Chapter 3
Digital Employee Experience Engagement Paradox: Futureproofing Retention Practice

John Ludike

> *The human spirit must prevail over technology.*
> —Albert Einstein

Abstract The digital disruption of everything technology, society, business models is impacting the future of work inclusive of the evolution of the role of both the generalist and specialist human capital practitioner. Futureproofing the employee experience through design thinking, robust workplace people analytics and agile transformation ways of working is the new normal for evidence based human resource practitioners. This chapter explores how specifically digital disruption is impacting future of work and what work in the future is likely to look like. Possible answers to which digital capabilities, competencies and business culture might enable not a race and battle against the smart machines but rather a constructive collaborative augmentation. Which of these future digital technology work processes or digital workforce contexts will enable sustainability despite massive automation and deskilling of knowledge work? The chapter makes recommendations for futureproofing retention and engagement via the (re) design of next generation employee experience.

Keywords Digital disruption · Employee experience · Design thinking
Workforce analytics · Agile transformation · Engagement · Retention

Introduction

The digital transformation of work and or the future of work and with it the workplace and its workforce have been enormously contemporary if not popular themes amongst futurists, technologists, human capital practitioners of all makes and descriptions as well as corporate executives. Amongst several others this digital transformation has been described as a renaissance by Miller and Marsh (2014),

J. Ludike (✉)
Independent Management Consultant, London, UK
e-mail: jludike@hotmail.com

a digital tsunami by Bhaduri (2016) and Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2012) describe it as a race against the machine. Kaplan (2016) even argues rather apocalyptically that humans need not apply only to be cheekily contradicted by Davenport and Kirby (2016) concretely stating that there are winners and losers in the age of smart machines and that actually only humans need apply.

It is well known that business models and contexts are rapidly being ravished by wide array of not just exponentially evolving technologies but highly disruptive technologies that will according to a recent McKinsey Global Institute report literally "transform life, business and the global economy". These include but are not limited to artificial machine intelligence, cognitive and quantum computing, as well as stellar advances in automation, robotics and, block chain and the so called internet of things. Social, mobile, analytics and cloud computing are already considered passé. These all ambiguously impact the future of work, the workplace context and future digital workforce.

This chapter explores how specifically digital disruption is impacting future of work and what work in the future is likely to look like. Possible answers to which digital capabilities, competencies and business culture might enable not a race and battle against the smart machines but rather a constructive collaborative augmentation. Which of these future digital technology work processes or digital workforce contexts will enable sustainability despite massive automation and deskilling of knowledge work? Where possible examples to illustrate these will be provided.

Human resource (HR) practitioners of every ilk be it scientifically inspired occupational psychologists or generalist HR practitioners are all scrambling around for an elixir or alchemy of agile methodologies and/or human centered design thinking which will revitalize what is now popularly and poignantly emerging as the employee experience. The practical implications of these given future digital work and workforce will further be elaborated on in this chapter and accordingly contextualized.

As the overall focus of this publication centres on the 21st century industrial psychologist and HR practitioner need to continually psychologically struggle with enigma of how best to define, frame, focus, mobilise and sustain employee engagement and retention in measureable and tangible terms, importantly however for this chapter albeit digitally so.

The Digital Disruption of Everything

Two recent stories of major even iconic businesses and their leaders having not mastered the disruptive transformational realities of new digital economy namely Nokia and General Electric aptly demonstrates Brynjolfson and McAfee's (2014) and Surdak's (2014) notions that digital technological advances have engendered the greatest changes in human history and has not just generated change on a par with the Industrial Revolution but that exponentially speaking most of the changes being wrought by digital technologies have yet to appear.

Following on Brynjolfson and McAfee's (2014) further argue that given the ever-increasing pervasive connectedness, and data enablement of digital context for example of Smartphones and their apps—25 billion apps have been downloaded from Apple alone machines will produce the majority of mobile data traffic, not humans. Workforces create and consume vast amounts of data. In the future they believe social media's revolution in communications will define society's evolution.

We all recall some of us even fondly how Nokia was dominant leading player and game changer in the cellular market given how it innovated and introduced countless revolutionary models. Ironically its leadership didn't have foresight like Apple of a platform based hand held device like the iPhone and like the Sony Walkman before it was less responsive to its customers and more importantly ignorant of exponentially evolving digital communications ecosystem (mobile, music, photo's camera, messaging, and video). The final result being that Nokia was sold to Microsoft by the then CEO, Stephen Elop, who at the press conference announcing the acquisition commented, "We didn't do anything wrong, but somehow, we lost."

