

PREDICTIONS FOR 2021



2021 is a new year...

Once the inertia of 2020 wears off and you regain focus – where will your focus be for this year?

Top themes for HR to focus on in 2021:

- Employee wellbeing
- Hybrid Workspaces
- Detachment
- Diversity & Inclusion vs. Belonging
- Learning & Development
- Superteams



You have an infinite selection of lenses – which one will you choose?

A common law of physics called inertia, refers to the fact that objects resist changes in their state of motion. If a stone is at rest, it will stay in a state of rest until a force acts upon it causing for it to budge. If you pick up the stone and throw it, the stone will continue moving through the air until it is brought to a halt by means of friction, resistance, and gravity. The same law applies to us when we spin around.

While spinning, our inner ear resists the movement at first, sending rapid impulses to the brain signalling movement. However, within seconds, your perception has normalized to the rotation of the head leading to the sense that you are still, but the world around you is rotating.



The longer we view ourselves through a distorted lens, the more likely we are to believe a distorted truth.

- Craig Groeschel



Suddenly, you stop!

Enter the inertia. You experience dizziness and the sensation of still moving, but you are not.

Reflecting on 2020, we can all relate to the feeling of spinning. Not only did everything around us change, but so did we. We learned how to survive on salary cuts and how to cope with multiple deaths. We managed to make friends with the four walls around us. Our dining room tables turned into office spaces. Kitchens became classrooms, and office parks became abandoned buildings with desperate “to let” signs decorating the windows.

But - we also learned the value of family and friends. Time became more precious than silver and gold. Saving lives rested on the shoulders of a whole nation, not only that of the doctors and healthcare professionals. We discovered our resilience and agility and dusted off old books we intended to read 4 years ago but never had the time to. We gained new appreciation for our work, and an even deeper appreciation for our health.

Once the inertia of 2020 wears off and you regain focus – where will your focus be for this year? Isn't it all about the lens we see life through? At Yellow Seed, we choose to wear the lens of possibility, positivity, and growth. We choose to prioritize our growth, the growth of others, our loved ones, and our well-being in 2021. We choose to identify the good, to celebrate what is right. We don't deny the opposite side of the coin, but instead we make the continuous decision to celebrate the beauty.

2021 is a new year. A year of regaining our balance and our focus after the spinning, and in doing so, opting for the right lens to help us see. You have an infinite selection of lenses – which one will you choose?

2021 Predictions:

Let us assume that there won't be a truly "post-Covid" reality. The question to ask is how has Covid shifted, shaped, and carved out the emerging themes within organisations for 2021 (and possibly for the following year or two)? How can we address these arising trends?

Dedicated professionals have conducted surveys around the globe to measure the impact of the current state on the way we work, interact, think, and survive. Regaining our focus in 2021 will ask of us to shift our attention to new ways of working.

Organisations, will be forced into conversations surrounding the wellbeing of employees, innovation to catapult into new possibilities, anti-fragility as a key trait in employees, and of course, regaining high levels of productivity and engagement.

We have identified the following 6 top HR trends for 2021:

