WHEN ‘WORK’ IS NO LONGER WORK
About the Special Interest Group on Transparent and Adaptive Talent Markets

Organisational designs in most of today’s companies were developed in times, and for times of stability and predictability. Given their rigidity, adjusting to a changing context requires restructuring, which is always a painful – and wasteful – process. In an ever-changing world, the quest has become to achieve agility, i.e. the ability to anticipate, respond, evolve, thrive, optimise, and capitalise in a disruptive world.

HR leaders from ADIDAS GROUP, CAPGEMINI, CISCO (sponsor), INTEL, SWISS RE and WL GORE & ASSOCIATES formed an EFMD Special Interest Group, to collectively explore opportunities to organise work differently, so that organisations and individuals can adapt in an ongoing process to a dynamic business context, and achieve a better match of demand and supply of talent. This report introduces the concept of a transparent and adaptive talent market. It provides a bold outlook into the future of work and into alternative strategies for engaging people beyond hierarchies, thereby understanding change as an opportunity rather than a threat. The report provides ample insight into the transformative journey toward such a market approach to managing talent, thereby identifying eight critical enablers and inhibitors.

Learn more at www.efmd.org/sig
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ABSTRACT

The future is one in which you probably won’t have ‘a job’. That is not to say you won’t work, just that you will work in fundamentally different ways.

How we work, with whom, what we do and for how long, will be increasingly influenced by the need to be flexible and adaptable. We as individuals—our skills, experience, aspirations, reputation—will be more visible for companies that, in turn, will become less hierarchical and more permeable.

This eBook was written collectively, by leaders in what will probably not be called Human Resources much longer, from ADIDAS GROUP, CAPGEMINI, CISCO, INTEL, SWISS RE and WL GORE & ASSOCIATES. They pulled their heads and hands together in an effort to work out work—what it will look like in the future and what we need to do about it today—under the aegis of the Brussels-based EFMD.

The Revolution turned out to be Digital

It has become difficult to avoid the message: digital is taking the world by storm and transforming everything in its path. It drives an increasing change across the globe, to what is harder to predict than ever.

Digital transformation is driving our organizations to become more flexible to create and exploit new business opportunities. At the same time, it is changing the expectations of how we work, everything from tenure to career, from how we relate to a desk to how we collaborate.

From Stability to Agility

In this digital vortex, organizations and their people need to evolve from seeking stability to embracing agility as “the ability to anticipate, respond, evolve, thrive, optimize and capitalize in a digitalized world.”

This requires a fundamental evolution in organizational structures and cultures. Organizations have to transition from hierarchies to wirearchies [Jon Husband] and must consider where they sit on a spectrum of transformational factors, where they need to shift, and the urgency behind the shift.
Take-off for Transformation

The way in which we define work and its structure will fundamentally change. Rather than jobs and roles, work will be thought of in terms of assignments, with teams assembled from the most suitable and engaged talent to execute them. Enterprise talent marketplaces will enable and embody organizational and talent agility. They will connect the work assignments needed to execute a given business strategy with the right people do to them, with their aspirations, experience, strengths and passion.

Individuals will have to rely more on their professional reputation and its visibility across internal and external networks, to shape a career on their terms, acquiring, developing and trading on their strengths and experience as they go.

Back to the Future

We believe the future of work can be described in a paradox: it will be a renaissance of the ‘world of work’ before work as we know it was invented. The digital revolution liberates “work” from the depersonalized perspective of the industrial era, going back to its original human roots of purpose, pride, personalization, community belonging and wider social impact.

We see the rise of a new breed of professionals who have much more in common with Renaissance master artisans than the blue or white collar workers we are used to: proud of what they do and what they create, working with passion and purpose, creating a personal reputation and brand.

From Permanent Employment to Professional Passport

As our organizations move from stable hierarchies to agile, open networks, corporations turn into a network of networks, and the enterprise talent marketplaces opens up to external talent.

Having multiple employers—at times at the same time—is already a fast growing trend. A new professional passport will provide access to assignments in all companies leveraging the open talent marketplace. It will put an end to current concepts of loyalty and career: employability and utilization are going to replace them.
AS THE WORLD TURNS DIGITAL

The future is one in which you probably won't have ‘a job’. That’s not to say you won’t work, just that you will do so in fundamentally different ways. On your terms, rather than your manager’s. In fact, managers as we know them will cease to exist. Where we work, with whom, what we do and for how long will be increasingly influenced by a need to be flexible and adaptable. We as individuals – our skills, our experience, and our aspirations – will be more visible within companies that, in turn, become less hierarchical and more transparent, looking beyond their borders to bring in skills from outside to augment internal talent. For organizations and their people, the future is all about agility.

WHO SAYS SO?

Well, some of the most progressive thinkers in some of our best-known and most successful companies, experts with a deep understanding of the importance of people and talent to their organizations. Leaders in what will probably not be called Human Resources for very much longer, from Cisco, Adidas, Intel, Capgemini, WL Gore & Associates, and Swiss Re. They are participants in a collaborative effort to work out work – what it will look like in the future and what businesses need to do about it.

Among their responses to such seismic shifts are an ‘open source’ business strategy, harnessing the power of the cloud for employees, and a prediction of the ‘death knell for the traditional line manager’. All agree that the very idea of work is undergoing an evolutionary step change that will have profound consequences not only for their organizations but also for entire economies and wider society.

But this is no talking shop for far-out futurology. Nor are these HR fads or fashions. The ideas might be big and often controversial, but that is only because they need to be to meet the size of the challenges faced by workers, businesses and economies.

If that sounds dramatic, consider the context. The disruption that has become the ‘new normal’ is a buzzword still loaded with relevance. The likes of Airbnb and Uber have become the poster children of a climate of disruption in which incumbent business models look increasingly exposed. This is also a climate that can throw up totally new opportunities for the quick and agile. Technology is the common factor, offering the means and often the very reason for innovation.
The world in which we live and work is VUCA – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous – a military acronym embraced by a business community constantly seeking opportunity in this ever-shifting economic landscape.

Upstart start-ups break cover with such speed and energy that they change the world seemingly overnight. Scale gives established organizations presence and power but it also makes them susceptible to the supertanker problem – changing course in response to new challenges or opportunities is difficult. To be cumbersome makes you vulnerable in the VUCA jungle.

Under the aegis of the Brussels-based management development organization EFMD, the six member companies have formed a Special Interest Group exploring ‘Transparent and Adaptive Talent Markets’. By leveraging talent in new ways, their thinking goes, established businesses can not only meet oncoming challenges but can put themselves into a position of strength to exploit emerging opportunities and make change become a driver rather than be at its mercy.

GIANPAOLO BAROZZI, Senior HR Director at CISCO, explains what is at stake:

We have competitors that not only come out of the blue but also businesses that are evolving their nature and becoming competitors. The agility we need to have is to quickly adapt our strategy – sometimes to do a U-turn – to start and close an initiative fast enough to respond to this environment. You can’t do this with the traditional org chart, with people nailed into their boxes and with change only possible by going through a series of change management initiatives, communications and reorganizations.

A clear example of such evolution is the way Amazon went from being an online bookseller to the major cloud computing enterprise Amazon Web Services, parking its tanks on networking giant Cisco’s lawn. Gianpaolo Barozzi explains that while his
company already has well established initiatives in place to meet such challenges, now is the time to go further, and faster.

The six member companies in the Special Interest Group are keenly aware that ideas will only get them so far. The main point of their collaboration has been to focus on a set of clear steps and principles to light the way for organizations on the path to the necessary agility. They also want to show that the environment businesses now face present fertile ground for forging new and better ways of working that will offer transformative benefits. This is disruption seen less as a challenge and more as an opportunity and even a competitive advantage.

A for agility

The starting point is for companies to understand how agile they are – and need to become. First, they need to grasp what agility means in an enterprise context. The Special Interest Group defines agility as “the ability to anticipate, respond, evolve, thrive, optimize and capitalize in a VUCA world”. The way to achieve that is to leverage talent in different ways and to take a fresh approach to how work is done. This will require a fundamental evolution in organizational structures and cultures, and a move away from stable hierarchies as the preferred organizational structure. Ideas, knowledge and people should be liberated from silos and made freely exchangeable. Rather than jobs and roles, work is thought of in terms of assignments, with teams assembled from the most suitable talent to execute them. That talent can come from outside, necessitating more permeable organizational boundaries. Whether inside or outside, an individual will have to rely more on his or her professional reputation and their visibility across networks. The result is a talent marketplace that embodies and enables organizational agility.

However, this isn’t about tearing down old structures and throwing up something shiny and new in its place. It is about seizing opportunities to move towards a way of working that, if done well, is better for both businesses and their people.

As the member companies themselves demonstrate, such ideas have to vary between businesses and sectors, between departments and functions and, of course, between people and attitudes. Assumptions rarely apply here.

WILL PEACHEY, Senior Vice President for HR Transformation at outsourcing and IT consultancy CAPGEMINI, says:
Our people should, by their nature, be super agile, but actually all human beings tend toward stability, they try to take care of everything and stop uncertainty, and that’s a difficult thing if you’re in a professional services organization where a prime reason your clients want you, is to deliver the new. Our idea of agility sits with the interaction with our clients. If you’re working in close proximity to clients and you’re shaping a response to a need you have to be highly agile and bring in the right people at the right time. It’s important for our business, because IT is transforming at an unbelievable pace. All the things that are happening in digital and cloud are transforming our business as fast as you can imagine.

For ADIDAS agility means blowing the organization wide open both structurally and philosophically. The company’s Director for Future Trends in HR Strategy, CHRISTIAN KUHNA, explains the radical 'open source' concept driving the sport and fashion brand’s strategy.
Open source in an organizational context means we have to shift from trying to solve and do everything internally. It starts with breaking down the walls between the silos we have between business units, between departments. We need much more collaboration and idea sharing. We need to work more in diverse teams that are set up with people from different departments, different age groups, and different nationalities. We already do that well but there is still a lot of silo thinking and non-sharing happening. We first have to start with our organization internally and then open that up step by step which we are also doing by collaborating more with other companies in doing projects and developing products.

He highlights as examples collaborations with rappers Pharrell and Kanye West and the Boost running shoe technology developed with chemical giant BASF. And that is just the beginning. Open source could take Adidas places many would think unimaginable right now.

I personally believe we will see areas where we will even work on projects together with competitors, says Christian Kuhna.

For WL GORE & ASSOCIATES the new talent marketplace is less about external disruptive threats than a shift in attitude toward the talent it will need to attract in the future. The company has already blazed the trail when it comes to creating a progressive and adaptive team-based culture.

DEBRA FRANCE, who focuses on Leadership Development and Organizational Effectiveness for Gore, says:

We have 10,000 people and not one manager and we never have had managers. We are 58 years old and we have not used a hierarchical model of management. We have some layers but leaders do not exert ‘power over’ others. We attempt to neutralize power and bureaucracy in the traditional hierarchy. If you untangle the elements and take those out you have a very different structure. We are team based. At the most elemental unit level of organization our company is made up of thousands of teams.

For a company where innovation is – literally – woven in to its products, this organizational arrangement actually becomes a competitive differentiator. So when it
comes to agility has Gore got it cracked? Not yet. Debra France explains that Gore’s
culture supports innovation well internally, but the pressure is now growing to partner
more effectively with external talent. This is a significant challenge for a firm built on
the closely guarded technical secrets at the heart of its products.

Even though we have this inclusive and agile internal culture, we have realized
that we can be insular, says Debra France. The idea of permeable boundaries
and letting the outside in is a challenge for us. We are a company that has trade
secrets in addition to patents. We are on the edge of whatever tech we are in.
We have grown up very secretive. How are we going to let a significant portion
of our workforce include temporary experts, to come in and then leave?

Gore has been piloting ways to assemble teams and define assignments in a way that
separates tasks from sensitive detail where possible, fire-walling intellectual property
while allowing external talent to help solve problems. The company has even put
challenges out to R&D crowd-sourcing platform InnoCentive, floating several
anonymized technical problems in such a way they wouldn’t reveal the work it was a
part of. Several solutions emerged from each experiment from the community of
freelance scientists, students, and retired professors and for a small outlay, the
company saved several months of work from numerous associates.

INTEL is trying to square a very similar circle. ANDREA NEWMAN, Director of the
company’s HR Strategy Office, says:

We recognize that we’re not going to be able to keep the intellectual property
and mindshare in certain disciplines if we have all the talent going in and out
and not staying at the company. Some of these areas take a decade to build.
There is an element where we need the long-term talent, but at the same time
we recognize we do need more agility in our talent pool that will allow us to
attract the type of talent that doesn’t want to stay at a company for their entire
career.

For Christian Kuhna from Adidas, it is being too protective in response to such worries
that is the danger.

There is risk in everything you do, he says. In this fast-changing VUCA world
the bigger risk is to be static and not agile. I believe that to switch into an open
source agile process in a business strategy is minimizing the risk, actually. It makes you more flexible, it allows you to react faster to changes and to adapt.

**Talking about your reputation**

Central to the way a talent marketplace can foster organizational agility is the idea of work becoming assignment-based rather than role-based. Talent with the appropriate skills is then brought together into a team to fulfill the assignment.

A flatter organizational structure is a natural consequence. Freed from the hierarchical management model, an individual’s professional reputation is no longer solely in the gift of his or her boss. It is the means by which a person shapes a career on their terms, acquiring, developing and trading on their skills and experience as they go. Reputation is the currency of this marketplace. Reputation of team leaders and the organization as a whole will become as important. Transparency is vital in order for the supply and demand sides to see what each other has to offer.

This flexibility works both ways. It allows organizations to quickly assemble teams of the right people with the right skills for a particular assignment, making for more efficient use of talent rather than have it stuck within ‘jobs’ or departments that remain static regardless of the ebb and flow of business need.

It also means an individual can alter the intensity of work – and, to a degree, the level of agility or stability – according to other factors in their life. So someone with no commitments and an appetite for variety could be highly agile, flitting across assignments and working intensively to gain new skills and experience. Someone with a new family might decide to work on fewer and less demanding assignments, at least for a while.

The benefits of this approach are clear to Will Peachey from Capgemini, who describes his company’s system of human resource management as “highly industrialized and process centric”.

You can see some things that are really distinctive about the idea of adaptive talent markets that are completely missing in the idea of existing human resource management processes, he says. One of them is the inside-outside problem. Mostly we only think about people who are inside our organization and not about the skills and capabilities of people outside it.
Another is visibility – transparency in the marketplace itself. An employee doesn’t really know what kind of work is coming and doesn’t have a strong visibility of what kind of opportunities there are and so is dependent on a manager to tell them what’s going to happen next.

The third thing is that the manager makes decisions for the employee. They have the visibility. What if the employee was to make the decisions for themselves and had some visibility of the work that was coming forward? They could think about their own skills and training and how to maximize their income by pursuing more senior roles. How do we do all of that without having this massive army of people who define skills, roles, competencies, jobs, who match people in the right kind of way?

The answer, he says, lies in replacing the layer of management that administers all of that with technology – a transparent platform where talent can meet opportunity to the benefit of both.

He cites Uber as an example of both total disruption to a top-down hierarchical model and a resulting marketplace solution. The traditional taxi office set-up has a controller allocating jobs to drivers over the radio, having to rely on each one to report their location and availability. There’s every chance the controller’s favorites will get the best fares, regardless of whether that is the most efficient option for the customer who has zero visibility, choice or control in the process. A bad driver with a clapped-out car? You pay anyway, or end your journey with an argument.

Flip that to Uber and there is no controller, just a transparent platform that offers a choice of cars, drivers rated on reputation, and online payment of a fare that’s agreed up-front.

Rather than relying the operator in the taxi office I would like to rely on the process of the platform that I’m part of, says Will Peachey. If you think about all of those ideas the future of work becomes highly assignment centric. It becomes reputational centric and it becomes something you become much more adept at choosing and wanting to do.

This concept lies at the heart of how a talent marketplace can work: a transparent digital platform enabling the right people to find the right work assignments and vice
versa based not only on supply and demand but on reputation and visibility of expectations.

In order to make such changes tangible and achievable for organizations, the Special Interest Group identified eight key areas of work that can act as enabling or inhibiting factors when it comes to fostering an agile culture: reputation and brand; reward and recognition; training and learning; what constitutes an assignment; people attributes such as skills, experience and expertise; organizational design and culture; the concept of an employee lifecycle; the role of the manager.

