MARCH 2024 EDITION

A special issue from ITD World Vietnam

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Letter from the Editors

Dear our valued readers!

As we embark on the third month of 2024, it is with great pleasure that we introduce you to our March edition. This month, the focus is on a topic of paramount importance: "**Skill Development for the Future**."

Personal Skill Development: A Matter of Utmost Relevance

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and evolving job landscapes, the significance of personal skill development has never been more pronounced. We delve into the core of this imperative, emphasizing the critical role individuals play in shaping their professional trajectories. From honing communication prowess to embracing adaptive thinking, we shed light on the diverse dimensions of personal skill development that pave the way for enduring success.

Employee Skill Development: Nurturing Organizational Excellence

Within the intricate tapestry of organizational dynamics, the cultivation of employee skill sets emerges as a cornerstone of sustained excellence. In this section, we present an array of strategies designed to empower organizations in fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth. Through targeted training initiatives, mentorship programs, and innovative development frameworks, businesses may unlock the full potential of their workforce, driving innovation and resilience in an ever-evolving landscape.

Letter from the Editors

9 Trends That Will Define the Future of Work

Amidst the flux of global paradigms and emerging technologies, it is imperative to discern the trends that will shape the contours of work in 2024 and beyond. Here, we would like to introduce you to a publication that discusses 9 pivotal trends poised to redefine organizational landscapes. By embracing these transformative shifts, businesses may position themselves at the vanguard of innovation, fostering agility and adaptability amidst a sea of change.

 May this edition empower you to chart a course toward excellence, equipping you with the tools and perspectives necessary to thrive in an era of unparalleled opportunity and transformation?

Here's to a month of growth, empowerment, and boundless potential!

Warm regards,

ITD World Vietnam team

SKILL DEVELOPMENT HAS NEVER MATTERED THAN IT IS NOW

(Source: https://itdworld.com/blog/leadership/skill-development/)

Skill Development
Has Never Mattered
Than It is Now

Skill development is the deliberate and continuous process of acquiring/ improving one's knowledge, skills, competencies, and capabilities in specific areas. Its main purposes include:

• Meet the demands of one's work or pursue personal and professional growth.

• Adapt to changing work environments.

• Enhance one's employability and achieve career goals.

• Support organizational success by fostering a skilled and competent workforce.

• etc.

Skill Development Examples

Skill development encompasses various areas, ranging from cognitive prowess to technical proficiency, soft skills, and personal management abilities. Each domain offers unique avenues for enhancement and growth.

● **Cognitive skills**

Cognitive skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and memory retention form the bedrock of intellectual capacity, encompassing processes.

Activities like solving puzzles help sharpen these faculties, fostering sharper logic and heightened creativity.

● **Technical/ Hard skills**

These are the competencies specific to a particular job or occupation, such as computer programming, accounting, or engineering. Embracing new programming languages via online courses or gaining mastery over software applications through tutorials and practice sessions significantly bolsters one's professional toolkit.

Skill Development
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Than It is Now

- **Soft skills**

Soft skills, though intangible, are equally vital for thriving in any professional environment. Effective communication, teamwork, and adept problem-solving are hallmarks of success. Actively refining communication skills through public speaking courses or honing teamwork abilities via collaborative projects fosters a conducive work environment and enhances productivity. Additionally, adept time management, facilitated by setting realistic goals and utilizing productivity tools,

ensures optimal task allocation and minimizes stress.

- **Personal/ Self-management skills**

Personal or self-management skills underpin one's ability to navigate life's complexities with finesse. Learning a new language not only opens doors to new cultures but also sharpens cognitive abilities. Or, incorporating mindfulness practices into daily routines aids in stress management and cultivates self-awareness, fostering emotional resilience.

The Importance of Skill Development

The future belongs to those who learn more skills and combine them in creative ways. - Robert Greene

Skill development holds paramount importance – both from an individual and an organizational perspective – thanks to its contribution to fostering growth, adaptability, and success in today's dynamic landscape.

Skill Development Has Never Mattered Than It is Now

Individual benefits

- **Increased employability:** In today's dynamic job market, possessing relevant and up-to-date skills is crucial for getting hired and staying competitive. Mastering new skills expands your career options and makes you a more attractive candidate.

- **Career progression:** Continuous learning equips you with the knowledge and expertise needed to perform at a higher level and undertake more challenging responsibilities. This translates to improved performance in your current role.

- **Personal satisfaction:** The process of acquiring new skills keeps you intellectually stimulated and opens doors to new opportunities and experiences. As such, it contributes to fostering a sense of accomplishment and boosting self-confidence.

- **Adaptability and future-proofing:** The world of work is constantly evolving. By staying abreast of emerging trends and technologies, one is better equipped to future-proof their careers, ensuring relevance and competitiveness in the long run.

- **Enhanced well-being:** Pursuing knowledge promotes well-being by stimulating intellectual curiosity, cultivating new hobbies/ interests, and fostering social connections.

