

THE FUTURE OF WORK



Kelly



In a market rapidly changing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations and workforce experts alike are trying to determine what the future of work will look like. However, most professionals involved in the process operate from the perspective of their individual scope of responsibility, which often leads to siloed perspectives that may solve one aspect of the challenge—yet create another problem. Based on conversations across the market and our in-depth research, Kelly® has determined that there are four dimensions organizations need to consider when contemplating the future of work: the workforce, the workplace, technology, and social norms. By taking these four dimensions into account, organizations can better gain a comprehensive overview of the range of models they may want to utilize to engage and execute within their workforce plan. Further, they can assess which combination of engagement models will drive the business outcomes they want to achieve.

For 75 years, Kelly® has been an innovator and a market leader in workforce solutions, helping organizations in many industries build their workforces and meet their operational objectives in an ever-evolving world of work.

In a marketplace where the COVID-19 pandemic is driving the fast pace of transformation, we maintain our focus on supporting our clients, our supplier network, and the talent we engage with our insights.

Every day, we study this challenge: What does the future of work look like? In this paper, we posit that organizations can secure significantly greater value by factoring into their assessments all four of the dimensions that define the future of work.



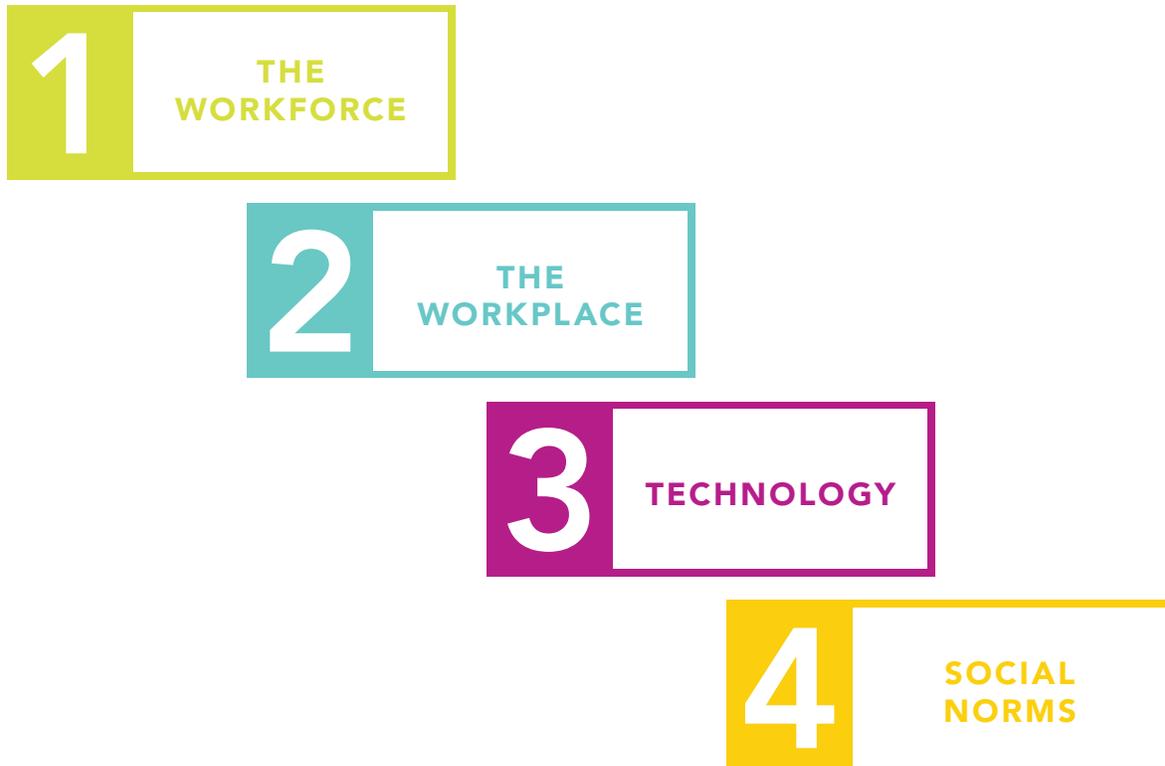
BROADENING ORGANIZATIONS' FOCUS

It's undeniable that the world of work is currently undergoing a significant transformation. It's equally undeniable that everyone—from employers, to industry analysts, to academics, to workforce specialists—is trying to predict what the future will bring in order to create effective workforce strategies.

