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## THE IMPACT OF GENERATIVE AI ON HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY: WORKFORCE REDUCTION AND TALENT RETENTION

## ВПЛИВ ГЕНЕРАТИВНОГО ШТУЧНОГО ІНТЕЛЕКТУ НА СТРАТЕГІЮ УПРАВЛІННЯ ЛЮДСЬКИМИ РЕСУРСАМИ: СКОРОЧЕННЯ ПЕРСОНАЛУ ТА УТРИМАННЯ ТАЛАНТІВ

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The article examines how the diffusion of generative AI is transforming human resource strategy in contemporary organizations, focusing on workforce reduction, job architecture reconfiguration, and talent retention. The study is based on the analysis of academic publications and analytical reports on the impact of AI on the labor market and HR management, using comparative analysis, synthesis, and systematization of managerial indicators. The findings distinguish AI-driven structural layoffs from cyclical ones, highlighting their effects on job functions and organizational roles. Structural layoffs are linked to the automation of operational and coordination tasks and a decline in entry-level positions. Changes in skills demand are identified, including the growing importance of AI competencies. An algorithm for role redesign is proposed, along with key metrics for evaluating retention strategy effectiveness.

**Keywords:** human resource management; talent retention; job architecture; reskilling; upskilling; internal mobility; AI skills; retention strategy.

Метою цієї статті є дослідження того, як поширення генеративного штучного інтелекту (generative AI) трансформує стратегію управління людськими ресурсами в сучасних організаціях, зокрема у контексті скорочення персоналу, реконфігурації структури посад і утримання талантів. Дослідження ґрунтується на аналізі сучасних наукових публікацій та аналітичних звітів, присвячених впливу штучного інтелекту на ринок праці та управління персоналом. У роботі використано методи порівняльного аналізу, синтезу та інтерпретації даних, а також систематизації управлінських показників, що застосовуються для оцінювання ефективності стратегії утримання персоналу. Результати дослідження дозволили визначити та систематизувати відмінності між структурними скороченнями персоналу, зумовленими впровадженням ШІ, і циклічними скороченнями, продемонструвавши їхні відмінності за причинами виникнення, тривалістю, типами функцій, що зазнають



змін, а також впливом на архітектуру посад в організації. Показано, що структурні скорочення пов'язані з автоматизацією операційних і координаційних функцій, які раніше виконували працівники, і супроводжуються змінами у структурі організаційних ролей та зменшенням частки початкових посад у кар'єрній ієрархії. У статті також проаналізовано трансформацію структури попиту на навички, зокрема зростання значущості компетентностей у сфері ШІ та скорочення ролей, які традиційно слугували стартовими позиціями для молодших спеціалістів. Запропоновано алгоритм стратегічного перепроєктування ролей в умовах впровадження генеративного ШІ, що передбачає ідентифікацію завдань у бізнес-процесах, відбір функцій для автоматизації, визначення зон людської відповідальності та планування переходу працівників до нових або трансформованих ролей. Також визначено та систематизовано ключові показники оцінювання ефективності стратегії утримання персоналу в умовах ШІ-трансформації, зокрема коефіцієнт утримання, час до досягнення продуктивності та рівень залученості персоналу, що дозволяють оцінити стабільність кадрового складу, швидкість досягнення працівниками ефективних результатів і рівень їхньої участі в організаційних процесах. Отримані результати можуть бути корисними для керівників компаній, HR-менеджерів та дослідників у сфері управління людськими ресурсами.

**Ключові слова:** управління людськими ресурсами; утримання талантів; архітектура посад; рескілінг; апскілінг; внутрішня мобільність; ШІ-компетентності; стратегія утримання персоналу.