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Than It is Now

Benefits for organizations

- **Bridging the skills gap:** From an organizational standpoint, continuous skill development helps address the gap between the skills businesses need and those available in the workforce, ensuring that companies have the talent necessary to thrive in the current competitive marketplace.
- **Enhanced productivity and performance:** A skilled workforce translates into heightened productivity and performance, driving efficiency and ultimately, profitability.
- **Increased innovation and adaptability:** Employees empowered with diverse skill sets are better equipped to tackle challenges creatively, think outside the box, and contribute to advancements in various fields. This lays the foundation for organizations to adapt swiftly to market shifts and technological changes.
- **Employee engagement and retention:** By demonstrating a commitment to employee growth and well-being, organizations foster a positive work culture, leading to heightened satisfaction, reduced turnover, and increased loyalty. This, in turn, saves costs associated with recruitment, training, and lost productivity due to turnover.

Skill Development
Has Never Mattered
Than It is Now

Benefits for organizations

- **Attracting top talent:** In today's competitive talent market, organizations that prioritize learning & development are more likely to attract and retain top talent. This ensures a strong and qualified workforce, crucial for long-term success.
- **Enhanced customer satisfaction:** Skilled employees generally deliver better service and address customer needs effectively, thereby boosting satisfaction and loyalty.

Build your own business team. Survival in business requires a synergy of skills.
- Richard Branson

Types of Skill Development

Skill development may be categorized in various ways, depending on the specific focus.

By purpose:

- **Upskilling:** Acquiring new skills to advance in your current career or take on new responsibilities. According to a study by LMS, 63% of respondents agree that upskilling will become more important than ever, given the AI-driven future that is about to come.
- **Reskilling:** Learning new skills due to technological change or career shifts.
- **Cross-skilling:** Acquiring skills from different disciplines to become more versatile and adaptable.
- **New skilling:** Preparing for a completely new career path.
- **Maintenance skilling:** Regularly practicing and staying updated on existing competencies.

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Than It is Now

By approach:

- **Formal learning:** Attending courses, workshops, or degree programs.
- **Informal learning:** On-the-job training, mentoring, self-study, or online resources.
- **Experiential learning:** Learning through active participation in projects, simulations, or real-world experiences.
- **Social learning:** Acquiring knowledge and skills through observation, collaboration, and feedback from others.
- **Microlearning:** Breaking down learning into small, bite-sized chunks for easy absorption.
- **Blended learning:** Combining different methods (e.g., online courses, workshops, group projects) for a richer experience.

Skill Development Topics

Choosing the right skill development topics depends on one's individual goals, career aspirations, and current skill set. Below are some specific topics divided by category:

Technical skills:

- Programming languages: Python, Java, JavaScript, R, etc.
- Software applications: Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Creative Suite, Project Management Tools, etc.
- Data analytics: Data visualization, machine learning, statistical analysis, etc.
- Cybersecurity: Network security, ethical hacking, digital forensics, etc.
- Cloud computing: AWS, Azure, Google Cloud Platform, etc.

Skill Development
Has Never Mattered
Than It is Now

Soft skills:

- Communication: Public speaking, active listening, writing, negotiation, etc.
- Teamwork: Collaboration, conflict resolution, leadership, emotional intelligence, etc.
- Problem-solving: Critical thinking, creative thinking, decision-making, etc.
- Time management: Organization, prioritization, goal setting, etc.
- Stress management: Mindfulness, resilience, self-care, etc.

Personal skills:

- Financial literacy: Budgeting, investing, debt management, etc.
- Health and wellness: Nutrition, exercise, sleep hygiene, etc.
- Project management: Planning, execution, delegation, etc.

- Learning strategies: Speed reading, memory techniques, note-taking, etc.
- Creativity and innovation: Brainstorming, problem-solving, design thinking, etc.

By industry or role:

- Marketing: Content marketing, social media marketing, digital advertising, analytics.
- Finance: Financial modeling, investment analysis, risk management, accounting.
- Sales: Prospecting, negotiation, closing deals, customer relationship management.
- Healthcare: Medical coding, patient care, communication with patients, use of medical technology.
- Education: Instructional design, teaching methods, technology integration, assessment.

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Skill Development Has Never Mattered Than It is Now

Emerging trends:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI): Understanding AI concepts, applications, and ethical considerations.
- Automation: Adapting to automation and learning new skills for jobs less susceptible to it.
- Digital marketing: Content creation, social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), etc.
- Sustainability: Understanding environmental issues and developing sustainable practices in your field.
- Remote work: Mastering communication, collaboration, and time management skills for remote environments.

Top Skills to Be Developed in 2024

Success is 20% skills and 80% strategy. You might know how to read, but more importantly, what's your plan to read? - Jim Rohn

The ever-evolving landscape of work demands a diverse skill set that encompasses both technical proficiency and interpersonal finesse. Here are some of the top skills:

- **Adaptability & continuous learning**

With rapid technological advancements and shifting market dynamics, the ability to learn new skills quickly and adapt to changing circumstances has become paramount. For this purpose, microlearning, which involves breaking down information into small, digestible chunks, emerges as a popular strategy for continuous skill enhancement.

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Than It is Now

- **Digital skills & Data literacy**

In an era dominated by AI and automation, digital knowledge has become indispensable. Understanding digital tools, data analysis, and cybersecurity awareness is imperative for navigating the current digital landscape effectively. Additionally, data literacy, the ability to comprehend and interpret data, is increasingly vital across various industries.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Automation**

Familiarity with AI, machine learning technologies, and automation is essential for professionals across sectors.

