

5-minute Insight

People Strategy for the digital age



A new take on talent

The digital revolution is reshaping the way we live our lives and the way we work. As business strategies undergo a fundamental re-think, so must organizations re-think their people strategies. A wholesale re-design of work is now required.

The speed of change makes it almost impossible to predict the future with any degree of certainty. In such climate, organizations need a credible and forward-looking leader; a role that has never been more critical. CEOs need to understand how technology can improve their business productivity and the customer experience, and plan for things that seem a distant dream.

One of the biggest headaches for CEOs is making sure that the organization has the right people to cope with what lies ahead. There's the basic question of planning for the capabilities that are needed now and in the future: Which roles will be automated? What new roles will be needed to manage and run emerging technology? What capabilities should the company be looking for, and training their people for? Where will we find the people we need?

But more importantly, CEOs need to be sure that the business is fit to react quickly to whatever the future may throw at it – and that means filling it with adaptable, creative people, working in a culture where energy fizzles and ideas spark into life. If they can't be found, they must be created. Whatever technological innovations are ahead, it's the people that will make the difference between eventual success and failure. That's why CEOs need a people strategy for the digital age.

A volatile, unpredictable world

CEOs are standing on constantly shifting ground. They see a boiling mix of opportunities and threats, driven by technology that's mining new markets but which is also transforming everything around them, from how their customers behave to what their people expect from work. They're reacting by exploring new business models, sectors and unexpected partnerships – in a bid to adapt quickly, find growth, but increasingly to access the capabilities they need.

Capabilities at crisis point

The capabilities shortage has become a crisis-level priority for CEOs; 73% name it as a threat to their business, compared with 46% just six years ago. The digital age has transformed a nagging worry into something far more challenging; 81% of CEOs say they're looking for a wider mix of capabilities than they have in the past. Businesses desperately need hi-tech innovators and 'hybrid' workers who understand not only their own sector, but complex digital technology as well.

A new take on talent

Success in the digital world demands new ways of thinking, especially when it comes to talent. Workers with the most in-demand capabilities are creating a 'gig economy', where they're in control of where and when they work. Organizations, in turn, are rethinking their talent mix and exploring the potential of automation; and CEOs have woken up to the value of diversity – of thinking and experience – to create value in the digital age. Companies should have a contemporary employee experience to attract and retain talent.

CEO's are increasingly worried about finding talent with the right skills

73%

of CEO's said availability of skills was a concern, an increase of 10% on 2014.



Using data wisely

There's still some way to go before organizations make the best possible use of the people data they collect. Under half of organizations consistently use analytics to provide insight into how effectively capabilities are being deployed. CEOs are fully focused on the role digital technology plays in engaging customers; so why are they ignoring its value when it comes to engaging employees?

Great leadership required

Competitive advantage in the digital age lies not in securing the best technology, but in using and managing talent well – and that demands truly great leadership. But this is leadership in a radically transparent world, where organizations are far more complex, where ideas are a commodity, and where talent is mobile and autonomous. Leaders must create a culture where innovation thrives, ideas spark into life and people – whoever and wherever they are – are bound together in a common cause.

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