FUTURE OF WORK TRENDS TO PLAN FOR IN 2020 & BEYOND

Why Read This Report

Over the last two decades, digital disruption, technological advances, market forces, globalization, and consumer and worker expectations have radically altered business structures, the workforce, and the nature of work itself. Over the next decades, the Fourth Industrial Revolution will gain momentum, blending technological, mechanical, and biological realities in a work ecosystem that truly spans the globe. Approximately $126.3 billion was spent in the global open talent economy in 2018, including $7.8 billion in

B2B.[1] Work is increasingly defined by the outputs and problems the workforce solves, teams and relationships, tools and technology that automate and enhance work, and integrated worker development and learning. Businesses that have formed within these new parameters—and legacy businesses that have adapted to these forces—are thriving. But change is rarely simple. We selected a highly targeted list of the most significant industry research reports to date and identified key insights and takeaways to be cognizant of and prepare for in 2020 and the decade to come.

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1   Staffing Industry Analysts, *The Gig Economy and Human Cloud Landscape: 2019 Update* https://www2.staffingindustry.com/Research/Research-Reports/Americas/The-Human-Cloud-Landscape-2019-Update

Macro Trends Shaping Work in 2020 and Beyond

Acceleration of digital-driven change creates a skills gap. The Institute for the Future (IFTF) conducted a workshop where expert participants imagined a future in which 85% of the jobs that today's learners will be doing in 2030 haven't been invented yet.[2] Despite efforts, a great number of organizations are scrambling to adapt their workforce fast enough to keep up. Businesses face the challenge of reinventing jobs while attracting talent to fill skills gaps created by rapid advances in technology. Most businesses struggle to up-skill or re-skill existing workers to meet new skills needs. According to the World Economic Forum, more than half of all U.S. employees will require significant re-skilling and up-skilling in just three years.[3]

▸ **The future of work is uniquely human.** Although IT, data, AI, and automation are radically shifting jobs, the future of work is still uniquely human. In a recent study, 74 percent of executives planned to implement AI to automate tasks in the next three years, but 97 percent say they will use AI to enhance worker capabilities.[4] The need to integrate technology with human intelligence, so that tech and human capabilities augment one another, has never been greater. Technology is making some jobs obsolete or transforming others—performing rote tasks or shaping workflows or informing productivity, for example—but it will continue to create and elevate roles that utilize uniquely human qualities such as curation, integration, problem solving, imagination, curiosity, and empathy. Collaboration between humans and machines could boost revenue for businesses by as much as 38 percent over five years.[5]

▸ **Open/flexible arrangements are replacing rigid work models of the past.** The alternative or independent workforce—comprised of skilled individuals who work on a contract, freelance, or gig basis—is no longer alternative, it is mainstream. By some estimates 40 percent of the U.S. workforce now works on a freelance or contract basis, and two-thirds of Millennial and Gen Z workers have a "side hustle."[6] In a recent Gallup study of U.S. workers published by the *New York Times*, about 64 percent of respondents were employed in a traditional one-to-one employee-employer arrangement. The remaining 34 percent held multiple jobs or had income from one or more self-employment arrangements.[7] Increasing connectivity and specialized

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2   Randstad Sourceright, *2019 Talent Trends Report*: https://www.randstadsourceright.com/talent-trends/

3   World Economic Forum, *Future of Jobs* 2018: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2018.pdf

4   Accenture, *Reworking the Revolution*: https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-69/Accenture-Reworking-the-Revolution-Jan-2018-POV. pdf#zoom=50

5   Accenture, *Reworking the Revolution*: https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-69/Accenture-Reworking-the-Revolution-Jan-2018-POV. pdf#zoom=50

6   Deloitte, *2019 Global Human Capital Trends*: https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends.html

7   *New York Times*, "Earning Income on the Side Is a Large and Growing Slice of American Life" (Dec. 18, 2019): https://www.nytimes. com/2019/12/18/upshot/multiple-jobs-united-states.html

B2B talent networks and platforms are making it possible for businesses to hire for the skills they need exactly when then need them. Forward-looking businesses are acquiring, investing in, or developing closer relationships with key open talent communities and platforms.