Skills such as coding, programming, data science, and engineering are integral for harnessing the potential of AI and adapting to automation.

- **Cybersecurity skills**

With the proliferation of online threats, cybersecurity skills are crucial for safeguarding digital systems and data. Proficiency in encryption, threat detection, and risk management is essential for ensuring the privacy and security of individuals and organizations.

Skill Development
Has Never Mattered
Than It is Now

- **Soft skills & Emotional intelligence**

As technology automates routine tasks, soft skills like empathy, leadership, and teamwork start gaining prominence and distinguish highly performing individuals from the rest. Emotional intelligence, which involves understanding and managing emotions, is essential for fostering strong relationships and navigating interpersonal dynamics.
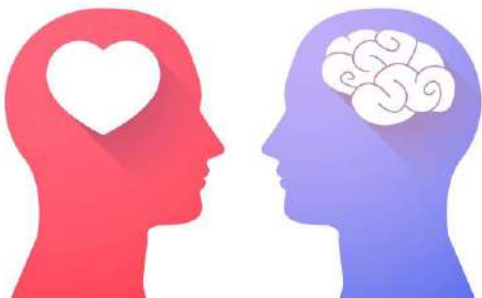
- **Project management skills**

Proficiency in project management is crucial for overseeing initiatives of varying sizes and complexities. Skills such as strategic planning, delegation, and feedback facilitate the successful execution of projects.

Even in such technical lines as engineering, about 15% of one's financial success is due to one's technical knowledge and about 85% is due to skill in human engineering, personality, and the ability to lead people. - Dale Carnegie

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

(Source: https://itdworld.com/blog/human-resources/employee-skill-development/)

Employee Skill Development:
Strategies for Organization

The talent landscape is shifting. Automation and technological advancements have been constantly changing the skills needed to thrive in the workplace – as such, organizations that fail to adapt risk falling behind. This is where employee skill development comes in – not just as a feel-good initiative, but as a powerful tool for driving business success.

Business Case for Employee Skill Development

The workplace has been rapidly changing; as such, the imperative for continuous skill development has never been more pronounced. The World Economic Forum has predicted a significant shift in job requirements, with millions of new roles emerging alongside the automation of existing ones. To thrive amidst this transformation, businesses must recognize the strategic value of investing in their workforce.

As technologies evolve and job roles undergo transformation, individuals must constantly adapt to stay relevant. Businesses that proactively invest in development initiatives are better equipped to navigate change, drive innovation, and maintain a competitive edge in their respective industries. On the other hand, failure to address skill gaps will impede organizational agility and hinder progress, as highlighted by a McKinsey report indicating that a vast majority of organizations (up to 87%) are grappling with skill shortages.

Various studies have revealed a concerning trend wherein a significant portion of employees lack access to formal workplace training, relying instead on self-directed learning. This underscores the urgent need for businesses to prioritize skill development initiatives

and provide structured learning opportunities for their workforce. Employees who perceive their organizations as invested in their professional growth are more likely to remain engaged and committed.

Notably, younger generations, such as millennials, place a premium on learning and development opportunities in the workplace. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, businesses can attract and retain top talent, nurturing a skilled workforce capable of driving organizational success.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of reskilling and upskilling has become even more pronounced. 64% of L&D professionals acknowledge the heightened priority of reskilling existing talent to address evolving skill gaps. Meanwhile, 72% of business leaders recognize the value of tailored learning programs aligned with strategic objectives, viewing them as catalysts for driving business growth and innovation.

Types of Employee Skill Development

Employee skill development encompasses a diverse range of approaches tailored to meet the unique needs of organizations and their workforce. Here are various types of methods often utilized:

Employee Skill Development:
Strategies for Organization

Formal training

Formal training programs include traditional classroom sessions, online courses, and workshops conducted either internally or by external providers. These structured learning experiences offer comprehensive instruction on specific topics or skills relevant to one's roles.

On-the-job training

This method involves learning by performing tasks under the guidance and supervision of experienced colleagues. Thanks to its hands-on approach, team members are provided the chance to acquire practical skills in real-world scenarios, facilitating faster skill acquisition and application.

Mentorship

Mentorship programs pair employees with experienced mentors who provide guidance, advice, and support in skill development and career progression. The role of mentors is to offer insights, share knowledge, and serve as role models who contribute to the mentees' professional growth and confidence.

Coaching

Coaching entails working one-on-one with a coach to identify strengths, weaknesses, and development areas. Coaches can offer personalized guidance, feedback, and support to enable employees to enhance specific skills and visualize their professional goals.

Internal knowledge-sharing sessions

These sessions are meant to allow employees to share their expertise and insights with colleagues across departments. As such, they help promote collaboration, foster a culture of continuous learning, and encourage the exchange of best practices within the organization.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

Upskilling/ reskilling programs

Upskilling and reskilling programs aim to equip employees with new competencies, often in response to technological advancements or evolving job requirements. These may include training on emerging technologies/ industry trends, or preparing team members for new roles within the organization.

