



# How Technology Can Help Cure What's Ailing the Healthcare Employee Experience

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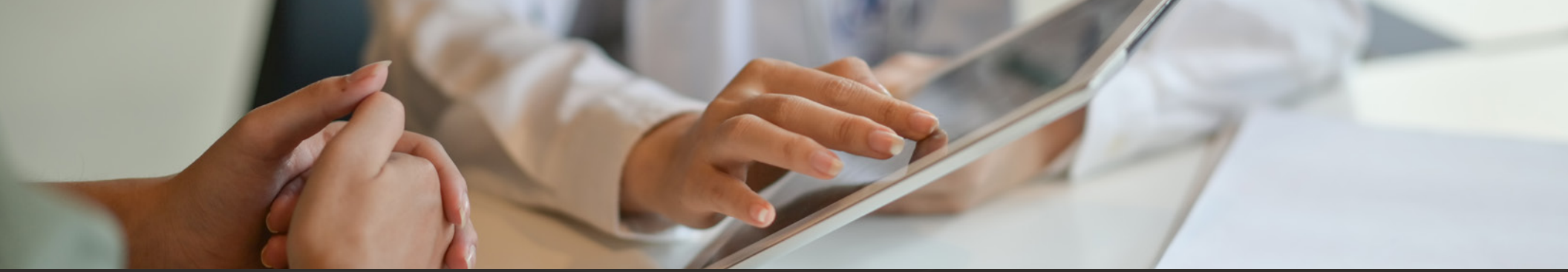
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**T**he healthcare sector has been in a state of transition for at least a decade. Healthcare organizations have faced changing care models, demographic shifts, and financial pressures, all while needing to adapt their strategies for attracting and retaining talent. These trends have only been amplified by the events of the past few years.

Healthcare workforce shortages, already a problem in some regions before the COVID-19 pandemic, are forecast to become even more widespread. **On a global scale, the World Health Organization (WHO) predicts that a worldwide lack of healthcare professionals will leave more than 18 million healthcare positions unfilled by 2030.<sup>1</sup>** Although the brunt of that shortage will be felt in lower- and middle-income countries, the WHO explains that all nations will face difficulties maintaining a sufficient healthcare workforce.

In addition to staffing obstacles, digital transformation continues to accelerate. Hospitals and health systems are moving beyond adopting electronic health record (EHR) systems and connected medical devices to integrate emerging technologies into a broad array of clinical workflows. These innovations have the potential to improve patient outcomes and revolutionize care, but their implementation will require healthcare workers to develop new skills and competencies.





The shift from fee- to value-based care is further upending healthcare's traditional patient care and business models, compelling providers to reduce costs and bolster outcomes—all while continuing to emphasize efficiency.

The pandemic exacerbated these challenges and placed the healthcare industry under an international media spotlight. Since then, frontline deskless healthcare workers have been experiencing unprecedented levels of on-the-job stress and burnout. **One survey showed that 55% of healthcare workers reported feeling burned out from chronic workplace stress during the pandemic, while about 30% have considered leaving the healthcare field for good.<sup>2</sup>**

These circumstances demonstrate that the need to improve employee experience in healthcare has never been greater. Fortunately, today's healthcare leaders are more focused on employee engagement and are seeking effective strategies to improve the workplace experience in their facilities.

Achieving these goals will require significant cultural and process changes—there's no simple fix. However, healthcare organizations that are successful will not only see higher employee satisfaction and retention rates, but they'll also be better prepared to navigate a healthcare landscape of ever-increasing technological and scientific complexity.

Today's healthcare workers have a greater focus on well-being, want to work for an organization that values diversity, equity, inclusion, and sustainability, and demand flexible work options and more autonomy. This ebook will help human resources leaders in healthcare organizations find better ways to support and empower employees, improving their experiences in clinical and administrative roles. We'll discuss best practices for promoting mental health and well-being, explain why reskilling and upskilling opportunities are so important, and offer strategies for achieving these aims cost-effectively and successfully.

