WORK 20 28

TRENDS, DILEMMAS & CHOICES

A study by Deutsche Telekom, Detecon International and
Henley Centre for Leadership/Henley Business School

SCOPE, AIMS AND AMBITIONS OF THE STUDY

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study provides informed and tangible projections about what the next decade will bring in terms of

- the Future of Work, Organisations and Leadership,

- the crucial underlying developments and trends in the external environment of organisations, and

- tangible implications for how organisations and decision makers can change their practice and start action today.

AMBITIONS OF THE STUDY

- Thought-provoking, challenging, and inspiring – for decision makers, commentators, innovators, and people and society at large.

- Creating discussions, generate controversies, and fruitful debates.

- Stimulate purposeful, courageous, and positive actions.

METHODOLOGY, SAMPLE AND PROCESS

We interviewed 50 influential people from across industries and society to learn their projections for 2028.

OUR SAMPLE

- included five predefined categories: Top and Senior Managers, Drivers of Innovation, Futurists, Young Movers, and Academics

- had 36 male and 14 female participants

- included people from Manufacturing, FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods), Financial services, Professional services and consulting, Infrastructure, ICT, Retail, Utilities, NGOs, Politics, and Higher Education

- represented the following countries: Denmark, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, United Kingdom, United States of America

OVERVIEW ON TRENDS

CRUCIAL TRENDS IN SHIFTING SOCIETIES

- Ubiquitous digitalisation
- Informed disorientation
- Need for belonging
- A cry for societal purpose

ORGANISATIONS

- Size does not matter
- Screwed-up failure culture
- Analogue as twin of digital

WORK

- Work is all or nothing
- Tech-driven radical transparency
- Episodic loyalty

LEADERSHIP

- The good, the bad and the ugly of leadership
- Gig Leadership
- Leading hybrid work forces
- Top management as central hub
- Leading for radical human-centricity
- Leadership development unlearned

GET STARTED, ENABLE SENSEMAKING AND TAKE ACTION FROM THE 2028 INSIGHTS!

20 28

I. CRUCIAL TRENDS IN SHIFTING SOCIETIES

II. TRENDS AND TRANSITIONS FOR 2028 ORGANISATIONS

III. TRENDS AND TRANSITIONS FOR 2028 WORK

IV. TRENDS AND TRANSITIONS FOR 2028 LEADERS

V. ENABLING AND KICKING OFF YOUR ACTIVITIES

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UBIQUITOUS DIGITALISATION

Let's face it, everybody will be affected, whether in a helpful or a ghastly way

In 2028, intelligent technology and people-tech interactions will be ubiquitous in peoples' tasks, jobs and lives. How?

There are two strong but opposing projections:

- 2028 will be full of possibilities, with technology supporting and enhancing our work and lives for a more reliable, safe, and creative environment

