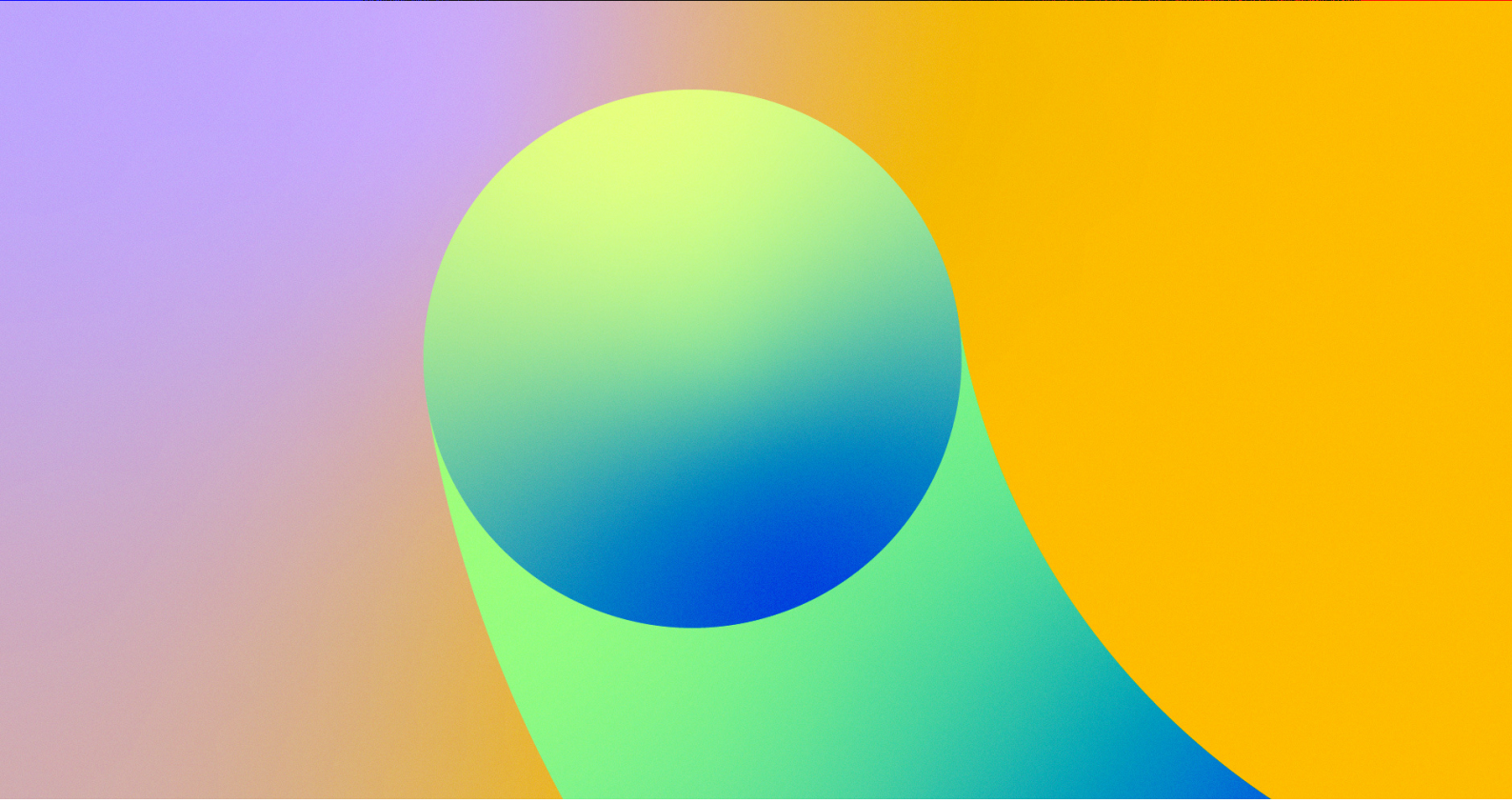


The Winning Skills Advantage

Report by Simon Haines
CEO, Simply Get Results

Key lessons on how to build winning skills in HR and beyond



[Simply Get Results](#) has contributed to KPMG’s latest global ‘Future of HR’ research,¹ providing international benchmark analysis, skills market insight and commentary.