# A renewed focus on mental health

Healthcare jobs have long been stressful for frontline professionals, with heavy workloads, lengthy shifts, and fast-paced schedules the norm in this industry. In addition, the ongoing burden of confronting illness and death on a daily basis has contributed to the prevalence of chronic anxiety and psychological strain among caregivers.

**The pandemic increased these challenges, with more than 20% of healthcare workers across 21 countries experiencing clinical depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>3</sup>** Raising awareness of the prevalence of mental and behavioral health challenges among healthcare professionals is critical, as awareness is key for removing stigmas and creating an open dialogue about the problem.



# 20%

of healthcare workers are experiencing clinical depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>3</sup>



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**JUSTIN KNOERZER**

Senior Director of Cloud Product Strategy, Oracle

## Broadcast your benefits and encourage their use

HR teams can take concrete steps to make resources available and offer formal support to healthcare workers. To start, they must ensure they internally advertise all benefits available to employees, including flexible work options. Your workforce should be able to quickly and easily access information about paid leave or wellness days, as well as resources such as therapy, books, articles, or exercises that address burnout directly. And the organization should encourage a culture of using paid leave at all levels.

"Today's healthcare leaders realize that they need to provide the workforce with truly meaningful support, not just create an employee assistance program with a checkbox mentality," explains Justin Knoerzer, senior director of cloud product strategy at Oracle.

One way HR can improve support on an individual level is by making employee check-ins more frequent and more meaningful.

"In the past, check-ins with employees were generic and infrequent," Knoerzer says. "Now, they need to be more personalized, and they need to take place more often, so HR can understand what employees' emotional pulse is like in the middle of a shift, when they've just completed a complex procedure, or how they're feeling at the end of the day."

HR leaders can leverage mobile-friendly tools to help managers and employees maintain regular check-in cadences, such as through pulse surveys and reminders to schedule one-on-one meetings, all from a single place. Managers and HR can also track the data gathered to determine how factors such as engagement, sentiment, and interactions are trending for an individual or team and how the trends compare to the organization as a whole.

## Implement time-saving technology

HR can offer support broadly by deploying technology solutions that enable healthcare workers to complete required documentation and workflows in fewer steps. This way, they spend less time on menial tasks and no longer need to put in hours of charting after their workday is over.

Ritesh Patel, senior partner, global digital health at integrated marketing agency FINN Partners, explains that industry-leading healthcare systems are now leveraging automation and artificial intelligence (AI) to reduce the administrative burdens employees face.

“If part of a nurse’s daily routine is data entry, it’s worthwhile to ask if technology like robotic process automation can take that over,” Patel says. “If a physician assistant is spending a lot of time filling out charts after every encounter, we could leverage an AI-powered system that performs voice transcription to save that time.”

Time-saving technologies free up healthcare professionals for higher-level tasks and create opportunities for health systems and HR to support burnout-reduction activities.

“If technology can ease these burdens, the burnout rate will be that much lower,” Patel adds. “Clinicians can spend the time that’s been saved practicing meditation, learning or relaxing and reflecting.”



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**RITESH PATEL**

Senior Partner, Global Digital Health, FINN Partners



## Building stronger organizational cultures

If you want employees to feel valued, their voices must be heard across the entirety of your healthcare organization. When this occurs, leadership can be confident that frontline deskless workers have the tools and skills they need to get their jobs done in a fast-paced and rapidly changing clinical environment.

### Leverage listening to assess skills gaps

Listening is an important way to make sure the organization is hearing from employees on a regular basis. One method of listening to employees involves distributing digital questionnaires or surveys and monitoring the resulting

employee sentiments. Another method is to use interviews, workshops, and focus groups to gather qualitative data about employee experiences and how they could be improved. Listening to the needs of your workforce will enable you to identify what's most important to teams and individual workers.

With that feedback and deep workforce visibility, HR will discover where healthcare professionals need the most support and where skill gaps exist within the organization. HR should develop a current and accurate understanding of each employee's skills. By making those skills visible, HR will empower each worker to contribute in ways that are most beneficial to the organization.



