume review. A high-burnout role nobody missed.



CORE HR

40% OF THE WORK: ELIMINATED

One HR specialist for the US and Canada. Generalists moved up into HR business partner roles.

YOUR JOB IS SAFE.
YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION IS NOT.

02 · DEVELOPING

THE AGENTIC L&D TEAM



DEVELOPING AT MSI

LEARNING STOPPED WAITING ON COURSE BUILDERS

+250%

L&D PRODUCTIVITY

same team, more learning shipped

NARRATED

E-LEARNING

text to speech from a script

SAFETY

VIDEO

text to video, made in-house

PRACTICE

PARTNERS

interviews, hard conversations, benefits

AI LIFTED PRODUCTIVITY 14% ON AVERAGE, AND 34% FOR THE NEWEST PEOPLE.

MSI. Brynjolfsson, Li & Raymond, “Generative AI at Work,” NBER w31161, 5,179 support agents.

900%

ANTICIPATED L&D PRODUCTIVITY GAIN SINCE 2023,
AS WE DEPLOY A FULLY AGENTIC SOLUTION.

IN BUILD AT MSI · LND STUDIO

IT BUILDS THE COURSE. EXPERTS APPROVE.

GOES IN

REQUIREMENTS

THE LAW

IMAGES AND DOCS

IT DRAFTS

THE FULL COURSE

ANIMATIONS, PHOTOS, VIDEO

QUIZZES AND GAMES

MAPS THE SKILLS

TAGS EVERY SKILL

LOGS IDS TO THE LMS

CREATES NEW ONES

THEN

AN EXPERT APPROVES

TO EDIT

JUST TALK TO IT

03 · RETAINING

SHARE THE SURPLUS



RETAINING

LET PEOPLE KEEP SOME OF THE TIME AI GIVES BACK



SHARE THE SURPLUS

TIME BACK IS AN INVESTMENT

When work takes half the time, let people keep some of the gain: time to learn, or a workload they can manage.



REDEFINE ROLES

AROUND VALUE, NOT TASKS

Write job descriptions around the contribution people make, not the steps they perform.

Adapted from a Dayforce keynote, Las Vegas, October 2026.

04 · THE AGENTIC ENTERPRISE

DIGITAL EMPLOYEES



AGENTS THAT USE YOUR SYSTEMS

THE INTEGRATION PROJECT BECOMES AN ONBOARDING PROJECT

BEFORE

INTEGRATE THE SYSTEMS

Get the ATS and the HRIS to talk to each other. A project, a budget cycle, and IT time.

NOW

GIVE THE AGENT A LOGIN

It works your ATS, HRIS, calendar and LMS the way a coordinator would: read, act, hand off.

WOULD YOU LET A NEW HIRE DO THIS, WITH THIS ACCESS, UNDER THIS MANAGER?

A FRAMEWORK · THE DIGITAL EMPLOYEE FILE

ONBOARD AN AGENT LIKE A HIRE

01
JOB DESCRIPTION
The outcome it owns, and what it must never do.

02
ACCESS
Its own login. Least privilege. Nothing shared.

03
A MANAGER
A named human who answers for its work.

04
REVIEWS
Measured on outcomes, on a schedule, like everyone else.

05
OFFBOARDING
A way to switch it off, and a plan for who picks up the work.

IF YOU CANNOT FILL IN ALL FIVE, IT IS NOT READY TO WORK FOR YOU.

THE NEW OPERATING MODEL

HR OWNS THE ORG CHART. NOW IT HAS AGENTS ON IT.

01

BUILD CAPABILITY IN-HOUSE

At MSI, AI developers report to HR. Someone in the business has to be able to build, not just buy.

02

ARCHITECT THE WHOLE WORKFORCE

Human and digital, planned together: who does what, who manages what, who answers for it.

03

SPLIT THE WORK HONESTLY

Digital teammates take the tasks. People keep the judgment, the relationships and the exceptions.

Most of what gets called resistance to AI is the absence of a credible story about the future.

That story is a leadership deliverable, not a communications one.