Analysis by [Simply](#)² shows that the HR functions of leading companies are differentiating through skills.

KPMG call these market leaders ‘Pathfinders’ – and their newly published report seeks to understand what makes the most innovative and effective 10% of HR functions – the ‘Pathfinders’ – stand out from their peers.

This special download by [Simply Get Results](#) offers key learnings and valuable tips from the report to help you on how to build winning skills in HR and beyond.

That may sound straightforward enough, but what attitude and approach do market leaders bring to the HR discipline? What tools and techniques do they exploit? And what can YOU do to emulate their success? Read on to learn more!

What makes an HR leader?

The KPMG report highlights a broad range of valuable experiences from HR leaders across industries.

We conclude that leading HR functions exhibit 3 key traits that underpin their distinctive performance:

- 1** Embrace innovation and experimentation
- 2** Exploit the power of data plus the capabilities of technology and analytics
- 3** Identify and harness a new set of skills that are not traditionally found in HR

[1] The future of HR: Lessons from the Pathfinders. KPMG, September 2021

[2] Analysis by Simply using data from EMSI Burning Glass (2021)

Why skills and capabilities are the ‘new currency’ for HR success

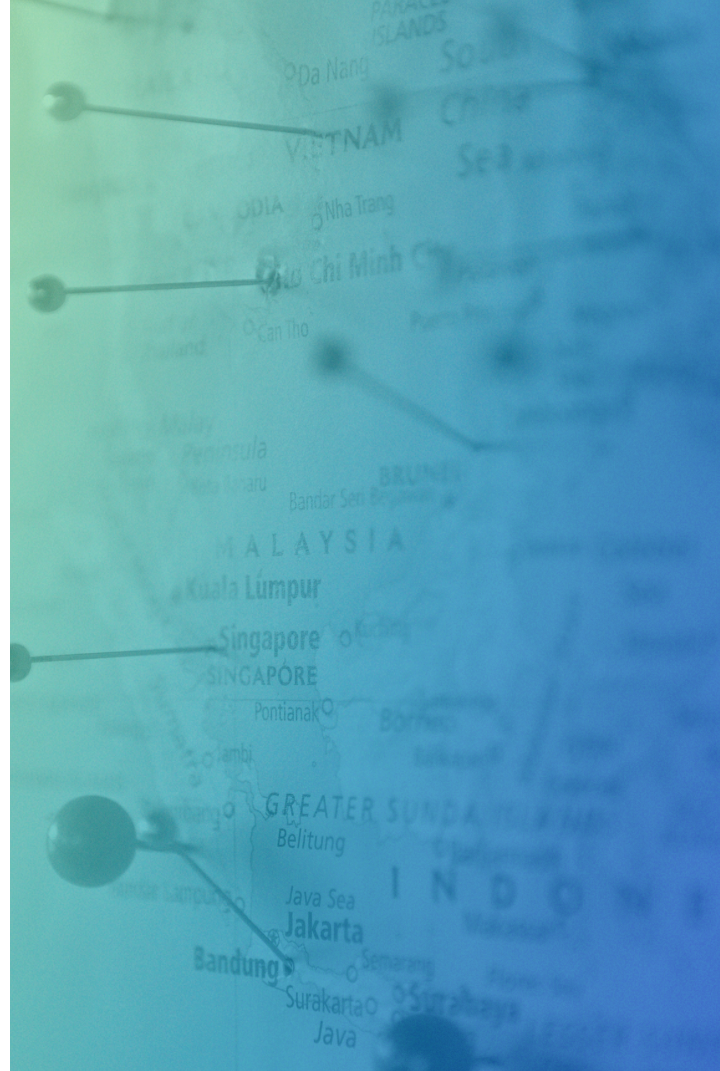
As of September 2021, we have had 18+ months to observe the corporate response to the pandemic crisis. Not to mention the so-called ‘double disruption’ of the pandemic alongside exponential technology adoption.

The result: a global skills crisis. The ways of working have fundamentally changed, and the skills of the workforce aren’t keeping up, as the KPMG report highlights:

“With the cost pressures of recruitment and the impacts of the pandemic on talent pipelines, reskilling and upskilling have become top priorities for the C-suite”

Leading HR functions are bringing a ‘challenger’ attitude to this crisis: breaking down silos, experimenting, innovating, failing, learning and continuously improving.