Tuition reimbursement

Tuition reimbursement programs provide financial assistance to employees pursuing further education, such as relevant courses, certifications, or degree programs. By investing in employees' educational pursuits, organizations essentially play a critical role in supporting their continuous learning and skill development journey.

Feedback & performance appraisal

Regular feedback and performance appraisal processes facilitate ongoing skill development by providing employees with constructive feedback on their performance, strengths, and areas for improvement.

Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning empowers people to take initiative in acquiring new skills independently. This approach involves self-study through resources like books, articles, online tutorials, or educational videos, allowing one to customize their learning experience based on their interests and goals.

Stretch assignments

Stretch assignments are challenging tasks or projects that push employees beyond their comfort zones and encourage skill development. These opportunities provide valuable learning experiences, allowing them to develop new competencies and expand their capabilities.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

| Job shadowing | Job shadowing involves observing and learning from experienced colleagues by accompanying them in their day-to-day tasks. This firsthand exposure makes it easier to gain insights into different roles, processes, and responsibilities, thereby facilitating skill acquisition and career exploration. |

| Simulation and gamification | Simulation and gamification techniques simulate real-life scenarios or incorporate game elements to engage employees in skill development activities. These interactive approaches provide a fun and immersive learning experience, allowing participants to practice skills, solve challenges, and receive instant feedback. |

| Professional development conferences and events | Attending professional development conferences, seminars, or industry events exposes employees to new trends, technologies, and best practices. These networking opportunities and educational sessions foster learning, inspire innovation, and keep employees abreast of industry developments. |

By leveraging a combination of diverse skill development methods and activities, organizations may deliver comprehensive and impactful learning experiences that empower individuals to thrive and contribute effectively in today's dynamic work environment.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

Employee Skill Development Stages

The process of skill development typically progresses through various stages – which have been explained by a variety of frameworks. Here, let us go over two prominent models:

The Dreyfus and Dreyfus Model

- **Novice:** Beginners with limited theoretical knowledge and practical experience. They rely on rules and instructions, may make many mistakes, and have difficulty understanding the context or the goal of the skill.
- **Advanced beginner:** Gaining some basic knowledge and practical experience. Able to apply rules in familiar situations – but still rely on rules and feedback to perform the skill. May have some success and

confidence, but still face a lot of challenges and limitations.
- **Competent:** Able to perform independently but rely on past experiences and problem-solving strategies. Can plan & prioritize tasks, and take responsibility for one's actions. Can perform the skill with consistency and efficiency, but still need some supervision and support.
- **Proficient:** More flexible and adaptable, able to handle unexpected situations and choose appropriate strategies.
- **Expert:** Operate intuitively and effortlessly, with deep understanding and automatic responses to complex situations. Can also train and mentor others. Can come up with new and innovative ways of doing the skill, but may also face some complacency and stagnation as a result of their expertise.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

The Four Stages of Conscious Competence

Focuses on individual awareness and effort during skill development, this model is comprised of the following phases:

- **Unconscious Incompetence:** Unaware of lacking a skill or its importance.
- **Conscious Incompetence:** Becoming aware of a skill gap and its challenges.
- **Conscious Competence:** Deliberately practicing and learning, requiring focused effort and error correction.
- **Unconscious Competence:** Skill becomes automatic and effortless, performed intuitively with minimal attention.

Additionally, it also proposes a few influencing factors – including individual factors (e.g. learning style, motivation, prior knowledge, practice time), skill complexity, and learning environment (i.e. availability of resources, feedback, and support).

Key Employee Skills for the Modern Workplace

What skills should employees have? The modern workplace is constantly evolving, requiring people to possess a diverse set of capabilities to thrive. While specific needs vary across industries and roles, certain key competencies are universally sought after:

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

Core skills

Communication: Proficient communication, encompassing written, verbal, and nonverbal forms, facilitates effective collaboration, information sharing, and relationship-building within teams and with stakeholders.

Relationship building: The ability to cultivate trust, resolve conflicts, and foster positive relationships with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders is essential for teamwork and achieving organizational goals.

Problem-solving & critical thinking: Being able to analyze complex situations, identify underlying issues, and devise innovative solutions is crucial for overcoming challenges and driving progress.

Decision-making: Making informed decisions, weighing options, and taking calculated risks based on analysis and intuition contribute to effective leadership and problem-solving.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

Adaptability & flexibility: Embracing change, learning new technologies and processes, and quickly adapting to evolving circumstances are hallmarks of resilience in the modern workplace.

Collaboration & teamwork: Working collaboratively in diverse teams, sharing knowledge, delegating tasks, and fostering a culture of mutual support are essential for achieving collective success.

Virtual collaboration: Effectively leveraging digital tools and communication platforms to collaborate seamlessly with remote colleagues and clients has been becoming increasingly important in dispersed work environments.

Time management & organization: Efficiently managing priorities, setting deadlines, and optimizing workflow contribute to individual and team productivity.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

Digital skills

Digital literacy: Fundamental understanding of technology concepts, proficient use of communication tools, and navigating digital platforms are prerequisites for effective work in digital environments.

Data analysis & interpretation: Proficiency in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data enables informed decision-making and drives organizational insights.

Cybersecurity awareness: Understanding online threats, adhering to cybersecurity protocols, and safeguarding data and systems are critical in safeguarding against online risks.