For each, a journey towards agility and transparency is mapped out with waymarks so that a company can measure itself and see what it needs to do to make progress. Between them, these factors describe the over-arching and significant cultural shift that is necessary.

For example, the manager’s role changes quite radically. Traditionally, the manager has acted as the conduit between an employee and the organization’s structures and values. They assign work, control training and career development, reward or sanction good or poor performance, and represent a role model for the internal culture and brand values.

In an agile environment the manager’s leadership credentials are no longer a given. The role becomes more one of facilitator and mentor, having to first attract and select the right talent for an assignment, form a team and then to keep the team engaged on its assignment, aspects that will require a more entrepreneurial approach and an ability to motivate and inspire. Furthermore, the manager will coach an individual’s growth and development rather than direct it.

This naturally requires a shift in how people are rewarded and recognized for work. Developing new skills is an inherent benefit in this marketplace environment, as is association with the assignment itself, adding value to an individual’s reputation in a more meaningful way than being just about the money.

Agility demands that the nature of assignments themselves changes to offer greater flexibility, from their creation to how they are resourced. For workers, constant ad-hoc learning to meet specific demands will be more relevant than training that is aligned to a job description. Managers tailor reward packages to attract the right talent and then shape the team to best deliver the required outcome.
Mastering your own destiny

The marketplace, then, gives workers far greater agency, effectively making each one an entrepreneur, constantly enhancing their reputations in order to differentiate themselves and exploit opportunities. It is an attitude that already pervades Cisco, says Gianpaolo Barozzi, where the culture is akin to a start-up and where individual entrepreneurship is highly valued. Empowerment at the edges is a key element.

People are welcome – often expected – to be entrepreneurs within the company and to propose solutions, which are then embraced at senior level and assimilated into the business goals.

As the key instigator of the Special Interest Group, Gianpaolo Barozzi is, unsurprisingly, an evangelist for agile working.

The business environment and talent market are changing every week if not every day. So the level of agility should become foundational to the organizational structure. The change is for agile to be a feature of your organization, to become a foundational chromosome, the very essence of it. That is how you respond to the changes.

And Cisco practices what he preaches. The company is implementing the Talent Cloud, perhaps the most fully formed example of a talent marketplace among the six companies so far.

Gianpaolo Barozzi explains how it works:

Talent Cloud is an ecosystem of solutions that are targeted to address the world of work. How work is defined, allocated, done, measured and rewarded. We start by introducing a way to make our talent visible. Second, we make the work that’s required within the company visible through an assignment market and then the two meet in the Talent Cloud – a talent marketplace. This will allow us to have the right people do the right work at the right time.

Cisco employees build a ‘talent profile’ on which they can showcase their skills, experience and achievements as well as their work aspirations. Each piece of work that needs doing is offered in an ‘assignment profile’ which explains the project’s objectives, how long it lasts, the skills and experience required, and who is already on the team.
We are at the beginning of it. We have around 1,000 people on the platform and we are transitioning from allocating people top-down to making the work visible in the talent market. It’s a pretty complex transition because it starts from a place where work is organized more top down than bottom up and where managers are used to measuring work by hours and headcount. Here, we’re going to say this is the work we need to do, this is the effort that is needed and let’s allow our leaders to express their preferences and have the right conversations with our talent to make sure we are connecting the right people to the right work.

TOM LAMBERTY, who works with Gianpaolo Barozzi on CISCO’s Talent Cloud, adds:

You basically start looking at the organization as two sides of the same coin. On one, the organization provides assignments – a broader concept to a job – which can have a duration of a day all the way to indefinite. On the other hand, you have a marketplace with internal people, external talent, freelancers and so on. They are looking for interesting assignments and the company is looking for talent that is able to work on those.

From a technical point of view, the Talent Cloud is there already, but from an awareness point of view we’re just starting. In the next 6 to 9 months, we will have our first robust data to look at to see what we need to adjust or fix. There are aspects of reputation, for instance, that we need to pilot and think about such as personal data privacy and security and first users’ feedback.

Such visibility and transparency means a significant cultural shift for an organization, although existing public platforms such as LinkedIn – and wider use of social media in general – suggests that attitudes are already moving in this direction. It is certainly easy to see how the next step for a marketplace such as Talent Cloud could be to extend its reach into that public sphere to exploit talent outside an organization to better meet the needs of assignments within it.

In any marketplace where reputation is the currency, though, there needs to be the facility for an individual to boost the value of their stock. Career development must be a part of an organization’s marketplace thinking, Tom Lamberty says, so that people can hone and improve the reputations they trade on.
If for whatever reason your reputation isn’t looking as good as you want it, the company should provide at least a framework that empowers people to improve in these areas.

As well as offering ongoing reputational maintenance, greater individual control also gives the employee an opportunity to take ownership of their personal career development. There is an existential imperative to this, too, of course. Becoming too comfortable and complacent in a job can mean that when the world changes the ground can move beneath their feet. Agility, then, is a means to increase employability and make work more meaningful.

GIAN PAUL GANZONI, Head of Organizational Effectiveness at global re-insurance firm SWISS RE, says:

At certain moments there is a harsh wake-up call for employees because they suddenly find out that the demands of the internal job market are different and when that happens it might almost be too late to acquire new capabilities or adjust. That is why personal growth is important. It is keeping people fresh but also instills flexibility.

Will Peachey from Capgemini sees the same danger.

It’s really easy to end up stuck in a career or in a job, he says. A sensible manager will want you to stay in the role that you currently do because you’re really good at it. And a sensible employee will want to stay doing the same job because they’ve learnt how to do it there’s very little risk. They are probably going to get rewarded by their manager for a job well done, whereas if they move it might be dangerous for their future. We make decisions about our roles on the basis of all sorts of things, like being close to home or fitting with child-care. But after years doing the same thing it’s almost impossible to move on.

The result can be many comfortable years that come to an abrupt halt when the market radically changes. As much as a professional services consultancy like Capgemini might appear agile by its very nature, there remains the risk that skills and expertise become highly specialized and narrow in pursuit of operational efficiency. This is compounded when people spend years on a single client project and effectively go native.
Custom paths, common goals

As the members of the Special Interest Group illustrate, the challenges of doing business in a VUCA world will differ from one company to the next. A relatively conservative company like Swiss Re feels a less immediate need to drive agility throughout its organizational structure than, say, Adidas or Cisco and there may, similarly, be less obvious immediate advantages to doing so. Such companies do need to understand what the future will look like, however, and to be at least thinking about how to adapt and capitalize on the advancing change.

For Intel, a flexible talent market is about the need to be competitive but also to respond to the cyclical nature of the industry. Andrea Newman reckons the company
needs to become 10 – 20 per cent more permeable to meet such needs. Creating greater agility within the organization is a work in progress, she says.

We are working on what mobility and movement, growth and learning really mean. How do we get more agile? How do we use different contract types? How do we have the ability to scale up and down quickly? We’ve taken new steps that are still in their infancy, while other elements are already healthy.

Gian Paul Ganzoni admits that the “slow” nature of Swiss Re’s core business, in common with similar large financial services organizations, places it some way back from the cutting edge of agile working where a company like Adidas is positioned.

However, there are a number of factors that place agility high on the company’s strategic agenda. A new life insurance business unit will see Swiss Re deal directly with consumers in a far more fast-moving market.

Gian Paul Ganzoni says: The slow business can be dealt with in fairly stable, hierarchical, organized structures whereas in the more deal-based business you need to constantly assemble project teams across different faculties across the company. That is an operational model that requires high agility.

He explained Swiss Re’s approach to changing working culture.

To respond to the trend for agility we have, last year, re-framed the career perspective dialogue between employees and line managers. Traditionally, that has had the connotation of ‘career path’, which means that if you join at a given age we almost have a road map that shows where you will be in the future. We are moving away from this very predictive, hierarchical planning towards an approach which becomes more owned by the employee and which is way more flexibly structured.

We are de-emphasizing hierarchical growth and putting personal growth at the forefront and framing the dialogue around that in order to think more flexibly. We also want to promote more talent movement across functions and organizational boundaries. So we promote the term ‘personal growth’ versus the old-style ‘career development’.
How and when organizations start the journey towards marketplace-powered agility, and the speed with which they make it, is an important aspect of the Group’s work as Martin Moehrle, EFMD Associate Director and the group’s facilitator, explains: “How can you move from one state to the other? Is it by radical moves where you say that from tomorrow everything is different? Or do you have a more evolutionary path? As a team we thought about an intermediate step, a readiness test by which every organization, all exposed differently to the situation, can think about how ready they are for a future world.

We try and describe the future and they say how ready for it they are as an organization. Which practices are already challenged and moving on in the right direction and which others are still rooted in a different world? Then there is a transition path to have, first, experiments with small pilot groups and businesses, then to expand these experiments and learn from them.

It is an agile approach to getting there – a process of trial and error and then broadening out until you reach the entire organization. We talk about a five-year horizon, but in some organizations it might be a 10 or 20 year horizon.
Work out 'Work'

If the proposed journey towards a new way of working is in itself an exercise in agility and adaptability, then the Special Interest Group can be viewed as a working example of the team-based, collaborative execution of an assignment that it espouses. Six companies with different characteristics, needs and knowledge coming together for a defined period to deliver an outcome – shareable solutions to mutual problems – before disbanding and moving on to the next challenge.

Those solutions are a response to global economic and cultural changes rather than an exercise in minting new ways of working for their own sake. It is a question of getting upstream of challenges faced by businesses and their people and capitalizing on the VUCA environment to succeed.

Globalization, the growing strength of emerging economies, and industrial decline in some western countries have created divides between those perceived to have opportunities and those who have not. This disenfranchisement has helped feed the rise in populist politics across the West. Nations and their economies are struggling to adjust and adapt to changes wrought by global trends. It is clear that the responsibility of minimizing the divisions and making change benefit the many rather than the few calls for the definition of a new social contract forged from the combined efforts of employers and political institutions.

The scale of these changes means their impact will be felt far beyond business models, organizational structures and the conditions under which most of us work. The so-called ‘gig economy’ brings freedoms and flexibility, but also the potential for employers to side-step their obligations. Out-dated employment laws must be overhauled where they no longer protect workers from onerous terms and poor treatment. The opportunity here is for lawmakers, legal experts and workers’ representatives such as trade unions to begin intense discussions on how to keep pace with such rapid shifts in the labor market.

Agile and flexible ways of working present opportunities but also significant challenges that must be addressed in a holistic way through a new alliance between people, enterprises, regulators and governments.

I think it’s a double edged sword, says Debra France from Gore. It will provide great opportunity for some and it could be damaging for others. Some will do wildly well under this model, but we cannot let the companies abdicate the
social contract. In the US working for a company provides your entry to healthcare, and companies facilitate employee retirement saving. How many people save enough for retirement now? Without corporate support for these requirements, many people will struggle. This workforce trend could be a way for companies to offload lives from their books. That’s my biggest concern from a social perspective, we need to avoid that.

Let’s consider this carefully and have it not just be about corporations that make money. We could have a huge social issue on our hands so let’s describe the benefits and challenges from a social perspective, and we can solve it there.

It is a view shared by Christian Kuhna from Adidas:

I think the risk of the divide becoming greater is quite big because it needs a very fast adjustment of how people think and work and learn. Not everybody is ready for that. If people don’t start learning and changing and building the skills very fast they will end up without the good prospects.

In this VUCA world – from terrorism to Brexit to all these things happening on quite a large scale at a fast pace – this is a time to step back and not react but to re-think the whole concept of work. This is an opportunity to really re-define the concept of why do we work, how do we work and maybe some people should be allowed to not work for a certain time. This moment of actually taking the time to re-think and re-define our system is the biggest opportunity.

What could emerge from such an opportunity is potentially profound. Among the members of the Special Interest Group there is an optimism that this new way of working could ultimately restore a sense of meaning and purpose to what we do. With that optimism comes a sense of responsibility to make this transformation equitable not only to organizations and the people that work for them, but also to the wider world. At a societal level it will involve re-thinking how work is compensated, valuing community contribution and re-purposing labor that is displaced by automation. In the workplace, climbing the corporate ladder will no longer be an end in itself. Instead, greater personal agency will see a return to artisan values.

Will Peachey at Capgemini sees a focus on personal skill and capability rather than pursuit of career progression for its own sake.
We haven’t sufficiently valued expertise in the hierarchy for a long time now, and management skill has been much more important, he says. I believe the transformation we see in the future of work might begin to de-layer and take out management and leave individuals to be assessed on the quality of their work in a more transparent way. My interpretation would be it’s a renaissance of expertise and the death knell of traditional management.

Gianpaolo Barozzi from Cisco says:

I think we’re going to experience the renaissance of the ‘world of work’, where ‘work’ is liberated from the depersonalized perspective of the industrial era, getting back to its original human roots of purpose, pride, personalization, community belonging and wider social impact. We see the rise of a new breed of professionals who have much more in common with Renaissance master artisans than traditional white-collar workers. A shift from having employees to recognizing that our best talent are master artisans and to offer the environment where they can thrive and succeed.

So work will no longer mean what it means to most of us today when it offers us not only a livelihood but also a significant source of purpose in our lives.

As Christian Kuhna from Adidas says:

Purpose is the strongest driver for motivation for development and that’s why I think everybody basically wants to work for a purpose. The more people experience this purpose-driven work the more people will see work as fulfillment and not as a burden.
**WHEN ‘WORK’ IS NO LONGER WORK**

The Revolution turns out to be Digital

When we look at the past twenty years, the most dominant trend has been the rise and rise of the internet, to a near ubiquitous experience in your pocket: a technology that has transformed our businesses and our lives.

*Digital is taking the world by storm and transforming everything in its path.*

It drives an increasing change in almost every industry and every country, to what we are not yet sure. The future is clear only in that it is uncertain, and while many people are placing bets, the logic to place them is open to many interpretations.

- We are seeing new entrants into mature markets who have transformed the landscape using new ways of mobile, social and new partnerships.
- New technologies augment our reality, which with the internet of things gives new ways to work.
- Speed of innovation is accelerating, with algorithms getting smarter and using computing power and data-automating tasks, which once seemed the preserve of humans only.
- Big data, cognitive computing and artificial intelligence development will soon enable unforeseen social/economic scenarios and business opportunities.
- All this enabled by an ever-evolving network, and accessed by near ubiquitous tools that we cannot keep our eyes off.

This change we are living through has forced organizations to seek to become much more flexible and innovation-centric. Looking for the new before new entrants take the market, and being able to change quickly to exploit new business opportunities.

At the same time, digital transformation has changed the expectations of how we work, everything from tenure to career, and how we relate to a desk to how we meet colleagues. All informed by our experience of digital in our personal lives—how we shop online, the transparency from the rating of others, the simplicity of paying.
Meeting the demands of individuals and organizations in new ways to address the digital transformation is the challenge of our time. Done well: Organizations will have a competitive advantage, and individuals will have more opportunities for meaningful work. Done poorly: Exploitation and brand damage will result.

Back to the Future

So how is the digital transformation paving the way for this future of work? What is it going to look and feel like? It can be summarized in a paradox: it will be a **renaissance of the ‘world of work’ before work as we know it was invented**. In the future ‘work’ is liberated from the alienated form it took on in the industrial era, going back to the deep human roots of purpose, pride, passion, community belonging and wider social impact.

We foresee the rise of a new breed of professionals who have much more in common with Renaissance **master artisans** than the blue or white collar workers we’re used to: proud of what they do and what they create, working with passion and purpose, creating a personal reputation and brand.

The key characteristic of those professionals and the organizations they are associated with is going to be **agility**. The platforms and networks enabling and enforcing agility are going to be **talent marketplaces**, and the form ‘work’ is going to take on in these environments is what we call a **work journey**. Let’s have a look at these three key interdependent components of the future of work in a digital world before drilling into the details of how we see individuals and organizations practically transition into this future.

From Ability to Agility

*We describe agility as “the ability to anticipate, respond, evolve, thrive, optimize and capitalize in a digitalized world”.*

The main ability to embark and embrace the digital transformation journey for **organizations and individuals** is agility. The way to achieve that for organizations is to leverage talent in different ways and to take a different approach to how work is done. It will be made possible by a fundamental evolution in organizational structures and cultures, and a move away from the stable hierarchies many of us still work in.
To be successful, organizations and individuals need to transform jointly from a stable into an agile world. Agile organizational structures will be fueled by agile talent, embracing and thriving in new dynamic environments. Ideas, people and work will be liberated from silos and made freely exchangeable. Rather than jobs and roles, work will be thought of in terms of assignments, with teams assembled from the most suitable and engaged talent to execute them. Individuals will rely more on their professional reputation and their visibility across internal and external networks.