And thankfully HR isn’t just looking at its own skills. HR leaders are focused on rebuilding and reskilling the workforce in an intentionally employee-centric way. Given most workers’ heavy reliance on technology, this means a ‘digital employee experience’.



So, leading companies have asked and answered some essential questions:

- **What skills will my company need to survive and succeed in the face of this double disruption?**
- **What critical skills gaps do we have in our workforce today?**
- **How can we most effectively fill these gaps?**
- **How can we do the above while maximising the employee experience?**
- **How can we exploit digital channels to deliver this?**

How are some getting ahead in this race? For many, the answer is ‘SkillsTech’.

Why ‘SkillsTech’ is the hottest new solution in HR

Renowned industry analyst, Josh Bersin, describes ‘SkillsTech’ as “one of the hottest markets in HR Tech” because it “helps [businesses] categorise, assess, manage and improve skills at work.”

SkillsTech varies in scope from one provider to another and covers more than just the creation of skills frameworks or ontologies. [Simply Navigate](#), for example, includes:

- Talent Intelligence
- Skills Management
- Reskilling and Upskilling
- Skills-led Workforce Planning

This is a powerful toolset, helping businesses understand the capabilities and skills of their organisation - a one-way ticket for HR leaders to think more like Pathfinders so they can make smarter, more impactful hiring decisions.

Why access to the right data is key

Because so much has changed during the pandemic, many HR and business leaders have lost sight of how competitors and the broader market have changed around them.

But for those in the know, it’s a closely guarded secret that up-to-the-moment data and insight is available on competitor and market behaviour - data that brings a distinct advantage to anyone accessing it, as the KPMG report explains:

“Organisations have [access to] a goldmine of data and Pathfinding HR organisations understand how to use it most effectively.”

At [Simply](#), we call this Talent Intelligence:

- Insight on which roles and skills are in most and least demand
- How labour supply is changing by cost, skill and location
- Which companies are hiring for which skills

By comparing your organisation to peers and competitors, you can choose to emulate the most successful or differentiate and take a different path.





What are the new skills for this new world of work?

By analysing nearly 900,000 HR job postings across seven major markets between 2017 and 2021, Simply Get Results found more than 200,000 job post references for future workforce planning and associated skills.³ **Simon Haines, founder and CEO of [Simply Get Results](#)**, shares the results of this data analysis:

“Skills such as workforce planning and problem-solving are now considered mainstream in HR, while more technical skills - like digital transformation - are clearly emerging among Pathfinding HR functions.

“You then see a ‘long tail’ of ultra-specific skills such as design thinking or data and visual storytelling, which are still very rare in the market, yet likely to be signals of truly disruptive or Pathfinding behaviour.”

What does this mean? Well, aspiring Pathfinders can know:

- Which skills matter most for their business strategy
- Who to benchmark against
- Where the critical skills gaps lie

Moreover, [Simply](#) uses the same data to enable ‘build’ or ‘buy’ decisions and drive action to close skills gaps.

“The findings reveal Pathfinders are... questioning HR’s own strengths and opportunities and using data and analytics to explore how the function can work better with other business functions to shape the workforce of the future”

Where to find ‘Pathfinding’ HR skills

Simply Get Results discovered that 70% of Pathfinding HR skills are typically found outside the HR function. The implications of this finding are HUGE.



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First, it means that if you’re running your HR function on ‘traditional’ or long-established HR skills, these are unlikely to be the skills that make the biggest impact on your business.

Second – and here’s the good news – it’s highly likely that many of the most valuable skills you need may exist already in your business today, just not in HR. You need data analytics – go visit IT. You need customer experience – go visit Marketing.

This is where concepts like role and skill adjacency (the similarity between one role/skill and another) come into their own.

Simply Navigate shows you where priority skills are and how they may already exist in your business. So, instead of hiring or training, your best move may be to collaborate.

KPMG’s Pathfinders are self-confessed collaborators, innovators and experimenters. But they’re also brave enough to experiment outside of their expertise and are inclusive enough to embrace other ideas, experiences and points of view. The KPMG report concurs:

“The findings reveal Pathfinders are... questioning HR’s own strengths and opportunities and using data and analytics to explore how the function can work better with other business functions to shape the workforce of the future.”