**Statement of the problem.** In 2024–2025, organizations actively experimented with generative AI systems. According to data from a consulting firm [1], in the United States more than 10,000 layoffs were announced during the first seven months of 2025 in which employers explicitly cited the implementation of artificial intelligence. These layoffs represent only a small share of the 806,000 layoffs recorded in the first half of 2025 – the highest level since 2020 [1]. Although these figures appear modest compared with overall layoffs, their structural nature is particularly significant. They primarily affect operational and administrative functions. In the case of AI-driven layoffs, it is not production workers who are losing their jobs, but employees whose work involves the coordination and transfer of information across organizational units, including support specialists, coordinators, and middle management roles. Analysts at the consulting firm Forrester emphasize that, unlike cyclical layoffs associated with economic crises, layoffs driven by automation tend to be structural and long-term in nature [2].

Developments in the labor market also indicate that technological change is reshaping the early stages of the career ladder. A study published in July 2025 [3] reports that employment among programmers aged 22–25 declined by nearly 20% compared with its peak at the end of 2022. As a result, young specialists are increasingly facing higher levels of unemployment: the unemployment rate among bachelor's degree graduates has risen to 6%, which is above the overall average.

University programs and employers are responding to these challenges. According to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) [4], the integration of AI literacy into academic curricula is becoming a

key condition for employability. Business schools are embedding AI-related competencies into programs as early as the first year of study, as employers are reducing the number of internships and increasingly expect graduates to be capable of performing more complex tasks from the outset of their careers. AACSB analysts also emphasize that employers remain dependent on human judgment, yet they are no longer willing to maintain large apprenticeship tiers within organizations. As a result, the number of entry-level vacancies is declining, while demand for experienced employees remains stable or even continues to grow [4].

Against this backdrop, human resource strategy is no longer limited to a staffing function and instead becomes a mechanism for addressing two interrelated challenges: optimizing workforce size through changes in processes and job architecture without undermining organizational competitiveness, while simultaneously retaining and redirecting talent capable of supporting the implementation and scaling of the new operating model.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** In contemporary literature, the impact of generative AI on human resource management is primarily examined through the transformation of HR functions, changes in the content of work, and the development of new employee competencies. In particular, P. Budhwar et al. [5] emphasize that generative AI is reshaping the logic of Human Resource Management (HRM): routine HR processes are increasingly automated, while the strategic role of HR is expanding. The authors note that the adoption of large language models influences the structure of work roles and generates demand for new digital and analytical competencies.

Other scholars, Y. Jiang, Z. Cai, and X. Wang [6], examine the integration of generative AI into HR processes from a risk-management perspective. Their study shows that the use of AI alters HR decision-making procedures and requires a reconsideration of organizational roles, responsibilities, and control mechanisms. Research by H. Bennett et al. [7] focuses on the role of HR business partnering during periods of organizational change. The study demonstrates that HR units are increasingly involved in strategic decision-making related to workforce transformation and the balancing of workforce optimization with the preservation of critical competencies. In the work of N. Dragičević Rogge, A. Lamovšek, and S. Batistič [8], a typology of generative-AI-supported work is proposed. The authors introduce the concept of individual ambidexterity, defined as an employee's ability to simultaneously employ algorithmic tools and their own domain expertise. This perspective highlights that effectiveness in an AI-enabled environment is determined not by the replacement of human labor by technology, but by the complementarity of human and algorithmic capabilities. The issue of competency development in the context of AI is analyzed by A. Jaiswal, C. J. Arun, and A. Varma [9], who demonstrate that systematic upskilling programs enable multinational corporations to adapt more rapidly to technological change and reduce the risk of talent loss. Similar conclusions are presented in Ekuma's systematic review [10], which emphasizes the shift of organizations toward continuous skills development models.

A separate stream of research focuses on internal mobility within organizations. C. Ray [11] demonstrates that internal mobility increases employee tenure within a company and enables organizations to utilize existing human capital more effectively, which is particularly important in the context of technological change.

At the same time, most studies examine either the impact of AI on work or the instruments of employee development. The question of how AI-driven structural layoffs can be combined with talent retention mechanisms within a unified HR strategy remains insufficiently explored, which defines the focus of this study.