GETTING TEAMS EXCITED, NOT SCARED

FOUR MOVES THAT MAKE IT FOR ME

01

DECLARE IT

Say what you are doing with AI, and what you are not.

02

SHARE THE SURPLUS

Some of the time AI gives back goes back to the person.

03

ASK THE FRONTLINE

80% of improvement potential sits in frontline ideas, not executive directives.

04

GO FIRST

Nobody danced until somebody did.

80%: Robinson & Schroeder, Ideas Are Free (2004).

EVALUATING AN AI INVESTMENT

THREE FILTERS BEFORE YOU BUY

01

SPEAK IN REVENUE AND PROFIT

Savings divided by net margin is the sales it equals. At a 10% margin, $1M saved equals $10M in new sales. Illustrative.

02

ROUTE TASKS BEFORE DECISIONS

Eliminate the scheduling before you automate the judgment. Lower risk, cleaner ROI.

03

PLAN THE ABSORPTION

Who redesigns the work, and where the freed capacity goes, decided before the savings are counted.

WHY THE TIMING MATTERS

ADOPTION IS NOT ABSORPTION

Phase one

ADOPTION

Rolling the tool out. Fast, visible, and easy to put a number on.

Phase two, where most of us are now

ABSORPTION

Redesigning the work around it. Slow, and it runs on the people already doing the work.

NOBODY UNDERSTANDS THE NEW WORK UNTIL THEY HAVE LIVED IT.

BACK TO RECRUITING · A YEAR LATER

WE NEEDED RECRUITER I AGAIN

Year one

RETIRED

The agent took the scheduling. We retired the Recruiter I level and moved everyone up.

Then

NEW WORK EMERGED

The agent hands off when it is lost. Recruiters on the phone all day could not catch it. Candidates waited.

Year two

BACK, DIFFERENT

Step in fast when the AI raises its hand. Customer service, not admin. Fewer heads.

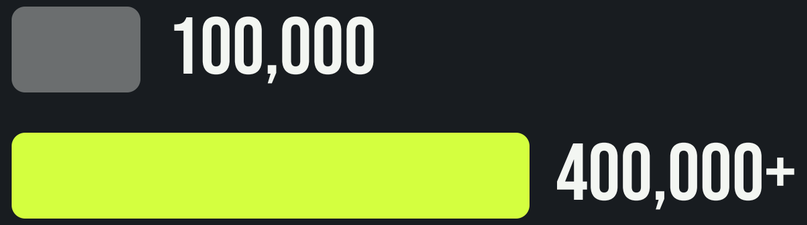
IF WE HAD CUT THEM IN YEAR ONE, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN REHIRING THEM IN YEAR TWO.

THIS IS NOT NEW

THE ATM PRECEDENT

Jevons paradox: make a task cheaper, and organizations do more of it.

ATMS INSTALLED IN THE US



Four times the machines, doing the exact task tellers were paid to do.

BANK TELLER JOBS

DID NOT FALL.

Fewer tellers per branch made branches cheaper, so banks opened more of them. Teller jobs held steady, even rose.

The work moved. It did not evaporate.

FREED CAPACITY DOES NOT BANK ITSELF. IT IS A DECISION ABOUT WHERE IT GOES.

James Bessen, “Toil and Technology,” IMF Finance & Development, March 2015.

THE COMPANIES THAT CUT, ASKED AFTERWARD

MOST OF THEM WISH THEY HAD WAITED

1,163

LEADERS SURVEYED

C-suite and senior business leaders, February to March 2025

39%

CUT JOBS FOR AI

made employees redundant as a result of deploying AI

55%

OF THOSE REGRET IT

admit they made the wrong decisions about those redundancies

KLARNA CUT ~700 ROLES FOR AN AI ASSISTANT, THEN REHIRED.

Orgvue survey of 1,163 C-suite and senior business leaders, February to March 2025. Forrester expects about half of AI-attributed layoffs to reverse.

WHY WE DID NOT CUT

SLOW DOWN. MEASURE COST AVOIDANCE.

OUR RECORD

ZERO LAYOFFS, EVER

Six recessions, no furloughs, and AI has not changed it.

