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INSIGHTS REPORT



SHREC 2026 THEME

The Capability Advantage

The few workforce decisions that separate winning financial institutions from the rest

PANEL 1 OF 3

Beyond Recapitalisation

Building financial institutions that can compete, adapt and endure

Thursday, 5 November 2026

The Zone, Gbagada, Lagos

Senior HR EXECUTIVES' CONFERENCE
FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

Executive summary

THE ARGUMENT

Capital sets the starting line. Capability decides how well it is deployed.

33
banks met the CBN's new minimum capital requirements

₦4.65tn
in new capital raised between April 2024 and March 2026

72.55%
of that capital came from Nigerian investors

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria, statement of 1 April 2026.

The question now is what institutions do with that capital. At SHREC 2026, five HR leaders from Nigerian banks, moderated by Olasunkanmi Adenuga of Workforce Learning, discussed the people decisions that will answer it.

THREE DECISIONS TO TAKE TO YOUR NEXT LEADERSHIP MEETING

1 **Name the one capability that matters most.**
Panellists named adaptability, agility, business leadership, ownership and workforce architecture. Describe yours in behaviour you can observe, then decide whether to build it, buy it or partner for it.

2 **Prove the return on people investment.**
Agree the measures with Finance and the business owner, and report what changed, not just how many people you have.

3 **Carry people through the change.**
Explain why the institution is changing. Keep the values worth keeping. In any merger, plan critical roles before the deal completes. Move time saved by AI into advisory work, and keep a named person accountable for every decision about people.

WHERE TO START

Pick one capability. Test it in one business unit. Decide within 90 days whether to scale it. The toolkit on pages 10 and 11 shows how.

The panel



Panel 1 in session at SHREC 2026, The Zone, Gbagada, Lagos.

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Head, Human Resources

"What we heard" summarises the panel's discussion in our words, without attributing views to individuals. Content labelled Workforce Group is our own view and guidance.

01

THEME 1 OF 5

Which one capability matters most?

THE MODERATOR ASKED

> **What is the one capability your institution must build or strengthen in the next 24 months to stay competitive over the next five?**

WORKFORCE GROUP VIEW

Capability is the right behaviour, plus the roles, owners and routines that make it happen every time.

If you cannot describe it in observable terms, you cannot hire for it, develop it or measure it. Ask your board: did the new capital accelerate something overdue, or create a new need?

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE PANEL

After the Group CEO of Workforce Group contrasted raising capital with building capability, panellists named five capabilities:

Adaptability
Learning and changing with conditions: applying a revised credit rule correctly and knowing when to escalate.

Agility, built through leadership
What the organisation can do collectively, made repeatable by leaders who prepare people early.

Business leadership
Commercial acumen, risk discipline, AI and digital literacy, and people leadership, set by role.

Ownership
Sound decisions within delegated authority, with risk and profitability in view.

Workforce architecture
Anticipating skills needed over five years, then deciding to build, buy or partner.

Five answers, one pattern
Each is a behaviour you can observe, made repeatable by roles, owners and routines.

APPLY IT ON MONDAY

1. Choose one capability and write three behaviours that show it at work.
2. Name the two roles where it matters most, and how you will know it has improved in six months.
3. Decide whether to build, buy or partner, and record who owns the decision.

THEME 2 OF 5

02 Making the case in the language of the business

THE MODERATOR ASKED

> How do you know people investment is building capability?

WORKFORCE GROUP VIEW

The business now asks one question of HR: "what return, and how soon?"

Report outcomes, not activity: fewer credit files sent back for rework, not the number of people trained. And report them in naira.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE PANEL

From cost to return
Treat workforce decisions like lending decisions, each with a business case showing the expected return.

Productivity, not just headcount
Keep productivity gains distinct from headcount cuts, including work shared with AI agents.

Finance as a partner
Win the CFO early, because the MD will ask whether it is affordable.

Fund what matters
Confirm the right capabilities and people are in the right jobs. Fund what matters and review the rest.

Choose where to win
Decide which roles and capabilities are critical, and focus there.

Understand why people leave
Diagnose the causes of departures, not only the count, and retain through steady leadership.

GUARDRAIL: PAY AND TALENT

Price critical roles on governed market evidence and internal equity. Never share offers, pay plans or hiring intentions with peer institutions, including at events like this: it can raise concerns under the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2018.

APPLY IT ON MONDAY

1. Build a one-page people investment scorecard for one business unit, agreed with Finance.
2. Agree three shared measures with your CFO before the next budget round.
3. Mark each current initiative as scale, sustain, redesign or stop.

