4 Trends That Are Shaping the Future of Work

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The way we work has shifted quicker than anyone could have imagined. If you're reading this from your home office, taking a quick coffee break from the seemingly constant stream of Zoom calls, then you're already seeing a glimpse of the future of work.

Before COVID-19 spread globally, the workforce had already begun to make a gradual shift in how we work, but the global health crisis has greatly accelerated this change. In the past few months, remote teams and virtual meetings have taken center stage as businesses determine a better way to work through the crisis and beyond.

So, what is the driving force behind the future of work? Before COVID-19, a transformation had already begun to steer businesses toward a digital approach. The pandemic has expedited this change, forcing businesses to find efficient ways to connect outside of the office, and most of these changes are here to stay. Within the next few years, much of the workforce will likely experience significant shifts, mainly driven by a few prominent current trends.

Here are four significant ones to keep a close eye on.

1. Going remote.

In our post-COVID world, remote working seems to be the norm for many businesses across the world, but it will likely stay that way beyond present times. As useful and collaborative as physical offices can prove to be, businesses are discovering that a remote workforce can perform just as well outside of the four walls they're traditionally used to.

Employees enjoy the ability to choose where they work—83 percent of employees, remote or on-site, say that a remote work opportunity would make them feel happier at their job. If you need more evidence as to how remote is beneficial, employee happiness benefits productivity as well; a recent study found that workers are 13 percent more productive when happy in their work environment.

As collaborative technology continues to advance, it will become even easier to connect to work from almost anywhere in the world. With the help of video conferencing such as Zoom becoming commonplace, employees will be much more likely to choose a remote workstyle over an office set up in the future, whenever possible.

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2. The digital transformation.

It's no secret that technology plays a large role in the way we work, but its role will likely become even more important in the future of work as it continues to evolve. "The digital transformation" is here, and many businesses are working to develop ways to convert their workforce to a digital mindset. But don't panic just yet—the digital transformation is not about replacing employees with technology, but rather digitalizing the processes of how the workforce functions.

The past has taught us that technology has an extraordinary

capability to redefine efficiency, such as how switching from computers to laptops made it possible for employees to take their work anywhere. The current digital transformation is centered around solving problems for teams and businesses at an increasingly accelerated pace. Technologies such as Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Google Drive continue to push the limits of streamlining communication to decrease the friction that happens in the workplace. As the future of work continues to evolve into a remote setting, physical means of communicating will lose popularity and be replaced with more efficient systems that connect to the cloud.

Increasingly, companies are realizing that the "old ways" of how employees work are not as effective as they could be. The adoption of collaborative technology in the workplace will continue to construct the future of work, encouraging more businesses to trial better ways of connecting internally and lay the groundwork for an enhanced telecommuting experience.

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3. Millennial takeover.

They're tech-savvy and ready to work in a new way. They're the Millenials, and the future of work is already heavily influenced by their transition into the workforce. Though there are a variety of opinions on this generation, there's no doubt that Millennials are already changing the tides of work. As the "Boomer" generation begins to phase out of the workforce, Millenials are beginning to fill the leadership positions of former executives. This passing of the torch will bring on new styles of leadership that emphasize innovation and value learning over perfection.

Millennials grew up in a time where technology was evolving fast and will bring this trend with them, propelling the digital transformation's role in the future of work even further. They understand the importance of streamlining processes for their teams and the impact technology has on increasing productivity.

Another value Millennials hold closely: The ability to work remotely and have a flexible schedule. Millennials entered an always-on workforce, with smartphones upping work expectations. Gone are the days of logging off for the night – technology has made workers accessible anywhere, anytime. This has made it so working at convenient hours that balance personal life is the millennial gold standard. As technology continues to engulf every aspect of our lives, Millennials are pushing for a work-life balance that allows for time to unplug and recharge. Flexible working may seem like a temporary situation, but as Millennials begin to take over the workforce, it is bound to become the trademark of the future of work.

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4. The need for a scalable workforce.

As the business landscape continues to change, the size of a business's workforce will need to adjust as well. A scalable staff allows for flexibility to adjust as needed, accommodating changes in the industry and financial circumstances that businesses will face in the future.

Hiring a full-time employee is no longer an easy process; benefits, 401Ks, and salaries are extra expenses. The average cost per hire is estimated at $4,000 due to administrative tasks, paperwork, and possible turnover—all expenses that can

be easily solved by hiring external talent. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that a flexible workforce is a reality businesses must face to survive in a rapidly evolving market—and they'll need the right resources to do so.

Fortunately, there are a variety of companies that offer flexible talent solutions, on-demand, and take care of the entire process for you (read: no more dealing with the details!). Some services to check out include Assemble, Upwork, and Fiverr; all of which offer expert work that you can easily hire to meet your short-term or recurring talent needs and help you better prepare for the future of work.

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Although there is no exact method to predict the future, the current trends within the workforce already provide incredible insight into how the future of the work will operate and impact businesses. No matter your industry, it's vital you keep a close eye on current trends to set your business up for future success.

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