



## Preparing for a Digital, Disruptive and Exciting Future!

More than 50 human resources practitioners came together to discuss how they are readying their organizations for the future. The theme – “Digital, Disruptive and Exciting Future” was coined by Deloitte Consulting, in line with our view of the future of leadership, work and the human resources function.

### **POLL RESULT: What are the top trends most critical to your organization currently?**

1. The employee experience (59%)
2. Future of work & organizations (46%)
3. Careers and learning (44%)
4. Leadership disrupted (33%)

(39 audience members participated in this poll)

### **The future is here**

Jeff Schwarz, Global Human Capital Leader for Deloitte Consulting opened with the ten Human Capital Trends of 2017 which are clustered across the following six themes:

- How we redesign the organization and its leadership for the future?
- How we design the employee experience for engagement, productivity and growth?
- How we build a new management system to empower and engage the teams?
- How we build a culture of continuous learning, adaptability, growth and personal development?
- How we leverage digital technology to design and improve work, the workplace and the workforce?
- How we leverage data, cognitive technologies, and AI to improve the organization and its teams?

It was heartening to note that more than 85% of the participants reported that their organizations had done something new and interesting in the areas above in the last 12 months.

This is testament to the fact that the HR function is leading itself through a significant identity change. Not only do HR organizations need to structure themselves for service delivery efficiency and excellence in talent programs, they must now also focus on the employee experience, employee productivity, and the entire realm of work, job, and structural design. The new rules provide a mandate for many HR organizations to reorient themselves and focus their people on the changing human capital issues their companies face.

### The future of work is a future with no constraints

Indranil Roy, Deloitte Leadership Practice Leader provided an overview of how Deloitte in partnership with Singapore Economic Development Board, views the Future of Work. The picture he painted was not a post-apocalyptic era where the 'machines' have taken over humanity. Instead, he views it as a glorious world with no constraints.

The future of work is premised on facts like cognitive computing is growing exponentially, the nature of careers is changing and there is an explosion of contingent work. This opens up three possibilities across work, workers and workplaces:

1. **Radically open** – whether it is talent platforms or the gig economy, every organization will be able to leverage talent from across the world to solve their most wicked problems at breakneck speed
2. **Agile by design** – organizational structures and cultures will be designed to enable user centricity, lightning fast speed of ideation, prototyping, user testing and the proverbial 'shipping the product'
3. **Augmented with Smart Machines** – will refer to a world where humans focus on the emotive elements of work (i.e. empathizing with people to understand their pains and gains) while being aided by smart machines to help them with the analytical and repetitive elements

"This needs to change", remarked Indranil, when he asked for a show of hands for people who are actively reorganizing their teams to take advantage of these possibilities, and only a few hands were raised. The future of work opens up a constraints-free world where the only limitation to talent, resources or capabilities are our imaginations. He concluded by urging the audience to shift their mindsets, akin to 'flipping a switch', and start preparing for the future of work, today.

### The future of leadership is digital

Nishith Mohanty, Director Deloitte Leadership, noted that employees of digital organizations seem have similar experiences across organizations – a culture of high risk-taking, alignment to a bold purpose which is achieved through the use of data, customer-centric, agile experimentation and a tremendous focus on learning.

Deloitte's research codifies these experiences of employees into 23 traits of a Digital Organization – the Digital DNA. These 23 traits are driven through three themes of Digital Leadership:

1. **Thinking differently** – digital leaders are broad thinkers and thereby create possibilities. They take quick decisions and focus heavily on experimentation
2. **Acting differently** – digital leaders collaborate with everyone and thereby activate ecosystems. They have an innate ability to understand others better than they understand themselves
3. **Reacting differently** – digital leaders take big, bold risks, they challenge status quo, and they do so with a high level of emotional maturity

### POLL RESULT: What is your Digital Readiness?

#### Digital Readiness Indicators:

1. Thinking differently: **64%**
2. Acting differently: **65%**
3. Reacting differently: **57%**

#### Overall Scores:

1. High scoring factors: People regard, emotional intelligence, breadth of perspective
2. Low scoring factors: Self belief, resilience, drive

(43 audience members participated in this poll)

"This needs to change. its all in our heads – the challenges, the myths, the constraints."

