

SEISMIC SHIFTS THAT HERALD THE WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE

Dr Karie Willyerd shares many years of research to alert you to major changes coming your way.

A colleague and I have spent years researching the workplace of the future. We've interviewed thousands of professionals, hundreds of employers, studied countless globalisation trends, and developed 50 detailed case studies. I can tell you with a fair amount of insight how you should be preparing your team, your organisation, and yourself for the future.

It was time well spent, as the end result is now a best-selling book *The 2020 Workplace*. If you're behind on your business book reading, here are some of the major changes coming your way. There are seismic shifts in play today that will affect our future. Changing demographics in age, race and gender across the world will have a huge impact. The biggest of these is the age-skew, which is the most diverse in our history. There will be four and possibly five (yes FIVE) generations in the workplace at once.

Throw in the massive disruption of a protracted economic recovery and you've got the longest span of generations in the workplace at once. Leaders (and HR Departments) will be charged with managing extreme age diversity and

meeting the range of expectations each generation has for its bosses. Tomorrow's leaders will also encounter a marketplace more globally dispersed than any of their predecessors.

THE FUTURE IS CROWDED

Social technologies will be the driving force in both recruitment and corporate innovation. Over the next ten years, employers will increasingly adopt crowdsourcing over outsourcing. Harnessing the collective intelligence of a large group of people or a community, through an open call, will become standard practice. The most efficient networks for employers will be those that link to the broadest range of knowledge. Social networking isn't new as an HR resource but the collaborative and social foundations of wide-scale crowdsourcing have the potential to reinvent HR, as we know it.

Take learning, for example. If your corporate learning function looks the same as it did five years ago, or even two years ago, then you have a problem. Learning must incorporate the features that make hanging out on social sites compelling –

commenting, rating, tagging, signals of changes, rich media, user profiles, ability to form communities, and so on. The ability of social technologies to foster collaboration and connectivity will be the mainstay of both recruitment and retention in future workplaces.

Transparency, collaboration, personalisation and hyper connectivity will become defining traits of successful companies. The rise of Social Recruitment means that recruitment will begin on social networking sites. Over the next decade, the majority of white-collar professionals will be recruited through highly trafficked social networks, supplemented by video interviews and reference checks on social networks.

The use of internal corporate social networks will also increase in both usage and value. As more and more socially connected and collaborative learning and training tools, such as YouTube and Jam, become embedded into organisations, internal social networks will become powerful mechanisms for managing skill sets, enhancing knowledge sharing and driving innovation amongst employees and potential candidates.

ONLINE REPUTATIONS CARRY CAPITAL

We will also see the increase of team appointments rather than individual ones. Employers are already beginning to harness the value of hiring entire teams as part of a block. The increasing importance of teamwork in the global workplace will make this an effective means of tackling business problems and fulfilling labour requirements. Be careful what you say and post online. Your online reputation will have capital. The strength of a candidate's social networks will play a pivotal role in the hiring process.

Reputational capital will become a currency in and of itself, reflecting the sum of a candidate's insight, influence and expertise. And speaking of what you say online, blogging will no longer be optional for executives. Engaging with social media and online networks will be woven into the very fabric of an executive's role. The ability, therefore, to communicate, articulate and influence through words, as well as performance, will become increasingly important.

Interactive videos and game-like simulation will transform training. The Millennial generation grew up on Game Boy, World of Warcraft and EVE Online. IBM has already studied whether participation in massive multi-player online role-playing games develops leadership skills (the answer is 'yes'). As markets become increasingly complex and specialised, it is difficult for an executive to get a chance to see the whole picture.

Management simulation provides the ability for 'serious play' – an opportunity to innovate, take risks, and practice in a safe

environment. New-hire games can be used even in advance of hiring, allowing players to become familiar with corporate products and services. Games will take a key role in teaching collaboration skills.

DIVERSITY IS STRATEGIC NOT MANDATORY

Skills shortages in specific disciplines, such as science and engineering, and lack of multi-cultural talent will no longer be a human resources issue, but rather a strategic business priority. The global war for talent will become more important than ever. Diversity will be a business strategy, not an HR mandate. Some of these trends you can see emerging now, such as the basic ubiquity and influence of social networks. Others may seem more abstract to you, depending on the size and sector of your organisation.

Given the major trends in globalisation and demographics, you should (at a minimum) know which critical skills you will need in the future and craft a strategy for how you will find, retain and build those skills. Plan how you will harness social media as part of your recruitment strategy. Understand what social learning tools you will use to develop and engage your employees. Think about how you will implement workforce planning and analytics techniques to understand the 'what if' scenarios in your business planning and expansion.

Organisations need to change the paradigm of what they consider to be a 'career'. 'Most people think of a career as a sequence of promotions to move through. In today's labour market, this is not sustainable. In the

future, as well as promotions, a career will be characterised by transfers, secondments and projects that allow individuals to build portable capabilities and competencies in the workplace.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LEARNING

A career today is about building the employment value proposition of the individual through the mix of experiences. Learning is at the heart of this shift, and social media is the delivery mechanism for building these portable capabilities. According to the Institute for Corporate Productivity, high performing organisations are more encouraging of social media use than low performers.

Shared workspaces, wikis and blogs received the most encouragement from employers, while tools with more security concerns, such as social networks, shared media and micro-blogs were more likely to be discouraged or blocked. The same research revealed that 80% of respondents believe their organisations do not use enough social media technologies for their learning activities.

Regardless of the respondent group – large companies, small companies, Millennials or Baby Boomers etc – the majority of workers would like to see more social media use for corporate learning. If you think embracing participation on social networks is simply about posting vacancies on the company's Facebook page, then think again.

Don't underestimate the power of social networking in shaping the future workplace. Change is the watchword of progression. How's your progress going?



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