The Future of Work

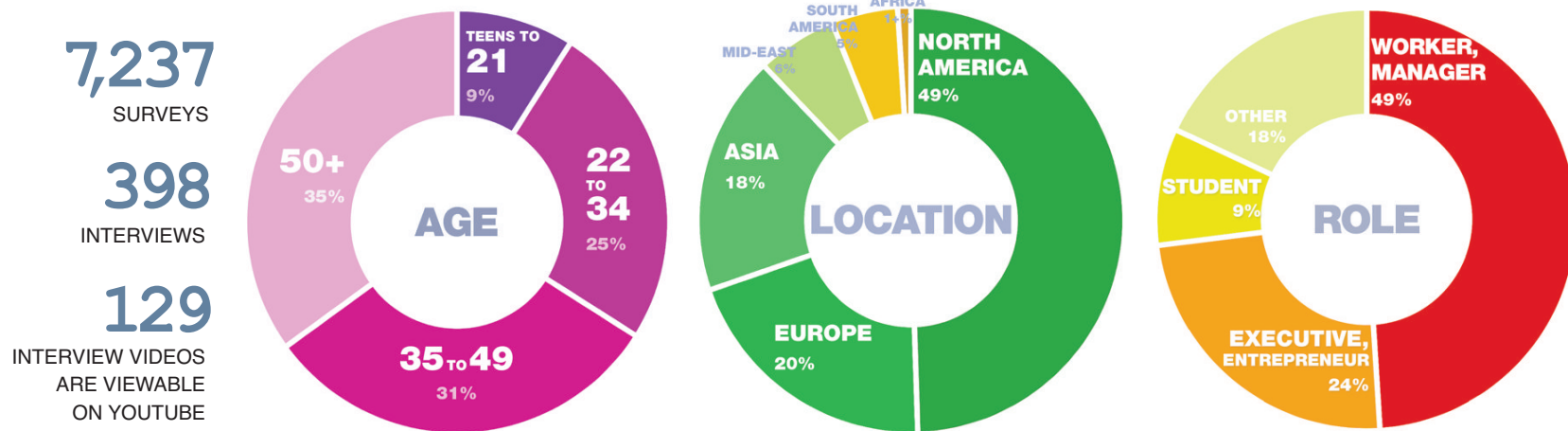## Making the Future Work

2015—2020

AND DECADES TO COME

Making the Future Work

2015—2020

AND DECADES TO COME

Rather than add to all the hyperventilating about the disruptive changes that will impact and reimagine the Future of Work...

We studied what it will take to make those disruptive changes work and what matters in the future of work.

7,237 SURVEYS

398 INTERVIEWS

129 INTERVIEW VIDEOS ARE VIEWABLE ON YOUTUBE

AGE
- TEENS TO 21 — 9%
- 22 TO 34 — 25%
- 35 TO 49 — 31%
- 50+ — 35%

LOCATION
- NORTH AMERICA — 49%
- EUROPE — 20%
- ASIA — 18%
- MID-EAST — 9%
- SOUTH AMERICA — 9%
- AFRICA — 1%

ROLE
- WORKER, MANAGER — 49%
- EXECUTIVE, ENTREPRENEUR — 24%
- OTHER — 18%
- STUDENT — 9%

RESEARCH FUTURISTS

For more than two decades, under the direction of Bill Jensen, CEO of **The Jensen Group, The Search for a Simpler Way** has interviewed and surveyed over a million people around the globe.

For this Future of Work project, we crowdsourced the research with an amazing team of thought leaders, academics, researchers, interviewers, pattern recognizers, clarifiers, editors and networkers.   This project's team included:

- Brian Barela, Senior Digital Marketing Consultant, Levatas
- Suzanne Daigle, NuFocus Strategic Group
- David Dunnington, M.OrgDev, Our Best Work
- Sue Elliott, Inspire Profits
- François Lavallée, Aliter Concept
- Johann Gauthier, Global Rockstars Community
- Bill Jensen, Project Leader, The Jensen Group
- Mark Koskiniemi
- Mathieu Laferrière, PMP
- Mark Leyba
- Jean Marrapodi, Ph.D, New England College of Business
- Eileen McDargh, The Resiliency Group
- Tanveer Naseer, M.Sc., Tanveer Naseer Leadership
- Papitha Cader, M.Eng., PlatformPlus Ltd, New Zealand
- Linda Stevenson, Stevenson & Associates
- Lance Tracy, Accenture
- Tony Vlahos, JD, ExecuNet
- Mike Wittenstein, MBA, Storyminers
  See page 35 for links to all teammates

For information about this study:
Bill Jensen, bill@simplerwork.com
www.simplerwork.com

To view interview videos,
go to Future of Work Study on YouTube

Methodology
We asked scores of questions revolving around two core themes:

- What are people's **dreams** for the future and for the future of work?
- What are the **tough choices** leaders need to make to lead us into the future?

We then performed a gap analysis: Are companies and leaders making the tough choices and facing the tough challenges that match how people want to work and live? What changes need to occur to close the gaps?

Our huge thanks to the 7,635 interviewees and survey respondents. Thank you for sharing your insights and passions!

Making the Future Work

We are standing at the dawn of a new era.

Infinite possibilities.

Amazing opportunities.

Where our hopes and dreams can be realized.

And our passions will guide us.

And our humanity and joys will fulfill us.

**If only we could get out of our own way
and stop shooting ourselves in the foot.**

Advisory
The results of this study should not be viewed as stand-alone findings.
Organizational capacity, the relationship of a company with its workforce, leadership calls to action, and all the other findings within this report are complex issues extending beyond what is mentioned here.
This report should be considered one portion of an overall strategy to address these issues.

1

LEADERSHIP

PAGES 6-12

How long will leaders hold back the future?

The **biggest fundamental shift in capacity** is in freeing people

to be their best. Yet too many leaders are **holding back that future**

because it comes wrapped in risk.

2

RELATIONSHIP

PAGES 13-23

We've been asking the wrong questions.

