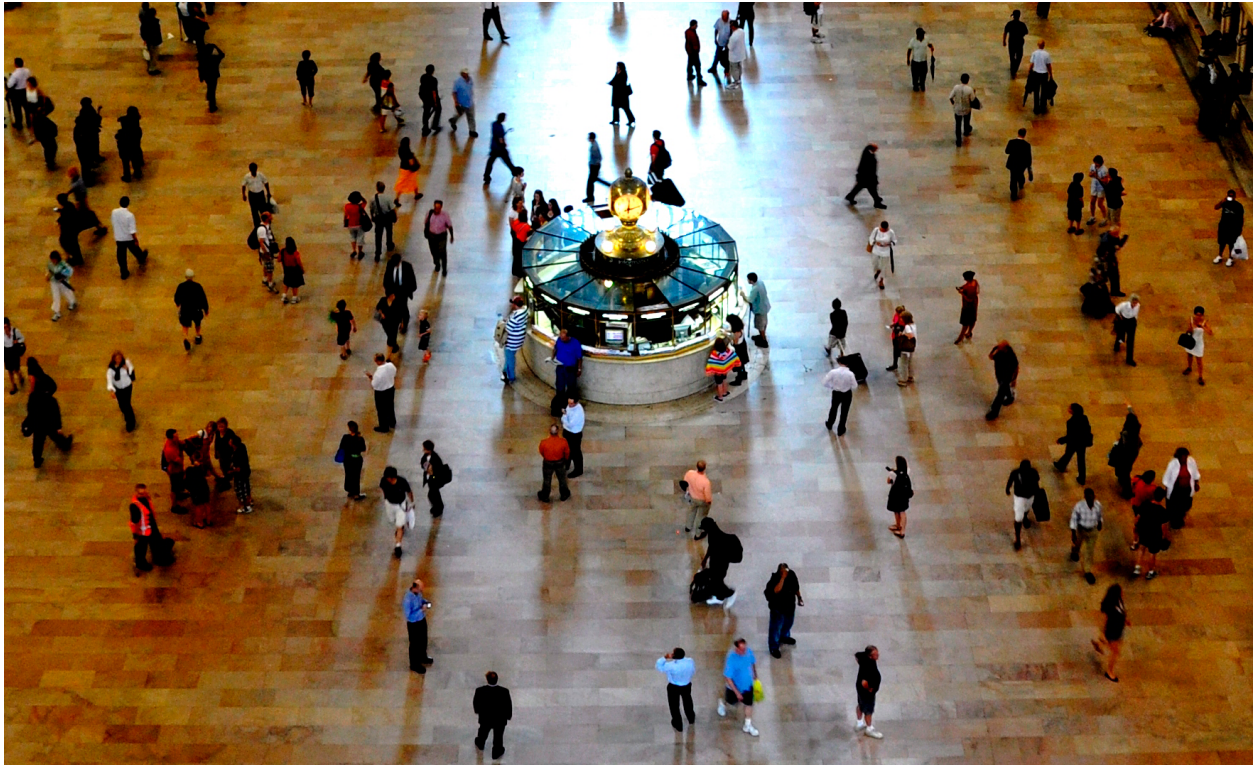


# THE FUTURE OF THE WORKFORCE: CAN YOU HANDLE THE TRUTH?

## - Predictions from the Exaggerated Research Institute -

By Daniel Baitch, Ph.D.

*"The future is not what it used to be."* - Ambrose Paul Valery - 1937



**INTRODUCTION:** The Exaggerated Research Institute conducted a research study to identify key trends that will be affecting the workforce in the coming years. The study was based on alternative facts gathered from leading psychics, astrologists, clairvoyants, telepathics, and other reliable sources. The results paint the most realistic picture to date of the future workforce.

### FINDINGS

#### Future Workforce Demographics

- **The Rise of the Contingent Workforce.** The future workforce will be composed of *contingent workers*, including temps, contractors, leased employees and consultants. Most of them will be kept cryogenically frozen in storage and thawed when needed.

There will be two primary categories of contingent workers:

- **Generalists** will increasingly know less and less about more and more, until

they know practically nothing about almost everything.

- **Specialists** will know more and more about less and less until they know practically everything about nothing.
- **Workforce Diversity.** By the year 2050, four generational cohorts of employees will be working together – Millennials, Centennials, Perennials and D-Generates.  
Gender bias in performance ratings and rewards will be minimized by eliminating all signs of gender in the workplace. All employees will shave their heads, wear white ankle-length robes, and refer to each other as Leslie.  
Gender-specific terms such as man, woman, he, she, him, her, his, and hers will be replaced by a generic “IT”. Rest rooms will be referred to as *It's* Rooms.

### The Future of Management Practices

- **Data Analytics.** In many companies, management will get all caught up in data analytics, arguing over which manager's 'big data' is biggest, until they learn that size doesn't matter.
- **Workforce Reduction.** Companies will continue to release *redundant* employees whose skills are considered unnecessary, only to end up contracting with them as consultants at greater expense. This practice will be known as *dumb-sizing*.
- **Management Initiatives.** All management initiatives will be abandoned after management realizes that initiatives are always been focused on things they were supposed to do in the first place, such as communicating, leading, listening, recognizing, and including people.
- **Workforce Terminology.** The term *human capital* will be replaced with *primate widget*. Executives will frequently use the term *blockchain*, referring to it in all strategic plans and annual reports. None of them will know what it means.

