Steve 0:10

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Steve 1:00

Welcome to the HR Happy Hour show. My name is Steve Boese. I'm joined by Trish Steed. Trish, how are you?

Trish 1:05

I am freezing cold. How are you?

Steve 1:07

Freezing cold for sure, but our guest will warm both our black hearts, I think, with his insight and his enthusiasm. He is the hardest working man in HR technology enterprise technology. He's Chris Leone from Oracle. Chris, how are you?

Chris Leone 1:24

I'm doing great. It's awesome to be back with you, too.

Steve 1:24

It's fantastic to see you. You're out in California, I'm assuming tonight, Chris?

Chris Leone 1:24

I'm in Pleasanton, CA.

Chris Leone 1:26

Make us envious. Is the weather at least good there?

Chris Leone 1:30

You know, it is warm-Ish. It's gonna be 62. I won't complain. It's awesome. Yeah.

Trish 1:41

I was in Oslo [Norway] last week with HR Tech Europe doing a whole session out there. It was bitter cold, like, the most cold I've ever been. I came back to Lincoln, NE, and no lie right now, it is negative three. With the windchill, it is negative 20. Like, what's going on? What's good? I should have stayed in Norway.

Chris Leone 2:14

My youngest son is going to go to college. He's going to be a senior next year. Anyway, one of the criteria for colleges, for him, is temperature. I don't know what weight we'll assign to that factor but it's there.

Trish 2:28

I think it needs to be there. My daughter is in her senior year here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and we just bought her a snowsuit because they don't cancel. All the schools here are closed, but the colleges are going. Anyway, I said for her to enjoy her snowsuit as long as she goes to class.

Steve 2:45

It's brutal. It's winter. It's winter everywhere. I think for sure we're going to relocate this show to Florida really, really soon. But Chris, it is great to see you back out on the show again. Since we last spoke, I think your role at Oracle has expanded a little bit. We want to learn about that a little bit and talk about some of the news, right? Because this year, in enterprise tech, for sure, is going to be the year, not just of AI, but maybe of AI agents. Oracle is on the forefront of that news as well. So maybe, we'll start there with some of the latest news from Oracle, and then we'll talk a little bit about what you're doing connecting the world of HCM and supply chain management.

Chris Leone 3:23

Sure, sounds great. All right, so what are we doing in AI? I'll go back a little bit to when we started, not too far back, but I guess it was early 23 late 22. We were very lucky. We have an Oracle Cloud infrastructure platform that we can leverage. And, you know, the world was hit by chat GPT, and everybody kind of jumped in. And very early on, we partnered with our cloud infrastructure team to really put a large language model (LLM) together for fusion. And we said, "hey, look, we need to make sure that we're investing here. We know this is going to be a trend." So very early on, Oracle hosted fusion-specific set of LLMs that we could start to build. In 2024, which is the beginning of calendar year, in 24 we started to deliver the first set of generative AI capabilities, and you know, what I always say is, "it's a learning path," right? And not only do our customers need to learn to understand how they're going to govern these things and manage these things; our engineers have to learn how to build on this technology. It's a probabilistic technology, not deterministic, that we're used to. They had to start simple. They had to understand how to build prompts and how to tokenize them so they had contexts. And we had to learn how to check in code and manage that, and all the things that we had to do to. We had to learn how to use this new technology. So, we got a jump start on delivering capabilities, and we did that throughout the calendar year 24. Then in late 24 and starting into early 25, we realized the next set of use cases were really around AI agents. The way we define AI agents is: an LLM and a set of tools that provide context that LLM. And we started building a number of AI agents, starting in, let's say, 24d which is the end of calendar year 2024. Coming into calendar year 25 I think we've announced across Fusion Applications, over 50 AI agents, and delivered on a good portion of those as of today. So, you know, that's kind of where we're at. And I could talk about what that looks like, but it's been, it's been great. The adoption from customers has been really good. I mean, we have probably 1000s of customers that are using at least one of the agents, whether it's the first generation of what I would call text augmentation (basic recommendations and those types of things). And you know, we're starting to get customers using our AI agents like additional tools, whether it be a knowledge store or a business object or an API or a calculator or some of those additional tools that we've enabled. So it's pretty exciting.