The Rise of Talent Marketplaces

To enable and implement agility, organizations need to leverage innovative platforms and networks like talent marketplaces. These are transparent ecosystems that connect the work assignments needed to execute a given business strategy with the people, their aspirations, experiences, strengths and passion. They enable an organization to allocate, develop and reward talent in an agile, proactive and seamless manner while enabling talent to leverage the full spectrum of business assignments to grow and navigate their career, matching personal preferences with work opportunities—sustaining their own employability. Central to the way a talent marketplace is fostering organizational agility is the idea of work becoming assignment-based rather than role-based. Talent with the appropriate skills is then brought together into dynamic teams to fulfill the assignment.
As a consequence organizational structures will flatten, and an individual’s professional **reputation** will no longer be solely a gift of his or her leader. Professional reputation becomes the means by which individuals shape a career on their terms, acquiring, developing and trading on their strengths and experience as they go.

*Reputation—of an individual, a leader, an organization—is going to be the currency of this marketplace.*

And transparency about it is vital for both the supply and demand side to see what each other has to offer.

Agility works both ways then: It allows for organizations to quickly assemble teams of the right people with the right skills for a particular assignment, making more efficient use of talent rather than having it stuck within ‘jobs’ or departments that remain static regardless of the spring tides of business needs. It allows for individuals to choose the assignments best fitting with their career plans and aspirations, and be able to alter the intensity of work and better balance it with other factors in their lives.

**The Work Journey**

As organizations move from stable hierarchies to agile, open networks, the corporation as such turns into a network of networks, a ‘**wirearchies**’ (Jon Husband). The enterprise talent marketplaces will open up to external talent. “Employees” will become part of shared talent pools and work on one or more assignment for one or more companies. On the other hand companies will become part of a “consortium” established on the basis of shared talent management agreements and requirements.

This open talent marketplace—shared and leveraged by multiple companies—will make the traditional employee lifecycle become obsolete. It will drive a transition towards an employee journey through multiple assignments in multiple companies—some of them likely at the same time. The key ticket to employment will turn from an exclusive permanent employment contract with a single employer into an inclusive **professional passport (literally to pass through different ports)**—created and validated by the different employers of the “consortium”. It will
provide access to assignments in all companies leveraging the open talent marketplace.

Take-off for Transformation

What seems to be simple at first sight—adding agility to the way we do and deploy work—strikes at the very heart of the relationship that formed the traditional bond between organizations and their talent. Therefore the starting point for organizations and individuals is to understand how agile they are—which took us to consider the **people and business case** for transformation.

The People Case

Why would individuals step away from the value of working for an established business and seek the liberated but risky professional life of an agile worker in an open talent marketplace?

Traditional workplaces have "promised":

- Arranged and available work that employs one’s experience and capabilities
- Training and development provided to ensure one could meet current and future business needs
- Reliably occurring compensation and occasionally recognition for contributions
- A sense of community and shared endeavour with others under the banner and brand of a single company
- Some degree of safety net to guard against the risk of illness, disability, or obsolescence

### The People Cases

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However, the same shattering changes that have opened new risks and opportunities for business have opened up in kind for individuals:

- Automation and Artificial Intelligence are obsoleting the full spectrum of jobs from assembly to the C-Suite.
- Technology has completely altered markets, business models, and entire professions—eliminating more as the new ones being created.

- The discrete, cognitive tasks of work in the digital age are awakening longings for balancing work with family, experiencing nature, and the satisfying human act of “making”.
- The previous securities from working in an established business have been disrupted, and new platforms that allow any business anywhere to locate talent anywhere anytime have shifted many risks to more likely rewards from working as a self-determined agent.
- The pervasive availability of assignments made visible through a talent marketplace is awakening the entrepreneurial spirit of the prepared worker who is willing to combine continuous learning with the careful tending of reputation while delivering quality work.
- New virtual communities of practice are more inclusive and vast than any single company could have been.
- When and where and how much to work is determined entirely by the individual, and the promises of the traditional established business are replaced with an individual’s ability to create these benefits for oneself.
Our proposal for more agile organizations based on a transparent adaptive talent marketplace has the ambitious objective to converge the corporate world benefits with the freelance talent platforms’ advantages.

Social Implications

We recognize that globalization, the growing strength of emerging economies, and industrial decline in some western countries have created divides between those perceived to have opportunities and those who have not. This disenfranchisement has helped feed the rise in populist politics across the Western Nations, and their economies are struggling to adjust and adapt to changes wrought by global trends. It is clear that the responsibility of minimizing the divisions and making change benefit the many rather than the few calls for the definition of a new social contract forged from the combined efforts of employers and political institutions.

The scale of these changes means their impact will be felt far beyond business models, organizational structures and the conditions under which most of us work.

The so-called ‘gig economy’ brings freedoms and flexibility, but also the potential for employers to side-step their obligations.

Traditional employment laws must be overhauled where they no longer protect workers from onerous terms and poor treatment. The opportunity here is for corporations, lawmakers, legal experts and workers’ representatives such as trade unions to begin intense discussions on how to keep pace with such rapid shifts in the labor market.

Agile and flexible ways of working present opportunities but also significant challenges that must be addressed in a holistic way through a new alliance between people, enterprises, regulators and governments. This article is our first contribution to this discussion.

The Business Case

On the business side, there is already an emerging trend for more dynamic, project-like structures in many organizations, which are starting to compete with the more static traditional hierarchical structure of departments with leaders and set objectives. Working in projects has great benefits, but the need to set out these benefits suggests rightly that there is a cost.
To counterbalance these costs effectively, the method by which resources are allocated to projects is important. We have assumed the use of a market rather than a more traditional resource management function and assumed that market is transparent and adaptive—meaning both workers and those seeking workers have complete information, and the market can change to provide workers with different skills.

Three core categories of benefit arise from this kind of market:

**Securing scarce resources and key skills**

- **Changing demography**
  We assume that workers at different stages of life have different time and work preferences. Where employers cannot match these preferences skilled workers find other employers. Transparent markets make visible work that can be part time or assignment based, and so appeal to demographics otherwise excluded from the traditional full time work place.

- **The impact of automation**
  The impact of automation is broadly expected to affect tasks rather than whole roles. To gain the benefit of automation, workers must be assigned tasks which can be reallocated.

**Aligning labor cost to demand which changes faster than the traditional hiring cycle.**

- **Proactive resourcing the peaks**
  Visibility of demand drives movement in the internal market, broadening the market to include external workers gives greater supply.
- **Reducing cost of non-deployed staff during the troughs.**

Using external workers gives a simple method to reduce supply, offering ‘off time’ to permanent workers reassured by visibility of future demand.

**Effective management of workers stuck in low value roles**

- **Low employability—driving self-realization**
  
  Greater visibility of the market will help workers understand when they are close to commoditized skills and roles. Self-realization drives better engagement and avoids other management actions which carry significant cost.

- **Pre-Skilling—enabling the business case**
  
  Training people proactively for a new role—leaping to the new—has clearer benefits when the workforce is deployed to projects. This approach improves productive time allocated, and gets greater value from an individual worker.

These benefits from a transparent and adaptive talent market **drive new revenue, reduced costs, and lower future risk of cost.** They rely on the enterprise measuring the cost of labor, an essential management metric in a project organization.

**Enablers & Inhibitors**

We believe both business and people perspectives provide powerful cases for agile transformation. the transition from a stable into an agile environment for organizations and individuals is about understanding their agility—and how they can seize the opportunities of an increasingly digitalized environment.

**Most of the talent policies and procedures still in place were designed to support stable businesses and an equally stable work setting.**

*The agile world will require a revision and evolution (if not a revolution) of all of our HR practices including the underlying organizational structures and cultures.*

We identified multiple external and internal enablers and inhibitors for an organization to leverage a transparent and adaptive talent marketplace. Practices
for each of these already exist in all organizations, and most will need to transform them significantly to turn them from inhibitors to enablers.

We focused our analysis on the eight most critical internal ones: Assignment Attributes, Culture and Environment, People Attributes, Reputation and Brand, Reward and Recognition, Role of the Manager, Talent Journey, Training and Learning.

Per each of these areas we laid out the journey trajectories from a stable into an agile world short-, mid- and long-term. A compelling picture what “work”—enabled by a transparent and adaptive talent marketplace—will look like 5 years from now; along with two intermediate steps we suggest to take, relative to the technology maturity of the organization.
The main characteristics for each enabler are outlined below. A detailed description per each enabler can be found in the Appendix of this eBook.

**Assignment Attributes**

The talent marketplace will support the description of discrete tasks or singular performances with precise requirements for capabilities, estimated time to complete them, and a price tag for the organization to pay the worker who wins the contract.

Turning ‘jobs’ into assignments and making them visible and accessible is a critical prerequisite for the marketplace—providing one side of the coin. It requires business leaders to use a different mode to describe their demand—starting from the outcome of an assignment.

**People Attributes**

In a platform-based Talent Marketplace, technology will enable vast access to individuals who offer descriptions of their unique combination of attributes. Individuals will create their own profiles about the experiences and capabilities they choose to put forth that will substitute for traditional resumes.

On the other side of the coin the people looking to take part in the marketplace are required to open up and share their professional strengths, work history and
future ambitions at a much greater level of transparency—creating a trustworthy picture of themselves.

**Reputation & Brand**

In the Talent Marketplace an organization’s brand will be defined and validated by a network. Similarly, individuals’ reputations will be their admission ticket to the Talent Marketplace; their reputation will be their currency to get the assignments they wish and—as leaders—to attract the talent they want.

Sources of insight are aggregated in an automated way and made visible to the individual and the marketplace—transparency of the brand and the corresponding reputation will be key to fuel the marketplace, for both individuals and organizations.

**Role of the Manager**

Managers who focus on asserting control to create predictable results will be challenged when they no longer “own” their talent. Those managers who see agile workers as augmenting their talent pipelines and who actively help individuals build their reputations based on valuable deliverables will attract the best talent.

The well-known metaphor of the orchestrator is replaced by the curator: leadership in the talent marketplace still requires the ability to identify those individuals who will form a great team—without having to tell them what to play anymore but rather make them hungry for applause.

**Rewards and Recognition**

When platforms make rewards transparent, organizations will need to enrich their offerings to attract both internal and external talent to key projects. Pay will need to vary even more widely for different assignments and varying levels of capability and reputation.

When each assignment carries its own price tag, the marketplace enables new levels of clarity and flexibility for organizations planning their staffing and budget requirements and for individuals monitoring their workload and income requirements.
**Training and Learning**

Completing even the most effective training has never been a guarantee of capability, so transcripts, or descriptions of previous work are not enough evidence of ability. Individuals will face new challenges of transporting their expertise when they move beyond working within traditional organizations where one’s track record is easily discovered and validated.

Since the information of ‘trending’ skills and experience, as well as predictive scenarios are available for everyone real-time, personal development decisions in the marketplace will be made with a much higher degree of sustainability. Individuals will be able to safeguard their employability with current and accurate data about demand for current and emerging capabilities.

**Talent Journey**

Individuals will sculpt their work to support life choices; working when, where and how much they choose. A Career Passport confirming their contributions and learning journeys will accompany individuals through their careers, and the most agile and experienced will command the greatest opportunities.

Both people and business leaders (and the whole organization—at the end of the day) move from a CV type of documentation to a Facebook-like timeline—becoming the key to open up future opportunities.

**Culture and Environment**

Organizations will evolve their business models to keep pace with external markets and deploy talent from a mix of internal employees and agile workers to keep up that pace. The best will treat all workers as if engaged in long-term relationships, because the reputation of how they treated those individuals will endure long past the engagement.

“Elephants will dance”: the big benefit for large organizations in a marketplace environment is the ability to combine stability (a guaranteed continuous flow of attractive and diverse assignments) with the agility to instantaneously connect the right people with the best-fit work.
The Team

The people who actively participated in the EFMD Special Interest Group and collectively wrote this eBook were:

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**W.L. Gore**: Debra France (Leader and Innovator Development)

**EFMD**: Martin Moehrle (Facilitator) and Shanshan Ge (Coordinator)
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Assignment Attributes

APPENDIX: ENABLERS & INHIBITORS

Assignment Attributes

Definition

Units of work have been described differently over time. In earliest times, the activity of work was not differentiated from any other activity that sustained life. Then the industrial age brought in the time and motion studies that propelled ever improving processes that saved time and increased the output of each worker. While industrial engineers and instructional designers continued to decompose work into its most discrete elements to improve productivity or to teach employees the necessary skills, most organizations – and their human resources professionals – have focused most closely on units of work represented as a job. They created job postings to hire people and job descriptions to ensure workers know the range of tasks they will complete in exchange for payment.

To make the shift to working in a talent marketplace, managers, companies, and individuals will need to focus on defining and describing more flexible units of work. They will need to define what we call assignments, a series of activities to achieve a specific outcome completed by any worker who has the reputation, capability, and desire to contract for it. Most organizations have jobs or roles where employees will agree to perform key tasks and “other duties as required.” However, the talent marketplace will support the description of outcomes or singular performances with precise requirements for capabilities, estimated time to complete them, and a price tag for the organization to pay the worker who wins the contract.

Dimensions

The term assignment is meant to provide a more generally valid concept of the allocation of a job or a set of tasks or activities (cf. Wiktionary). It is supposed to capture any potential type of work in any type of working relationship (including both Stable and Agile worlds).
Therefore the very basic definition would read: *An assignment is a set of activities directed to achieve a given outcome within a given time.*

An assignment encompasses a number of dimensions:

- The **duration** of an assignment is by definition flexible and ultimately dependent on the desired outcome. It can be mapped to a continuum from a few minutes all the way to multiple years. The well-known case of the “job role” – in principal an open-ended assignment – is based on the assumption of permanency; it marks one extreme on the continuum.

- An assignment may require varying **levels of time consumption** by someone who is allocated to it; the consumption levels may range from very high (beyond what we know as 'full-time') to very low (even putting the assignment 'on hold' for a period of time). The consumption level is dependent on the dynamics and dependencies inherent to an assignment.

- Since the desired assignment outcomes can be very diverse and the assignment can assume multiple **shapes**, e.g. developmental assignments to grow specific skills or stretch assignments to experience unknown practice areas.

- Even though the assignment is directed to achieve an outcome, it is not necessarily (and in the environments we're focusing on much less likely) **fully prescriptive** with regard to the activities or tasks to be performed to achieve the outcome. This is not to say that we don't care how assignments are fulfilled – we do very much – it is all about providing the teams working on the assignments with the freedom to figure out how to best take care of them.

- An assignment is defined as an **entity**. It can nevertheless be split up and allocated to a number of different people (e.g. a team) which may or may not belong to the same organization – an assignment allocated to a single person is just one out of many possible cases, which does include the option of allocating an assignment or part of it to a machine.
Assignment Attributes in an Agile Environment

Agile environments require much greater levels of maturity with regard to an organization's ability to create assignments – moving away from the much broader definition of a job – and allocate resources to fulfil them. The talent marketplace as a common platform will

- allow for an organization
  - to offer the assignments needed to execute a given business strategy in a standardized way and
  - search and find individuals, leaders and teams to be allocated to these assignments on the same platform

- allow for an individual
  - to offer their experience, engagement and productivity on a standardized platform and
  - find assignments matching their aspirations and needs on the same platform

The benefits for the individual include

- All open assignments are visible and accessible
- Freedom to choose the work assignment that best fits personal aspirations and needs
- Professional reputation and track-record of leaders offering assignments is transparent
- Professional reputation and track-record of others working on assignments is transparent
- Ability to fully own individual career moves
- Ability to ensure employability by viewing assignment trends in the market place

The benefits for the organisation include

- All individuals within the organization are visible - including their professional track-record and their professional reputation
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Assignment Attributes

- Ability to identify individuals that fit best to a given assignment, anywhere in the world
- Ability to assemble teams short-notice
- Access to a greater pool of diverse talent fitting assignments requirements
- Visibility on current expertise and capabilities and future gaps across the talent pool providing the ability to design and deploy dedicated development interventions
- Transparency on professional reputation of leaders, teams and individuals

To enable a marketplace approach the assignment-parameters will have to entail a basic set of information about:

- the start-date of an assignment and its planned duration
- the objectives/ desired assignment outcomes
- the expected commitment needed to accomplish the assignment – e.g. full time/ part time/ total number of days
- the customer (internal / external) the assignment is serving
- the experience/ expertise / attitudes required to successfully fulfil the assignment
- the assignment leader (professional reputation and track-record)
- the team members (professional reputation and track-record) already engaged for the assignment (if any).

