



## CAPITAL H

### The postgenerational workforce: from millennials to perennials

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**Burt Rea:** Welcome to the Capital H podcast, where we explore the latest topics and trends focused on putting humans at the center of work. I'm your host, Burt Rea and I'm looking forward to continuing this series on the findings of our 2020 Human Capital Trends survey. Today's episode will guide us to think about how organizations can create meaningful worker experiences for all five generations that are in the workforce today.

Our trends survey revealed that just 6 percent of respondents strongly agreed

that their leaders are properly equipped to lead this multigenerational workforce effectively. This prompts an interesting question: Should traditional workforce segmentation approaches—those that are anchored in identifying HR needs and characteristics by generation—should those approaches remain the focus of future workforce strategies? To help us find an answer, I'd like to welcome Suzan Briganti, founder and CEO of Swarm Vision, a company focused on measuring and leveraging innovation talent in the enterprise.

**Jeff Schwartz:** Suzan, thank you so much for joining us today on Capital H. Before we get started and before we dive in, just take a minute to introduce yourself and give us a little bit of background on your company Swarm Vision.

**Suzan Briganti:** Sure. Well, thanks for having me. My name is Suzan Briganti and I grew up in Silicon Valley since before it was called that really. And I know it sounds like I came west on a covered wagon, but it wasn't that long ago. And I had the privilege of being raised by a pair of very innovative

parents and went to some very stimulating schools here and then went on to have about a 30-year career in enterprise. And along the way, I kind of stumbled across something very interesting. The first software we built became a global crowd of innovators that quickly grew to about 20,000 members in 98 countries.

And they were profiled on their innovation talent with a simple kind of freemium profiler and our customers access this crowd for innovation challenges. It was super successful, but then as happens in every innovator's life, you have an epiphany when least expected. And it happened when a bunch of customers all within about a month said to me, "Suzan, why can't we get this kind of innovation from our people?" I mean, we have 130,000 employees or whatever the number was. So I knew we'd really stumbled into a massive opportunity. And that was about driving innovation internally inside large organizations. So we pivoted and went after that. So I founded Swarm Vision in 2016 after that big insight and we haven't really looked back. So, we ended up conducting the world's largest study of serial successful innovators, which I had a front row seat on. It was really fascinating.

And then we went on to build an enterprise grade SaaS platform. So Swarm really identifies innovation talent inside large organizations, and there's lots of it, by the way, it organizes those people into stronger teams, upskills people 10 to 20 percent in about eight weeks and drives a culture of innovation to retain that high value talent.

**Jeff:** One of the questions we wanted to really start with today is talking a little bit about the relationship between age and generations and innovation. There are a fair number, I'll call them preconceived notions, as to where innovators are and where innovative thinking is across the five different generations in the workforce. Help us think through the relationship that you're seeing in your research between age and generations and innovation.

**Suzan:** Well, sure. I think some of those preconceived notions come from just

humans. We tend to often look for silver bullets and that explain things, but life is usually a little more nuanced than that. So in our research, which we conducted over four waves on four continents, one of the things we did was look at the correlation between innovation scores and age, as well as gender and ethnicity.

And we actually found there was no correlation between age and innovation scores. I think where this comes in, these sort of stereotypes, is that there is a different relationship with technology, certainly. The digital natives, they've just grown up swiping and doing all that stuff. So they might have a more natural relationship with technology, but that is really not involved at all in terms of what we measured.

When we looked at serial successful innovators, we looked at thousands of questions and what emerged were eight innovation skill clusters that are highly predictive of innovation business results. And being a digital native is just irrelevant. Those things kind of move through the population. At one time it would have been something else, but it's just really not one of the major predictors. So yeah, I think it's just a time sort of to free ourselves of those age based shortcuts and look inside people, their psychographic traits.

**Jeff:** So what you're saying is a bit counterintuitive, not necessarily to me, but maybe to some which is having studied who is innovative and what makes someone innovative and you've studied it around the world four regions, four waves of research. You're not seeing necessarily relationship between innovation and age and generations. What is correlated or associated with innovation? How do you identify innovation in an organization?