Engagement — and how we approach employees' relationship with a company —

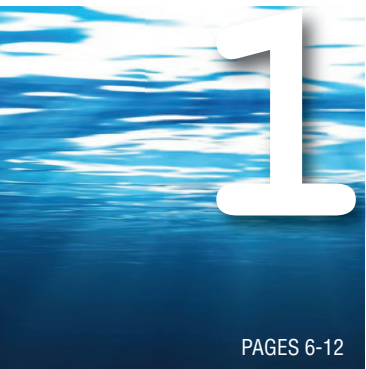is so horribly incomplete that it **is dangerous to leaders who rely on it.**

3

FACING CHOICES

PAGES 24-31

The future of work is personal.

Very personal. The hardest and most important work in the future of work

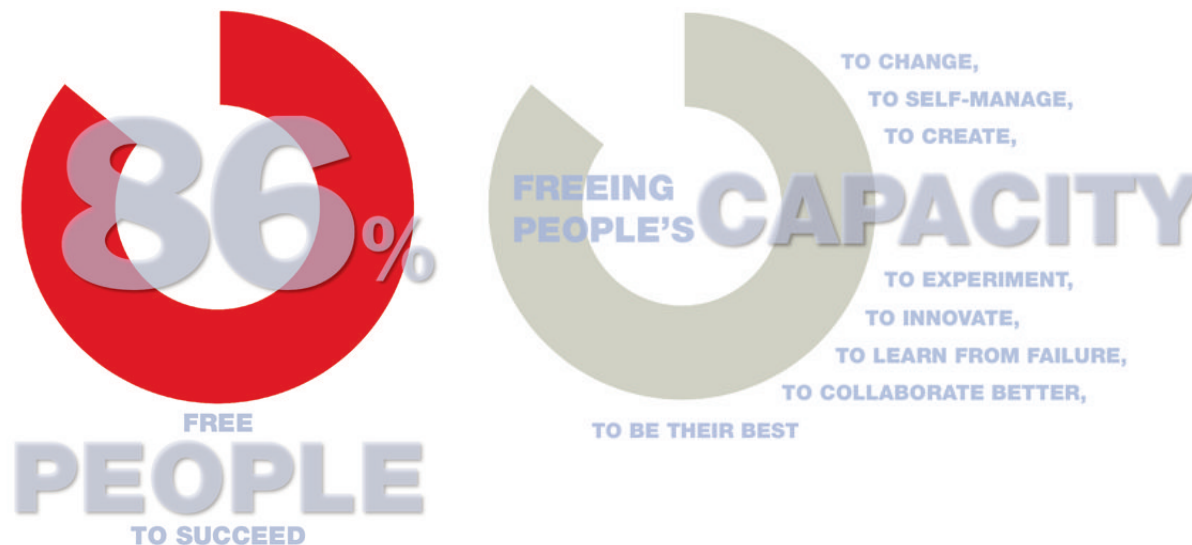centers on one detail: **personal accountability in decision-making.**

1

PAGES 6-12

How long will leaders hold back the future?

The **biggest fundamental shift in capacity** is in freeing people

to be their best. Yet too many leaders are **holding back that future**

because it comes wrapped in risk.

86% of respondents said the toughest challenges and choices facing senior execs were people issues — how to find them, organize them, manage them, resource them and develop them — so that everyone has the capacity to help their teams and their company succeed.

However, respondents went far beyond "treat your people better." They cited, like many others have, the need for a strong, passionate vision to connect employees to their company. And **to truly move into the future of work,** they stressed that most every people management system has to change. That the future of work is moving from hierarchy to wirearchy (network). That the workforce needs to be **freed to create value** in ways that today's hierarchies do not do.

86%

FREE

PEOPLE

TO SUCCEED

FREEING PEOPLE'S **CAPACITY**

TO CHANGE,
TO SELF-MANAGE,
TO CREATE,
TO EXPERIMENT,
TO INNOVATE,
TO LEARN FROM FAILURE,
TO COLLABORATE BETTER,
TO BE THEIR BEST

Leaders have been hyperfast in pushing cost/efficiency changes, marketplace changes, and risk-management changes…

But they are glacially slow in rethinking hierarchies, planning, budgeting, managing, resourcing, training and development

HIERARCHY
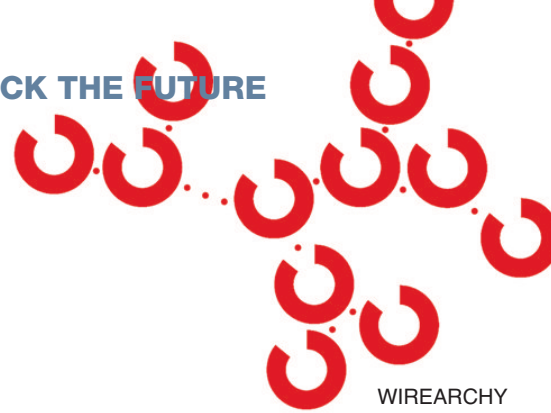
WIREARCHY

Too many leaders are willing to be out of sync with the needs of the workforce because embracing the future of work, including changing how companies are run, means higher risks, uncertainty and (perceived) loss of control of outcomes.

Acceptable losses in capacity

**Workplace Capacity Crisis
This is the urgent gap** that business should be addressing, but is not.

Unacceptable losses in capacity

Company structures, hiring, budgeting, planning, teaming, managing and training and development all need to be urgently disrupted, reimagined and redesigned for the 21st century.

The future of work workforce isn't buying this slowdown or rationale. Because the current losses in capacity greatly increase their workload and stress, and endanger work/life balance. And because it **squanders massive amounts of value** that they could be creating. The future of work calls for an overhaul of business and work design.

Our respondents echoed the sentiment posted by venture capitalist Vinod Khosla on TechCrunch.com, September 2014:
"Although a hundred entrepreneurs may fail for each one that succeeds, the successes make the failures worthwhile.
Too often, there is a tendency, especially among investors, large corporations, and public officials, to reduce the probability of failure to the point that the consequences of success become inconsequential."