Similarly, General Electric (GE) recently announced that Jeffrey Immelt has resigned from this iconic conglomerate following 16 years as director and CEO having famously succeeded the legendary Jack Welch after not being able to engender and sustain investors' confidence specifically related to speed and impact of its digital transformation efforts. Accordingly, digital business researchers Raskino and Waller (2015) report that the latest seminal wave of innovation in social, mobile, data analytics and cloud as well as machine learning technology further erodes the boundaries between the physical and digital worlds and more importantly that it is advisable keeping in mind that all enterprise's now are digital companies as technology keeps opening opportunities.

The realities of these so termed platform (Parker et al. 2017) and gig economy (McGovern 2017) type enterprises are often further described by mentioning that Uber, the world's largest taxi company, owns no vehicles. Facebook, the world's most contemporary media owner, creates little if any content and Amazon the most valuable retailer, noticeably has no inventory and further that the world's largest accommodation provider, Airbnb owns no property.

New sources of value innovation and progressive business models and players are radically transforming entire industries true to the notion that software and artificial intelligence is eating the world given its central role in creating so much lower cost based service value innovation and distinctive customer experiences we thrive on. It is there for unashamedly vital for HR and other more scientifically driven practitioners to acknowledge that both the speed and nature of business and technology evolution is accelerating and maintaining the status quo is not an option.

Notoriously Kurzweil (2005) in explaining his law of accelerating returns he predicts an exponential increase in technologies like computers, genetics, nanotechnology, robotics and artificial intelligence further famously pronouncing that machine intelligence will be infinitely more powerful than all human intelligence combined. Maybe not such a profound proposition given that already, artificial

intelligence is all around us, from self-driving cars and drones delivering Amazon package's and fertilising crops to virtual assistants and software enabled chatbots that translate, invest and even control lighting of premises remotely, all voice activated off course. Regrettably business as usual as Kodak discovered is no longer a feasible option and many a well-known organization will not see the light of day over next decade. Digital innovation is driving new generation of agile innovative organizations e.g. As mentioned the likes of Netflix, Instagram, Amazon, Airbnb, and Uber have used exponential technologies to completely disrupt the entertainment, photography, publishing, retail, hotel, and transportation industries. Organizations intuitively sense and know that to remain relevant in the new economy they need to be more innovative, more often.

Needless to say Raskino and Waller (2015) further maintain that in addition this unsurmounted technological innovation will in addition lead to a supply-side economic gains with further long-term improvements in both efficiency and productivity. Consequently, transportation and communication costs will drop, with logistics and global supply chains becoming more effective, impacting the cost of trade progressively liberating new markets which propel economic growth.

Although while all this might well be true and exponentially evolving so to speak the current contradiction is that there remains a significant chasm between radical new technology(ies) and the slower pace of both human skill and organization development. The increasing effect of digitization on society and the economy however is not to be underestimated. Quintessentially in addition to being the custodians of human cooperation, compassion and creativity the optimum rather grand challenge of our time for all human capital practitioners is inventing effective organizations worthy of the human spirit and equally if not more so the boundary less potential of the human species.

The transformative effects of digitalization have upended entire industries—publishing, music, movies, retail, gaming, and others. Sensors, artificial intelligence, micropayments, driverless vehicles, and tools such as virtual reality and 4D printing are changing every dimension of business. Evolving as an exponential organization as termed by Ismail et al. (2014) is as much a necessity as it is a choice. They believe that countless industries will digitize and that the so called digital revolution so far is just the tip of the iceberg given that every company is or will evolve into an information-based entity and thrive on abundance, not scarcity as they have propensity to rather than owning assets, exponential driven organizations borrow or lease them at little or no cost—like Uber, Airbnb and Google, remaining agile, through renting employees and leveraging cloud computing.

In order to rise to this challenge and the pivotal leadership role of HR practitioners we need to focus on how digital disruption is impacting the future of work and work of the future with its workforce capabilities inclusive of culture and context. Thereafter we can well proceed to reflect on implications of all and how HR practitioner's might go about futureproofing their organizations meaning move faster or face oblivion.

Future of Work and Work of the Future

Given this exponentially networked, digital platform based and gig experience driven economy it is necessary for us to proceed to further briefly explore some of the realities of the future of work and the future workforce. Many HR practitioners can well find this unnerving especially if they have not transitioned to what Prensky (2012) terms either a digital native or digital immigrant needing to familiarise themselves with how everyday devices becoming smarter and smarter and constantly connected to and via internet of things e.g. Wearable Fitbit, Garmin and or Netflix, Showmax, U Tube mobile and screen-based downloads in data, knowledge rich world. Meister and Willyerd (2010) in describing the Workplace of 2020 elaborate on various changes relating to the future of work and work of the future as follows:

