

Top HR Skills 2023

Stay ahead of the curve with the must-have HR skills for 2023



loop



Foreword

2022 marked the rise of hybrid work as the standard way of working, leading to a surge in technology adoption and the creation of innovative job opportunities. This shift in the workforce also brought about a massive wave of upskilling and reskilling, drastically changing the way we approach work in the present day.

As per the Future of Jobs Report by the World Economic Forum, 50% of all employees will need reskilling by 2025 as the adoption of technology increases.

So with several enterprises announcing job cuts, hiring freezes, and layoffs, the present world of work faces a supply and demand gap in both the workforce and skills. Consequently necessitating people to continually adapt, upskill, and embrace opportunities to remain relevant in the current dynamic and fast-paced business landscape.

If your employees have the relevant skills for the new world of work, you can strengthen your company's position in the market for now and well into the future.



AMRIT SINGH

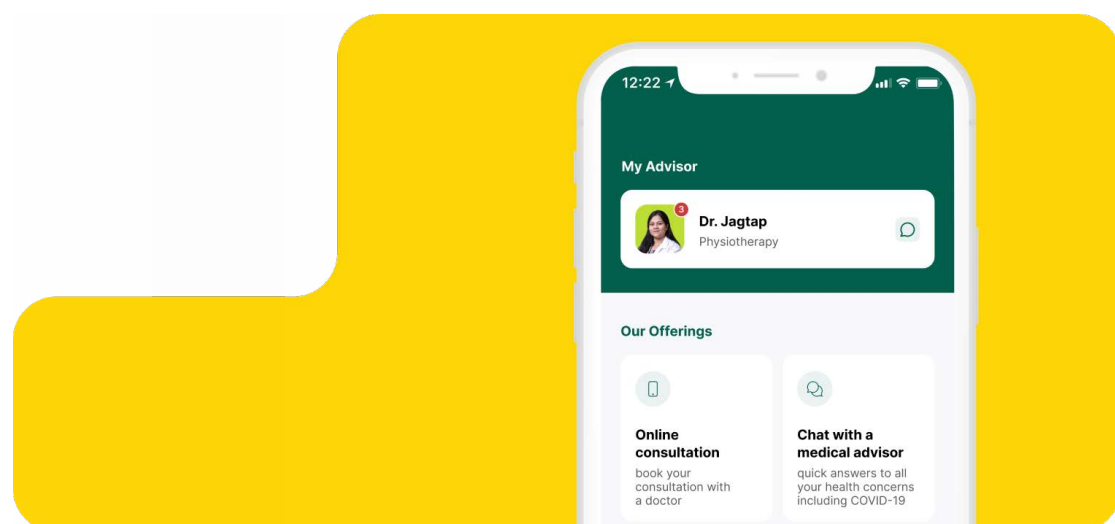
Co-founder and CRO at Loop

About Loop

The Indian healthcare system is flawed. Hospitals react to sickness but do not offer quality care. Doctors attend to the patients but do not give them enough time and care. Bills are soaring high, booking an appointment is cumbersome, and lab tests are getting expensive.

You see, there are many areas that need attention. And that's what we, at Loop, are aiming to fix. At scale. **We've built an insurance and care platform that makes employee health benefits simple, useful, and holistic.**

Founded in 2018, Loop Health is the fastest-growing B2B healthcare startup in India. We're proud to serve 400+ companies like NoBroker, Medline, Zoomcar, General Electric, and Bajaj to insure 300,000+ employees and their families. We are backed by top-tier investors like Elevation Capital, Khosla Ventures, and General Catalyst, and have raised more than \$40m+ towards our vision of rebuilding healthcare and insurance from the ground up.



Introduction

Any transformation brings about a complex set of needs.

How do you keep up and maintain your competitive edge?

The business world, especially, is under the constant burden of staying relevant – both with changing customer needs, maintaining a hybrid workforce, and evolving technologies. As your employees continue to grow and adapt to possibilities, the role of human resource professionals becomes pivotal.

Due to the nature of the job, you must possess a diverse set of skills - **a unique combination of hard and soft skills.** To succeed, HR professionals must know the latest trends and developments in the future of work and continually build their own skillset.