▸ **Adaptability is the differentiator.** Businesses that are adapting, innovating, and thriving are team oriented, challenge focused, and flexible. They are quickly moving away from slower, hierarchical, 20th-century business structures. Flexible and open talent models—augmenting in-house capabilities with freelance talent from the non-traditional workforce—is a philosophical change that is reshaping businesses from the inside out. It prioritizes cross-pollination and partnerships and points businesses toward developing open talent ecosystems that provide top-level skills and the flexibility to scale up or down as needed.

The Future of Work Is Uniquely Human

To say that technology is changing the workplace would be to understate the immense shifts happening in an era of continual digital transformation. The market for automation technologies is growing at a remarkable 20 percent per year, including robotics, cognitive technologies, and AI, which radically alter business norms with their ability to automate standardized routines and transactions, process and generate language, gather and process data, identify patterns, and make sophisticated predictions that affect business outcomes.[8,9] As technology-enabled solutions replace jobs, others are created—new roles, skills, and relationships between talent and businesses are forming in the process.

▸ **Technological advances elevate the need for human intelligence.** Although some jobs are being eliminated by tech, the reality is that many jobs are simply changing. Businesses need and are placing greater value on uniquely human skills such as curation, integration, problem solving, imagination, curiosity, and empathy. As we have seen across businesses in the Open Assembly Collective, and as noted in recent Deloitte research, "Automation, by removing routine work, actually makes jobs more human, enabling the role and contribution of people in work to rise in importance and value." The value of automation and AI is to augment the workforce, "enabling human work to be reframed in terms of problem solving and the ability to create new knowledge."[10] As Evans-Greenwood, Guszcza, and Lewis report, "It is the ability

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8   Deloitte, *2019 Global Human Capital Trends*: https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends.html

9   Mathesia, *Outlook on Data Science 2019*: https://mathesia.com/1400-2/

10   Deloitte, *2019 Global Human Capital Trends*: https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends.html

to collectively make sense of the world that makes us uniquely human and separates us from the robots—and it cuts across all levels of society."[11]

▸ **Flexible skill sets, not rigid roles.** To keep pace, organizations are reimagining the employee-employer relationship and adopting a new philosophy of work that matches business needs with workers in flexible, skills-based interactions. We see greater recognition that outdated corporate workforce/talent strategies may not offer the adaptability or flexibility needed to grow or sustain business. HR leaders and executives have begun to shift away from the talent models of the past—from more rigid roles and responsibilities and hierarchical team structures—toward skills-based open talent models that integrate freelance or contract talent for nimble innovation and problem-solving capabilities.[12]

▸ **An open talent mindset is shifting the "job" mentality.** Emerging talent strategies recognize that the 20th-century, job-focused talent model isn't well designed for a world in which skill needs are rapidly changing. Over 60 percent of businesses report that it's challenging to find experienced hires, and 37 percent struggle to identify full-time talent with the right skills.[13] On the other hand, emerging open talent strategies take advantage of hyper-connectivity that allows for non-local talent to participate in all levels of business. Companies are more and more likely to locate experts in the on-demand talent pool.[14] Open sourcing talent makes it possible for businesses to gain skills as needed to solve real-time problems/challenges toward strategic outcomes. This approach has significant advantages for both workers and businesses:

1. Businesses can optimize their workforce through access to non-local talent via networks, gaining new skillsets rapidly (in hours, days, or weeks) whereas re-skilling or up-skilling can take months or years.
2. Businesses get problems solved when they need to be solved.
3. Workers gain access to projects and challenges that match their unique skill sets and drive their own careers forward.

