

**HYBRID
WORKFORCE**

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TRANSITION TO A
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by Alain Thys

OVERVIEW

Although the introduction of new technologies is usually introduced and handled by other departments in your organization, you cannot afford to stay on the sidelines. Technology will affect every aspect of your company's human resource strategy.

If left unmanaged, the unintended consequences of going too fast too soon can create inefficiencies and even unrest. On the other hand, if you get ahead of the conversation and prepare for this bright new reality, you can leverage technology for higher productivity, higher motivation, and eventually a better strategy execution.

And let's be blunt: technology will also affect many of today's HR functions. So it's probably a good idea to start reskilling yourself as well.

THE MACHINES ARE COMING. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, IOT, AND ROBOTICS ARE NEARING THEIR PROVERBIAL TIPPING POINT.

The speed of artificial computation continues to double every three months and the market for cobots (collaborative robots that work alongside humans) is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 44.5% from 2019 to 2025.

ALMOST EVERY OTHER TECHNOLOGY INDICATOR IS POINTING IN THE SAME DIRECTION.

These developments will have a massive impact on the way we work. Whereas those in low-skill occupations will be most exposed to robots and those in middle-skill occupations will be most exposed to software, those in high-skill occupations will be most exposed to artificial intelligence, especially if they are highly educated, older workers.

As an HR leader, you need to help the business get ready for this reality. Not at some undefined point in the future, but today. Because the future is coming fast. The organisations that are first to start the transition to a human-tech hybrid workforce will be the ones who come out ahead when the market evolves.

Practically, this means that you need to focus your team's attention on three domains.

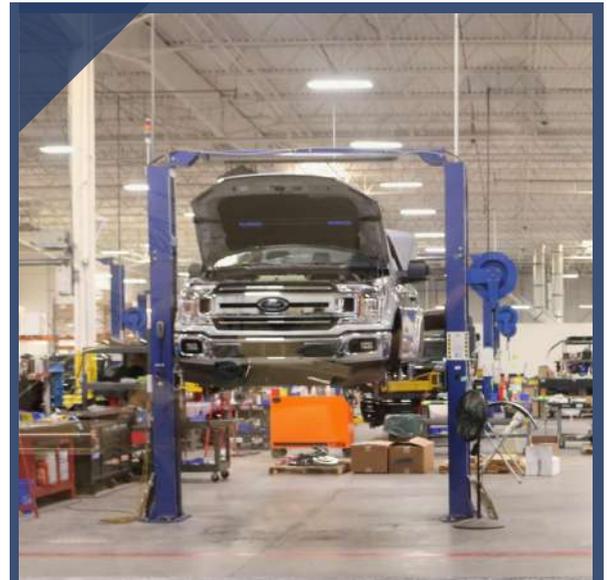
#1 - CRAFT A VISION OF YOUR COMPANY'S TECHNOLOGY AUGMENTED WORKFORCE

Until now, human resource teams have translated company strategy into actions and behaviours for every department and individual in the business. In the future, you will need to include technology in the 'worker mix'.

You need to look at every activity in the business and ask yourself the question, 'Will this task still be around tomorrow? Will it still look the same?' This allows you to imagine both your future workforce and the changes that technology will bring about for your employees without getting swept up in techno-dreaming.

JOBS DON'T NEED TO BE AUTOMATED SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY CAN.

And even when there are clear benefits, it should be done with caution. Computers may be more efficient in processing transactions but will struggle to display empathy towards customers for quite a while. AI engines can accelerate analysis and decision making but can also introduce unconscious biases which may discriminate or be unethical.



EUROPE'S POSITION IN THE ROBOT MARKET

According to a Grand View Research study, Europe is a key revenue-generating region and accounted for a significant market share of around 37% in 2018.

Europe's regional growth is attributed to the enormous application of cobots in different verticals such as electronics, logistics, and inspection.

Also, the regional growth of the cobot technology can be attributed to various advantages such as increased collaboration and efficient manufacturing optimization solutions offered by automation at workplace.