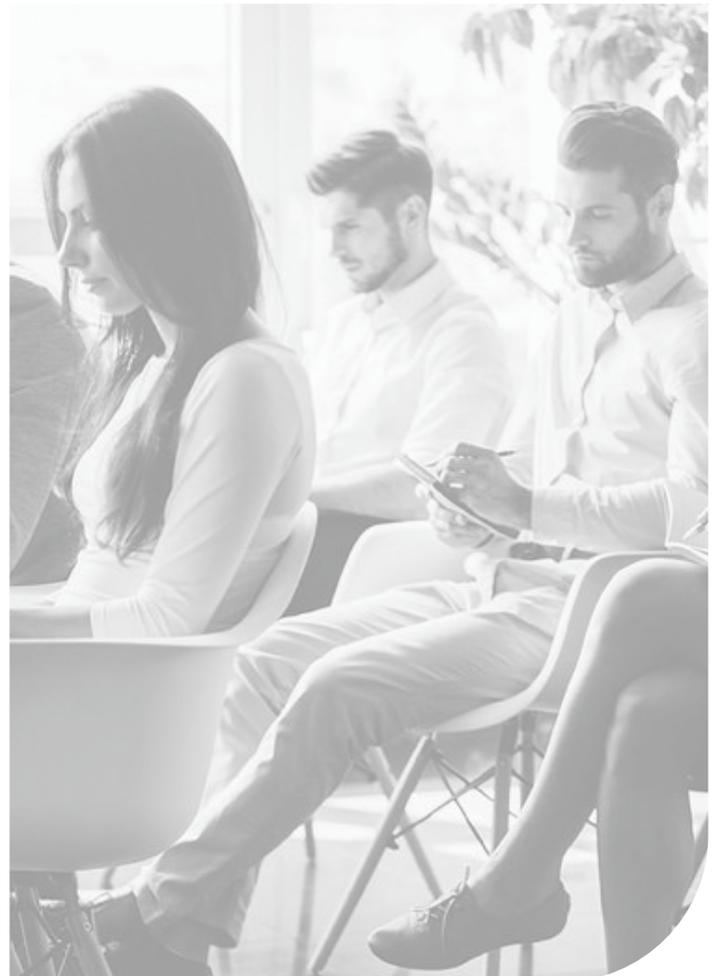
1. Employee Wellbeing

Not just you but me too

2020 brought employees increased stress, increased workloads, and decreased engagement - all leading to HR departments having their hands full with individuals sitting on the brink of burnout. This trend is likely to continue well into 2021. Since January 2020, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (Sadag) has received more than 55 000 calls for help and have seen 23 recorded suicides per day in South Africa. Intentional efforts towards employee wellbeing (which includes a holistic view of health) will be a major focus of HR teams in 2021. Research shows that employers have seen an increase in mental and physical health amongst employees when HR and organisational leaders invest in the employee life experience of their staff. This means supporting employees in all aspects of their personal and professional life.

Ideas for application:

- Regular conversations between employees and leaders should be a priority and should convey a message of empathy, positivity, and understanding.
- Burnout programmes, regular employee check-ins, workload distribution conversations, and time management support are all key focus points for HR leaders.
- Provide opportunities for employees to work through their own emotions and experiences. This can be done through peer coaching, focus group discussions, EAP counselling benefits etc.
- Consider using technology as an enabler in helping employees manage their mental health - from mindfulness apps to wellbeing apps.
- Provide financial support and guidance to employees who are struggling to manage the negative effects of the Covid pandemic. Think online financial management courses, financial coaching, company loans, debt counselling etc.
- Address the adverse effects of isolation by keeping your staff connected. Train your leaders to use virtual technologies throughout isolation periods to ensure your staff feel supported.



If your business needs support in supporting your employees' mental health through these difficult times, please get in touch with our team of psychologists to assist:
www.yellowseed.co.za/contact-us

2. Hybrid Offices

“Location, location, location”

Many organisations settled into the work-from-home approach quickly and effectively, while others found the transition straining on their teams. Hybrid working arrangements (virtual combined with partial office-based work) will be prominent in 2021. Dimensional Research in collaboration with Cisco and Webex, found that approximately 77% of larger organizations will increase work flexibility while 53% will shrink office sizes in 2021.

This forces HR leaders to find a fresh perspective regarding the way work and collaboration is managed.

