



The 4th Industrial Revolution in the Workforce, Friend or Foe?

AI Needs Human Labor More Than Ever

- » **The New Freelancers:**
Tapping Talent in the Gig Economy
- » **Importance of Connections in the workplace**
- » **Reflections on the future direction for HRM**



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Government Human Resources

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Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Awar
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Man and echoes of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Dear Readers

We are pleased to present to you the tenth issue of HR Echo Magazine, which is being published in line with the Annual International Human Resources Conference, under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai.

We wanted the topics of this issue to focus around the theme of the conference: "The 4th Industrial Revolution Human Capital Challenges", which will shed light on all of the work sectors, as well as over their administrative systems, tools and human capital.

As the Fourth Industrial Revolution in its all implications moves rapidly, it is necessary to be vigilant, keep pace, or even take proactive steps, in terms of preparation and modernization. The theme will benefit from the advantages that serve the work system in particular, and help people and governments to progress and provide better services that help increase people's happiness and make life easier.

Even if the repercussions of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are great for governments and institutions of all kinds, human capital remains in the focus, being its engine and the affected one at the same time. Therefore, it is necessary to concentrate on developing existing talents and skills and creating new ones that cope with developments of the stage and meet the needs of the future labor market. This will result from the Fourth Industrial Revolution, such as artificial intelligence techniques, and competition between artificial intelligence and workforce in many occupations and fields.

Dear Readers

This issue contains many specialized research articles, about international organizations and firms, and distinguished writers who enrich the topics of this issue with their insights and experiences. They discussion will centre around relationship between jobs and digital technology, their impact on skills, talent, as well as the nature and methods of workplaces.

Because the Fourth Industrial Revolution is a reality, it is necessary for governments and organizations to take steps to invest in all of its advantages. The first step is to empower human capital and equip it with the necessary knowledge and skills through innovative and continuing education and training, taking into account the needs of different generations.

Among the topics addressed, which are no less important than the previous ones: the new employees who engage in independent work and make up the so-called independent self-employment economy and how institutions benefit from the talent available in this mode of work. More over the source of expertise and competencies and the issue of work-life balance and counsel given to employees and institutions in this regard. The Echo also sheds light on the future trend of human resources management, and the importance of social relations in the workplace in creating an attractive environment that encourage intellectual and social integration



Dr. Ilias Visvikis
Professor, School of Business
Administration & Director
of Executive Education -
American University of Sharjah

Technological Revolution.. Opportunities and challenges

It is my great pleasure to be able to contribute to this edition of HR Echo.

This is a unique opportunity to engage with professionals working within the UAE government, and in private industry, regarding important issues we will all encounter as we face the future of work. In the article I was privileged to write for this edition, I discuss both the challenges and opportunities that will impact workplaces across the Emirates—and beyond—as robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) come to play an ever-increasing role, regardless of industry or sector.

As I reiterate in the article, these technological advancements offer us enormous opportunities to improve the way we work, if used in the right way. Being aware of the available technology (and technology in the pipeline) is one of the most effective ways we can ready ourselves for what is to come.

Understanding, and ultimately harnessing, new technologies for the benefit of our organizations, is the next step towards ensuring rapid technological advancements work in our favor.

As Director of Executive Education at American University of Sharjah (AUS), I have the honor of witnessing how such technologies can positively impact our society.

AUS faculty who are experts in specific areas of robotics and AI (for example, in the field of Smart Cities) help us to show our partners how state-of-the-art technologies can be deployed to realize their organizational objectives.

Our combination of academic rigor and practical, hands-on experience is useful for those who want to keep pace with these changes.

Robotics and AI have the potential to revolutionize our workplaces (and homes) in ways that we cannot even

begin to imagine. It is unrealistic to think that we can ignore this seismic shift—we need to embrace this unprecedented change, using these technological breakthroughs to our advantage.

The benefits are many: increased productivity, cheaper production costs and safer work environments, to name a few.

It is up to us, as organizational leaders, innovators, academics and scientists, to maximize the positive outcomes of a growing robotics and AI industry, and ensure that the workforces we are a part of thrive in this new age.

I trust that my contribution to this edition of HR Echo will provide some context in which to consider this issue, and stimulate discussion on what we can all do to utilize robotics and AI to the advantage of our organizations.

The 4th Industrial Revolution

in the Workforce, Friend or Foe?

Dr. Ilias Visvikis
Professor, School of Business Administration & Director
of Executive Education -
American University of Sharjah



In this article, Dr. Ilias Visvikis, Professor in the School of Business Administration at American University of Sharjah (AUS), and Director of Executive Education at the university, examines the impact of technology on the future workforce. Professor Visvikis believes that far from creating a shortage of jobs, the rise of digital technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics in organizations will create a shortage of skills. He argues that now is the time to up-skill the workforce and put in place training strategies that will ensure the new world of work has the capability necessary to drive it forward.

The world is changing, and so is the way we work. The workplace and the workforce of today would be almost unrecognizable to our grandparents, or even our parents, when they began their careers. Commentators suggest that even bigger changes are on the way, with the conventional view predicting that the world of work is set to transform at a pace never witnessed before, driven by rapid advances in technology that will replace human skill and ingenuity.

We are constantly presented with scenarios in which the world of work is overtaken by automation. Depending on what you read, automation, or Artificial Intelligence (AI), is likely to take over vast swathes of the current workforce, wiping out entire professions and rendering many of today's jobs obsolete. However, I would argue that this prediction is far from realistic. There is no doubt that AI and robotics, along with other digital innovations, will have a dramatic impact on jobs, skills and wages. However, I very much doubt that the rise of technology will lead to mass unemployment and economic stagnation, as some people fear and argue. I take the positive view, based on all the evidence, and contend that new technologies will allow us to embark on

Far from creating a shortage of jobs, the rise of digital technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics in organizations will create a shortage of skills

New technologies will allow us to embark on careers that are more meaningful and more fulfilling, and give us the work-life flexibility that we have for so long struggled to achieve.

As a result of the unprecedented technological advancements we are now seeing, a new breed of jobs will be generated and the jobs of today that remain into the future will inevitably look vastly different.

The rise of technology will lead to a reduction in the percentage of the workforce engaged in menial tasks and a greater reliance on them in meaningful, intellectually driven work

careers that are more meaningful and more fulfilling, and give us the work-life flexibility that we have for so long struggled to achieve.

I believe that in the future of work, there will be no shortage of work. While there will of course be some consequences associated with the rise of technology in the workplace, automation also brings with it many opportunities. As a result of the unprecedented technological advancements we are now seeing, a new breed of jobs will be generated and the jobs of today that remain into the future will inevitably look vastly different.

Indeed, I believe the rise of technology in the workforce will mean that more people are engaged in more meaningful, intellectually driven work, with a vastly reduced percentage of the workforce engaged in menial tasks. However, to embrace this change and opportunity, people will obviously need to be better educated, and more highly skilled. We therefore need to look at how people are educated at the school and university levels today, but also beyond this; that is, we need to equip people throughout their careers with new capabilities and competencies, and keep them up-to-date with the latest developments in their profession and industry. The future of work requires lifelong learning. Those who succeed in the future of work will be those who continually invest in their learning, and who demonstrate to their employers that they are doing so.

It is not just technology that is having a profound impact on the world of work. Rather, changes in technology are colliding with a collection of other megatrends, resulting in unparalleled change in the nature of work and causing us all to examine how we are preparing for the workplaces of the future. Such megatrends include previously unforeseen demographic shifts,



and globalization of the world at an economic and social level. In terms of demographics, according to the World Bank, more than 28 percent of the population of the Middle East is aged between 15 and 29—this equates to 108 million people. The “youth bulge” of the Middle East is a demographic trend echoed in other parts of the world: Asia and Africa are both experiencing the same phenomena. In tandem with this explosion in the world’s population of young people comes the rise of globalization. The world has never been more connected, with smart phones, social media and open-work platforms linking the world in a way that would have been unimaginable just a generation ago. These megatrends will combine to have a revolutionary impact on the world of work, with the effects already being felt in offices and factories around the globe.

Indeed, where we work and how we work has already changed. Automation and the future-busting innovations that come with it (Google Home and driverless cars being some of the first to come to mind) are already upon us. We are also beginning to see the economic shifts resulting from technology’s broader influence, with many of the world’s economies transitioning from reliance on fossil fuels and manufacturing to knowledge-based and skill-driven industries. Today, some of the world’s biggest companies don’t own traditional

It is not just technology that is having a profound impact on the world of work. Rather, changes in technology are colliding with a collection of other megatrends such as demographic shifts and globalization.

Where we work and how we work has already changed. Automation and the future-busting innovations that come with it are already upon us.

The Open Talent Economy is already here, replacing traditional, permanent employees who value long-term job security.

the Open Talent Economy will continue to grow, seeing the ratio of permanent employees to contractors or freelancers decline

physical assets and infrastructure, but create value by connecting people, products and services using technology. Already, employers are beginning to better understand the benefits in productivity and profitability that come with offering employees greater flexibility. The Open Talent Economy is already here, replacing traditional, permanent employees who value long-term job security. As the world of work changes, the Open Talent Economy will continue to grow, seeing the ratio of permanent employees to contractors or freelancers decline, as organizations and professionals come to appreciate the benefits of matching specific talents to specific projects, on an ad hoc basis. It is, of course, technology that has allowed this Open Talent Economy to flourish. The internet has allowed organizations seek out the most appropriate skills for their needs, with those that can provide those skills often able to do so from any location in the world.

So as organizational leaders and educators, how do we keep up with the changes that are already upon us, and begin to prepare for more unprecedented change?

Being realistic about what lies ahead is a first step in the right direction. Admitting that the workforce is going to change, and change fast, allows

organizational leaders to plan for the inevitable. An assessment of what skills are likely to be the most in short supply in the next 5, 10 and 20 years, in individual organizations, and the specific departments within these organizations, is essential. Only by assessing where the gaps will be can we start to put in place strategies for filling these gaps, and ensuring our organizations have the skills and capacity required to take them forward into the next century and beyond.

It seems from the research, that while organizations are starting to understand the skills gaps that they will likely encounter in the years ahead, they are far from confident that their workforces are well prepared. According to a survey from Deloitte and MIT, 70 percent of business leaders believe that their organizations will need a new mix of talent and skills in the future. Of course, what these skills will be depends on the nature of the organization itself. Indeed, even the best futurists cannot predict what these specific skills-sets will look like. However, what we can say, is that we know that there will be some skills and capabilities that almost every organization will need, and these are skills that we can start to imbed across organizations, right now.

There are some skills that AI and robots just can't acquire (well, not yet anyway). Valuable human skills, such as leadership, creativity, emotional intelligence, value judgements and communicating knowledge are just some of the things that humans do well and will continue to do well even as AI and robotics take over more parts of our lives. These are the skills that employers will need more

The internet has allowed organizations seek out the most appropriate skills for their needs, with those that can provide those skills often able to do so from any location in the world.

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of, in the not-so-distant future of work, and these are the skills that individuals would be wise to equip themselves with if they want to stay relevant and in-demand in the workforce of the future.

However, I believe that the skill that will be most valuable to individuals in the new world of work will be adaptability. Despite our best efforts, no one knows what the future will look like, and the future of 10 years' time will look markedly different to the future of 20 years' time. We therefore need to teach workforces how to be adaptable and flexible. An individual who is willing to adjust their skill-set or take on an entirely new career trajectory at any point in their professional life is more likely to see success in the workplace than someone unwilling to bend to new realities. Being agile and quick to respond to new market demands will allow individuals to prosper in the new world of work.

Despite all the uncertainty surrounding the future of work, one thing is clear: it will no longer be enough to finish one's education and training upon leaving

There are some skills that AI and robots just can't acquire such as leadership, creativity, emotional intelligence, value judgements and communicating knowledge.



school or university. Learning and education will be a lifelong endeavor, with employers and employees needing to take equal responsibility for ongoing professional development. Teaching employees how to learn, and making ongoing education compulsory, needs to become the norm in organizations of all shapes and sizes. Formalizing training requirements and creating education and training ecosystems will help to guarantee that individuals do not “fall through the gaps” and get left behind in the new world of work, but rather stay “ahead of the curve.”

Already at AUS we are seeing strong demand for executive education and on-the-job professional training and development that provides employees with the knowledge needed to adapt to the aforementioned changes brought on by digital technology, AI and robotics. As a relevant example, with the creation of Smart Cities high on the UAE government’s agenda, our new professional development course—Certificate in AI for Smart Cities—will help professionals apply the benefits of AI to their Smart City projects. Delivered by AUS Executive Education in conjunction with the AUS College of Engineering’s Department of Computer Science and Engineering, topics to be covered include big data, machine learning, cyber-physical systems, Internet of Things, cyber security, blockchain and cloud computing—all topics that will help Middle Eastern leaders make the most of the opportunities available to them as a result of AI breakthroughs. We expect demand for such courses to grow, with organizations looking for structured programs on AI and robotics customized to the specific needs of their workforce.

As great is the need for research and increased understanding of the field of Smart Cities, AUS has recently established a brand-new research institute dedicated entirely to it. To be known as the Smart Cities Research Institute (SCRI), the institute will foster cross-disciplinary research activities that help utilize AI and other forms of technology to create more resilient, efficient, informed, connected, secure, healthy and sustainably driven living environments. Never has this goal been more important, with cities around the world becoming increasingly over-crowded and urbanization continuing at unprecedented rates in many countries.