AS A HUMAN RESOURCE LEADER, YOU NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE BUSINESS BECOMES MORE DIGITAL WITHOUT LOSING ITS HUMANITY.

All while keeping everyone aware that new technologies may also allow the business to work in completely new ways which might not have been considered before.

#2 - RETRAIN YOUR PEOPLE FOR THE NEW REALITY

While humans are pretty good at adapting to any situation, it will take some time for your people to synchronize themselves to any hybrid reality. They'll need to learn new skills and accept that some of the skills they acquired in the past have become obsolete.

IN SOME CASES, THEY MAY EVEN NEED TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THEIR JOB OR ENTIRE DEPARTMENT WILL DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY.

But as some tasks will be automated, new ones will emerge. These are likely to build on specifically human traits like empathy, creativity, and teamwork. What these jobs will look like is still unclear today. But regardless, they will require talented individuals who identify with your organization and are willing to invest their energy into your goals.

Therefore, rather than merely accepting that automation will be a quick route to cutting costs, your HR team needs to create a plan to retrain your people for the future work reality that you identified in your vision. You will need to help them adapt to working with a machine or even transitioning to a role which may not even exist today.



If this is an impossible task and you really cannot reintegrate a team member into your future organisation, you should give them a fighting chance by helping them update their skills for other environments.

#3 - CREATE A MACHINE-POSITIVE CULTURE

During the Industrial Revolution, many workers rose up against the new technologies that they believed were coming to take their jobs away. Over the coming decades, people will likely be just as concerned, especially considering the general hysteria of the media and Hollywood's efforts to warn us about the coming AI takeover...

TO PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING IN YOUR BUSINESS, YOU NEED TO START BUILDING A TECHNOLOGY POSITIVE CULTURE TODAY.

This doesn't mean sugar-coaching reality. But it does mean pro-actively pointing out how the introduction of technology will improve the working conditions of everyone and make our work more interesting and challenging. At this point, you should also provide reassurance to those whose jobs may be affected by the introduction of AI or robotics and explain how your business will take care of these people.

Obviously, you will only be able to create this techno-positive culture when you've created a clear vision and have a retraining plan ready. Otherwise, you'll just stay stuck at the level of creating excellent propaganda that



no one will believe. In fact, it may even make people more nervous as they will notice your statements are not grounded in knowledge and insight.

ALAIN THYS THE AUTHOR



Alain Thys is an experience architect who has led transformation programmes impacting employees in 100+ countries. He specialises in the development of customer, employee and stake/shareholder experiences that delight and transform.

SOURCES

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HR & STRATEGIC CHANGE

AS AN HR LEADER, YOU SEE THE CHANGE

Digitalization brought us a world of new business models, eco-systems and complexity. New collar jobs require a lot of blend digital, technical and soft skills. Change has truly become a constant. Talent shortage is real.

YOU WANT TO EXPAND YOUR ROLE, BUT LACK THE TOOLS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

In the 2020s, HR leaders will need to become true talent managers, proactively helping the business to manage the human aspects of digitalization, uncertainty, engagement and supply chain transformation. And while you want to create tomorrow, your toolkit still focuses on improving yesterday, assuming that HR is only about attracting, developing, retaining and especially administrating employees. If you want to do more, the white papers on Google offer beautiful buzzwords but they provide little practical guidance.

HR & STRATEGIC CHANGE: Key services & tools to support you

- ▲ Personal coaching and assistance from global experts to expand HR to talent management.
- ▲ Craft employee experiences that increase employee engagement and help align behaviour to the company strategy.
- ▲ Engage your people with an organisational purpose that delivers profit and a sense of personal fulfilment.
- ▲ Create a tech positive culture, that uses automation and digitalisation to augment the performance of the talent in your business.
- ▲ Leverage the talent in your company's ecosystem for maximum value to your organisation.

**CONTACT US TO DISCOVER THE NEXT STEPS
FOR YOU AND YOUR COMPANY**



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