- 2028 will show deep disparities and high levels of separation, a sharp increase in replaceable tasks, and few new jobs. Even more complex activities will become extinct
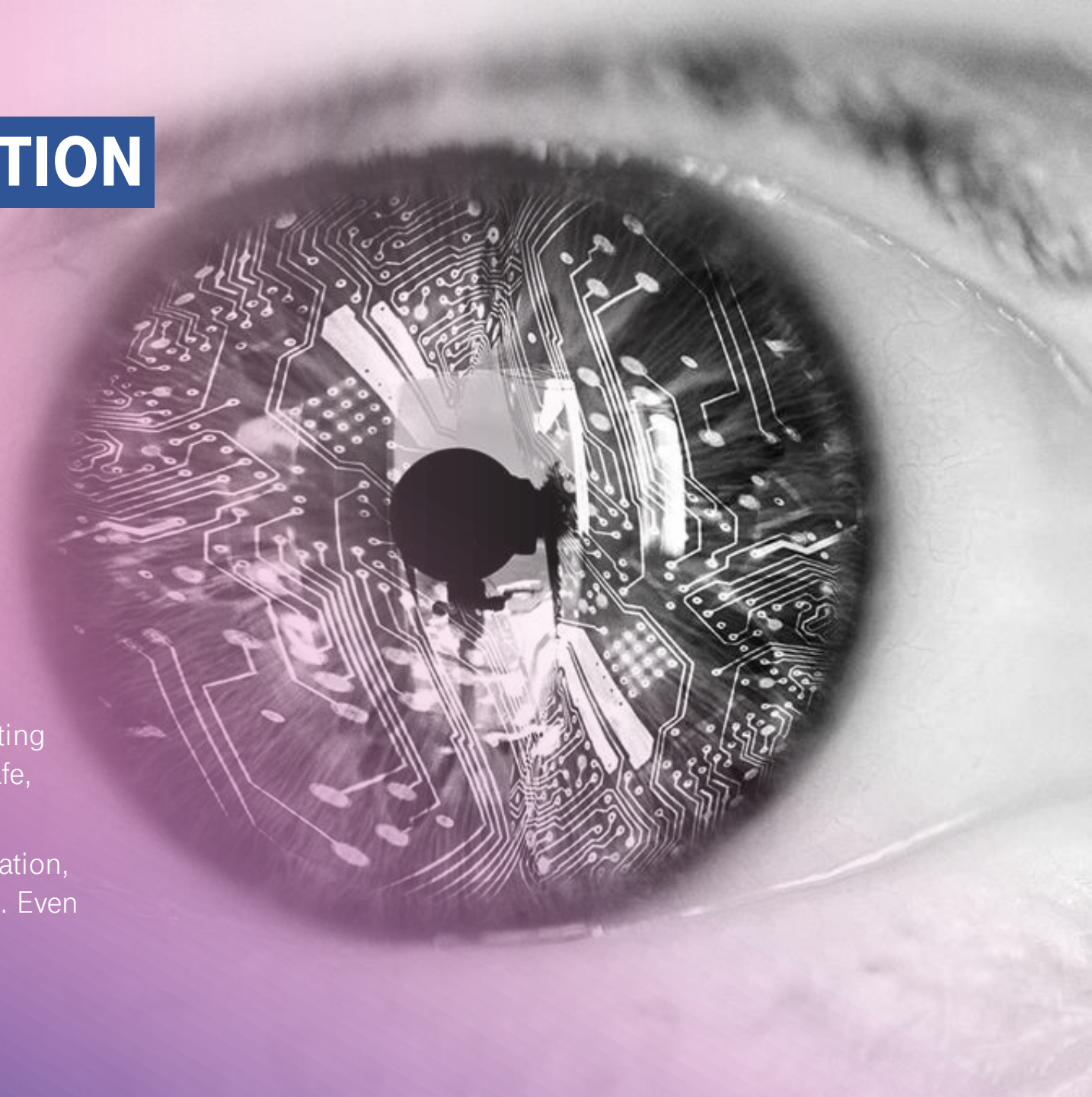
2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

- Intelligent technology and people-tech eco-systems supporting and enhancing our work and life and will make it more reliable, safer and more creative
- Beyond the current horizon we will see new roles and tasks we do not even know of today
- Humans will adapt to change, like they have shown throughout history for instance in automatization in manufacturing
- Societal developments, e. g. aging population, health and care in conjunction with a declining demand for relevant professions, will require services building on robotics, AI or automation

2028 WITH MORE DISPARITIES AND SEPARATION

Dilemma 1:
We will see sharp increase of replaceable tasks – yet the pace of new job creation will be ambiguous

Dilemma 2:
The threshold of tasks affected (enhanced or replaced) will affect complex activities! We (will) see a false sense of security at higher level roles – some tasks will be extinct we thought completely out of reach

Dilemma 3:
The demand gap will widen: Between high-level, evolving skills that are thought after VERSUS medium-level, simple skilled jobs that will see accelerated replacement

DISCUSSIONS AND CONTROVERSIES ...

- Who needs to engage with the possibilities and dilemmas: Society, politics, organisations, individuals?
- What role must education play preparing job entrants for the new world of work? – Where are we now?
- How can organisations address fear / preservation needs of employees and make opportunities accessible?
- Who is dealing with individuals who can't keep up with constant re-invention? Imagine none of us will do the job she/he is doing now!
- What is the demand for and value of regulation that facilitates flexibility, yet enables and protects employees?

> " But it has been this way throughout the major part of history, that one thought if this development continues, the automation or the robotization in production, that masses of people would become jobless [..] But it did not happen that way. One of our greatest qualities is that we are creative. "

Silke Luinstra, founder of „Augenhöhe", film producer, consultant

IMPLICATIONS ...