What one thing, more than any other, is needed for leaders to **stop slowing down** and **holding back** the **next big fundamental capacity shift in work?**

Courage

Courage to trust your people a lot more, freed from many of today's Industrial Age management practices.
Courage to embrace a networked future that blends clear goals and helpful guidance with more self-organization, shared leadership and shared accountability for results than today's hierarchies allow.
Courage to create a vision and chart an innovative course into uncharted waters — and stick with it.
Courage to encourage intense diversity of thinking and debate. Courage to create a culture based on failing forward.

Many of today's most successful ventures — from Google to Wikipedia, to Facebook, AirBnB, eBay, Amazon, Apple, Zappos, SAS, Wegmans, Zingermans, Re:Life, Menlo Innovations and so many others — are either based on new ways of organizing and empowering people or are creating the tools for all people to empower themselves. Every company needs to stop restraining its people by holding back and risk-managing and tip-toeing around the approaches that will deliver the future of work.

STUCK IN THE PAST?

Our respondents echoed this September 2014 post by McKinsey on *Management Intuition for the Next 50 Years*:
"Businesses suffer from a surprising degree of inertia in their decisions about how to back up strategies with hard cash to make them come to fruition. Research by our colleagues showed that between 1990 and 2010, US companies almost always allocated resources on the basis of past, rather than future, opportunities."

OR LEAP INTO THE FUTURE?

BENCHMARKING FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

It's not with another company. It's with yourself. The path to the future of work is simple:

Are you reinventing all your people processes at the same rate (or faster) than you are changing your cost/productivity processes?

Is there just as much pressure from senior management to change how the company is structured and how people are resourced and developed to meet their bottom-up needs as there is for cost-containment, growth, risk-management, competitiveness and speed?

If yes, then odds are you are on-track for creating the future of work.

Wrapped in risk or not: **Time has run out.**

Further slow downs take us all down, via the **global talent time bomb.**

Urgent

One of our interviewees is Gib Bulloch, Executive Director for Accenture Development Partnerships. In Harvard Business Review[1] and in a shared study by Accenture, Brookings Institution and The Global Business Coalition for Education,[2] he shares that we are facing a **global talent time bomb** — we simply do not have enough people with the right kinds of skills for 21st century jobs.

If you're a leader, you're living this. Manpower's 2014 Talent Shortage Survey: 36% of companies are reporting talent shortages. Oxford Economics: By 2021, 25 countries will have serious shortages of college-educated talent, including USA, UK, Canada, Japan, France and Germany.

Rethinking education is clearly essential. But we also need to **unleash all the unused, amazing capacity in companies** that is currently being wasted. We need to do so much more to **TRUST** the great decision-making within each individual and **TRUST** everyone to fully share their views and insights in ways that don't fit within hierarchical structures and ways of thinking.

Leaders, it's great that you're doing everything you can to find and keep the rock stars out there. But our respondents wanted you to know that just like the apps on our phones are freeing unbelievable capacity and imagination for everyone on the planet, we need to rethink people management and work design. So that 100% of your employees can be rock stars. **So that everyday, ordinary people can do the extraordinary.**

A few examples of overhaul from our interviewees...

Accenture tied leadership development to social giving. Execs take a cut in pay to develop themselves through nonprofit projects.

Service Rocket manages global offices not through hierarchy, but through its core values, including "straight talk" between teammates

Menlo Innovations built a company on one idea: Joy. Among other innovations: The buddy system. Every job is essentially shared with someone else.

Fairtrasa has done more than build a sustainable fair trade fruits and vegetable business. It educates everyone in its supply chain.

"

"Systems have to change. And they will change **whether you like it or not.**"

— **Patrick Struebi,** Founder & CEO, Fairtrasa

"The way it's been done is no longer relevant, but it is also **morally wrong,** and we need to do it in a different way."

— **Traci Fenton,** Founder & CEO, WorldBlu

"We have to start thinking not about fitting people into jobs, but rather looking at the person and **creating a job around them,** nurturing their passions and developing their skills."

— **Vivek Bapat,** SAP Global Vice President, Portfolio & Strategic Management

"You can't find answers just with the CEO or with the Board of Directors — **your answers are actually at ground level.**"

— **Choon Neo Siow,** Managing Director, Training and Performance Enhancement, FedEx Asia

"The biggest challenge is the **corporate immune system** of antibodies — the norms, the risk-management, the bureaucracy in many companies that looks to snuff out change or things that don't look like normal business or maximizing profit or shareholder value."

— **Gib Bulloch,** Executive Director, Accenture Development Partnerships

"Start with **passion** and reverse engineer from there."

— **Chris Carmichael,** Serial Entrepreneur; Founder, Crater

"So much of the work environment is based on fear. Fear is destructive. Period." — Survey respondent

"The way they make us do things is soul-sucking." — Survey respondent

"It's sad that so many of us have to quit and start our own businesses to do anything that matters." — Survey respondent

"

2015—2020   How much longer will leaders hold back capacity,   hold back the future?

And, because we all have a voice in the global conversation
and can leverage that voice for change...
How much longer before we all find this squandering of human capacity intolerable?

The greatest opportunity ever of unleashing human capacity is staring us in the face, and we're OK with how it's being wasted?
By 2100, there will be 12 billion people on this planet.[1]
Don't we owe it to them, our future, to unleash our amazing capacity, and theirs, now?

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY, TAKE 2

We didn't want to be too subtle about the urgency our respondents wanted us to convey...
Especially when they spoke about whether or not they can achieve their dreams and goals where they work.

DEAR LEADER:

Change the design of work, now!

IT'S TIME TO FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE THE WAY WE MANAGE PEOPLE AND THEIR WORK...

Unleashing everyone's amazing capacity to create value.

HOLDING BACK THE FUTURE OF WORK

CREATING THE FUTURE OF WORK

SEVEN WAYS WE DESIGN WORK
The future of work is leveraging the best mix of 4, 5, 6, 7 for your organization

1

CHAIN OF COMMAND
Examples: Military, Police

2

BUREAUCRACY
Example: Government

3

20th CENTURY HIERARCHY
Example: Most companies

4

PROJECTS
Examples: Movies, sports, freelance
Traits: Creative, defined start/end

5

ENTREPRENEURIAL
Examples: Google, Apple, Tesla
Traits: Combines 20thC with Projects: Focus on innovation

6

PATHFINDERS
Examples: Zappos, Menlo, Valve
Traits: Piloting new 21stC ways to organize people/work

7

WIREARCHY
Examples: Wikipedia, Linux, AirBnB
Traits: Leveraging the power of community

2

PAGES 13-23

We've been asking the wrong questions.