We've rounded up some of the most in-demand skills you must master in the coming years. Let's dive in.

2023's Must-Have HR Skills to Punch Competition in the Guts

How do you ensure you succeed in your roles and address management and employee needs? Keep on reading for the most sought-after skills in HR.

Table of contents



Adaptability skills	6
Confidentiality skills	8
Communication skills	10
Organizational skills	12
Digital and data literacy	14
Business acumen	16
Soft skills	18
Conclusion	21

Adaptability skills

Why is it important to be flexible?

Unexpected events (such as an employee quitting) can disrupt your daily schedule. To adapt to or even anticipate these changes, you must:

- **Manage change** - HRs need to help employees navigate change along with **explaining the 'why' behind the change** as well as the change in processes. You should recognize the need to revise existing policies, develop new ones, and assist employees in adapting to change (for example, by helping them adjust to new positions).
- **Think 'big picture'** - Think of HRs as business partners in strategic planning and decision-making. **You must forecast changes.** For instance, as a business expands, consider investing in existing staff through creating and implementing career development programs.
- **Assess and improve** - The secret to a healthy work environment is **never getting too comfortable.** HRs who possess a mindset of improvement can aid in modernizing the workplace in multiple ways like introducing unique benefits and perks, thereby retaining employees.

How can you improve your adaptability skills?

- **Listen** - Proactively listen to your employees. When you **ask for their opinions** or even indulge in casual conversation, it brings forth novel ideas for change. For instance, complaints about new policies indicate it needs revision.
- **Participate in active communities** - Join relevant online discussions, forums, or groups to **keep up with the changing and upcoming HR trends**.
- **Network** - Network with HR industry leaders either online or at in-person events to **learn about best practices and stay updated**.
- **Improve** - **Keep tabs on metrics** that will help you understand what needs improvement and what works. Do this not just for your HR practices, but for the company as a whole.



Confidentiality skills

Why is it crucial to be confidential?

Besides managing confidential information such as compensation, HRs discuss sensitive and personal matters with employees. To ensure they respect an individual's privacy, it's a must to develop:

- **Trust** - HRs need to inspire trust. When an employee faces an issue with a manager or has a problem with a certain policy, they will want to talk to someone in the HR department. They will only do so when they **feel secure enough to raise a concern** that won't affect their status of employment.
- **Ethics** - The HR department has access to corporate information, such as offer letters, salaries, budgets, contract terms, etc. They must not misuse this information and should **maintain professionalism at all times**.
- **Discretion** - HRs must **handle all the information they receive from the company or employee with care**. Disclosing employee information like medical history not just puts the employee in an uncomfortable spot, but also may result in legal risks. Hence, keeping information discreet is of utmost importance.

How can you demonstrate your confidentiality skills?

- **Manage data** - Follow the advice from IT and legal experts to the T to store and manage sensitive data.
- **Maintain a friendly face** - Be approachable and regularly converse with employees and managers.
- **Keep an employee handbook** - Compile an employee handbook so all company procedures and guidelines are transparent to each and every employee.
- **Build all-inclusive policies** - Make policies all-inclusive so they meet every employee's needs.



Communication skills

Why is it important to be a good communicator?

HRs interact with people all day, every day. So whether it's over an email, over the phone, or face-to-face, good communication skills iron out issues before they escalate. For that, you must:

- **Manage conflicts effortlessly** - Your responsibility is to give employees a safe space to work through issues and to help staff find workable fixes. So whether it's salary negotiations, grievances, or exit interviews, HR teams must be able to **de-escalate tension, encourage active listening, steer the conversation towards solutions, and negotiate a compromise easily**. This helps maintain a balanced work environment.
- **Listen actively** - The HR department is the ears of the organization. Whether a professional or personal issue, teams seek HRs council. With active listening, you can **document conversations, write detailed reports, and ensure employees feel valued and heard**. Overall, this will help diagnose and find apt solutions.
- **Write clearly** - Whether it's during the interview stage or handling an appraisal, **human resources speak to every member of the organization**. They also send mass emails about wellness initiatives, cultural events, health insurance enrolment, etc. Sometimes even handle workshops and presentations. Hence, having good written communication is key.