What will it take to transition your organization?

It is important for an organization to understand where it currently falls and desires to be on a spectrum of levers that impact how the transition to an assignment-based environment will be shaped. Below are a few areas to consider and our view on their evolution’s direction from a stable into the agile future state. The future state depends mainly on the business model, business strategy and the market environment of the organization.
The Intertwined Nature of Enablers and Inhibitors

Assignment attributes by themselves, however, do not make an agile environment. Interdependencies with other enablers and inhibitors play a key role in the organization’s integrated eco-system. Find below our view on the relative importance and interdependency of both internal and external enablers/inhibitors. The company’s journey and current environment will impact where it wishes to focus to become more agile in its approach to assignment attributes.
An assignment based environment will

- require significantly more flexibility of reward and recognition systems. Assignments come along with their price – which will vary based on urgency and importance of the assignment and the availability of talent to work on the assignment – transforming the way we reward and pay people in corporations
- drive transparency of the professional reputation of the market players since it will become the "ticket" to an engagement
- be closely tied to the introduction of people attributes – because both represent the two sides of the same coin named marketplace
- support more just-in-time and on-the-job types of training and learning – empowered by AI-recommendations
- disrupt the employee lifecycle as we know it since the 'cycle' restarts with every assignment and evolves itself into a journey through multiple assignments
- strongly influence new requirements for managerial roles – focusing on three areas: breaking down strategic goals into assignments; assembling and forming high-performing teams short notice; coaching teams to their strengths
- depend on a culture that is supportive of the approach and vice versa drive a flattened networked organizational structure

Four external drivers strongly influencing assignment-based environments:

- Even though not necessarily a prerequisite emerging technologies like collaboration tools and – very soon – VR and AR are the most important enablers and drivers for assignment-based environments. They allow for speed, transparency and accessibility in the talent marketplace and enable virtual teams across company and national borders.
- Digitalization and the VUCA business and societal environments are forcing organizations to create more agile and responsive ways of working.
- Automation and robotics in concert with AI have the potential to replace millions of jobs in the next decade – and with it the notion of a job as such. Hence the urgency for alternative collaboration and employment models.
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Assignment Attributes

- Finally, the increased **transparency of labor markets** through platforms like upwork.com or freelance.com has already created assignment-based marketplaces with strong growth rates empowering talent to try out new ways of working – and raising their expectations with regard to employers.

Potential Hazards to Guard Against

It is equally important to assess hazards and hinge factors that could disrupt a re-imagined approach to assignment-based environments. Here are some key areas for consideration:

**TRANSPARENCY**

- There will always be specific assignments (e.g. innovation work) that cannot be made visible to the entire talent population to protect intellectual property / competitive advantage.

- Equally it is important to understand who is currently benefitting from the of lack of transparency, which characterizes many as-is assignment-offering and resource-allocation processes. Otherwise one runs at risk of not being prepared to manage the dynamics which will be caused by making them more transparent.

**ASSIGNMENT ALLOCATION**

- With allocation-transparency comes the need to ensure fairness in the way in which talent is selected and appointed, to minimize individual bias or retaliation.

**ASSIGNMENT PRICING**

- The marketplace will need to ensure that less-attractive assignments (e.g. low-visibility/low-complexity vs. high-visibility/high-complexity work) are also being 'sold' – e.g. by increasing the reward.

**PLATFORM DESIGN**

- The design of the marketplace platform needs to start from a User Experience perspective and therefore be based on the right balance between simplicity and effectiveness to stimulate user acceptance and impact.
ROLE OF THE MANAGER

- In an assignment-based organization managers should be able to translate the organizational strategy and goals into the work-to-be-done to execute them and – of course - to manage work by transposing it into assignments.

Transformational Trajectory

How could the journey from a stable world into an agile one unfold?

The key states and the related activities are:

ENVIRONMENT

- Analyze and understand the Business environment (volatility / unpredictability / disruption)
- Identify the impact of a globalized Talent and Labor Marketplace transparency
- Assess technologies contributions and opportunities: ubiquity of broadband, devices, collaboration applications
- Sense the changing societal values (work-life blurredness, meaningful work, demographic change)

DIAGNOSIS

- Define the strategic impacts on traditional organizational design requirements
- Set a two horizon technology / digitalization / automation assessment for your architectures and infrastructures
- Assess your cultural maturity / savviness
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Assignment Attributes

- Establish an early-prototyping environment, doing experimentation, testing, and validation of your hypotheses

INCUBATION
- Start with pockets within a project-driven organization with urgent / important business demand (e.g. agile teams, consulting services)
- Provide core platform functionalities based on a robust architectural framework (including data model / infrastructure / end-devices / user experience / mobility)
- Partner with regulatory bodies to develop playbooks
- Fuel self-sustainability

TRANSFORMATION
- Evolve as business needs evolve
- Shortened improvement loops
- Set analytics to identify areas for automation
- Showcase business (impact) and talent (employability / autonomy) benefits
- Establish lower walls to / network with external marketplaces
- Turn risks into innovation opportunities

2020+
- Get ready for a Blockchain-powered global marketplaces
- Transition to "wirearchies"
- Implement AI enabled allocation / learning
- Experience VR/AR becoming a commodity – allowing for improved collaboration experience and
- Leverage the full power of IoE/IoT driving decentralization of business models and economies as such
Questions to Get Started

In an environment where many factors are changing at once, here are a few simple questions to help assess whether moving to an assignment based environment is a primary area for an organization to focus on or if other enablers and inhibitors must be addressed first

CUSTOMER / BUSINESS STRATEGY

- What level of agility and flexibility does your business model / your business strategy require from your workforce?
- Are you facing an increased number of short-term high-priority customer requests?
- What level of cross-functional / cross-geo collaboration and innovation does your business model / your business strategy require?

ORGANIZATION

- Are you facing an increasing number of reorganizations?
- Are you challenged with a growing number of re-skilling initiatives?
- Are you experiencing an increase of involuntary layoffs and hiring-peaks in the same period?

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

- Are you facing an increase of voluntary terminations / attrition rates?
- Are employee engagement scores are going down with regard to development / career opportunities?
People Attributes

Definition

Organizations have evolved from demographic hiring in the industrial age that presumed to secure the required strength, intelligence, and shared values by hiring someone of a certain age, gender or ethnicity. Today, most organizations depend on hiring processes that validate years of personal attributes; including, work experience, degrees and certifications, and other job-specific qualifiers, followed by some assessment of personality and temperamental “fit” during an interview process. The process is often corrupted by attempting to match personal attributes to poorly articulated Job attributes and personal assessments of candidates often tainted by bias.

In a platform-based Talent Marketplace, technology will enable vast access to individuals who offer descriptions of their unique combination of attributes. Early signals of this activity are reflected in LinkedIn Profiles composed by individuals about the experiences and capabilities they choose to put forth that are substituting for traditional resumes.

New knowledge, skills, and aptitudes will also be needed by all players in the system. Managers, HR professionals, and agile workers will engage through:

- clearly articulating their own capabilities and matching the required ones;
- enhancing organizational and individual brands that develop mutual attraction; and
- rapidly forming teams with changing and diverse members.

Dimensions

We define “people” as individuals who:

- are part of the “extended enterprise” (i.e. the enterprise ecosystem = the organization and the value chain partners it is directly collaborating with plus the network of employees);
- have their own social and professional network of personal contacts;
- are actively engaged in the marketplace.
We define the key attributes of people as:

All tangible and accessible information from and about an individual which is relevant to enable both the individual and the organization to effectively participate in all marketplace-transactions.

The attributes of people are therefore characterized by the following set of dimensions:

- the attributes need to be **tangible**, meaning: accessible by others as well as transparent with regard to how the information was gathered and by whom. This includes that the information needs to be meaningful, timely and reliable.
- the attributes may originate **from an individual** – which means the individual provides and owns them – or **about an individual**, which means the information is provided and owned by others. This may include information gathered and processed by machines.
- the attributes need to be **relevant** - there is a purpose behind gathering them (organizational or marketplace or individual goals). If they do not support this purpose, there is no need to capture them.
- the attributes need to **enable both the individual and the organization** – they need to prove relevant for both parties.
- the attributes are ultimately a means to enable individuals and organizations to **effectively operate in the marketplace** and **better collaborate in achieving their goals**. The organizational goals are understood as strategic goals broken down to manageable initiatives and assignments. The individual goals are understood as career and employability goals

**People Attributes in an Agile Environment**

Agile environments utilize attributes of people to a much greater degree than stable ones to empower employee- and leader-decision making. To enable assignments and talent brokerage, the basic attribute set of people in a marketplace environment is focused on people's

- **ASPIRATIONS** with regard to the engagements they are looking for
  - functional area (e.g. marketing, sales, finance)
**APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – People Attributes**

- location (e.g. city, country)
- type of work (e.g. remote, on-site)

**AVAILABILITY**
- timeline (e.g. preferred start date, end date)
- time consumption level (e.g. hours per week, days per month)

**SKILLS AND KNOW-HOW**
- Technical skills
- Areas of knowledge mastered

**PAST AND CURRENT ENGAGEMENTS**
- timelines
- customers served (industry, function, etc.)
- key partners (industry, function, etc.)
- locations
- budget ownership
- team members
- team leaders

**PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION**
- experience
- key achievements
- key skills strengths
- endorsements (peers, partners, customers, etc.)
- areas of expertise
- network
- promotions
- recognition (awards, patents, publications, etc.)

**The benefits for the individual include**

- Building and evolving a professional brand (inside and outside of the organization)
- Increased employability
- Accessing a broader range of opportunities and hence more choices
- Predictive development of capabilities relevant for future assignments
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – People Attributes

The benefits for the organization include

- Ability to identify individuals that fit best to current and future assignments
- Visibility on current/past expertise and capabilities and future gaps across the talent pool providing the ability to dedicated development interventions
- Transparency of professional reputation of leaders, teams and individuals

What will it take to transition your organization?

It is important for an organization to understand where it currently falls and desires to be on a spectrum of levers that impact how the transition to an assignment-based environment will be shaped. Below are a few areas to consider and our view on their evolution’s direction from a stable into the agile future state. The future state depends mainly on the business model, business strategy and the market environment of the organization.

The Intertwined Nature of Enablers and Inhibitors

People attributes by themselves, however, do not make an agile environment. Interdependencies with other enables and inhibitors is a given. How you structure people attributes influences and is influenced by these at different level. Below is guide to the relative importance and dependency of both internal and external
enablers/inhibitors. The company’s journey and current environment impacts where it wishes to focus to become more agile in its approach to people attributes.

A people attribute based environment will

- require a fundamental redefinition of **reward and recognition** systems, since it will call for a new balance of flexibility, risk and security: which means that compensation is not following a stable growth path anymore but rather will vary depending on the 'market value' of people's skills and reputation and the 'market value' of the assignment to work on. In addition, there will be a need to design new rules to ensure a level of security balancing market volatility.
- drive transparency of the professional **reputation** of all market players (people, managers and organizations) since it will become the key "ticket" to an assignment and the key "ticket" to the best talent. We will also see much more frequent and regular public endorsements and "feedforward" ensuring reputation is kept current and based on broad whilst relevant input.
- be closely tied to the introduction of **assignment attributes**: both elements represent the two elementary sides of the same coin named marketplace
- support more multi-sourced ‘on-the-fly’ / ‘on-the-job’ types of **training and learning** – self-driven and owned, with learning agility becoming an even more important capability. On-demand content curation will be driven by AI. And AR/VR (soon to come) applied to specific assignment learning requirements will become a game-changer in multiple L&D areas.
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – People Attributes

- disrupt the employee lifecycle as we know it: since the 'lifecycle' restarts with every new assignment. “Retention” will be replaced by affiliation; “career” by a professional journey; and “succession planning” will be replaced by understanding and attracting talent pools.
- enforce the role of the manager to shift dramatically: temporary assignment/team-leads without 'owning' people anymore, high adaptability to varying contexts, agile assembly and formation of high-performing teams; outcome and strengths-focused coaching.
- drive and depend on a culture that is fueled from within the teams rather than the corporation – based on mutual trust and an outspoken two-way 'contract' between people and the organizations they engage with.

We also identified four external drivers strongly influencing people attribute based environments:

- The overall talent market transparency will provide visibility of talent and opportunity on a global scale – which also means that competition – in some areas of work – will shift dramatically. We will see the rise of shared talent pools and the definition of professional portfolio based and driving people attributes. This is also an area where we see a strong need for cross-national regulation – which at the same point in time is not going to keep up with the pace of technological innovation.
- Raising consumer expectations already impact the expectations of people with regard to their relationship with employers and their work preferences. This trend is going to rise and analytics-inferred recommendations and automation will play an increasingly important role.
- Emerging technologies such as new collaboration plays (incl. AR/VR end-devices) and blockchain powered marketplaces will drive increased flexibility and ownership of the workplace configuration, as well as new decentralized and customized experience levels.
- Finally, the rapid growth of social media applications like LinkedIn (employee focus) and Glassdoor (employer focus) will drive transparency of the professional reputation of employers and employees and accessibility of talent and work, as well as new forms of analytics including social graphing and network vibrancy.
Potential Hazards to Guard Against

It is equally important to assess hazards and hinge factors that could disrupt a re-imagined approach to assignment based environments. Here are some key areas for consideration:

The potential risks are dependent on the business environment (for the organization) and the talent market environment (for the individual). The more volatile and unpredictable these environments become, the higher will be the risk of not being able to respond to those changes and becoming vulnerable to competitive threats.

From an organizational point of view – especially when looking at larger and geographically diverse organizations – it is about readiness to utilize more detailed information about people's attributes and activities by leveraging employee data traces and using data analytics to support organizational and individual decision making.

A marketplace approach provides potential risks mainly with regard to the organizational culture required to make it work such as

**TRANSPARENCY**

- People attributes transparency may conflict with individual confidentiality concerns (e.g. data ownership, opt-in/opt-out choices) and public legal regulations (e.g. data privacy, data protection). Individuals should own and control their data and be informed about the value and the return for them in making them available and visible.

- A way to address this would be a “reputation-blockchain” approach which would allow individuals to fully own their proven people attributes and decide on the type and amount of information made visible depending on the transaction.

**REPUTATION**

- As professional reputation (and the transparency about it) plays a key role in creating trust and initiating relationships in the marketplace, it will become critical to ensure that talent with little or poor reputation is provided with options to address and change it.
THE ROLE OF THE MANAGER

- In an assignment-based environment, managers will have to set their people free to navigate the marketplace and make their journey through different assignments and leaders. Managers will have to transition to a much more consultative, coaching and counseling role.

Transformational Trajectory

How could the journey from a stable into an agile world unfold?

The key states and the related activities are:

ENVIRONMENT

- Analyze and understand the business environment (VUCA / Disruption / Challengers / IoE Innovation)
- Identify the impact of emerging External Talent Marketplaces / Contingent workforce / Multi-generation presence at work
- Assess and review the internal organizational structures
- Leverage Talent and Employer Market Transparency (LinkedIn / Glassdoor / Upwork)

DIAGNOSIS

- Fully leverage the power of Big Data – People Analytics
- Add intelligence and insights to traditional analytics
- Identify strategic interlock – business needs and business case
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – People Attributes

- Initiate early experiments with a rapid prototyping approach. Understand emerging technology and digitalization impact (VC world / military)
- Introduce an experience focus
- Perform systemic risk assessment

INCUBATION
- Focus on early marketplace adopters
- Ensure and develop technology savviness and utilization / infrastructure and data model
- Execute agile adjustments on go-to-market cycles – experience driven
- Influence / adopt regulatory environment
- Initiate and leverage external partnerships
- Introduce a light and flexible governance

TRANSFORMATION
- Scale, scale, scale
- Provide variance and enable choice / customization
- Culture meets strategy for breakfast everyday
- Open up to external marketplaces
- Technology infrastructure and eco-system is running smoothly

2020+
- Staying hungry ...
- Permeable Marketplaces are established and have become the main operating system of a network of organizations
- Value proposition of the organization vs a freelance world is established and working

Questions to Get Started

In an environment where many factors are changing at once, here are a few simple questions to help assess whether moving to a people attributes based environment
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – People Attributes

is a primary area for an organization to focus on or if other enablers and inhibitors must be addressed first

CUSTOMER / BUSINESS STRATEGY

- What level of agility and flexibility does your business model / your business strategy require from your workforce?
- Are you facing an increased number of short-term high-priority customer requests?
- What level of cross-functional / cross-geo collaboration and innovation does your business model / your business strategy require?