Engagement — and how we approach employees' relationship with a company —

is so horribly incomplete that it **is dangerous to leaders who rely on it.**

All relationship conversations
use too much of **a corporate-centric lens.**

WE ALL CRAVE BEING ENGAGED AT WORK!
At face-value, no one can argue with the idea of engagement!
But a **FATAL FLAW** is built into the lens through which we
understand our relationship with companies
and our relationship with work.
We are not asking the questions that will deliver
the future of work.

Respondents told us that today's conversations about
the relationship, and its measures, place too much emphasis on
how it benefits the company and are **missing at least half
of what the future of work relationship** is about.

FATAL FLAW EXAMPLE: IBM's 2014 SMARTER WORKFORCE INSTITUTE STUDY
"IBM defines engagement as the extent
to which employees are motivated to contribute
to organizational success, and are willing to apply
discretionary effort to accomplish tasks important
to the achievement of organizational goals." [1]

**The current corporate-centered lens
blinds leaders as to future of work realities.**

The lens the future of work workforce uses...

They see companies as **vehicles to achieve their goals and dreams** — vehicles that can **amplify** their passions, achievements and community relationships **beyond** what they could have done on their own or elsewhere.

COMPANY AS VEHICLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS

That flops everything

Priorities... Focus...

The questions we ask...

The conversations we need to have...

How we listen...

The employee / employer relationship...

Everything

A company's and leader's vision is absolutely crucial to this — employees will stay with or leave companies based on their vision — but **only if** that vision matches what's already in the worker's soul, and **only if** the company creates an exciting space for the worker to explore his/her passions and push them further. **Visions excite people...** But the way many companies run their business destroys that excitement.

Add in other trends — continued growth in freelance workers, GenY/GenZ views about work, tenure with any one company continues to decrease — and the **workforce's view of seeing companies as vehicles to fulfill their own needs will only get stronger.**

70%
VERY HAPPY
6%
HAPPY
62%
I AM
HAPPY

69%
STRONGLY AGREE
7%
AGREE
62%
I CAN ACHIEVE MY
DREAMS

72%
VERY HOPEFUL, OPTIMISTIC
8%
HOPEFUL, OPTIMISTIC
68%
I AM
HOPEFUL
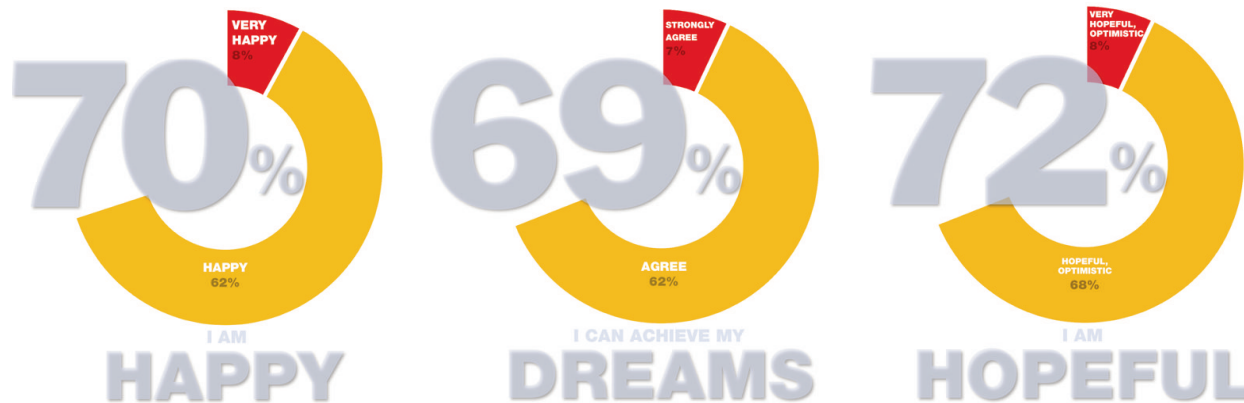
We're Happy…   We Can Achieve Our Dreams…
Just Not With You…   You Are Not Meeting Our Needs…

That's the main message our survey respondents want today's leaders to hear, loud'n'clear.
70% say they are happy at this moment.
69% believe in their own ability to achieve their dreams.
72% feel hopeful and optimistic about the future.

So all the reports of chronic disengagement at work do not mean that the workforce is disengaged from working on what matters to them.... They are very engaged in their hopes and dreams!

However, they are extremely frustrated with business's lack of caring or desire or ability to be a vehicle for achieving their dreams and goals. Only 29% agreed with the statement, "I can achieve my dreams and goals where I currently work."

This means nearly three quarters of the people who work do not believe they can meet their personal goals in today's work environments.

Note: Two-thirds of those who can achieve their dreams [67% of 29%] were either senior execs, entrepreneurs, or worked in extremely entrepreneurial environments (e.g., Silicon Valley firms, startups). Only 9.8% [33% of 29%] of line-level workers and mid-managers working in non-startup, more-established types of environments believed they can achieve their dreams and goals where they work.

29%
STRONGLY AGREE
7%
AGREE
22%
I CAN
ACHIEVE
MY DREAMS
WHERE I CURRENTLY WORK

The elephant in the room...

100%

of the workforce are consumers.

CLIMBING TOWARD

100%

of those consumers have experienced some form of intense personalization, connections, joy, passion or achievement though their phone, tablet, gaming, entertainment, education, shopping or community experiences. Impacting their expectations, beliefs...

More than two-thirds of interviewees

68%
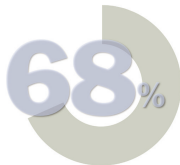
mentioned how employees' phone and online experiences were changing their perceptions, attitudes and expectations and/or mentioned some experience outside of work as the kind of standard that leaders should pursue.

FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK WORKFORCE...

The standard for evaluating any work experience is no longer work... It's life.

MEANING: The standard against which the workforce will evaluate all corporate IT and work process experiences is each individual's phone.

The standard against which the workforce will evaluate company culture, managers and leadership is each individual's tribe, community, mentors and coaches.

The standard for engagement is no longer just comparing one company to another. It's also whether one's work experiences are as good as their life experiences.

The future of work requires a completely new set of questions that are workforce-centered, life-experience centered — that explore whether the design of work meets workforce needs as much as company needs...
Whether the company is a vehicle for them to achieve their personal goals and dreams. Questions/Likert statements* such as...

- I can achieve my next five-year career goals and dreams within this company.

- The commitments that I am asked to make for the success of the company
  are aligned with and support my personal passions and purpose.

- My company is respectful of my time and attention, and is focused on using it wisely and effectively.

- Corporate-built tools and processes are as good as or better than any app
  or tool I can buy, or build, for my own use.

- My team and I have the freedom to self-manage and to achieve our company vision
  and our goals as we see fit.

- My senior management team asks all of us to evaluate their performance, to give them feedback directly —
  not just through surveys — and then acts on the feedback they receive.

- I believe in my senior management's vision for the future.
  I work for a company that is creating the future of (fill in the blank).

- The way this company makes a difference in the world is aligned with what I believe truly matters.

- This company pays all full-time, part-time and vendor teammates a fair and living wage.

- Learning and development within this company exceeds anything my social network or I could design.

- Our culture treats failures as necessary on the path to innovation and greater creativity, and crucial to our continuous learning and opportunities for growth.

- My manager provides the same quality (or better) support, guidance and resources as my social network.

- My company understands that I am investing my assets — time, attention, ideas, knowledge, passion, energy and social networks — to make the company go, and is providing an appropriate return on my investments.

- My company is a meritocracy — the best ideas get selected and implemented — and our open and collaborative environment helps all teammates in promoting our ideas.

****Rough ideas:** We'll leave it to social scientists to select the few best questions and perfect the wording of each question. The list above is for examples only. It is not comprehensive and is not intended to replace engagement as a new model. However, the list is representative of what the future of work workforce says matches their concerns, needs, hopes and dreams. **The questions above view the company as a vehicle to fulfill individual needs, vs. the other way around.** Note: **Customer/client delight drives everything!** Those questions are crucial — omitted from pages 17-18 only as our focus was on what needed to be reinvented.

In the future of work...

50/50

The conversation we have about the company/workforce relationship, and the questions we ask to understand it and track it, **need to change to be 50% corporate-centered, 50% workforce-centered.** (Customer delight woven into both)

50/50 REDUCES
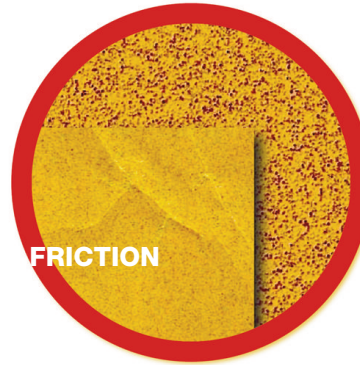
FRICTION

FRICTION:
Anything that slows down a transaction.
Companies study this with laser focus —
when it comes to **customers.**
But because they're asking mostly
corporate-centered questions, they're
**missing a lot of the friction
within their own organization.**

Because leaders are not asking the questions they should be asking (...the first rule of top-down culture is:
don't ask questions you're not willing to address if the feedback is negative...), leaders are **missing learning about
all the friction that they built into their employer/employee relationship.**

The shift that is needed in this area of the future of work has two parts:
Part 1: The art and science of developing 21st century workforce-centered measures
Part 2: The art and science of integrating and balancing workforce measures with company measures

Part 1: For the purposes of discussion, we're calling these **Galilean Measures,** to communicate the reality that
embracing the future of work will require a way of thinking **as heretical as Galileo's** assertion that the sun did not
revolve around the earth.

Dear leader: In the future of work, the workforce does not revolve around company needs. Deal with it.

Part 2: For the purposes of discussion, we're calling these **Taijitu Measures,** to communicate the balance required
when integrating workforce- and company-centered measures. **Taijitu** is the Chinese term for the graphic that **combines
two parts, yin and yang, in harmony.**

To successfully build the future of work, leaders will first need the **courage to face Galilean truths.**

Then the future of work will require leaders with the values and skills to **create the highest Taijitu standards** —
where the work of leadership is to constantly balance decisions, budgets, strategies and priorities to meet both
company and workforce needs — as well as balancing head and heart, where passions matter as much as plans.

IN FUTURE OF WORK CONVERSATIONS, EVERY LEADER WILL HAVE TO PUBLICLY ANSWER THIS QUESTION

SIMPLER FOR WHOM?

Simplicity eliminates friction.

But because most companies are so corporate-centric in how they define simplicity, their approaches to work design actually **create friction for the workforce.** (Senior execs are shooting themselves in the foot!)

During the 11 years prior to our focus on the Future of Work, 2003—2014, as part of our ongoing study, we asked more than 65,000 people these two questions…

Which group consistently gets the **MOST** attention when we simplify things?

☐ COMPANY   ☐ WORKFORCE
☐ EXECUTIVES   ☐ CUSTOMERS

Which group consistently gets the **LEAST** attention when we simplify things?

☐ COMPANY   ☐ WORKFORCE
☐ EXECUTIVES   ☐ CUSTOMERS

☒ MOST
EXECUTIVES

**50%
97%**

Ranges (50%-97%, 77%-100%) reflect different companies' results. Pattern is clear: **Friction is consistently pushed down onto the workforce.** This area is not being studied in ways that the future of work workforce says it should be. Nor is it equitable — sources of friction that senior execs care about get rapid attention, while they continuously add to workforce sources of friction.

☒ LEAST
WORKFORCE

**77%
100%**

Simpler for whom?

This will be one of the most crucial questions in the future of work.