1. Employees, will be hired and promoted based upon their individual reputation or personal brand capital hence for employees to advance, workers will need extensive, high-quality social networks, strong personal brands and demonstrated expertise and accomplishments. These components comprise reputation capital.
2. Contract and assignment or project based jobs will be the path to permanent full-time employment to let firms test potential employee's capabilities before hiring them full time but also given emphasis and preference of new generation workforce relating to agile, flexible as well as remote and virtual working.
3. Employee's mobile device of choice will become their office, their classroom and their concierge as smart phones and tablets are replacing personal computers as the internet connection devices of choice. Easy to use, superb connectivity and great versatility, these as well as wide range of platform Apps enable employees to work anywhere, any time.
4. CEO's job requirement's will include need for a digital 2020 mind-set in order for them to thrive in a networked always on world where there is pressing need to communicate, connect and collaborate 24/7 be it via Blogging, Twitter, Instagram or Facebook all preferred channels of the 21st century workforce and consumer. Digital fluency and social media literacy and in many cases advanced analytics if not coding will be as basic a requirement as reading.
5. Lifelong learning will be a business requirement and the corporate curriculum will use "video games." Alternate reality games and simulations to engage young people.
6. Corporate social responsibility programs will increasingly be designed to attract and retain employees as employment branding becomes more prominent. New generation high potential employees focus on the "triple bottom line: people, planet and profits" where diversity and gender equality will be a critical business issue rather than an HR issue.

It seems therefore that digital technology enables real time employee engagement at scale. Video Blogs (vlogs), Twitter and digital video are assisting pioneering leaders to connect, communicate and more importantly collaborate with their organizations.

Enterprise social platforms further elevates progressive, open and inclusive two-way communication where employees share, collaborate and co-design their respective futures in real time. Digital technology ushers in new era in which leaders engage with employees in unprecedented authentic manner which makes transformative change happen. As such it empowers employees by giving them a voice to make organization vision a reality. The digital tools encourage conversation and provide all opportunity to participate in sculpting of organizations destiny.

In digital economy's parlance employees are crowdsourced to co-create and co-design and as such accelerate creation of and adoption of agile fit for strategic purpose solutions. Culturally it embeds transparency and reduces potential for digital divide.

The Workforce of the Future Index which is published by the Economist Intelligence Unit quantifies the technological aptitude of national workforces in 56 countries, across the following six dimensions which can easily be integrated into future digital workforce planning and most importantly deployment efforts:

1. Technology and connectivity infrastructure which focuses measures relating to access toreliable electricity and high-speed Internet inclusive of the number of secure Internet servers as well as quality of information and communication technology (ICT). Interestingly the top-ranking nations include South Korea, the Netherlands and Switzerland.
2. Technology and society similarly this element measures the prevalence of technology in the everyday lives of a nation's citizens, including affordability, number of active Internetusers, e-commerce sales and local hosting of web content. The top-ranking nations are the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Norway.
3. Labour markets education and technology skills as can be expected this dimension focus and evaluates the prevalence of skilled workers and the quality of their skills. Factors affecting this category include the general state of education (including tertiary education), students' mathematics and programming skills, and prevalence of the Internet in schools. The top-ranking nations are the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Germany.
4. Government environment regulations and legislation laws contribute to the accessibility of technology. Indicators here include a nation's cyber laws, protection of intellectual property, online services and general commitment to both privacy and security of ICT related information. Not surprisingly top-ranking nations in this category are France, the United States of America and the Netherlands.

5. Business environment—equally important is measurement of a market's ability to adopt new technologies, and the quality of the political and economic environment in a country which enables and scrutinises countries local start-up culture. The top-ranking nations are the United States of America, Germany and United Kingdom.

It must therefore follow that a so called digital workforce constitutes more than the merging of technology and business it's about the cultivation and optimisation even leveraging of entire new generation of digital mind-set employee all who can to explore, connect, socialize, and in turn sculpt differentiating consumer experiences. Ingham (2017) argues that by organizations optimising on delivering capabilities of innovation, talent, change, and collaboration they shift their focus from developing individuals to enabling networks and relationships between employees. Accordingly, at work it would seem that, good relationships correlate to higher engagement and productivity. It further enables employees to cope with the rapid pace of change. People are the core differentiator today, and to enable people, organizations must empower them digitally with the necessary resources and support a mind-set shift given that an inherent curiosity combined with social driven learning and collaboration capabilities are definitive digital competencies of the future workforce. In an increasingly digital world, said digital transformation is not just about more and better, faster as well as different technologies. It entails what is known as digital congruence—aligning your company's culture, people, structure, and tasks. That's why it's crucial to embrace the diversity of generations and technological advances, and to realize that improving leadership skills and fostering an environment of continuous learning is paramount. Both agility and collaboration are going to be ever prevalent and inherent job requirement's whilst organization's will continuously need to create type of environments to optimize and leverage workforce and people's capacity for growth, learning and innovation.