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11 *Deloitte Review*, "Reconstructing work: Automation, artificial intelligence, and the essential role of humans" (Issue 21): https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/cognitive-technologies.html

12 Accenture, *Reworking the Revolution*: https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-69/Accenture-Reworking-the-Revolution-Jan-2018-POV.pdf#zoom=50

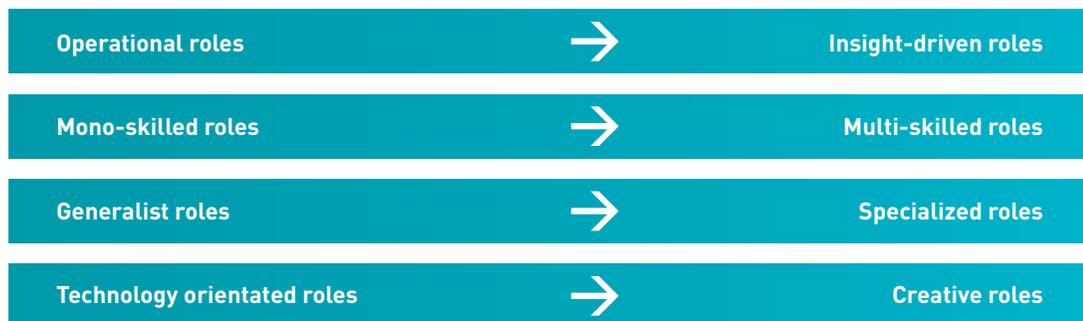13 Deloitte, *2019 Global Human Capital Trends*: https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends.html

14 Toptal, *State of the Remote Workforce 2019*: https://www.toptal.com/insights/state-of-the-remote-workforce-2019

▶ **People are choosing purpose and meaning over predictable jobs.** The number-one reason that people quit their jobs is the inability to learn and grow. More people than ever are choosing to work in the open talent economy where they can find flexibility, work-life balance, and opportunities for learning, skills growth, and challenge. The expansion of the open talent economy in part reflects workers choosing autonomy and control over their day-to-day tasks as well as influence over their career trajectories, charting their own path of learning and advancement. As Baby Boomers retire, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z are leading the pivot toward more flexible work models and redesigning teams and work structures to take advantage of the growing freelance/contract open talent workforce.[15]

Key Takeaways

→ The digital revolution elevates the need for uniquely human skills such as curation, integration, problem solving, and empathy.

→ Skills-based open talent models enable businesses to innovate and problem solve at the precise moment needed to move forward.

→ Open talent models provide businesses with critical skill sets in hours, days, or weeks instead of months or years.

→ The open talent economy has significant advantages for workers, providing flexibility, work-life balance, and opportunities for learning, skills growth, and challenge.

HIGHER VALUE WORK

Operational roles	→	**Insight-driven roles**
Mono-skilled roles	→	**Multi-skilled roles**
Generalist roles	→	**Specialized roles**
Technology orientated roles	→	**Creative roles**

Jobs that will be reconfigured: More roles will be reconfigured than lost or created as a result of AI Intelligent machines that can take on routine work while helping people become more strategic and creative while engaging a greater range of their skills. Operational jobs are likely to become more insight-driven, while mono-skilled roles will become more multiskilled.

Source: Accenture Research

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15 Upwork, *2019 Future Workforce: How Younger Generations are Reshaping the Future Workforce*: https://www.upwork.com/i/future-workforce/fw/2019/

Open Models Are a Massive Culture Shift for the Workplace

Businesses list digital transformation and innovation as top priorities, but many are struggling to envision and execute these priorities quickly. Slow-moving corporate structures, lack of talent or adequate access to talent, and outdated mindsets are common barriers. Open talent strategies and horizontal cross-functional teams are replacing traditional vertical hierarchies and siloed organizational models. Jobs themselves are changing dramatically. As many as 90 percent of organizations are redesigning jobs, and 32 percent are redesigning them substantially.[16] As the talent market tightens, organizations are looking strategically at all types of work arrangements. As more businesses embrace open innovation and open talent strategy, CEOs and HR leaders recognize the growing need for integrated, company-wide programs that communicate capabilities enabled by open talent models, while reassuring traditional employees that their livelihoods are not at stake.