**Suzan:** Yeah, that's a great question. Well, so out of those four waves of research, what really emerged were eight skill clusters and I'll say them, but they're each very, have very specific meaning. So it's drive, disrupt, create, connect, control, think, deliver, and give. And within that, there are 26 sub-clusters. So, what we, one thing we found,

which is also kind of cool is that a lot of people think that creativity and innovation are the same thing, but we found that create is only one of the eight skills and that it has very specific components to it. So it's not artistic creativity. A lot of the most mentally innovative people can't even draw a stick figure.

So it's time to really kind of blow up this whole topic. Some of the other skill clusters that end up being super important aren't talked about in innovation. For example, connect is a set of four different interpersonal traits, such as relating to diverse stakeholders, persuasion, team building, and navigating a complex organization. And you can imagine the effect of those things on the uptake of your innovation. So we define innovation not just as having cool ideas, but it's actually getting novel solutions to important products into the market and actually getting adoption. So control, think, deliver, give, and connect are as important as the overly emphasize, create, and disrupt. So that gives you just a little bit of a flavor, but it's an extremely nuanced tool. So one thing I want to add to this though, is that because there are eight skill clusters and 26 sub-clusters, more people can participate in innovation than just the stereotypical creative types.

So that's a wonderful truth inside large organizations where sometimes innovation feels like it's off there, the fun people over in the corner getting to do whatever, right? And in fact, a lot of the waste in innovation comes from it being staffed incorrectly with pure idea people. So with Swarm, you can actually create teams with coverage of all eight of these skill clusters. And we know from the research that you'll get far more actual innovation in the market from it.

**Jeff:** So what I'm hearing you describe is that there are different dimensions of innovation. That creativity is part of it, but it's not all of it. And there are different roles and they're different capabilities of insights that team members bring to the innovation game.

**Suzan:** Oh, that's very much. More people do need to be involved than we typically see

on innovation teams and when you do have a more mentally diverse team, you actually have more success. And, so I think it's really exciting output. And so there's another fallacy though that I have to bring up here. And that is, I think in the workforce, we know that diverse teams are a good thing and it is absolutely important to have diversity. But what we wanted to differentiate between is the notion of innate diversity. So the kind of characteristics you're born with, when you're born, your gender, your ethnicity, we want that kind of diversity for all kinds of good social reasons. What we really want is psychographic diversity. And that's what Swarm Vision allows you to put together, the coverage of those eight different thinking styles, if you will.

**Jeff:** So this is of course very interesting because one of the phrases that we've been hearing for the last couple of years or many years is a phrase like diversity of thought or diversity of perspective, a diversity of thinking. And I think that's what I'm hearing you talk about, which is part of what Swarm Vision does is you can help understand the individuals in an organization helping us understand diversity at a psychographic level. For people who aren't exactly sure what it means when you say a psychographic element of diversity, what should we be thinking about?

**Suzan:** Yeah, well, so psychographics are really attitudes, beliefs, and values. And where I came to understand the power of psychographics was back after business school, I joined a pretty famous ad agency called BBDO, which is a fantastic place to learn right after business school. And large brands are essentially positioned on psychographic profiles of their customers. So you'll find the difference between a Coke user and a Pepsi user is largely psychographic. So it's attitudes, beliefs, and values as opposed to demographics. So I had a good 30 years of working with psychographics in my marketing background to position products. And I saw the power of it, how predictive it was of behavior. So it's different than personality. Personality genuinely refers to the big five personality

traits and we tested personality, the big five personality in the first correlation study that we did, the first of our four waves, and there was no correlation with business results from innovation. Personality is kind of what we think of when we think of profiling a person, but it doesn't turn out to be predictive of business results, so we just broomed personality. Instead we look at attitudes, beliefs and values.

**Jeff:** How important is it in terms of the impact and the effectiveness or intensity of innovation to get the right combination of these eight factors and sub factors when you're looking at innovation at a team or an organization? Part of the reason I'm asking this question is one of the things that we've looked at in this year's Human Capital Trends report is we're doing a little bit of what I'll call myth-busting, which is, I think that there has been a little bit of an overzealous focus on differences across generations and how important and impactful they are in terms of business results and business effectiveness in different ways.

We talked about the idea of Millennials to perennials. What we're saying by perennials is that people, regardless of their age, have psychographic or dimensions or experiences or attributes or capabilities that are relevant for team and organizational performance and that's really what we want to understand. But the other piece we're looking at is, how do we get the right balance and combination right? To ask the question very directly, are we looking for a team of people who all have all the attributes, or are we looking for a team where the combination of them together is what really drives innovation in an organization?