Essential that HR practitioners understand, appreciate and value the complex relationship between meaning people attach to their work experiences as its integral component of their personal and social identity. In many ways the drastic impact of ecosystem of cognitive, social, cloud and analytic chatbots, virtual assistants etc. is not fully apparent yet however more than plausible to argue that it could represent gigantic socio-cultural workplace transformation.

Fortuitously McKinsey (2017) during time of writing has published a report on the impact of automation on jobs and estimate 400–800 million workers will be displaced due to the emergence of robots and automation by the year 2030. The 400 million figure is a midpoint; dependent on the pace of adoption of the technology, there could be 800 million people who could be displaced. Fortunately, technology will also lead to the creation of jobs that would offset the job loss. The caveat here being that organizations and countries will have to be adept at ensuring the smooth transition of the displaced workers towards the sectors and areas of strong job creation.

The report also states that around 75–375 million people would have to switch occupation by 2030. Here too, 75 million is the midpoint, while 375 million is when the adoption of technology will be fastest.

It mentions that the impact of automation will also vary:

- By the country's income level.
- Demographics.
- Industry structure.

Mancini (2015) in his interpretation of collaborative work spaces states that the gap is widening between individual workers making use of new collaborative technologies and organizations' ability to control these tools. He argues compellingly that work culture and traditional hierarchies are evolving in response to collaborative technology, however emphasises that organizational structures must facilitate this evolution if businesses wish to take full advantage of technical innovations and people's ability to use its advantages to augment productivity. Ingram's (2017) views that the organization of the future will need to be social and connected, and postulates further that the technologies and structures to facilitate this will be increasingly important.

According to previous mentioned McKinsey report, the following factors will serve as a catalyst in the creation of work for both the developed and the developing economies:

- **Rising incomes and consumption, especially in emerging economies**: The report estimates that global consumption would grow $23 trillion between 2015 and 2030. And as income will rise, the consumption pattern will also change with consumers spending more on all categories. The sectors which will be affected by the same leading to greater job creation are as follows: consumer durables, leisure activities, financial and telecommunication, housing, healthcare, and education.
- **Healthcare of aging population**: The report estimates that there will be an addition of 300 million to the population above 65 years of age as compared to 2014. This will lead to increased spending on healthcare and personal services. Potentially, this could result in the creation of 80 million jobs globally in the healthcare and related sector.
- **Investment in infrastructure and building**: The report estimates on an average $3.3 trillion per year will need to be invested per year to fill the infrastructure gap. This could lead to the creation of 80–200 million jobs by 2030.
- **Investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate adaption**: In case of a step scenario, which is organizations and nations proactively working towards meeting the commitment of the Paris climate accord, there could be a potential creation of 10 million jobs in manufacturing, construction, and installation.
- **Technology development**: The report estimates that investment in technology will increase by more than 50% between 2015 and 2030. The investment would be largely focused on technology services and technology consultation.

The resultant would be the rise in jobs related to the developing and deploying technology. The jobs which will be impacted would include the following profile: computer scientists, IT administrators, and engineers. Approx., 25–50 million jobs will be created globally.

- **Marketization for previously unpaid work**: As per the report, 75% of the unpaid work falls in women's domain there could well be a shift with individual households either investing in paid work, or the government providing universal childcare and other services. The shift could lead to the marketization of 50–90 million unpaid jobs by 2030 which would be constructive.

So in summary 60% of occupations could have up to 30% of their activities automated including radiologists, design engineers, market researchers and well wide array of HR professionals including occupational psychologist given mammoth rate of automation and cognitive (AI) technologies impacting entire HR value chain of attraction, assessment, development engagement and deployment. They are being replaced by big data analysts, social media experts, cloud builders, app developers, and other types of information specialists. Software engineering jobs will grow at a rate of 18.8% by 2024 which is triple the rate of overall job growth rate.

As challenging and profound as to comprehend Davenport and Kirby (2016) further convincingly elaborate on the use of smart machines and how it encroaches on knowledge work and threatens professionals, including lawyers, doctors, accountants, professors, pilots, and more. They do however argue that it is possible and necessary to prepare employees to augment machines given that machines streamline tasks and people supplement that work with variable, complex thought. Machines and humans produce better results than either could alone. Augmentation finds ways for humans and machines to form partnerships. They argue in order for humans to remain relevant and make meaningful impact people in organizations need to adopt following approaches or steps:

- **Step up**—Humans have "big-picture" perspectives. They can focus on more generalized and large-scale strategic thinking to remain relevant. Automation does not excel in that area.
- **Step aside**—Personal interaction is important but beyond the scope of computers.
- For example, salespeople, motivational coaches and therapists perform work that may benefit from machine analyses but requires human engagement.
- **Step in**—Companies must have a few people who can "understand, monitor, and improve" the functionality of computers and information systems.
- **Step narrowly**—Jobs with a limited purview may not be worth automating. Finding these niche fields is a path for career growth.
- "**Step forward**"—Those who understand computer systems will have jobs in modifying and designing technology to meet the changing needs of businesses and industries.