Ideas for application:

- Be intentional regarding the design of your hybrid environment rather than allowing and extending the offer of remote work to employees but lacking in the support they receive from leadership.
- Identify the individuals who indicate better engagement within the remote working model and those who are struggling to work virtually. Then offer mixed solutions to employees in order for them to function optimally.
- Keep an open communication channel between employees and HR. Talk about the change of mind-set that is required, while also having a good understanding of the difficulties employees and leaders are dealing with. Take special care to talk to leaders who believe that all employees must return to office-based work routines to be effective.
- Identify the perks for in-office work and align perks for those working offsite. Be diligent in driving organisational change and creating a well-balanced work experience between remote workers and in-office workers.
- Be creative and personalize the work experience for each individual. Consider using AI-based technologies, smaller team units - who are able to care for each other's emotional needs - and establishing flexible working arrangements with clear guidelines for each.

3. Increased Detachment

“Employee today – but not tomorrow”

Employees are removed from their natural habitat, the office, which can lead to higher risk of detachment. Employees are stretched into new roles due to lay-offs in the organisation, often with little guidance from HR or managers and little to no knowledge or passion for their new portfolio. Social interactions and team building sessions which kept company culture in good spirits, have also been stripped away. In addition, we have seen an increased risk in cross-border employment scooping up individuals by offering higher salaries with no need to relocate. We predict that HR leaders will see a drastic increase in detachment from employees calling on drastic changes.

Ideas for application:

- Scheduling regular check-ins, team development activities and/or employee bonding experiences to foster trust and strong bonds between employees will be vital.
- Ensure that your leaders set clear, collaborative, and aligned expectations to keep employees engaged. According to Gallup's research, employees who strongly agree that their job description aligns well with the work they are asked to do are 2.5 times more likely than other employees to be engaged.
- Prioritise regular feedback sessions. Detached employees often benefit from some direction and recognition but when a leader also asks for feedback from the employee, it shows humility. Allow employees to voice their frustrations, ideas and experiences on a regular basis.
- Build trust and improve internal communication. Optimize your communication strategy to keep employees up to date with organisation successes, goals, projects and even employee story sharing. It's easier for team members to feel detached when they are not kept in the loop.

4. Diversity & Inclusion vs. Belonging

“Belonging or simply fitting in?”

In a year where Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) was one of the hottest topics, we certainly failed to acknowledge that simply because someone is included within the team, does not mean that they feel at home or like they belong. In 2021 we are likely to see the focus shift from our failing D&I tactics to a focus on belonging in the workplace. As published in the Harvard Business Review, high belonging was linked to a whopping 56% increase in job performance, a 50% drop in turnover risk, and a 75% reduction in sick days.

Belonging speaks to company culture, and the extent to which employees are encouraged to be their authentic selves at work. Rebekah Bastian, a vice president of culture and community at Zillow Group, said that the superior business outcomes often associated with having diverse teams can't be achieved without a sense of belonging. It's not enough to simply include people at the table, she said, but to "amplify everyone's voices, clear barriers...and appreciate each other for our unique backgrounds."

Ideas for application:

- Establish values such as compassion, empathy, self-awareness, and integrity as core values of the organisation. Be sure to crystallise what this looks like in action by defining the behaviors that you want to establish in your workplace.
- Initiating benefits such as flexible work schedules or wellness programmes that are applicable to all groups to signal that you care about their unique needs, demands, and challenges both work-related and personal.
- Introducing events to celebrate victories bring forth a sense of belonging and creates a culture where everyone is seen, heard, and celebrated.
- Look at the tone of your leadership team. Is the tone of leadership corresponding to actions? Do they value diversity, inclusion, and belonging in their day-to-day actions? If not, focus on initiatives that will drive these behaviors in your leaders.
- Establish an inclusion and belonging strategy, task team and executive sponsors before executing key initiatives to ensure that you are intentional in creating the rhythms, processes, communication, metrics and technology that support your D&I objectives.

5. Learning And Development

“Future Skills in the flow of business”

A rise in demand for new skills has the Human Capital team spinning. HR leaders are facing rapid changes within the organisations, as the skills-gap increases year-on-year. A recent analysis run by Gartner shows that companies listed roughly 33% more skills on average job ads in 2020 compared to 2017.