▸ **Flexible business models are gaining the most traction.** Businesses are becoming increasingly permeable, interconnected, collaborative, and changeable in shape and size. Businesses with more fixed structures, such as traditional retail, are suffering while those that have embraced adaptability and flexibility are gaining. In 2019, 73 percent of executives expected significant disruption in their industry within three years, up from 26 percent in 2018.[17] In the emerging open, flexible models, work is distilled into specialized tasks that can be executed through many work channels that include in-house (traditional employees) and freelance or contract workforces. Businesses report increasing satisfaction with the on-demand talent hiring process.[18] Open talent models help businesses accommodate for challenges and changes in the market, and for most that means simply expanding talent pools to include auxiliary networks, communities, and platforms of skilled workers.

▸ **HR must pivot to attract and engage the best talent.** As pressure to adapt and innovate increases, HR leaders are working more closely with CEOs to ensure that their talent strategy aligns with future needs of the company. HR is undergoing a philosophical shift, moving toward relational (networked) talent strategies and away from more limited and transactional models of the past.[19] HR is beginning to view talent differently—as networked and open talent ecosystems rather than self-contained talent pools that operate within the business's boundaries. While HR is focused on delivering an effective workforce, project heads and

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16 Deloitte, *2019 Global Human Capital Trends*: https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends.html

17 Mercer, *Global Talent Trends 2019*: https://www.mercer.com/our-thinking/career/global-talent-hr-trends-infographics.html

18 Toptal, *State of the Remote Workforce 2019*: https://www.toptal.com/insights/state-of-the-remote-workforce-2019

19 Mercer, *Global Talent Trends 2019*: https://www.mercer.com/our-thinking/career/global-talent-hr-trends-infographics.html

managers also require skills and strategies to help configure and manage blended teams of traditional and non-traditional workers.

▸ **Open talent models change the worker development trajectory.** Most businesses are still structured with clear hierarchies and siloed business functions—a model in which workers are expected to start at entry level, slowly acquiring skills and expertise, and advancing into new roles over many years. Open talent models offer a radical departure to the slow pace of worker development. Many businesses are taking steps to utilize or test the open talent approach—integrating freelance or contract workers, utilizing talent communities and platforms, and encouraging internal open innovation and problem solving through cross-departmental collaboration or organization-wide "crowdsourcing" contests or challenges.

▸ **The rise of open talent parallels the rise of team-based business models.** As Wazoku states,[20] "Departmental silos are disintegrating, and we are witnessing the formation of a 'global brain.'" Evidence strongly suggests that team-based organizational models—which often exist in tandem with open talent models—improve business outcomes, often significantly. According to recent research by Deloitte, 53 percent of organizations report a significant improvement in performance, and an additional 21 percent reported a minimal lift after adopting a team-based model.[21] The shift to teams is paying off for Cisco, Google, and other enterprises that are using teaming and networking to drive innovation and performance. Among organizations that have not fully transitioned to team-based work, new software capabilities and open talent platforms are helping.

Key Takeaways

→ Open talent strategies and horizontal cross-functional teams are replacing traditional vertical hierarchies and siloed organizational models.
→ In emerging models, work is distilled into specialized tasks that are executed by a blended workforce of in-house and independent workers.
→ HR is shifting toward a networked and open-talent ecosystem approach to talent.
→ More businesses are utilizing or testing the open talent approach through communities and on-demand platforms.

20 Wazoku, Disruptors Changing the World: Why Innovation Must Be Fueled by People https://www.wazoku.com/resources/disruptors-changing-the-world-why-innovation-must-be-fuelled-by-people/

21 Deloitte, *2019 Global Human Capital Trends*: https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends.html

Open Talent Models Evolve and Lead to Talent Flexibility and Workforce Sustainability

Open talent platforms (or "talent communities") have been around for decades, but until recently many companies showed reluctance to make them a significant part of their workforce/talent strategy. That is changing as businesses recognize the advantage of tapping the skill, speed, and scalability offered by platforms and communities. Such communities are growing rapidly to meet demands for general and niche skills. According to Deloitte, talent platforms now manage over $2 billion in outsourced (freelance or contract) activity.[22]

