



After A Pandemic: Work and the Worker

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Much of the talk about the future of work gave the pandemic the credit for kindling our spirits to who we need to become, what we need to do, and what we must achieve as we continue to work.

There are a number of forces that have impacted our society today and shaped the way we reason about all the things we do. A number of these forces were identified by Peter Drucker as accelerated change, overwhelming complexity, and tremendous competition. Other forces would include fatigued courage slackening culture, unfathomable collaboration, cryptic communication, increased consciousness, and steady contradictions.

As we look on at the future of work, it would appear that these forces will shape what we do, how we do it, what we describe as meaningful work, and who we need to be to give expression to these things.

A recent report by Bakhshi, Downing, Osborne and Schneider (2017) identified the trends influencing the future of work as: the environment, urbanization, increasing inequality, political uncertainty, technological change, globalization, and demographic change. These trends suggest that our focus on the future of work must cater for these demands.



What Kind of Work will the Future Require?

My goal is not to address the value expectations of these groups but to say that any work that satisfies the needs of these groups, provides value to them, and ultimately makes them functional should be the focus of educational institutions, job curators and creators, as well as policy makers.

It is important to posit that because the needs of these groups are ever changing and always influenced by the forces we earlier identified, the types of work to be done will be dynamic. Work will easily be redesigned and enriched to cater for the changes in expectation of these groups.

A good place to commence the consideration of this question is to find out what work is. Work suggests the performance of a task on a continuous basis to produce satisfaction for people, businesses, and societies.

If we adopt this perspective of work, then it suffices to say that the work of the future will be the one that brings value to people, businesses, and societies. This leads us to defining what value is to these 3 segments. Value here will connote what these segments need to be fully functional and satisfied.



What kind of worker will the future of work need?

Seeing that this is not a subject based one, a description of the ideal worker of the future will follow an approach to identify the qualities and competences that should be possessed.

Broadly speaking, the worker of the future must be one that possesses specific technical and behavioural competences. These competences will change based on the needs of the groups we earlier identified as well as the compelling forces in the society.

More specifically, the worker of the future must be:

1. **An advancing personality:** The focus must be on ensuring that the groups are able to transcend their current status for a higher one.

2. **Contribution-driven:** The worker of the future must be able to identify the pursuits of these groups and ensure their goals are met by applying his skills, knowledge, and experience to the tasks assigned.

3. **Insights focused:** The worker of the future is one that is sensitive to the changes in the society and flexible enough to adapt the new demands without losing sight of the expected value for the stakeholders.

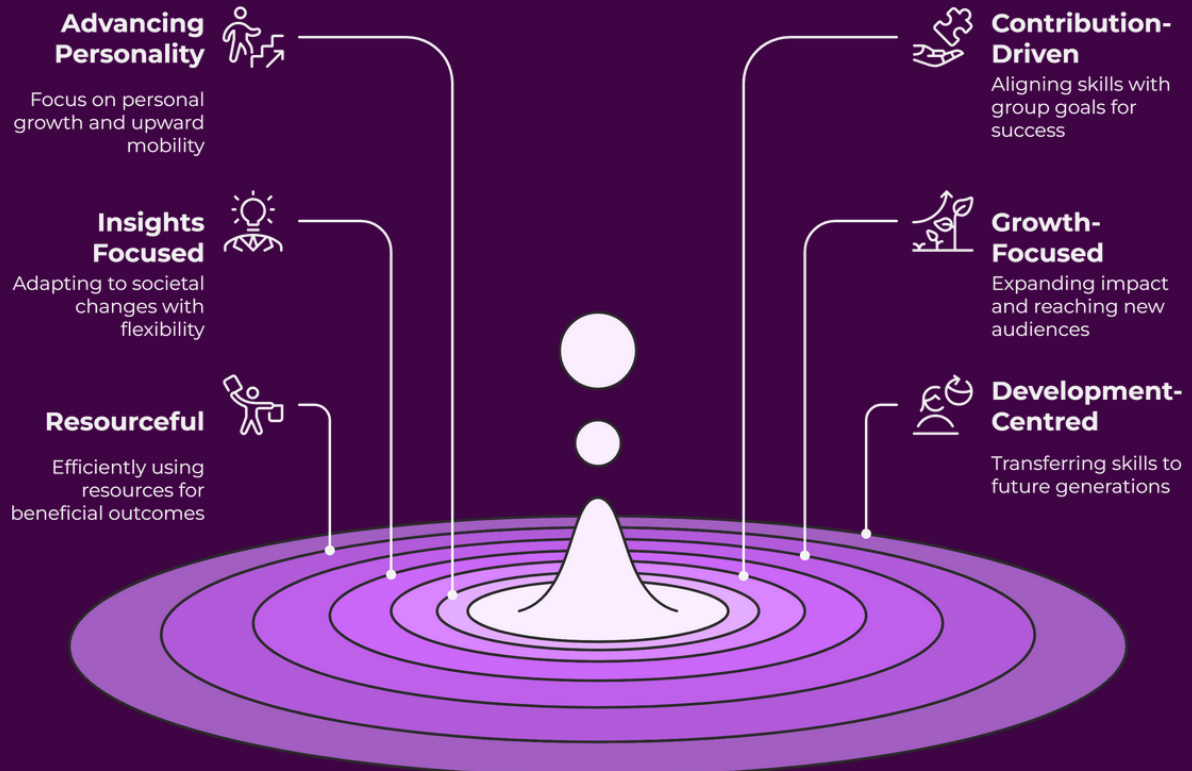
4. **Growth-focused:** The worker of the future is one that fixes his attention on expansion of effect. The worker of the future must endeavor to bring his organizations product and service to as many people as possible across as many societies as possible. Here, the intensity of impact is what drives the work that is done.