Our prediction is that organisations will introduce micro learning, blended learning and in-house learning as key to their learning and development strategy. Learning that is delivered iteratively, within the flow of natural work will become critical to enable a future-fit workforce that is ready to learn at a continuous and rapid pace. This will also nurture a culture of innovation, learning, and agility.

Ideas for application:

- Identify the future skills that are relevant for your organisation/ industry and establish a future-skills initiative aimed at building a future-ready workforce. Consider research-backed future skills such as Emotional Intelligence, Change Resilience; Cognitive flexibility; Creativity; Judgement and decision-making; Critical Thinking and Digital Confidence.
- Before any learning can take place, the focus should be placed on breaking down the existing barriers employees have regarding their own abilities and current roles. A learner-for-life mindset is the key to continuous development and growth within the team.
- Rethink the way learning should take place. Introduce social learning opportunities, informal knowledge sharing, coaching and mentoring opportunities and other creative ways of incorporating learning into the flow of everyday work etc.
- Focus on micro-learning offerings for topics like: How to use the organisation's platforms; Change Management principles; Onboarding; Training regarding Operations and Procedures etc.
- Introduce blended learning solutions combining online learning with interactive (virtual) workshops to up your learning engagement and transfer.
- Incorporate gamification principles to facilitate fun and interactive training.

If your business needs support in driving a future-fit learning and development strategy, please get in touch with our learning & development team: www.yellowseed.co.za/contact-us

6. Superteams

The 'not-so-average' Joe

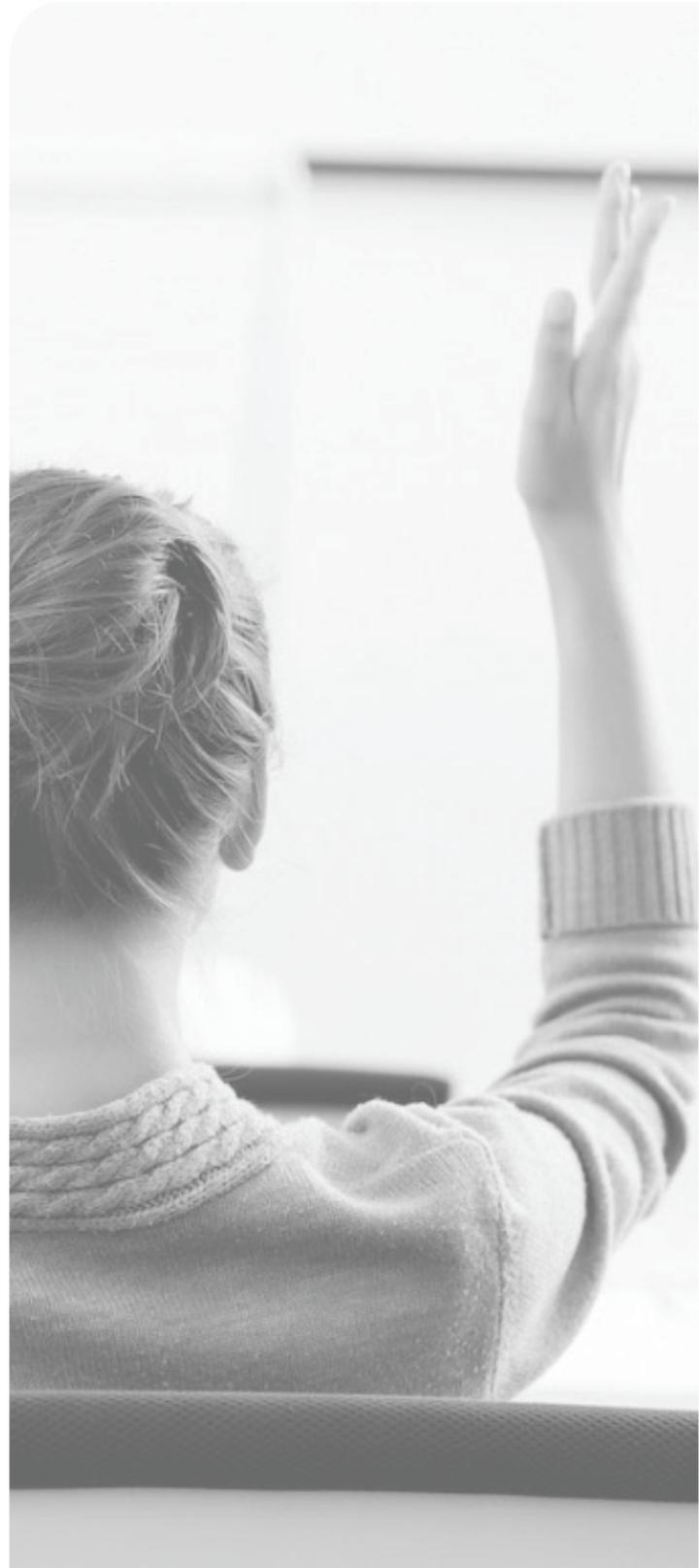
Research shows that high performing teams outperform average performing teams by a factor of 2000. And nowhere in history has this become more important than now. With employees not able to return to offices or company gatherings any time soon, the micro team has become the main channel of organisational communication, belonging, collaboration and success.