One of the most important aspects of the work of AUS Executive Education is the dissemination of knowledge from the university to the broader community. As the world becomes more technologically-driven, and our day-to-day lives become even more influenced by AI, universities like ours will play

The skill that will be most valuable to individuals in the new world of work will be adaptability.

Being agile and quick to respond to new market demands will allow individuals to prosper in the new world of work.

It will no longer be enough to finish one’s education and training upon leaving school or university.

The responsibility for the professional development will become an equal responsibility between the employer and the employee himself.



an essential role in keeping businesses and individuals in sync with the digital innovations that surround them. As yet just another example, our course, Decrypting Cryptocurrencies: An Introduction to Digital Currency Analysis and Investment, is open to the public, transferring the knowledge and experience of the university’s faculty in this area to the wider community. For people working in the banking, insurance, financial compliance and investment industries, among many others, keeping informed and at the helm of digitally driven trends ensures that they will not be passive bystanders to changes in their profession or sector. By taking ongoing education and training seriously, these professionals will have the power to influence and direct the outcomes of technological change in their industry.

As the world continues its march into the digital age, we often forget, or dismiss, the risks that our reliance on digital technology creates. As either individuals or organizations we are increasingly exposed to a new breed of perils that come from our digital dependence. If we are to make the most of new digital technologies, and advances in AI and robotics, we need to be prioritizing security and risk minimization at a personal and organizational level. With nearly all employees in today’s workforce operating some type of digital device as part of their role, it is imperative that everyone in the workforce has the training they need to avoid their exposure to online and digital risks

and have the tools and know-how to respond appropriately should they fall victim to a cyber attack. AUS Executive Education has recently launched an innovative course designed for people at all levels of the workforce, and across all industries, that will help them to prepare for and mitigate the threats that come from being so digitally engaged. Courses such as our Cyber Security Bootcamp need to become the norm in all workplaces as technology continues to advance into all facets of our working lives.

Working at a university such as AUS affords me the privilege of seeing the most up-to-the-minute advances in technology, including those in the fields of AI and robotics. Students and faculty at AUS are consistently looking to take AI and robotics to the next level of ingenuity, with researchers in the university's colleges experimenting with how to utilize AI in some of the GCC region's most important industries. One example is a project currently being undertaken by AUS engineering students that looks at how robots and AI can be harnessed to solve the problem of utility engineers tasked with assessing the integrity of the polymer insulators used in the UAE's power system grid. Another impressive example is that of a team of students, also from the College of Engineering, who have devised an In-Pipe Inspection Robot that can be used by the oil and gas industry to detect pipeline leaks and other defects. The team was recognized for their efforts last year when they were named finalists in the UAE Artificial Intelligence and Robotics Awards for Good, an initiative launched by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai. It is projects such as these that demonstrate the good that can come from AI and robots, making our jobs easier and, more importantly, safer, and freeing up our time to work on other parts of our roles. As AUS embarks on its recently announced new research direction, and invests increased amounts of funding into research degrees, there is little doubt that an increased number of AI and robotic innovations will come out of the university. AUS is obviously not alone in promoting research in AI and robotics, with universities around the world placing these areas at the top of their research agendas. It is clear that with public and private investment, our workplaces can expect to become even more impacted by technology in the immediate future. We therefore cannot sit idle and see what affect this technology will have.

To conclude, by positively viewing the changes to work wrought by technological advances and putting in place strategies that will help us optimize these changes, we can help to ensure more positive outcomes for

Central to any future of work strategy of any organization—public or private—needs to be education and training.

more people over the years ahead. Central to any future of work strategy of any organization—public or private—needs to be education and training. Empowering workers with technical and soft skills for the changes that lie ahead will ensure that individuals have autonomy and control over their future, and that organizations have the skills and knowledge to grow and flourish in the new world of work.

It is imperative that everyone in the workforce has the training they need to avoid their exposure to online and digital risks and have the tools and know how to respond appropriately should they fall victim to a cyber attack

AI Needs Human

**Labor More
Than Ever**



Dr. Mohamed Abdulzاهر
Media Consultant - General Secretariat of the Cabinet of UAE

I have asked a friend of mine, who was working in customer service at a bank, about his work now, and how it became different now, comparing to 2019 after he lost his job.

He said, "I am very well now, feeling better and more fortunate, where I am working in customer service at one of robot's maintenance company, which specializes in public parks cleaning. Moreover, I am weekly taking care of dozens of "robots" at registration, maintenance and periodic inspection. Our company is looking for new employees every month." (Future Dialogue at 2050).

Contrariwise, to what many see as a decline in human employment rates in the face of "Automation" growth and the replacement of 4IRs' techniques and AI tools that replace man in many jobs, there is a great growth in job opportunities and the demand for some human jobs.

Some countries would suffer from a lack of human workers and will open the door to receive new immigrants from other countries to fill the gap in the human labor market.

4IR could eliminate jobs in more than four sectors, which will not be needed in the future; but it would open the door to millions of jobs in more than 14 new sectors, that had never existed before.

Worldwide Spending on Cognitive and Artificial Intelligence Systems Forecast to Reach \$77.6 Billion in 2022, According to New IDC Spending Guide.

Following the fast growth in this sector since 2015, it is possible to say that incoming 10 years, global spending could increase to about USD 1 trillion in 2030. Especially as the world's largest companies pump millions of dollars into investments in this field ,and the governments ,which they have begun to build cities of the future ,based on AI and the4 IR technologies.

Automation is nothing new – machines have been replacing human workers at a gradual rate ever since the Industrial Revolution .This happened first in agriculture and skilled crafts like hand weaving ,then in mass manufacturing and ,in more recent decades ,in many clerical tasks ,according to World Economic Forum report.

As the extra income generated by these technological advances has been recycled into the economy ,new demand for human labor has been generated and there have ,generally ,still been plenty of jobs to go round.

AI and related technologies will also boost economic growth and so create many additional job opportunities ,just as other past waves of technological innovation have done from steam engines to computers .In particular ,AI systems and robots will boost productivity ,reduce costs and improve the

4IRs will provide millions of jobs in 14 sectors and will eliminate jobs in four sectors in the future

The world will witness growth in employment opportunities, although robotics and artificial intelligence have acquired many jobs

Global spending on artificial intelligence to reach \$ 77 billion in 2022 and will reach \$ 1 trillion in 2030

AI systems and robots will boost productivity, reduce costs and improve the quality and range of products that companies can produce.

Up to 800 million workers worldwide will lose their jobs by 2030 and will be replaced by Robots

quality and range of products that companies can produce ,according to World Economic Forum report.

According to the World Development Report 2019: The Changing Nature of Work, from the World Bank.

Global Skills Race

"Up to 800 million workers worldwide will lose their jobs by 2030 and will be replaced by Robots" a study of McKinsey Global Institute said, the study of 46 countries and 800 occupations found that up to one-fifth of the worldwide work force will be affected.

Today's global workforce of 6 billion has 2 billion employed, 2 billion self-employed, 1 billion in the informal economy, and 1 billion unemployed or in transition. About 3 billion people were employed in the early 21st century. Today there are 4 billion, either employed by others or self-employed. Hence, new technologies over the last several decades created as much or



more new kinds of employment than they replaced. Unfortunately, about a billion people have not made the transition as successfully as others have, according to Millennium Project.

Countless opportunities lie ahead to improve the quality of working lives, expand choice, close the gender gap, reverse the damages wreaked by global inequality and much more. According to International Labour Organization report. In January 2019.

Yet none of this will happen by itself. As was the case in 1919 when the ILO was founded, without decisive action we will be heading into a world that widens existing inequalities and uncertainties.

Forging a new path requires committed action on the part of governments, employers' and workers' organizations by reinvigorating the social contract.

The major economic shifts under way – involving new technologies, demographic upheaval and climate change – will have both disruptive and transformative effects on our economies and on work. Major investments are needed to shape and guide these transformations to create decent work. Countries must now prioritize long-term, sustainable investments that favors human development and protect the planet, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Added ILO's report.

Technology and labor market

International Telecommunication Union (ITU report confirmed the role of Technology to open doors for new jobs and opportunities.

ICTs have incredible potential to improve development outcomes in both the developing and the developed world, and it is self-evident that digital inclusion is necessary for sustainable development in the 21st century.

ICTs enhance our capability to measure progress toward all the SDGs, evaluate the methods used to achieve them, learn what is working and not working, and improve the timeliness and quality of decision making.

ICTs provide opportunities to streamline and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities we undertake across the development landscape.

ICTs provide access to a completely new range of digitally enabled products and services, which strengthen local economies, local innovation and local communities.

ICTs are already empowering billions of individuals around the world –

Today's global workforce of 6 billion has 2 billion employed, 2 billion self-employed, 1 billion in the informal economy, and 1 billion unemployed or in transition

Countless opportunities lie ahead to improve the quality of working lives, expand choice, close the gender gap, reverse the damages wreaked by global inequality and much more

Countries must prioritize sustainable investments that favors human development and protect the planet

ICTs are already empowering billions of individuals by providing access to education resources and health information And provide them with instant electronic services



by helping them make better-informed decisions, by providing access to education resources and health information, and by delivering services such as mobile banking, e-government and social media networks.

People: We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

Planet: We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

Prosperity: We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

Peace: We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies, which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Partnership: We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable

Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

Required skills

According to a previous report from the World Economic Forum (October 2018), The most important challenges facing Human Labor in the future: the availability of skills required to cope with the great technological development.

One such issue is ensuring that the workforce has the skills needed to support new technologies. Our research shows that the digital divide between developed and developing countries is becoming more acute, and is the result not only of business cost-benefit decisions but also of workforce capabilities. By capabilities, I mean not just the higher-level technical and vocational skills needed to design, operate and maintain digital infrastructure, but also basic skills and ICT proficiency. The message is that skills matter, if we want to use technology to decrease, not increase, inequalities.

So far, this wave of technological change has not brought about an overall reduction in employment, as the Forum's report confirms. While the change has affected certain sectors and occupations negatively, it is generating many new jobs in others, both directly and indirectly.

Everywhere we look, skillsets will need to be radically altered to keep pace with the changes taking place in the world of work. If businesses are to keep up with the disruption brought on by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, they will need to help their staff learn new skills. According to World Economic Forum.

The businesses that thrive will be those that put talent development at the center of their operation. Using data analytics, HR functions will need to learn how to look ahead, analyzing skills gaps and working out how to align their workforce to meet current and future challenges.

Future skills

According to "Future skills six approaches to close the skills gap" study issued on the World Government Summit (WGS) in February 2019, in partnership with McKinsey & Company: Digitization and automation are bringing about vastly changing requirements at the workplace, and will be increasingly important for continued participation in society. Future skills¹ are needed now—skills that to some extent already exist today like agile working and digital interaction, and also skills that are only just emerging like blockchain technology development, all of which will become considerably more important tomorrow.

The most important challenges facing Human Labor in the future: the availability of skills required to cope with the great technological development.

The digital divide between developed and developing countries is becoming more acute

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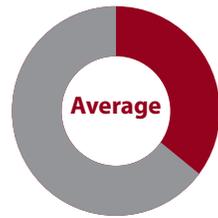
Future skills like agile working and digital interaction, and blockchain technology development are needed now

25 percent of today's workforce will either need to find new professional activities by 2020 or significantly broaden their technological skills as well as their digital citizenship and classic skills

As it currently stands, 25 percent of today's workforce will either need to find new professional activities by 2020 or significantly broaden their technological skills as well as their digital citizenship and classic skills—i.e., their cross-disciplinary skills². These skills include programming, agile working, and adaptability. Even elementary school students need to get ready for the change, since by 2030, 85 percent of them will work in professions that do not yet exist.

Previous papers on future skills have identified 18 future skills, and shown that the future skills gap—i.e., the number of underqualified workers—will rise to 700,000 for technological skills in the next five years, and to as much as 2.4 million for cross-disciplinary skills. This discussion paper proposes methods that Germany can implement to close the future skills gap as quickly and in as targeted a way as possible. The various papers on future skill have been developed with the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft, a German non-governmental organization seeking to address challenges in higher education, science and research. Founded in 1920, major donors include most major German corporations, but also > 2,000 medium-sized companies.

Skills Disruption



35% of core skills will change between 2015 and 2020

Average

- 43% Financial Services & Investors
- 42% Basic & Infrastructure
- 39% Mobility
- 35% Information & Communication Technology
- 33% Professional Services
- 30% Energy
- 30% Consumer
- 29% Health
- 27% Media, Entertainment & Information

- 48% Italy
- 42% India
- 41% China
- 41% Turkey
- 39% South Africa
- 39% Germany
- 38% France
- 37% Mexico
- 31% Brazil
- 29% United States
- 28% United Kingdom
- 27% Australia
- 25% Japan
- 21% Gulf Cooperation Council
- 19% ASEAN

Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

Skills will change 35% for Human Labor between 2015 and 2020.

The number of robots operating worldwide is rising rapidly, the report says, stoking fears of a jobs meltdown. But technology is laying down a path to create jobs, increase productivity and deliver effective public services. Fears surrounding innovation, which has already transformed living standards, are unfounded.