ORGANIZATION

- Are you looking up LinkedIn when you try to find out more about the professional background of someone in your own organization?
- Are you struggling to describe – in an aggregated form – the strengths (expertise, skills) of your organization?
- Are you able to identify the best person in your organization to work on a specific business challenge?

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

- Was your organization facing mass-layoffs in the near past – and if so: were you made aware early so you could prepare?
- Does your organization provide you with a relevant and current map of development / career opportunities?
- Does your organization provide a transparent single-place-to-go showing all open jobs / assignments?
Reputation & Brand

Definition

The concept of Reputation and Brand will evolve with the rise of Talent Marketplaces. While historically, a brand was created and owned by an organization (or an individual), in the marketplace environment a brand will be influenced and validated through the network. It will be composed of the reputation of each individual working with and associated with the brand. Equally, the reputation of individuals will become their “currency” in the marketplace, the “admission ticket” to assignments, and the reputation of an organization will become it “admission ticket” to talent. Through the marketplace platform, reputation will be transparent within organizations and also visible externally. By making all opportunities and market-players visible, the marketplace will provide a lot more choices for the organization and for the individual, and the reputation of both, individuals and the organization, will significantly influence how these choices will be made.

Dimensions

A brand is a name, term, design, symbol or other feature that distinguishes one organization's value proposition from those of others. A brand can also be used as a synonym for an organization or an individual owning the brand. Brand identity – the outward expression of a brand – reflects how the owner wants customers to perceive the brand; whereas brand image describes the customer’s mental picture, the emotional association with the brand. A brand is focused on how one wants to be perceived whereas reputation is all about how one is actually perceived. Therefore, a strong brand does not necessarily equate with a good reputation. And a solid reputation does not automatically result in a strong brand.

Professional reputation of an individual can be described as a combination of three facets:

- The charter and recognition-at-large organizations – and in general social entities - attribute to the individual;
- The personal experience, achievements and outcomes, strengths (skills and expertise) recognized by peers and leaders;
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Reputation & Brand

- The experience the individual is creating in the view of others when collaborating, working in a team and achieving a shared purpose together; or – regarding team leaders – the experience in forming, leading and growing a team. Simply stated: would people choose to work over and over again with that individual?

We recognize a fundamental human and social element in reputation, which overlays people’s skills, expertise and experience.

Therefore, reputation in the talent marketplace has two key dimensions:

- **Digital Dimension** — reputation as a graph: inferred from the professional traces left by the individual, such as the creation of organizational value in the past – e.g. the success and relevance of previous assignments – the decisions and actions organizations undertook to reward and recognize an individual’s achievements, along with the ‘professional graph’ of an individual in executing assignments and collaborating with customers, peers and leaders.

- **Human Dimension** — reputation as a figure: derived from other’s (e.g. team peers, partners, customers) who got a direct experience of the professional value the individual created, and how he/she achieved it as a team member, a partner/supplier or a team leader. For example, how others perceived when the individual was working on an assignment and how the assignment goals were achieved with and through others.

These dimensions are connected by a fundamental integrator

- **Personal Network** — individual reputation’s dimensions and related social capital are always relational, i.e. dependent on the number and strength of relationships people have in organizations as well as the breadth, size and diversity of their professional network. Surfacing reputation will take into account and leverage each individual’s network and social reach.

Reputation and Brand in an Agile Environment

The ability to navigate agile environments requires instant access to timely, relevant and reliable information about the environment; most importantly (but not limited to) information about the people acting in this environment. Therefore, agile
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Reputation & Brand

Environments are going to foster the reputation of individuals and organisations to become much more transparent and accessible. As a consequence, brand ownership will shift from a centralized, “by design” approach made for stable environments to a much more dynamic “open-source” play. In the future a brand will be composed by and therefore become dependent on the network it is embedded in to a much larger degree.

The benefits for the individual include

- Higher visibility of professional reputation across the organization and beyond – and therefore more chances to be approached for work that fits personal aspirations and strengths
- Increased transparency about the professional reputation of peers and leaders one collaborates with / is looking to collaborate with
- Ability to own (better understand and more actively develop) personal professional reputation
- Co-constituency of an organizational brand, which creates a stronger sense of belonging

The benefits for the organization include

- Involvement of network stakeholders in constituting the brand allows for a more intimate and sustainable customer relationship
- Increased brand reach and impact
- Instant access to the professional reputation of everyone within the organization – and therefore a much higher chance to identify individuals that fit best to a given assignment in a faster and more precise way
- Transparency of reputation is going to create a culture of trust (in the organization, its people and the talent marketplace itself)

What will it take to transition your organization?

It is important for an organization to understand where it currently falls and desires to be on a spectrum of levers that impact how the transition to an environment that will be shaped. Below are a few areas to consider and our view on their evolution’s direction from a stable into the agile future state. The future state depends mainly
on the business model, business strategy and the market environment of the organization.

The Intertwined Nature of Enablers and Inhibitors

Reputation and Brand by themselves, however, do not make an agile environment. Interdependencies with other enables and inhibitors are a given. How you approach reputation and brand influences and is influenced by these – with differing levels of impact. Below is a guide to the relative importance and interaction of both internal and external enablers/inhibitors. A company’s journey and current environment may impact where it wishes to focus to become more agile in its approach to reputation and brand.
An agile environment based on a new approach to reputation and brand will:

- turn traditional **reward and recognition** systems upside-down, since professional reputation as the main marketplace “currency” will be the key determinant of the market-player value vs. rewards tied to grading systems based on job-role evaluations.

- support a shift to “swarm-defined” assignments of various forms. Team reputation will be distributed per individual contribution on an assignment; with brand providing the broader purpose for the team.

- account for a radically new definition of **people attributes**. We will see a renaissance of the Master Artisan, passionate in what they do, with a clear purpose and ethos, owning their personal brand and being proud of their public reputation.

- stimulate a self-driven **learning** attitude, lifelong and ad-hoc learning as a secondary influencer of the overall brand one belongs to.

- replace the traditional linear **employee lifecycle**. With a strong personal brand and public reputation, people will be able to navigate their professional journey within a single and across multiple organizations – choosing their own timeline

- heavily influence new requirements for **managerial roles** – including: brand mentorship, tribal team leadership, building a leadership brand, and reputation
feed an evolutionary “viral” culture that is composed of organic, micro-branded moments and a culture of transparency that requires and drives trust and honesty.

And a strong brand will be anchored and protected through the transparent swarm of people constituting the organization. This may put the organization under pressure short-term, but will in the long run immunize against weaker leaders.

Three external drivers are strongly influencing reputation and brand-based environments:

- The role of networks can’t be overestimated: They allow for brands to instantaneously morph to different meanings, relative to a specific situation, the needs of an individual and the network as such. And they will be the most important breeding ground for the key information feeding into the professional reputation.
- Digitalization means Glocalization: allowing brands on the one hand to adopt to individual fit, e.g. in different life phases. And – on the other hand – putting the spotlight on organizations to take on responsibility for the full (global) supply-chain. Moreover, reputation going glocal means a huge increase of reach and flexibility for individuals.
- Digitalization massively drives an increasing convergence of digital and physical brand presence. Opening up the physical presence to an even greater variety of hybrid multi-dimensional spaces.

Potential Hazards to Guard Against

It is equally important to assess hazards and hinge factors that could disrupt a re-imagined reputation and brand-based marketplace approach. It provides potential risks mainly with regard to the organizational culture required to make it work. Here are some key areas for consideration:

- Organizations will have to work more proactively to develop customer and thus talent perceptions that accurately reflect the brand, or the brand is doomed to limited growth potential.
If a brand doesn’t meet customer and talent expectations in every interaction, there is a risk that they will look for other brands better meeting their expectations in every “moment that matters”.

Becoming an “open-source” brand provides the risk of not being able to manage brand-damage caused by network stakeholders.

Surfacing reputation comes along with a variety of potential risks:
- reputation is based on (an aggregation of) subjective beliefs or opinions of others. It provides the risk that it is based on misconception, prejudice or even intentional misinterpretation.
- reputation is dynamic and changes over time plus takes time to build up. The risk that a single action can harm or even destroy a reputation that was built over a long period needs to be taken into account.
- reputation is fragile and sensitive; it needs to be protected in order to preserve credibility and trust – and it needs a culture of trust as a prerequisite to make it transparent.

A reputation-based culture could be a scary and stressful place to live in. Organizations will need to properly measure an individual’s aggregated reputation and carefully position the value and benefit of reputation to the individual. The cultural human side is the most important element to consider in introducing transparent professional reputation.

Transformational Trajectory

How could the journey from a stable world into an agile one unfold?

[Diagram: Transformational Trajectory]
The key states and the related activities are:

**ENVIRONMENT**
- Assess how hierarchical and top-down is your brand definition
- Identify stakeholder-value drivers in your brand
- Understand and take into account Gen X leadership, preference to be protective and risk-averse
- Implement controlled innovation – quality driven
- Analyze the characteristic of your internal Talent Marketplace
- Understand how much Reputation is leveraged and used in a hidden manner
- Take into account the impact of external driving forces: technology, digitalization, glocalization, demographics

**DIAGNOSIS**
- Assess your consumer-focused brand
- Assess your social media brands
- Assess your brand internally through your employee engagement survey
- Perform multichannel brands, channel segmentation (sales data) analysis
- Research transformative brands
- Leverage big-data and an analytics-driven approach
- Identify the key reputation components / drivers in your organization

**INCUBATION**
- VUCA realization and its impact on your organization
- Implement a strong employee-focus approach
- Enable employees to shape brand responsibility
- Create a risk-taking, experimental-friendly environment
- Explore network extension, democratized brand ownership, ownership transfer
- Initiate with an opt-in reputation policy for transparency
- Co-creation of reputation graph

**TRANSFORMATION**
- Experiment with a more open brand approach
- Collective ownership and individual reputation
APPENDIX – ENABLES & INHIBITORS – Reputation & Brand

- Generate trust, enablement
- Implement network extension, brand extension
- Re-define the concept of «employee» in your enterprise
- Live the new work: utilize reputation as a currency
- Consider Brand as partner, brand as enabler

2020+
- Change 'on board'
- Implement a permanent transition/evolution mindset
- Employees and partners collaborate
- Everyone is a brand – everyone is the brand
- Wirearchy
- Brand as network of networks

Questions to Get Started

In an environment where many factors are changing at once, here are a few simple questions to help assess whether moving to a reputation and brand-based environment is a primary area for an organization to focus on or if other enablers and inhibitors must be addressed first

CUSTOMER / BUSINESS STRATEGY
- What level of agility and flexibility does your business model / your business strategy require from your workforce?
- Are you facing an increased number of short-term high-priority customer requests?
- What level of cross-functional / cross-geo collaboration and innovation does your business model / your business strategy require?

ORGANIZATION
- Do you know what your employees are good at?
- Are you able to identify the ten strongest employees in a certain area within a day?
- Are you facing an increasing number of reorganizations?
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Reputation & Brand

- How long does it take to create a cross-functional team to address a specific customer demand?
- What are the efficiency metrics of your internal hiring process?
- Are you hiring externals whilst laying off internals with similar qualifications at the same point in time?

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

- Do you have full transparency on all open jobs/assignments across the organization?
- Is it easier to find a new role within the organization vs. externally?
- How often did you get a call from an internal leader looking for talent vs. a headhunter?
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Role of the Manager

Role of the Manager

Definition

The role of the manager in a talent marketplace will evolve to accommodate and to leverage greater complexity. The manager will be an attractor, an enabler and a connector of just-in-time, on-demand talent. The manager’s work will become significantly more dynamic when accessing workers who bring precisely what is needed to meet business needs rather than relying on the known capabilities of individuals in a fixed team or department.

To meet the objective to provide the right talent at the right time to support dynamically changing business needs, managers will contribute in a "breathing organization" where internal and external talent are continuously on-boarded and released from projects. The most effective managers will guide, nourish, and engage individuals from the external talent market, as well as their own employees. This continuous assembling of workers possessing as-needed capabilities will require managers to excel at rapidly forming teams and continuously aligning and validating deliverables, while negotiating the wildly different personal requirements of autonomous workers.

Dimensions

Current definitions of “manage” still reflect the needs of the Industrial Age: “to direct or be in charge of; to handle or control.” Control was essential to achieve economies of scale and predictable processes, so managers were put in control of others to direct their efforts and punish or reward them based on the outcomes of their efforts. As demands on organizations have grown more complex – and no single manager can know as much or more than an assembly of capable professionals – expectations of managers have evolved from “direct and control" to "align and empower" workers. These more recent behavior expectations will be essential as managers give up ownership and control of their human resources in exchange for wider access to optimal talent on digital platforms and extreme flexibility in deploying them.

Managers who try to apply traditional skills to “plan, command, and control” will not be successful when they try to navigate dynamic environments in a stable-linear
way. However, managers, who have migrated to leveraging the wisdom of teams will effectively engage the collective expertise and knowledge of diverse workers. They will create conditions that foster collaboration among individuals striving to get their personal needs met while desiring to make a greater impact by working well with others.

Workforce planning will shift from projecting hiring requirements to creating flexible talent scenarios that can meet requirements of frequently changing business goals and priorities.

Organizations will shift to just-enough centrally-steered talent processes to ensure consistency and quality across the organization, with most talent decisions made at the most local level possible.

Managers in agile organizations will evolve into enablers and connectors. They will balance providing task clarity and enough emotional security for individuals with meeting requirements of timing and quality of deliverables for the organization. They will foster self-management of individuals by providing coaching and continuous feedback, while attending to costs, milestones, and outputs for the organization.

They will maintain a holistic view of what the organization requires, while inspiring and guiding flexible teams composed of internal and external members to achieve mutual goals.

The best agile managers will engage fluently with the organization’s external networks to seamlessly engage internal and external talent to respond to changing needs.

An agile manager in the talent marketplace will be one who flexibly assembles, aligns, and rewards the most capable individuals to achieve the outcomes of an organization.

The role of the Agile Manager leveraging a talent marketplace will be known for:

- Attracting the best talent based on a personal reputation for achieving results by helping workers learn, collaborate, deliver, and build their own reputations
- Ensuring the work of a continuous flow of autonomous workers to achieve the organization’s objectives by providing context, clarity, and continuous feedback
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Role of the Manager

- Matching the needs and value propositions of the organization with the strengths and preferences of individuals willing to bring their unique capabilities
- Helping individuals meet their personal growth goals and development plans while delivering valuable work
- Leading and shaping the work with a light touch by providing context, aligning effort, and protecting the organization’s interests, while getting the most value from optimal talent
- Creating an environment for individuals to do their best work and for the organization to capitalize on the innovation this enables

Role of the Manager in an Agile Environment

Agile environments require managers to organize work in a more flexible manner. They will move from directing work from individuals in stable roles and departments towards leading in a dynamic network and assembling the outputs of internal and external talent to complete needed assignments. New requirements for managerial roles will include focusing on three areas: breaking down strategic goals into assignments; assembling and forming high-performing teams on short notice, and coaching teams to their strengths.

