

Technological enablement, not human displacement



There is every reason to be hopeful and optimistic about the digital future. Within the last ten years alone, huge strides in innovation have helped invent many new industries and opportunities. It is becoming clearer that what we are experiencing is actually a surge of technological enablement with incredible speed, agility and flexibility, and not human displacement.

It will of course be inevitable to revise current job designs and create new ones. Around 50 percent of jobs today can already be automated, but only 5 percent of the activities in these jobs can be replaced. However, the breakneck speed of technological advancements could definitely increase that to 15 percent by 2030, which also means that up to 14 percent of the global workforce (or 375 million employees) may need to change their occupational category within the next decade.^{1,2}

So how does digitization truly enable humans at work if it means an enormous amount of adjustment? This is how: the digital revolution has disrupted the idea of 'work' itself. Even now, it no longer has to be a rigid 9-to-5 job that occupies us for an average of 40 hours per week.

This shift could make the labor market more competitive as the 'war on talent' gains new targets, in addition to high tech talent who can support the digital transformation. It won't be farfetched to expect that the hottest jobs will require 'soft' skills like critical thinking, complex problem solving, creativity, people management, emotional intelligence and negotiation.³

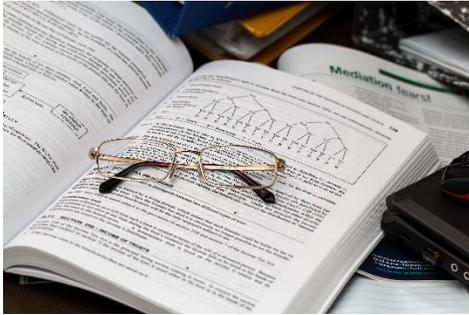


Work will also become malleable and democratic.

The volatility of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will enable people to evolve their careers repeatedly throughout their professional lifetime. This would move many employees towards wanting to design their work and compensation around how they need to live their life and find satisfaction. They will call for a high level of flexibility and trust concerning where, how, when they work, and what they choose to work on. They will also prefer engagement on a freelance or contractual basis. Currently, 22 percent of the global workforce is contingent and this could grow to at least 50 percent in 2018, especially as 54 percent of large companies around the world plan to engage more non-traditional talent over the next three years.^{4,5}

Such inevitable changes in future workplaces could prove challenging to embrace in developing and emerging economies that have culturally and traditionally been more focused on technical jobs and skillsets. But between now and 2021, the growing population of young people entering the workforce in these regions will create a talent surplus.⁶ Slow transformation could actually risk losing more talents and opportunities to talent-deficit developed economies or new centers of innovation. So among the best

things we can do is to, first and foremost, embrace change. It's true that historically, every industrial revolution has displaced jobs and upended business models. But history also teaches us that change is inevitable and, ultimately, good and beneficial for the society at large.



Organizations should prioritize upskilling their workforce today to stay abreast of developments in the digital revolution. Continuous learning and job design improvements will ensure that we will remain relevant and competent in the new landscape. A key factor is also the traditional educational system that is still being followed today. Students are still being equipped with skills and knowledge that will no longer be relevant by the time they enter the workforce. Just as organizations need to rethink job design, so should educators

rethink the curriculum. Digital leaders need to partner with relevant government and educational institutions to develop and train the future workforce in order to better meet future demands and challenges.

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(Source : Sambhav Rakyan, <https://tinyurl.com/yd7o54e4>)