**Suzan:** Yeah. It is more the latter. First of all, very few people have all of them. Only about 2 percent of a typical large organization will score in that transformational range, which means they're high on all eight skill clusters, so 2 percent. It would be, I think, a waste to use those people all together and they would be duplicating each other. I like the idea that we can take our existing workforce and maybe we have out of 1,000 people, 200 of them

will be what we call explorers. They score in the horizon two range, so they're capable of doing sort of exploring adjacent spaces and what's next for the company.

I would rather put those people together into teams, many of whom together will actually, combined, score on the horizon three zone. I love the idea that we can do more with what we have. I think it's the little bit of a tension that there is between, so let's say you're strong on, I'm just going to guess, disrupt and create and think, and let's say I'm strong on deliver, control and drive, and someone else is strong on another two or three. The tension between us is a wonderful thing. You want just enough tension, but not too much. I like to use more of the diversity approach rather than people overlapping and repeating each other and having coverage of the same skill over and over.

**Jeff:** Are there a couple of examples where the results that you saw in terms of the distribution of innovation attributes or the way the teams were put together really told a sort of remarkable or sort of an unusual story? In practice, what have you seen that really is noteworthy and what have you seen about how organizations or companies have used the Innovation Swarm Profiler to do things that you think are particularly high impact or just good lessons for us to be thinking about?

**Suzan:** Well, a couple of things that I've seen customers do that are really exciting, one is I've seen a large packaging company in the Southeast, we designed their R&D division using Swarm. They had already decided to organize according to innovation horizon. They're making their investments in continuous improvement, incremental innovation, adjacent and transformational. They had, on their own, the epiphany that, "Hey, we don't know how to staff for this." Then they were referred to us by a customer and ended up using Swarm. They were able to then reorganize their people, aligning their people to the kind of innovation that they were trying to achieve in each of the groups or projects.

Aligning the talent to the objectives of the project, I think, is the first use case.

The second thing we're seeing, and we're super excited by the results, our customers now take cohorts of employees through Swarm Innovation training. It takes about eight weeks. Then they reprofile them, and on average we see people coming up in their scores 10 to 20 percent. Most of them are moving up an entire innovation horizon, from H1 to H2 or H2 to H3. I think those are two concrete use cases we're super excited about. Very few training programs have any kind of concrete ROI like that. We also require the learners to submit an innovation proposal and we see whether that proposal matches their new profile, which it does in most cases. It's pretty wild what you can do with science.

**Jeff:** It's fascinating to hear you describe how the Swarm Vision training that you're doing can actually, in a sense, help expand the innovation dimensions or capabilities of the people in an organization. One of the things that you've been talking about is how corporate and organizational strategies over the last several decades are shifting from what one of our colleagues, John Hagel, talks about from optimization to creativity and creating new value. And it's no surprise that in most organizations, as you've described, a very high percentage of the workforce that you're profiling are in the optimization, I think you called it optimization and energizing categories, but not in the categories of exploring and transforming. Are you finding from organizations that

they are looking for more explorers and transformers, and that's part of what you're helping them do, both on the acquisition side and the talent management side?

**Suzan:** Absolutely. So I think for them, they haven't had a way of really measuring what they have. And so that's obviously the first step, is just to get a clean catch and look at the distribution that you have. What we find is in faster-growing companies, they have a higher mix of explorers and transformers. So we've got matched pairs where everything else being equal, same category, both US companies, both about the same age of company, the faster-growing company has double the mix of explorers and transformers than the slower-growing company.

So yeah, I mean, I think they do want more explorers and transformers, so it's really exciting to us to find that we can actually do that for them. We don't have to fire people, they could actually be given the chance to develop these capabilities. And when you think about it, there's no other species on the planet that innovates. It's human. To innovate is human. And, we just can't stop ourselves from fiddling with things. But, few of us have been educated or acculturated or rewarded for it, at least since adulthood, we've never had a more industrialized education system than we have today. And these kids have been taught to the test. And the result of that is they often can't do things where there's a lot of ambiguity involved. They just are sitting there, waiting for the instructions.