5. **Resourceful:** The worker of the future must be able to harness resources to produce results. Great attention must be paid to knowing how to grow resources and ensure their efficient use in delivering beneficial outcomes to stakeholders.

6. **Development-Centred:** The worker of the future is one that must show how to transfer competences to successive generations of the workforce. Here, attention must be paid to leadership, coaching, mentoring, sponsoring, and managing talent.

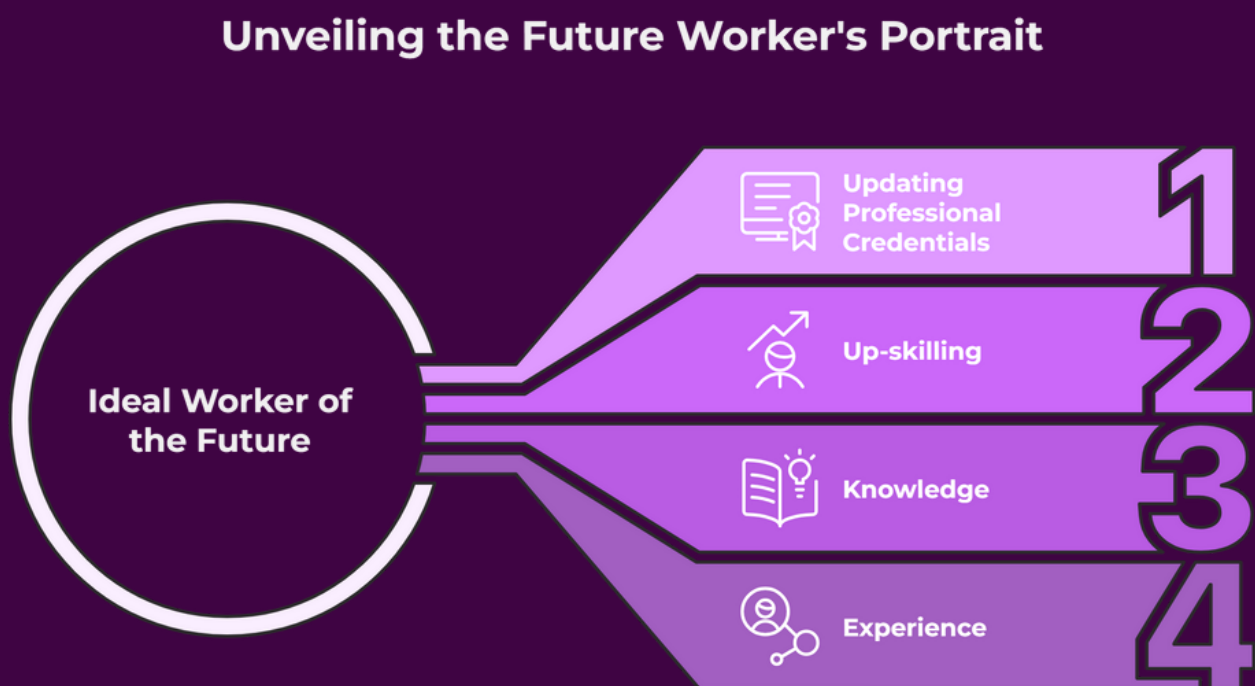


Future Worker Attributes



We can expect the ideal worker of the future to be an individual that pays attention to the under-listed. You can call these considerations, the portrait of the worker of the future.

1. **Updating professional credentials:** There's a constant need to validate your competence by certifications.
2. **Up-skilling:** The future will demand more skills than are possibly known today. The worker of the future must pay attention to developing greater depth of proficiency in their areas of expertise. In addition, they must be able to demonstrate great human relations skills. Ultimately, they must typify an individual with great conceptual skills.
3. **Knowledge:** Here, critical attention must be paid to the knowledge of the job, organization, industry, and society. The worker of the future is one that must show that the knowledge acquired is current and relevant to the cause of the organization at the time.
4. **Experience:** The worker of the future is not going to be a loner. The individual must be an integral part of activities within and beyond the industry that can impact the work that he does.



What will be the ideal work environment for the future of work?

Today, work is being executed in several locations across the world. People are contributing to organizational success from the comfort of their homes. Others are even doing so much to meet customers needs from places that otherwise would only fit for leisure or vacation.

What is important today is that the future of work is mobile. With the advent of technology as expressed in machine learning and artificial intelligence, work by physical congregations will reduce.

While working from home has become more prominent, other forms of work will gain attention. There will be an increase in the use of shared workspaces. Travels will be limited. Investments in real estate for workers will be on a decline.

There are concerns what effect these patterns of work will have on human interaction. I dare say that humans will find more creative ways to ensure they connect with one another.



Final Word

The future of work is here. It will require an agile worker and organization.

The future of work will demand a discerning workforce. One that is not distracted by changes in society but is sensitive to know the potential impact those events can have on the organization.

The future of work will need a more dynamic environment. One that is not fixated on what used to work but committed to an effective and efficient way of delivering value to the marketplace.

The future of work will impact and be impacted by the economies of the world, their political machineries, technology, cultural diversities, legal frameworks, and the need for a sustainable environment.



Reference

Bakhshi, H., Downing, J., Osborne, M. and Schneider, P. (2017). The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030. London: Pearson and Nesta.