Communication Skills

Digital technology spurs rapid innovation and growth, disrupting old production patterns and blurring the boundaries of firms. New business models, such as digital platforms, evolve at dizzying speed from local start-ups to global behemoths - often with few tangible assets or employees.

New platform marketplaces are connecting people more quickly than ever before. This "scale without mass" delivers economic opportunity to millions of people, regardless of where they live.

New markets and jobs are driving demand for employees with teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills. Technological change is eliminating repetitive "codifiable" jobs and replacing them with new types of employment: in Europe alone, there will be estimated 23 million new jobs this century.

Technology changes not just how people work but also change terms on which they work, creating more jobs that are non-traditional and short-term "gigs."

The Fourth Industrial Revolution will create new areas of work that have not existed before and are all related to the technologies that will be created by that revolution

Governments should cooperate with various partners, economic and academic sectors to develop human resources.

This is making some work more accessible and flexible, but raises concerns about income instability and the lack of social protection.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution will create new areas of work that have not existed before and are all related to the technologies that will be created by that revolution, such as:

User and entity big data analytics, App- and web-enabled, markets, Internet of things, Machine learning, Cloud computing, Digital trade, Augmented and virtual reality Encryption, New materials, Wearable electronics, Distributed ledger (blockchain), 3D printing, Autonomous transport, Stationary robots, Quantum computing, Non-humanoid land robots, Biotechnology, Humanoid robots, Aerial and underwater robots.

No wonder that over the next five years AI Growth rates will be included as an indicator of Global Economic Growth, as well as the 4IR technologies as per capita, along with national income rates, GDP, inflation, and other indicators that measure state's economic power.

Arab level

We will witness a breakthrough in areas like artificial intelligence, robotics, virtual reality and energy storage will affect nearly every aspect of the way we work and live. Nowadays the so-called Tsunami technology advance

On the Arab level, how good we are in using technology? Are Arab states losing the race of technological progress? Has a single Arab country, been able to develop a mobile phone with an international name or brand? Have we tried self-sufficiency from TV screens or laptops, or even from keyboards, or computer mouse! We are only consumers, and the Arab market is one of the largest markets importing such goods globally

Humanity continues to embark on a period of unparalleled technological advancement. The ground appears to be shifting beneath our feet as we hurtle through a period of unnerving change. The coming years will present both significant challenges and opportunities. Many domains will be changed, new cities will be established and new industries will emerge, even the concept of time and distance will change

You may travel between Cairo, Dubai and Riyadh in half an hour; you may wake up in the morning only thinking about your personal information security, or your electronic devices, neglecting even your desire for food and drink. An argument between you and your "Robot work helper" may break out and you never know! He may take over your job

The bodies of people may fall on you as a result of the collision of a flying taxi in the crowded sky. Space congestion in vehicles and aircrafts may exceed the traffic jam of cars on earth

The mobile phone may disappear and be replaced by smaller and faster voice and image transmission tools; we might see increased crop production, new product development, and diversity of water sources, organic fertilizer stocks, new antibiotics and alternative human prosthetics

It worth to mention that Arab countries -except one country- are still lagging far behind, in applying this advanced technologies

The UAE continues to drive the Arab world's tech ambitions, it may be a while before it can fairly be described as the Silicon Valley of the Arab world, yet it is rapidly becoming a leading technology hub in the region, drawing local and international entrepreneurs and generating substantial investor interest

The UAE allocated large budget for future technology, and also drafted new legislations and laws to cope with the current innovative technology

The UAE established " AREA 2071 " which is UAE Centennial Plan, that aims to make the UAE the world's leading nation by 2071 through a series of bold initiatives across a variety of industries, also there is the UAE Council for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

According to IDC forecasts, the world is spending in the year 2018 on digital transformation technologies, including hardware, software and services, amounts to nearly \$ 1.3 trillion. Gartner, Inc. also forecast total IT spending worldwide to reach US \$ 3.7 trillion in 2018, an increase of 4.5% over 2017

There are countries that are looking, preparing, racing, competing, inventing and executing, those are the winners, other countries will fail down overnight

The UAE continues to drive the Arab world's tech ambitions; it can fairly be described as the Silicon Valley of the Arab world. Yet it is rapidly becoming a leading technology hub in the region



because the seeds of their destruction are sown deep with their unplanned strategies and stagnant polices.

Governments face challenges and choices pertaining to how to apply AI technologies in the public sector and in governance strategies

AI Ethical Codes

A report published recently in the World Government Submit (WGS) by Deloitte confirmed that; "Despite remarkable achievements, the rapid development of AI has raised a host of ethical concerns. Governments face challenges and choices pertaining to how to apply AI technologies in the public sector and in governance strategies«.

AI long-term development

The report refers to the rapid development of AI has raised some concerns being a subject of fear and skepticism in the media .Could AI long-term development lead to the end of humankind as Elon Musk ,Bill Gates and numerous technologists have speculated ?What is the role of ethics in the



design ,development and application of AI ?How will ethics help maximize the benefits of AI to increase citizen well-being and common good?

While there is an increasing interaction between AI technologies and our socio-political and economic institutions ,consequences are not well defined. The advent of AI raises a host of ethical issues ,related to moral ,legal ,economic and social aspects of our societies and government officials face challenges and choices pertaining to how to apply AI technologies in the public sector and in governance strategies .From Uber's self-driving car fatality to Amazon's gender biased recruitment tool ,examples of AI ethical concerns abound and reinforce the idea that they should be taken into account before an AI system is deployed.

In this perspective” ,ethics “can be defined by the pursuit of” good “actions based on” good “decision-making— decisions and actions that lead to the least possible amount of unnecessary harm or suffering.

It implies that our government and business leaders understand and define what” good “means for AI systems .Gaining societal consensus on the ethics of AI is one of the key tasks of the government ,according to Deloitte.

Big Gap

According to the WGS's report ,there was a recent survey by Deloitte of 1,400 U.S .executives knowledgeable about AI identified that one of the biggest challenges facing AI is around the ethical domain .As per the survey 32% ,of respondents ranked ethical issues as one of the top three risks of AI while most organizations do not yet have specific approaches to deal with AI ethics .For instance ,how do we ensure that AI systems serve the public good rather than

The report refers to the rapid development of AI has raised some concerns being a subject of fear and skepticism in the media

AI systems' behavior should reflect societal values. Gaining societal consensus on the ethics of AI is one of the key tasks of the government.

Most organizations do not yet have specific approaches to deal with AI ethics

exacerbate existing inequalities?

There is a big gap between how AI can be used and how it should be used. The regulatory environment has to progress along with AI which is rapidly transforming our world .Governments and public institutions need to start identifying the ethical issues and possible repercussions of AI and other related technologies before they arrive .Objective is twofold:

- **First** to properly manage risks and benefits of AI within the government for an AI augmented public sector.
- **Second** to develop smart policies to regulate AI intelligently and secure it benefits for the society and economy.

Ethical considerations

Can we develop ethical frameworks for maximizing AI benefits while minimizing its risks?

The report has defined five AI Ethical considerations for Public Sector:

- **Regulatory and Governance** :What are the principles of governance that governments should adopt as part of anticipatory regulation ?How do we allow the development of AI applications for the public good ?What is the moral status of AI machines ?What properties must a machine have if it is seen as a moral agent ?Who is liable for decisions that AI and robots make? How do we bring transparency in the implementation of AI algorithms to prevent encoding of bias in machine decisions?
- **Legitimacy and non-repudiation** :How do we ensure the AI we are interacting with is legitimate ?How do we know that training data are legitimate ?Are we sure decisions are made by the proper AI agent?)Principle of nonrepudiation.(
- **Safety and Security** :Does AI warrant a new science of safety engineering for AI agents ?How do we ensure that machines do not harm other humans? Who will cover in case of damage ?Will an accident caused by our robot make me responsible?

- **Socio-economic Impact** :How do we prevent job losses caused by AI intrusion in work place ?What are the social and moral hazards of predictive profiling ?Will humans reach a point where there is no work for us due to AI ?Will humans do different type of jobs ?Will the society become a jobless society ,as described by many authors and how will the governments tackle it?
- **Morality** :Do we have the right to destroy a robot ?Is a robot the property of a human or belongs to public wealth ?How could we control a system that has gone beyond our understanding of complexity ?What if AI/robots develop their own views of problems and solutions ?Should a robot/AI have its own digital identity that allows it to own decisions ,assets and other things ?Should they have legal status and rights?



Ethical Frameworks

There has been an increasing interest in the global academic, corporate and government community to develop ethical frameworks for maximizing AI benefits while minimizing its risks .A few examples are listed below:

Academic institutions

Launched by Harvard Law School's Berkman Klein Center ,together with the MIT Media Lab ,the 27\$ million - Ethics and Governance of AI initiative - aims at developing new legal and moral rules for artificial intelligence and other technologies built on complex algorithms.

Corporate Organizations

Many technology companies have also designed programs that support AI as a tool to create a better society .For instance ,Google initiative called" AI for Social Good "and Microsoft's115\$ m" AI for Good "grant aims to fund artificial intelligence programs that support humanitarian ,accessibility and environmental projects .Recently ,Microsoft committed 50\$ million to its" AI for Earth "program to fight climate change.

Public Sector

Over a short period ,an increasing number of countries have announced the release of AI ethical guidelines .In December ,2018 the European Commission, supported by the High-Level Expert Group on AI released the first draft of its Ethics Guidelines for the development and use of artificial intelligence 5.At the same time ,Canada recently released the Montreal Declaration of Responsible AI ,which is a document to guide individuals ,organizations and governments in making responsible and ethical choices when building and utilizing AI technology.

UAE Leads

Last year UAE has launched Legislation Lab ,which aims to create a reliable and transparent legislative environment ,introduce new or develop existing legislation ,regulate advanced technology products and applications and ,by providing a secure legislative environment encourage investment in future sectors.

The legislation lab will work with leaders from government authorities and the private sector and business to develop laws governing vital future sectors affecting humanity ,and support the UAE's role as a global incubator of innovation and creative projects.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a black smartphone. The hand is wearing a grey, textured knit sleeve. The phone is held over a silver laptop keyboard. To the right, a blue ceramic mug with a brown handle is visible. The background shows a wooden table and a blurred outdoor setting with wooden chairs.

The New Freelancers: Tapping Talent in the Gig Economy

Judith Wallenstein, Alice de Chalendar,
Martin Reeves, and Allison Bailey
Boston Consulting Group (BCG)

The gig economy is often perceived as a fast-growing threat to employment stability and labor rights, promoting low-grade, low-paid jobs that offer workers little of the appeal or dignity of traditional employment. Public policy discussions and media articles often portray digital labor-sharing platforms—such as Uber, TaskRabbit, and Upwork—as a rapidly expanding source of real or potential exploitation, undermining the job and social security infrastructure established in mature economies a century ago.

In an April 2017 editorial, the *New York Times* concluded that gig platform companies “have discovered they can harness advances in software and behavioral sciences to old-fashioned worker exploitation.”

To understand the extent to which those fears of disruption and exploitation are grounded in reality, the BCG Henderson Institute, as part of its Future of Work project, conducted a large-scale global survey of workers with the support of Research Now SSI, and additional supporting research. Our survey sample intentionally included a significant portion of workers with pay and education levels below the average in their countries. We included these respondents to reflect the views, needs, and employment circumstances of the workers potentially most vulnerable to disruption, and to avoid the risk of artificially rosy findings. Our sample also comprised workers in a rising wave of what we call the new freelancers—that is, those who find temporary work through digital labor-sharing platforms. This group, a product of our era’s

Gig economy means the spread of freelancers or the use of short-term contracts between the companies and freelancers

Gig platforms increase access to new, high-tech skills and sorely needed workers of many types

While the gig economy is often described as a large and rapidly growing global phenomenon, it remains relatively small by some important measures.

ongoing digital disruption, is often perceived as the disenfranchised vanguard of the gig economy.

The survey results, along with a separate survey of executives in diverse industries and interviews with company leaders and with founders and executives of labor-sharing platforms, offer a more nuanced view of the emerging gig economy. In particular, our research underscores the significant opportunities—for workers and companies alike—to benefit from it. Many of the new freelancers we surveyed are embracing the trend as a path to greater autonomy and more flexible and meaningful work.

For companies, the findings highlight that gig platforms increase access to new, high-tech skills and sorely needed workers of many types who are difficult to source through traditional labor markets.

More broadly, our research reveals that gig work is just one element in an emerging ecosystem that includes other evolving forms of work—such as temping, contracting, and self-employment—along with a variety of support services. The result is profound change in the way companies hire, train, reward, and manage employees.

The new freelancers—a product of our era’s ongoing digital disruption—are themselves beneficiaries as well as victims of disruption. This balance between disruption and opportunity emerged on a personal level in the responses to our worker survey: the number of workers who reported losing their job to the freelancing trend equalled the number who regained employment by the same path. More than 30% of those who returned to work credited online gig work with enabling them to rejoin the workforce.

Amid such turbulence, despite no net losses of jobs, it’s easy to focus on the resulting discomfort. Yet disruptive change is also forcing greater overall adaptiveness in the employment system, creating fresh opportunities in traditional labor markets and at companies.