THEME 3 OF 5

03 Enduring without being trapped by legacy

THE MODERATOR ASKED

> What enables an institution to endure for generations without becoming trapped by the practices that made it successful?

WORKFORCE GROUP VIEW

Legacy is an asset when it is values and a liability when it is habit.

The test: can people say why a practice exists and what it earns today?

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE PANEL

Longevity brings resilience, memory and stakeholder confidence, but the practices that built an institution may not carry it forward.

Keep the values, not the habits
Anchor the institution on its values, not on its age.

Succession for the goal
Choose successors for where the institution is going, not copies of incumbents.

Pair memory with new perspectives
People who know what worked, alongside those who bring new ideas.

Learn by experimenting
Run small, time-limited experiments within controls. A failed experiment is not a control breach.

Carry people along
Explain the reason and the reward, and keep communication two-way.

"Don't defend a practice simply because it has always been done that way."
A panellist, paraphrased

APPLY IT ON MONDAY

1. List ten long-standing practices and mark each as a value to keep or a habit to change.
2. Ask the owner of each habit to state its reason in one sentence.
3. Run one small experiment with named controls and a review date.

THEME 4 OF 5

04 AI and the future of the HR profession

THE MODERATOR ASKED

> "What is the future of HR as AI automates work, and how do we protect people while moving to skills?

WORKFORCE GROUP VIEW

AI exposes HR's real value: judgement, context and accountability.

Put released time into advice, and count it as a saving only when a realised saving or measured output gain follows.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE PANEL

Repositioning, not disappearing
From processing towards adviser, coach and business partner.

Learn the business
Bring solutions, so no major decision is taken without its people implications.

Design work with AI in it
Shift roles towards advisory work, and plan AI agents alongside people.

Fundamentals first
Generic AI misses local context. Learn the work so you can challenge the tool.

Automate, augment, stay accountable
Automate low-value tasks, augment people, keep a named owner.

Measure the shift
Assess the work, retrain for new roles, and track placement and proficiency.

GUARDRAIL: BEFORE ANY AI TOOL TOUCHES PEOPLE DECISIONS

1. Use only authorised data and tools, and meet the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, including the rights of people subject to automated decisions.
2. Name who can override a recommendation, and require human review before any consequential decision.
3. Keep junior staff learning: where routine work is automated, give them supervised cases and feedback.

APPLY IT ON MONDAY

1. Sort HR processes into automate, augment and keep human, with an owner for each human decision.
2. Teach the fundamentals of a process before giving anyone an AI tool for it.

THEME 5 OF 5

05 From the floor: expectations, pay and mergers

DELEGATES ASKED

> How do we handle pay expectations, specialist pay, skills-based design and merger fatigue?

Q1 How do we manage employee expectations of pay now that the balance sheet is bigger?

What the panel said. Frame it as shared prosperity: employees should share in the institution's success alongside investors. Flexible benefits were one example.

Workforce Group view. Expectations reflect two years of inflation and naira depreciation as much as the bigger balance sheet, so address both. Be clear about what is decided and what still needs approval.

Q2 Could a separate pay structure for technology roles help?

What the panel said. A delegate raised specialist pay bands. The moderator urged flexibility within each institution's context and within what is proper.

Workforce Group view. The pull from fintechs and offshore employers is real, but a band alone will not hold people. Settle role evaluation, internal equity and governance first, and pair any band with career paths.

Q3 How do we move to skills-based design?

What the panel said. Specialist and management career paths should run side by side, with grading and pay evolving.

Workforce Group view. Start where skills change fastest: technology, data and risk analytics. Define each skill in observable terms, and map it to existing grades before touching pay.

Q4 How do we handle organisational fatigue from mergers?

What the panel said. Treat it as change management. Engage critical talent early, because the people you most want to keep may leave first.

Workforce Group view. Before the deal completes, share only information Legal has cleared. After completion and CBN approval, apply the same role criteria to people from both institutions and confirm appointments.

APPLY IT ON MONDAY

1. Write a half-page shared prosperity message and test it with managers.
2. Ask Legal to define what can be shared with the other party at each stage of a deal.
3. Track critical-role vacancies and regretted exits through any integration.

The one decision to change

Asked to name one workforce or organisational decision they would change, the panel offered five answers.

1 **Build digital fluency and commercial acumen**
Move beyond traditional banking expertise, keep sight of the large middle of the workforce, look beyond pay to culture and flexible working, and borrow knowledge from outside the industry.

2 **Personalise the HR offer**
People's needs differ, so one generic offer fits fewer of them. Test what different groups value.

3 **Keep career depth visible**
Development builds skills; career management decides where people go next. Both shape the quality of credit, risk and compliance decisions.