▸ **Classic team structure is replaced by networks and the ecosystem approach.** More businesses are viewing talent as networked ecosystems and are taking steps to create business talent models that integrate internal and external workers in teams, blending full-time/permanent hires with freelance, contract, or on-demand talent for flexibility, speed, and workforce sustainability. Talent platforms fulfill more than technological-skills gaps. About 33 percent of talent services are focused on IT while others serve key functions such as operations (25 percent), marketing (15 percent), research and development (15 percent), and product design and support.[23] As businesses adopt a networked model, software and systems—such as the new Microsoft 365 Freelance Toolkit and apps and web-based team interfaces like Slack—help businesses utilize and maintain a non-local, blended workforce. (Slack went public in 2019 and saw a 37 percent growth in users.[27])

▸ **Improved access to highly skilled talent.** Talent communities/platforms increasingly provide access to highly skilled individuals and groups that would otherwise be missed by corporate talent outreach. Platforms like Upwork, Fiverr, 99designs, Catalant, Topcoder, Freelancer. com, Toptal, Wazoku, Mathesia, and others are growing quickly. In Quarter 3 of 2019, Upwork reported revenue growth of 23 percent year-over-year to $78.8 million[24] and that more than 30 percent of Fortune 500 companies now use the platform.[25] But companies still have high concern about the quality of on-demand talent, which gives an advantage to platforms that recognize their concern.[26] Platforms can serve a valuable HR function: screening, sorting, and curating talent pools with specialized skills on behalf of their clients or partners. We also

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22 Deloitte, *2019 Global Human Capital Trends*: https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends.html

23 Staffing Industry Analysts: *The Gig Economy and Human Cloud Landscape: 2019 Update*: https://www2.staffingindustry.com/Research/Research-Reports/Americas/The-Human-Cloud-Landscape-2019-Update

24 Upwork, *Upwork Reports Third Quarter 2019 Financial Results*: https://www.upwork.com/press/2019/11/06/upwork-reports-third-quarter-2019-financial-results/

25 Upwork, *Upwork Debuts the Upwork 100* (Nov. 2019): https://www.upwork.com/press/2019/11/19/the-upwork-100-q3-2019/

26 Toptal, *State of the Remote Workforce 2019*: https://www.toptal.com/insights/state-of-the-remote-workforce-2019

see a growing number of talent communities and platforms recruiting talent from specific segments outside of the traditional workforce such as parents, military personnel, and veterans. Examples include The Mom Project, The Second Shift, and WeGoLook.

▸ **Internal "freelance" culture and worker mobility are increasingly encouraged.** The open talent model mindset is also being applied internally, tapping existing workers' potential in a creative approach while promoting the idea of open and flexible work models. In a recent survey, 82 percent of full-time employees would consider working on a freelance basis to improve work-life balance, health, well-being, and quality of life—and 51 percent of employees would take an internal freelance project or assignment to gain experience or new skills.[27] Salaried employees are engaging in open talent models that allow them to sign on for temporary projects or participate in competitions. In this way, companies and public-sector organizations such as NASA are accessing and leveraging worker capabilities more strategically while upskilling employees and promoting learning.[28] Innovation teams benefit from a wider range of ideas and points of input, while employees gain positive growth and experience that may encourage them to continue working at the company.
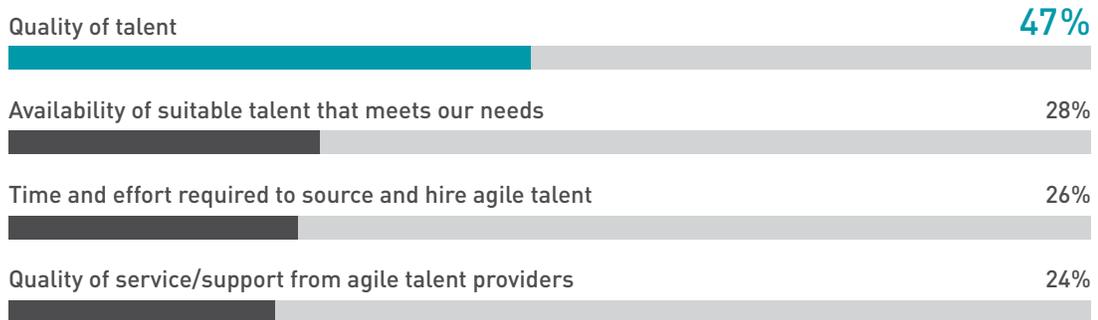
Key Takeaways