Taking the Real Measure of the Gig Economy

While the gig economy is often described as a large and rapidly growing global phenomenon, it remains relatively small by some important measures. Our research shows that workers’ use of labor-sharing platforms as their primary source of income is still relatively modest, particularly in mature markets. In the US, Germany, Sweden, the UK, and Spain, just 1% to 4% of workers cited gig platforms as their primary work source. The share of primary-income gig workers has remained stable across most of Europe for half a decade, according to a 2016 report by the OECD’s Institute of Labor.

However, gig work’s portion of the overall labor force was greater in the four developing markets in our survey—China, India, Indonesia, and Brazil. The





share was biggest in China, where 12% of workers said they earned their primary income through digital platforms. This higher share no doubt reflects the larger proportion of informal employment in emerging markets. Still, it shows that workers in those markets have adopted labor-sharing platforms faster than workers in mature markets.

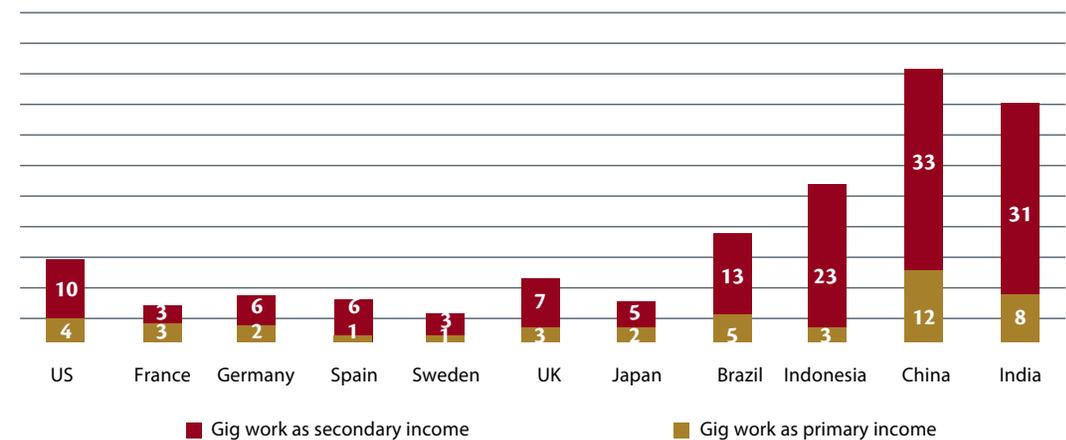
Measuring gig work only as a primary source of income, however, may underestimate its true size and growing global significance. An additional 3% to 10% of workers in mature economies, and more than 30% in some developing countries, reported using gig platforms as a secondary source of income. (See Exhibit 1.)

Corporate executives worldwide recognize that the rise of the new freelancers will have a significant impact on their workforces. In a 2018 survey of 6,500 executives worldwide, conducted by BCG in partnership with Harvard Business School's Managing the Future of Work initiative, roughly 40% of respondents said they expected freelance workers to account for an increased share of their organization's workforce over the coming five years. And 50% agreed that corporate adoption of gig platforms would be a significant or highly significant trend.²

12% of workers earned their primary income through digital platforms

3% to 10% of workers in mature economies, and more than 30% in some developing countries, reported using gig platforms as a secondary source of income

EXHIBIT 1 : The Use of Gig Platforms Was Greatest in the Four Emerging Economies Surveyed
% of respondents



Source : BCG Future of work 2018 worker survey, conducted with Research Now SSI

40% of respondents said they expected freelance workers to account for an increased share of their organization's workforce over the coming five years

38% of global senior executives were using on-demand, online marketplaces to source freelancers

The new freelancers are active in all industries—including B2B and retail sales and education, mobility, delivery, IT, and data processing

These results are consistent with research, published in May 2018, by SAP Fieldglass, a provider of cloud-based external workforce management solutions, conducted in collaboration with Oxford Economics. Of the 800 global senior executives surveyed, 38% were using on-demand, online marketplaces to source freelancers. The study predicted that companies' adoption of these platforms would nearly double in three years.

Alexa, Get Me a Freelance Software Designer

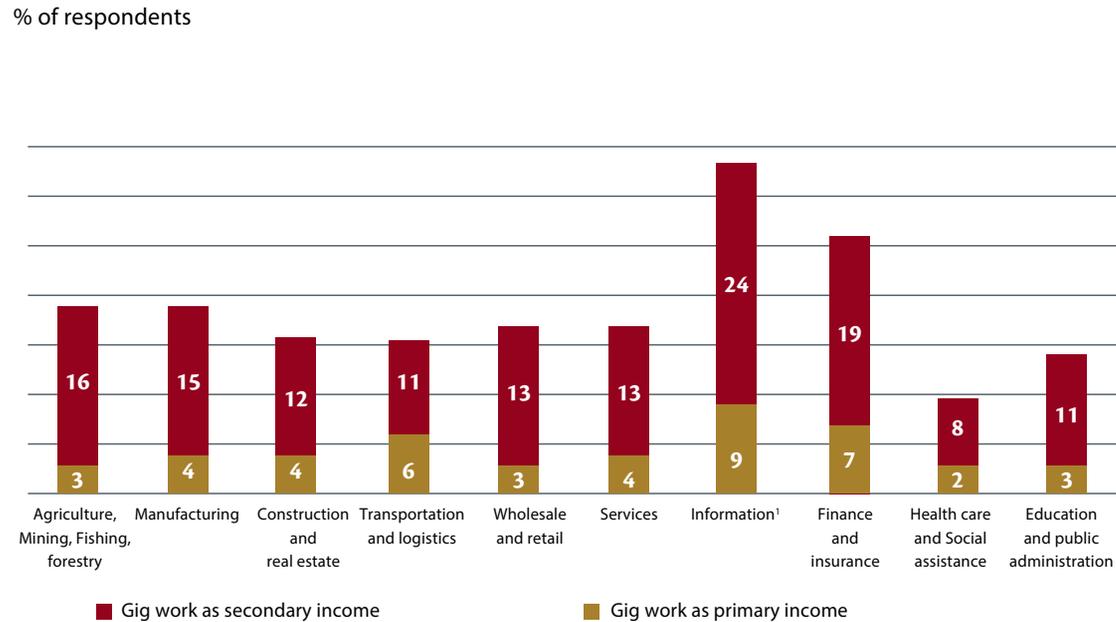
Public discourse on the sort of jobs that dominate the gig economy often focuses on on-demand chores in delivery and mobility services, such as Uber and Lyft. It's time to reboot that conversation, our survey found. The new freelancers are active in all industries—including B2B and retail sales and education—not just in the traditional freelance strongholds of mobility, delivery, IT, and data processing. (See Exhibit 2.)

In short, digital freelancing has emerged as a significant source of primary and secondary employment in all major industries, giving virtually all companies access to new freelancers.

Our worker survey, as noted earlier, was designed to include a significant sample of less-educated, lower-paid workers. But the perception that the gig economy is dominated by poorly paid work—such as ridesharing, delivery, clickwork, and microtasks—also proved false. Low-skill, low-wage freelance tasks accounted for only about half of the freelance work sourced through platforms. Much of the remainder comprised higher-skill, higher-paid work, such as software development and design. (See Exhibit 3.)

In short, digital freelancing has emerged as a significant source of primary and

EXHIBIT 2 : The New Freelancers Are Working in All Industries



Source : BCG Future of work 2018 worker survey, conducted with Research Now SSI

¹ Includes media, telecom, and data processing.

secondary employment in all major industries, giving virtually all companies access to new freelancers.

Our worker survey, as noted earlier, was designed to include a significant sample of less-educated, lower-paid workers. But the perception that the gig economy is dominated by poorly paid work—such as ridesharing, delivery, clickwork, and microtasks—also proved false. Low-skill, low-wage freelance tasks accounted for only about half of the freelance work sourced through platforms. Much of the remainder comprised higher-skill, higher-paid work, such as software development and design. (See Exhibit 3.)

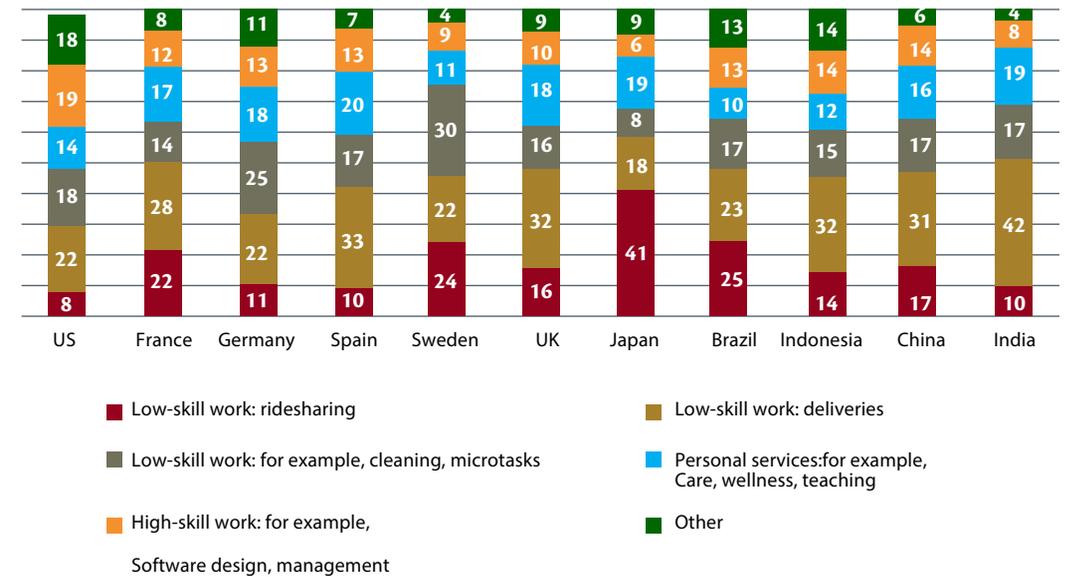
Gig platforms are not created equal. They differ in structure and in other meaningful ways, including the type of work offered, the type of freelancer seeking work, and the nature of the work contract. Platforms tend to be differentiated between those that own the employer relationship and assign and process work through the platform on the employer’s behalf, and those on which individual freelancers and employers negotiate terms.

The types and motivations of gig workers who use the various types of platforms differ accordingly. We have identified four “tribes” of new freelancers: Digital Nomads and Fly-In Experts, who negotiate individually, and Autonomous Clickworkers and Digital Valets, whose work is based on platform-set contracts. (See Exhibit 4.)

Gig economy is not limited to Low-Skill skills tasks, but include high-skill, higher-paid work such as software design and development

Gig platforms differ in structure including the type of work offered, the type of freelancer seeking work, and the nature of the work contract

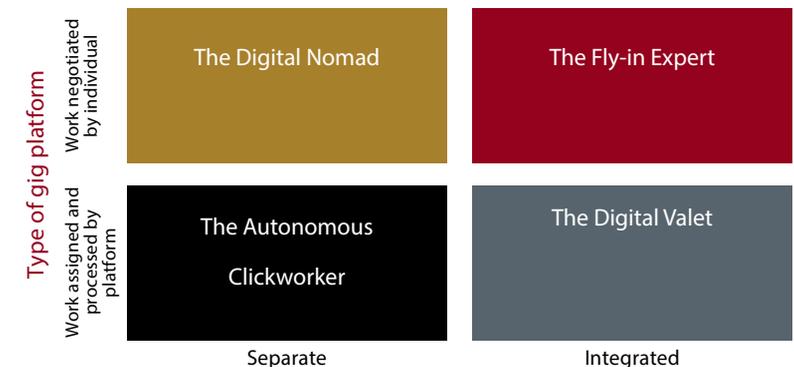
EXHIBIT 3 : Many Freelancers Find Work on Platforms That Seek Higher-Level Skills



Source : BCG Future of work 2018 worker survey, conducted with Research Now SSI

Note: Because of rounding, not all columns equal 100

EXHIBIT 4 : The Four Tribes of new Freelancers and Their Gig Platforms



Source : BCG analysis

45% chose remaining independent and adding clients as needed to increase their income, compared with only around 20% who preferred finding a full-time salaried position

How Freelancers Really Feel About Gig Work

Contrary to widespread assumptions, most freelancers we surveyed said they do not choose gig work for lack of better options. Often they freelance in addition to other work or full-time employment. For many freelancers, gig platforms fulfil goals, preferences, and needs beyond compensation. Those benefits, they said, include greater autonomy and flexibility in their work and private lives and better choices of work projects.

For women, minorities, and workers in emerging markets who otherwise had few or no employment possibilities, platforms created or expanded their opportunities by making it possible for them to work remotely.

Freelancers typically find work through multiple types of platforms in addition to personal networks, and they generally work on several projects simultaneously or sequentially, as needed. When asked to define their preferred future employment, around 45% chose remaining independent and adding clients as needed to increase their income, compared with only around 20% who preferred finding a full-time salaried position. (See Exhibit 5.)

Globally and across all types of workers in our survey, more meaningful work ranked as a top priority, along with higher wages. The new freelancers were no exception. The three top benefits they cited were the opportunity to spend time on more meaningful and interesting tasks, to be self-employed, and to fit full-time work more flexibly around private needs.