COUNT WHAT YOU AVOID

THE NUMBER NOBODY COUNTS

Rehiring, retraining, knowledge that walks out, trust you spend.

THEN

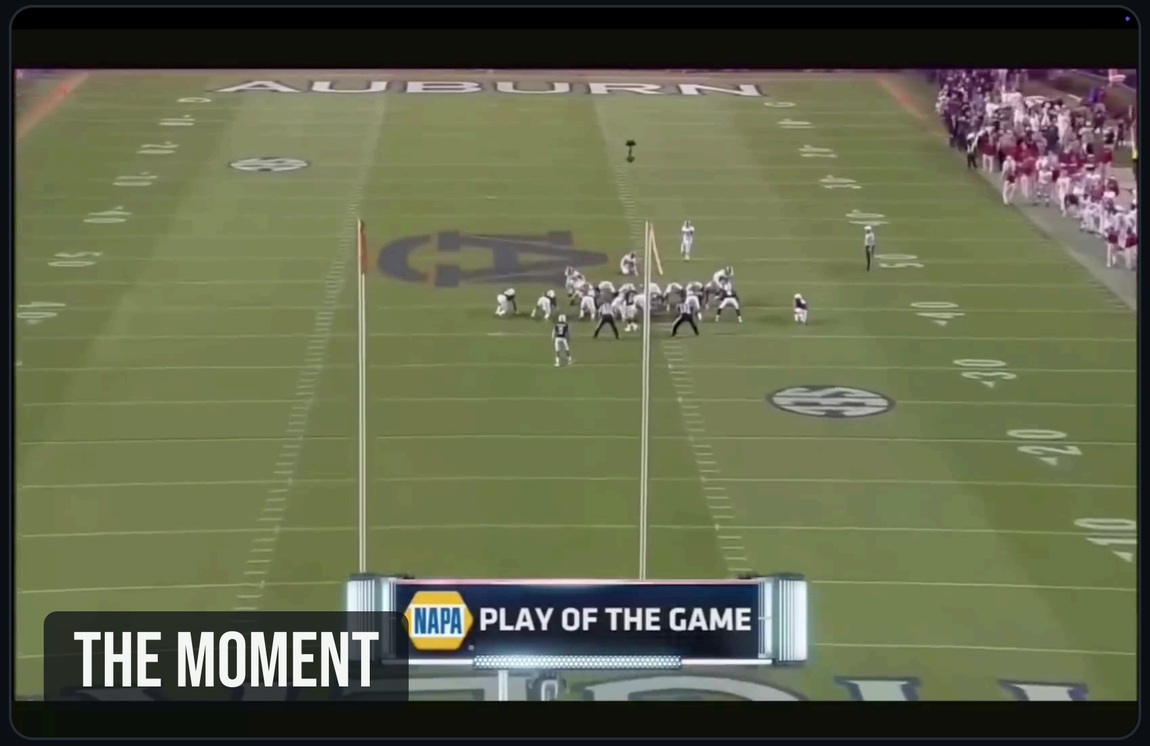
REDEPLOY AND MEASURE

Move the freed capacity, measure the impact. That is where the $20M came from.

YOU DO NOT MAKE LONG-TERM DECISIONS FOR SHORT-TERM PROBLEMS.

ONE LAST STORY · IRON BOWL, 2013

ONE SECOND LEFT. TIED GAME.





THE DIRECTORS FROZE. A STUDENT LED.

SHE DID NOT START EVERYONE AT ONCE. SHE SEQUENCED IT.

01

GOT UP WHERE ALL COULD SEE

Leadership has to be visible before it can be followed.

02

TUBAS FIRST

The biggest, loudest section. Everyone follows them.

03

THEN THE HORNS

One section at a time, each one ready before the next.

04

THE WINDS FELL IN LINE

Once it started, the rest came on their own.

YOU DON'T NEED EVERYONE ON DAY ONE.

YOU JUST NEED THE TUBAS.





KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

CONNECT WITH ME

Chris Courneen

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HR GANGSTER

SCAN FOR LINKEDIN

linkedin.com/in/chriscourneen


WHAT CAN AI DO
FOR YOU?
GO FIRST.