→ Businesses looking for the advantages of flexibility, speed, and workforce sustainability are increasingly turning to platforms to connect with top talent in the freelance economy.

→ Open talent platforms are growing quickly, but they must not lose focus on the quality of work delivered.

→ Platforms do more than solve the IT talent gap: Operations, marketing, research and development, and product design and testing platforms are also growing.

→ Traditional full-time employees are enthusiastic about internal freelancing (temporary projects) and crowdsourcing competitions that increase their knowledge, skills, and experience.

27 Planview Spigit, *5 Factors to Turn Ideation into Impact*: https://info.planview.com/5-factors-turn-ideation-to-impact-_ebook_im_en_reg.html

28 NASA, *Future of Work Report 2018: Learning and Developing for a Lifetime* https://blogs.nasa.gov/futureofwork/2018/12/19/theme-3-learning-and-developing-for-a-lifetime/

QUALITY IS THE TOP CONCERN FOR COMPANIES THAT WORK WTH ON-DEMAND TALENT

Quality of talent   **47%**

Availability of suitable talent that meets our needs   28%

Time and effort required to source and hire agile talent   26%

Quality of service/support from agile talent providers   24%

Source: Toptal, State of the Remote Workforce 2019

Room for Growth: Benefits, Worker Fairness, and Freelance Worker Engagement

As the number of independent freelance or contract workers increases, fewer employers are fulfilling fiduciary responsibility like the regularity of a paycheck, benefits, and automatic withholding for taxes and retirement. This is a significant shift in the worker/company relationship. While on-demand platforms face mounting regulatory and legal challenges regarding worker classification and rights (California's controversial Assembly Bill 5 [AB-5] took effect January 1, 2020), the organizations who benefit from on-demand or open talent platforms must also contend with new worker realities at a company level, developing engagement strategies that attract and retain needed talent that includes independent freelance or contract workers as well as full-time employees.

▶ **Most organizations need to update old strategies to provide adequate worker support.**
At least 79 percent of executives predict that contract and freelance workers will replace full-time employees in the future.[29] But a vast majority of organizations haven't considered these issues in depth and still struggle to achieve harmony with a greater range of worker types. This is concerning. As the independent workforce and open talent models grow and mature, businesses will need to rethink rewards and engagement tactics to include freelance or contract and full-time workers, recognizing that all worker types are driven by similar motivations to find meaning, learn, advance, and be rewarded for their work.[30]

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29 Mercer, *Global Talent Trends 2019*: https://www.mercer.com/our-thinking/career/global-talent-hr-trends-infographics.html

30 *Open Assembly*, "These Three Barriers Make It Harder to Choose the Freelance Lifestyle": https://open-assembly.com/blog/these-three-barriers-make-it-harder-to-choose-the-freelance-lifestyle

▸ **Engagement studies must include freelancers or contract workers for accurate data.**
In a time when the employee-employer relationship bond is weakening overall, measuring employee engagement is critical. Unfortunately, companies are spending valuable time and resources to measure traditional employees only, a shrinking percent of their workforce, leaving out freelance or contract workers. This is a missed opportunity. As the open talent workforce grows, companies would be wise to track their engagement, too, to ensure they are building a robust and resilient workforce.