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**ANNIE HARTMAN**

Senior Director of Human Capital  
Management Solution Engineering, Oracle

“Accurately identifying employee skill sets is a challenging endeavor,” says Annie Hartman, senior director of human capital management solution engineering at Oracle. “You need to start by defining the skills. In the clinical world of the past, this was done solely according to certifications and credentials. Today, there’s an increased awareness of the value of soft skills. If an employee who is currently an individual contributor wants to develop into a manager, there’s a broad array of soft skills that they’ll need to cultivate. One way to address this is to suggest mentors that they could network with.”

HR’s inventory of employee skills and skills gaps should be taken as a real-time snapshot of that data, and the information-gathering process should involve everyone in the organization, starting with leadership.

“It’s also critical to build a top-down model,” Hartman continues. “As a leader at Oracle, I’ve received training on how to listen, how to create diverse and inclusive environments, on the importance of work-life balance, and on many other aspects of team building. That focus on nontechnical issues is very important because it helps members of the leadership team contribute to building a stronger organizational culture.”



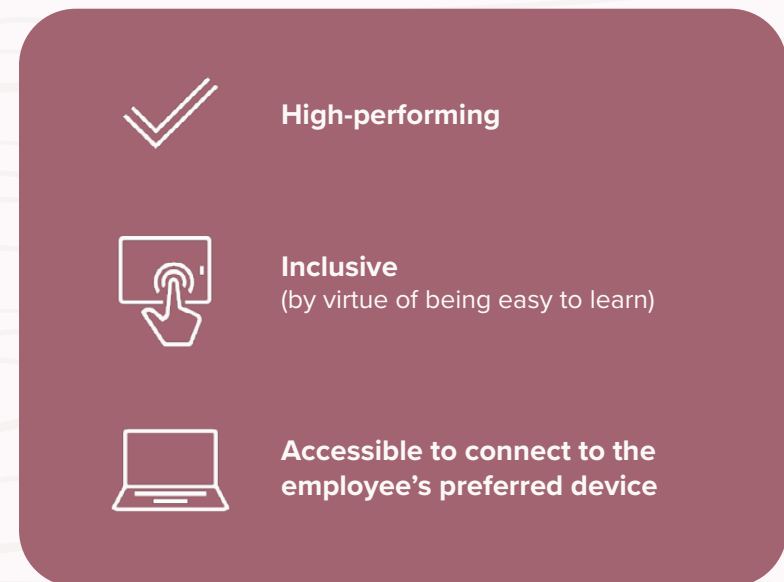
## Use listening insights to improve growth opportunities

The next step for HR is to create new training programs and policies to address skill gaps. This will likely have an immediate and direct impact on employee satisfaction. By enabling employees to upskill on the job, healthcare organizations can dramatically improve retention rates and feelings of loyalty within the workforce.

“When it comes to upskilling employees within large hospital and healthcare delivery organizations, breaking down the barriers that exist between traditionally siloed departments is extremely important,” Patel says. “Let’s say someone’s in a janitorial role, and they’re interested in becoming a nurse’s aide and helping in the emergency department. In the past, career advancement was restricted to roles inside one’s core department, but when you remove the silos and offer training and upskilling to all personnel, people tend to stay within the organization for much longer.

“Health systems that have initiated this kind of system since the beginning of the pandemic have seen their retention rates go through the roof,” Patel continues.

Achieving this success requires HR to provide training that’s clear and easily accessible. Technology solutions should make information effortless for employees to access and also personalized and relevant. It’s sometimes said that the technology you choose defines the culture of your organization. When selecting systems, it’s essential to focus on offerings that are:



Ease of access is a must-have, particularly for today’s healthcare workers, who are short on time and mostly work away from a desk.



## Emphasizing safety and compliance through clear communications

At the start of the pandemic, many healthcare professionals felt like they were risking their health and even their lives each day when they came to work. This compromised their sense of safety, exposing cracks that were already present within the foundation of their working lives. The ensuing trauma has contributed to the crisis situation the healthcare industry is facing today, where burnout is far-reaching and endemic.