**Indranil Roy**  
Deloitte Leadership  
Practice Leader

The Deloitte research elaborates that when it comes to Digital Leadership, most organizations comprise three categories of leaders – four out of five leaders typically ‘don’t get it’ or ‘fear it’. These are leaders who feel Digital is a fad, and it shall pass; or those who feel that they have missed the bus already and are ‘afraid to ask the stupid questions’. In the Digital Future, it’s the third category of leaders whom we need to identify and develop – those who do get it and are willing to invest in it.

“Our role as HR practitioners is twofold...”, added Nishith, “One – accurately separating your Digital-naysayers from the investors, and two - immersing the naysayers into digital ecosystems to show them what good looks like, while opening up your biggest funding pools for your investors.” He concluded with a request to get to know their digital leaders, for their company’s future may indeed lie in their hands.

### The future of Human Resources is to ‘startup-ify’ the function

After spending most of her career working with C-level business leaders in a Fortune 50 energy company to solve their talent management dilemmas, Rukhsana Pervez, Director Deloitte Leadership, shared her personal journey of discovering the new possibilities for HR today. She reinterpreted the ten Human Capital trends introduced by Jeff from a practitioner’s perspective and noted that there are 5 key shifts that the function will need to make:

1. Get obsessed with creating irresistible employee experiences instead of creating more programs.
2. Identify the few big bets and get after them, rather than feeling a need to answer every employee eventuality.
3. Discovering the truly unique organization-specific game changing practices instead of feeling the pressure to “keep up with the Jones’s” and adopt the next big thing.
4. Being brave enough to test out less than perfect employee solutions with real users, instead of long drawn our development cycles.
5. Tapping on the ideas of others in the ecosystem, instead of feeling a need to build everything in-house.

She noted that these shifts may not come naturally to HR practitioners who have long been conditioned to ensure everything is planned for, that risks are well mitigated and that solutions are near perfect before launching to the organization. A mindset shift is a required and a new set of skills are emerging. Design thinking, leveraging analytics and adopting agile ways of working are no longer the privy of start-up or technology organization, but are being proven as the game changer for HR functions.

Leveraging these capabilities, Rukhsana shared Deloitte’s “Startup-ify your HR” approach which brings together the successful learnings of start-ups and applies them to the HR world:

1. **A collaborative approach** – which brings together employees, alumni, potential hires, business leaders, Ux designers, etc. one the one hand; and talent specialists, partners, industry experts, strategy experts, digital experts, ecosystem curators, etc. on the other.
2. **A user centered design** – which builds personas for employees and stakeholders.
3. **A learning immersion** – which unlocks the mind and creativity .
4. **A hackathon** – which prioritizes rapid prototyping and experimentation.
5. **A multi-sensory experience** – bringing out the best of all participants.

### POLL RESULT: What capabilities will you need in the Human Resources Function?

1. Digital leadership
2. Agile
3. Analytics
4. Design thinking
5. Start-up way

(More than 80% of the audience members polled mentioned one of the five capabilities above)

**The future is here – do we aim to survive, drive or thrive in it?**

Pushp Deep Gupta, Partner Deloitte Leadership then shifted perspectives to thinking beyond the human resources function and asked the audience to poll the top challenges their business leaders and partners are facing today.

Deloitte's research indicates that the challenges laid out by the audience comprise the following recurring elements:

1. **Leading change** - Industry disruption.
2. **Managing stakeholders** - Dealing with multiple externals.
3. **Building a competitive edge** - Managing intense rivalry or industry disruption.
4. **Connecting with the ecosystem** - High stakes negotiations or mergers and acquisitions.
5. **Diversity** – Multi-cultural or multi-generational workforce.

Deloitte believes that 'challenges' identified are actually pivotal opportunities for leaders and businesses alike to not just survive the future, but to actually thrive in it.

There is no better time than today where such opportunities have proliferated: digital companies today pivot their business models at the blink of an eye; legacy organizations redefine their DNA to look less like their competitors and more like technology companies; business leaders today surround themselves with problem statements of the future and not their achievements of their past; designers today fall in love not with their ideas but with their customers; engineers and psychologists work together today to solve problems which are outside of either of their domains. Today they all do this in service of purpose and profit.

The future is digital, disruptive and exciting and the choice whether you want to merely survive, perhaps even drive or actually thrive in it is entirely yours.



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