The talent marketplace as a common platform will:

- Enable an organization to
  - Respond to changing market or customer requirements through rapid identification and deployment of capabilities from internal and external workers
  - Match internal workers with replacement assignments as elements of their work are disrupted or eliminated by automation or other changes in demand for their capabilities
- Enable an individual worker to
  - Find and evaluate assignments that meet personal needs for income, time commitment, personal and professional growth, purpose, and reputation building
o Constantly evaluate the state of one’s profession, which skills are emerging or descending, price tags for different kinds of work, reputations of organizations and leaders worth working for, role models to emulate, and the range of benefits to seek from different organizations

- Enable an agile manager to
  - Locate and deploy optimal talent immediately to complete critical assignments
  - Manage and leverage talent costs more effectively

The benefits for individual talent of working with an effective Agile Manager include

- Choose the organization and specific managers to work for based on their reputations for clarity, honesty, fair compensation, and mutual concern for reputation
- Choose managers who are known as career builders through effectively matching individuals to assignments and providing continuous coaching and feedback

The benefits for the organization of developing effective Agile Managers include

- Greater returns from talent expenditures
- Greater flexibility to reassign individuals whose jobs are being disrupted
- Increased ability to attract scarce talent and pay premium rates only as long as needed
- Rapid team formation and disbanding to address new or changing requirements quickly
- Continuously expanding a bench of agile talent to meet future needs

To enable a marketplace approach Agile Managers will have to:

- Excel at precisely defining assignments and applying appropriate price tags
- Quickly and effectively communicate requirements, expectations and context to agile workers
- Deliver task-based and career-development coaching and feedback to get the work done and to develop longer term capabilities and relationships with the best workers
Create conditions for collaboration among diverse individuals connected by ephemeral objectives

What will it take to transition your organization?

To take full advantage of a Transparent and Adaptive Talent Marketplace an organization will need to evolve the expectations, selection, and development of its managers to establish new behaviors required in this environment. Below are a few areas to consider and our view on how they will need to evolve for an organization to cultivate these capabilities for a more agile future state.

The Intertwined Nature of Enablers and Inhibitors

Agile Managers cannot create an agile environment by themselves. Their contributions will be interdependent with other enablers and inhibitors. The following graphic illustrates external drivers, these interdependencies, and their relative impact.
The bottom of the illustration shows **external developments**, which have prompted the role of the manager to evolve so that the benefits of transparent and adaptive talent platforms can be realized.

For example, Agile Managers will use emerging technologies to connect to external talent bases where they will cultivate broad business and social networks. This broader access to talent will allow them to respond to dynamic market conditions and changing client expectations. Labor regulations, unions, and work councils will enable or inhibit these new relationships.

The Role of the Manager is one of eight intertwined Enabler/Inhibitors to achieving the benefits of the talent marketplace. Begin at 9 o’clock and travel clockwise to examine these factors.

- Traditionally managers have allotted **rewards and recognition** to individuals within the defined organization’s defined parameters. Flexible reward and recognition systems will drive a world where the assignment itself comes along with a price – which will vary based on urgency and importance of the assignment, as well as the availability of talent to work on the assignment. Providing individual and tailored reward and recognition will become more important to serve different needs of the workforce. In an environment where flexible and very diverse teams will be the norm, the ability to liaise quickly with different employees and to express care and appreciation will be key.
In addition to paying the platform price tag for specific capabilities, managers will influence the reputation of workers based on how they fulfill assignments. Reliability, quality output, and collaborative capabilities will differentiate some workers. The platform will drive transparency of the professional reputation of the market players empowering reputation to become the "admission ticket" to an engagement. Managers will also build their own brand in addition to contributing to the organization’s brand. The behavior of the managers and how they role model the brand vision and the employee value proposition will become essential for attracting and retaining key talent. Effectively dealing with social networks will be crucial for creating a strong reputation and brand.

Managers will become skilled in defining assignment attributes required to produce organizational outcomes. They will achieve these assignments by assembling agile, mission-based teams to meet client needs rather than through applying stable corporate processes. As a connector and enabler, the manager needs to help the teams focus on what matters most to the organization and how to shift resources according to priorities.

As an enabler, the manager will be much more active as a coach and advisor on-the-job to ensure that employees can keep up with the fast changing work requirements. Training and learning will need to shift from a heavy focus on classroom training to an approach that focuses more on managers providing just-in-time resources that support the self-development of the employee. Some managers will occasionally provide access to training in new skills to enhance their own reputation and attract better talent.

The manager will be the dominant force in shaping each worker’s experience of the organizational culture and climate. More entrepreneurship will be required from managers as well as capabilities to shape the organization and its culture. The manager will be pivotal in creating an organizational culture that fosters and supports an entrepreneurial mindset, while at the same time ensuring alignment with its overarching intent, shared priorities, and regulatory requirements.

Managers will need to engage effectively with employees inside and outside the organization at different stages of their individual careers instead of operating within a uniformly defined employee lifecycle. These capabilities
will be crucial for managing a diverse and multigenerational workforce operating with different working agreements, including flexible working and varied contracting models to meet individual needs. Manager attention will shift from career management to supporting individual growth.

- Managers will require significantly more agility in leveraging **people attributes**. They will focus more on how to orchestrate and leverage diversity and different working styles. They will ensure that leadership capability is developed and reinforced at every level of the organization, so that there is leadership from every seat to meet client expectations. With this pervasive leadership, strong but simple common principles will be necessary to ensure a shared strategic intent and a joint approach how to drive the business.

### Potential Hazards to Guard Against

It is important to anticipate potential hazards to evolving the role of managers working with a talent marketplace. Here are some key areas for consideration:

- Managers are expected to operate within labor laws that vary widely geographically. Platforms will present talent from different locales long before these laws are harmonized presenting potential compliance risks and individual liability for these managers.
- Traditional leadership training and development will be inadequate and possibly misleading for new conditions and requirements.
- Organizations will most likely maintain a mixed state of stable, traditional employment arrangements while migrating to more agile engagements, and managers who migrate early could be penalized for diminished output while the rules change and until the benefits are apparent.
- Managers will have to navigate the tension between workers’ privacy rights and the market’s requirements for accurate and transparent individual reputation.
- Managers will need adequate support to transition their roles from directing and controlling to consulting, coaching and counseling.
- Potential blame could be placed on managers for incomplete outcomes until systems are in place for coordinating the integration, alignment, and contributions of numerous, agile work units.
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Role of the Manager

- Managers will need mechanisms to address talent with low capabilities or reputations without hurting their own reputation for delivery
- Funding will need to be adjusted to attract workers that command higher price tags than previously allocated for internal, captive talent

Transformational Trajectory

How could the manager’s journey evolve from a stable world into an agile one?

The key states and the related activities are:

ENVIRONMENT
- Volatile and potentially disruptive business environment
- Rise of external agile talent eager for different working arrangements
- Rapid changes in requirements for new capabilities and levels of agility in internal workers
- External driving forces – demographics, generational, social, technological, geopolitical, economical ...

DIAGNOSIS

Assess maturity level of current managers to become more agile:
- Inspirational /engaging leadership
- Social network management skills
- Agile project/work management capabilities
- Broad range of people development skills
- Entrepreneurial mindset
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Role of the Manager

- Ability to deal with agility and ambiguity
- Ability to inject and handle change
- Experience and ability for rapid team formation and collaboration across boundaries
- Strategy impact on organizational design requirements
- Two horizon technology / digitalization / automation assessment (architectures/infrastructures)
- Cultural maturity / savviness
- Experimentation / testing / validation of hypotheses

INCUBATION

- Identify areas of the organization that will be better served by more agile staffing
- Identify current managers who have demonstrated some agile talent skills
- Create experiments by inserting these agile managers into dynamic settings with the resources, guidance, and sponsorship to recruit and lead mixed teams of internal and external agile talent to achieve specific objectives
- Monitor progress, capture issues, facilitate learning and documentation of practices
- Enlist effective agile managers to influence management training design and mentor next candidates

TRANSFORMATION

- Determine optimal locations and degrees of agile practices
- Develop metrics and success criteria
- Evolve hiring and development practices for expanding agile management talent
- Communicate benefits realized by the business and agile workers
- Join other organizations to address regulatory and legal barriers
- Identify remaining barriers and create plans to transform them to enablers

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- Pervasive talent platforms across all geographies, industries, and capabilities
Support for developing leadership skills in all players in the marketplace throughout their lifetime

Evolved labor laws and workforce rules that generate opportunities for organizations and all workers

Questions to Get Started

Here are a few questions to guide an organization’s transition toward engaging in a Talent Marketplace:

**Organization**

- How quickly and effectively could you shift your organization to address a significant disruption to your organization?
- What would be the greatest barriers to changing the composition of your workforce to survive or compete?
- How well is your organization currently adapting to market requirements and environmental changes?

**Business Strategy**

- To what degree is your strategy focused on explore or exploit, and how does your current workforce and management team need to shift to reflect these priorities?

**Organization Culture**

- Is your employee value proposition a source of competitive advantage, and how effectively are you delivering on it?
- How do your organization’s cultural values match the hopes of talent entering the workforce?
Rewards and Recognition

Definition

The reward system of a company refers to a set of programs/initiatives that reward performance and motivate employees on an individual, team, and/or enterprise ecosystem level. Recognition is an additional avenue to reward an employee or team for reaching a specific goal, exhibiting a key behavior or value, or producing high quality results in the workplace. A key goal of employee recognition is to show appreciation for achievements and incentivize an employee or team to continue delivering high performance.

When platforms make rewards transparent, organizations will need to enrich their offerings to attract both internal and external talent to key projects. Pay will need to vary even more widely for different assignments and varying levels of capability and reputation. And in a transparent market, pay will be set in a very logical and consistent manner through the market itself. In some areas today, lack of transparency allows underlying issues such as inequality of pay to remain hidden.

When each assignment carries its own price tag, the marketplace enables new levels of clarity and flexibility for organizations planning their staffing and budget requirements and for individuals monitoring their workload and income requirements.

Dimensions

The general philosophy of Rewards is usually set at the Enterprise level. Recognition happens predominantly at the team and individual level, although there are instances where a recognition could be bestowed from the Enterprise.

Reward and Recognition encompasses a number of dimensions that should be understood within the company environment:

- The **philosophy** of the company is a key dimension in setting the appropriate reward and recognition structure in order to achieve the desired outcome.
  - Is addressing individual and/or generational differences fundamental in designing reward and recognition practices?
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Rewards and Recognition

- Is individual compensation for performance tied to/influenced by company performance – if so to what extent?
- Should variable pay be the primary differentiator for performance? Should performance be rewarded via bonus or integrated into base pay as a permanent increase?
- Do employees share company growth (performance) equally?

- The products and/or services a company offers may influence the number and structure of reward offerings. The range of roles within a company may also influence the structure of the offerings. If the company is relatively homogeneous in what its sells, then the reward structure may be relatively simple in nature.
- Specific differences on items such as bonuses and variable pay programs will be influenced by the above dimensions.
- How a company chooses to structure base salary, address merit increases and promotions/advancements, provide stock, or offer profit sharing will factor into the reward structure.
- The level of flexibility desired in employee mix (i.e. full-time, freelance, and part-time) will influence the number of contract structures needed to address the different type of workers.
- Talent availability and whether a certain type of skill or worker will be either scarce or critical to the future may also impact the reward structure and level of variability required.

- Recognition can take on many shapes and it is important to understand the desired approach.
- Is recognition formal in nature or more unstructured and informal?
- Are both monetary and non-monetary recognitions part of the ecosystem?
- How do individual preferences factor into the recognition ecosystem?

Reward and Recognition Attributes in an Agile Environment

Many enablers, when combined, significantly contribute to the need for change in the reward and recognition system. For example, how assignment attributes are
defined may influence when you get rewarded, and the culture may shape the type of recognition changes and incentives the company desires to encourage.

In an agile-agile environment, companies will move more towards a flexible reward system, requiring:

- More and different reward packages
- Enhanced choice and personalization as ways to both recognize and reward
- Ongoing real-time performance feedback and rewards
- Redesign of reward systems in order to satisfy the needs of the new ecosystem which go beyond “own employees on own payroll”

If this is done right – aligned to a company’s ecosystem, then an increased maturity in the deal /employee promise, fairness and equality should be visible – driven by transparency and an empowered workforce. Transparency, in this context, refers to numerous things from how open and willing a company is to share the different reward structures to the level of visibility into a person’s recognitions they receive. The key is to ensure that the structure that is in place is socially acceptable.

The benefits for the individual include

- Enhanced choice and personalization with regards to reward and recognition
- Greater transparency – leading to freedom to choose a reward structure that works for a life stage
- Improved reputation due to a new reward and recognition structure – leads potentially to new assignments and learning opportunities
- Real time Recognition and Reward

The benefits for the organization include

- Perception of fairness (driven by transparency) even when all things are not equal
- Access to greater pool of diverse talent and greater flexibility
- Ability to match needs of market (i.e. different work types – freelance, short term contract, open ended contract) with reward system
- Ability to match needs of talent with reward system
What will it take to transition your organization?

It is important for a company to understand where it currently falls and desires to be on a spectrum of levers that impact how reward and recognition will be shaped. Below are a few areas to consider and our view on their evolution’s direction in the agile future state.

![Diagram showing a spectrum ranging from stable to agile for different aspects of reward and recognition systems.]

The general **Philosophy** of a reward and recognition system can be described as a spectrum ranging from an approach where rewards are tied to defined job-roles allowing for a structured and predictable reward system, to an approach tying rewards and compensation to the outcomes of a certain work assignment.

**Provider** refers to whether the reward or recognition is primarily influenced by the manager and/or organization or the team or customer. Depending on the company, where you land on the spectrum may differ between the reward and the recognition approach.

Although it may seem like a subtle difference, **Focus** examines whether the company places more emphasis on the performance of an individual employee or the value either a team or individual provides to the company.

**Visibility** signifies how observable the reward and recognition system is – whether employees understand and see the rewards and recognitions other receive or whether they are invisible. One additional aspect of visibility is whether the mechanisms of the reward and recognition system are known by all.
Lastly, **Format** focuses on the range of reward and recognitions available. For static/similar, there is little variability in how reward and/or recognition is handled, whereas in flexible/unique multiple options are available to fit the scenario.

**The Intertwined Nature of Enablers and Inhibitors**

Rewards and recognition by themselves, however, do not make an agile environment. Interaction with other enablers and inhibitors is required. How you structure Rewards and Recognition influences and is influenced by these—with differing levels of influence. Below is a guide to the relative importance and interaction of both internal and external enablers/inhibitors. A company’s journey and current environment may impact where it wishes to focus to become more agile in its approach to Rewards and Recognition.

- How **organization design, culture and environment** are viewed and shaped at a corporate level and what senior leadership thinks will influence how flexible a reward and recognition system can be.
- The **assignments** a person receives in addition to **development and learning opportunities** can become part of a suite of options in which a company rewards and recognizes its people.
- The role of the **manager** will still impact a person’s reward and/or recognition for whatever his/her assignment is in the moment—the degree of impact will
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Rewards and Recognition

depend on the company philosophy. For example, the manager or team lead may give input and be influencers but more scope/authority could be put in the hands of the organization setting the pay envelopes—whether that is a compensation team or another team.

- A person’s personal network, in this case team mates, may have more influence on rewards and recognition than they do today. This will be dependent on the flexibility level in the company/culture. It can also be more important for a person to achieve a result with a larger team and be recognized for this via social networks than getting the next promotion. How you’re rewarded and recognized, even with an assignment or development opportunity, can influence a person’s reputation and brand.

- In the new world, the employee life-cycle will evolve, putting more power in the hands of the employee—if a person does not like the reward and recognition, they can go somewhere else. A person’s network will also impact the employee life-cycle to a greater extent in the future.

- Last but not least, the country regulations and laws will influence what a company is allowed to do with reward structures and programs.

Potential Hazards to Guard Against

It is equally important to assess hazards and hinge factors that could disrupt a re-imagined approach to assignment based environments. Here are some key areas for consideration:

CAREER MODELS, WORK TYPES & REWARDS

- Gone are the days of every employee of a company being hired into an open ended role. With the rise of freelance employees, and the need for employees to shift within the company quickly, more work may be set up with a predefined scope and end point. With this comes the potential for a new rewards system aligned to this scope. If a company only implements part of the equation (i.e. new work models but no new rewards model) there is a risk of employees becoming dissatisfied with the rewards and exiting the company.
FLEXIBLE TEAMS

- In some business situations, teams will need to form and dissolve in faster and different ways than before. This is another area requiring careful planning of both a recognition and a reward system that will account for the dynamic nature of team work to ensure real-time integration.

PARTNERS

- If the company has more joint ventures, partnerships, job exchanges of employees, or other cross-pollination efforts, significant thought will need to be put into whether recognition and rewards structures for these types of situations come into play. Do you want to recognize partners or do you keep the model strictly focused on the contractual obligations outlined for the rewards?

Transformational Trajectory

How could the journey from a stable world into an agile one unfold?

