



CEO Corner: Choosing Optimism About the Future of Work

I get asked a version of the same question everywhere I go lately: “Are you worried?” People want to know if I lose sleep over AI, over shifting talent markets, over a workforce that seems to be rewriting its own rules in real time, over my job disappearing. And I understand why they ask. Change this fast can feel less like an opportunity and more like something happening to us.

But here’s where I land: I’m optimistic. Not naively so. I’ve spent enough years studying how work actually changes inside real organizations to know optimism without clear eyes is just wishful thinking. I’m optimistic because of what I see when I look closely.

I see individuals using technology to strip away the parts of work that we don’t want to do and never should have taken up so much of our time in the first place; the reports nobody reads, the approvals that exist because they always have, the busywork that crowds out the work that actually matters. It’s less of a threat and more about opening up space for the things only we can do. Things like judgment, connection, creativity, and care. How is AI going to tell you which cookie is best if it cannot taste it?

As we saw in this week's The Pivot Effect, we can and are building careers that don't move in straight lines, and treating that as a feature, not a flaw. The old model of pick a lane, stay in it, retire from it is giving way to something better and it's the way curiosity actually works.

Start discovering the strengths in yourself that a rigid job description won't surface. And let's be honest, as scary as it might seem right now this may be just the thing that pushes us to do something better, more interesting – something we personally care about.

A lot of people are in a job because that's where they landed, not necessarily because that's what they wanted to do. Let this time be your nudge to focus on you and what you really want to do with the time you've been given (yes, LOTR reference).

I see leaders asking better questions than they used to. Not just "how do we get more output," but "how do we build something people actually want to be part of." If they aren't asking, tell them. That shift, more than any technology, makes me confident about where work is headed.

None of this means the road is smooth. It rarely is. But optimism has never required a smooth road just a clearer sense of what's worth building toward. It might just take us getting some of that childhood wonder back to refocus.

I think the future of work is worth building toward. As I say each week on The Pivot Effect, there's always a future, sometimes we just have to make it.

Are you ready to be part of it?

— *Teri A. Zipper*

HR Humor Break



How does an HR manager stay optimistic through a company reorg?

They just call it a “growth opportunity” and keep the confetti on standby.

Thank You for a Successful 29th Annual HR Systems Survey

Data Cleaning Now Underway!

Thank you again for being part of the 29th Annual HR Systems Survey. Your participation continues to make this one of the HR technology industry’s most trusted independent research resources, and we don’t take that trust for granted.

As we move into the next phase of the research, we wanted to share a quick update. Our team is hard at work reviewing, hand-cleaning, and validating thousands of survey responses before identifying the trends that matter most. It’s a detailed process, but it’s one we believe is essential.

For nearly three decades, our approach has remained the same: the voice of the customer deserves more than a quick analysis. By combining rigorous research with years of historical data, we’re able to uncover more than what’s happening today. We’re able to better understand how the HR technology landscape continues to evolve over time.

Because the strongest research doesn't begin with assumptions. It begins with listening.

And we're excited to share where you'll see the findings first. We'll be unveiling the 2026 HR Systems Survey results live at HR Tech in Las Vegas this October, where we'll explore the trends, insights, and shifts shaping the future of HR technology.

Thank you again for your time, your insights, and your continued trust in this research. The data matters, but what makes it meaningful is the shared context, experience, and perspective you bring to it.

Two Headlines, One Message: AI Still Needs the Human Element



Our own Stacey Harris, Chief Research Officer and Managing Partner at Sapient Insights Group, was recently featured in two very different conversations that landed on the same takeaway: successful AI adoption isn't just about the technology.

Earlier this year, HR Executive published a roundup of key insights and perspectives shared during HR Tech Europe 2026. Stacey joined five other industry leaders to reflect on one challenge that continues to surface across organizations: while AI usage continues to grow,

many teams are still struggling to translate individual experimentation into meaningful organizational adoption.

Here is the fact: 81% of HR professionals use AI personally, yet only 36% say it's built into how their teams actually work. Stacey's perspective? The challenge isn't recognizing AI's potential. It's moving from awareness to action.

That same theme resurfaced in a very different conversation when Human Resources Director America asked Stacey to weigh in on why Mark Zuckerberg's AI agent strategy at Meta hasn't delivered the results many expected.

Her response:

"I think he forgot about the importance of context and the importance of the human interaction with those agents, and the auditing that needed to be required, like any other resource inside your organization."

Two very different headlines. One consistent message.

Whether the conversation is happening during an industry event like HR Tech Europe or in response to one of the world's biggest AI investments, the human side of AI continues to be one of the most important—and often overlooked—parts of the conversation.

We're proud of Stacey for continuing to represent Sapient Insights Group and the community we serve in conversations like these.

Read the full HR Executive piece: [Six HR Tech Europe voices on why AI adoption is stalling](#)

The HR Huddle Podcast



There's a lot to catch up on across the network. Catch the latest episode of HR We Have a Problem, where host Cliff Stevenson sits down with Jeff Smith, CEO of 15Five, to talk about why AI should make us more human at work.

In Spilling the Tea on HR Tech, Stacey Harris joins Cliff to dig into governance versus gatekeeping, leadership shakeups, and AI's moral crumple zone.

And on a newly launched episode of The Pivot Effect, Susan Richards and Teri Zipper talk with Sapiient's own Summer Orellano about her career journey.

Hosted on the WRKdefined platform. For partnership inquiries, please don't hesitate to reach out to info@sapiientinsights.com.

From the Cash Register to Closing Deals: Summer Orellano's Unplanned Path to Sales Leadership

Career advice loves a five-year plan: pick a lane, climb the ladder, don't look sideways. Summer Orellano's story, shared on the latest episode of Sapient Insights Group's podcast *The Pivot Effect*, makes a pretty compelling case for the opposite. Summer now leads sales at Sapient. A few years ago, she was managing Airbnbs in Florida, having moved there with her two kids during a hard postpartum stretch. Before that, she took a shot at Nursing school. Because that's what everyone around her was doing. None of it was mapped out, and that, she says, is kind of the point.



Read more...

Not Sure Where to Start?

Not sure where to start with AI and HR transformation? We've got you. Sapient Insights Group has resources designed to meet you where you are — explore our HR Leaders AI Launch Plan, take the AI Readiness Assessment, or dive into *Change Without Confidence Is Chaos*.