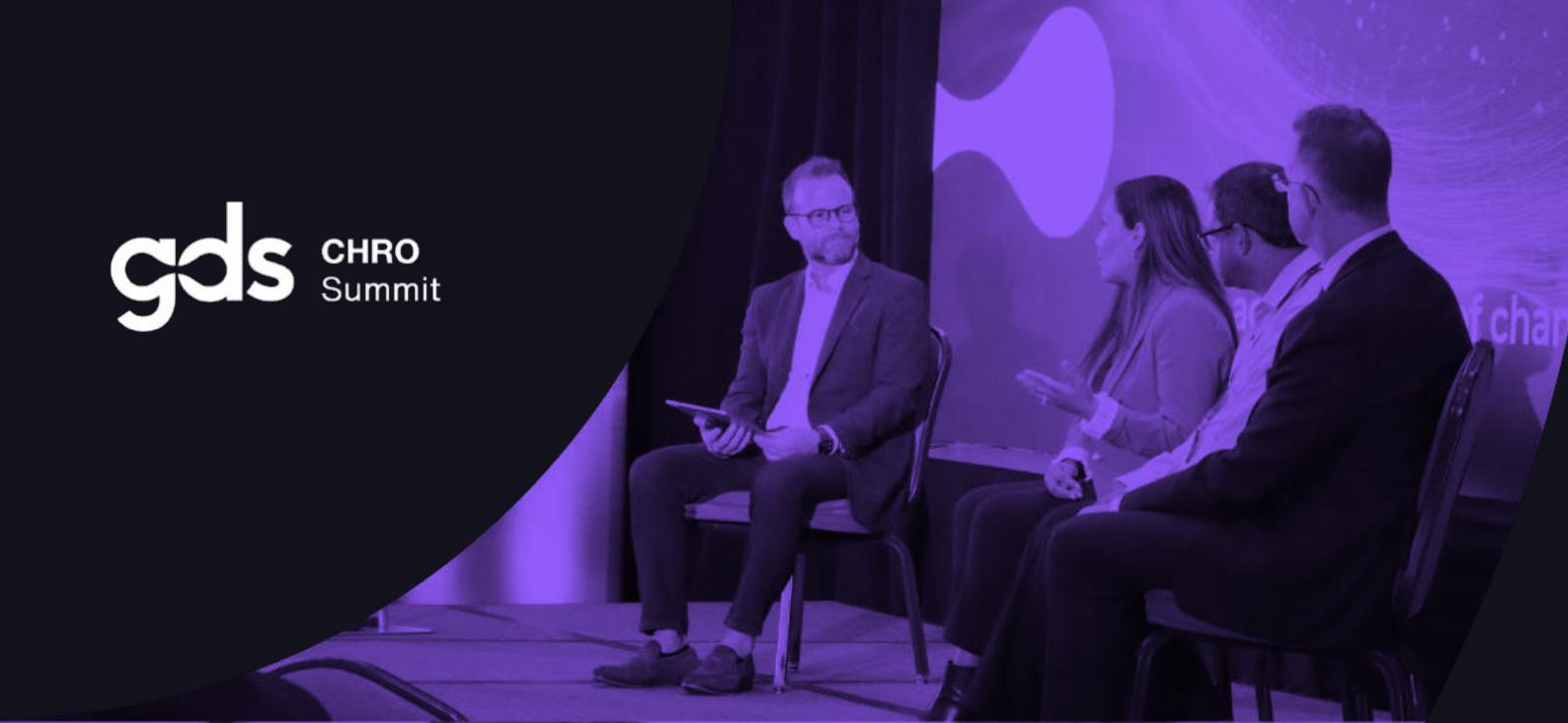


**gds** CHRO  
Summit



# CHRO Insight Summit

Chicago, 02-03 April 2025

Insight Report from the Main Stage

# Contents.

- 03**     **Intro**
- 04**     **Beyond the “Seat at the Table”** – HR’s Role in Enhancing Organizational Effectiveness
- 05**     **Let’s Talk** – How Conversations Yield Faster, Better Results for HR Leaders
- 06**     **Shaping the Future of the HR Leader** – An Interactive Discussion on the Ever-Expanding Role
- 07**     **Strategic Plans for Cultivating Outstanding Leaders**
- 08**     **Boosting Workplace Culture in the Digital Age** – without Losing the Human Spark
- 09**     **Future-Ready Leadership** – Navigating the Challenges of Tomorrow
- 10**     **Is Your Company’s Culture More Connected Than TikTok?**
- 11**     **De-Romanticising AI** – Practical Lessons and Next Steps for HR Professionals
- 12**     **Transforming Employee Experience** – Insights from Daikin Comfort’s Innovative Approach
- 13**     **Four HR Challenges**
- 14**     **Outro**