And so, that's why we find that it's not age-related. This innovation capability, it's about being able to thrive in uncertainty and ambiguity and change. And that's the kind of scene we're getting into here. So then companies are learning to, or starting to think about, how to design for change and there are structural aspects of that, which we don't really get involved in, but maximizing your surface area of the organization to have a lot more interaction with the outside world, becoming more external externally-facing. But there's also this big talent piece to it.

**Jeff:** How does your research help managers, and executives, and companies who are leading and coordinating innovation efforts? Because part of where we started the discussion is we spoke a little bit about the preconceptions we have across generations. And I'll say them out loud. Younger people are more innovative than older people. The older you are, the less innovative you are. And there are some preconceived notions like that out there. There are also preconceived notions that managers and executives have about, what does it take to be innovative and how to put together an innovative team? So specifically from the management and executive perspective, what are some of the things you've learned in your research and that you're doing with clients and organizations, so that they can better manage and lead innovation within their organizations themselves?

**Suzan:** Well, I mean, one thing I want to say just from the get go is to address your question about age, is that some of the top innovators in our dataset are in their 50's and 60's. They've been in the workforce for 30 to 40 years. And, they not only have the create and disrupt skills that you would expect, but they also have the connect skills, so that's why they're so good at navigating these complex organizations, persuading people, bending the rules to advance innovation, either that they've produced or that their teams have. And they have those think skills, that ability to catch on early to emerging trends, and the control skills, so they can speak the language of money.

So, just to confront straight on this idea that only the young are innovative, we really know that is not true. Our data proves it. And in terms of how to help executives and leaders, I think the first thing to do is just to go deeper, because what happens the longer you've been, the higher up you go, and I've been a VP and a C-level executive, you start interacting with only a couple layers below yourself. So you have your deputies, your lieutenants you're always going to, and you really don't know that many layers beneath you. So you're not going to know the people who have

innovation talent. You'll just see them maybe as, Joe Schmo, and they've got three years in the business, they're doing a fine job on XYZ.

So I would say give everybody a chance, and profile everyone who reports to you or is in your division, and you're going to discover a lot of innovation talent early career, that you can harness to actually achieve your results faster. So that's the first thing. The second thing is, use the profiles to put teams together. Don't just use your usual suspects people put teams together based on who they've worked with in the past. So that's the absolute opposite of diversity, and the opposite of using any kind of science. So I would say those two things, just to really give everyone a chance, and then use science to form your teams rather than the usual suspects.

**Jeff:** Let me come to a final topic, which hopefully is not a surprise to you and to the listeners to our podcast. We're still in the middle of a global health crisis. What are you seeing in this COVID-19 moment, around innovation and generations in the workforce that really begins to resonate with you?

**Suzan:** I think the health crisis has made innovation even more real and critical to our customers. They've literally had to do so many things differently, so much faster than they ever thought possible. So number one, it's showing them that they can do it. They can move fast. And we've been telling customers and prospects for a long time that we're entering a time of exponential change, and now they kind of believe us. The other big thing I see is that customers are now starting to talk with us about using Swarm to build a future-fit workforce. People who can thrive in uncertainty, that sort of scale learning that you talked about, who can innovate every day and continuously renew their organizations versus sort of waiting to be forced to do it by an external crisis.

So I think while our research was really with innovators to drive innovation, what we're finding as a side effect is that people with these eight skills, or several of them, tend

to have more elastic minds, they tend to see growth opportunities in crisis, more easily. So I think that's really exciting that this whole idea of being able to thrive in uncertainty, drive growth, drive innovation every day, rather than it being sort of an episodic thing, or something you can only do through acquisition.

So, to us, it's very exciting. And while it's horrible, all of the people who've fallen ill or died, and the millions of people out of work, we're not celebrating that. I think, in a way, it's been a shock to the system that will, in the end, be good for the largest organizations, if they grab a hold of it and use it as a time to rethink their approaches to talent, and to structure, and governance. And really design themselves for change going forward.

**Jeff:** Well, Suzan, thank you. This has been a great conversation we've talked about both breaking some myths about thinking across generations. What we've really been exploring here is understanding innovation across generations, innovation as a perennial capability, if I can put it that way.

**Suzan:** Thank you. It's been a pleasure.

**Burt:** Thanks so much, Suzan for sharing that excellent insight on the relationship between age and innovation. It's really interesting to hear how the global health crisis is changing how we think about a multigenerational workforce and innovation.