As a result, they also reported higher happiness and satisfaction levels with their work than people in traditional full-time employment, despite the fact that they were more likely to work more than 45 or even 60 hours a week, and to earn slightly lower salaries. The latter was especially the case when freelancing was the primary source of income.

Today, freelancers are increasingly tapped as a source of scarce talent and expertise by companies that need to adapt to shifting customer demands.

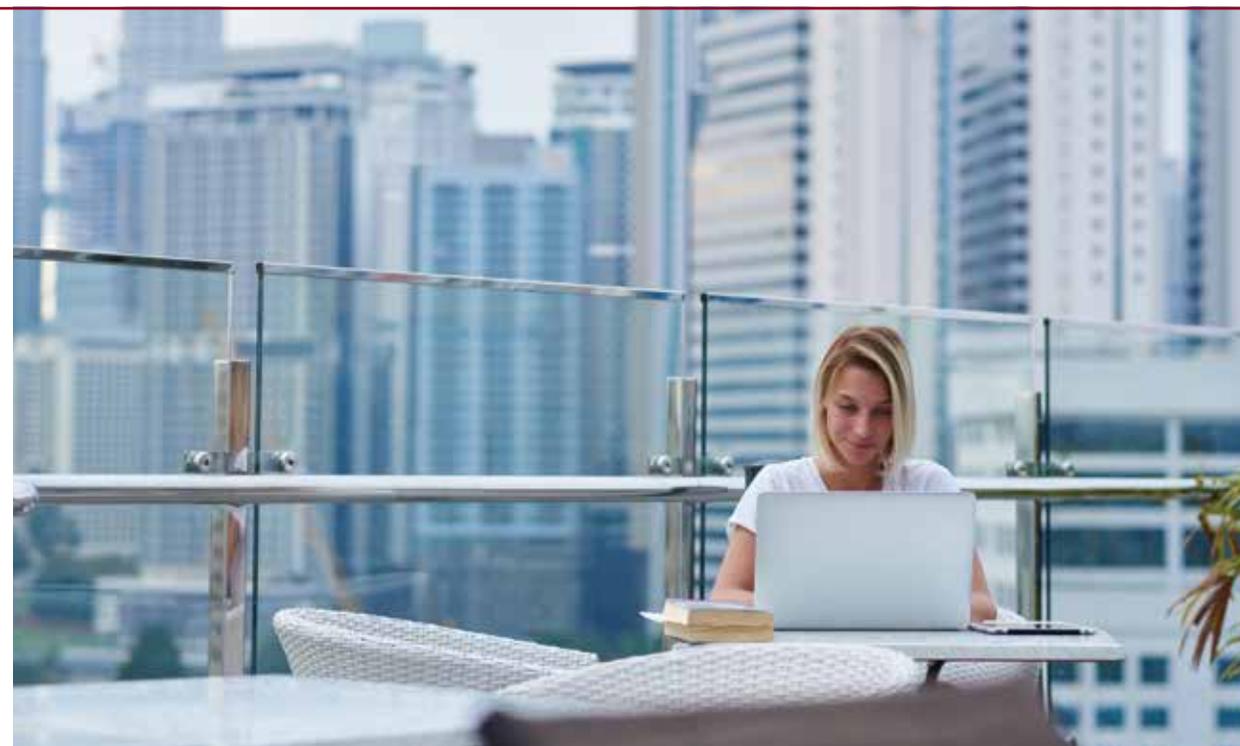
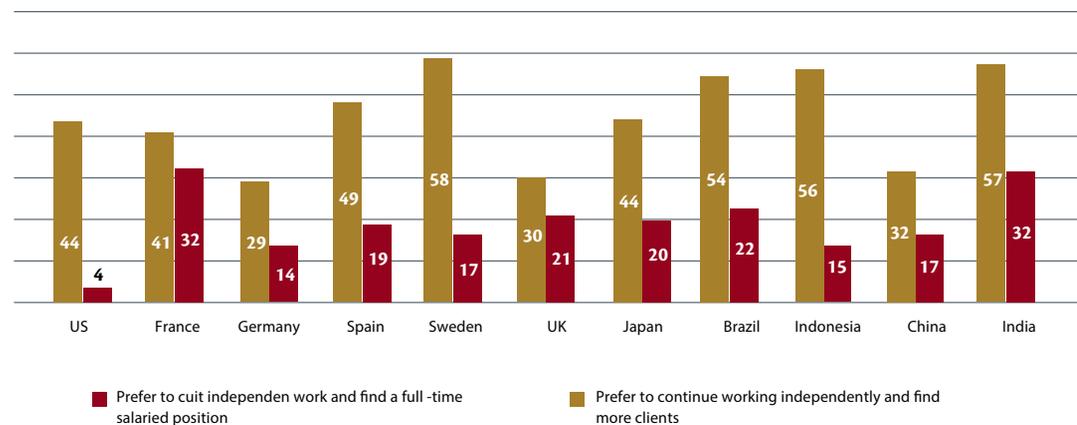


EXHIBIT 5 : The New Freelancers, by more than 2:1 prefer independent full-time salaried employment % of respondents



Source : BCG Future of work 2018 worker survey, conducted with Research Now SSI

Freelancing Evolves from Cheap Labor to Top Talent

Corporations have historically contracted freelancers to reap the cost benefit of using lower-skilled and lower-cost workers to execute noncore processes. In highly regulated labor markets such as France and Germany, hiring a freelancer doesn't entail providing the health care and pension benefits that salaried workers receive.

Freelancers have been a readily available and flexible resource to staff projects quickly, plug capacity gaps, and cover peak demand. Today, however, freelancers are increasingly tapped as a source of scarce talent and expertise by companies that need to adapt to shifting customer demands. Labor-sharing platforms provide rare skills that companies struggle to source on the traditional labor market of full-time employees.

An executive at a leading European bank told us that hiring freelancers and other external workers is "no longer merely a cost solution to get through restructuring times; it is about bringing very specific skill sets to the organization."

Another executive, in Germany, said he posted a full-time opening for a Java developer, offering a 20% pay premium and exceptional perks. He did not receive a single application in 18 months and was forced to hire a freelancer to complete the work.

Operators of labor-sharing platforms and workforce management service providers, pivoting to a new business opportunity, are targeting corporate clients with services that help them manage the shift to external freelance talent while retaining flexibility and work quality.

The shift in corporate strategy toward embracing gig workers—despite the disruption to the company and to individual workers—shows that companies overall are attempting to become more adaptive and resilient in a fast-changing business environment.

Tapping the talent and capabilities of the new freelancers will impose a learning curve on corporations



How Companies Can Adapt to the Freelance Future

The gig economy seems to be here to stay, first and foremost because it satisfies the needs of individual workers and companies. Tapping the talent and capabilities of the new freelancers will impose a learning curve on corporations. The motivations and aspirations of gig workers often differ significantly from those of traditional employees—and therefore from the experience of most corporate employers.

To make the most of the new freelancers, executives in traditional companies will need to adapt their management practices and strategies to attract people who don't necessarily like large corporations and find ways to integrate them into their operations. Here are some steps companies can take to get up to speed in the gig economy.

Embrace gig work and labor-sharing platforms to increase your company's flexibility.

When it comes to sourcing scarce skills and talent, and responding to changing customer demands, these platforms can be valuable tools. Gig platforms already offer access to significant parts of the workforce in all industries.

To make the most of the new freelancers, executives in traditional companies will need to adapt their management practices and strategies

Gig platforms already offer access to significant parts of the workforce in all industries.

Freelancing laws and regulations are rapidly evolving and companies are part of the process

Map the skills your organization has and those it lacks.

Our client work in re-skilling has taught us that many companies lack the basic data needed to map current skills and a foresight function to determine future skill requirements. Those tools would enable leaders to source critical skills and determine where and why freelancers fit into the picture—for flexibility, speed, cost arbitration, or talent access.

As the European bank executive told us, "We need a map of skill sets, and a map of skills compatibility and transferability. Yet we probably don't even have the CVs of all our employees."

Define your freelance sourcing strategy.

You can either tap into existing labor-sharing platforms and networks or build your own. When using existing networks, companies should be deliberate in choosing those affiliated with high-quality freelancers who know the company's work processes and procedures.

Philips, the Dutch multinational technology company, is among companies that have created their own solution. Its platform, Philips Talent Pool, allows the company to address the dual challenge of maintaining a pool of freelancers familiar with the company and vetting the quality of their work.

Labor-sharing platforms, whether self-built or external, allow companies to cast a broader net for resources, specifically for scarce skills.

Don't just hire freelancers—integrate them.

To get the most out of freelancers—and make them want a return engagement—companies need to adopt new capabilities, support systems, and ways of working. The workers in traditional corporate environments we surveyed often resented the friction, variable quality, and need for re-work

created by the use of freelancers. "I had to redo all the poor work the freelancer did," was a typical complaint.

Truly integrating temporary workers so that they can perform at a high level requires the willingness and the flexibility to create more adaptable workflows and processes. Companies must clearly articulate the role of these workers and the purpose of integrating them to gain broad internal support from and alignment with other workers.

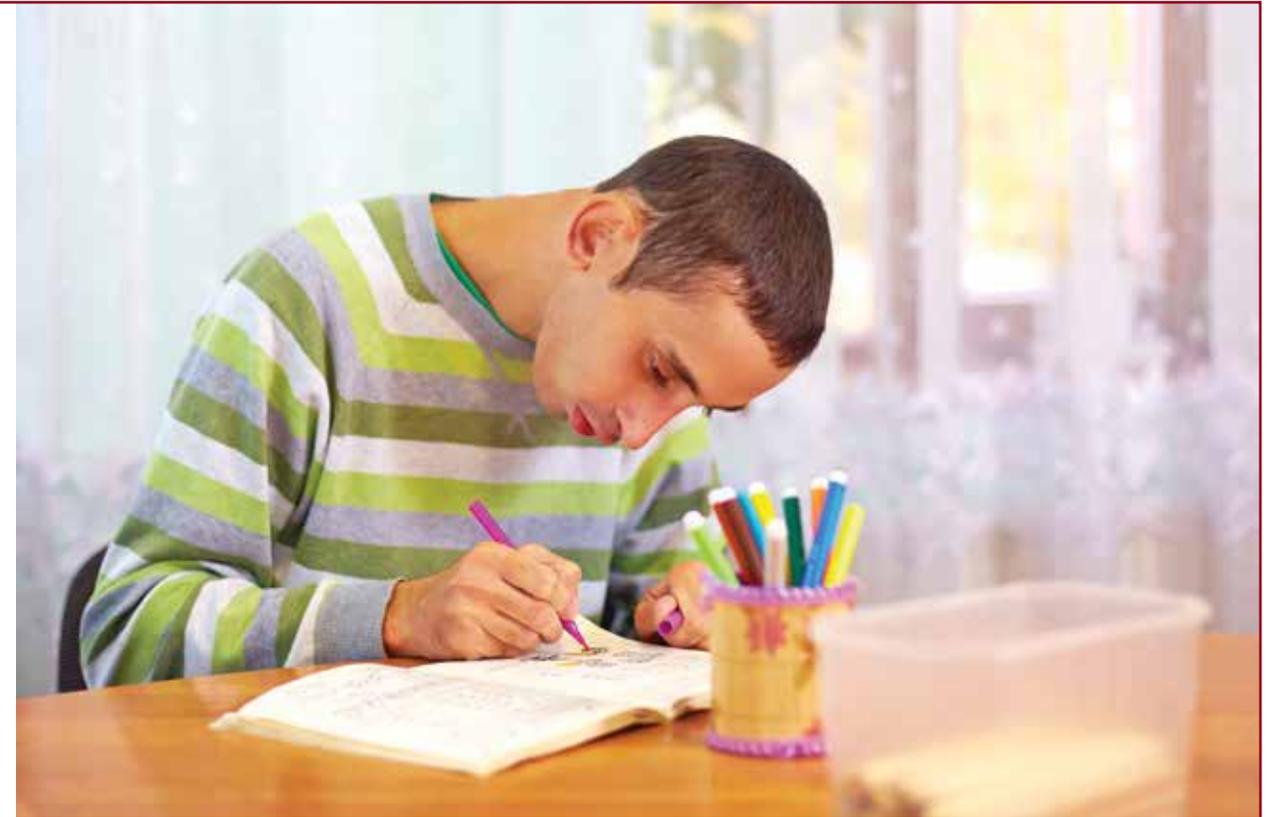
Take advantage of new gig-economy support services.

Investments related to the gig economy are shifting from the financing of marketplaces toward the development of adjacent technologies. The latter include such services as invoice processing and insurance provision for freelancers, and the development of shared online and offline work spaces. These moves into adjacent systems aren't limited to startups. Large multinationals are also taking part, and many are leading the way, as SAP's acquisition of Fieldglass demonstrates.

Engage in the regulatory dialogue.

Regulation of the gig work domain is evolving rapidly. New Zealand has banned on-call work, Ireland has changed its legal definition of self-employment, US courts deal with lawsuits by Uber employees arguing for employee status, a UK parliament inquiry has called gig work "freeloading on the welfare state," and strikes by Dutch gig workers have forced the Dutch government to establish a taskforce to study the phenomenon. While all these responses were triggered by situations involving lower-skill gig workers, companies might find they also face constraints and resistance when they contract higher-skill workers.