Simplicity can only address the huge amounts of friction that companies push down onto the workforce if leaders have the **courage to face Galilean truths** — that **true simplicity** includes workforce-centric **PROFOUND PERSONALIZATION:** tailoring a lot more of what each worker receives to his/her own needs, tastes, desires and preferred ways of working, reading, listening and learning.

"

"Simplicity is the holy grail. We've made work way, way too complicated."

— **Chris Kane,** ex-Head of Real Estate, BBC Workplace

"We need workplaces that **harness people's intrinsic motivation.** Leaders have to get out of the way. Stop directing and supervising... Nurture and steward people on a quest.

— **John Verdon,** Former Futurist for Canadian National Defense, Complexity and Foresight Consultant

"We're in the midst of a fundamental capacity shift — a game changer. A lot of change is afoot with architecture shifting from hierarchy to network. And the question is: **Just how far out of sync are you willing to be?"**

— **Arthur Brock,** Founder, New Currency Frontiers, Emerging Leader Labs

"Family." • "Inspire others." • "Make a difference."
"Be happy." • "Live a life of love, caring." • "Leave a legacy."
— Sampling of survey respondent's dreams and goals

"The balance of power between organizations and people **is shifting.** That's a good thing because it holds everybody more accountable and makes us deliver better products and experiences."

— **Rachel Happe,** Co-Founder, The Community Roundtable

"I am an equity warrior. I seek to flip the script on traditional outcomes. We have an obligation to move society forward. **The eyes of the future are looking back** and demanding that we get it right."

— **Stephen Ritz,** South Bronx Teacher, Education Innovator

"

2015–2020 Will we face the Galilean truths that are foundational to the future of work?

That companies are middlemen between each individual's labor and the marketplace,
and it's only worth staying at a particular company if it continues to provide a good return
on our time, ideas, passions, purpose and energy.

And that personal ROI is tracked in non-corporate-centric ways:
Does this company help me achieve my dreams and my goals in a timeframe that meets my needs?
Does it amplify my vision, passions, achievements, and community relationships and networks
beyond what I could have done on my own or elsewhere?
Does it promote and support collaboration as openly and intensely and wonderfully
as I experience with all my networks beyond this company?
Does it help me achieve amazing results more simply, more easily
than I could have done on my own or elsewhere?

The nature of work, our relationship to it, and how the marketplace pays for our efforts are in the midst of
major upheaval and 21st century disruptions. We will only fully understand those shifts, and how best
to address them, when we start thinking differently about our relationship with companies.

The work of 2015—2020...

A willingness to understand the world as it is, with the audacity and moral courage to build a world that could be.

Our thanks to interviewee Jocelyn Ling, of Incandescent, who cited this idea from Acumen Fund, where she previously worked. Acumen's full description of "moral imagination" can be found here.

3

PAGES 24-31

The future of work is personal.

Very personal. The hardest and most important work in the future of work centers on one detail: **personal accountability in decision-making.**

Most every respondent said the same things we've heard for decades…

Follow your bliss… Be passionate…
Do what makes you happy…
Love what you do and you'll never
view anything as work…
Do work that's meaningful to you…
Make sure you're making a difference…
Care for others, deeply...

The future of work clearly revolves around personal passions, joy and play.

Let the beauty of what you love be what you do.
— Rumi

And, as we dug deeper…

Respondents told us that **the hardest work in the future of work** — for all of us: line-workers, managers, leaders — **will be the many daily choices we will need to make.** Precious few will have one clear answer, one right answer. Often the quickest solution will not be the best solution. Most everything will take more effort than you could have imagined.

UNPROVEN
DIFFICULT   UNFAMILIAR
COMPLICATED   PARADOXICAL

Satisfying bosses, customers, teammates **and** **fulfilling my own needs**

Staying focused on family, all relationships **and** **doing great work**

INTERWOVEN   UNKNOWABLE
DISRUPTIVE

UNPROVEN
DIFFICULT   UNFAMILIAR
COMPLICATED   PARADOXICAL

Keeping up with the onslaught of To Dos **and** **making time to think, to grow, to learn, to reflect**

Developing others **and** **developing myself**

INTERWOVEN   UNKNOWABLE
DISRUPTIVE

UNPROVEN
DIFFICULT   UNFAMILIAR
COMPLICATED   PARADOXICAL

Doing what truly matters, living a great life **and** **getting shit done**

Pushing boundaries, pushing myself **and** **managing risks, not creating unnecessary fear**

INTERWOVEN   UNKNOWABLE
DISRUPTIVE

All that, and so much more, is hard enough in the present, when many challenges are known. Venture into the future, where so much of what's known goes out the window... where what got you here won't get you there... and, unless you have an unshakable foundation to draw upon, the future quickly becomes overwhelming.

Respondents told us that rock-solid foundation is...

Inner knowingness, centeredness and serenity...

Which includes being able to make sense of all the changes coming at you, as in "How do I navigate all this? What really matters?" For some that came from spirituality, for others it came from an inner-passion or family or community or being of service to others or practicing habits like exercise, meditation or holistic wellness.

But how, exactly, **do we use inner knowingness to tackle the work of the future?** To better understand this, we asked most interviewees "From anytime in your life — childhood to now — what tough choices did you make that now guide or influence your future choices?" As they shared their stories, **three facets** emerged about how to make successful, confident choices in the future. From the outer-most facets, that are easily observable by others, to the central core, truly knowable only by you...

COURAGE
AUTHENTICITY
SELF-AWARENESS

1. Less Fear, More Courage

By far, we found that the biggest barrier to the future of work was FEAR. Fear of the unknown. Fear of risk. Fear of looking bad. Fear of failure. Fear of loss. Fear of loss of financial security. Fear of change. Fear of instability. Fear of difficulty. Fear of not meeting someone else's expectations.

The problem is… All those things we fear… That's the very definition of the future! Unknown. Unknowable. Uncharted. Untested. Untried. Risky. Changed. Difficult. If we can't push past those fears, we'll never be able to shape our own destiny in the future.

Courage in the future of work means owning those fears, understanding them, and pushing on anyway.