Next, for our roundtable discussion, I'd like to welcome back Jeff Schwartz, our US Future of Work leader for Deloitte Consulting, and Ashley Reichheld, the leader of Deloitte's US Customer & Marketing practice for the automotive, transportation, hospitality & services sector and Maggie Gross, head of Strategy the New York studio of Heat, a Deloitte business and in this conversation we will be discussing the components of a successful talent strategy for a multigenerational workforce, the risks of not considering a post-generational approach, and how organizations can begin to gather the right data for a more personalized employee experience.

Jeff, Ashley, Maggie thank you for joining. Thank you and welcome to our podcast. Our purpose here is to have a bit of a round table discussion following Jeff's conversation with Suzan. Jeff, we'll ask you to bring forward any insights or takeaways from that discussion, but this round table is really meant to be a bit of a dialogue with Deloitte on this topic of generations in the workplace. So, to get us started, we can start with Maggie. In thinking about this work in this area, and how Heat is addressing this as a digital agency, what are insights that have sparked your thinking about post-generational workforce? How have you seen target audiences, different stakeholders changes and morph, or even come together?

**Maggie Gross:** Yeah. So, I think there's almost a couple of steps back even there, which is the fact that context of culture is, I think, what tends to shape our perspective of what generations care about today, and I think what we're realizing, especially in this pandemic, is the context of culture is putting pressures on us all the same way. So, it's actually more likely that a Generation Z and a Boomer and a Gen X and a Millennial are experiencing the same things, and they ultimately have similar mindsets and insight into the way that the world is around them, and I think that has really big implications for how organizations and brands interact with these folks.

I worked for a global consumer electronics brand several years ago, and their target was just called a youth-minded consumer. It wasn't Millennials. It wasn't based on age. It was literally just based on folks that wanted to kind of be ahead of the curve, and that actually made all the difference in their ultimate success because they weren't limited themselves based on an age range. They were completely targeting based on kind of a value set that folks can share, no matter how old they are and what year they were born in.

**Burt:** Yeah, yeah. I almost feel like it reflects this current world situation that we're in where disruption trumps demographics, and we're all in this together, which we

keep hearing. Ashley, we'd love to hear your perspective in terms of thinking about customers, of customers of products, customers of processes, customers of ideas. How are you seeing the impacts of generations either coming together or remaining distinct?

**Ashley:** We're actually seeing a lot of variables that are shared across generations. So, one, for example, is safety. One of the topics we've researched quite heavily is to try to understand how quickly people are going to come back to staying in hotels or flying on airplanes, and regardless of where in the country you are or regardless of what age you are, regardless of what generation you're from, safety is paramount. It's paramount for everybody coming back, so it's one of the things that really underscores the commonality that exists across generations.

Another one is trust. In fact, today, trust is fractured, and trust is fractured amongst customers. Trust is fractured amongst employees. About 60 percent of Americans don't trust others to social distance. Of the most trusted sources to let people know when it's safe to come back, businesses are actually second-to-last at 4 percent, and almost a third of employees don't trust their employers. So, I think another very sad statistic is that across generations there's a lack of trust today.

**Burt:** Yeah. Interesting. Disturbing about that 4 percent. Jeff, we'd love to bring you in and tie to Deloitte's Human Capital Trends report, which we just published recently. How did we see post-generational demographics impacting our trends, and what are we seeing in that respect?

**Jeff:** So, it's interesting. When we looked at generational trends and we started our research even last summer, we actually started with the premise that the generational discussion was really shifting towards the centrality of Millennials and Generation Z, and we literally talked about the idea that we're all Millennials now. Our thinking really evolved as we did the research, as we did the global survey, and part of what we hit on, I think Maggie's

touched on it and Ashley's touched on it, is part of it is understanding what different demographics and different age groups want.

A really interesting part of it was understanding across those age and demographic groups what they're looking for. So, that's where we came up with just a notion of the post-generational workforce, the Perennials versus Millennials, and Perennials is an idea from an author, Gina Pell, who wrote a book by that name looking at what we have in common, and as we've talked about just in the last few minutes, values, context, trust, or as Ashley said, lack of trust and what we've really challenged ourselves on is to not get caught up in segmenting the workforce and only think of it in terms of are you a Millennial, are you an Xer, are you a Boomer, are you Generation Zed? There's some value in that, but there's value way beyond that in looking at different perspectives in terms of, like the idea, a youthful consumer. A youthful consumer can be a 60-year-old youthful consumer, and you can be a 20-year-old youthful consumer. In fact, you may be a young person who isn't a youthful consumer because of the way that you look at life. So, it's exactly these kinds of questions that we're trying to open up in the trends discussion this year.