The key states and the related activities are:

ENVIRONMENT

- Analyze and understand the Business and Talent environment (volatility / unpredictability / disruption / scarcity of skills)
- Identify the impact of globalized Talent and Labor Marketplace transparency
- Assess technologies contributions and opportunities: ubiquity of broadband, devices, collaboration applications
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Rewards and Recognition

- Sense the changing societal values (work-life blurredness, meaningful work, demographic change)

DIAGNOSIS

- Define the strategic impacts on traditional reward and recognition structures
- Set a two horizon technology / digitalization / automation assessment for your architectures and infrastructures as it relates to ability to handle multiple employment contracts, individualized pay structures, recognition platforms, and measurements
- Assess your cultural maturity / savviness
- Establish an early-prototyping environment, doing experimentation, testing, and validation of your hypotheses

INCUBATION

- Test out 1 to 2 key areas that must evolve to increase flexibility—such as a new employment contract or a new reward or recognition approach
- Develop an integrated communication plan to increase transparency within the company to build trust
- Provide core platform functionalities based on a robust architectural framework (incl. data model / infrastructure / user experience / mobility)
- Partner with regulatory bodies to develop playbooks
- Fuel self-sustainability

TRANSFORMATION

- Evolve as business needs evolve
- Expand use cases to develop out full range of capabilities
- Set analytics to identify areas for automation
- Showcase business (impact) & talent (employability / autonomy) benefits
- Establish lower barriers to network with external marketplaces
- Turn risks into innovation opportunities
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- Get ready for a nimbler workforce – prepare the culture for onboarding, integration, and off-boarding
- Transition to flexible rewards
- The rise of the professional passport

Questions to Get Started

In an environment where many factors are changing at once, here are a few simple questions to help assess whether Rewards and Recognition is a primary area for a company to focus on or if other enablers and inhibitors must be addressed first.

AGILITY

- How agile is the existing reward and recognition structure at the company? Consider using the spectrum of levers above to understand where the company sits today.

COMPANY PHILOSOPHY

- Does the company philosophy around rewards and recognition need to change to? Consider this in the context of the business cases described in prior sections. In certain business cases changing the reward and recognition structure may take on a greater sense of urgency than in others.

CULTURE/ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

- Is the culture and organizational design set up in a way to embrace change in this area?
Training and Learning

Definition

Organizations have long provided training and learning experiences to ensure their workers developed skills to meet current and future needs. However, new complexities requiring access to a wider range of capabilities are fundamental drivers of a new Talent Marketplace. When companies go to the marketplace to match assignments with willing workers, how will they know for certain that the agile workers in this environment have the capabilities they claim?

Completing even the most effective training has never been a guarantee the learner has mastered the capability, so university transcripts, lists of courses completed, and even previous jobs are not evidence of ability. Platforms like LinkedIn solicit endorsements of individual capability claims, but agile workers still face challenges of transporting their expertise when they move beyond working within traditional organizations where one’s track record is easily discovered and validated.

Companies have long invested in internal corporate training programs and their branded “universities” hoping to create a competitive advantage through focused development of their own employees. However, as agile workers accept temporary assignments and fluidly travel in and out of organizations, what is the role of training and learning in developing and certifying expertise in a broader talent ecosystem?

Dimensions

Traditionally, training and learning in organizations was composed of sponsored educational activities designed to develop skills and capabilities in internal employees. The objective of these activities was to ensure a steady source of capable workers to meet that organization’s unique requirements. Large, well-resourced training programs were perceived to be a competitive advantage, so their employees could develop more profoundly than external workers who could not access these learning opportunities.
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Training and Learning

In these traditional employment settings, stable organizations offered their employees exclusive opportunities to develop:

- Job skills such as specific production processes, negotiation skills, or creating Excel spreadsheets;
- Broad career skills such as active listening, time management, or influencing skills;
- Technical or functional skills specific to trades or professions such as computer languages, Computer Aided Design (CAD) skills, or infection control methods.
- Supervisor, management or leadership development processes and experiences.
- Learning support that promoted behaviors valued in their unique organizational cultures.
- Some companies created their own certifications of comprehensive capabilities that evolved to an industry-acknowledgement of a discrete and valuable capability set such as the Project Management Professional (PMP) or Cisco Certified Network Associate.

So what will become of these exclusive, company-specific training programs when the talent marketplace drives greater mobility of internal and external workers across and through previous organizational boundaries?

Dimensions of Training and Learning in a Talent Marketplace will include:

- Individuals with careers as unique as thumbprints will seek and drive their own learning based on their interests, capabilities, and assignments they pursue to fulfill their personal aspirations and life requirements.
- Technology-mediated learning will provide individual access to vast offerings and certifiable, personalized learning opportunities.
- Many self-selected learning opportunities will be uncurated or uncertified, which will require individuals and organizations to validate whether required capabilities resulted from the learning.
- Companies will compete for the best agile workers by allowing them access to their internal training programs where these workers can further
differentiate themselves in the market by accessing to these exclusive learning opportunities

- Trades and professional organizations will re-emerge as recognized developers of expertise.
- Individuals will collect recognizable, open-standard learning units from employers, education institutions, and industry and professional groups, to confirm and convey their expertise.

Training and Learning in an Agile Environment

Agile environments will require systems of responsive and adaptive learning support to reflect rapidly changing organizational requirements for skills and a multitude of individual learners seeking to fulfil their unique learning goals. Training and Learning will move away from longer curricula and be constituted through a high number of shorter and relevant nuggets as required at a certain point.

The talent marketplace as a common platform will require and enable:

- **Organizations** to
  - describe precise capabilities and experiences required for individuals to be considered for emerging assignments in a standardized way
  - link assignment descriptions to available training and learning resources for individuals to develop these capabilities and
  - search and find individuals or teams who have completed training and learning in these capabilities on the same platform

- **Individuals** to
  - discover and anticipate the most sought-after capabilities in the marketplace by tracking requests and requirements for skills and capabilities to meet available assignments
  - seek and acquire training or learning support that is a match for assignments on the platform
  - find assignments matching their certified capabilities on the same platform

The benefits for the individual include

- All open assignments and their capability requirements will be visible and accessible
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Training and Learning

- Transparent confirmation of completed learning activities associated with their career passports
- Pervasive access to learning support informed by current market data enabling entirely self-driven learning
- Links to learning communities, trade and professional organizations, and commercially available learning opportunities linked to available assignments
- Fewer boundaries between traditional education and workplace-learning to support lifetime learning support
- Discussions of ascending and descending capabilities and predictive scenarios enabling individuals to safeguard their employability with current and accurate data about demand for current and emerging capabilities

The benefits for the organization include

- Individuals co-investing in their readiness for assignments
- All marketplace players (employing organizations, commercial training providers, agile workers) motivated to ensure requisite training and learning for available assignments is widely recognized and available
- Trades and professional groups easily engaged in refining requirements and learning support for all vocations and professions through the platform
- Market forces dictating content and availability of learning instead of internal training departments
- Higher education facing indisputably defined requirements for workforce preparation
- Platform-based learning as an economical alternative to internal offerings for non-proprietary learning
- Non-valued internal learning is identified, replaced with economical alternatives, or eliminated
- Internal learning opportunities opened to agile talent to attract discerning agile workers with high learning agility
- Platform analytics enabling modeling and anticipation of future learning needs
Enabling a marketplace approach to training and learning will require:

- Precise descriptions of desired capabilities for available and emerging assignments
- Constant inflow of data describing demand for ascending and descending skills to fuel analytics
- Capacity for immediate revision of training based on descriptions of exemplars, best practices and changing requirements
- Analysis of efficacy and connection to a wide range of developmental modalities (MOOCs, mobile, communities of practice, simulations, on-the-job, experiential, coached/mentored, etc.)
- Development of a validated system for recognizable, open-standard learning units for agile workers to convey their expertise

What will it take to transition your organization?

It is important for an organization to understand where it currently falls and desires to be on a spectrum of levers that will shape its transition to platform-supported training and learning. Below are a few areas to consider and our view on their evolution’s direction from a stable into the agile future state.
The Intertwined Nature of Enablers and Inhibitors

New approaches to Training and Learning alone will not create an agile environment. Interdependencies with other enablers and inhibitors are presumed. This is just one of several interdependent factors, which have different degrees of influence on how an organization will move toward benefiting from a Talent Marketplace. Below is a guide to the relative importance and dependency of both internal and external enablers/inhibitors. The company’s journey and current environment impacts where it wishes to focus to become more agile in its approach to Training and Learning in a talent marketplace.

Starting at 9 o’clock, clockwise. Training and learning in a platform-based environment will:

- Drive validated expertise and so drive capacity for individuals to earn increased rewards
- Enhance individual reputation and brand as they develop additional capabilities, as well as drive organizational reputation and brand when an organization actively contributes to the learning of agile workers and makes this part of its reward package
- Be influenced by assignment attributes published on the platform. A pervasive talent platform will generate enormous amounts of data on
ascending and descending skill requirements to drive training content and availability.

- The role of the manager will be less of an influence on training and design, as data from the platform will create a more accurate portrayal of skill requirements for current and emerging assignments.
- Training and learning will shape internal and external individual’s abilities to work within organizational cultures.
- Continuous, lifelong training will influence employee lifecycles, which will be entirely personal as individuals can configure their unique learning and contribution paths.
- People attributes will drive learning, as they exercise the ability to customize their learning based on personal aspirations and opportunities. Similarly, platform-supported learning will significantly expand their personal attributes and competitiveness for valuable assignments.

The bottom of the illustration shows six external drivers strongly influencing training and learning in this environment:

- Trades and professions will emerge as significant influencers in a global, communal commitment to grow capabilities for all platform participants. They will have a broader perspective to see and respond to rapid changes driven by technology and global, economic shifts.
- Traditional education systems will be disrupted, making way for new relationships among education providers and a blurring of distinctions between education and workplace learning.
- Certifications might provide reputation validation, but will have to be relevant, differentiated, and valuable to achieve the status of currency in the marketplace.
- The portability of expertise will require collaboration and trust of all platform players, and will be a foundational condition for the effectiveness of the talent marketplace.
Potential Hazards to Guard Against

It is equally important to assess hazards and hinge factors that could disrupt a re-imagined approach to training and learning in a marketplace environment. Here are some key areas for consideration:

Organizations will need to balance the benefits of market-enabled, pervasively available training and learning with the competitive advantages of truly differentiated, proprietary learning support. Preserving this closely held development will require a parallel approach to training that prepares enough talent to meet organizational needs while keeping vulnerable strategic and proprietary intelligence from view.

The transition period for organizations from maintaining highly resourced internal training and learning support to leveraging a talent platform – and for individuals transitioning from a stable-employee to an agile-worker mind set – will be a period fraught with risk of having prepared enough talent with the needed capabilities to meet business requirements. A staged transition of capabilities based on uniqueness, demand levels, ease of preparation, value to business, and other factors will need to be orchestrated. That said – those organizations that are early adopters will attract the most agile talent, which could make it difficult for the more cautious organizations to attract the best contributors later.

The economics of training and learning will be up-ended, as individuals outside traditional organizations could see more requirements to pay their way and fund their own learning unless this becomes part of the preferred reward package from organizations seeking the most valuable agile workers.

A further risk will emerge for vast numbers of workers whose learning drive has atrophied from years of institutionally determined training. These individuals are already at greatest risk of losing more of their employment opportunities to automation, and could represent a lost generation with low viability in the talent marketplace.
Transformational Trajectory

How could the journey from a stable world into an agile one unfold?

The key states and the related activities are:

**ENVIRONMENT**
- Advancements in pervasive technology-enabled, uncurated, self-driven learning
- Knowledge-workers and creative workers seeking novelty and more capability enrichment in their careers
- Velocity of change in professions and vocations
- Requirements for higher returns on investment in organizational training and learning
- Increased cost and decreased relevance of higher education to the workplace

**DIAGNOSIS**
- Which capabilities (and required learning) should remain internal for differentiation and competitive advantage?
- Which assignments and associated training should be made available to external talent?
- Which assignments have the greatest potential for agile workers and what is the requisite training and learning for them to be prepared?
- What are more cost-effective methods of preparation for non-competitive roles?
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Training and Learning

INCUBATION

- What alternatives for training and learning could we experiment with immediately?
- Who could we collaborate with to leverage training and learning investments more effectively for internal and external workers?
- Where should we allow attrition to reduce ranks of internals in identified roles and migrate toward greater use of externals to rapidly infuse new capabilities?

TRANSFORMATION

- How can we build reputation for the organization’s unique and valuable internal training and permit external talent to participate as part of their reward package – especially in prioritized fields?
- Where can we create learning consortia to develop training and learning for non-competitive roles?
- How can we create global outreach to ensure societal preparation of future talent in current geographies and begin preparation of future talent pools in emerging economies to develop access to additional sources of talent?

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- How will we participate in an ecosystem of talent where all seeking to participate in bringing their capabilities are prepared and matched with fulfilling and valuable assignments?
- How will other social support systems evolve to provide psychological and wellbeing safety nets in a transformed workplace?

Questions to Get Started

In an environment where many factors are changing at once, here are a few simple questions to examine your organization’s training and learning strategy in anticipation of a platform-based talent marketplace.

CUSTOMER / BUSINESS STRATEGY

- What are the core competencies that drive the value proposition of your organization? What will you want to preserve as core, unique or proprietary capabilities exclusive to your organization?
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Training and Learning

- What non-exclusive capabilities could be the first to be sourced and prepared through external talent platforms?
- What do you anticipate will be the most valuable and possibly scarce talent you will want to attract and develop internally or externally?

TECHNOLOGY

- How are you progressing toward providing, current, relevant, pervasive, on-demand training in your organization?
- What external partnerships and providers do you have relationships with to enrich your learning ecosystem?
- What will be the impact on your current workforce of automation and other shifts, and how could you leverage a platform approach to shift training and learning to help affected workers reskill?

EMPLOYEE LEARNING

- How have you lowered boundaries to mobility and deployment of talent within your organization?
- How have you begun to make your organizational boundaries more permeable to allow external talent to enter and be effective within your teams?
- Who is allowed or encouraged to participate in learning opportunities within your organizations? All – or only some – of your own employees? Any of your external workers?
- How is employee and agile worker capability and expertise validated and trusted?
- How much of your employees’ learning is inside your organization? How much of your employees’ learning is outside your organization? How can you integrate, expand and possibly merge all their learning opportunities with a larger learning ecosystem?
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Talent Journey

Talent Journey

Definition

The concept of the Talent Journey will evolve with the rise of Talent Marketplaces. While historically, the journey an employee took through their career was created and owned by organizations, in the marketplace environment the journey will be created by the individual, and validated by the network.

In the future talent market the talent journey will be driven by much greater focus on the acquisition and change phases, which will drive greater visibility and accessibility of all opportunities. The control of the enterprise will move to more open systems of learning, and recognition of contributions.

An individual’s journey will become more open, and provide a lower cost of change to new assignments. The enterprise will become a consumer of the open information constructed through the journey and therefore will need to connect to multiple trusted sources.

Through the marketplace platform, this journey will become transparent within enterprises and also visible externally. In a sense the platform become a passport, providing the evidence of belonging.

Dimensions

Traditionally the talent journey might be defined as an acquisition phase, a perform phase, and a change phase. Each phase would have moments or events.

- Acquisition might include
  - finding,
  - applying,
  - being evaluated, and
  - deciding.

- The perform phase might include
  - onboarding,
  - learning,
  - contributing, and
  - growing.

- And the change phase becomes like the acquisition,
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Talent Journey

- finding a new role,
- applying, etc.

Although written here through the lenses of the employee, every step is defined and accountable to the enterprise.

In this traditional setting, stable enterprises could take time, which would enable their talent to:

- Have an employee experience through their time with the enterprise – structured journey
- Build a track record and trust of their talent – assigned assignment
- Enable their talent to trust the enterprise – especially to enable mobility to new risky areas – CV/Resume
- Have confidence to reach beyond the bounds of the enterprise to freelance or subcontractors – exclusive workers

With a talent market place, there is much greater mobility of internal and external workers across and through previous organization boundaries. In and of itself this doesn’t affect the journey, which has always been built on the movement of people. However we also expect this movement to be in a much more rapid cycle. A number of studies suggest that the average duration of employment will move from 15 years to 2 or 3 years. This speed of change undermines the opportunity employees have to take time over the journey, and employers have to get to know their talent.