Amidst this general malaise relating to the digital workplace and it's even more digitally enhanced, augmented and/or deskilled workforce it increasingly will be about HR practitioners and the wider HR community's employees' ability to re-envision, reimagine if not reposition and reinvigorate their roles. Given the apparent lower levels of trust and engagement in and with leadership practitioner's emphasis is increasingly going to center on futureproofing via collaborating, communicating, and connecting with the wider human network of things.

Burning questions, which remain after reflecting on how digital disruption is impacting future of work, the workforce and organizational culture are:

- How to define, frame, focus, mobilise and sustain, meaning futureproof employee engagement and retention in measureable terms?
- How relevant are either of these (engagement and retention) given increasing temporary and transient nature of digital work context e.g. Half-life of knowledge and skills and average tenure of C Suite Executive down to less than 4 years with organizations now around 15 years before obsolescence?
- Which processes, methodologies and practices, e.g. design thinking, agile organizational design, talent analytics etc., will optimise employee experience to ensure human potential fully leveraged throughout individual and organization lifecycle?
- How is organizations and work to be redesigned to leverage the digital workforce and sculpt breakthrough employee experience?
- How must practitioners reinvent themselves and HR evolve to ensure relevance and meaningful impact on optimum productivity and retention of employees on one hand and competitive innovative driven organization culture on the other?

Futureproofing Retention and Engagement via the (Re) Design of Next Generation Employee Experience

Amidst this sea change in digital workplace context, with its rapid continuing technological advancement with unprecedented volatility and tormenting ubiquity. Both Adams (2017) and Morgan (2017) argue for radical change meaning to either disrupt or be disrupted. They implicitly imply in their work that only true certainty is needed for humanising the workplace employee experience. Their respective yet mutually reinforcing positions are that by treating employees as adults not children as well as handling employees as consumers or customers (not a one-size-fits-all approach) and more importantly by valuing employees as humans, HR practitioners can contribute to the creation of a workplace context in which employees are able to invest more of their whole selves into the workplace.

They remain perplexed by the fact that given fact that we can buy online with one click from Amazon, Takealot make video calls with Skype and What's App connect to our social networks via Facebook, Instagram etc. and share knowledge

and ideas through Twitter and Pinterest it is hard to comprehend why our corporate procurement systems, teleconferencing, directory and collaborative workgroup services, and corporate communications platforms are at times lagging and so incredibly cumbersome by comparison, leading to sense of disillusionment and disenfranchisement and this all amidst what Pine and Gillmore (2011) termed an experience economy.

Morgan (2017) through his research into 17 attributes of the Employee Experience Index (EEI) focusing on technology, physical spaces and organizational culture argues that organizations which progressively invest and devote resources to sculpting workplace experiences are:

- included 11.5 times as often in Glassdoor's Best Places to Work.
- listed 4.4 times as often in LinkedIn's list of North America's Most In-Demand Employers.
- 28 times more often listed among Fast Company's Most Innovative Companies.
- listed 2.1 times as often on the Forbes list of the World's Most Innovative Companies.
- twice as often found in the American Customer Satisfaction Index.

In addition, what these cutting-edge companies like General Electric, Cisco, International Business Machines (IBM) and Marriott International were found doing to create environments that are helpful and stimulating, instead of taxing and draining lead them to having more than 4 times the average profit and more than 2 times the average revenue. They were also almost 25% smaller, which suggests higher levels of productivity and innovation. As such these findings would suggest the need for clear conceptualization of the employee experience as the new frontier of competitive value innovation.

For retention purposes, the employee experience needs to be clearly differentiated and Patterson et al. (2017) are adamant that it encapsulates the entire relationship and journey that an employee experiences while interacting with an organization and as such human capital practitioners would be well advised to:

- Make the employee experience a core part strategy.
- Understand employee expectations and bridge the "Expectation Gap".
- Establish rock-solid Brand, Transactional, and Psychological Contracts that breed trust and confidence.
- Build an employee-employer partnership in creating something extraordinary.
- Leverage employee engagement into to propel customer satisfaction, loyalty, profit, and growth.