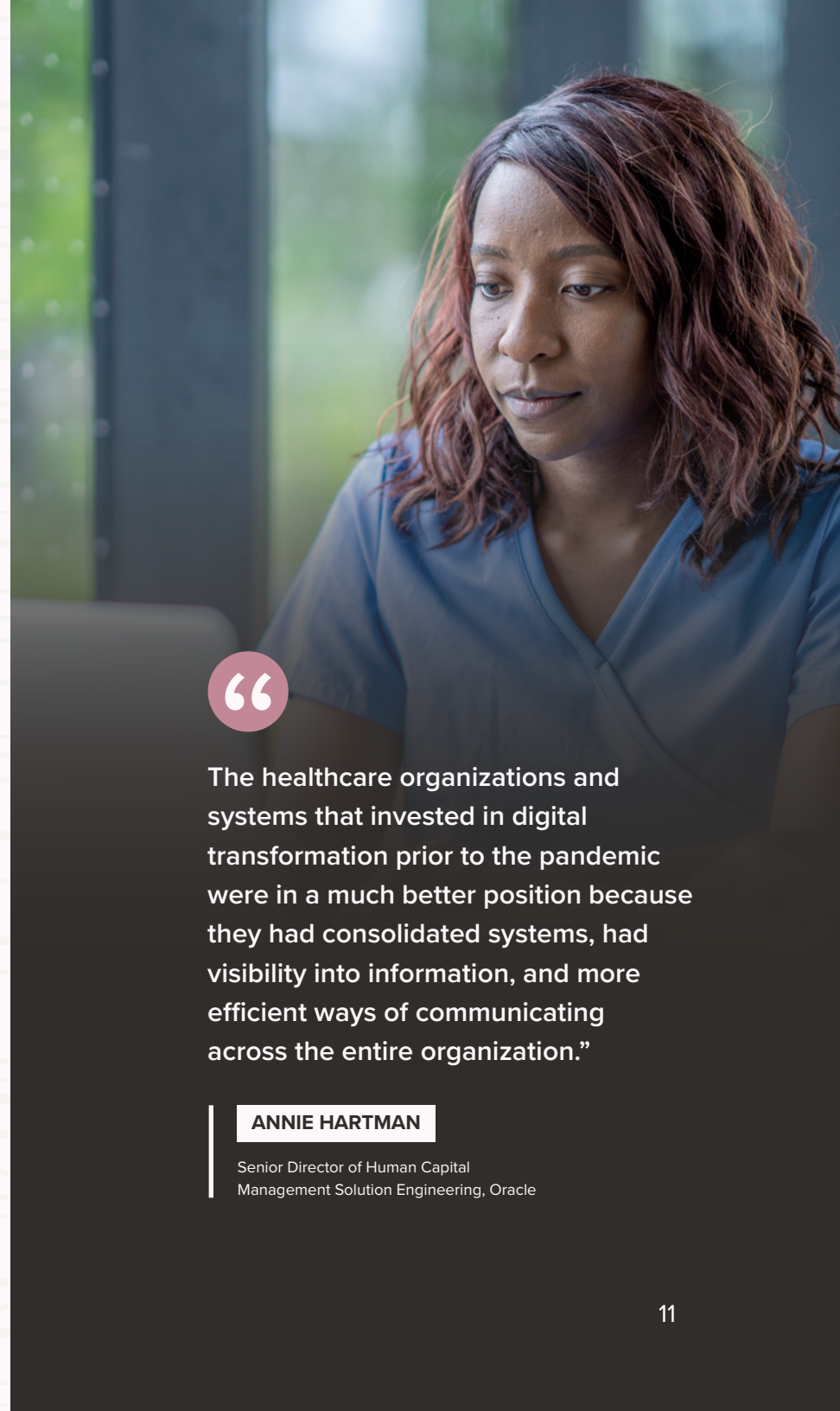
## Boost accountability with technology

Healthcare HR leaders are tasked with rebuilding this sense of workplace safety. They will need to leverage technologies and policies to help healthcare workers feel safe, provide them with an easy means of reporting issues, and offer guidance on how to proceed in challenging situations. HR also must maintain visibility into ongoing issues and keep track of how the organization is handling them. Such transparency is vital for creating trust, not just in safety and compliance but also in how healthcare work is designed.