# CHRO Insight 2025

## Future-Ready Leadership, AI, and Investing in Culture

The CHRO Insight Summit in Chicago brought together senior people leaders from across the spectrum of industries to tackle today's most pressing human resource and talent management challenges.

We heard insightful discussions, bold strategies, and industry-shaping ideas on everything from organizational effectiveness to practical steps toward AI integration.

If you missed out or maybe just wanted a refresher, here is a wrap-up of all the key takeaways from the main stage...



# Beyond the “Seat at the Table”

## HR’s Role in Enhancing Organizational Effectiveness

### Speaker



**Renee Konzelman**  
Chief People Officer, The Pampered Chef, A Berkshire Hathaway Company

### Summary

Renee Konzelman started our summit by reflecting on her first year at Pampered Chef and her philosophy on impactful HR leadership. Her central theme: HR should transcend traditional boundaries and actively contribute to business growth and problem-solving. HR professionals, she believes, must be proactive, drive change, and demonstrate tangible value across the entire organization.

### Key Takeaways

#### People Leadership Value

People leaders bring the most value when they do not stay in their HR lanes.

#### HR’s Strategic Role

HR can play an impactful value-creation role far outside of a people strategy.

#### Organizational Effectiveness

Align strategy, structure, processes, rewards, and people. It’s crucial for effectiveness.

#### Driving Business Results

Know HR stuff, work smarter and give people reasons to believe.



**Go where the energy is. Don’t stay in your lane. Go where the clients can help you so that you can really drive and add value to the organization.**

**Renee Konzelman**

Chief People Officer, The Pampered Chef, A Berkshire Hathaway Company

# Let's Talk

How Conversations Yield Faster,  
Better Results for HR Leaders

## Speaker



**Shon Holyfield**

CEO & Founder,  
Amazing Workplace

## Summary

Shon Holyfield's keynote focused on the crucial role of understanding and measuring employee happiness in organizational success. He advocated for shifting beyond traditional engagement metrics, emphasizing that genuine employee happiness directly correlates with key business outcomes such as higher profitability and lower turnover.

## Key Takeaways

### Employee Happiness

Happy employees drive 22% higher profitability with 87% lower turnover risk.

### Employee Experience

Fundamentally, this is about having better conversations with your people.

### Measuring Feelings

Directly asking how you feel provides more dependable results than numeric scales.

### HR Compliance

The "least happy topic" for our attendees. Which means it's an area to keep an eye on.



**“People want to be listened to. They want to be treated well. If we say we’re going to do X, then we do X. Communication is absolutely key.”**

**Shon Holyfield**

CEO & Founder, Amazing Workplace



# Breaking the AI Barrier in HR

From Hesitancy to Confidence

## Speakers



### Jeff Arnold

Director, Talent Acquisition at  
Western Governors University



### Tia Butler

Chief People Officer, NCQA



### Aryeh Lehrer

Vice President, Talent  
Management and  
Acquisition, Comcast

## Summary

Jeff Arnold, Tia Butler, and Aryeh Lehrer explored the adoption of AI in HR at scale, addressing initial resistance, common misconceptions, and fears surrounding its implementation.

They delved into strategies for increasing adoption and building employee trust – and the evolving challenge of candidates using AI in the application process.

So... What will AI's long-term impact be on talent development and the workforce?

## Key Takeaways

### Adopting Technology at Scale

It's here. And we need to move our people from hesitancy to confidence quickly.

### AI in HR

Is AI a microwave ("I still have a stove") or an iPhone ("I don't carry my MP3 player")?

### AI and Talent

AI will change the talent profiles needed within organizations in the future.

### Breaking the AI Barrier

Involve tech-savvy employees as peer advocates and foster a sense of FOMO.