Social media proficiency: Leveraging social media for communication, marketing, or research purposes enhances organizational visibility and engagement in the digital sphere.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

Additional desirable skills across other development areas

Creativity & innovation: Cultivating a creative mindset, generating novel ideas, and fostering innovation contribute to competitive advantage and organizational growth.

Emotional intelligence (EQ): Self-awareness, empathy, and effective management of emotions enhance interpersonal relationships and leadership effectiveness.

Learning agility: The ability to rapidly acquire new knowledge and skills, particularly in fast-paced environments, fosters adaptability and resilience amidst change.

Lifelong learning: Embracing a mindset of continuous learning and skill development ensures relevance and longevity in one's career trajectory.

Intercultural awareness: Understanding and valuing diverse cultures and perspectives promotes inclusive and collaborative work environments in a globalized workforce.

Self-leadership: Taking initiative, setting goals, and proactively driving personal and professional growth demonstrate resilience and commitment to excellence.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

How to Develop Employee Skills - plus Best Practices

Developing employee skills involves a strategic approach aimed at aligning individual development with organizational objectives. Here's a comprehensive step-by-step guide:

- ### Conduct Training Needs Analysis

Begin by assessing the current skill levels of employees and identifying any gaps between existing competencies and job requirements. Consider future organizational goals and industry trends as well to better anticipate future needs. During this process, one may utilize various assessment tools such as surveys, performance evaluations, and skills assessments to gather relevant data.

- ### Choose the right development methods

Select approaches that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. Organizations should offer a mix of formal training programs, on-the-job experiences, mentorship opportunities, and online courses to accommodate varying learning preferences.

- ### Develop a comprehensive plan

Create a detailed plan outlining the specific skills to be developed, the methods and resources allocated for training, and the expected outcomes. Define clear objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of the program. Establish a budget and allocate resources accordingly to ensure the effective implementation of the initiative.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

- **Secure buy-in from employees**

The next step is to communicate the benefits of skill development programs to employees to gain their support and participation. Organizations must emphasize how acquiring new competencies will contribute to their professional growth, job satisfaction, and career advancement. Encourage active engagement and involvement in the development process to foster ownership and commitment.

- **Measure results & make adjustments**

Regularly track the progress of skill development initiatives and evaluate their effectiveness against predefined KPIs. Solicit feedback from participants to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to the program. Continuously monitor the impact of such efforts on individual performance and organizational goals, refining strategies as needed to optimize outcomes.

Additionally, here are a few best practices to help optimize skill development within organizations:

Facilitate lateral movement:

Encourage employees to explore lateral movement within the organization, so that they may gain exposure to diverse roles, departments, and projects. This fosters cross-functional collaboration, broadens skill sets, and promotes a holistic understanding of the business.

Implement job rotation & cross-training:

Consider introducing job rotation and cross-training initiatives to expose team members to various tasks and responsibilities. This approach enhances versatility, adaptability, and resilience, enabling people to tackle evolving work demands with confidence.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

Offer personalized training programs

Provide a diverse range of personal and technical training programs tailored to individual needs and career aspirations. Consider flexible learning options such as online courses, workshops, and certifications to accommodate diverse learning preferences and schedules.

Unlock creativity:

Organizations should build up a culture that nurtures innovation. Encourage brainstorming, experimentation, and risk-taking to stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Provide platforms for collaboration and idea-sharing to harness the collective creativity of teams.

Foster a goal-oriented mindset:

Promote a goal-oriented mindset by aligning personal and organizational objectives. Encourage goal setting, progress tracking, and milestone celebrations to instill motivation, focus, and accountability in skill development endeavors.

Cultivate a learning culture:

Promote a culture of continuous learning and coaching within the organization. Encourage employees to set learning goals, share knowledge, and recognize achievements in skill development. Provide dedicated resources, time, and incentives to support learning activities and foster a growth mindset.

Make learning accessible and engaging:

Ensure accessibility to training resources for all employees, regardless of location or job title. Incorporate gamification elements and interactive platforms to make learning engaging and enjoyable. Additionally, encourages collaboration and peer-to-peer learning through online forums, communities, and group projects.

Employee Skill Development: Strategies for Organization

Partner with external providers:

In certain cases, organizations may want to collaborate with external training providers, universities, and professional associations to offer specialized training programs. Leveraging external expertise not only supplements internal initiatives – but also exposes employees to diverse learning opportunities.

Invest in leadership development:

It is critical to equip leaders with coaching, mentoring, and motivational skills to support employee skill development initiatives effectively. Strong leadership fosters a supportive learning environment and empowers employees to reach their full potential – while weak leadership does just the exact opposite.

Utilize technology:

Harness the power of technology to facilitate skill development initiatives. Implement learning management systems, online collaboration tools, and mobile learning apps to deliver training content efficiently and enhance accessibility for employees.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

(Credit: Emily Rose McRae, Peter Aykens, Kaelyn Lowmaster, and Jonah Shepp

Source: https://hbr.org/2024/01/9-trends-that-will-shape-work-in-2024-and-beyond)

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

In 2023, organizations continued to face significant challenges, from inflation to geopolitical turmoil to controversy over DEI and return-to-work policies — and 2024 promises more disruption. Gartner researchers have identified nine key trends, from new and creative employee benefits to the collapse of traditional career paths, that will impact work this year. Employers who successfully navigate these will retain top talent and secure a competitive advantage for themselves.