The best way for companies to stay on top of evolving regulation is to remain engaged in dialogue with regulators, legislators, labor platform owners, and



Companies that are thoughtful and diligent in attracting, compensating, and retaining freelancers play an important social role and strengthen social fabric and talent

Freelancing offers opportunities for people from remote areas, housewives and people with special needs

opinion leaders. They should also monitor regulatory developments and shifts in public opinion and perception.

Freelancers aren't the only option for companies looking to source critical talent in a flexible way and create a more adaptive employment model. But they can be an important part of the puzzle. Despite the challenges facing freelancers in many countries, gig work offers clear benefits to those in the workforce who value flexibility and self-directed work.

Whether to villagers in remote areas, homemakers with restricted working hours, or disabled people lacking access to the regular job market, gig work offers a significant chance for meaningful employment. Companies that are thoughtful and diligent in attracting, compensating, and retaining freelancers—in addition to traditional employees—fulfill an important social role as employers. At the same time, they strengthen the social and talent fabric of their own organization.

The career advice I wish I had at 25

Shane Rodgers
State Director at Australian Industry Group (AI Group)



In the future, when we turn 50, we will each be given a ticket to a time machine and, just once, we will be able to go back in time and talk to our 25-year-old selves.

Even then, time travel will be expensive and wreak havoc with frequent flyer programs. So there will only be one trip. So what if we could? What would we say? What advice would we give?

I often wish I could do this. Just once. So, just in case the time machine ever comes along, this is the career advice I would give my 25-year-old self.

1. A career is a marathon, not a sprint

Chill. When we are younger we tend to be impatient. As you get older you realize there is no real rush. Life, and the careers we pursue to fill it and pay the bills, needs to be approached on a long-term basis. If you sprint you will wear out or start to resent work that you previously enjoyed. Allow yourself time to breathe and grow. Things will come if you work hard and allow your-

Get good at things before you try to move to the next thing.

If you are smart and competent, step up and do whatever you are capable of doing in a mature way.

self time to get good at things. Always rushing only leaves you empty, and tired. It is fine to give yourself permission to take some time in the slow lane with the hat people. You will find yourself seeing things on the journey that you didn't realize were there.

2. Most success comes from repetition, not new things

I remember hairdressing legend Stefan Ackerie telling me this in 2003. I had never really thought about it before. A few years later Malcolm Gladwell's brilliant book *Outliers* was published, promoting the idea that you needed to spend 10,000 hours on something to become truly expert at it. This applied to the Beatles and their Hamburg gigs and Bill Gates who, through a series of fortuitous accidents, ended up spending more time than almost anyone else on a computer.

The lesson here is get good at things before you try to move to the next thing. Genuine expertise belongs to an elite few. They seldom have super-powers. They usually have endurance, patience and take a long-term view. They also love what they do. If you find that, do not let it go.

3. If work was really so great all the rich people would have the jobs

It is well established that almost nobody laments on their death bed that they didn't spend enough time at the office. This seems obvious. Yet still we let contrived circumstances and fairly trivial issues keep us from important events like school sport days and kids getting badges for picking up rubbish. I wish somebody had schooled me about these priorities at 25. I can remember every sport day and certificate presentation I missed. I cannot remember any of the reasons I missed them.

4. Deprioritize your career when your kids are young

If you have skills, commitment and passion, careers tend to take care of themselves. Over the long haul, it really does not matter if you have a few years when your career is in canter mode while you prioritize young children. This should apply to men and women. I was watching some video of my kids when they were little last week and I realized, again, that the little people in that video do not exist in that form anymore. They have grown into pride-worthy adults but the tiny people with wonder in their eyes were just passing through. If you miss that time meeting deadlines and finishing reports, you never get it back. Childhood is fleeting. When it is in its formative stages, you get one chance.

You can also miss the chance to learn. Children teach you a lot more than you teach them. They give you a second chance to see the world for the first time through their eyes. And you will be astounded what you miss in the clutter of life. Hold onto those times while you can. As the nun sang in *The Sound of Music*, you cannot keep a wave upon the sand. And you look kind of ridiculous trying.

5. In the workforce, always act like you are 35

A recruiter gave me this advice some years ago. It is quite inspired. What she meant was, when you are young in the workplace; do not act as a novice. If you are smart and competent, step up and do whatever you are capable of doing in a mature way. Similarly, when you are an older worker, do not act like it. Approach your day with youthful energy. To quote a famous Frank Sinatra song: "You're 35 and it's a very good year".

6. Management is about people, not things

It is easy to fall into the trap of believing that all people are equal, behave the same every day and have a generic capacity to perform. Humans are simply not made like that. Business guru Jack Welch says the workforce consists of 20 per cent of people who are high performers, 10 per cent that you should get rid of and 70 percent, who do okay. The problem is the 70 per cent. Most managers want everyone in the 20 percent. We need to be careful not to believe that the 70 per cent are underperformers. Sometimes we need to celebrate the competence of the masses not the superpowers of the elite. As managers, we are not managing things, we are empowering people and making the best use of whatever it is they bring to the table.

7. Genuinely listen to others

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking we have all the answers as individuals. We do not. As a group, we are far more powerful. We need to learn to genuinely collaborate and really listen to the opinions of others. And we need to ask our own people first. So many managers and firms fall into the trap of asking external consultants for answers and then trying to implement the recommendations over the top of tried-and-true employees. In almost every case, our own people already know the answers. We need to avoid letting familiarity blind us to the talent sitting around us.

Business guru Jack Welch says the workforce consists of 20 per cent of people who are high performers, 10 per cent that you should get rid of and 70 percent, who do okay.

We need to ask our own people first.

Many managers fall into the trap of asking external consultants for answers over the top of tried-and-true employees.



8. Never work for horrible bastards

Life is way too short to tolerate really bad bosses. If you find yourself working for one, unless you are desperate or starving, start looking for a new job. Immediately. Then sack the bad boss. By leaving.

9. Recognize that staff are people with finite emotional capacity

This is one I really wish I had known earlier. It is clear to me now that humans have a finite emotional capacity. If there is something challenging happening in their personal lives, they have limited capacity left to deal with issues at work. In nearly 100 per cent of cases I have dealt with of people suddenly under-performing at work, it has nothing to do with work. When good people have problems, managers and companies need to carry them. This should be a personal mission. If we learn to carry people when they most need it, we become a stronger community and we empower people in ways that we probably cannot imagine when we are young. A re-invigorated broken employee is a corporation's most powerful force. They become a slightly better version of themselves without the need for a V energy drink.

10. Don't just network with people your own age

Beware the whiz kid syndrome. Smart, young people have a habit of forming communities of other smart young people and feeding off each other's energy. In the older world they are seen as "bright young things" that give confidence that the future is in good hands. How many times have you heard that? Youth enclaves can actually be restrictive. Smart 20-somethings should make sure they network with older people too. In fact their networking should be about meeting useful mentors and career champions who can open doors and fast track careers. Similarly, older, successful people should not just sit in musty clubs talking about the 1970s. They should be proactively seeking out smart, young people who can shake them out of their comfort zone and open their eyes to new ideas.

11. Celebrate cultural differences in the workplace

One of the big mistakes we make in Australia is failing to adequately recognize the value of overseas experience and people from a variety of cultures. Diversity brings a richness to our workplaces that benefits all of us. Overseas experience is real experience. We should take every opportunity to inject new thinking into our workplaces. It is where the magic begins.

12. Take the time to understand what your business does

I love the story of President J F Kennedy's visit to NASA during which he asked a cleaner what his job was. The cleaner replied that he sent rockets to the moon. All of us should feel part of what our organizations actually do. We should take the time to be part of the big picture and always feel connected with the true objectives of our workplace. Do not wait for someone to tell you or lament that internal communication is crap. Find out for yourself.

13. Don't put off working overseas

Geography is becoming less relevant. We are all citizens of the world. President Obama made the point during his University of Queensland speech that the world was becoming smaller and even the Pacific Ocean was now just a lake. If you get the chance to work overseas, and you aspire to do that, take it. There is never a right time. And we always regret the things we don't do far more than the things we do.

14. Work in an office where you have friends

You will spend a lot of time at work. You should work with people you like. I used to be a bit sceptical about a question in employment engagement surveys asking people if they had a "best friend" at work. I realize now that work is much better if you are among friends. The happiest people are those who do things they are passionate about with people they really like. Further to

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If you find you have taken on a job you hate, ditch it quickly.

If you work somewhere that compromises your personal ethics and values, get out of there as quickly as you can.

Failure is just part of a process to eliminate unsuccessful options.

Sometimes failing spectacularly is the best evidence that we are serious about aspiring to the extraordinary.

There is no value in being ordinary when you have the capacity to be remarkable.

that, if you find you have taken on a job you hate, ditch it quickly. Your career can survive a few well-intentioned detours and mistaken pathways.

15. Never sacrifice personal ethics for a work reason

Crucial to workplace happiness is value alignment. If you work somewhere that compromises your personal ethics and values, get out of there as quickly as you can. Good people will be unnerved by things that do not feel right. If it does not feel right, it probably is not. Bad things only manifest when good people do not take a stand.

16. Recognize that failure is learning

As bizarre as it might sound, failing is not failure. Researchers recognize that failure is just part of a process to eliminate unsuccessful options. To misquote Woody from Toy Story, when we make a few mistakes, we are not failing, just falling - with style. Even fairy-tale princesses recognize that you need to kiss many toads before you find a handsome prince. Thomas Edison articulated this best: "I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that don't work." If we fear failure, we tend to take a minimalist approach to our jobs and the opportunities around us. Takes some risks. Sometimes failing spectacularly is the best evidence that we are alive, human and serious about aspiring to the extraordinary. There is no value in being ordinary when you have the capacity to be remarkable.





Reflections on the future direction for HRM

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Most of the articles we are asked to write are focused on sharing a piece of knowledge or wisdom which is something we do enjoy doing. However, it is also appropriate from time to time to take a step back, widen the perspective and look at some of the bigger issues in HR and people development.

As an organisation that is widely regarded as being at the forefront of innovative thinking and practices in the world of HR, AQR International is very often asked about where, and how, HR and its related disciplines could evolve over the next decade or so.

There is no doubt that the world of Human Resource Management is at a crossroads, particularly in people and leadership development and its relationship with organisational development.

A great deal of the current debate focusses on the impact of technology. This is indeed a significant factor but it is not the only factor. There are several factors and, importantly, they are all to some extent interrelated. And like any other profession, they will impact on the way human resource management works and the role of human resources professionals.

In addition to the impact of technology, there are perhaps three themes which emerge consistently in our work around the world:

- The nature of the Human Resource Management in the 21st Century
- Professionalism and the adoption of well-founded concepts
- Evidence based practice

We'll start with the first of these. Before examining these further, it is worth restating what is becoming a cliché - that the most important resource that an organisation has at its disposal is its people. Despite the advent of technology, which some fear might replace people in some way, it is likely to be the case that people are more important – not less so – in the future.

Classical economic theory suggested that the key factors in production, i.e. the creation of wealth in an organisation or a society were Land, Capital and Labour (People). To that we can now add Innovation and Technology.

Whatever the resource – land, capital, innovation and technology – it is the people element which optimises their impact.

The HR role has generally evolved and developed in line with the development of management theory and it is worth looking at this briefly to understand the how and why and then to consider where it goes next.

Structured approaches to management can be considered to begin with Scientific Management. Employees were considered factors which would be equipped with sufficient skills and knowledge to do what managers required and what they did could be analysed and converted into routines. Focused largely on their efficiency, there was little expectation of their engagement in work other than to do what was required from them. The equivalent of

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HR at that time would be focused on administrative tasks (recruitment, staff records, etc) and basic skills development. Some organisations would introduce a welfare component.

The management of the human resource was largely in the hands of line managers who would be supported by a largely administrative HR function.

Next came a realisation that employees were not all the same and responded in different ways to certain inputs – their motivation and behaviour were rarely optimised. This evolved into a growth of interest in motivation, leadership, desired behaviour (through evolution of competency frameworks), and teamworking as organisations sought to capture the potential interest of employees in their work. The interest in behaviour spawned an interest in psychology, personality and psychometrics. Culture, performance management and the way work is organised became important. Coaching and Mentoring emerged

At the same time legislation began to appear which regulated many aspects of the way employees were managed.

The net effect was that this introduced a lot of technical and technological components into the optimisation and development of human resources.

Line managers rarely had the skills or knowledge to handle this and most of this therefore found its home in the Human Resources function which would often be more directly involved in managing people. Expectations of staff were generally limited to their enthusiasm for the organisation and loyalty.

As we enter the 21st Century, the picture evolves again. Employees are better educated and can participate in the way their work is carried out to a much greater extent than before. Indeed, they want work that interests them, they seek involvement and they enjoy decision making and adopting leadership to some extent.

Leaders and managers begin to be better trained and better educated too. They now learn many elements that would have been previously the province of the HR professional. They learn how to engage with employees and we begin to see leaders and managers expected to be coaches and mentors too.

Technology begins to impact on the administrative aspects of HR. More processes are systemised and information about staff is gathered through IT.