#### **Formation of the objectives of the article.**

The purpose of this article is to substantiate the impact of generative AI on the transformation of human resource strategy by analyzing structural layoffs and changes in job architecture, and to identify managerial mechanisms for talent reten-

tion under these conditions, particularly through role redesign, competency development, and internal employee mobility.

#### **Summary of the main research material.**

The methodological framework of the study is based on the analysis of contemporary academic publications, analytical reports of international organizations, and consulting companies devoted to the impact of generative AI on the labor market, organizational structures, and human resource management. The sample of sources includes works published преимущественно in 2021–2026, which makes it possible to cover the period of active diffusion of generative AI in business practice and academic discourse.

The criteria for selecting sources were: the presence of empirical or analytical data on the impact of artificial intelligence on employment, job structure, and HR processes; publication in peer-reviewed academic journals or authoritative analytical reports of international organizations and research centers; and relevance to the topics of HR strategy transformation, competency development, and talent retention.

The study employs methods of systematization and comparative analysis; the method of generalization, used to develop an algorithm for role redesign under conditions of generative AI adoption; as well as interpretive analysis of analytical data, which made it possible to identify key trends in changing skills demand and retention strategy tools.

The results of the study are primarily relevant to knowledge-intensive organizations in digitally intensive sectors, where the adoption of generative AI directly affects the structure of job roles, skills demand, and human resource management practices.

Before proceeding with further analysis, it is advisable to briefly clarify the key concepts used in the article. Structural layoffs are understood as dismissals caused by long-term technological changes, particularly the automation of functions through AI, leading to a sustained reconfiguration of work. Job architecture refers to the system of roles and positions within an organization and the possible transitions between them.

In this context, sunset roles are positions whose relevance is declining due to technological change, whereas emerging roles are new or transformed positions that arise in the process of digital technology adoption. AI-critical areas denote those areas of a company's activities where the use of AI has the greatest impact on productivity and performance outcomes.

To understand the scale and depth of these changes, it is necessary to clearly distinguish structural layoffs caused by automation from cyclical layoffs, which traditionally accompany economic downturns. This distinction makes it possible to see that the issue is not a temporary reduction in headcount, but rather a long-term reconfiguration of job architecture, the disappearance of certain levels of the career ladder, and the emergence of new role configurations. For this reason, the analysis should begin with this conceptual distinction.

Unlike cyclical layoffs caused by economic downturns, structural layoffs are not limited to temporary factors. The study [2] notes that job losses resulting from automation are “structural and permanent”, whereas jobs that disappear during recessions typically return as the economy recovers. According to Forrester’s projections, by 2030 AI and automation could eliminate approximately 6.1% of jobs in the United States (around 10.4 million positions), while 20% of jobs are expected to be significantly affected by AI, although they will not disappear entirely [2]. To systematize the key differences between these two types of layoffs, their comparative characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

In organizational practice, generative AI is typically integrated through a range of technological tools that support work processes. The most common are AI copilots, which assist employees in generating text, analyzing information, and preparing reports,

as well as knowledge retrieval systems (RAG), which enable language models to work with a company’s internal knowledge bases.

Generative AI is also used for automated document creation and classification, processing customer inquiries, and workflow automation. In most cases, such systems operate in a decision-support mode based on the human-in-the-loop principle, where AI assists in analyzing information, while final decisions remain with humans. It is precisely this model of technology use that creates the preconditions for role redesign and changes in the structure of employment within organizations.

The comparison presented in Table 1 shows that layoffs associated with AI adoption differ fundamentally from conventional cyclical layoffs. During economic downturns, companies typically reduce costs and workforce levels on a temporary basis. By contrast, the introduction of generative AI changes the very logic of work organization. The issue, therefore, is not simply a reduction in the number of employees, but a transformation of which functions are performed by humans and which are carried out by algorithms. For this reason, such layoffs are rarely temporary: once processes are restructured, organizations generally do not return to their previous role structures.