Therefore the critical dimensions of the talent journey are:

- the joining and re-joining cycle,
- the performance / talent cycle, and
- the time cycle that builds relationships and trust and forms an input to reputation and culture.

Talent Journey in an Agile Environment

The ability to navigate agile environments requires a clear sense of joining and progressing, and evidence of performance that has been delivered through the talent journey in the past.
Therefore rather than enterprise talent and HR systems separating freelancers and employees, and ‘archiving’ leavers, we expect to see much greater integration between workers, no matter their contract type. We also expect to see ‘passport’ or ‘thumbprint’ type learning and performance solutions, issues expanded on in other Enablers, become more important.

The benefits/cost for the individual include

- Easier entry into the enterprise, pre-onboarding, and speed to engage
  - A potential cost for the individual as the enterprise asks for ‘pre-onboarding’ to be done in their own time, not as part of the working day.
  - A potential cost for the individual is to invest into his ability to swiftly manage through the three steps of the talent journey
  - Necessity to stay active and be informed on multiple relevant talent marketplaces
- Recognition of trust carried with you to new enterprises and roles
- Talent built in one environment can be carried into new enterprises
- Simpler and lower cost of switching who you work for
  - Possible lower cost of being removed from a role, so less long term thinking and confidence in the future.

The benefits for the organization include

- Speed to engage workers across and outside the enterprise minimizes idle cost, and maximizes revenue or time to benefit.
- Recognizing talent from other enterprises means less ‘start from scratch’ development programs, lower cost of L&D.
- Faster time to trust workers means better engagement. It also means there is an opportunity to align with the intrinsic motivation of workers, rather than treating workers as resources to assign and motivate extrinsically.

What will it take to transition your organization?

It is important for an organization to understand where it currently falls and desires to be on a spectrum of levers that impact how the transition to an environment that will be shaped. Below are a few areas to consider and our view on their evolution’s direction from a stable into the agile future state. The future state depends mainly
on the business model, business strategy and the market environment of the organization.

The four dimensions, how workers engage (exclusively or as a multi-company), the structure or flexibility of the journey, the choice or allocation of workers over their assignment, and the portability of the documentation which carries the trust of the enterprise. We see a slow evolution of these dimensions, and even in an agile future we imagine the number of workers and enterprises who have moved to the agile quadrant to be small.

The Intertwined Nature of Enablers and Inhibitors

The talent lifecycle by itself does not make an agile environment. Interdependencies with other enablers and inhibitors are a given. How you approach the employee lifecycle, influences and is influenced by these – with differing levels of impact. Below is a guide to the relative importance and interaction of both internal and external enablers/inhibitors. Depending on an enterprise journey and current environment this may impact where it wishes to focus to become more agile in its approach to the talent lifecycle.
An agile environment based on a new approach to the talent lifecycle will:

- Consider strongly the **reputation and brand**, record in and demonstrate an understanding to ensure trust is captured from both the worker and enterprise.
- Recognize that the **attributes** of the worker come from the lifecycle.
- Both provide and consume the data required for **reward and recognition**.
- Be enabled by a new management function which will provide trusted information.

**Potential Hazards to Guard Against**

It is equally important to assess hazards and hinge factors that could disrupt a re-imagined approach to the talent lifecycle in a marketplace environment. Here are some key areas for consideration:

The enterprise will have to balance the benefits of a market enabled and all pervasive lifecycle which simplifies the movement of talent with the advantages of a captive supply of labor which is tightly bound to the enterprise. In the USA, while employee protection is short, there are many talent officers who see much greater issue in the speed of exit when an employee decides to leave.

Talent in an enterprise, and what it means to perform, differs greatly from manufacturing, service, and other business models. The transition to an open lifecycle which is trusted is a significant challenge when enterprises consider what it means to be a trusted worker in such different ways.
The requirement to retain talented and performing individuals may change, from bonus and stock, to assignment choices and retainers.

This model of the ‘walled garden’ of talent, to an open field will undermine many workers who have built themselves a strong network inside the enterprise, only to find the walls opening, and the network outside becoming more important.

**Transformational Trajectory**

How could the journey from a stable world into an agile one unfold?

The key states and the related activities are:

**ENVIRONMENT**

- Individuals seeking greater recognition outside the enterprise.
- Increased velocity of leavers and joiners.
- Talent is visible outside the enterprise and performance needs to be managed/remain visible.
- Networked organization depending on trust rather than hierarchy

**DIAGNOSIS**

- What is the measure of talent, how can that be reflected outside the enterprise?
- Who are the workers that are most volatile, is this choice, lack of opportunity, life circumstance?
  - Which workers return from alumni?
  - How would the skills and experience of those returning be recognized?
Which skills are duplicated across the enterprise? Are the multiple groups of workers with the same skills who could benefit from greater mobility?

How does the enterprise trust, what are the markers, what is the test? Do you use calibration, 9 box grid, performance metrics?

INCUBATION

What developments could be made to the talent system to include freelancers and subcontractors? How might this be different by country and local legal situations?

How might the alumni system provide data and reflect skills and experience?

In highly networked enterprises experiment with the separation of manager and coach/sponsor role, so the management of trust is done by someone outside the team. This could make it easier to find common metrics and be less parochial.

TRANSFORMATION

A talent system that is used inside and outside the enterprise, with industry / widely recognized skill development and experiences.

New contracting models offer alternatives to high frequency moves, recognizing and managing the potential for the transfer of risk to workers and mitigating it sufficiently to ensure there is no reputation cost.

New management models supporting assignment working, offering new ways to quickly gain trust in both the worker and enterprise without having to rest on one relationships.

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Perhaps workers own their data, and its validation by the network, with trust ensured by the duplication of the data – much as blockchain offers?

Perhaps teams are joined through new transactions which are recorded during projects and remain to enable teams to rebuild quickly?

Perhaps there are new open learning standards, much like a University Degree is validated by other Universities, which begin to reflect a common understanding of skills achieved and experience earned in multiple situations?
Questions to Get Started

In an environment where many factors are changing at once, here are a few simple questions to help assess whether moving to an employee lifecycle based market is a primary area for an organization to focus on or if other enablers and inhibitors must be addressed first.

CUSTOMER / BUSINESS STRATEGY

- What level of agility and flexibility does your business model / your business strategy require from your workforce?
- Are you facing an increased number of short-term high-priority customer requests?
- What level of cross-functional / cross-geo collaboration and innovation does your business model / your business strategy require?

ORGANIZATION

- Do you know what your employees are good at?
- Are you able to identify the ten strongest employees in a certain area within a day?
- Are you facing an increasing number of reorganizations?
- How long does it take to create a cross-functional team to address a specific customer demand?
- What are the efficiency metrics of your internal hiring process?
- Are you hiring externals whilst laying off internals with similar qualifications at the same point in time?

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

- Do you have full transparency on all open jobs/assignments across the organization?
- Is it easier to find a new role within the organization vs. externally?
- How often did you get a call from an internal leader looking for talent vs. a headhunter?
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Culture and Environment

Culture and Environment

Definition

For an organization to leverage a Transparent and Adaptive Talent Marketplace, it will need to evolve its business models to keep pace with its external markets and deploy talent from a mix of internal employees and agile talent to keep up with that pace. It will foster respect for all needed capabilities and the people who have them, whether they are internal or external workers. It will develop an environment of transparency in order to cultivate trust and collaboration among all players. It will treat all individuals as if engaged in a long-term relationship, even if they end up together only for brief episodes, because the reputation of how they treat those individuals will endure long past the engagement.

Everyone will experience the challenges of frequently changing roles and relationships, training and rewards. Therefore, all should have access to the benefits from this adaptive environment – such as a higher likelihood of finding or maintaining one’s ideal working conditions and opportunities to contribute from one’s strengths. Which is in stark contrast to how most organizations differentiate today between internal and external talent.

Dimensions

The cultural and organizational attributes of a talent marketplace are characterized by a set of dimensions. The three dimensions listed below do not claim completeness, but they are supposed to kick off an initial thought process and analysis:

- an attribute which probably comes first to mind when thinking about culture and organization is structure: we are used to define organizations with some sort of hierarchy, whether it comes along as a matrix or a more traditional top-down pyramid. From a functional point of view, it is supposed to provide orientation, clarity and stability. The marketplace model is much more about dynamics, diversity and flexibility and the organizational model it enforces is what Jon Husband called a “wirearchy”. In his words "a dynamic flow of power and authority, based on information, trust, credibility, and a focus on results, enabled by interconnected technology and people".
a second attribute are the relationships within the marketplace and between the market-players. Hierarchical structures give a preference for more unilateral relations: like an employer telling an employee what to do, how to do it and when. The marketplace, however, is only going to work on the basis of mutual transparency and trust. Ultimately it creates (and requires) a relationship on an equal basis – which does not mean that decision making becomes ‘democratic’. It rather means that decision making power itself is becoming more relational – depending on the relative state of the market demand and supply situation.

a third attribute relates to temporality. What do we mean by that? A structured and one-directional world builds on the idea that the future can be planned, that career growth will be steady, in a single word: that there is stable progress. The marketplace environment is to a large degree characterized by experiments, risk, fast trial and error, re-starts, ad-hoc collaboration, meaning: a culture which is embracing change, uncertainty and dynamism. This requires different mind- and skillsets for those who live and embrace this culture to address better their personal needs and preferences.

Culture and Organizational Design Attributes in an Agile Environment

Agile environments drive (and presuppose) cultural and organizational attributes in very different ways than stable ones, in order for marketplaces to function in a self-sustained way. To enable a free and fast flow of assignment and talent brokerage,

- the organizational prerequisites are all about the design and provision of a self-sustainable platform whereas
- the cultural prerequisites are all about the mindset that embraces an environment of transparency and honesty, collaboration and feedback.

The benefits for the individual include

- Increased employability through increased opportunity and more frequent feedback on fit (or lack thereof and hence, development needs)
- More flexibility in and ownership of their personal needs, preferences, and professional pathways
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Culture and Environment

- Greater chances that personal strengths, aspirations and preferences will come into play

The benefits for the organization include

- Improved chances to find the individuals that fit best current and future assignments
- Greater flexibility and agility when it comes to serving short-term customer needs or exploring new market opportunities
- Increased ability to source, form, adjust and dissolve teams for innovation and disruption

What will it take to transition your organization?

It is important for an organization to understand where it currently stands and desires to be on a number of levers that impact its transformation journey to a marketplace environment. Below are listed a few areas to consider regarding the evolution from a stable to an agile future state. The future state will always depend on the given business model, business strategy and the market context of the organization.
The Intertwined Nature of Enablers and Inhibitors

Cultural and organizational attributes by themselves, however, do not make an agile environment. Interdependencies with other enables and inhibitors need to be taken into account. Below is an example of the relative importance and interdependency of both, internal and external enablers/ inhibitors. Depending on a company’s current context and strategy, it might have different areas of focus to become more agile in its cultural and organizational attributes.

Starting at 9 o’clock, the interdependencies with other the enablers/ inhibitors is as follows:

- A project-based organization design will make **reward and recognition** more dependent on the outcome and complexity of the various assignments during a period under review, i.e. reward will become less comparable across people and therefore, more personalized.

- **Assignment attributes** need to be specific enough to differentiate between people interested in the job, and if they are, they will drive transparency and honesty in the organization.

- **People attributes** define the requirements for an engagement with this organization/ ecosystem, and specifically with a given assignment in order to make meaningful selection decisions and automating long listing.
When it comes to **training and learning**, an individual talent will get in an agile environment many more data points regarding required competencies and skills, in order to identify learning needs on a personal level and be self-driven in his or her desire to learn new skills.

The **Employee Life Cycle** has in a stable organizational context a strong culture-building effect, at certain stages of the ELC certain events take place. This effect will diminish on the way to becoming agile, as ELCs will become ever more personalized and at the end lose their meaning.

Whereas in a stable context, the **manager** allocated work to people within his area of responsibility, this is now performed by a marketplace. The manager still has to define the assignments and make selection decisions, and he/ she is still in charge of the outcomes. However, his/ her role during the assignment is much more that of a coach, requiring new capabilities and responsibilities.

An organization's culture and its brand will become the two sides of the same coin (it always has been, but now it will be much more visible), an internal and an external face of workplace realities that reinforce each other. **Reputation** gaps will accelerate and enforce culture change.

The bottom of the illustration shows four external drivers strongly influencing assignment based environments:

- Culture will be strongly reflected and made visible in social media, which again drive transparency inside and outside an organization.
- Policies, law, and regulation were established in times of stability in the industrial age; with the transition to agile organizations, there is an increasing pressure to refresh the national and international legal and regulatory environment (labor law, social security, role of unions etc.).
- The network of an individual constitutes the source of his/ her reputation and the access to other organizations; the collective networks of individuals in an organization define the external reach and internal connectivity, for information and expertise to flow and trust to percolate.
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Culture and Environment

- Rapid team formation will become a key performance indicator within agile environments, given the formation of many new teams around assignments and the need to get quickly operational in such a new team.

Potential Hazards to Guard Against

It is equally important to assess hazards and hinge factors that could disrupt a re-imagined approach to assignment-based environments. Here are some key areas for consideration:

The potential risks are dependent on the business environment (for the organization) and the talent market environment (for the individual). The more volatile and unpredictable these environments become – the higher will be the risk of not being able to respond to those changes and becoming vulnerable to competitive threats.

From an organizational point of view – especially when looking at larger and geographically diverse organizations – it is about awareness and conscious change of the cultural and organizational attributes. By listening frequently to the voice of the organization and the individuals belonging to it – and by inserting systemic interventions, the mindset of all stakeholders will be aligned with a marketplace direction.

TRANSPARENCY

- A talent marketplace requires full transparency of supply and demand (and rewards attached to assignments), in order for search costs to be minimal and trust to develop in the functioning and fairness of the marketplace, i.e. all relevant information being available. If the level of transparency, especially regarding people decisions, is low in an organization, then raising this level is an urgent requirement, but needs to be done carefully and stepwise.

THE ROLE OF THE MANAGER

- The role of the manager is critical in such a path to more transparency, as the level of discretion in decision making will be reduced in an agile context. If management behaves rather autocratically, then this will be in stark contrast of the future role of managers and again, management behavior needs to change.
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Culture and Environment

REPUTATION

- Is the organization already broadly using 360 ° feedback and other feedback and social media tools to provide evidence of someone’s performance and behavior, or is reputation of individuals still very much defined by management judgement?

Transformational Trajectory

How could the journey from a stable to an agile world look like?

![Diagram showing transformational trajectory]

The key states and the related activities are:

ENVIRONMENT

- Business environment
- External Talent Marketplace
- Internal Talent Marketplace
- External driving forces (demographics, social, technological, geopolitical context, ...)

DIAGNOSIS

- Where do we stand today, how ready are we to succeed in an agile-agile environment?
- What is our agile-agile vision in view of the environmental forces?
- Where are our biggest gaps?
- What can we learn from others?
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Culture and Environment

INCUBATION

- Which of our talent segments and/ or enablers/ inhibitors would lend themselves best as pilots for experimentation?
- What is our transition plan for the next 2 years, what do we hope to have achieved by then?

TRANSFORMATION

- What has worked and what not? What can we learn from pilots?
- How to scale up the changes within pilot segments?

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- How can we intelligently track our agility?
- How can we continue experimenting and learning?

Questions to Get Started

In an environment where many factors are changing at once, here are a few simple questions to help assess whether organization design and culture is a primary area for an organization to focus on or if other enablers and inhibitors must be addressed first:

CUSTOMER / BUSINESS STRATEGY

- What level of agility and flexibility does your business model / your business strategy require from your workforce?
- Are you facing an increased number of short-term high-priority customer requests?
- What level of cross-functional / cross-geographic collaboration and innovation does your business model / your business strategy require?

ORGANIZATION

- Are you looking up LinkedIn when you try to find out more about the professional background of someone in your own organization?
- Are you struggling to describe – in an aggregated form – the strengths (expertise, skills) of your organization?
APPENDIX – ENABLERS & INHIBITORS – Culture and Environment

- Are you able to identify the best person in your organization to work on a specific business challenge?

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

- Was your organization facing mass-layoffs in the near past – and if so: were you made aware early so you could prepare?
- Does your organization provide you with a relevant and current map of development / career opportunities?
- Does your organization provide a transparent single-place-to-go showing all open jobs / assignments?
- Is such a job board just an alibi internal mobility tool, or is it really offering a fair opportunity for a next job?
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