And, while we all draw upon the courage of others to jumpstart our own, we found a direct connection between each individual's courage to venture into unknowns and how grounded they were in truly knowing themselves. Most every interviewee could tell a moving, powerful story about that one (or more) moment in their life when they previously found the courage to act, when they had already pushed past the fears they faced.

The secret to less fear, more courage in the future, is realizing you've already been there, done that — triumphantly. And can do it again.

2. Be Your Authentic Self... Always

If you are to enter the future of work, most every decision you make needs to be grounded in who you are and why you do things and why you don't do things. This has been popularized by authors Simon Sinek as Know Your Why and Brené Brown as Daring Greatly. And most poignantly by Steve Jobs in his famous Stanford commencement speech — eloquently capturing what all our interviewees meant when they said "Trust your gut":

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life....

Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice.

And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.

They somehow already know what you truly want to become."

3. Self-Awareness: Know Thyself... Deeply

Jobs didn't just craft a great speech. He lived it. He found himself and his calling years earlier by tuning in to himself. He found himself in his travels to India. By taking a calligraphy class. By starting over after getting fired from the company he founded. Most everyone we interviewed described their own journey to know themselves. Some experienced hardship and loss. Some journaled. Some found themselves through relationships or coaching or being mentored or mentoring others. While their journeys were different, they all shared the same conviction...

The one thing that is central to preparing yourself for the future of work — for the future of anything — is knowing yourself... deeply.

SEEING... FEELING... COURAGE, AUTHENTICITY, SELF-AWARENESS
We invite you to watch the interviews we have posted on YouTube.
There you will see and feel what we can only hint at here.
A leader whose source of courage came from standing up to a bully in school.
A leader whose authenticity truly burst forth after his wife's bout with cancer.
Teachers who are saving the world, one child at a time.
Twenty-somethings who are daring greatly.
Please, watch. See, feel. You will be glad you did.

When we stepped back to consider the stories and insights all our respondents shared with us about facing choices in the future of work... When we examined all the common themes, passions and advice...

One clear, succinct, central idea emerged... **The one specific personal accountability you, and all of us, have in all decisions we make,** if we wish to work, play and succeed in the future.

COURAGE
AUTHENTICITY
SELF-AWARENESS

WILLINGNESS TO EMBRACE PERSONAL VULNERABILITY

For every leader, manager, worker: A continuous willingness to be vulnerable is the fundamental personal difference between staying stuck in today and jumping into tomorrow.

We all must be willing to...
Act decisively and boldly when there are no guarantees... Depend on others for our own success... Say "I don't know" or "I'm scared"... Try something that's never been tried before... Create the space for others to do the same.

EMBRACING
VULNERABILITY

RELATIONSHIP   CAPACITY
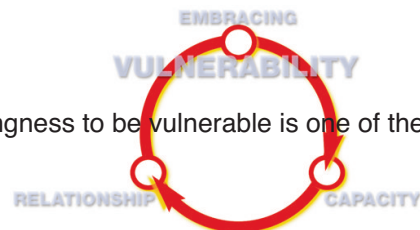
Our willingness to be vulnerable is one of the biggest factors in increasing capacity and changing our relationship with work.

"The power of love does not come from hard skills or hard work.

It comes from each of us searching for, and discovering, our inner Mandela."

— **Felix Maradiaga,** Managing Director, Pioneer Capital Partners, Nicaragua

"Write your own script.
Don't let anyone write it for you.
Mine: **Cooler entrepreneurship.
Cooler love. Cooler art."**

— **Jerome Jarre,** Co-Founder, GrapeStory, Vine star

"I realized years ago that I never needed to actually know what the ending was... **I just needed to convince myself to have a go.**
Just try things and see what happens."

— **Matt Edmundson,** Serial Entrepreneur, UK

"I want to leave a legacy by blazing a trail for and with my peers that they can do more, be more, and achieve anything they wish." — Survey respondent

"My dream is that every street will be a safe place for every law-abiding citizen who lives in, works on, or socializes on that street. Now that's a goal worth spending your life on!"
— Survey respondent

"There are times when the vision is so grand, and so important, and so contrary to the reality on the ground, that you just **need to stand up, take a risk,** and give it everything you've got. **We are the leaders. Don't wait for others to lead."**

— **Gidon Bromberg,** Co-Founder, EcoPeace, Israel

"Create an alignment between your passions and your skills, and your heart and your mind, and **you can do anything."**

— **Raheela Khan,** Assistant Manager, Treasury & Investments, Doha Bank, Dubai

2015–2020   Will each of us be willing to embrace personal vulnerability to make the future of work a reality?

Connecting the dots between personal choices,
our relationship with our companies, and capacity:
One theme was expressed over and over...

While only a couple of our interviewees said it with this much sass...

It's the people stupid!

...Most every interviewee expressed the sentiment above:
That the driving force behind the future of work has always been right in front of us.

As CEO Ben Lightfoot, of McCann Worldgroup, Singapore, said:

"Human beings are amazing,
and our job is to remove the
barriers for them to be brilliant."

CLOSING THOUGHT

2015—2020   At least to jumpstart us into the future, should 90% of all leaders should be women?

Rhetorial question to make a crucial point.

When we examined the skills and attitudes required to lead and work in the future:
Empathy, caring, personal insight, less focus on hero-worship and more on collaboration and community,
more willingness to be vulnerable, more servant leadership, selflessness, and all the rest...

And then when we compared our findings to all the studies (Zenger Folkman, et al) that find that women leaders
fare better than men in these areas[1]...

And then when McKinsey's Director Emeritus Joanna Barsh called for her daughters and all women to transform capitalism —
making the "dark ages of 2014" a distant memory, when "there were too few women in high places to tip the balance
toward Adam Smith's principle of sympathy."[2]...

And when Japan's Prime Minister and First Lady, Shinzo and Akie Abe, began speaking out on "womenomics," that
"we are in need of bold changes..."[3]   And when SheEO noted that if women entrepreneurs were funded to the same
degree as their male counterparts, they would create 6 million jobs in the next 5 years in the US alone...[4]

And when, on the same day that Pakistani teen Malala Yousafzai won the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize for advocating girls' rights,
Microsoft's CEO was pulling his foot out of his mouth for telling women to trust karma to eventually deliver the raises they deserve...