Trish 6:29

Thank you for giving that rundown of that, Chris. One of the questions I hear a lot from the leaders and human resources people that we're talking to is: they're not sure that they fully understand AI agents. So, I think your description is really helpful, but when you're talking about some of the different ways they can be using that, when it comes to your customers, are you giving them different scenarios of how they can? Is there a different pathway, maybe dependent on their industry, or how does that work for them?

Chris Leone 6:56

Excellent question. We get that a lot, right? Where do I start? In some organizations, especially globally, there's some concern about AI and all these things. First, what I would say is, you know, I think the technology is going to be, and is, so revolutionary that the automation that we're able to achieve with it will push organizations. If they want to remain competitive in their industry, in their market, they have to adopt it. First, you know, some of the use cases that we're able to support now that we never could in the past, are really what you would consider a professional knowledge worker providing guidance or advice or information or best practices as part of their role. We're now able to take that type of information and inject it into our application via knowledge stores and content, and use that in context to a business process. I can give you lots of examples of that, but, you know, the one that I'll say right now is benefits. We have a decently sized benefits organization. Our benefits document is like, 370 pages, 340 pages, something like that. When you're going through the benefits process or onboarding an acquired company that has questions about not understanding the benefits plan, and maybe they're unionized, and it's different for all these unions, it literally is a full-time job to get on the phone, talk to them, explain what the benefits do and explain what it means for your particular plan. Now we can inject an AI agent that can know all the policies and all the information for the particular plan that you have. We can understand information about you as a person. So Trish, we know how much PTO you have, how many dependents you have, those are all the things we have knowledge about. As you're going through the process, we can make recommendations, or you can ask questions, and we can answer in specific too Trish, and give you the information. That can cut across our entire application suite. So today, a lot of the deployments are really in context to a business application. But ultimately, a lot of these things will be able to be autonomous, and you'll be able to run these things without, you know, always having to check in and ask questions. It'll run in the background, and there'll be something called a "human in the loop", where at certain points of the process, it'll ask you, "Hey, I've done your benefits. Here's what you did last year, plus two additional things I think you should consider, take a look and do you want to prove it? Yes or no?" If no, you can make changes and move on. So, we'll start to automate more of these, you know, processes as we go forward, and the technology allows us to do more and more of that?

Steve 10:02

Chris, thank you for explaining. That's a great example, right? And I think that's one of the questions we is: what's the difference between, say, the chat GPT interface that people know, versus these AI agents, which are going to be more powerful; the agents that are going to help them execute processes, going to understand more context, etc.? Would you say that's a fairly significant leap from, AI v1 if you will, and what you guys are developing now?

Chris Leone 10:33

I think AI v1, and most people interacting with ChatGPT, are doing prompt engineering. They've gotten really good at defining a well formed prompt to get an answer that they're looking for. And I think what AI agents do is, they orchestrate a process around a particular task or a particular goal. That's what they're doing, whether it's a single agent with a bunch of tools. So in benefits, it's a single agent with a policy document that we've stuck in our vector store. It's a bunch of business objects to understand the assignment business object and a bunch of different business objects to understand, for example, Trish's absences and her assignments and her dependence and all of that. So it's interacting, and the LLM is able to call the right tool using natural language to answer the question that Trish is asking. That cuts across a lot of different things. That's a single agent. Those were some of the use cases that we've been delivering on; and now we're moving into what I call agent teams, where you break down a more complex task into sub tasks, and you have a supervisor that is managing a number of different agents, and they form a team, and they can communicate with one another, and each one has an assignment and has different tools that they that they leverage for that assignment or that goal that they're doing. You can string multiple steps together to start to form a broader and broader process for an organization. And that's the complexity now. Is it a perfect world today? It's not, because you know sometimes the agent makes a mistake, doesn't call the right tool, doesn't get the right answer. You want to put checks and balances, like putting a human in certain steps in the process. We also have to have the ability to observe these agents to make sure, if they've gotten wrong, we can understand why they went wrong. Because, remember, they're not deterministic like code; they're probabilistic. And so, they're making decisions, and that's function calling: call tools make decisions. We must be able to troubleshoot those. As we get into more sophisticated, sequential type processes, which is where we're going to solve harder and harder and more complex work in the real world; we're troubleshooting and finding issues and determining what the problem is so you can correct it. Those are new techniques that we're bringing in to to our platform. What we're delivering, customers have to know how to leverage in order for them to determine, "did it make the right decision, not the right decision, etc." Auditability is important.