How can you improve your communication skills?

- **Body language** - **Interpret nonverbal cues** by paying attention to body language.
- **Feedback** - Collect feedback and tips from different teams **about your written communication**. For example, someone from sales can advise you on improving your persuasion skills while someone from marketing can help proofread emails.
- **Public speaking** - Improve public speaking and presentation skills by **attending a public speaking seminar, taking help from others** who are good at it, practicing in front of the mirror, etc.
- **Reading** - Read books to **help with soft skills** like conflict management, empathy, listening, persuasion, negotiation, and more.

Organizational skills

Why is it important to be highly organized?

The HR department has to liaise between CEOs, department heads, employees, and more. To manage expectations better, you need to:

- **Manage calendars** - In between meetings with internal and external stakeholders and individuals, HRs must **make time for other essential tasks** like setting up a proper benefits plan, learning and development programs, engagement sessions, wellness of employees, and more. With proper calendar management, busy HRs can manage their time effectively and be productive.
- **Maintain records** - HR teams must **manage and document several physical and digital processes** from interviews to corporate policies. This makes it imperative to store and retrieve employees effectively.
- **Structure time** - HRs manage multiple time-sensitive tasks like drawing up payroll and health insurance employment tasks. Without time management, it's difficult **to meet deadlines and comply with regulations.**

How can you improve your organizational skills?

- **HRIS** - Invest in a reliable HRIS system **to keep track** of different processes.
- **To-do lists** - Organize your daily agenda with the help of a to-do list **to prioritize your tasks**, so you're never behind.
- **Time management** - Measure the time each task takes up so you can **create slots to focus** on specific responsibilities.
- **Toolkits** - Use tools to automate tasks and keep you **up to date with notifications**, so you don't miss anything.



Digital and data literacy

Why is it important to be literate with data and digital tools?

As the saying goes, “data is the new oil.” It’s proven that data enables organizations to streamline processes, gain visibility, increase profit, drive better decisions, and drive higher profits. Yet, HRs must be equipped with the skills to use this data. And digital tools help with this. So, here’s what you need:

- **People analytics** - With respect to employee management, it’s now central to making data-driven decisions. With the help of people analytics, it’s possible **to provide actionable insights** for matters related to learning and development, workforce processes, talent management, and more.
- **Reporting** - With analytics comes reporting, which helps read, analyze, and interpret data. By understanding and interpreting data, it’s possible to turn dry information into compelling messages using storytelling. By effectively reporting key metrics, it puts HRs in a better position to advise managers and employees **to create evidence-based decisions** leading to improve people processes.
- **HRIS** - Human Resource Information System as a solution simplifies HR tasks for the HR department. There are plenty of tools out there for a single process or multiple processes together. These solutions focus on **automating basic HR tasks so you can be more**

productive and efficient ensuring the department runs smoothly without hiccups. It is essential that HR skills training includes guidance on HRIS navigation and how to understand and interpret the data stored there. Don't shy away from them, learn them, embrace them, and free up your time.

How can you improve your data and digital skills?

- **Apply for online certifications and courses** - You can indulge in many online courses **to improve your skills in data analytics and HRIS systems.**
- **Participate in professional development conferences**
 - Attend conferences that focus on digital HR and technology. These events provide a great opportunity to network with HR professionals, **learn about the latest trends,** and gain insights into the industry.
- **Partner with a tech-savvy HR colleague** - Reach out to an HR colleague with expertise in digital HR and offer to shadow them or work with them on a project. This can **provide hands-on experience** and help you develop your skills.

Business acumen

Why is it important to have business acumen?

HR managers with business acumen are better equipped to support their organizations and contribute to their success. It helps align HR strategy with business goals, enables better decision-making, improves communication, betters cost management, and more. Here's what this bucket covers:

- **Coaching** - Effective coaching comes in handy when it's time to train staff from time to time. You must be able to **explain difficult concepts and create presentations that simplify learning for fellow employees**. This also comes to use during onboarding, re-integration, conflict resolution, and in assisting frontline managers with people issues. You can develop these skills on the job or in external coaching training.
- **Advising** - A key skill HRs need is to be a trustworthy and credible advisor to stakeholders. Whether it's senior management, line managers, or employees, it's important to advise them effectively on personnel issues. This skill will help you in not just advising but also how you **advise in a way that builds trust and strengthens your reputation as a credible practitioner**. This is where the previously mentioned communication skills come in.
- **Strategic mindset** - Even if you are not (yet) at a level where HR strategy creation is among your responsibilities, you still need to be able to **understand the strategic intent and translate that into an implementable execution plan**. The ability to interpret and implement a

strategy, as well as create an HR strategy that effectively supports the overarching organizational strategy, will help you make more impact within your organization and strengthen HR's role as a strategic partner.