In 2023, business leaders and organizations continued to contend with major shifts affecting the workplace, including the pressure of inflation on both employer and employee budgets, the emergence of generative AI (GenAI), geopolitical turmoil, a series of high-profile labor strikes, increased tension over return-to-office (RTO) mandates, a shifting legal and societal landscape for DEI initiatives, the increased impact of climate change, and more.

As we look toward 2024, we can expect disruption to continue. Gartner's research has identified nine trends that will shape work in the next year. Leaders who proactively develop explicit business and talent strategies to navigate these trends will give their organizations a competitive advantage in both talent outcomes and achieving the organizations' strategic goals.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

1. Organizations will offer creative benefits to address the costs of work

Employees who have shifted to working remotely or in a hybrid environment have experienced what it is to work without bearing the costs — financial, time, and energy — associated with going into an office daily. According to Gartner's research, 60% of employees say the cost of going to the office outweighs the benefits, 67% feel that going to the office requires more effort than it did pre-pandemic, and 73% say it feels more expensive. Unsurprisingly, 48% of employees say RTO mandates prioritize what leaders want over what employees need to do good work.

What was once largely assumed — that employees bear certain costs of work when they agree to take a job — can no longer be taken for granted, particularly given that there isn't a definitive relationship between the location of work and performance. Gartner research has found that in-office requirements do not have a statistically significant impact on employee performance, positively or negatively.

Organizations looking to attract and retain talent will not just try to find the perfect hybrid strategy but will look to tackle the cost of work head-on. They can do this by sharing the tangible and intangible costs of returning to the office and finding ways to reduce the total costs.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

Leading companies are exploring more impactful and creative benefits, including:

- **Housing subsidies:** Organizations that want employees to come into the office may seek to help them afford nearby housing. Another option is company-owned apartments near the office that could make the cost of short-term trips to headquarters more manageable.

- **Caregiver benefits:** The pandemic left many families with an acute awareness of how critical reliable, flexible childcare, eldercare, and pet care are to a healthy workforce. Leading organizations are beginning to fill these gaps with targeted benefits, such as onsite or shared drop-in childcare for employees, pre-vetted pet care provider recommendations, and on-call access to skilled care providers to address gaps in eldercare support.

- **Financial well-being programs:** In 2023, Gartner's research found that only 24% of employees rated their financial well-being favorably, down from 27% two years prior. This low level of financial well-being makes the cost of work more acutely felt. More organizations will begin offering personal financial planning and education services to help employees make the most of their finances.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

2. AI will create, not diminish, workforce opportunity

A 2023 Gartner survey found that 22% of employees expected AI to replace their jobs in the next five years. Despite this anxiety, in the short- to medium-term, GenAI won't replace many jobs, but it will lead jobs to be redesigned to include new responsibilities, such as interacting with GenAI tools. Gartner predicts that GenAI will play a role in 70% of text- and data-heavy tasks by 2025, up from less than 10% in 2023.

This year, executives should be prepared to iterate and adapt their plans and expectations for GenAI as tools evolve and employee proficiency improves. Business leaders should partner with HR to assess how GenAI investments should change team roles and workflows and to identify potential internal candidates for newly redesigned roles. HR must also evaluate GenAI's impact on hiring strategies, identifying which technical requirements and assessments are now unnecessary for open and upcoming roles, and determining how to assess talent against any new skill needs.

3. Four-day workweeks will move from radical to routine

Previously considered a radical departure from the traditional schedule, a four-day workweek has been raised in union negotiations and become the preference of many workers.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

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Previously considered a radical departure from the traditional schedule, a four-day workweek has been raised in union negotiations and become the preference of many workers.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

A 2023 Gartner survey revealed that 63% of candidates rated "four-day workweek for the same pay" as the top new and innovative benefit that would attract them to a job. Recent pilots of a four-day workweek have suggested benefits for productivity and employee well-being.

As a talent shortage puts pressure on attracting and retaining employees, organizations in 2024 will use four-day workweeks to improve both talent outcomes, such as employee engagement, performance, and well-being, and business outcomes, including eliminating inefficiencies, attracting and retaining talent, and driving competitive advantage.

Embracing a four-day workweek will require organizations to rethink the cadence of work. This means being more explicit about scheduling focus time or when and where collaboration, brainstorming, and feedback sessions take place. This intentional approach to time not only facilitates a four-day workweek, it also allows organizations to benefit from shared expectations for when different types of tasks might be done, reducing the burden on managers and employees to set these expectations.