“When you think holistically about the current situation, you’ll see that healthcare employees aren’t just resigning,” Hartman says. “They’re redesigning what they want their work to be. In this new world of work, communication is absolutely paramount. The healthcare organizations and systems that invested in digital transformation prior to the pandemic were in a much better position because they had consolidated systems, had visibility into information, and more efficient ways of communicating across the entire organization.”

Throughout the pandemic, many healthcare employees were asked to implement new processes and technologies on the fly. It’s now become vital for healthcare organizations to implement systems that will make it easier for workers to understand best practices and protocols, including those around workplace safety. These systems must provide step-by-step guidance so employees don’t feel like they must figure things out by themselves.

The right technology can help people understand what’s happening, what they need to do, how to stay safe, and how to pivot as situations change.



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## Staff teams to support a safe and productive work environment

To ensure healthcare workers have the time and capacity to adhere to best practices, facilities need to maintain adequate staffing levels. A fully automated solution for time, labor, and leave management can make it easier to achieve this, particularly if the solution can also manage contingent workforces during spikes in patient volume or employees taking time off.

“Whether you’re opening a new unit, forecasting float staff assignments required for the next week, or figuring out how to staff a new telehealth program, you need a solution that can match the skills that are available within the organization with the available assignments,” Knoerzer says. “By doing this in a way that’s smart, you can best set up your employees for success. This will positively impact the quality of patient care.”

Having adequate staffing levels influences other organizational priorities, such as whether employees follow health and safety protocols or take advantage of career development and training resources. In addition, being short-staffed contributes to worsening mental health and burnout among employees—making them more likely to quit.

## Make improvements holistic

Addressing all of the issues we’ve mentioned is a cyclical process. Only by improving the employee experience and making workers feel supported can you hope to improve recruitment and retention. And only by improving recruitment and retention can you maintain adequate staffing levels so workers feel they have enough resources and support.

The good news is that improvements in any of these areas are likely to lead to gains in the others.

“In today’s healthcare industry, the HR function is becoming less of a recruiting function and more of a talent management function,” Patel explains. “Health systems are focused on bringing in tools and platforms to help employees stay engaged. They’re trying to hire people who fit into their teams and offer them the support and training they need to contribute to the organization for the longer term.”



# Take the next step: embrace opportunities for innovation

Today's healthcare HR departments face numerous and complex challenges. Record levels of burnout, worker shortages, and unprecedented quit rates are only the tip of the iceberg. But healthcare organizations today also encounter a wealth of opportunities.

With digital transformation accelerating, it's become easier for hospitals and health systems to consider leveraging new technologies to solve longstanding problems, create efficiencies, and, ultimately, enhance care quality and the patient experience.

But to do so successfully, HR leaders must be willing to transform their organizations through innovation. The right technology solution can enable stakeholders across the hospital or health system—from clinicians and



administrators to finance and HR teams—to make better decisions through enhanced visibility. In addition, these solutions help healthcare organizations realize cost-saving efficiencies, create employee experiences that truly reflect their values, and help clinical and non-clinical staff grow their careers.

Along the way, organizations will reduce compliance risk, improve workforce insights, and increase their ability to retain talent—all of which will be critical for meeting the world's healthcare needs in the 21st century.