Trish 13:15

Thank you for explaining that, because that leads to the question that I'm hearing the most, which is around, "how do we know that the answers that it's giving us are correct?" I love that you're explaining this. You really must have the human in the loop. You're sort of choosing at what point you can have the human interacting with the data, right?

Chris Leone 13:33

Exactly. Exactly.

Trish 13:35

The other thing I heard you mention when we last heard you at CloudWorld, you were talking about how the current AI agents are actually good because they're learning as they go, right? So that's a little bit different than what we've had in the past. This is not just human resources, but across the business, right? We had to be the ones who made sure that we weren't missing a step. Can you talk a little bit about how these AI agents are actually learning from themselves or each other, and how they're propelling us forward at a much faster pace?

Chris Leone 14:07

Yes, I will; and I will tell you one quick funny story. Do you remember back in Redwood Shores, since we've been together a lot of time, and we first started talking about how we're going to inject LLMs into our technology, and the group was giving me that HR technology group [of people] was giving me a hard time about it. They were saying, "you're going too fast." Now, nobody's looked back. I just think, "look, we have to make this investment in technology." This was way back in early 24 and I tried to get those people to listen.

Chris Leone 14:39

That's a lesson for those people!

Chris Leone 14:41

I tell my team all the time that if we didn't think of the future of technology, we’d be so far behind. But we said, "hey, look, we have to go invest and learn this."

Trish 14:50

I was gonna say, Chris, as someone who was an Oracle customer when I was an HR leader, when you're sitting there doing it [HR work], that's what we've been asking for. For over a decade, we wanted some way to manage all of this data and have it be correct and have it make recommendations to free up our time to do other things. Now, that's what you're delivering.

Chris Leone 15:14

I feel like we'll be able to do real work for people and for users of our system, versus just being there where you do all the work in a system that can't fully support the work that you want to do. It's a really different paradigm and, even getting my product managers heads around understanding the "new world order" and what we're able to provide, it's different. Even the transition from single-agent using and using knowledge stores and business objects, which is hugely powerful, to these multi-agent teams doing a bunch of different tasks. I'll give you a supply chain example if you want. You know, we have a supply chain process that we're building now, and it's a multi-agent team. It really starts with a maintenance technician that is looking at an issue with a CNC machine, and he [the mainteance technician] doesn't know what the issue is and didn't get an error code. He or she can take a picture of the broken spindle, or whatever it is, and upload that that picture. Then, we can use a vision LLM to diagnose, or an industry specific LLM to diagnose what the issue potentially could be. That agent diagnoses what the issue could be and says, "here are the three potential things." It not only looks at the picture with the industry LLM, but it has a service history of that particular asset. So, it can come back and say, "it could be any one of these three problems, or these two problems," then, I can tell you what it will cost to replace the spindle, and to put a new one in is x amount of dollars. With amount of dollars predicted, that agent can make a decision and say, "I'm going to fix it." Or, you could put a human in the loop, in that second step of the process. Then, you could send it to a maintenance technician, which is going to go repair it, right? The AI agent can say, "here's what it is, here's the cost, here's the time it should take. I'm going to auto generate a maintenance work order and send my technician out, and we can do that entire three or four step process." After they're done, we can send a summary and update it in the technician's work order and be done with the process. And so we can start to automate these processes, leveraging the LLM, using the tools that it has available in these multi-step agent flows. That's just one example where I'd have three or four people involved and I'd have to look at manuals; then, I'd have to look at the service history and I'd have to do all that work on my own. Now, we can just completely automate that process. The reality is, we're going to come up with a bunch of these examples, and then our customers and partners are going to be be able to say, "I have information, maybe in another system, that I can pull some information from, or I have something on the internet that I need to go grab, or I have something, you know, in a different part of our organization, and I can grab that information to add context to the decision that the LLM is going to make." So, it [the agent(s)] can make better decisions, to be more precise. Those types of use cases are going to be everywhere. They'll change how people are interacting with our system, I think, over the next 12 to 18 months.