The lower part of the career hierarchy appears to be the most vulnerable in this restructuring, as it has traditionally concentrated standardized tasks that served both as professional entry

Table 1

**Differences Between AI-Driven Structural Layoffs and Cyclical Layoffs**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>AI-Driven Structural Layoffs</b>	<b>Cyclical Layoffs</b>
Cause	Transfer of decision-making and functions to AI platforms; automation of processes that previously required human coordination.	Macroeconomic downturns, fluctuations in product demand, and financial crises.
Duration	Permanent: technologies replace roles rather than temporary workers; requires workforce reskilling.	Temporary: employment levels tend to return to previous levels as the market recovers.
Functions affected	Operations, customer support, and middle management; roles responsible for information transfer and coordination.	Employees across departments, depending on industry conditions and demand cycles.
Impact on job architecture	The lower rungs of the career ladder disappear; junior employees are expected to demonstrate AI competencies from the outset; companies reduce or cancel internships.	The organizational hierarchy remains largely unchanged; demand for entry-level positions returns after economic recovery.
Strategic response	Reskilling and job transitions, creation of sunrise roles to replace sunset roles, and investment in internal mobility.	Cost reduction measures and waiting for demand recovery.

*Source: compiled by the authors based on the analysis of sources [5; 6; 8–10]*

points and as a form of learning workload for junior specialists. Some indications of this trend can be observed in LinkedIn analytics on the structure of employment at the lower level of the career pyramid. In the Technology, Information and Media sector, the share of entry-level employees increased between 2020 and 2022, but declined by 0.9% between 2023 and 2025 [12]. This suggests a reversal of the trend following a period of active expansion of junior positions. Similarly, the Indeed Hiring Lab report from September 2025 identifies an imbalance in the structure of labor demand: over the course of one year, the number of job postings with junior titles declined by 7%, while postings for senior positions increased by 4% [13]. Taken together, these data do not support the claim that AI has completely displaced entry-level roles; however, they clearly illustrate the mechanism of change. Career entry points become less stable when part of the training and routine tasks is automated, while companies simultaneously optimize costs and raise expectations regarding minimum productivity from the first day of employment.

It should also be noted that the reconfiguration of job architecture is accompanied by changing expectations regarding competencies at the entry stage of a career. According to the Work Trend Index 2024, 66% of managers reported that they would not hire a candidate without AI skills, while 71% stated that they would prefer a less experienced candidate with AI competencies to a more experienced candidate without them [14].

These findings indicate a structural transformation in the demand for skills. Entry-level positions do not disappear automatically; however, they are no longer “apprenticeship roles” in the traditional sense and instead become more tool-oriented. In the analytical materials prepared for this study, this shift is described as a transition from a workforce expansion logic to models characterized by higher skill density, where the key indicator becomes productivity per employee and the team's ability to scale outcomes through technological tools.