It is therefore clear that employee experience is total sum of everything an employee experiences throughout his or her connection to the organization—every employee interaction, from the first contact as a potential recruit to the last interaction after the end of employment. It is as such further distinguishable from:

- New and automated or "transformed HR"—While human resource and occupational psychologist practitioners shape and transform some of the most critical processes within (recruiting, assessment and selection, on-boarding, performance reviews and talent management planning), employee experience involves so much more. It needs to be considered as the intersection of employee expectations, needs, and wants and the organizational design of those expectations, needs, and wants.
- Employee engagement—Often used interchangeably with employee experience represents an employees' commitment to a company and its jobs and is the end goal while actual realized employee experience is considered the means to that end. The now momentous battle for hearts and minds of employees however is played out daily and constitutes far more than the results from annual employee engagement survey. In many ways these once off isolated engagement initiatives serve more to impact leader's credibility and further erode trust as organizations and their leadership are perceived by new generation workforce as inept and even clumsy as they not proactively designing and leading meaningful employee experiences to produce measureable employee retention and engagement.
- Employer or employment branding—Again far to regularly in order to improve rankings in various Best or most admired and innovative Places to Work type surveys and under the guise of competing in the war for talent, many companies try to develop an external reputation to help improve their digital, high potential talent attraction and retention efforts. Many of these however are "paid to participate" type surveys and employees increasingly growing weary of them as doesn't truthfully reflect and or ultimately represent human—experience of for example either belonging as feeling part of a team, group or organization or purpose meaning understanding why one's work matters. Practitioners are often asked to work with Marketing, Communications and Corporate Affairs functions to develop a brand. Many organizations e.g. Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Mc Donald's, Pizza Hut as example notorious for positioning iconic external brands yet internally employee experiences lack any happiness or vigour which IBM describes respectively as the pleasant feeling arising in and around work as well as the presence of energy, enthusiasm and excitement at work. All which are valuable attributes to consider for employee retention and sculpting experience which drives it.
- Benefits, compensation or events—Normally shortly following one of many surveys already mentioned be it culture, engagement, retention, trust on annual basis people practitioners of every description called upon to assist with wish list of what benefits, compensation, parties and events can be arranged to better ensure retention and engagement. The more scientific and evidence orientated practitioners have even termed these the EVP or employee value proposition. Although practitioners might include such tactics which as with previously mentioned employee branding is then normally cascaded throughout organization as means to pacify response and or rectify results from various surveys and although the EVP could in part impact an employee's decision to join, stay, remain etc. it's not synonymous therewith. Employee experience design goes

well beyond making employment more fun and enjoyable it involves designing and delivering distinctive experiences for employees that are strategically aligned with and fosters increasing digital capable organizational culture.

True to Patterson et al. (2017) definition practitioners in their quest to address the psychology of employee retention and engagement need to deeply scrutinize and appreciate that the Employee Experience is the sum of the various perceptions employees have about their interactions with the organization in which they work throughout their employment journey. Morgan (2017) suggest practitioners continue to focus their abilities on technology, physical spaces and organizational culture as accordingly the experiences organizations design are ultimately what shape the actions that employees take and the relationships or associations that they want to have with a specific organization. It is easy for HR practitioners to be lulled into sense of comfort that themes related to digital future of work is decades away however Meister and Willyerd (2010) already proposed that by 2020 employees will expect the following five principles to resonate strongly in their workplaces:

- "Collaboration"—This calls for interwoven work, internally and externally.
- "Authenticity"—Core values and transparency demonstrate genuineness.
- "Personalization"—Employees want tailor-made personalised career paths.
- "Innovation"—In a changing world, new thinking enables sustainability.
- "Social connection"—Workplaces will be based on sharing and forming a community.

Continuing Meister and Willyerd (2010), further argued that by 2020, HR teams would grow and/or evolve to include new specialists such as the following:

- "Capability planners" who ensure that the company develops much-needed skills.
- "Chief technologists" who serve as HR's IT experts.
- "Community gardeners" who help to create and nurture online communities.
- "Futurists" who work with companies to anticipate their future needs.
- "People capability planners" who map out employees' career path and/or route for development.
- "Place planners" who ensure that site-specific features work well at presentations and at 'virtual and collaboration sites', professional career paths and/or routes of development.
- "Social connectors" who provide expertise in using social networks and social media.
- "Talent scouts" who spot emerging talent and approach experienced professionals for hiring.
- "Talent development agents" who help to plan and create accelerated as well as enriched learning experiences, if not widened opportunities for employees.

So both these principles as well as new HR practitioner specialisms can easily collaborate in order to sculpt and renew and align employee experience to purpose of hyper connected exponential organization of the 21st century where agility and value innovation are drivers of accelerated double digit growth and sustainability (Ismail et al. 2014).