Steve 18:45

Chris, I love that example for a couple of reasons: one, because it's really cool, and the second reason is it gets to the second part of the conversation we wanted to have with you today about how HCM and the supply chain are connected, interdependent organizations. Especially complex organizations, like manufacturing organizations, have to find ways to work more efficiently across both domains. In your example you gave, we've got a potential issue with a machine that might need to be repaired. Now, we've got to find a person, an actual living person, to actually affect that repair or replace the part, etc. Now, we get into things like workforce planning. Does this person have the right skill? Are they actually in the office or at the factory today? Are they out on leave? Perhaps in that scenario, if we can't find the right person with the right skills, we might go out to a contracting agency, or whatever the case may be, to do that [complete the task]. But there are interdependencies between these advanced supply chain processes and people right? HCM are numerous, and you're spending a lot of time, both personally with the teams, on making things more effective. I'd love for you to talk about these connections and why they matter.

Chris Leone 19:54

The great thing about people is: they're everywhere. They really do form the foundation. I could just tell you what we're doing. In this scenario, we have a maintenance tech workbench that we have as part of our enterprise maintenance application. This is where we track assets, and track the maintenance of those assets and all those types of things. We also have technicians that we deploy. Some of the things that we do is exactly like you said. When we create a a shift for the next two weeks, we use our scale scheduling application to make sure that we understand, generally, these are the maintenance work orders that we need to work on; these are the general skills that we need for these, and they're not as sophisticated. It's like, I need a welder. I can't weld, but, I don't have 50 other skills I'm looking for. For these specific things that I need to fill, we can schedule work with our application. So you get a two week schedule, then day-of shift. That way, I know the people that I have working for, say, my maintenance set of projects that I have, or maintenance work orders that I have. Then, like you said, we have a schedule that's set all of the people that are there, that have been assigned their first set of work orders. It's all based on their skills that we have in the system, based on the workers that are there, and we know the duration of the work. So, one of the cool things about manufacturing is: we know how long everything takes for the most part, so we know people are on track or off track. I'll give you some areas where we're looking at bringing in our rewards capabilities to start saying, "hey, this should take two hours, and people that do it an hour and a half, they can get some rewards." We can start to inject some of the other HR processes, which just naturally occur to us. But when I'm talking to my manufacturer, my maintenance team, they're like, "Oh, that's a good idea. We could do that," and this encourages people to do better. Then, you get other people where it's going to be bad for the people that aren't doing as good. If you put these incentive in place, and you can figure out how to manage it, you can get the right person for the right work order; and then ,as a new work order comes up, and you're looking through the people they have available if it's an emergency, you can find the person with the right talent and with the right skills. You can tell them to stop work on something else and start working on another thing. So we've injected a lot of these, you know, HR processes with our technology, into maintenance, into manufacturing. We do the same thing in manufacturing. So we have a manufacturing workbench, which is very similar. We call it a Production Supervisor Workbench, where the production supervisor is managing the all of the production work orders that they have to build on the factory floor for the particular day. maybe they have a plant that they're managing and a bunch of work centers that they're working on, and you have to deploy the right people to the right work centers with the right materials for them to get jobs done. All of that is the same process where I'm doing shifts for two weeks, and I used to laugh because they didn't have this capability. So I would say, "hey, you know, Betty and Joe: you go to this CNC machine." So, you put everybody in a parking lot, and you just tell them to go over here versus having a systematic way to know exactly where they're going. It's all based on workload, and they know how much time each thing takes. One of the things that I've been able to, I won't say me, but the team has been able to bring into some of the supply chain manufacturing side is, being able to round out the edges of how you inject the HR processes more formally into the manufacturing process. So, it's really doing recruiting, really doing scheduling, really doing rostering, really leveraging skills to make sure it's making the right decisions to put the right people in the right place at the right time. It does all come together. When you sent me that note saying, "Hey, these are the things that are kind of interesting and top-of-mind," not all of them, but many of them are the things that we are delivering, right? So it was easy to say yes to this show topic!