A SuperTeam is a team that consistently delivers a superior performance relative to expectations. These teams are characterised by their agility, excellent communication, constant evaluation and improvement, sense of trust, aligned vision as well as their effective work methods. In 2021, organisations will need to prioritise team development, cohesion and agility to ensure broader organisation success.

Ideas for application:

- McKinsey found that 97% of employees and executives believe lack of alignment within a team impacts the outcome of a task or project. Support leaders to ensure that the entire team understand their role, purpose and short-term vision. In Superteams each player understands and contributes to the overall objective and purpose.
- Working long hours to increase output often births quite the opposite – reduced productivity. When people socialise and get to deepen the roots of their professional relationship, they show increased performance and engagement. Create open spaces and time for team members to interact and have fun together.
- Create structured programmes that support the team development journey and help teams to discuss and address any frustrations that might be hindering their progress as a unit.
- Create facilitated opportunities for team members to get to know each other and better understand each other's behavior. Consider using team dashboard tools like Cloverleaf to offer insights into each team member's preferred way of working.
- Create processes, systems and/or opportunities for team members to regularly give each other feedback and hold each other accountable.
- Be intentional to group diverse team members together on projects to enable higher levels of creativity in the team. Then provide support and guidance on how best to navigate conflicts and differences in opinion to drive a growth mindset and iterative problem solving.

If your business needs support in increasing team performance in your organisation, please get in touch with our Team Development consulting team: www.yellowseed.co.za/contact-us



Cloverleaf

Cloverleaf is a comprehensive personal and team development tool. That means we're not just a survey and personality test. Focus on the context of what needs to get done, and align your people to that goal.

When you know who each person is, and how they interact with everyone else, you can make the right decisions for your team.



Agile TQ

High-performing teams outperform average teams by a factor of 2000. Now more than ever, teams have been appreciated for being agile and showing exceptional results – driving our organisations through the new world of work. Agile TQ is a blended programme (interactive workshops & online learning modules) written and facilitated by the Yellow Seed team, transforming teams into agile superteams. Agile TQ runs through an insightful diagnostic tool, enabling leaders to make informed decisions surrounding team management and team performance, while being supported and guided by our team of industrial psychologists and agile coaches.



Online Learning Offerings

Learning is not served in a box anymore. Technology has made it possible for learning to take place anywhere, anytime. Studies have shown that learning in the flow of work, increases knowledge retention and productivity of employees. At Yellow Seed, we offer innovative, creative, and effective learning solutions either from our own library of courses or straight from your pen. Grow your organisation by investing in smart and cost effective learning and development solutions – unleashing the exponential human potential of your workforce.



For more information, visit:
www.yellowseed.co.za/products

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