people first

powered by **MHR**

Putting people first: An AI action plan for nonprofit HR teams

Burnout. Budget constraints. Talent gaps. If you're part of an HR team in a nonprofit organization, you're probably feeling the strain. Now, AI is reshaping how work gets done — and HR is right at the center of that shift.

This isn't a conversation about tomorrow. It's about today. The right AI tools can help nonprofit HR teams cut down on repetitive admin, streamline hiring and onboarding, and improve employee engagement — without adding headcount.

To lead this shift effectively, your HR team needs a clear AI upskilling strategy - one that empowers your team, sets the pace for change and frees you to focus on what matters most: your people and your mission.

Why upskilling can't wait

Three numbers tell the story:

- 75% of nonprofits report unfilled roles
- 95% of HR leaders cite burnout as a top issue
- 44% of workforce skills are projected to shift in just five years

(Source: World Economic Forum)

Despite the urgency, most nonprofits lack a clear plan to prepare their workforce for AI. But here's the good news: HR doesn't need to have all the answers from the start. You just need to lead the way with the right mindset and tools.

HR's own upskilling sets the tone for the rest of the organization. When your team adopts AI tools for recruitment, compliance and internal mobility, it builds internal credibility to lead larger transformation efforts.

Start with tools that meet you where you are

AI might feel like a leap. But in many HR systems, it's already here — quietly improving everyday processes. People First, our all-in-one HCM platform, is designed for nonprofit realities: limited resources, complex workforce models and high expectations.

With People First, you get:

Recruitment & Onboarding: Automatically parses resumes to extract skills and experience, speeding up shortlisting and improving hiring accuracy.

Talent Management: Recommends SMART goals and personalized learning paths to align employee growth with organizational needs.

Payroll & Compliance: Detects payroll anomalies, ensuring accuracy and reducing compliance risks.

Performance & Check-Ins: Uses AI to suggest check-in topics and analyze sentiment, helping managers proactively support employee wellbeing.

Workplace Insights: Delivers predictive analytics and natural language queries to surface workforce trends and answer HR questions instantly.

AI Assist & Self-Service: Empowers employees and managers with AI-driven chat support and personalized insights for faster issue resolution.

These features aren't theoretical. They're already helping lean HR teams reclaim time and reduce burnout.

Taking action to drive change

Adopting tools like People First is a critical first move - but real transformation happens when HR teams take deliberate steps to build trust, foster understanding and guide change. Implementing AI isn't just a tech upgrade; it's a people initiative. That means HR must lead the charge not only with the right tools, but with a thoughtful rollout strategy that addresses fears, builds confidence and reinforces the human-centered values that nonprofits stand for.

Here are some practical steps to help your team take action and lead AI adoption with clarity and confidence:

Step 1: Remove the fear, build the trust

AI adoption starts with trust. For many nonprofit staff — especially those in values-driven roles — AI can seem abstract or even threatening.

What you can do:

• Address concerns head-on. A Gallup poll shows thavt 1 in 4 U.S. workers fear AI will eliminate their job. Be transparent about what AI is (a tool), and what it's not (a replacement).

• Make it personal. Show how AI will reduce admin overload — not eliminate human roles.

• Create safe spaces for feedback. Use check-ins, anonymous surveys and listening sessions to gather concerns and share progress.

With People First, this kind of communication is built in. From employee listening tools to customizable check-ins, the platform supports a people-first approach to transformation.

Step 2: Start small and show value early

You don't need an enterprise budget to make AI work. Focus first on the areas where automation creates immediate wins — like hiring or compliance.

Try this:

• Automate job postings and candidate communications.

• Use AI to pre-screen resumes and match skills to job requirements.

• Apply predictive analytics to highlight retention risks or DEI gaps.

In People First, these capabilities are already in place — and designed for lean teams. With built-in dashboards and real-time insights, you'll have the data to show what's working.

Step 3: Make learning continuous (and accessible)

Upskilling doesn't mean long training sessions or complex certifications. Microlearning, peer-led sessions and embedded AI guidance can all support learning in the flow of work.

How to approach it:

• Embed learning into onboarding and performance reviews.

• Use check-in prompts to suggest development areas.

• Offer short, targeted resources that teach AI tools in context — like a walkthrough of resume parsing or how to use feedback-based goal suggestions.

People First makes learning visible and accessible. From customizable onboarding tracks to learning pathways and gamified content, your team can learn as they go — without losing momentum.

Step 4: Lead by example

HR is uniquely positioned to model what responsible AI adoption looks like. That includes:

• Ethical use of AI in hiring and evaluations

• Transparent data practices

• Ongoing evaluation of what's working and what needs adjusting

By embedding these principles into your workflows, you not only build trust — you position HR as a strategic partner in your organization's future.

People First. Purpose always.

Nonprofit HR teams are no strangers to doing more with less. You're already balancing burnout, budget constraints and ever-changing compliance demands - all while keeping your people at the heart of your mission. Embracing AI isn't about replacing that mission. It's about reinforcing it.

You don't need a massive budget or a perfect plan to get started. You just need to lead with purpose — and the right tools.

People First by MHR was built for mission-first organizations. It brings HR, payroll, talent and compliance together in one intuitive, mobile-friendly platform — so you can spend less time on admin and more time driving impact.

Ready to put AI to work for your nonprofit HR team? Schedule a demo to see People First in action.

Get in touch

info@mhrglobal.com | mhrglobal.com
(+1) (470) 890 6170 (US) | +44 (0) 115 945 6000 (UK) | +353 (01) 541 3778 (IRE)

The science behind
a new world of work