**To learn more about how Oracle Fusion Cloud Human Capital Management can help healthcare organizations embrace opportunities for innovation, [click here](#).**



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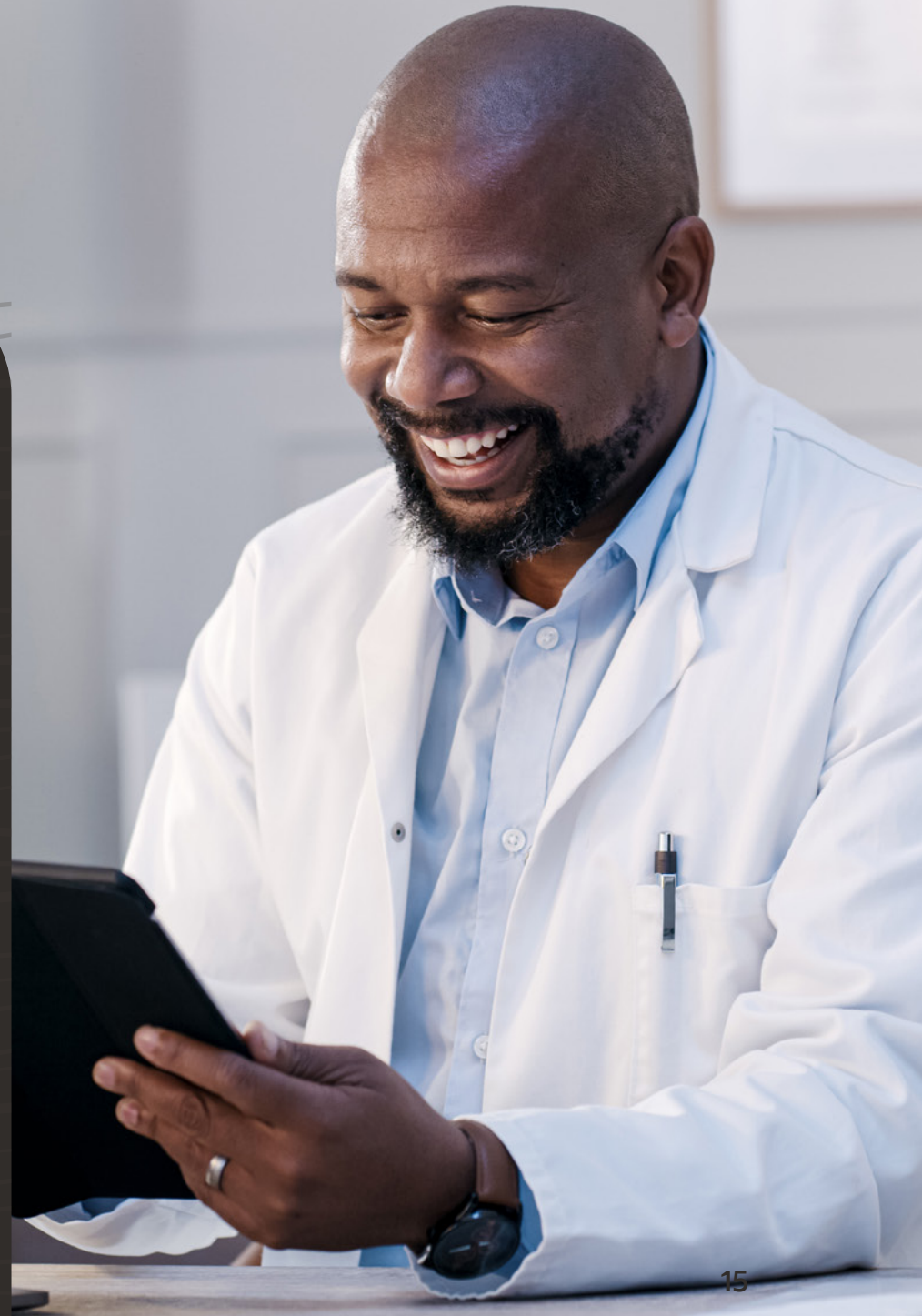
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Oracle Fusion Cloud HCM is a complete solution that connects every human resource process—and every person—across your enterprise. We help you create a community where employees feel valued, heard, and like they belong. With a single user experience and data model as well as seamless processes and infrastructure, Oracle Cloud HCM can help you redefine what best looks like for your people.

[Learn more](#)

## Sources

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