Steve 24:06

We're excited to hear that, both just from what we're doing in our work and also... in my background, I was a purchasing guy for a long time, so I was like, you know, toe deep in the supply chain side of things, right? The complexity of some of these processes for these large manufacturing organizations is huge, right? And it's funny, when the pandemic happened, I think, like 80% of us became supply chain experts all of a sudden. This was because we couldn't get the things we wanted right away or at all in our local stores. But the complexity of these processes and the interdependencies among them, and then injecting in the people you need with the right skills at the right time, as you said, Chris, this speaks to something we've talked about forever. I know something personally I have experienced, and Trish has as well as, is: you can't do this if you are running 12 different systems from nine different suppliers. I feel like you can't, right? So, if you got one doing your procurement, and you've got one doing your inventory management, then, you got another one doing your recruiting and you've got another one doing your learning, right? You just have a very, very difficult time tying it together. One of the key advantages you see from an approach like you guys are taking at Oracle is: you guys manage that for the customers. you manage the people and their skills and their availability and their experience and their reputation. It's all there. I'd love for you to comment a little bit about how you work with customers to try to help them understand that this stuff works better together.

Chris Leone 25:41

I tried to take a realistic view with Oracle/a realistic view of the world. And as much as I'd like for everybody to be 100% on every Oracle module that we deliver, even if they were at the industry solutions, we wouldn't cover the entire landscape of what people need. So, the way I look at and what I tell my team is like, AI and agents, you know, are or will be the same. I'll talk about that in a second. But we want 75-80 or 85% of the foundation of business functions. We think you shouldn't have a separate sourcing system, a separate purchasing system, a separate, inventory system, a separate order management system, and separate CPQ system, etc. It's like the old days when we were buying, ERP. People thought they should get AR from this company, and an AP system from another.

Steve 26:48

People would buy compensation systems standalone. That was common in HR.

Chris Leone 26:52

Exactly, it was. It's crazy. I do think that we are seeing, and we will continue to see, a consolidation to get to 85-80 something like that percent. There will always be satellite specialty systems that people plug in, and we want to allow for that. So, you know, as we move, I can just give you the example: as we move into more and more process manufacturing, we know that recipe management is a super specific industry-type thing, right? Do we want to build recipe management for every different type of recipe? Maybe for Colonel Sanders recipe, but not for the rest, right? You know? So, as you get into paint and different chemicals, it gets really complicated, right? And so, people can have their own specialty system, but we want to be able to take that information and use it to plan what production we're going to do, and the sampling that we need to do, and everything that we need to do downstream. So yeah, let's, let's have some basic capabilities there, but let's be open to bringing in other people's specialty solutions. In supply chain, I see it even more. In HR, it's kind of gotten a little more homogeneous, you know, and we do a lot of the same things across vendors; but, in supply chain, there are very industry-specific capabilities. So, we need to be open to saying if somebody has a specific, you know, specialty planning capability in a certain industry, we're not going to go there. Instead, you can plug in your planning, and we'll take that and drive it into inventory and order management and all the things upstream. To answer your question, I do believe that organizations need to kind of consolidate around the core to get the advantage, especially as we get into AI and process more process automation, but from an Oracle perspective, we do believe that there will always be specialty/niche areas that we need to add and accommodate. It makes sense, and we're never going to build it all, and customers are going to have their own specialty, secret sauces. We need to work in both worlds. I think consolidating some of the core simplifies things. Costs get better, and as we get to AI, it's going to be more important. And this is the one piece I believe on AI agents. With AI agents, there are going to be agent proliferations, you know. One of our competitors came out with something other than more AI agents, but they came out saying they were going to manage everybody else's building agents; which is great. We're going to do that. We're going to build a lot, and we're going to manage it too. My belief is that most organizations are going to consolidate AI agents to where their transactional data platform is not just a data analytics platform. At the end of the day, not only do you want to build AI agents that can read information and produce information, you also want to build a agents that can commit transactions and update the system and make accurate changes to things that you're going to do. It's not just sticking things in a CRUD database. You must go through user-level security and all of the complexities of the business objects that are around these complex systems. So, I think agents are going to evolve around some of these larger application vendors, and there'll be some orchestration, you know, solutions that, whether they're the hyperscalers that orchestrate these across maybe multiple different platforms; but, a lot of these agents are going to be built on top of these larger ERP, HCM platform areas. And I also believe that a vendor will have to have the ability, like an agent IDE, to build. We already do internally. We have some news that will be coming out shortly, but you need to be able to build your applications. In the future, it won't be the traditional, you know, IDE that we've built in the past, where we lay out a page. We put a REST service behind it. We, you know, we start from that. It'll be an AI agent builder platform, because those are the applications that we'll be building in the future. And if you don't have an agent IDE as part of your application, you're going to be significantly far behind all the other application vendors. In my opinion.