Nevertheless, the majority of workforce professionals can benefit from attaining a 360-degree view of the future of work by examining all four of the dimensions that impact it. Achieving a broader focus based upon all relevant information will lead to the ability to develop truly informed strategies. This can enhance organizations' workforces, and by extension, their ability to achieve their operational goals.

THE FOUR DIMENSIONS

Based on our research, we have found four dimensions of work that organizations should consider in order to determine the right models for engagement and execution within their talent supply chain.



1

THE WORKFORCE

In addition to transformations brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the workforce is being impacted by several powerful trends. A simple demographic aspect that we're dealing with across the globe is the multi-generational workforce. In addition, organizations are increasingly making use of cognitive automation for repetitive and data processing tasks, as this allows them to achieve cost savings ranging from 60 to 80 percent.¹ Because computers are taking over these types of tasks from humans, jobs as we know them are being deconstructed. Consequently, workers are likely to develop portfolios of skills that can either be used collectively to perform a role or individually to complete projects.²

Furthermore, the gig economy continues to grow, according to some estimates by nearly 30 percent over the next decade.³ This provides organizations with alternatives to full- or part-time employees, even for projects that require a high level of skill and experience. The gig economy is inherently linked to the growing importance of organizations that provide advocacy for their current and future workforces, particularly in the wake of the emerging independent workforce. At the same time, thanks to increased access to remote learning and project-based work, workers are becoming more empowered to create their own individualized career paths.



2

THE WORKPLACE

COVID-19 has dramatically changed how we view the workplace. But the truth is that talent expectations were shifting long before the pandemic. In the 1990s, people worked in a traditional building, in a cubicle or private office, behind a desk. Today, workers want their workplaces to match their lifestyle. Some office workers want amenities such as a broad selection of refreshments, a gym, and access to retail. Others want a flexible co-working space with a meeting room and a range of features. Yet others prefer or require to work entirely remotely. Furthermore, we now have the ability to communicate with other people in a personal, interactive manner, regardless of the physical location where the work is performed.

All of this change introduces significant consequences for how organizations select and organize their work environments. For example, consider a company that makes a capital investment in a building. The company expects that building to function as a work environment that promotes worker productivity for at least 20 years. Yet what does this look like in terms of catering to a range of different—and changing—worker preferences? How is this being impacted by the broad adoption of remote work? And how do contingent workers and free agents fit into this picture? We can also look at companies in co-working spaces. This type of work environment can be highly conducive to collaboration when needed. However, it can also raise concerns about IP protection and accountability that wouldn't be present in a traditional work environment.

Together, these examples illustrate that there's a changing dynamic in the workplace. In order for organizations to understand and leverage it to their advantage, they must embrace it.



3

TECHNOLOGY

Based on our research, we've found that the disruption technology is bringing to the ways people connect with work can be consolidated into three core impact points.

First, augmented intelligence (much preferred to *artificial* intelligence) and robotic process automation will eliminate some jobs, change others, and create entirely new ones. In fact, some experts predict that 65 percent of children who are in elementary school today will eventually work in jobs that do not yet exist.⁴ While the specific job titles remain a work in progress, three new categories of jobs are emerging: trainers, who teach augmented intelligence how to perform; explainers, who explain advanced technology to non-technical people; and sustainers, who safeguard the performance of augmented intelligence.⁵ Although we cannot yet know precisely what all of the new roles will be, it's critical for organizations to understand the trends and respond effectively in the market, whether as a service provider or consumer.

Second, the emergence of the platform economy is creating a conflict within organizations. There are currently more than 1,800 digital work platforms active, each designed to support a specific community and purpose.⁶ Cloud-based free agency platforms deliver a highly customized and personalized experience that aligns directly with the consumerization of technology. In contrast, over the past 10 years, organizations have been focused on centralization and standardization in order to mitigate risk and lower costs. As a result, there will be a disconnect between established organizational processes/policies and workers' increasing expectations of individuality and personalization of the work experience. This disconnect needs to be resolved in order to create alignment around work.

Third, emerging beliefs surrounding analytic and cognitive learning are being challenged by facts. It is true that there are many new opportunities for organizations to engage and learn. However, not all of these opportunities are realistic as of yet, and those that are realistic are not always executed properly. For example, many companies are investing in machine learning, yet the amount of data they're inputting is far from sufficient for the machine to truly learn independently. In short, now is a time to experiment and test solutions. Despite the fact that technology is advancing, and more capabilities are being developed every day, companies need to be aware that they're still learning how exactly to utilize those capabilities in order to gain usable, realistic insights about their workforces.