So, Ashley, one of the things that you talked about it, and I think we've touched on in the discussion is, how we want control at the same time that we want to feel safe. One of the things that we've seen in, we had the BC era, the C era, and soon we'll be in the AC era. So, we had the before COVID, the COVID era, we're still in the COVID era, as far as I can tell in July 2020, and we're all looking forward to the AC, the after COVID era, but we're seeing a very interesting dynamic, which is we're all, especially parents we're trying to take care of our families and our kids and our work at the same time. And the idea that we have a work life and a family life has been, I don't want to say shattered by the situation we're in, but we're all we're working with our families running around in the background and that's a shift for us. And we're moving from the idea that, in the same way that you can be a Millennial

or you can be a mom or you can be a part of a generation of something else, what we're seeing in this moment is, we are all many, many things at the same time. And part of what we're looking for are work environments that recognize our lives are integrated. How do we actually apply tools and analytics to looking at the notion that we are many things at the same time? How do we do that in consumer marketing?

**Burt:** Yeah, and Jeff, I would expand your question to say, if you don't have kids, you probably have roommates. And I think it's all about this disruption that we're dealing with in the crashing together of our multiple roles, forcing our employers, our organizations, to recognize the broader individual, the broader self that we bring to our work, that many organizations never had to deal with before.

**Ashley:** Well so, it's a phenomenal point, Jeff, that you're making, and I would back up to say, you don't wake up as a customer and you don't wake up as an employee. You wake up as a human being and so, the role that you happen to play at any one point in time, is in fact the role you're playing, but the values you hold as a customer, as an employee, as a person, as a human are really what shift what you do. So, if you really want to understand how to create a workforce environment that's going to be lasting and valuable for your workforce, you've got to understand what it is that they think is important. Those values are ultimately what drives your emotions. And we, as human beings, are emotional creatures. Eighty percent of the choices that we make are emotionally driven. So, if you kind of follow this back, you start with values. Those lead to emotions, those emotions lead to behaviors. That's actually what you need to be able to do in order to effectively help your employees. In the research that we did around values, one of the things that I would note is that values don't actually shift rapidly. They of course changed over time, and, I love quoting Maggie on this because it's one of my favorite things she says, "We think about values like rock, and water falling on rock, and so over time, you

do have rock that shifts and changes like the river, that will mold the rock." Values are like that. Now what's interesting is as this pandemic has shaped up, what we're starting to see is an increase in people wanting control, which links back to the conversation we're having earlier on trust and safety, but also caring for others. So as you think about what your organization needs to do in order to help people feel a sense of belonging, the ability to care and care for others, the ability to be feel cared for, is incredibly important. And we don't expect those things to change overnight, even with the pandemic. We expect this to be a continuum because human values are plastic. And Maggie, you've already started thinking about how to shift from demographics-based segmentation to values-based segmentation. I think it might be worth humming a few bars on that.

**Maggie:** Yeah. My background is as a sort of brand and sort of digital strategist. And in an ad agency environment, really my job is to make sure that creatives and clients understand the people that they're talking to. And I have done so many segmentations that were rooted in demographics that finally, I had to kind of say, "I can't engage with these anymore." And I need to have really honest discussions with clients about number one, they're not particularly accurate. And I actually believe that they're somewhat destructive towards long-term meaningful growth of society. When you place a person's picture on the upper left hand corner of a profile, and you say, "Single mothers are this." And you have a couple of statements, their demographics, how much money is in their wallet, how they feel, where they shop.

Unfortunately, that removes all of the nuances of who these people can and ultimately could be. And only showing single moms as the person on the profile, and not really showing all of the options about who they can be out in the world. We've taken a slightly different approach where we like to look at people based on their values and we'll do on our profiles profile templates, at least inside the agency is, we don't put what

percentage of them are male versus female, what their age is.