**When they're learning from their peers and when you can tap into the talent, it changes the narrative. It allows that curiosity to come in on a peer-to-peer level.**

### Tia Butler

Chief People Officer, NCQA

# Strategic Plans for Cultivating Outstanding Leaders

## Speaker



### Daniel Swartz

Global Vice President,  
Human Resources For  
Operations, Align  
Technology

## Key Takeaways

### Strategic Leadership Development

Focus on internal mentorship, intense programs for VP-level, and succession planning.

### Navigating Uncertainty

Create “organized chaos” to build resilient leaders who can pivot under rapid

### Global Team Management

Take a “modular approach” to global programs, allowing flexibility and adaptation.

### Diversity and Inclusion

“Diversity means different things to different cultures in different countries.”

## Summary

Vitor Hugo Cid and Daniel Swartz explored the key experiences that shaped their leadership journeys and discussed the evolving nature of the path to leadership.

They examined the essential skills that modern HR leaders need to succeed in a disruptive environment, including business acumen, embracing transformation, and a human-centric approach that balances long-term strategic planning with immediate needs while fostering inclusivity.



**Bring different people to the table and give voice to people that usually will not have the same opportunity. Those are two things that actually shaped my leadership style.**

### Vitor Hugo Cid

Global Head of HR, BUs EMR&CM and Cardiovascular Informatics, Philips



# Boosting Workplace Culture in the Digital Age without Losing the Human Spark

## Speaker



### Edward Marx

CEO Marx Advisory, Author,  
CIO of Global Health  
Systems, Team USA

## Summary

Edward Marx talked of taking teams to summit mountains, creating tangible positive outcomes, and cultivating award-winning workplace environments.

He believes his success stems from valuing the “human spark” in individuals and fostering strong relationships. And corporate success comes from focusing on culture.

## Key Takeaways

### Employee Recognition

A handwritten thank you card can have a significant positive impact on an employee.

### Leadership Availability

Go “one by one” to employees, look them in the eye, tell them how important they are.

### Customer Focus

Ensure your team directly hears about the impact of their work from those they serve.

### Personal Connection

Keep your own CRM to know your people.  
Include details!



**People have to know what they do matters. It's one thing for you to tell them, and I'm sure you do, but to have your customers tell them is more impactful.**

### Edward Marx

CEO Marx Advisory, Author, CIO of Global Health Systems, Team USA

# Future-Ready Leadership

Navigating the Challenges of Tomorrow



## Speaker



### Michelle Balsick

Senior Director, HR Digital  
Experience at Staffmark  
Group



### Dr. Norma Tirado

CHRO, Access Community  
Health Network

## Summary

Michelle Balsick, Dr. Norma Tirado, and Stacy Winsett dived into the most pressing challenges facing HR leaders today: immigration policy impacts, funding uncertainties, the need for upskilling and diverse thinking, identifying and cultivating future-ready leaders, and the ability to navigate change and foster a learning culture. They also shared their strategies for addressing the evolving language around DEI.

## Key Takeaways

### Policy Changes

Adapt quickly, collaborate across departments, and be a partner NOT scary HR police.

### Diverse Thinking

Talent circulating only within the industry?  
Be wary a lack of “diversity of thought”.

### Future-Ready Leaders

Proactively “ready leaders” for change.  
Don’t rely on change management processes.

### A Learning Culture

Great leaders are also great learners.  
But they will make mistakes.



**We have influential managers who change and transform our organization. We’re working on identifying who those individuals are because they’re not always the ones that are up here on a stage talking.”**

### Stacy Winsett

Chief People Officer, RATP Dev USA



# Is Your Company's Culture More Connected Than TikTok?

## Speakers



### Robin Bouvier

Vice President, Health Transformation, Aon

## Summary

Robin Bouvier focused on the critical connection between an organization's culture and employee well-being, comparing it to TikTok's engaging nature. Robin believes connection, personalization, and fun are key to boosting employee engagement, reducing burnout, and improving retention because employees prioritize a fun workplace, alignment with core values, and overall well-being.

## Key Takeaways

### Personalized Connections

Can your business recreate the level of personalized connections that TikTok exploits?

### Company Culture

Do something different to increase connection within your organizational culture.

### Employee Wellbeing

Wellbeing is the 4th most important thing after pay, benefits, and core values.

### Employee Engagement

Employees who believe their organization cares about them are 3x more engaged.



