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01 What is the future of conventional ideas of 'work' and the 'workplace' as we know it?

Changes in “work” or “workplace” as we know it will move at a different pace in different industries, but the following are few important secular trends:

The distinction between work and leisure will get even more fuzzy. Workplace will be anywhere from where you can find a broadband connection, or send an online mobile message on your ever smarter phones.

Virtual teams will get more predominant than co-located teams. More problems will be thrown into the open source or crowd source domain, to get more creativity and also to get more variability in costs.

Individuals will build their personal brands through blogging, social media and a vast band of freelancers will emerge who prefer not to be ‘organization’ persons but experts for contract hire - often at huge premium.

An important trend will be the automation of white collar jobs where we believe today that human intervention is essential. This will increase needs for reskilling.

Work place infrastructure will become like the Server farm infrastructure - you rent space when and if you want. Taking this to a further futuristic model, home and workplace will co-located and be available as rentable parts of large managed infrastructures.

Companies will become facilitators - intermediaries who negotiate and coordinate with multiple partners to deliver services and goods to end clients - like it is already happening in the Building industry.

Compensation will move towards outcome based earning than just a fixed and variable model.

While change will be dramatic, I think you will also see an equal and opposite reaction. People will long for working in high human interaction environments, working in tightly bonded teams, sharing in a way that only physical proximity makes possible. Just as culture became global, a longing for localness increases. So also the more things change, the more they will remain the same as humans will demand human interaction.

02 Given the rampant invasion of technology in learning and education, what do you think is the future of human interaction and personal mentorship?

As technology becomes seemingly all pervasive, there will also be a backlash. People will realize that the value in learning from peers, from social interaction is far higher than remotely delivered, structured learning absorbed in isolation. Each mode of learning will find its own place.

In a fluid, virtual job market, the only glue that will help hold a desired set of people together is humanness of their interaction. Shared vision. Shared culture. Shared values. Pride of association. Social relevance. Community branding. These will become extremely real in the corporate world, compared to today where they are good concepts to talk about but difficult to show tangible presence.

People wellness will become a core component apart from business goals. Reporting, valuation and branding of companies will include people wellness as a parameter.

Corporate leadership will have to learn the skills of “yoda”, the Zedi Master. They will not only be business leaders, but be seen as wellness gurus who can guide people towards higher levels of personal evolution and emancipation. Today, Art of Living Foundation, is as much a commercial enterprise as a spiritual movement - with their corporate training events and their extensive product portfolio. Tomorrow’s business will be the other way - integrate their wellness ethos into their business operations with a strong branding and communication that showcases their paths of helping their people evolve while working with them.

Leadership preparation will, therefore, be also about building personal awareness, coaching competencies and spiritual awakening. “HR” will come to mean enhancing Human relationships in its literal sense.

03 Ten years from now, in your opinion, what will be

- (i) the most overrated and overused management principle that will lose its relevance.

Organization structures, hierarchies and “reporting” relationships. A close second in irrelevance will be traditional performance measurement schemes which will give way to true developmental tools for performance enhancement.

- (ii) the single most important thing that a manager will need to know, in order to succeed.

The single most important thing that a manager will need to know in the future is how to manage and monetize information. There is a veritable explosion of data and we live in a world of information overload. Those who have access to the right information, at the right time, duly dissected for better decision making, for quicker course correction will be the most successful.