Instead, We have a 100 person visual aid that essentially has 100 little stick figures. And it says, "If this audience was a hundred people, how many of them would be male versus female? How many of them would be people of color? How many of them may be LGBTQ?" And we'll sort of choose some different demographics that might be unexpected so that our creative team understands that this is more than just the single image that we happened to find and put in the upper left hand corner of that profile. And instead, we're talking about a very broad base of a bunch of different people that ultimately share a common core set of values, but they may look very different out in the world. So that's been really important for us, not just from helping our clients understand that people are more than how they look on paper, but also ultimately making work that's representative and inclusive of people beyond kind of the things that we might assume about them based on the way they look.

**Jeff:** Maggie what I love about this discussion, and I think it hits on a couple of points that we were exploring when we were researching the trends and writing the trend on the post generational workforce. One is that no matter what part of the workforce we're looking at across spectrum, it's 100 people, it's actually thousands of people, it's actually hundreds of thousands of people. And being able to see them, not as a point, but as a spectrum or portfolio, I think is very powerful. We talked about the fact that an intern could be 70 years old and 24 years old, not just the 24 year old, sort of represents part of that point.

The other point that you mentioned, which is actually on of the themes of another trend in the report, we have a trend on, beyond re-skilling, looking at the role of capability development and the resilience in the workforce. And the tie-in here, which I think is very interesting, based on how you were describing some of the consumer insights research, is we're both looking at a view of who you

are and who you could be at the same time. And in terms of the workforce, this is critical today. It's also very interesting to look at this over the last several months, as we've been in this COVID era, as I describe it, because what's become really interesting from the workforce perspective is not what we hired you to do, and it's not what you were trained to do, right? It's actually what you are capable of doing. And shifting our view of the workforce from the skills and the categories that we thought you were in to understanding your potential and your future capabilities is a big shift that we're seeing right now. And when you and Ashley think of that from a customer insights perspective, I think this is part of what you're touching on, which is kind of about who we are, and a little bit about who we might be.

**Ashley:** There's a huge link between customer and employee that's been unspoken that we should speak out loud. And that is that they're linked, First of all, they can be the same thing. But more importantly, your customers are looking at how companies are treating employees today and deciding whether or not to trust a brand based on how they perceive that brand is treating their employees. So there's absolutely a link. And we were just on the phone with the chief experience officer from one of the big banks. And he was telling us that when his employees feel cared for, they do their best job at taking care of customers. So not only are they looking at each other to see how well we're all doing by them, but that one leads to another, to another.

**Burt:** I would even extend that Ashley to say that when we demonstrate trust to our employees they are empowered to do the right thing, to take initiative with our customers. Or the opposite, if they don't feel trusted then they don't take action when customers need their help.

**Jeff:** One of themes of the trends research this year, is that whether we're talking as Ashley was summarizing it, whether we're talking about who we are as customers, or whether we're talking about who we are as workers and employees, we're uncovering

something. It's only radical because it only took us about 100 years to recognize that fundamentally we need to think of customers and workers as humans and as people. And we can laugh about it, but we tried to segment it. We tried to say, "We think we know who you are, and this is the category that you're in." And whether it's a Millennial, or Maggie, as you were talking about, a working mom, and but over the last 30 years we invented a whole new field called behavioral economics. The first guy to win a Nobel prize in behavioral economics, this is an economics Nobel prize winner, Danny Kahneman never studied economics. He was a psychologist. Well, basically what he said was, "We are people, and to understand economic interactions, we need to really understand human behavior." Now, this is only the last 30 years, right? We had all these ideas in economics and business which saw people as customers, or workers in a relatively mechanistic way. The whole notion of scientific management, that we could sort of put you in a box and we could sell to the box. And what we're really exploring now is how to put humanity and diversity and equity and values, as Maggie and Ashley were talking about, at the center of what we're looking at, and how to do that with the rigor of algorithms, right? It's a very interesting discussion to look at the evolution of the discussion. How do we understand people as customers and workers in increasingly sophisticated ways? But what's at the forefront is the human dimension of the discussion.

