



Trends on the Future of Work

Ashok Krish, Head of Social Media & Workplace Reimagination
at Tata Consulting Services' (TCS) Digital Enterprise, gives us
a rundown on how the way we work is changing



Bots Will Boost Collaboration

Companies should be looking to use technology and data in more interesting ways, rather than relying on age-old wisdom and insights about the workforce which are increasingly not relevant.

We often find leaders are interested in agile forms of working inspired by tech companies, and yet often humans select the teams. Companies should be looking more towards artificial intelligence (AI) and big data to help select teams and manage workflow in the most optimal way.

For example, chat bots are computer programs that mimic conversations with people using AI and are being used by companies, including TCS, to help foster a collaborative environment. The bot can measure who you speak to the most and give you prompts to approach those who you could communicate with more.

External collaboration platforms that allow employees to send instant messages also continue to gather pace. For example, Slack, founded in 2009, has 2.3 million daily active users. In our recent report, [Workplace of the Future](#), 64 per cent of the European youths we surveyed stated that social and cross-cultural intelligence is the most important skill for the future, while 73 per cent believe that technology enables transparency and improves decision making.

Rise of the Multi-Skilled Workforce

The only way to be unique in this job market is to be multidisciplinary. Anyone in a specialised role is at risk. AI software

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is getting very efficient at narrow, focused roles and especially those that deal with quantitative information – for example, it’s much easier to replace an analyst than it is a plumber.

As a result, we’re starting to see organisations transform the way they interview and hire people. If you look at Google and Microsoft for instance, they are looking at a very interesting range of skillsets with a combination of design and engineering skills.

Now, everything after the design phase is a black box, outsourced or a machine makes it. Those with design-thinking skills and deep empathy who are able to look at a problem and translate it into design which then becomes an app, platform or something that you can sell, are becoming the most important people in most enterprises. More companies are looking for people with creativity and the willingness to learn, rather than just pre-existing knowledge.

The time of these individuals is best shared between working on multiple projects, rather than just one. In a way,

this completely messes up traditional approaches to project management, however we are seeing it lead to better productivity.

Space for Experimentation

Large organisations need to create spaces where they facilitate customers, students, freelancers and start-ups to be able to collectively try out new things.

That’s the only way they’ll come up with new services and products faster in a world where entrepreneurs are able to execute at a staggering pace.

So, organisations are now starting to think about hackathon spaces where you would invite a mix of your customers, students and freelancers. A lot of the best talent in the next five years will be freelance and the most talented people will not want to invest their time in one company. ■



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After having worked with Fortune 500 clients on several large IT projects as a solution architect (a job profile that one eventually reaches when a tech company does not want you to write code), Ashok now heads the Social Media & Workplace Reimagination practice for the TCS’ Digital Enterprise. It is a role that involves shaping the future of his customers’ workplaces by leveraging digital forces such as social, mobile, big data, cloud and AI.

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