Trish 31:00

I feel like we need a whole manual of everything you just said because really, truly, I think as someone, and I mean, Steve's obviously worked in in manufacturing before I did as well. I worked early my career at both GE and Nabisco. Like all of the things, again, we were trying to figure out how to get everything to sort of fit together in a very rudimentary way. The AI agents can now bring those two pieces together for us so that we can focus on the more high-level discussions. This brings me to one thing I want to make sure we cover, or at least touch on, which is around data security and privacy. So I mentioned I was out of the country last week. I was speaking to about 100 plus CHROs and employment attorneys. The biggest questions were around feeling insecure, especially in other parts of the world, about the privacy and the data security. Can you talk a little bit, I know your Oracle customer base understands your investment in that, but can you talk for maybe people that are less familiar, about how you approach that?

Chris Leone 32:03

What is the context you're looking for? Is it just our general security infrastructure as it relates to AI and agents?

Trish 32:08

How it relates to AI and agents. Like, if they're trying to make that decision to to not only choose you as a vendor, but specifically as they're thinking about AI agents.

Chris Leone 32:19

The great thing that that that we do is, and we did this early on if you remember back to the first session that I had with the analysts, they were like, Yeah, you know, your competitors are going to train these engines and these LLMs". We don't train the LLMs. At least today, we could get into some specialty models, but the LLMs, we don't train them on customer data. We don't do any of that for a number of reasons; but, one of the reasons is, we don't know which LLM is going to be the winner from a technical perspective. You know, we just saw grok came out yesterday with a bunch of new capabilities. We saw the operator UI, where they're kind of billing agents on top of chat GPT. Anthropic has, you know, new capabilities and has been a leader. So, for us, we don't know which technology is going to ultimately win. So today, we use Cohere and Ollama as two of the models that we ship out of the box. We allow you to bring your own model, and you can do that, but we don't pass any customer data to the to these LLMs. We provide context. The reason we use tools and knowledge stores is to provide context to the LLM to provide specific answers. We don't take all of the benefits information and try to train the LLM. We don't pass that information on to it. We don't take all of the user information for that purpose. We tokenize it and inject it into a prompt. So we're never pushing the data to the LLM, other than to provide context to get us a better answer to go to the next step. That's why tools come into play. They're so important. That's why knowledge stores come into play. They're so important. This is why I said that these agents will stay close to the transactional source for a lot of what customers will do, because we have all of the user-specific security in the flows that we deliver as part of our applications. We may leverage analytic information, read only information from these large analytic stores, but ultimately, if I want to update mass amounts of orders, automatically, leveraging agent-making decisions, processing these, communicating to customers, and then ultimately changing the order or creating an order; All those things have to happen in transaction system. If you don't have that transaction level security and integrity, it's impossible to do. What we've provided as security capabilities, governance, trust, none of that changes for us. From adding AI or adding LLMs, it all stays the same. So we don't share PII, we don't move customer data around. We don't train the LLMs on customer data. None of that changes. You know, in the future, could there be some specialty LLMs maybe, that we look at and we train in some special way on fusion data model. But today, the use cases that we're delivering, we use just the context that gets that we leverage from tools like business objects, or knowledge stores, all of those things. That is what we leverage.

