4 Talent Trends To Look Out For As Automation Disrupts, Well, Everything

More than half of leaders globally are expecting automation and AI to replace one in five jobs in their organizations, leading to major disruption in their talent pools in the next three years, according to a report on *Global Talent Trends 2019* by global consulting company, Mercer.

While almost everyone tries to figure out what this emerging technology is going to mean for their own jobs, it seems that leaders are confident at getting in front of the change, with four in five saying they believe that their organization can lead the disruption in their industry. This relies on them facing up to several human risk factors though—after all, leaders are still learning what new functions they will need filled in future, and in the meantime feeling under-skilled and under-valued does not lead to a motivated workforce.

The report, based on over 7,300 insights from leaders, HR and employees across 16 geographies and 9 industries, identifies four key trends in talent to look out for over the next year.

Aligning work to future value

Leaders are redesigning jobs to fit where they believe future value will come from, leading to a redefining of products, service lines and jobs to be done, and a restructuring of teams to suit those goals. The term "restructuring" is often dreaded in most offices, as it's associated to redundancies. However, that's not always going to be the case, with most companies showing that they are prepared to embrace change, but keen to integrate their people in with it.

This means they are building people strategies tied to the organization's values that keeps employees attached and loyal to the business while changing with it. Change could be uncomfortable for some employees—nearly 80% of executives see contingent and freelance staff substantially replacing full-timers in the future—but ultimately a commitment to upskilling and a fresh look at reward systems could end up benefitting most.

Building brand resonance

Attracting top talent is no longer about money or benefits—future employees are likely to care more for what a business stands for and the way it operates. People want to feel proud of who they work for and they need to trust that the business puts its values into practice—especially with the cultural of sharing on social media. The youth in particular want to be able to share what they do and who they do it for.

This means companies are putting time into creating value propositions to attract and keep the best people, which includes embracing the three Es: ethics, which consider human values and transparency; equity, which keeps an eye on equality and diversity; and

empathy, which involves making a real and considered effort to understand people and their needs.

Curating the work experience

How much tech is too much? Data overload leads to confusion and disconnected people. Making work systems simple, easy to use and efficient helps employees to thrive, as does clear and honest communication, without bombardment of too much messaging. Simplified processes will also lead to quick decision-making across the board.

This includes making it possible for employees to manage and choose their own training needs and career paths. Empowering HR to (transparently) use data and technology to understand employee needs and provide tailored learning and development tools will lead to engaged, happy and capable people.

Delivering talent-led change

Change management needs to be structured properly and lead confidently, with the HR function becoming ever-more vital to give clarity and prevent confusing people. Change fatigue and employee burnout can dramatically hinder transformation efforts. As the caretaker of people, HR needs to be fully involved in all change programs and lead the transformation from an employee perspective.

HR will begin to interact with people more, focusing less on operations and more on support, using tools to listen to and touch base with staff—not just to find out what they need and what they are lacking, but also to gather and identify ideas in how to help the business grow and improve. This will likely involve digital tools to align HR with the business and teach the business who its people are, and how and where to move them to best suit future roles.

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