▸ **Benefit models inadequately reflect new employee-employer structures.** Benefits and rewards structures are still set up for a workforce comprised of traditional employees.[31] However, health care and other insurance, paid vacation and leave, and access to retirement savings plans are seemingly not attractive or strong enough to deter a growing number of workers from choosing alternative, freelance or contract work arrangements. Although not all freelance or contract workers choose alternative arrangements by choice, analysis suggests that a significant number are—and that they are happier in that choice than traditional employees.[32] On the surface this may seem like good news—companies might see significant reduction in benefits costs. This is shortsighted. Companies will still need strategies to keep their workforce engaged and happy and to cultivate the strong relationships that give them access to the right talent at the right time.

▸ **New models and services are emerging.** The Aspen Institute Future of Work Initiative has proposed a model of portable, prorated, and universal benefits in context of recent developments such as multi-employer benefits, Black Car Fund, Ghent System, group insurance, and Secure Choice retirement plans.[33] Some insurance providers and platform providers are beginning to develop insurance and retirement plans specifically for independent workers, designed to make it as easy to save for retirement as it is when an employer is deducting retirement savings from a paycheck. New associations, such as iPSE.us, that serve on-demand, freelance, or contract workers are also rolling out benefits programs to independent workers. Over time, such options may weaken the appeal of traditional employment arrangements further.

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31 *Open Assembly*, "These Three Barriers Make It Harder to Choose the Freelance Lifestyle": https://open-assembly.com/blog/these-three-barriers-make-it-harder-to-choose-the-freelance-lifestyle

32 Upwork, *Freelancing in America 2018*: https://www.slideshare.net/upwork/freelancing-in-america-2018-120288770/1

33 Aspen Institute Future of Work Initiative, *Portable Benefits in the 21st Century*: https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/future-of-work/

The Language of Work in Flux

As worker-company relationships transform and technology enables a global workforce, the language of work itself is changing. Linguists note that language is consolidating.[34] At the same time, longstanding terms like "job" and "employee" naturally are shifting. Newer concepts like "crowdsourcing" and "gig economy"—which have been applied widely—have spurred other terms to define the space such as "open talent model," "on-demand talent," and "independent workers."

▸ **Generic terminology both helps and undermines positive outcomes.** As more companies adopt open work models, generic terms are sorely needed to communicate strategies to employees and stakeholders at all levels. However, popular generic terms go both ways— either serving or undermining efforts to unify behind a new approach. Most words that describe the future of work are not in the common lexicon. Future-of-work leaders must be careful not to assume that peers, workers, or customers are familiar with open work terminology. What's more, terms such as "gig economy" can take on an alternative or negative meaning with shifting news, e.g., stories that paint Uber and the "gig economy" in unfavorable light.

▸ **Toward a new lexicon of work.** On the positive side, standard terms for worker roles or functions (e.g., sticking with existing job titles) can make it easier for individuals to advance in their careers. But ill-defined terms like "gig economy," "crowdsourcing," "human cloud," "internal crowd," and "external crowd" do not always accurately communicate the potential of the future of work. Even "passion economy"—which we think describes the nature

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34 Jeffrey Punske, PhD, Director of Undergraduate Studies in Linguistics at Southern Illinois University Carbondale

of the new work models—can be misconstrued. Experts suggest that "on-demand talent" and "open talent models" more accurately redefine the space and complement existing concepts.

▸ **Conscientious use of language.** No thought leader or organization has the ability to control language, but everyone has influence within a specific sphere. Relating to terminology in a conscientious and deliberate manner increases the likelihood that exchanges will be meaningful and empower stakeholders—workers, companies, and society as a whole— around the future of work. As thought leaders, it is our responsibility to influence future-of-work language conscientiously.

Key Takeaways

→ Broad terms like "gig economy," "crowdsourcing," "human cloud," "internal crowd," and "external crowd" often do not accurately communicate the nature of work.

→ Generic terms can serve or undermine efforts to unify behind a new approach, and most future-of-work terms are not in the common lexicon.

→ General terms such as "gig economy" can quickly turn divisive or take on a negative connotation when repeated in negative news stories.

→ Don't assume that peers, workers, or customers are familiar with the terminology. As thought leaders, it is our responsibility to influence future-of-work language conscientiously.

Resources

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With support from John Winsor, Catherine McGowin and Brandon Dwight