

21 Trends for 2021: TRANSFORMING TALENT & THE FUTURE OF WORK

Four Forces and a New Reality: Existing Trends Accelerate – shifting demographics, technological revolution, individual choice, and client sophistication along with a key number of emerging trends are the main pillars of change driving these 21 trends in 2021 around the future of work and the global workforce.



SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1 Skills scarcity** is amplifying, showing the growing divide between those with in demand skills/job roles vs those that are in decline.
- 2 Growing social polarization** and tensions surrounding global issues of inequity requires companies to stand up and speak out on diversity, inclusion and other critical talent development topics.
- 3 The rapid rise of remote work** creating more on-demand workforce, hybrid work models that is more accepting of part-time, flexible and contract workers.
- 4 The accelerating gender gap** resulting in a global workforce “she-cession” as women are disproportionately affected by both social and economic crises due to the pandemic.

RISE OF INDIVIDUAL CHOICE

- 5 New hierarchy of needs calling for greater work flexibility, autonomy, and choice** as consumer behaviors shift and wellness at work becomes the norm.
- 6 Health and well-being, both physical and emotional** at never-seen-before levels of employer responsibility, creating a greater role for HR leaders to support employee wellness and success.
- 7 Omnipresence of digital interactions.** Increased adoption of social networking and virtual communities is swelling digital adoption with new ways to interact anywhere, anyhow, anytime.
- 8 Employees as consumers with demands for greater transparency and equity** reflecting What Workers Want – security, sustainability of skills, work life blend and wellness. Demands on employers to act as global citizens via greater stakeholderism when it comes to the environment, social justice and corporate governance.

TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

- 9 The continued human-machine co-evolution.** The reacceleration of automation at scale fueled by 5G will speed up the skills revolution, transform industries and drive increased productivity, with higher wages and more new-collar jobs.
- 10 The growth of cyber and remote working means every company must be a tech company** to be able to compete and create more value. “Superstar” organizations that were making fast progress on digitization before the pandemic are emerging stronger.
- 11 Technology will allow individuals and employers to learn more about well-being management.** Organizations will need to balance using technology as a tool to solve for 'always on' culture or enhancing productivity, with growing responsibilities around data ownership and transparency.
- 12 Rise of digital disruptors and the digitization of the customer experience.** The abundance of individual data + insights, enables the ability to measure and assess progress and potential weaknesses. Growth of telemedicine, pharma, edtech and self-care will drive personalization of digital solutions.
- 13 Education r(e)volution.** The ongoing need for upskilling and reskilling will change the future of education. Shift towards on-demand, micro-certification, virtual teaching and cloud based coaching providing new solutions for the Skills Revolution.

CLIENT SOPHISTICATION

- 14 Acceleration of workforce strategy and strategic talent management** in order to optimize the best workforce mix and achieve competitive advantage in the marketplace.
- 15 Data-centricity increasing demand for AI-driven assessments and solutions** helping organizations to better predict performance and individuals know more about their skills and career potential.
- 16 Building supply chain resilience to mitigate uncertainty and manage risk,** which will result in a race for organizations to evolve as both connected platforms and ecosystems.
- 17 Renewed demands on leaders** to lead with empathy and digital agility, championing ESG and being a part of driving the green deal and climate action regardless of sector, with focus on recovery and sustainability.

EMERGING TRENDS: ONES TO WATCH

- 18 Recovery revolution** with the rise of HealthTech, EdTech, GreenTech and the “Amazonization” of healthcare post pandemic. Next gen tech, healthcare and green economy will compete for in-demand skills and talent.
- 19 Pivoting to progress.** Businesses will need to continue to show agility and adapt to the changing needs of the market and consumers if they are to thrive. The pandemic has forced many industries to reinvent themselves and transform in the long-term.
- 20 Amplified consumerization of work.** Expectations of new opportunities, new breakthroughs and a seamless, personalized virtual experience of work and life will be a new reality in an increasingly-digitized post-COVID world.
- 21 Net zero employment emerges as the epitome of responsible ESG.** As skills needs shift faster, the best employers will commit to achieving a balance of being net zero on jobs. As organizations restructure and jobs are lost, others will be created and people reskilled for new roles either in or outside the organization.