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New research adds to growing awareness that HR departments will become increasingly reliant on employees with soft skills as the "emotional economy" emerges, highlighting challenges that will also arise.

The OrgDev Institute whitepaper, based on insights from senior HR and organisational development leaders, says empathy, communication, adaptability and problem-solving will become the most sought-after attributes, and that this will prompt an expectation for HR to have proven tools that measure soft skills.

This isn't as straightforward as it seems, however, and will in fact be a significant challenge for HR. "The inability to hard measure 'soft skills' is an issue for the HR industry as a whole and limits the ability to build programs that have the capacity to both train and nurture said skills," the whitepaper says.

"Measuring the value of an HR department will also become increasingly challenging," it adds.

Mirvac's co-head of HR **Ben Morris** says in the paper that HR is not particularly good at articulating its own value or measuring the effectiveness and outcomes of HR programs.

"I think it's a real shame because I think better measurement and better demonstrations of the links to commercial outcomes would earn our HR functions.

[The future of HR: Rising to the challenges of AI, staff retention and the longevity of a critical industry](#), OrgDevInstitute, August 2018

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