4. Employee conflict resolution will be a must-have skill for managers

This year, conflicts between employees are poised to be at an all-time high due to various crises, including geopolitical issues, labor strikes, climate change, pushback to DEI efforts,
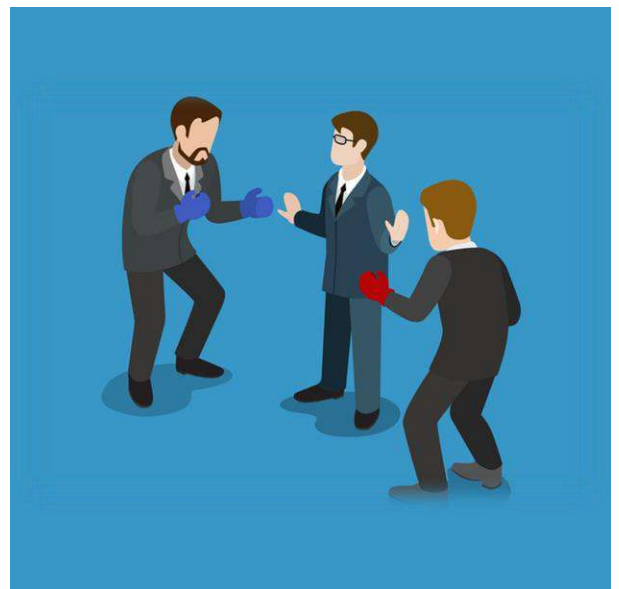
9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

and upcoming elections for half of the globe. Conflict between employees at all levels pulls down both individual and team performance; for many, work is not a safe space.

A 2023 Gartner survey found that 57% of managers say they are fully responsible for managing and resolving team conflicts. Managers who can effectively navigate and manage interpersonal conflict among employees will have an outsize positive impact on their organizations — the question is how many feel trained and prepared to do so? Organizations that have tried to keep contentious topics out of the workplace may start this process behind the curve, particularly as conflict resolution is not an intuitive skill.

Organizations should upskill managers and managerial

candidates in conflict resolution through dedicated training and shadowing or coaching opportunities for new managers. Leading employers are also finding ways to recognize and reward effective conflict resolution at all levels of the organization, including considering conflict-management skills during performance review cycles and promotion decisions.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

5. GenAI experiments will yield hard lessons and painful costs

Enthusiasm, hype, and a strong fear of missing out are driving executives to encourage the implementation of GenAI within their teams and organizations. Yet, the Gartner 2023 Hype Cycle for Emerging Technologies found that GenAI has already reached the peak of inflated expectations and will next enter the "trough of disillusionment" — a two-to-five-year period during which it won't live up to overinflated expectations.

This doesn't mean that GenAI won't provide significant benefits or solve business challenges; it means that companies will need to actively manage expectations, as well as the risks associated with implementation.

GenAI tools are being deployed with promises of incredible productivity returns if organizations apply them to their internal data and documents. However, access and file classification policies have long been minimally observed, if not neglected, at most organizations. For example, when GenAI-enabled assistants are deployed against an organization's internal files that lack proper access controls, an employee can ask: "Who filed harassment complaints in the last year?" or "What are the salaries and bonuses for everyone VP and above?" and get an answer.

In addition to governance, the output of GenAI is not infallible, creating a strong need for quality control and good employee judgment.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

These risks don't outweigh the potential benefits of GenAI, but they require organizations to actively train employees to develop judgment around information validity and how and when to use this new technology.

6. Skills requirements will overtake degree requirements as the "paper ceiling" crumbles

College degrees are the top requirement of yesterday's job descriptions, not tomorrow's. Organizations today are increasingly shredding the paper ceiling — the invisible barrier workers without degrees face — and embracing skills-based hiring, even for some corporate jobs long considered degree-dependent.

Major companies, including Google, Delta Airlines, Accenture, and Zoho, have already removed many of their degree requirements from job postings to attract qualified talent without arbitrarily limiting themselves. State and local governments around the world are also embracing this approach. This allows organizations to hire from a much broader talent pool that includes both internally developed talent and workers Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs).

This shift enables employers to consider new avenues to find — or develop — the talent they need. In fact, leading organizations like Target, Amazon, and EY are increasingly touting their in-house universities and business schools — and expanding apprenticeship programs — as tailored credential programs that prepare talent with the specific skills they'll need to advance.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

7. Climate change protection becomes a new employee benefit

From severe storms to extreme heat to massive wildfires with far-reaching impacts on air quality, the past year brought new visibility to how climate change is impacting workforces worldwide. As these events shift from localized and episodic to widespread and persistent, organizations are making climate change disaster response plans a more explicit and transparent part of their employee value proposition.

In 2024 and beyond, organizations will begin to highlight and promote direct climate change protections as a key part of their benefit offerings. These could include:

- **Explicit commitments to physical safety:** Organizations may develop proactive plans to offer shelter, energy, and provisions when natural disasters arrive and actively communicate their response capabilities to their workforce.

- **Compensation to impacted employees:** Organizations may offer designated PTO or monetary benefits to those who experience hardship due to a climate-related event. Subsidies for short-term housing, relocation assistance, disaster-related leave, or stipends for specialized safety equipment could become more explicit components of organizations' benefits packages.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

- **Mental health support:** Many organizations have already expanded emotional well-being offerings over the past few years, but some may begin to offer access to grief counselors to help their employees globally cope with the impacts of these events.

These benefits will be particularly impactful for organizations with localized operations or a limited number of locations, where most, if not all, of their operations will stall in the event of disaster.

