



LIFELONG LEARNING

DISCUSSION PAPER

Our Management 4.0 campaign is examining the skills and practices that managers and leaders will need in the future; in a workplace and world transformed by automation and AI.

In an age where technology is enabling new business models, disrupting existing business practices, transforming the workplace and shifting the balance of power.

And at a time when society is becoming more diverse, when the workforce is ageing and where the demands and expectations of employees and consumers are changing.

To start the conversation, we are publishing a series of short discussion papers exploring six of the key drivers and forces of change. Together, they lead to one simple conclusion: how we practice management is being transformed.

THE PACE OF CHANGE IS ACCELERATING. EXISTING JOBS WILL DISAPPEAR AND NEW ONES CREATED. RETRAINING AND RE-SKILLING WILL BECOME MORE IMPORTANT, AND EDUCATION WILL BE A LIFELONG ENTERPRISE. HOW DO WE CHANGE OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM AND BUILD A CULTURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING? WHAT IS THE ROLE OF MANAGERS AND LEADERS?

As the world and workplace is transformed, it will be more important than ever to invest in people. Education is and should remain the foundation on which to build a skilled and productive workforce. But as technology, artificial intelligence (AI) and automation create new pressures on the labour market, education reform, a new approach to lifelong learning and an acceleration of retraining and re-skilling initiatives will be key to future prosperity for individuals, managers and businesses.¹

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is disrupting the workplace. By 2030, 375 million workers worldwide, around 14% of the global workforce, may need to find new jobs and new careers as automation and advances in AI transform the world of work.² Some existing roles and occupations will disappear, and many new ones will be created. Some forecasts predict that 85% of the jobs in 2030 do not exist yet.³ This will require retraining and reskilling on an unprecedented scale.

“ WE SEE RETRAINING (OR “RESKILLING” AS SOME LIKE TO CALL IT), AS THE IMPERATIVE OF THE COMING DECADE.⁴ ”

Education is at the heart of preparing the next generation, including our future managers and leaders, but there are concerns that our education and skills systems are not prepared for this challenge.

“ CREATIVITY, SOCIO-EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPLEX REASONING ARE THE SKILLS THAT ARE RISING IN IMPORTANCE ACROSS EVERY WORK ROLE. THESE SKILLS ARE NOT TAUGHT IN TODAY’S LEARNING SYSTEMS.⁵ ”

How do we reform the education system to “focus on things that machines will be less good at for longer,” rather than skills that are rapidly becoming obsolete?⁶

¹ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/jobs/we-need-reskilling-revolution-heres-how-make-it-happen>

² www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/retraining-and-reskilling-workers-in-the-age-of-automation

³ <https://www.delltechnologies.com/content/dam/delltechnologies/assets/perspectives/2030/pdf/Realizing-2030-A-Divided-Vision-of-the-Future-Summary.pdf>

⁴ <https://hbr.org/2018/05/automation-will-make-lifelong-learning-a-necessary-part-of-work>

⁵ <https://www.accenture.com/sg-en/insights/future-workforce/transforming-learning>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/oct/12/schools-not-preparing-children-to-succeed-in-an-ai-future-mps-warn>

Do we need a system that prioritises the development of human potential: creativity, imagination, critical thinking, social interaction and physical dexterity?⁷ In an automated future, when machines will be taking on more of the routine tasks, will it be these “human” skills that are the source of competitive advantage for both individuals and organisations?⁸

And what will the Fourth Industrial Revolution mean for our colleges and universities? Will we see qualifications and degrees becoming shorter and more focussed? Will there be more provision to support lifelong learning with modular post-graduate qualifications throughout the working lives of individuals?⁹ Will students be attracted to those colleges and universities that fully embrace the digital age?¹⁰

Is it also time to rethink education and training? Should we move away from terms such as “retraining” or “reskilling”, terms which suggest something that is reactive and time-limited, and from “lifelong learning” and “continuous professional development” as these only appeal to professional classes?¹¹ As McKinsey argue:

“
...EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND PUBLIC-SECTOR LEADERS NEED TO START TALKING ABOUT 'LIFELONG EMPLOYABILITY': HELPING PEOPLE CONTINUALLY AND SUCCESSFULLY ADAPT AS THE ECONOMY EVOLVES.¹²

”

Will lifelong learning or lifelong employability be more important for some sectors than others? The RSA have predicted one possible future scenario of a “Big Tech Economy”, where the growing demand for skilled software developers and engineers “means that for this group in particular, reskilling is key to staying at the top of the pile”.¹³

“
SIMPLY TO REMAIN EMPLOYED WILL REQUIRE ENGAGING IN LIFELONG LEARNING AND REGULAR RESKILLING.¹⁴

”

And who will take responsibility for lifelong learning and employability? The best companies, as now, recognise that investing in their staff’s development will ultimately pay dividends. But do all companies need to recognise that they will have to invest significantly in training at all levels, as they can not rely on workers entering the labour market with the right skills?¹⁵ Indeed, with Amazon’s recent announcement of a \$700m plan to retrain and upskill one third of its American workforce, are we already seeing companies step up to the challenge?¹⁶

The Government will have a major stake in trying to drive national productivity, with skills being one of the key factors behind this, but what is their role? How can they help embed lifelong learning and employability?

And what about the individual? What responsibility will individuals have? Will they recognise the value and invest properly into lifelong learning schemes? How do we help individuals develop that creativity and curiosity that drives a passion for lifelong learning? And what is the role for employers and leaders in promoting a culture of lifelong learning and employability?

“
THE ILLITERATE OF THE 21ST CENTURY WILL NOT BE THOSE WHO CANNOT READ AND WRITE, BUT THOSE WHO CANNOT LEARN, UNLEARN AND RELEARN.¹⁷

”

We want to hear your views on the questions posed in this paper.

To get involved, visit us at:
www.managers.org.uk/managementtransformed

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⁷ <https://medium.com/learning-re-imagined/education-and-the-fourth-industrial-revolution-cd6bcd7256a3>

⁸ <https://hbr.org/2018/05/automation-will-make-lifelong-learning-a-necessary-part-of-work>

⁹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2019/05/22/8-things-every-school-must-do-to-prepare-for-the-4th-industrial-revolution/#7a136d31670c>

¹⁰ <https://www.pwc.co.za/en/publications/pwc-focus-on-education-series2.html>

¹¹ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/competitive-advantage-with-a-human-dimension-from-lifelong-learning-to-lifelong-employability>

¹² <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/competitive-advantage-with-a-human-dimension-from-lifelong-learning-to-lifelong-employability>

¹³ RSA (2019), The Four Futures of Work, p.41
https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/rsa_four-futures-of-work.pdf

¹⁴ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FOW_Reskilling_Revolution.pdf

¹⁵ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FOW_Reskilling_Revolution.pdf

¹⁶ <https://techcrunch.com/2019/07/11/amazon-invests-700-million-to-retrain-a-third-of-its-u-s-workforce-by-2025/>

¹⁷ Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (1970)