Design Thinking, Robust Workplace Analytics and an Agile Mind-Set are Enabling Centrepieces of Digital Transformation Roadmap

Having reflected on digital disruption which is dramatically impacting the future of work and work of the future as well as ubiquitous morphing of employee experience inclusive of retention and engagement, the following reality emerges: Human capital practitioners will often be faced with having to reinvent, reimagine and future proof impact of these digital changes to business and operating models by answering questions from the CEO and Board like:

- What is our digital transformation roadmap for our people?
- How do we align our people culture to simultaneously enhance agility and lower cost?
- What does optimal differentiated employee experience look like across the different stages of an employee journey for a digital ready increasingly contingent, virtual and mobile segmented workforce?
- How do we align our people attraction, engagement and retention strategies with our organizations ideals of being value innovators in social, mobile, analytics and cloud space?
- How do we accelerate organizational and cultural change via data driven and predictive analytic based decision-making?
- How do we both simplify and scale structure of HR people management function to ensure that it delivers global solutions to managers and workforce?

New generation employees value creative jobs that enable them to make positive social impact on their communities and society as a whole as well as having huge expectations relating to how they experience their working lives all which were alluded to previously as it relates to optimising and designing meaningful employee experiences on one hand and organizations having to out innovate their competitors in order to avoid going the same way as the Dodo hence need to articulate a digital transformation roadmap to address various challenges as presented.

Kolko (2015) eloquently stated that people need their interactions with technologies and other complex systems to be simple, intuitive, and pleasurable. He further proposed that empathic human cantered design enhances the user experience at every touch point, and as such fuels the creation of products and services that deeply resonate with people be they employees and/or customers.

Adopting a human centred design thinking approach to employee experience would therefore make huge sense in order to shift focus away from merely developing programs, processes etc. but co-creating and co-designing meaningful employee experience that are compelling, enjoyable, and simple. It as such enables HR practitioners to transform from process developers to experience architects. This approach to thinking could further create empowering environment that fosters fresh, innovative ways to continuously search for new ways to communicate, collaborate and explore new purposeful social nuances and connections related to employee and organizational digital transformation journey. As thinking is highly collaborative co-design across disciplines and functions it is deeply engaging and as such contributes and enables to creating a narrative which humanizes and simplifies all and as such could accelerate change.

Brown (2009) describes the need to establish choices as it relates to innovation as a set of principles relating to design thinking that balance the needs of individuals and of society as a whole; new ideas that tackle the global challenges which design thinking can be applied to by diverse people to a wide range of problems. Implying and meaning new strategies that result in differences that matter and a sense of purpose that engages everyone affected by them which resonates with burning need to future proof employee experience, engagement and retention via digital roadmap which as per design thinking provides:

- Insight: learning from the lives of others go out into the world and observe the actual experiences [of people] as they improvise their way through their working lives.
- Observation: watching what people don't do, listening to what they don't say.
- Empathy: standing in the shoes of others.

The new generations of employees have huge opportunity to all become digital nomads leveraging wide range of remote working technologies already mentioned and hence Yohn (2016) in emphasising need for organizations to design their employee experiences as thoughtfully as they do their customers advances notion of using design thinking to map actual employee experience throughout employee journey fostering engagement and retention as follows:

- sourcing and recruiting.
- pre-boarding.
- onboarding (orientation and initial training).
- compensation and benefits.
- ongoing learning and development.
- ongoing engagement, communication, and community involvement.
- rewards and recognition.
- performance planning, feedback, and review.
- career advancement.
- retirement, termination, or resignation.

So each experience becomes a memorable moment of truth gaining insight and empathy as it relates to what employee thinks, feels, believes, expects and values as well as deeply intrinsically appreciates during each experience.

Arguably the second centrepiece of digital transformation roadmap which could have preceded the previous element of design thinking relates to what contemporary scholars Ulrich et al. (2017) as well as Boudreau and Ramstad (2007) and lastly Becker (1993) earlier referred to as need for HR practitioners to generate measurements, data and workplace analytics in order to provide robust evidence as to outcomes of their endeavours be it assessment, selection and or as in this case all that relates to the psychology of retention, engagement and the employee experience within a volatile digital landscape.

Barends et al. (2014) is of opinion that evidence-based practice relates specifically to making decisions through the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available evidence from preferably secured via multiple credible sources by:

- Asking—translating a practical issue or problem into an answerable question.
- Acquiring—systematically searching for and retrieving evidence.
- Appraising—critically judging the trustworthiness and relevance of the evidence.
- Aggregating—weighing and pulling together the evidence.
- Applying—incorporating the evidence into a decision-making process.
- Assessing—evaluating the outcome of the decision taken so as to increase the likelihood of a favourable outcome.

As increasingly the case when everything nowadays is digital, and accordingly tracked, prioritized, systemised and managed with real time, just in time data practitioners have the opportunity, to demonstrate where and how much they directly impact strategic business goals via robust workplace analytics. Determining and calculating tangible benefits from improving time to market, continuous learning, responsiveness, and collaboration resulting from initiatives could be considered.