8. DEI won't disappear; it will become more embedded in the way we work

After a flood of corporate attention in 2020, there has been a growing disillusionment with DEI — and even direct pushback in some quarters. For too many organizations, DEI still operates in a silo and suffers from a lack of accountability and ownership from business leaders, limited decision-making power to drive outcomes, and ineffective, uncoordinated cross-enterprise DEI efforts. When companies expect enterprise-wide results without enterprise-wide ownership and accountability, it results in unfair expectations for DEI programs and disappointment in DEI outcomes.

But the critical need for diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforces remains, leaving organizations uncertain about what to do next.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

In 2024, companies will begin to pivot to embedding DEI throughout the organization. This approach will change how business leaders interact with DEI, positioning it not as "what" they do, but "how" they achieve high performance in their key objectives. Ultimately, this new model will see DEI shift to a shared way of working as organizations fully integrate DEI values into business objectives, daily operations, and culture.

9. Traditional stereotypes of career paths will collapse in the face of workforce change

Traditional career paths, where employees rise the ranks and retire at the peak of their careers, are going away. Some employees don't retire at all or do so after a career shift or break, including performing different or less lucrative work.

More employees are stepping out of the workforce mid-career, shifting across industries, or embracing contingent work and other nontraditional employment models at some point in their careers. A 2022 LinkedIn survey of 23,000 workers found that 62% had already taken a career break and 35% would potentially take one in the future. Workers are also contending with involuntary disruption to their careers due to economic cycles, caregiving responsibilities, displacement during conflict and natural disasters, and shifting responsibilities as technology and business models evolve.

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

As atypical career paths become mainstream, the well-entrenched stereotypes that underpin most talent management strategies will prove a growing barrier to talent acquisition and retention. Organizations must adapt to these changes in three key ways:

- **Make it easier for talent to stay at or return to the organization.** Employers are breaking with the stereotype of career continuity by offering job sharing, gig work, or reduced hours to provide greater flexibility. Bringing retired employees back as gig workers or mentors or facilitating temporary departures from the workforce with mid-career leave programs and returnships enables employees to more effectively fit work into their lives. Organizations such as United Technologies, Goldman Sachs, and Johnson & Johnson provide returnships or rotational programs for caregivers reentering the workforce.

- **Take advantage of expertise where it exists, regardless of tenure.** Organizations are breaking the mold of a step-by-step progressive career trajectory by enabling younger employees to take on roles because of their expertise or aptitude in niche terrains. C-suite executives in their 20s aren't just for startups — we're seeing companies hire executives from a pool of early career workers whose limited experience includes successfully navigating emerging priorities for their industry, such as mitigating third-party cybersecurity vulnerabilities

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

in financial services, piloting ambient digital scribes in health care, deploying smart checkout systems in retail, and optimizing production processes with digital twins in manufacturing.

- **Prepare for the imminent retirement of many experienced workers.** Organizations are redesigning work to facilitate internal rotation programs, removing age limits for apprenticeships so that anyone can train in a new subject, and creating shadowing opportunities so that more experienced workers have the opportunity — and the expectation — to help early and mid-career colleagues develop expertise. For example, Tetra Pak employs a rotation program where nearly half of each product team is reshuffled every 18 months. Staff are encouraged to select their top three preferences for rotations based on new areas or skills they wish to learn but may have little or no experience in.

Cross-training employees in various domains have a long-term benefit, as employees with dexterity across multiple domains are more likely to be successful in the future as roles evolve with new technologies and business models. This will be particularly appealing for organizations facing the threat of losing decades of institutional knowledge and specialized expertise.

These nine trends will shape the future of work across 2024 and beyond. Executives must evaluate which of these trends to prioritize and pilot based on criteria including:

9 Trends That Will Shape Work in 2024 and Beyond

- Which trends will disproportionately impact your organization?
- Which trends might give you a strong comparative advantage in the labor market if your organization acted on them?
- Which trends pose a threat to your strategic goals if you don't act on them?

While most organizations cannot act on all of these trends, those that don't prioritize and take action on some will find themselves at a disadvantage — both in terms of talent retention and attraction, as well as their ability to meet strategic goals.

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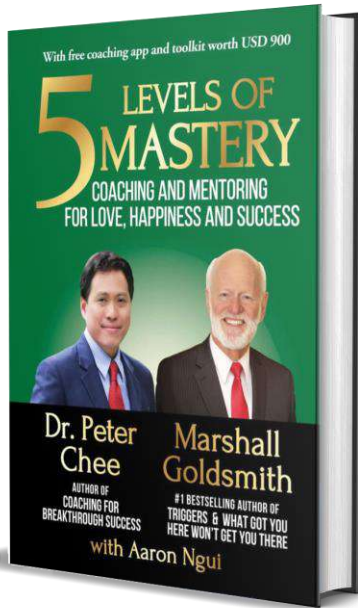
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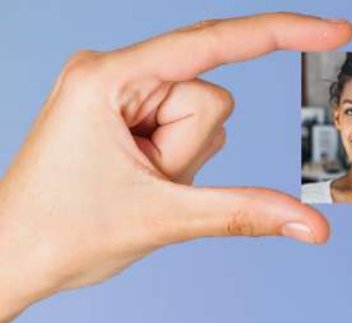SAVE COST   SAVE TIME   STAY SAFE   STAY AHEAD

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