We concluded that the fastest, easiest, best — and only — path to the future of work
is with a lot more women leaders.

Making the Future Work

2015—2020

AND DECADES TO COME

The future of work will surely be shaped by amazing and disruptive innovations, and unforeseen global forces.

But those things don't make the future work.
We do.

With our imagination and curiosity, our humanity and compassion.

With our hopes and dreams, our joys and passions.
With our triumphs and failures. Our toil and talents.
And our tribes.

If... If we have the courage and willingness to be vulnerable — to go where we have not gone before.

Making the Future Work

2015—2020

THE WORK AHEAD: GETTING STARTED

1 **AN INVITATION** to use a new lens in examing your situation: Do you see any of the gaps we saw?

2 **A REQUEST:** Have the courage and willingness to start future of work conversations without "Yeah, buts"

3 **LEAD FROM WHERE YOU ARE:** Have new and difficult conversations necessary to creating the future of work...

Face Galilean truths

SPECIFIC TO YOUR ROLE

IF YOU ARE IN, OR REPORT TO, THE C-SUITE

- Choose: Future or not?
- Push way beyond engagement
- Seek feedback, listen more
- Assess need for work redesign (Mix of 4, 5, 6, 7 on page 12)
- Seek Galilean truths, build Galilean measures
- Trust more, reinvent faster

IF YOU ARE A MANAGER OR WORKER

- Work within your span of control or influence: Use this report to make changes for your team
- Speak up, push for change
- Move on if change doesn't come.... You deserve an environment that helps you achieve your dreams and goals

4 **SHARE THIS REPORT:** Change the global conversation

Future of Work Study

Part of The **Search for a Simpler Way study** which, for more than two decades, has interviewed/surveyed over a million people around the globe

For information about this study:

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Linda Stevenson, Stevenson & Associates, Minneapolis, MN, email
Lance Tracy, Accenture, email
Tony Vlahos, JD, ExecuNet, email
Mike Wittenstein, MBA, Storyminers, email

METHODOLOGY

7,237 online and paper-based surveys
398 interviews conducted via Skype, Google Hangout and phone calls
Conducted May-October, 2014
We asked scores of questions revolving around
two core themes:
What are people's dreams for the future
and for the future of work?
What are the tough choices leaders need to make
to lead us into the future?
We then performed a gap analysis:
Are companies and leaders making the tough choices
and facing the tough challenges that match how
people want to work and live?
What changes need to occur to close the gaps?
Participants cited in this report helped edit their quotes for clarity, brevity.

129 interview videos are viewable on YouTube: Future of Work Study

PHOTOS/IMAGES

Dreamstime.com: Billyfoto, Amabrao, Jon Byers, Roger McClean, Elwynn, Gradst, Doctorkan, Godfer, Jacek Charaszewski, Dibrova, Elena Milevska, Johannes Swanepoel
OneBigPhoto, Wikimedia Commons, Unsplash.com. Wallmu.com
DollarPhoto.com: Jules
Mikhail Mishchenko
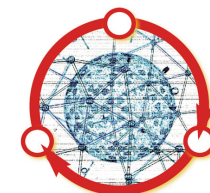
Connecting
the dots further

Future of Work Study
Additional Reading

For furthering the discussion: Links to other sources, articles

Leadership ● Click on bullets
Relationship ●
Choices ●

The Operating Model That Is Eating the World

How Networks Change Systems

What's Your 200-Year Plan?

Women Are the Great Disruptors

How Design of Experiences Drives Everything

5 Ways the Workforce Will Change in 5 Years

Start-Ups and HR: Love or Hate?

New Distributed Leadership Model: Internet of Things

The Business Case for Happy Employees

What If the Tech Race Isn't Enough? What Then?

A Question of Attention

30% of High School Seniors Will Flunk College

Why Millennials Want to Work for Themselves

Performance Mgmt, Bad at Change Agility

The Many, Many, Many Things You Should Say No To at Work

Workers Strike to Get Their CEO Back

Unleash Your Superpower

How Google Motivates Its Best Teams

Collective Intelligence in 3 Mins

The Global Talent Crunch

What the Workplace of the Future Means to You

Leaders: You Must Be the Change

Why Embracing Failure Matters

Don't Manage Millennials, Lead Them

Skills Leaders Need at Every Level

Execs Will Need These Skills in 2039

Looking for Leaders in the Wrong Places

Get Ready for Generation Z

Corporate America Hasn't Been Disrupted

Six Trends Completely Reshaping the World

Plans Are Useless, But Planning Is Indispensable

Study: Companies Good at Change

In Sharing Economy: Workers Find Both Freedom and Uncertainty

From Concentrated Power to Collective Intelligence

What Is Self-Leadership?

The Number One Reason Good Habits Don't Last

What Experience Designers Can Learn from Kids

The How Not to Suck Manifesto

How to Be a Remarkable Founder

8 Questions Business Leaders Should Ask Themselves Every Day

No Managers? No Hierarchy? No Way!

Future of Work: Collaboration and the Trust of Teams

To Be a Better Leader, Become a Better Listener

Work Less, Live More

How to Find Your Purpose and Do What You Love

50 Things About Millennials That Make Corporate America Sh*t Its Pants

21st Century Ways of Working

The Worse Thing Leaders Can Do to High Performers

What If 300,000 Employees Asked the CEO to End Pay Inequity?

Change Leader, Change Thyself

Is Management Due for a Renaissance?

Why Women Are Better Leaders

Life and Work in Distributed Wonderland

Why Micromanagers Can Destroy a Company

Do Great Work. Live Great Lives.

10 Lessons from the Dalai Lama That Will Change Your Life

Happiness Strategies for Daily Life

The 5 Regrets of the Dying

Find Your Silence

How to Get Over Your Self-Doubt

Nowism: Being Present

10 Culprits Robbing Your Happiness

F**k Yes or No

Asking Good Questions

We Only Get One Planet

3 Ways Micromanagers Can Destroy a Company