How can you improve your business acumen?

- **Educate themselves** - Besides core human resources, HRs can educate themselves with the **basics of other fields like accounting, economics, finance, etc.** Whether a certificate, workshop, or course, there are plenty of means.
- **Network with business leaders** - HR managers can learn from other business leaders in their organization by attending meetings and events or participating in mentorship programs. This can provide them with **valuable insights into the business** and help them build relationships with key stakeholders.
- **Participate in cross-functional projects** - HR managers can gain valuable experience by participating in cross-functional projects that expose them to different parts of the business. This can help them better **understand how different departments work together** to achieve the organization's goals.
- **Shadow business leaders** - HR managers can observe business leaders in their organization as they make decisions, analyze financial data, and make presentations. This can provide valuable **insights into how business leaders think and approach problem-solving.**

Soft skills

Why is it important to have soft skills?

HR managers with strong soft skills are better equipped to build relationships, resolve conflicts, engage employees, manage change, and effectively manage talent. These skills are essential for ensuring the success and productivity of the organization. Here's what you need:

- **Proactivity** - As an HR professional, you are the connection between the employer and the employee. As such, proactivity can **help you spot potential problems early and prevent them from escalating.**
- **Teamwork** - Teamwork is one of those HR skills that is imperative. As an HR professional, **you're expected to work together with your colleagues in Human Resources, and with managers in the organization.** Working together internally by actively aligning HR activities benefits both the organization and HR.



- **Team building skills** - As connectors within the workplace, HR professionals are the driving force behind fostering workplace friendships and promoting company unity. Through their planning of enjoyable social events and coordination of company-wide gatherings, **HR helps to bridge the gap between different departments.** With the important task of shaping the company's culture, HR must possess exceptional team-building abilities. Your role is to mold individual employees into a cohesive team, working towards common goals.

- **Critical thinking** - As a director, making tough decisions such as disciplining employees or establishing company-wide policies is a regular task. To tackle these challenges, you must maintain a clear head, approach problems with a solution-focused mindset, and act professionally. With the responsibility of making decisions that impact the company on a macro level, the HR officer must **weigh multiple perspectives, consider various factors, and anticipate the long-term consequences of their actions.**

How can you improve your soft skills?

- **Seek feedback from colleagues** - Ask for feedback from colleagues, supervisors, or subordinates **to understand better how they are perceived** and what areas they need to improve.
- **Volunteer for leadership roles** - Take on leadership roles in volunteer organizations, clubs, or industry associations **to gain experience working with others and leading teams.**
- **Network with peers** - Connect with peers in your field to exchange ideas and **learn from each other's experiences.** This can provide valuable opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- **Read leadership books** - Read books on self-improvement and leadership **to gain new insights and learn from the experiences of others.**
- **Take on mentorship roles** - Mentor others in their organization or industry to help them develop their skills and share their experiences. This can help you **develop your leadership skills and improve your interpersonal skills.**

Conclusion

The last three years altered the way we operate and do business. Moving forward, HR will play a crucial role in driving organizational transformation. **Improving HR competencies can create more fulfilling career paths and foster a nurturing work environment that prioritizes growth and talent retention.** In addition, this will aid in constructing an inclusive and purpose-oriented organization.

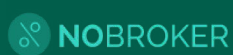
Organizations need to equip HR professionals with the latest skills to create a workforce that is prepared for the future. HR has taken on even greater responsibility in driving business transformation, serving as a catalyst for change in the post-pandemic world. With access to cutting-edge technologies, **HR professionals can develop their digital competencies, paving the way for transformative change across various organizational domains.**





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