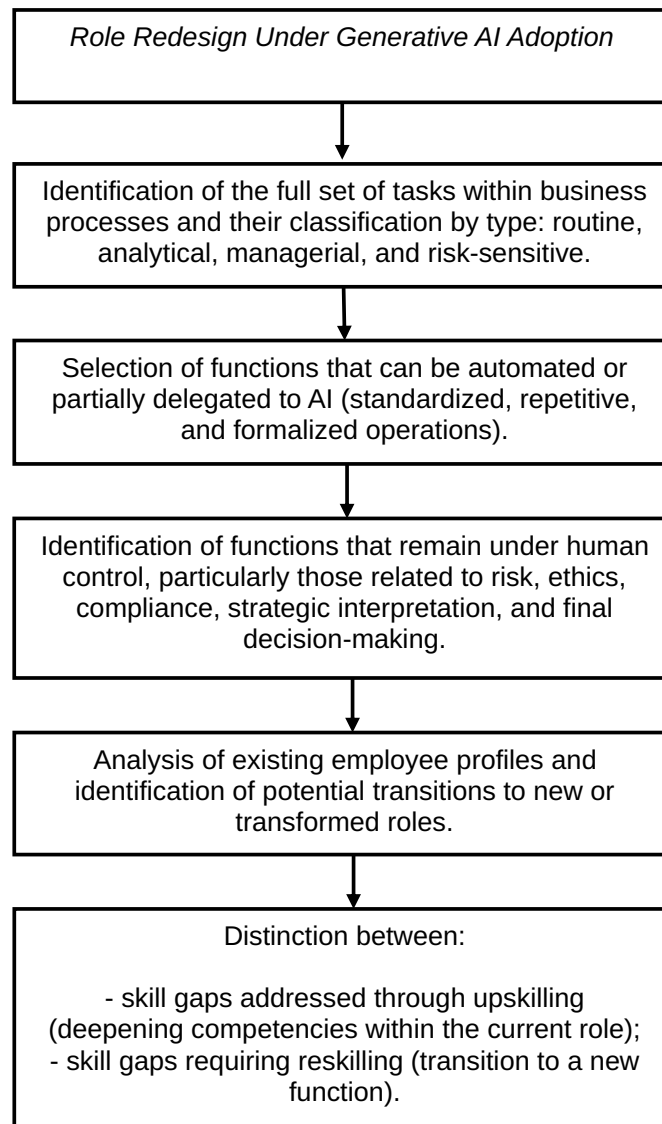
Thus, the practical conclusion within the first research objective is that workforce reduction and hiring should be considered elements of a unified strategic framework that includes process redesign, the renewal of job architecture, and the preservation of career entry pathways, particularly for junior roles. Without such an approach, structural workforce optimization may generate short-term cost savings but create long-term talent shortages.

If generative AI continues to drive profound workforce restructuring, employee retention ceases to be merely an HR function and instead becomes a condition for the return on the entire transformation effort. In more compact lean organizational structures, each key specialist concentrates knowledge, processes, and managerial linkages. The loss of such an employee entails not only replacement costs, but also a slowdown in the implementation of change, a decline in the quality of oversight, and increased organizational risks. Therefore, retention in the context of AI is not simply about keeping a person in their current position; rather, it involves creating a clear development pathway in which some roles gradually lose relevance while others emerge at the intersection of domain expertise and the use of AI tools.

In the Future of Jobs Report 2025, this logic is presented in practical terms: if we imagine a company with 100 employees, 59 of them will require training by 2030; 29 will be able to upgrade their skills within their current roles, 19 will undergo upskilling and transition to other positions within the organization, while 11 risk not receiving the necessary training, which would negatively affect their future employment prospects [15]. For a retention strategy, this picture is significant because it clearly demonstrates that retention in the AI era does not mean keeping employees in their existing roles. Rather, it means retaining them through managed transitions to new roles or through the reconfiguration of the content of their current roles.

In this context, internal mobility becomes a key infrastructure of the internal labor market. Data indicate that employees who make internal transitions are 40% more likely to remain with a company for at least three years [16]. What matters here is not only the numerical value of this figure but also the managerial implication: during periods of structural change, the absence of opportunities for internal transitions becomes a costly organizational choice. The practical implementation of a retention strategy in the context of AI adoption begins with the analysis of the transition from sunset roles to emerging roles, focusing not on job titles but on specific tasks and skills. The logic of these changes can be illustrated as follows (Figure 1).

