



# PATTERNS OF WORK

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.*

## **EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS ARE CHANGING, WITH A DESIRE FOR MORE FLEXIBLE, SELF-DIRECTED FORMS OF WORK THAT ALLOW BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE. HOW WILL MANAGERS AND BUSINESSES RESPOND?**

Our patterns of work are changing. More than any generation before them, millennials increasingly expect to work flexibly, independently and remotely, with virtual meetings seen as the norm. The 9 to 5, 40 hours a week working model is increasingly a thing of the past, as is the traditional 40-years-at-one-company career with a defined benefit pension and expensive watch at the end of it.

At the same time, technology is creating an 'always-on' culture, or digital presenteeism, making it difficult for workers to switch off during their leisure hours. How will future managers meet these challenges while simultaneously managing personal relationships with colleagues who may not share the same office space.

The way people choose and develop their careers is also changing, with the emergence of 'flexible talent pools' whereby people match their skills to relevant work and choose their preferred working pattern.<sup>1</sup> Are employees turning away from wanting to spend a solid and stable decade at one company, towards having a more diverse career and facing a number of different situations and challenges all with different pressures and goals? This may be particularly relevant when you know there are multiple employers

who you could work for. As such, is 'careers security' - the ability to move on and up, independent of your current employer - overtaking 'job security' as a key concern?

People are now working multiple careers and changing jobs frequently based on their own preferences, lifestyle and aspiration, without fear of reprisal. This "multi-staged path will see them moving in and out of corporate careers, small companies, entrepreneurial ventures and self-employment over a life-long career".<sup>2</sup>

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**44% OF MILLENNIALS DO NOT EXPECT TO STAY IN A JOB FOR LONGER THAN 2 YEARS, AND ONLY 16% EXPECT TO STILL BE IN THE SAME JOB A DECADE FROM NOW.<sup>3</sup>**

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Part of this diversification of work is the rise of multi-activity: portfolio workers who hold several jobs and who have several different income sources at the same time. According to supporters, this "slasher generation" (so-called due to the forward slashes between job roles) benefit from greater job satisfaction and mental wellbeing, as well as from higher income and more job variety. But will companies still see the incentive to invest in

<sup>1</sup> Korn Ferry (2019), A New Deal For The Future Of Work: from reward to the employee experience, p.14

<sup>2</sup> Women's Network Forum (2019), Fuelling Gender Diversity: unlocking the impact of the next generation workplace

<sup>3</sup> <http://changingworld.work/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/WEC-The-Future-of-Work-What-role-for-PrES.pdf>



the development of staff which they share with others? And will an increasing focus on values and the need for work to be ‘meaningful’ see the rise of the purpose-driven organisation as standard? Should all businesses strive to be social enterprises?

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**GEN Y AND Z WORKERS NO LONGER MERELY FOCUS ON SALARY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT – FLEXIBILITY IS KEY.**<sup>4</sup>  
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How will these new patterns of work impact upon workplace diversity and inclusivity? Flexible working delivers many benefits, both personal and professional. It can mean many things: working from home, working compressed hours, term-time hours, part-time or flexi-time working. It has become an umbrella term to describe all kinds of working outside the traditional “9-to-5”. But despite the many benefits, flexible working still suffers from an unhelpful stigma - that those who use it are somehow less productive and less committed to their career than those who work their contracted hours in the office. How do managers and leaders tackle this stigma and promote flexible working? Will tackling this stigma become business-critical if employers are to attract future talent?

When talking about working outside of the office, the role of technology

is critical. Smartphones mean that many tasks like checking contracts and answering a conference call can now happen anywhere at any time. This can empower employees and help organisations become more agile, but organisations need to avoid developing a culture of digital presenteeism.

With millennial burnout anecdotally higher than past generations, never feeling like you can switch off from work may be a contributing factor. As technology becomes a bigger part of working life, how will digital presenteeism be managed? Even in a virtual world, employees still want social interaction, which suggests that rather than dying out, the workplace will change. Leaders will need to think carefully about how they design work spaces and workflow to build in these human needs.

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**WORK IS NO LONGER A PLACE TO GO BUT MORE A TASK TO PERFORM.**<sup>5</sup>  
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A key challenge is how managers and leaders adapt to these changes. McKinsey have predicted that future organisational structures will become flatter and that managers and teams will need to be more agile.<sup>6</sup>

According to some labour market forecasts, project work and freelancing will increase at the expense of traditional roles. Agile

“work swarms” – heterogeneously structured working groups with external participants - are becoming more common. These are characterised by their flexibility, speed and activity-oriented structures, by their autonomous task management and by the eventual dissolution of the group following the completion of their project.

With workplace structures potentially becoming wider, flatter and less hierarchical, what skills and techniques will leaders need to manage and motivate their team and develop engaged, committed staff? If careers become more fluid and work more flexible, how will managers develop their employees for both their role and their potential? Furthermore, how will managers and leaders build resilient teams and organisations that can effectively deal with regular and frequent change?

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

To get involved, visit us at:  
**[www.managers.org.uk/managementtransformed](http://www.managers.org.uk/managementtransformed)**

**#managementtransformed**

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cp.de/en/inspiration/office-40/topics/the-future-of-work/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://changingworld.work/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/WEC-The-Future-of-Work-What-role-for-PrES.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> McKinsey & Company (2019), How Companies Can Help Midlevel Managers Navigate Agile Transformations