For instance, traditional appraisal or performance management which typically relies on formal discussions once or twice a year is now sometimes replaced by much shorter but more frequent reviews (fortnightly or monthly) that occur partly through an IT platform. Each party records their view of performance and behaviour over the preceding time period and sometimes add a simple rating to summarise the assessment. The system stores and records these exchanges and even monitors these to identify where there is, say, divergence of view or there is evidence of falling performance and can be programmed to suggest that a more formal discussion might be valuable.

This is an example of technology supporting the evolution of a process which enables “management by exception” – the manager intervenes when the need becomes evident.

The focus of Human Resources Management activity remains optimising the contribution that people can make to the performance of the organisation. Now it is increasingly through proactive engagement with employees. And this now brings in concepts such as diversity.

One growing trend is for some employees to be happy to work as independents and for some to choose to work for finite periods of time.

This does not necessarily mean that they are not interested or not loyal to a particular employer. Their skill set enable them to choose an alternative way of working. This can suit many organisations who will often choose to treat them as they would a permanent employee.

The purpose of this reflection is to understand that the HR function hasn't changed in its purpose – particularly the way it contributes to the organisations purpose and to the wellbeing of employees.

Technology begins to impact on the administrative aspects of HR. More processes are systemised and information about staff is gathered through IT.

One growing trend is for some employees to be happy to work as independents and for some to choose to work for finite periods.

What is changing is what the HR profession does to deliver its purpose.

If we look closely at the term Human Resource Management, we might see that it is referring to the Management of the Human Resources available to the business. Strictly speaking this is the responsibility of the individual(s) who is responsible for managing the resources available to them to achieve a desired outcome. That is normally a line management or leadership function.

At the start of this evolution, this was very much the case. HR (or more likely called Personnel Management at that time) played a peripheral and often administrative role. As complexity entered the picture, the HR role became much more operational because this is where the expertise, education and technology to handle complexity were invested. It also became more strategic because the impact of the complexity needed to be handled carefully.

Now technology has made inroads into the administration elements of the HR function and management and leadership development embraces much of what HR professionals would learn and apply.

This doesn't threaten the HR function. It changes it and gives it potentially a greater purpose.

Some level of support will still be required, the line management and leaders will need sources of professional support and assistance and will need to be guided as HR practice evolves.

Three years ago, I spoke at a major Coaching conference at the University of Kansas in the USA. The key note address was on “The Future of Coaching”. The keynote speaker opened by stating “Coaching has a future ... coaches may not!”.



It was a dramatic opening and it served its purpose. It recognised that coaching and mentoring were now recognised as important and valuable approaches to developing people. The practice of coaching has been almost entirely in the hands of (specialist) coaches. However, many managers and leaders were now developing those same skills and didn't always need an external coach.

It simply reflected that coaching as a skill and application was evolving and that those who offered those services needed to evolve with it because people were learning how to do some of this perfectly well for themselves.

What seems to be emerging is that HR will occupy a similar space to the Financial Function or the Technical Function of an organisation.

The strategic element should strengthen. The HR function will increasingly contribute to the strategic direction of the business. The way an organisation manages people is a key enabler towards achieving all of its important outcomes. In turn this means development of policies, strategies, processes and plans in the same way that the technical function or the finance function would do that.

This means that it is the responsibility of the HR professional and the HR function to identify practical, well founded and reliable approaches for recruitment, development and motivation of the organisation's human resource. It's an important contribution because optimising the human resources available to an organisation is a complex matter. So, another key challenge for the HR function is to examine this complexity and translate it into realistic policies and comparatively simple practices which can then be applied by those who are working directly with the people in the organisation.

Another element which should strengthen is the development and application of "big data" – especially for a purpose we discuss later – evidence-based practice. Interestingly many organisations already generate a lot of relevant data but it is often used only for reporting and rarely for analysis.

This analysis is both important and valuable. Whether it is to identify trends, provide evidence of impact of policies and practices and where that should be improved and how, as well as identifying what the organisation needs to consider to move to the next level.

Yet another challenge is to integrate HR policies and strategies more fully with each other and with other key business processes. It is not unusual to find that organisations will introduce approaches which, independently seem to make good sense, but will sometimes undermine each other if they are not part of the same picture.

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Integrating HR policies and strategies more fully with each other and with other key business processes is another challenge.

There is a growing interest in ensuring that those who work as HR professionals are professionally prepared to work to universally accepted standards.

This presents an opportunity as well as challenge for the HR professional and the HR function. It has an increasingly important strategic role to play and retains an operational function even though some of this is migrated to the line managers and leaders in an organisation.

And this brings us back to the two other interrelated two issues which are growing in importance – professionalism and evidence based practice.

Unlike many of the professions, the HR world is much less regulated whether we are talking about its entirety or elements of it. As Leaders and HR Directors become more comfortable with what HRM can contribute, there is a growing interest in ensuring that those who work as HR professionals are professionally prepared to work to universally accepted standards.

Arguably there are organisations which provide qualification and training frameworks which ensure that those who practice have at least a minimum level of training and development. This includes professional bodies such as SHRM as well as many academic institutions which will sometimes collaborate effectively with professional bodies.

Though useful, our understanding of how individuals respond to events and how organisations work is evolving – and improving – all the time. There is therefore an imperative for CPD – Continuous Professional Development. Some do it and many do not. Yet it is rarely the case that this a requirement for HR professionals. It is routine in many professions – accountancy, engineering, and the medical professions. We would not be very comfortable if we went to see a dentist who last did their training 10 years ago and is not aware of or open to new ideas and approaches.



A common example of the challenge for professionalism is the practice of Coaching, to which we have already referred. It is increasingly becoming evident that coaching and mentoring – if carried out properly is a very useful approach to developing people. Developing a coaching culture can be transformational.

But ... anyone can call themselves a Coach or Mentor – even without any training. There are no universal standards (although one professional body, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council is making good progress in this area and is bringing others alongside). There is a plethora of training programs for coaches ranging from a 3-day program to a comprehensive qualification requiring an understanding of theory as well as evidence of practice. Some are comprehensive and are likely to be valuable, others are very basic.

There are essentially two options. Introduce regulation requiring CPD to be demonstrated in order to maintain some form of recognition as a professional or rely upon the individual to do this willingly and consistently as part of their desire to be recognised as HR professionals.

Allied to the idea of professionalism is that the concern that there are a great many ideas and concepts circulating in the world of HR. More appear each year and some become very popular indeed. Moreover, there are ideas which were developed a long time ago but have been superseded by better, often more complete, ideas, and yet are still adopted although their effectiveness is now in question.

Developing a coaching culture can be transformational.

Bringing clarity to how HR policies and processes are selected, developed and implemented to ensure that the best decisions are made.

There are also a lot of trends which are often little other than fads. In the midst of this there are of course often excellent ideas which get little recognition.

Arguably, a key function for the HR Department or HR professional is to be alert to ideas old and new and to be objective in their evaluation of them – especially in understanding how they contribute to effective HR and OD practices as well as the ability to apply them with a realistic expectation of making a difference.

Being objective is critical. This is about decision making in a complex area. It is also about being critically aware about what is your purpose. Decision making and problem-solving works best when there is a desire to find a solution that makes a difference to a real, not imagined, objective.

This reinforces the future role of HR - bringing clarity to how HR policies and processes are selected, developed and implemented as well as underpinning the objective and balanced analysis to ensure that the best decisions are made.

In our work we frequently find that this approach simply isn't there. Take Talent Management for example. Many go straight from the need for talent management to introduction assessment and development centres.

A competent HR function should identify:

- **What** do we, in this organisation, mean by Talent Management, and **what** difference do we expect if we do something? What are the objectives?
- **How** can those objectives be met? **What** are the options available? (a common issue is that people will only consider options with which they are already familiar or comfortable).
- Crucially, **what** is the evidence for each approach including Assessment and Development Centres. How can we be confident (not necessarily certain) that this will be useful in our situation?
- **What** will be the implications for the organisation (culture, values, key business processes, etc)? These can often be wider than the activity ("Why haven't I been selected for the Development Centre" or even "Why have I been selected?").

And the so called "million-dollar question":

- **How** much will this cost and what will be its benefits in terms of a significant and serious aspect of the business. What can we reasonably expect when this is introduced properly and how will we measure and evaluate it?

This is largely about evidence and Evidence Based Practice which we'll touch upon in a moment.

Say, we wish to examine Assessment Centres as part of a Talent Management solution. What will we seek to assess? – how do we know it is critical for the organisation? Again, we have seen organisations say they want to assess attitude and mindset but the content of the Development Centre may only assess behaviour which is not the same thing.

- A useful mnemonic for appraising everything that an HR professional does is **TOIDPAR**. Originally developed by Dr Dave Francis, Principal Research Fellow, Brighton Business School, UK, this is a simple but effective decision making process which has applications beyond HR:

T - Tune in – why are we thinking of doing this, what are we trying to achieve

O - Set Objectives – what will success look like, what different will we make and how will we measure it?

I - Gather Ideas and Information - are there different ways that these can be achieved? Gathering these and understanding how these can be evaluated.

This is a critical stage in decision making. Sometime people say it is difficult to gather evidence in this way because there are so many factors affecting people and organisations.

Evidence based practice might not mean that we make perfect decisions. It is about making more informed decisions using trusted and reliable evidence that it relevant to the circumstances and to what are the objectives.

The need to understand biases is also a factor. Just because you completed a training program in Emotional Intelligence doesn't mean that it is a solution or a part of a solution for every challenge or issue. There may be better solutions – you have to ask the question and, if they are there, find them and appraise them honestly.

D - Decide – on the basis of objective appraisal and in terms of criteria that are genuinely relevant for the Objective identified earlier.

P – Prepare or Plan – which includes resourcing properly

A – Action – Implement

R – Review – to confirm return on investment, to identify what worked and what didn't so that it can be improved

There is a significant amount of money spent each year on the Management of Human Resource – especially people and organisational development. We often hear the term budget being used – which indicates that organisations see it as a cost. It is much rarer to hear the term “investment” being used but that is exactly what Human Resource Management is about –it's about investing time, money effort into optimising the human resource in any organisation.

The notion of Evidence Based Practice is now rising to the top of the agenda and, perhaps, not before time. It represents another area where 21st Century HR can make a unique difference.

Professor Rob Briner, one of the world's leading psychologists and Scientific Director at the Centre for Evidence-Based Management (www.CEBMa.org) suggests that Evidence Based Practice is the opportunity for increasing the likelihood of a favourable outcome. Describing a process similar to TOIDPAR, Briner acknowledges that gathering evidence in HRM can be problematic but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be done. It is an excuse not to do it.

It's about investing time, money effort into optimising the human resource in any organisation.

The HR profession is not under threat. It is exposed to change and much of that is significant.

It also doesn't mean trying to gather all the evidence. There is a need to be judicious – finding the best available evidence is the goal. We might be interested in improving employee morale for a variety of good reasons but it can be difficult to assess on an ongoing basis. So, we might evidence it through looking at attendance, the number of ideas being submitted, customer satisfaction when dealing with staff, etc. Any one of these might arguably not measure morale but something else. Put them together (in the way you might present evidence in a court of law) and together they might work as measure

Briner useful suggests that there are 4 sources of evidence:

Academic Literature – examining relevant research

Organisational – internal data – often abundant

Practitioners – what is the experience and expertise of professionals

And

Stakeholders – values and concerns of staff, managers, clients, etc

In terms of the future of HR, these indicate what will be sought now and more so in the future.

The HR profession is not under threat. It is exposed to change and much of that is significant. There is opportunity to continue its evolution. Considering the impact of technology is only part of the changing picture.

What is more fundamental is how, and why, would HR Management make a difference and how would we understand that.





Importance of Connections in the workplace

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While research shows that social connections have the greatest influence on wellbeing (Helliwell & Wang, 2012), they are often also the last thing on the radars of organizations as they plan and organize for greater levels of productivity, profit and competitiveness. Yet, times have changed and the expectations employees hold of work have as well. Work is a calling for many professionals who see beyond its financial reward towards the realization of their deeply held aspirations and professional and well as personal goals. Further, considering that people work throughout their lifetimes and spend most of their days in organizations of some sort, it is inevitable to think of work as a place where relationships will form. Many workplace connections extend beyond work contracts and across global borders and persist well into the years. Paying attention to the human side of the workplace and creating an environment that is uplifting, convivial, supportive, as well as intellectually and socially stimulating is a contribution all businesses can offer to their employees. These benefits are not only for employees themselves, but organizations as a whole benefit from them too. We argue that ignoring workplace relationships and their facilitation may be costly and offer a brief review of why this is the case. We conclude by providing ideas for ways in which organizations can increase their internal social capital and leverage this aspect of wellbeing into greater organizational effectiveness.

Social Connections

Social connections have for too long been considered an afterthought in the workplace; after all, people are there to gainfully work. Yet, workplace relationships are commanding more respect as rates of loneliness around the world continue to increase with implications for health in particular, but also for the spinoff benefits to workplaces, such as innovation, career progression and personal/professional support (Holt-Lunstad, Robles, & Sbarra, 2017). The research is clear, when it comes to wellbeing, a growing national priority in the UAE and across the region, social connections matter more than any other factor (Helliwell & Wang, 2012). Instances of shared emotion, reciprocal care, as well as behavioral synchrony are vital to human flourishing and such moments can emerge between strangers sharing mutual responsiveness in the grocery checkout line, or equally between employees around the office water cooler. Thus, it is not only intimate relationships that matter, but any social connection made through professional networks, non-profit and volunteer groups, sport clubs, community coalitions, religious organizations, friends, and of importance to this article, colleagues.