4 **Require an investment case**
Before approving headcount, ask for the business justification.

5 **Build a culture that lasts**
Culture should outlast the individuals who built it. Institutions can learn from each other's experience of building capability.

THE CLOSING CHARGE

"Ambitious strategies depend on the quality of talent and the capability built internally."

The moderator, paraphrased

Toolkit: run a 90-day capability test

One worked example from start to finish: an SME credit team at a bank. Use the same five steps for any capability you choose.

STEP 1

1

By Day 30

Pick the capability and describe what good looks like

Name the behaviours you expect to see. Ask two senior reviewers to score the same sample file, so everyone agrees the standard before you measure anything.

IN OUR EXAMPLE

SME credit assessment. Good looks like three behaviours: assessing repayment capacity, documenting material exceptions, and escalating within authority.

STEP 2

2

By Day 30

Measure where you start

Count what happens today, over four normal weeks. Agree this starting point with Finance and the unit head before you change anything.

IN OUR EXAMPLE

The team reviewed 80 loan files. 8 were sent back for rework: 1 in 10.

STEP 3

3

Days 30 to 60

Try one fix

Change one thing at a time, so you know what made the difference.

IN OUR EXAMPLE

The team was coached on the three behaviours and given a simpler review checklist.

STEP 4

4

Days 60 to 90

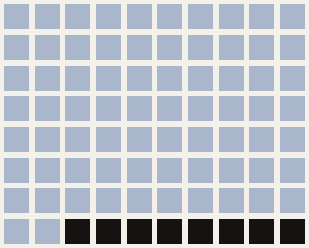
Measure again, the same way

Use the same measure and the same length of time as Step 2.

IN OUR EXAMPLE

The team reviewed 90 files. 5 were sent back: 1 in 18. Rework almost halved, and the team handled 10 more files in the same time. Fewer files bouncing back means faster lending decisions and less senior time spent on corrections.

BEFORE: FOUR NORMAL WEEKS

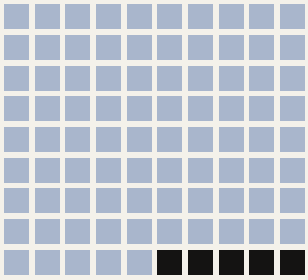


1 in 10

sent back
72 of 80 files
approved first time

»

DURING THE PILOT: FOUR WEEKS



1 in 18

sent back
85 of 90 files
approved first time

Approved first time Sent back for rework

Each square is one credit file. Illustrative example.

Toolkit continued

STEP 5

5

Day 90

Check, then decide

Before you claim success, test the result with four questions. If all four hold, scale the fix to the next unit. If not, adjust it or stop.

Same team?
Did the number of analysts stay the same?

Same work?
Were the files of similar difficulty?

No shortcuts?
Did control exceptions stay flat or fall?

Worth it?
Does Finance agree the benefit, and is it cheaper than hiring another analyst?

HOW TO KEEP SCORE: FOUR QUESTIONS FOR YOUR SCORECARD

THE QUESTION	WHAT TO MEASURE
Can people do it?	Share of staff who meet the standard without supervision
Is the work better?	Files sent back for rework, and control exceptions
Is it worth the money?	Benefit confirmed by Finance, minus the full cost of the fix
Are we keeping the right people?	Regretted exits in the team over the same period

For control and support roles, judge the quality of challenge and escalation, not revenue.

ONE MORE TOOL: DECIDE WHAT AI SHOULD DO

AUTOMATE
Routine queries, data entry and standard letters

AUGMENT
Drafting job descriptions and analysing attrition, with a person checking

KEEP HUMAN
Hiring, promotion, discipline and pay decisions, with an accountable owner

MORE AUTOMATION — MORE HUMAN JUDGEMENT

YOUR NEXT 90 DAYS

Which capability will you test, and what evidence would persuade Finance and Risk to scale it?

Share a short, anonymised example with your Workforce Group contact.

THE CLOSING THOUGHT

Recapitalisation answered the regulator's question. Capability answers the shareholder's.

Choose the capability, prove the return and carry people along.

SHREC 2026: THE PANELLISTS TOGETHER



Panellists and moderators from all three panels, with the Workforce Group team, at The Zone, Gbagada, Lagos, on 5 November 2026. Thank you to everyone who shared their experience and made the day possible.

Workforce.

SHREC is convened by Workforce Group.

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TALK TO US ABOUT YOUR NEXT 90 DAYS

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Also in this series: Panel 2, Future-Ready or Left Behind · Panel 3, The Capability Squeeze

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