4

SOCIAL NORMS

Social norms include regulatory, cultural, generational, and socioeconomic norms, to name but a few. These norms change over time due to a wide range of factors. As an example, it used to be the norm for workers to retire at 65; but today, many are working beyond that age due to financial pressures or personal preference. Similarly, early adopters of technology led the way in remote work before the pandemic forced widespread adoption. While one might expect early adopters of new social norms to be Millennials, they might well be Baby Boomers with considerable experience who want to remain professionally active.

Another important development is talent's increasing desire to work for companies whose purpose aligns with their personal values. Individuals care about the purpose of the organizations they work for, the purpose of the companies whose products they consume, and the purpose of the groups with which they identify. In fact, almost 65 percent of job seekers won't work for an employer if they don't know or don't agree with its mission.⁷ At Kelly, our purpose is to connect people with work in ways that enrich their lives—this is what brings us to work every day.

The key to understanding social norms is recognizing that they're also driven by consumerization and individualization; that they're unique to each market, segment, and in many cases, each human being that's engaged in the process. There's no "one size fits all" generalization, and organizations need to be conscious of the various impacts across the environment.



BUSINESS BENEFIT

When an organization considers only one, two, or three of these dimensions, it results in a skewed view of the talent landscape and work. In contrast, when an organization considers these four dimensions in a balanced manner, it leads to a wide range of models of how to engage with talent; how to construct talent communities; how to build sourcing strategies; how to govern relationships; and when to buy, build, or borrow talent.

For example, if a company needs to borrow talent, when does it do so in a temporary labor model versus an online platform model versus an outsourced relationship? Or when do worker responsibilities become more advanced due to technology, and how does that affect the types of roles a company needs?

At the same time, by considering the four dimensions as they relate to the personal aspect of talent inspiration and motivation, organizations can increase the level of employee engagement. This in turn increases both the employees' value to their own selves, as well as to their work environment and company.

Only by taking all four dimensions of workforce, workplace, technology, and social norms into account can an organization truly assess the right combination of models to utilize within its supply chain to drive the business outcomes it wants (e.g. to stay agile, maintain simplicity, remain compliant, and achieve the best ROI).



PUTTING OUR FINDINGS INTO PRACTICE



CHANGE

When one of our clients considered all four dimensions, they acknowledged the impact of change and the need to secure the necessary resourcing and prioritization internally. By understanding the diverse impact of change, from incremental to transformational, the company ensured that the pace of change—and therefore the commercial impact—was one that the organization was prepared to absorb.



RECRUITING

In another partnership, our client recognized the need for a massive shift in its sourcing and recruiting strategy as a result of the digitization of its business. It consequently altered its campus recruitment strategy, and instead drove a focus on remote working arrangements and gig work in order to attract a different segment of the workforce.



COLLABORATION

Another client's facilities team realized that the workplace was intended to provide an environment that maximized collaboration, innovation, and growth. It therefore developed a new area of collaboration with the organization's HR and procurement teams to align overlapping strategies.

In each of these cases, the adjustments generated a measurable impact on efficiency, engagement, culture, and profits.



CONCLUSION

The challenges facing companies today are complex. Organizations need to know what dimensions to look at to gain a comprehensive overview and consequently break down the complexity in order to determine what's important for their workforce strategies. In addition, it's imperative to also keep talent's perspective in mind, since this is critical to engagement, culture, and by extension, profits.

Finally, it's important to understand that moving forward in this journey isn't always about having the answers; it's about sharing experiences along the way in order to learn from each other and to grow together. In this endeavor, Kelly brings a broadly informed perspective to help organizations decipher the challenges and complexities they're facing, and will face in the years to come.

SOURCES

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3. SIA Workforce Solutions Buyer Survey 2020
4. World Economic Forum Global Challenge Insight Report: The Future of Jobs – Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution
5. MIT Sloan Management Review: The Jobs That Artificial Intelligence Will Create
6. Dell Technologies: The next era of human – machine partnerships: Emerging technologies' impact on society & work in 2030
7. 50% of Job Seekers Want Purpose, But U.S. Companies Simply Don't Deliver It

About Kelly

Kelly connects talented people to companies in need of their skills in areas including Science, Engineering, Education, Office, Contact Center, Light Industrial, and more. We're always thinking about what's next in the evolving world of work, and we help people ditch the script on old ways of thinking and embrace the value of all workstyles in the workplace. We directly employ nearly 370,000 people around the world, and we connect thousands more with work through our global network of talent suppliers and partners in our outsourcing and consulting practice. Visit kellyservices.com and let us help with what's next for you.

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