Trish 35:43

Thank you. I think too, you're very transparent. You as in Oracle. I mean it. For as long as I've known of Oracle and used Oracle, I mean, that trust you have when you're a customer, because you are very transparent with your customer base on any changes, any advancements, any innovations, right? And you're telling them so that they have plenty of time to ask questions, or to make any decisions they need to make, right? You're not just bringing it on people, and they don't have any reaction time.

Chris Leone 36:12

I would say probably one of the biggest differences that we have is all of the AI agent capabilities are delivered as part of our application, meaning you don't have to subscribe to them differently. We're just delivering that capability as part of the application experience. That's why we deliver these LLMs. You don't have to go out and subscribe to Ollama or to ChatGPT. You don't have to pay something extra for that. It's just part of the service. We believe that adding this level of intelligence, that this is how we build our applications. I mean, when my team is building an application, they're thinking about this new tool that they have, which is an LLM, and what it can provide to that business' process flow. What they have to think about that is, oh, customers have to pay different now. They can either use Anthropic, or I don't know which LLM that they're going to use, so I have to, you know, figure that out. And so it becomes something we don't have that as part of the equation. We want to make our applications more intelligent and easier to use and automate more of the processes. And so we deliver all of that as part of the application experience. It's a really different approach than, I think, pretty much what every other vendor is doing.

Steve 37:28

One of the things, Chris, that I was thinking about as you were describing how your approach to this was: potential buyers need to work very, very closely with their current providers or their potential providers to understand how some of this works. It can be complex sounding for HR, people, especially who just don't have that deep of a background in some of these tools. So, it's going to be important for them to partner with their IT teams as well, who are going to be more versed in this stuff and also partner with their providers. And Trish, I'm thinking, you wrote questions to ask your AI vendor, a kind of checklist on our site, like, a year or so ago, that needs to be redone. I'm gonna tell you that right now, it needs to be redone based on some of the things we've heard today, but some of the advances in technology too, and it's gonna be important for HR leaders, especially who are listening to this, to work really closely with their peers and to work closely with their providers to understand these things, because they can be scary sounding. I think, Trish, you mentioned that the folks you were in front of that last week were a little bit reluctant perhaps, or a little bit concerned about some of this stuff. I think it's going to be important to work with those teams to help them understand the capabilities better. But also, you know, the steps that your vendors are taking to protect data.

Chris Leone 38:46

I saw a totally interesting thing, and this kind of blew my mind, because I wasn't thinking this way. One of our customers, I'll try to send you the LinkedIn post. They posted a job for an agent, and they had a salary. I forgot what it was, It was like a $5,000 or something, to hire an agent to do this type of work. Will that be where we end up? I don't know. It blew my mind. I literally spend all my, not all my time, and my team will tell you that. I started building on these agent platforms myself. I won't tell you all the ones, but I started building, you know, I started with LangGraph and and Python, and then then I went to, like, Flowise and Relevance AI and Crew AI. I started building these agents myself, because I wanted to understand how they all worked, you know? And so then, I started building many different ones. I came back, I said, "this is my understanding of what we need to do and how we should do it." In the consumer world, they're building agents that can be deployed to small/medium businesses that can do all the cold calling, that can do all the follow up, that can take all the appointments, that can do all the scheduling. I mean, those things that are existing today, they're reaching out to HubSpot, sending emails through Gmail, all of that kind of stuff that I've built myself. Those are workable solutions for medium and small businesses, where you would have two or three people that are doing that, that that literally can be all done and all completely automated today. They can even do a really good job of context and all the things that you need to know. I pull all that information from my CRM database. I understand all of it. I can send a really personalized email with follow ups and schedule an appointment without having a person in the middle. Those are real solutions people are paying for today, and they work, right? That's just the beginning of what you're going to see. So, I thought that was a really interesting. People are hiring and paying for someone to build them an agent to do this work that it will probably save them a lot of money.