How do you become a HR leader?

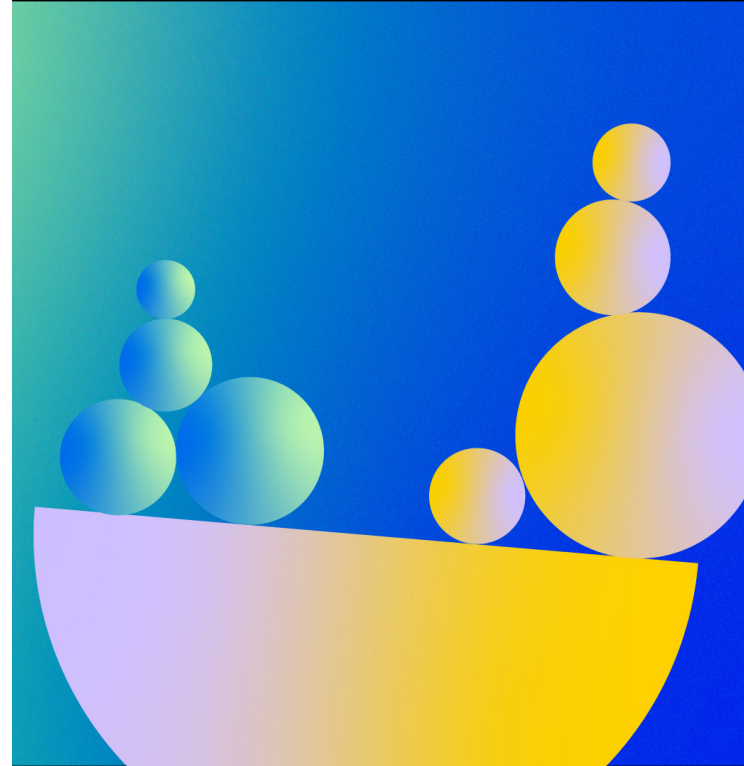
What are the skills required to be a Pathfinder in HR? Who is leading the way? And what can you do to catch up and get ahead?

It's very clear from this analysis that being a HR leader is NOT about making the most popular or obvious choices.

As the name 'Pathfinder' suggests, these HR leaders are breaking from traditional skill-sets and embracing innovative practices not traditionally associated with HR.

But how can you know which skills are needed to be most successful, or where to find these skills? We recommend:

1. Translate business strategy into underlying capabilities and skills – future success is defined not only in terms of financial and customer metrics, but in terms of the skills required to achieve those goals.
2. Benchmark against the best – compare your organisation to a combination of your established competitors, disruptors in your industry and leaders in the fields you want to excel in (e.g. differentiate through customer experience by learning from leaders in customer experience regardless of their sector).
3. Track emerging, declining and forecast growth skills – to 'future proof' your workforce you need to understand which skills will become redundant and which will fuel your future – and the data is out there to do just that.



4. Estimate, don't survey, for the skills you have today – AI technology like [Simply Navigate](#) can use data from your HR system to estimate the most likely skills across your workforce today. This detail helps you identify critical skills gaps and investment priorities.
5. Use AI tech to evaluate your 'build or buy' decisions – use role adjacency to pinpoint career development opportunities and use market supply data to evaluate hiring potential.
6. Prioritise the closure of your critical skills gaps – balance the most important and urgent vs. most do-able. And always explore skills development opportunities: developing skills can be 4-6x cheaper than hiring. You retain organisational knowledge and development investment is hugely motivating for your current workforce and future hires.

Achieve all of these things for your organisation with Simply Navigate, our ‘SkillsTech’ platform. It helps you:

- Analyse the skills market
- Identify critical skills
- Plan your workforce
- Close skills gaps

So you can navigate the changing world of work and come out on top.

Your next steps...

At [Simply](#) we have the data, insight and tools you need to identify and secure the winning skills for your organisation – in HR and beyond.

Contact us to discuss your business priorities and key workforce needs to enable your business growth strategy

Accelerate your Winning Skills journey.

Get in touch

“This is the gold standard for analytics”

CHRO, Global
Telecommunications
Company