**Burt:** Well, now I know, Ashley, we were talking a minute ago about how to measure that. I bet you've got an answer.

**Ashley:** I absolutely do. I'm so glad you asked that question again. We've recently come up with something that we call the trust ID. We talked about the importance of trust in both the workplace, but also for customers, and the fact that it's a needed dimension if you're going to get people to engage the way you want them to engage. Whether you're allowing employees to fill their possibilities, because they trust that you trust them to do it, or whether it's

the customer trusting an employee to get them what they need. So, the trust ID is based on four different attributes. We can measure the extent to which companies demonstrate humanity, transparency, capability, and reliability. Based on those metrics, we understand what people are likely or not likely to do. For example, as a company, when you score really highly on the humanity part of our trust ID, your employees are 260 percent more likely to feel motivated to go to work. They're also, by the way, more likely to be tenured, they're more likely to think their salary is a really good salary. You can tie it specifically to the things that they're going to do. So, we've come up with a way to measure those four elements and then to tie them back to specific behaviors.

**Maggie:** Yeah, I think one of the most interesting things is the capability and reliability aspects of the trust ID is something that is on... I got really excited, Jeff, when you brought up Kahneman, because he's one of my favorite authors. And capability and reliability on the micro side are how you trust another human being. Like, "Do I think that you're good at your job? And do I think that you're going to do what you say you're going to do?" The humanity and transparency are what are the added variables that are needed when it gets to the macro level and you're dealing with an organization. Because I can't really trust company A in those two buckets alone. I need also to understand that they treat their humans well, and I can trust what they say they're going to do. And organizations have to kind of adhere to a bit of a higher, I guess, a higher bar in order to make sure that people know that they're not just trying to take advantage. So, that added element of humanity and transparency is what gives me the confidence, as a consumer or as an employee when I come to that table, and I assume that my employer or the organization I'm about to buy something from, has my best interest at heart. And I think some values-based cues can help me understand that, but it's ultimately in the way that these organizations behave out in the world.

**Burt:** What I'm hearing is, my motivation for treating my employees well, to trust my employees, to think about them as whole human beings is if I don't, my competitor organizations will, and my talent will walk out the door.

**Maggie:** Yeah. And I think the COVID pandemic has made it even more apparent because all us are doing this podcast from our homes right now. And even before the podcast started, we made the joke of, we're not really working from home anymore. We're just living at work now. And those lines are really blurring. And it really means that we treat each other with kindness, and we're all a little bit more human when we show up to work.

**Burt:** Yeah. A little more forgiving. Well, we're just about at our time. I want to thank you all for joining for this conversation, this round table. Jeff one thought or two that you would sum up and maybe bring this all together for us.

**Jeff:** Well, first it's been great having this discussion, Burt, with Maggie and with Ashley, and also talking earlier with Suzan Briganti, the CEO of Swarm Vision. And I think one of the things that we've highlighted in both discussions is that thinking about the humanity of whether our lives as customers or the humanity as workers and employees, and that none of us are any one thing. I know it's almost obvious to say that, but whether we're thinking about it as organizational leaders, we've made a lot of progress by putting people in categories and boxes. And the opportunity today, and this is certainly what we've seen in the COVID era is that we are moms and we are dads and we are workers and we are caregivers and have high levels of ambition, but sometimes we're exhausted and we're all those things at any one time. And being able to deal with that humanity and complexity, I think is what we've seen. And it really goes back to this idea of leading through paradox, recognizing that any one of us is many things at the same time, right? And all of us are capable so much more than we're actually almost ever asked to deliver as a worker. So the

richness of the discussion is very exciting, which is what we're trying to get to in this whole idea. Post-generational workforce is a much broader and energizing discussion than putting us in categories.

**Burt:** Well-said, Jeff. Appreciate you being here and guiding us through. Thank you all.

**Maggie:** Thanks a lot. This was great fun.

**Ashley:** Thanks everybody. Thanks for having us.

**Burt:** Companies are continuously challenged to employ a talent strategy that benefits all segments of a multigenerational workforce. But moving beyond the generational scope to put together talent strategies that offer more tailored worker experience and enhanced meaning in careers will help companies see greater ROI when it comes to innovation and engagement. Thanks again to my colleagues Jeff Schwartz, Ashley Reichheld and Maggie Gross for sharing their perspective, and also thank you to Suzan Briganti for discussing her research findings and applications of innovation talent across generations.

In addition to tuning in to our podcast series, you can also read the report online at [www.deloitte.com/HCTrends](http://www.deloitte.com/HCTrends). Join us next time as we continue to explore the topics and trends that put humans at the center of work.



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