Trish 40:50

I always appreciate your enthusiasm, but also the fact that you dive in, you make sure you are learning and building and changing and challenging. And I don't know, I mean, obviously we talked to a lot of people and a lot of a lot of vendors in the space, but I feel like that is another differentiator. And I feel like having you over both HCM and supply chain, it does help make it make better sense, right? Especially for those of us who are trying to understand it. And Steve, to your point, it's changing so rapidly, even if we provide a resource, or someone else provides a resource as an HR professional, or supply chain professional, whatever. I think you also have to be aware of "how old is this information I'm consuming," right? You have to know a trusted, updated source. I did look when I was in HR, the Oracle website is a great wealth of information, right? You have webinars, articles, eBooks, you name it, and it's current. I just feel like that's such a good, free resource for people, if you're wanting to learn more and understand some of the things we're talking about in greater depth, right?

Chris Leone 41:55

There's so much and it is changing so fast. There's so much information out there. I can tell you, I try to build it myself, or I do myself. I watch so many YouTube videos on people building stuff, and, you know, just that's a great idea, because people are so, so smart, you know? They have such great ideas. Our customers come back with great ideas, like, "Hey, have you thought about this?" Then, the people that really get it, and I can see my product managers who really understand kind of what you can do. Now, it feels like if I gave you some use cases, you'd be like, "Oh my God. I know what to do." We're delivering those, but some of the ones that you're able to do now you're going to be like, "Oh my gosh, I don't, I have teams of people that were doing that," you know? Now we can really help in those areas.

Trish 42:38

Can I one question real quick before that wasn't really planned, but I was thinking about? So I mean, we all have kids that are college age or entering the workforce. I've been really surprised talking with both my kids, who are at different universities, about how many AI classes are now being offered. Obviously these are things that are being written by these professors in real time. Does Oracle, or you, or your teams, do you have any connections with universities to help guide what they're teaching? You know, one of my kids is in finance/economics, and the other one is in journalism, and it's important in all of those fields. Is Oracle having any connection to universities in terms of this?

Chris Leone 43:22

We do have these connections. I'm not the best person to give you the rundown of what we do. We have a high school on campus, you know? We have a whole research group that works with a lot of universities.

Trish 43:31

So in other words, if you're at a university, or you're an educator, you can absolutely connect with Oracle and sort of get those questions answered. Because, I was watching my daughter today. She showed me some programs she was using where she coded a whole entire website, and it took her three minutes to do, start to finish. Everything I asked her, it just did it. And I thought, "Do you know how long it took me to build websites when I first started it?"

Chris Leone 43:59

It's gonna be just such a crazy, different world for our kids. I mean, yeah, it's just happening.

Trish 44:03

That shows why we need to make sure we're educated. If you're in a leadership position, you're going to be hiring people straight out of college who probably know more than you when it comes to artificial intelligence in general, right? So make sure we're keeping up with trends.

Chris Leone 44:20

They're all on these agent platforms, and literally, I've built some with them.

Steve 44:27

And luckily for young people, the corporate world has a long history of young people coming in and having to teach the people who have been there for a long time how things work, right? That'll never end, right?

Chris Leone 44:38

Never.

Steve 44:38

Chris, it's been great to see you. Thanks so much for sharing some really important updates about what Oracle's been up to. Some of the things you're delivering, some of the possibilities for the future, and as you said, some of the real key interconnectedness between HCM and SCM, which you get to work on now, really every day. It's been a great update. Great to see you. We look forward to seeing you in person soon.

Trish 44:59

Yeah, we'll see you very soon.

Chris Leone 45:00

Thank you for having me. It's always super fun.

Steve 45:03

Awesome, great, great stuff. Trish, thanks to you. Thanks to Chris. Thanks for tuning into the HR Happy Hour show today. We appreciate you guys being a part of our conversation. And remember, if you enjoyed today's episode, be sure to subscribe on your favorite podcast platform. Catch us on YouTube now as well. We'd love a five star rating and review, and it helps us to connect with more leaders like you. So thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time on the HR Happy Hour Show.

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