

GUIDE

The HR Leader's Guide to Nearshoring

How to Secure Talent, Build Cohesive Teams and Lead
Successful Transitions

Introduction

HR leaders are often invited into nearshoring conversations after the big operational decisions have been made. By then, the risks are already built in: hiring delays, rushed recruitment, divided teams and cultural friction that drags on performance.

Beyond supply chains or shipping routes, nearshoring is a people transformation. Success depends on whether organisations can attract the right skills, integrate new teams effectively and adapt without losing momentum.

This guide gives HR leaders a way to step in earlier and shape the outcome. It focuses on three critical areas — securing talent, building teams and managing transition — and offers practical steps to de-risk nearshoring through people. With these tools, HR leaders can help projects land smoothly, with the right foundations in place for long-term success.

Why nearshoring is back on the agenda.

Nearshoring has returned to the top of C-suite agendas as companies face geopolitical tension, fragile supply chains and volatile shipping costs. [2024 Bain & Company survey](#) found that 80% of COOs plan to nearshore within three years, up from 63% just two years earlier.

2024

COOs planning to
nearshore within three years

80%

2022

COOs planning to
nearshore within three years

63%

The momentum is uneven, as [Kearney's 2025 Reshoring Index](#) shows, but the business case remains clear: nearshoring promises shorter lead times, lower transport costs, reduced carbon footprints and stronger supply chain resilience. Yet none of these gains are possible without people. The availability of talent, the way teams are structured and how organisations adapt will determine whether nearshoring strengthens resilience or introduces new risk.



Talent. Use data to make the right location decisions.

Nearshoring plans collapse when companies discover too late that the talent isn't there. HR leaders can prevent this by putting workforce intelligence at the centre of site selection and recruitment planning.



Map talent markets early

Use live data to compare skill availability, pay levels and competitor presence across candidate markets. This shifts talent from an afterthought to a deciding factor in location strategy.



Build pipelines before you launch

Partner with local universities and technical colleges to co-design apprenticeships and training pathways that build a future talent pipeline. Anticipating skills gaps in this way has helped global manufacturers reduce hiring times by up to 35% according to BCG.



Hire for potential, not perfection

Early hires in new sites often face evolving roles. Structured assessments that measure adaptability, collaboration and problem-solving help secure people who can grow with the operation rather than being locked into rigid role profiles.



Design for inclusion from day one

Nearshoring is an opportunity to strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion. Inclusive recruitment processes and benefits tailored to local expectations, create stronger, more resilient teams and broaden access to underrepresented talent.

HR leaders who bring market intelligence and workforce strategy into the earliest conversations de-risk nearshoring and prove their role as strategic decision-makers.

Teams. Turn new and relocated staff into cohesive units.

Once the talent is secured, the challenge shifts to building effective teams in a new market. For HR leaders, this means shaping how relocated employees and local hires come together - and ensuring leadership structures are strong enough to support them.



Embed local leaders in senior roles

When relocated staff work alongside new local hires, cultural divides can quickly appear. Giving local leaders a seat at the top helps bridge differences in language, customs and expectations. Leadership assessments at this stage can pinpoint which candidates have the cultural fluency and management capability to succeed across both contexts



Plan staffing alongside project timelines

Nearshoring projects often demand large cohorts to be hired quickly, which can strain culture and processes. HR should be embedded in project planning from the outset so roles are scoped accurately, recruitment workflows are tested, and pipelines are built in advance. Competitor insight into how other organisations have sequenced hiring in similar markets helps HR leaders avoid missteps and set realistic expectations with the C-suite.



Build resilient leadership models

Distributed teams need leaders who can balance HQ direction with local realities. Establishing advisory boards or local leadership councils provides local autonomy while maintaining central alignment. Market benchmarking can show where internal leadership capability may need strengthening.



A strong team structure creates early momentum. Without deliberate integration and clear leadership models, even the best-resourced nearshoring projects risk losing cohesion.

Transition. Momentum through organisational change.

Even the best-prepared teams won't thrive if the wider organisation fails to adapt. Transition is where nearshoring tends to succeed or fail, making it a critical focus for HR leaders.



Decentralise decision-making to fit new structures

Centralised models often slow multi-site operations. HR leaders should push for structures that give local teams authority within clear global guardrails. Benchmarking against how peer organisations structure decision rights in nearshore markets can highlight where bottlenecks are likely and where decentralisation is most effective.



Lead transparent, culturally aware change management

Relocation can unsettle employees in both existing and new sites. Communicating openly about the rationale for the move, while showing respect for local customs, helps maintain trust. Equipping leaders with intercultural training and assessing which managers can operate effectively across contexts strengthens engagement during this period of uncertainty.



Anticipate and address attrition risk early

Nearshoring projects often trigger turnover, as existing staff feel displaced and new hires struggle to connect. HR leaders should plan for retention measures such as career pathways for both groups, tailored onboarding, and targeted support for relocating staff. Competitor insight into attrition trends in similar markets can help anticipate risks before they escalate.

By reshaping structures, guiding change with cultural awareness and planning proactively for attrition, HR leaders can embed resilience that lasts well beyond the launch of a new site.

Taking nearshoring projects from risk to resilience.

Nearshoring is often treated as an operational move, but in reality it is a people transformation. Talent availability, team cohesion and organisational transition are what make the difference between a project that delivers resilience and one that creates new risks.

By stepping in early, bringing workforce intelligence to the table and guiding the people strategy, HR Leaders can de-risk nearshoring before problems take hold. They can position themselves as central to the business case, showing that resilience depends as much on people as on supply chains.

When talent, teams and transition are aligned, HR leaders turn nearshoring from a gamble into a long-term advantage.



Ready to transform your talent strategy?

Chameleon International is a global talent consultancy specialising in executive search, talent intelligence and workforce strategy. We work with organisations to anticipate skills needs, map competitive landscapes and build leadership teams that thrive across borders.

To learn more about how we help HR leaders de-risk nearshoring through people, visit [chameleon-international.com](https://www.chameleon-international.com).

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