**These are the things that your employees are asking for. And it only takes a few seconds to really have an impact.**

### Robin Bouvier

Vice President, Health Transformation, Aon



# De-Romanticising AI

## Practical Lessons and Next Steps for HR Professionals

### Speaker



#### Cyril George

Head of HR Technology & Operations,  
General Motors

### Summary

Cyril George filled our “future focus” slot with a word of warning: don't overestimate AI's role in HR. He believes there is an absolute need for realistic, phased implementation. Cyril detailed GM's three-tiered HR operating model, which focuses on a digital tier driven by AI chatbots to handle transactional work, aiming to free up HR professionals for more complex issues.

### Key Takeaways

#### AI in HR

There is real pressure on CHROs to adopt AI everywhere. Stay strong.

#### Chatbots

A tangible and available way to get policy information, access pay slips, track training...

#### The Technology and HR Partnership

View IT as your best friend. But be realistic about IT's priorities (most often not HR).

#### HR's Digital Transformation

Aim: free HR professionals to focus on more strategic and people-centric work.



**“IT has a lot of budgets, but they do not have budgets for HR. So you need to really think about, how do you carve that out?”**

#### Cyril George

Head of HR Technology & Operations, General Motors



# Transforming Employee Experience

Insights from Daikin Comfort's Innovative Approach

## Speaker



### Marie Norman

Vice President, Talent Acquisition, Daikin Comfort

## Summary

Marie Norman shared her ongoing experience implementing a candidate and employee experience transformation. She outlined the importance of a healthy culture and positive employee experience, moving into real-world examples of Daikin's initiatives, such as revamping the application process and onboarding and emphasizing the significance of understanding the employee life cycle, the advantages of a holistic approach, and key elements for creating a positive experience.

## Key Takeaways

### Employee Journey Transformation

Think "365 and beyond". Because you want employees to make it past year one.

### Candidate Experience

Create more brand ambassadors. Ensure every applicant has a positive experience.

### Employee Onboarding Process

New employees should see themselves as part of the company "from the beginning".

### Skills Development

A crucial aspect of any holistic employee experience plan.



**You need to understand what kind of experience you want every candidate to have, regardless of whether you will hire them, because they will be your brand ambassadors.**

### Marie Norman

Vice President, Talent Acquisition, Daikin Comfort



# Four HR Challenges

## Speaker



**Renee Konzelman**  
Chief People Officer, The Pampered Chef, A Berkshire Hathaway Company

## Summary

Renee Konzelman opened our summit with a keynote, and closed it with this AMA session. Questions focused on key HR challenges and strategies, particularly within the context of organizational change – like managing employee experience and engagement during transformation, emphasizing the importance of understanding turnover metrics and focusing on retaining high-impact individuals.

## Key Takeaways

### Employee Engagement Challenges

Be realistic: maintaining or improving engagement during upheaval is a challenge.

### High Impact Turnover

Focusing on people you don't want to lose has become her "new turnover metric".

### Hybrid Work Model

It works. But set "core meeting hours" to facilitate in-office collaboration.

### Building Leadership Trust

Provide tools and data. And empower your leaders to deliver the message internally.



**My CEO has been challenging us. She felt like we got used to a different way of working in the pandemic, and even though some of us have returned to the office, our ways of working haven't evolved. You're still very meeting heavy. You're still very email heavy.**

**Renee Konzelman**

Chief People Officer, The Pampered Chef, A Berkshire Hathaway Company

## Audience Snapshot

# What challenge do you expect to have the greatest impact on your business this year?

54%

Incoming regulations and compliance

24%

Skills shortage

22%

AI and technological disruption

### The more things change...

At CHRO Insight, our community showed HR's crucial role in modern business.

We explored where it remains unchanged: attracting, retaining, and developing talent. We also explored where change is necessary: innovative thinking surrounding DEI, adaptation to AI, and fostering resilience.

Our speakers shared key strategies for enhancing employee experience and engagement, the importance of personalized connections, and technology's transformative potential.

### The most important takeaway?

Better connected cultures foster business success. Whatever is going on around them.

### Stay tuned

Our content doesn't end here – look out for more blogs, interviews, and footage from the summit, and be sure to check out our calendar of upcoming events.

We look forward to seeing how you apply these insights to advance your organization and navigate uncharted waters.

*See you next time!*

[Register your interest here](#)