Figure 1 illustrates the sequence of steps that organizations typically follow when attempting to redesign roles after the adoption of generative AI. The process begins with a simple question: what exactly do people do



**Figure 1. Algorithm for Strategic Role Redesign in the Context of Generative AI Adoption**

*Source: compiled by the authors*

within business processes? When tasks are decomposed into individual steps, it becomes possible to identify which of them are repetitive and can be performed by algorithms. For example, in customer support, AI can classify requests or generate standard responses, while more complex cases still require human involvement. Such analysis usually clarifies which functions remain the responsibility of employees and where new tasks emerge, such as verifying system outputs or configuring digital tools. At the next stage, organizations can address transitions between roles: some employees only need training to work with new tools, while others may move into entirely different functions. As a

result, not only the set of tools changes, but also the overall structure of work.

The combination of reskilling, upskilling, and internal mobility should be highly practical and implementation-oriented. Research by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) shows that the greatest productivity gains from the use of AI tools are achieved by less experienced employees, indicating that technology can act as a catalyst for learning [17]. However, this effect occurs only when quality control mechanisms, mentoring, and clear accountability are in place. Thus, retention in the AI era becomes a mechanism for preserving and developing professionals capable of operating

within a cycle of tool use, verification, decision-making, and accountability.

Internal mobility becomes effective when it is supported not only by formal transfer procedures but also by digital mechanisms for internally matching the demand and supply of skills. One publicly documented example is the FLEX Experiences platform at Unilever, which allows employees to participate in projects alongside their primary roles, develop new competencies through real business tasks, and increase the flexibility of resource allocation [18]. In the context of generative AI, this has a dual significance: horizontal transitions compensate for the compression of vertical career ladders, while learning becomes a productive contribution, reducing resistance to transformation and strengthening employee engagement.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of a retention strategy should be structured through a system of measurable metrics that simultaneously reflect workforce stability, the speed of achieving productivity, and the quality of employee interaction with the organization.

For the purpose of generalization, these indicators are systematized in Table 2.

The use of these metrics makes it possible to move a retention strategy from a declarative level to a measurable framework. At the same time, it is essential that these indicators be analyzed not only at the company-wide average, but also across AI-critical segments and in relation to transitions from roles that are becoming obsolete to emerging functions. Otherwise, a formally stable retention rate may conceal the

loss of strategic competencies. In the context of AI-driven transformation, the practical focus should therefore lie in the synchronization of three managerial decisions: process redesign, investment in skills development, and the creation of internal transitions as a systemic mechanism of career development.

**Conclusions.** The study demonstrates that generative AI should be interpreted as a driver of structural layoffs only when workforce reductions are accompanied by a redistribution of tasks between humans and AI tools and by the redesign of job architecture. Within this logic, tasks become the primary unit of managerial analysis: they are the elements that shift toward automation, compress the traditional career ladder, and ultimately reshape the demand for competencies, particularly at the level of junior roles.

Within the scope of the second research objective, it is shown that retention in lean organizations becomes a business imperative, as dependence on critical competencies increases and the cost of error associated with the loss of key employees becomes higher. The practical response to this challenge lies in the combined use of reskilling, upskilling, and internal mobility, complemented by the strategic planning of transitions from sunset roles to emerging roles. The effectiveness of such a policy can be evaluated through metrics of retention, time-to-productivity, and employee engagement, but only if these metrics are linked to specific transition pathways through which employees move into new forms of work content.

Table 2

**Key Metrics for Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Retention Strategy in the Context of AI Transformation**

Metric	Methodological definition and measurement approach	Managerial Question
Retention rate	SHRM describes one common approach to calculating retention as the share of employees with a tenure of one year or more within the relevant employee group [19].	Does the company retain key employees in AI-critical areas during the transformation process?
Time-to-productivity (TTP)	Indeed, defines time to productivity as an onboarding metric indicating how quickly a new employee reaches effective job performance after hiring [20].	Do reskilling and onboarding programs reduce the time required for employees to independently perform key tasks?
Engagement	Employee engagement. Gallup defines engagement as the degree of enthusiasm and involvement an individual has in their work and work environment [21].	Do employees perceive AI-driven transformation as an opportunity for development rather than a threat?

Source: compiled by the authors based on the analysis of sources [19–21]

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