

HR veteran on teaching next generation: 'Training and development is still in my blood' - hcamag.com

Source: gnews-leadership-development | **Published:** March 06, 2023 | **PMS Relevance:** PMS RELATED | **Type:** Opinion/Commentary | **Geography:** United States

Source URL: <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMi2wFBVV95cUxOREtRX3BwUmk1SFFNR2IGOTdjbTF>

Executive Summary

This article profiles Mike Rude, a long-tenured HR executive and current Gartner executive partner, using his career trajectory as a frame to examine two interconnected workforce topics: the evolving role of HR generalists versus centers of excellence, and the growing importance of manager effectiveness in remote and hybrid work environments. Rude argues against a full pivot to centers of excellence, contending that HR business partners remain valuable as single points of contact for line managers navigating blurred functional boundaries. The article also incorporates commentary from Dr. Terri Horton, who takes the opposing view that algorithmic platforms can now perform most generalist functions, and from Steve Cadigan, LinkedIn's first CHRO, who argues that organizations must become talent development businesses to address persistent talent shortages. A Gartner survey is cited indicating that leader and manager effectiveness is the top HR priority for 2023. The article concludes with Rude's assertion that frontline managers — not CEOs — have the greatest influence on engagement, retention, and productivity.

Key Insights

1. HR generalist roles are contested: SAP has moved toward centers of excellence for its 110,000+ employees, while Rude argues HR business partners still hold value as intake coordinators for managers navigating multiple functional teams.
2. Leader and manager effectiveness is identified as the most frequent top HR priority for 2023 per a Gartner survey, with remote work cited as a key driver of this focus.
3. Steve Cadigan, LinkedIn's first CHRO, asserts that qualified talent supply will not increase at scale, positioning talent development — not talent acquisition — as the central future-of-work imperative.

Practical Takeaways

- Organizations restructuring toward centers of excellence may encounter friction from line managers who prefer a single HR point of contact rather than navigating multiple specialist functions independently.
- Leadership development delivery is shifting away from in-person instructor-led formats toward technology-enabled and modular approaches in response to geographically distributed workforces.

Critical Analysis

The article's primary limitation is its reliance on one practitioner's career narrative and personal viewpoints as the central source of insight. Rude's perspective on HR generalists versus centers of excellence is presented without comparative data, case studies, or peer-reviewed support. The counterpoint from Dr. Terri Horton is mentioned briefly but not developed. The Gartner survey referenced lacks methodological detail — sample size, geography, and survey design are not disclosed, and Rude's own employer is Gartner, introducing a potential conflict of interest in citing that data. Steve Cadigan's claims about talent supply are stated as prediction without evidentiary grounding. The article reads as a profile piece with embedded opinion, not as research or analysis. Its value lies in surfacing practitioner perspectives and framing current HR debates, not in providing empirically validated conclusions.

Organizational Practice

SAP is described as having shifted from HR generalists to centers of excellence organized around different HR functions, serving over 110,000 employees. Mike Rude's career path illustrates a progression from specialist training and development roles toward broader HR generalist and business partner functions at organizations including Baxter International, AC Nielsen, IMS (Dun & Bradstreet), Stryker, Boston Scientific, Catamaran, and Option Care Health.

Strategic Implications

The article reflects an active tension in HR operating model design between specialist-driven centers of excellence and generalist HR business partner models, with AI and automation cited as an accelerant of that structural debate. The prominence of manager effectiveness as a stated HR priority for 2023 points to growing organizational attention on mid-level leadership capability as a lever for engagement and retention outcomes in distributed work environments. The framing of organizations as 'talent development businesses' signals a potential shift in how HR functions position their strategic value proposition.

Validation Status: passed
