

5 Ways to Prepare Your Business for the Future of Work

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Presented by  Microsoft

The workplace of the 20th century is no more. In my view, its remnants of menial labor and tasks completed by hand are soon to simply a vestigial tail of a bygone era. The future of work lies in the digital world.

One major indicator: Amazon announced in July that it plans to spend \$700 million to train about 100,000 workers in the U.S. by 2025, helping them move into more highly-skilled jobs. Why spend such a fortune? Because Amazon has already accepted the reality that advances in automation will soon be able to perform a vast number of jobs currently completed by humans.

Harvard Business School lends support to the need for such enterprise-wide initiatives by confirming that businesses face significant uncertainty due to many forces of change needed to prepare for the future of work.

All trends point to the idea that by 2030, the global labor force — made up of an estimated 3.5 billion people — could be led by knowledge workers with disruptive skills working in concert with AI. The question is: How do we create resilient workers in this new environment? And what are the strategies and solutions for the digital workforce of the future?

The impact of an algorithmic economy based in AI and machine learning will likely be transformative for the future of work, but it's important for company executives and business owners to begin preparing themselves and their employees for the future now.

Train your employees via gamification.

As aspects of your business evolve with technology and trends, so must your development and training. Gamifying training could help better engage, teach and retain your employees. According to *BW World*, the gamification technique works on both the cognitive (understanding, evaluating and analyzing information) and affective (emotions, attitudes and values) domains of the human brain. Gamification can make the learning process easier and faster for your employees, thus making it easier for you to roll out new systems, processes and initiatives.

Require online portfolios, not resume hardcopies.

Consider requiring every single candidate you process to have a full online portfolio showcasing the skills, certifications and accomplishments you require for the position you're seeking to fill. Seek out potential employees with a consistently updated and robust presence on professional social networking platforms like LinkedIn. This helps show they've embraced being part of the digital workforce.

Forget the idea of all your

employees “coming in” to work.

It's a good idea to retrofit your business model to accommodate employees who telecommute. The best talent isn't necessarily all within driving distance of your brick-and-mortar location. They could be in a different city, state or country, doing the kind of innovative work you want on your team, so why exclude them? In a 2018 survey by the Boston Consulting Group, of 6,500 executives worldwide, roughly 40 percent 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 percent agreed that corporate adoption of gig platforms would be a significant or highly significant trend.

Promote corporate wellness via wearables.

A study by the research firm Tractica suggests that by 2020, more than 75 million wearables will permeate the workplace. You can take advantage of this growing trend and incentivize your workforce to lead healthier lives both in and out of the office. Pay attention to data privacy policies on wearables before adopting them, then consider allowing your employees to opt into wellness programs and rewarding them monetarily for hitting physician-recommended wellness markers.

Prepare your human workforce to work in lockstep with “digital labor.”

A study by the World Economic Forum finds that while 75 million jobs could be displaced by 2022 due to the onslaught of machines and algorithms, this very trend is also expected to create about 133 million new roles. But it's important to

note that these jobs will include entirely new roles, as well as roles evolved from existing ones. It's a good idea to train your workforce to think of AI not only as a tool to use, but in some cases, as a coworker of sorts with some key strengths (as well as some noteworthy weaknesses).

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