



# Realistic HR and Payroll Tech Trends in 2019

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## Biography

*Simon Fowler is CEO at XCD (<https://peoplexcd.com>), whose world renowned HR & Payroll software XCD is available on the Salesforce cloud platform.*

*As an experienced Chief Executive Officer with a demonstrated history of working in the human resources industry, Simon brings tech industry leadership experience from roles with companies including Advanced Computer Software Group and Technology One.*

*He will spearhead a major new five-year plan for XCD, focusing on business growth and customer service.*

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## Abstract

*That technology is changing the face of HR is an unarguable fact. But when it comes to hot tech trends, there is a tendency to focus on buzzwords rather than reality, as the author of this article explains.*

## Introduction

Technology is changing Human Resources in many ways. But what is the true reality behind all the hype? Take last year's January predictions. According to many of them, artificial intelligence should be pervasive throughout the industry by now. But where is the blockchain tsunami that was forecasted? Where are the microchipped employees feeding biometric data into IoT applications?

That's not to say these things aren't in the post, but it illustrates that the hype train doesn't always deliver the trends that are most relevant to normal professionals' day-to-day lives.

The following list is arguably less exciting and contains no hoverboards or robots, but we have used stringent criteria, and we believe these are the things that will hit your to-do list in 2019, not 2022.

## Mobile

'This is the year of mobile'. It's been said so often that it's almost become a cliché.



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## Human Resources

Last year, an international study by IWG found that 70% of professionals worked remotely at least once a week, while 53% did so for at least half of the week. Employees are already mobile.

But if you are one of the HR and Payroll operations that's already fully mobile compatible, congratulations, you're in the minority.

So, drumroll ... this is the year of mobile. Mobile accessibility for HR applications.

For employees, this means easier engagement with the self-service systems that can save so much admin time; the ability to update personal information from their smartphone, to check details like pay or holiday allowance, or to scan and submit expenses.

If your current HR and Payroll platform doesn't offer this kind of accessibility, and many can't, perhaps it's time to think about upgrading to one that does.

## Cloud

Over the past few years, cloud computing has democratized the cutting-edge people management and data tools that previously only enterprise level business could afford. Research from Deloitte indicates that the majority of organizations not already in the cloud are either actively transitioning, or planning to in the immediate future, so if this isn't on your radar already, it will be soon.

For those already in the cloud, there is another rung to this trend. SaaS is nearly 20 years old and the major cloud platforms have had time to mature and diversify the solutions they host. This means it's possible to run multiple business operations on a single platform, HR, Payroll, finance, marketing and sales, all operating from a common data source with seamless integration; a single platform strategy.

## Data

Big data was big on the agenda last year. But for many HR professionals, just getting to the point of good data is a significant digitisation hurdle; missing records, incomplete data, or incomprehensible spreadsheets, saved on someone's laptop, now lost.

Unfortunately, it's very easy for data to become bad and comparatively difficult to make it good. But if you're sitting on a Pandora's box of bad data, there are two options. You either wipe the slate and start again, not practical or possible in most cases, or you roll up your sleeves and get stuck in.

A lot of organizations bring in a third party at this point, as cleaning data isn't quick or easy. If you're doing it yourself, create a list of your most vital data and focus your efforts here. You will probably find that the process will highlight many superfluous data sets that can be done away with altogether.

Good data is a result of robust data processes. Modern HCM platforms are underpinned by a single structured database, there are no needless transfers of



information between recruitment, HR and Payroll, and no different or legacy formats to deal with. Once you have got good data, make sure you have a system in place that allows you to keep it that way.

### **Automation**

The international business advisory firm McKinsey estimates that over half of the standard 'hire to retire' tasks that HR is required to carry out could be automated using technology available today, with little in the way of process change.

Tasks like recruiting and retaining talent, managing payroll, benefits, training and performance management are among those that can be significantly streamlined with the smart application of automation.

If you're still manually entering data, or laboriously transferring it between incompatible systems, you are at a disadvantage in a modern business environment where HR is under pressure to be more strategic and achieve more. Make 2019 your year to embrace automation.

### **Analytics**

If the subject of analytics hasn't come up yet, 2019 will be the year that it does. Given enough good data, analytics can reveal trends, spot insights and make predictions about your organisation and its people.

Combining information from recruitment, engagement, learning, compensation and resourcing, modern HR software crunches the numbers to look for statistically significant patterns.

Analytics is about asking 'why'. Data tells us what's going on in a business. Analytics use data to help us understand why – and board level recommendations underpinned by a data-backed 'why' are the most compelling kind.

### **Conclusion**

These tech trends are the basic practical issues we feel should be on the agenda of organizations who wish to remain competitive, both today and in the future. We call this 'Digital Basecamp', because without the practical essentials like data and automation, none of the really exciting stuff, the game changing innovations, will be easily accessible to you in the future. For instance, Artificial Intelligence won't do anything for you unless your data practices are solid; nobody climbs the mountain without going through basecamp.