Data and insights arising from these analytics may be considered a source of evidence that is used in making more effective decisions especially those impacting financial business metrics relating to cost and value of savings generated from engagement and or retention initiatives. Here total revenue lost due to vacancy position days or improvement in revenue per employee following improved engagement or retention of key talent instantly comes to mind versus psychobabble relating to value of mindfulness exercise or possible improvements in effectiveness and productivity from neuroscience.

Often various surveys, events, initiatives or interventions lack business case and/or tangible evidence in monetary sense of benefits gained and the so-called return on investment lags intervention by months if not years e.g. between annual surveys void of any cost and or revenue returned per employee. Here various contemporary

new generation platform based and wearable digital solutions will embarrass many a HR practitioner for example TrustSphere which provides online network employee relationship analytics in real time.

The final recommended centrepiece to enable digital transformation centres on need for HR practitioners to adopt a digital mindset as well as set of practices which doesn't require them to be technology experts but rather about curiosity, creativity, problem solving, empathy, flexibility, data informed decision making and team-based collaboration, cooperation and judgment to overall improve organization's nimbleness and overall responsiveness. It requires embracing and leveraging technology based solutions to effectively execute on business imperatives however equally critical is need to extend collaboration with other departments, incorporating mobile, analytics, social media and the cloud to ease their transition to be strategically more digitally transformative.

Gothelf (2017) shares story of large financial services concern who made every employee at its headquarters (nearly 3,500 people) re-interview for their job to bring about customer centricity and digital responsiveness. Staggeringly, 40% of people ended up in new positions or parted ways with the company. It wasn't about their skill sets. In fact, in many cases the employees' skill sets were still highly relevant. Rather, it was a specific mind-set that was lacking—one that could embrace the uncertainty, volatility, ambiguity and new the learning agility required for exponential organization.

It is increasingly becoming apparent that many organization's which are serious about its future sustainability and who are adopting agile mindset are amending their HR practitioner hiring approach as popularized by Bock (2015) former senior vice-president of people operations at Google to what is known as three thirds' hiring model. That means an HR department that breaks down as one third from HR backgrounds, one third from consultancy and business backgrounds and, crucially, one third from academic fields such as science and mathematics (people who are inculcated with the need for analytical proof). Keep in mind that organizations which fail to be more digitally agile and innovative as further mentioned by Bock (2015) half or 50% of the names of companies on the Fortune 500 have disappeared since the year 2000. Strangely Drucker (1978) shared this wisdom by stating that greatest danger in times of turbulence isn't the turbulence but to act with what he termed yesterday's logic.

Summary

This chapter explored how specifically digital disruption is impacting future of work and what work in the future is likely to look like. Given as HR practitioners we daily help organizations decode culture and grapple to understand the behaviours that drive innovation and performance, it remains pertinent to consider how everything is continually being disrupted digitally and is dramatically impacting future the of work and work of the future. It is more than obvious and ever

increasingly pervasive that the current era of disengaged, transient talent impacts every aspect of the business, and the need to reignite purpose at work has never been more urgent. This might be via organizational network analysis or next generation engagement platform which aims to improve team effectiveness through measuring digital engagement and identifying areas of communication bias all aimed at futureproofing employee retention and sculpting a more meaningful employee experience. It remains ironic though that despite the more technologies, devices, sites, apps, and other digital touchpoints we have, the less connected we are as human beings. HR practitioners remain profoundly challenged to; via design thinking, workplace analytics and new digital mind-sets enable a work context which provides for both individual wellbeing as well as all-inclusive societal prosperity. This will, as decades pass, only be achieved through ensuring transparency and clarity of the organization's mission and core values, communicating why employees matter and the specific behaviours that exemplify those values throughout the organization irrespective of scale and/or maturity of the so called digital transformation.

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John Ludike is an executive human resource practitioner and has gained majority of his experience within the Financial Services, (FNB, RBS, Mashreq Bank, Barclays) Retail, (Sainsbury's) Telecoms (MTN, Etisalat) and more recently Hospitality (Yum Brands!) industries. His pioneering HR talent management achievements within MTN has been recognized by the Human Capital Management Institute and recently been published in book titled Human Capital Trends edited by Italia Boninelli & Terry Meyer (2011) as well as Managing Human Resource Development: an outcomes based approach edited by Marius Meyer. He has in addition also contributed chapters to publications titled The role of the Chief Human Resources Officer and Shaping Africa's Talent both published by Knowledge Resources. He specializes in automated digital design, development and facilitation of implementation of human capital systems and accordingly recalibration of leadership talent and organizational development change programs and solutions. John principally undertakes international consulting assignments in London, Middle East & Asia and aims to seldom experience a winter as he migrates from one assignment to the next.