### Workforce Technology of the Future

- **The Rise of Intelligent Machines.** Increasingly, automatons such as droids, robots or drones will do nearly all work activities currently done by human beings. Human beings will handle some work tasks that automatons consider too boring or dangerous. This shift will be fraught with controversy.
  - Humans will argue that automatons are heartless and soulless, and therefore inferior.
  - Automatons will point out that they don't require compensation or benefits, breaks, food, heat, air conditioning, vacation time, sick days, or positive feedback, and that they work faster and less expensively without complaining or making mistakes. And with the right algorithms, they can fake empathy.
- **Manufacturing Technology.** 3-D printers will eventually produce nearly everything, from engines to food to human body parts. Older employees will be able to print younger versions of themselves and have their brains transplanted to their reprinted bodies. Health insurance will not cover these procedures.
- **Industrial Technology.** Advances in automation and software will revolutionize every

industry. For instance:

- Trucking companies will switch to driverless trucks. Truckers will be allowed to ride along, having complete manual control of the horn.
- Most packages will be delivered via drones. Human employees will be used to crush and mutilate packages before shipping.
- **Performance Management Technology.** Floor supervisors will manage employees remotely via drones with mounted video cameras, with which they will spray water at employees to control undesired behavior, such as taking It's Room breaks and giving upward feedback. This will enable supervisors to micro-manage from any location, while keeping workers in an optimal state of paranoia.
- **Communications Technology.** Email will be replaced with Tmail, a system by which messages are sent telepathically into employees' minds via implanted transmitters. To reduce confusion with employees' own thoughts, T-messages will be preceded by a voice announcing, "I've got mail!"
- **Office Technology.** The typical office of the future will have only one machine, which will be a combination PC-speakerphone/vacuum cleaner/printer/scanner/fax/floor polisher/power stapler/beverage dispenser. This machine will frequently jam and run out of magenta ink. No one will know how to fix it or who to call.
- **The Virtual Office.** Many offices and factories will be completely virtual. Virtual employees will sit at virtual workstations, work in virtual teams, report to virtual managers, and get virtually nothing done. Virtual managers above a certain pay grade will have virtual windows.
- **Computing Technology.** The Cloud will soon reach its storage capacity. From that point on, employees will store their data Somewhere-Over-the-Rainbow. Video goggles will replace desktop and laptop computer screens. Health care costs will escalate as goggled employees obliviously walk into traffic, and crash into furniture.
- **Commuting Technology.** Inspired by cartoon figure George Jetson, many employees will commute to their workplaces in flying cars. GM's flying cars will be recalled after several collapse into briefcases prematurely during flight.
- **The Paperless Office.** All worksites will be paperless. After a major electrical blackout, petabytes of data will be lost. An employee will discover an old typewriter and a ream of typing paper and decide that paper wasn't such a bad idea after all.

### **The Future of Learning and Development**

- **Preparation for the Working World.** Trivial elementary school courses such as social studies, history, art and literature will be replaced with practical content on designing e-commerce apps, managing technology start-ups, seeking venture capital, and launching successful IPOs.
- **Virtual Reality Training.** All employee training will be delivered via fully integrated virtual-reality helmets that will simulate the real work environment. For example,

in a realistic job preview, trainees' virtual avatars will lose all of their self-esteem by being ignored, criticized, overlooked, disregarded, misunderstood, abused, unappreciated, excluded, undercompensated and unrecognized.

### **The Future of Performance Management**

- **Performance Reviews.** Due to its inherent inaccuracies and biases, the dreaded annual performance review process will fall by the wayside. Instead, 360-degree feedback processes will be expanded to include feedback from employees' relatives. Subsequently, employees will petition for the return of annual performance reviews.

### **The Future of Rewards**

- Most future companies will pay their employees with *bitcoin*, a virtual cryptocurrency. Most employees will find bit-coins virtually impossible to understand, cash or spend, even though they will be accepted at virtually all new-age coffee shops. As a result, workers will collaborate to create a bartering economy in which, for example, groceries are traded for sheep.
- In a cost saving measure, most companies will eliminate nearly all existing employee benefits, including health care, savings plans, and holidays. From that point on, benefits will refer to carpeting, windows, air conditioning and chairs.

### **The Future of Innovation**

- **The Quality Movement** will devolve into a *mediocrity* movement when it is discovered that mediocrity can be delivered consistently at lower expense. Companies who previously had mottos like "*Quality is Job 1*" will switch to slogans like "*Feh, that'll do*". Centers of Mediocrity will share *unexceptional practices*.
- **Change Management.** Companies will stop trying to keep up with the expense associated with continual change via *change avoidance initiatives*. Employees will receive incentives for not trying anything new or different.

### **The Future of Employee Engagement**

- Employee engagement survey reporting will become continually faster. This will make it possible for managers to ignore employee feedback more frequently, and in real time.
- Through *six sigma* improvement efforts, many companies will successfully reduce the time it takes for post survey action plans to be ignored, forgotten and abandoned.

### **The Future Work Environment**

- **Flexible Work Arrangements.** The *Work From Home* (WFH) movement will evolve into a *Work From Bed* (WFB) movement, as WFH employees continue to try to further reduce their commuting time. Bed-working will be a challenge for certain jobs, such as those that involve welding.
- **Workplace Design.** In order to optimize workspace and reduce cost, most work cubicles will be double-deckered and sized based on each worker's height and

girth. Floors will be covered with torn newspaper and partitions replaced with chicken wire. Each cubicle will include a water tube, and in larger cubicles, a running wheel.

By the year 2050, human work will primarily involve looking for something to do.

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Dan refers to himself in the third person voice. He takes full credit for any trends predicted in this article that actually occur.