Paying attention to the human side of the workplace and creating an environment that is uplifting, convivial, supportive, as well as intellectually and socially stimulating is a contribution all businesses can offer to their employees.



Instances of shared emotion, reciprocal care, as well as behavioral synchrony are vital to human flourishing.

Teams with good social capital always seem to propose new initiatives with spontaneously self-forming teams brimming with enthusiasm.

What do relationships do for us?

Not to be dismissed or trivialized, interacting with others, generating acts of kindness, charity, concern, empathy, support, fun and cooperation all serve to generate happiness. Such interactions also build social and organizational workplace capital, the networks and social trust facilitating cooperative activity within and among groups. Social capital may be difficult to quantify, but easy to see when it is absent. Little communication, hesitation to work together, negative vibes and no synergy or momentum in terms of idea flow and development evolves in its absence. Teams with good social capital always seem to propose new initiatives with spontaneously self-forming teams brimming with enthusiasm; they also seem to buffer the effects of downsizing, budget cuts, and rejections a lot better. These connections are highly valuable to individuals themselves; they are estimated to be the equivalent of £85,000 a year in terms of life satisfaction (Powdthavee, 2008). The benefits of social connection also extend to community engagement, actions aimed at addressing public and social concerns and which help individuals develop skills and knowledge, as well as trust in others and work as a group.

Workplace relationships even impact health. Studies show the risk of early death and illness is predicted by having few social networks and this likelihood is as important as the risks inherent to smoking and obesity (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris, & Stephenson, 2015; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010). Having a supportive social circle at work significantly contributes to physical and mental health (Steffens, Haslam, Schuh, Jetten, & van Dick, 2017). In fact, merely having one good friend at work can help an employee stay with their organization and not quit during difficult moments. Having friends at work also boosts employee engagement by a factor of seven and gives employees the sense that someone cares about them as well as the work they do (Gallup, 2012, 2018). In the interim to making more sustainable organizational changes, retention may even be helped by strengthening workplace relationships.

In most offices however, high-quality connections (HQC; Stephens, Heaphy, & Dutton, 2011), the short-term, small interactions experienced as energizing and which provide for 'feeling felt' are more common. HQC's include quick hallway chats, a thumbs up gesture or quiet nod during meetings, private texts of support, and momentary "I get you" looks of support. Such interactions between colleagues build workplace capital and positive workplace cultures. Often naturally occurring, they can nonetheless be facilitated through purposeful task sharing, supportive onboarding relationships, or social activities. Beyond the support they offer, they also result in greater performance and a means to buffer workplace as well as personal and home life stressors; they further build a feeling of belonging and workplace attachment. Such connections contribute to workplace satisfaction, involvement, team cohesion, and organizational commitment (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Dickson-Swift, Fox, Marshall, Welch, & Willis, 2014; Fliaster & Schloderer, 2010). A spin off benefit is that they also influence the behavior and attitudes of others. Job satisfaction and the amount of effort one puts into it is contagious and such employees can be strategically placed to positively influence others (Chancellor, Layous, Margolis, & Lyubomirsky, 2017).

Relationships clearly contribute to wellbeing and equally so in the workplace, despite the fact that individuals routinely overlook the pleasure of connecting with others and assume they will be happier in solitude. Studies show that individuals underestimate the pleasure they get from talking to what are considered random strangers and yet, these paradoxically generate much satisfaction alongside surprising disclosures and revelations about one's own personality that would not be revealed otherwise as most of us connect

The benefits of social connection also extend to community engagement, actions aimed at addressing public and social concerns and which help individuals develop skills and knowledge.

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Having one good friend at work can help an employee stay with their organization and not quit during difficult moments.

High-quality connections build positive workplace cultures, feeling of belonging and workplace attachment.



with people already similar to us in culture, values, socioeconomic status or appearance (Epley & Schroeder, 2014). While solitude, quiet thinking time and solo mental processing are conducive to aspects of productivity and the ability to achieve a state of flow during work itself, the gains to be made from social connections to innovation, prosocial behavior, and organization commitment are just as great and both modes should be fostered.

Want More Sociability?

Many organizations operate in silos; that is, all accountants, psychology professors, or HR managers operate or are located in one physical space. While this serves the purpose of knowing where everyone is, much is lost by not connecting with other departments, even if the link is not immediately obvious. Multidisciplinary or cross-department work not only yields considerable efficiencies, but unique innovative contributions that can remain obscured by virtue of two people never crossing paths. It is the same reason why organizations are keen to facilitate professional travel and networking at conferences and events, relationships pay off in so many ways. Yet, these same relationships within organizations are often overlooked to the detriment of companies themselves as workplaces are considered places to house physical bodies and equipment, versus ideas. There are a number of things organizations can do to build better social connections in the workplace.

Organizations can schedule a bi-weekly “lunch with a purpose” as an example where employees are asked not to sit with known colleagues but are randomly assigned to lunch room tables to get to know one another and solve workplace issues, generate innovative ideas and opportunities. This ‘blind date’ option can be awkward, but in time, it can serve to generate strong social capital, whereby employees know who is working on what, for what purpose, and how it links to their own work. They also know from whom they can ask for help, information, support or inspiration before and when they need it, rather than toiling in silence or despair when they do. It can also spark innovative, unexpected ideas such that an accountant may be the one who proposes a brilliant idea for an ad campaign more easily than those personally invested in, and tasked with the responsibility of generating it. Another obvious solution is to reallocate offices otherwise and purposefully break up single-identity groups whereby the chances of sitting next to the accountant, nurse, political science professor, intern, or senior administrator is likely. This also serves to break up physical hierarchies that limit human connections due to the imposition of status. Nurturing professional diversity from within is an inexpensive and overlooked pathway to innovation and development of social capital that remains untapped for many organizations.

At the same time, fostering closeness within the same professional domain is also important as same department employees know their subject deeply, but are often too caught up in their mundane activity to be of any use to one another. They predictably tend to devote little time to innovation or



building rapport, particularly as the effects of daily exposure and habituation settle in and same department colleagues find less and less of value to say to one another. Yet, providing them with time – yes, more, even 30 minutes of scheduled time a week – preferably in another room, to solve, propose, and mingle purposefully can shift their focus from routine and meaningless “hi, how are you?” exchanges, to, “what are you working on these days?” It is surprising how little people know of, and about one another for no other reason than they spend too much meaningless time in one another’s space and consequently, do not care to. Changing the narrative and primary reason for coming together can shift a group away from its prevailing indifference towards a mutual curiosity and appreciation.

From these exchanges may emerge the safety to say, why are we doing things this way and why don’t we do this instead...? Or, I had no idea you were doing that, I’d be interested to collaborate; in fact, I have a friend... This emotional familiarity can also spark deeper conversations and more extensive ideation within a pool of content experts. In academia for example, being in the same building and office vicinity produced papers that were of higher quality, published in better quality journals, and 45% more likely to be cited within the industry or field (Lee, Brownstein, Mills, & Kohane, 2010). Such collaboration is facilitated by physical proximity, ease of communication, impromptu meetings, and lower costs to the transfer and exchange of ideas, all facilitated by close relationships. Offering employees scheduled thinking and socializing time does pay off.

Offering employees scheduled thinking and socializing time does pay off.

Workplace relationships can also help employees in times of need. New recruits are especially vulnerable to such effects. For example, knowing that it is one's manager – versus the whole company – that is the source of one's workplace difficulty and unhappiness can save unnecessary resignations; yet, this information only comes about as a result of knowing people in other departments and work teams who can confirm otherwise. Being socially isolated can give the impression that it is the whole organization that does not care and having such testimonies can save employees giving up on organizations altogether. Onboarding and offering early supports are critical to retention; yet, many organizations and managers assume these relationships will happen organically and without assistance. Not all employees, especially new ones, feel comfortable or safe enough to ask for help and even those who do feel resentful at having to build their networks on their own terms and time, when they need it most and also while navigating a new workplace and all that it entails. The cost of staying and fitting in with an organization should not be wholly borne by employees alone, organizations should play their part and can do a lot by providing key people, whether they are requested or not, to whom people can turn. Yet, while much is devoted to new employees and their retention, longer-term employees should also not be neglected or assumed to be fine just because they are not resigning; they too, need meaningful connections and to feel they belong.

Further, much is lost by simply not having a space in which one can connect with others and many organizations forgo including and creating such spaces, assuming that if a kitchen, board room, and personal offices exist, it is sufficient. These single purpose spaces clearly signal that only work and sustenance are of value, while areas from which joint ideas can emerge via impromptu social play and interaction are not valued or even discouraged. After all, workplaces are for “work”. Yet, today's work environment necessitates the development of creative and innovative ideas, which cannot be done by isolated employees alone. Further, the burdens of work themselves should not be accepted as a mere given when social supports can mitigate resignations, reduce absenteeism, avoid presenteeism, and reduce healthcare costs due to vague ‘I'm just not feeling well today’ excuses. In addition to these spaces, it is also giving permission to employees to use them and scheduling, as well as facilitating, such connections to emerge that make the difference. Otherwise, social relationships become a lot like physical activity; we all know we should do it; yet, the gym at the end of the hall remains ominously empty as few truly understand its value and whether

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The importance of social connections within professional settings as a means of improving work motivation, efficiency, the health of individuals, as well as their sense of job satisfaction and belonging to the organization.

they will be supported, allowed and encouraged to generate that state of health and vitality.

At last, while we have extolled the benefits of creating such social connections, organizations should take care not to undermine sociability by mandating it.

Nothing undermines happiness more than forcing employees to spend an afternoon in authorized ‘team building’ activities with people they do not like; giving time off may be preferable. Offering employees the choice to socialize or not, as well as non-threatening opportunities to do so through a number of naturally occurring reasons to work together, should be facilitated instead as tolerance levels and the need for sociability vary greatly.

Workplace Policy

Recent World Happiness Reports argue for a comprehensive review of all government decision making and policy design to embed wellbeing as a starting point for policy-making while ensuring that decision-makers move beyond current conceptions of economic progress. As such, governments should adopt consultative policy making processes with the supply and demand side and find ways to incorporate new measurement and evaluation models. We believe that organizations should and can do the same. Holistic policy development in which social norms around what good work means and how it can contribute to a good life for all stakeholders including employees, customers, and the environment must be re-evaluated; a new paradigm built on human progress, enlightenment, and social growth must take primacy.

What can be done?

We have highlighted the importance of social connections within professional settings as a means of improving work motivation, efficiency, the health of individuals, as well as their sense of job satisfaction and belonging to the organization. But how does an organization conceive of and implement workplace initiatives as well as HR practices that can turn policy into practice? While not exhaustive, at Global Communications Agency, we offer a three step approach to enhancing social connections in a work environment.



The first step is to determine how well an organization promotes social connections from the outset. Does the company encourage cooperative problem-solving? Is an employee encouraged to take initiative and bring ideas to management? What culture of learning and development is present in the organization? An assessment is carried out where collected qualitative data is cross-referenced with a company's existing social connection policies and procedures. The resulting blended data set is then assessed against national and international social connectivity benchmarks modeled on the OECD Better Life Index (2018). In the UAE, for example, GCA has developed a set of benchmarks that blend international happiness and wellbeing standards with the UAE Vision 2021 policy objectives. This "local" approach prioritises cultural specifics relevant to Gulf countries (in this case) when considering how best to enhance social connections. Benchmarks measuring improvements to happiness and wellbeing are insufficient if local considerations are not included.

Should a company already have a high degree of social connectivity all that is required is to review the implementation of policies and procedures to ascertain whether policy implementation can be improved. However, if the data reveals gaps in a company's social connections quotient, Global Communications Agency can recommend and create novel policy and procedure approaches designed to enhance such connections. Examples of policies include capacity building training on working in teams, the creation of physical spaces that encourage work collaboration, 360 degree HR reviews and assessments, and the development of a wellbeing code of

conduct in which senior management encourages the sharing of ideas and collective action in addressing business challenges.

As a third step, Global Communications Agency recommends certain training and capacity building options designed to enhance workforce productivity and connectivity. Currently on offer and slated for future development are courses on intercultural tolerance and understanding within the work environment designed to break down barriers to social interaction and team-building; character strength building for employees and leadership; positive psychology intervention programs designed to boost positive emotions, workplace engagement, relationships, meaning and purpose at work, and a sense of personal growth and accomplishment; as well as courses designed to enhance collaboration through the learning of advocacy and stakeholder engagement.

With the approach listed above and a multipronged focus on the development of solutions, we feel that relationships, known to contribute the most to wellbeing (Helliwell & Wang, 2012), can flourish and serve as a resource not only for employees, but for organizations as well, who benefit from leveraging such social capital towards greater productivity, innovation, efficiency, community contribution and forms of business excellence. We go even further and posit that when organizations contribute to the development of workplace social capital, they take a bold step and contribute to the development of better societies and nations as well.

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