- Find a balance of individual responsibilities, collective support, and accountability for transitioning into new work.
- An education system fit for the 21st century – Create an enabling environment and acceptance for culture of proper failing
- Create an organisation-wide sense of urgency, for life-long learning and whole person development amongst current and future workforce

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INFORMED DISORIENTATION

Navigating the promises and ambiguities of future technology and digitization

Some are very certain about the future of technology – while others clearly know that we don't know:

- The technology of 2028 is known today versus the impossibility of forecasting the technology of 2028

- The implementation of technology is easy versus many options are not feasible

- Mounting pressure on society and organisations to deal with accountability in people-tech ecosystems: for security – safety – transparency – access – input of data and algorithms

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

- A twice-split perspective: Tech 2028 is known today and implementation is easy VERSUS Tech 2028 is impossible to forecast and many options not feasible

- Technology we have heard of for the near or distant horizon: ubiquitous people-machine interaction, dominant voice control, machine learning, artificial intelligence, autonomous transport solutions, virtual reality meetings, holographs as near-life experience, hyperloops, etc.

- The logic for investment into technology will be (and is) for many a black box – and yet organisations are forced to make quick decisions about how to use these technologies.

- Mounting pressure on society and organisations to deal with accountability in people-tech ecosystems: for security –safety – transparency – access – input of data and algorithms

FOR DEBATE ...

- How to update and sustain key decision makers' expertise on technology's possibilities and controversies?

- How to include tech-savvy contributors across organisational levels and boundaries in investment decisions?

> **"** In my view, this is one of the greatest challenges businesses face: to set up their IT infrastructure in such a way that it satisfies their demands, in line with the direction work needs to develop towards in future. **"**
>
> *Andre Paetzel, Director Digital Consulting, Grey Germany*

IMPLICATIONS ...

- Move beyond generalizations: tech penetration needs industry- and company-specific context and consideration

- Clear decisions on WHO is accountable for WHAT in people-intelligent machine ecosystems, and their intended and unintended consequences

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NEED FOR BELONGING

— **Feeling at home in a disruptive and episodic life and work scheme**

- In 2028, people will look for a sense of belonging and of being at home – within fluid, disruptive and episodic forms of work and life

- There will be limited touchpoints between employee/collaborator and organisation, permanently changing entities, and omnipresent blurred boundaries

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

- People will feel the need to belong and be at home – in a fluid, disruptive and episodic form of work and life

- There will be limited touchpoints between employee/collaborator and organisations, permanently changing entities, and omnipresent blurred boundaries

- Global employees will be navigating with or without a cause or a community

- Protectionism and a sense of exclusion will arise as results of a global disconnect

FOR DEBATE ...

- Where do managers, employees, gig workers find a sense of belonging?

- Who among your managers and employees will aim for a central home or multiple homes in which to belong?

- Should organisations be a platform for belonging?

" I think the cause of it [protectionism and separatism] is somehow the need for belonging, which is essential to all people. When the entities to which one belongs to are dissolving, then people ask themselves, where do I belong to? "

A study participant

IMPLICATIONS ...

- Consider the need for belonging when thinking about the future of work

- Support people's readiness for a global village

- Identify early warning signals for unhealthy disconnect between employees and organisations

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A CRY FOR SOCIETAL PURPOSE

Businesses are at a junction with respect to long-term societal meaning

Societal responsibility will decide between the life and death of an organisation:

To have meaning in 2028, businesses will have to make choices towards sustainable models for business and economy. Organisations will need to re-envision:

- ... their decades or centuries old purposes they so far have taken for granted (e.g., move beyond a legitimate, yet limited focus on profit)

- ... their learned economic behavior

- ... their societal contributions

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

- Societies and businesses face a watershed in terms of choosing sustainable models of business and economy

- To have meaning in the society of 2028, businesses will be required to re-envision their decades- or centuries-old purposes, learned economic behavior, and societal contributions – all once taken for granted.

- Organisations' human-centricity is a necessity to address societal divisions and inequality gaps and create sustainable societies

- Yet, businesses are permitted to pursue profit! – as a long term perspective

FOR DEBATE ...

- What role or presupposed purposes, learned patterns of economic behavior, and societal contributions play in your organisations?

- Can you ignore human-centricity in the decisions and outlook of your organisation?

- How does your organisation balance effectiveness, tech-centricity and human-centricity?

- Who is asking those questions today in your organisation, and who needs to ask them in the future?

> *Increasingly, businesses are going to have to have a role in society which is looking towards the long term, and to grow their business and 'decap' all that growth from impact on the environment and proof positive social impact.*

Stephen J. Pain, VP Sustainable Business and Communications, Unilever

> *Maybe, I think, leaders will be more and more faced with: What role do I have, what is my purpose? How am I gonna contribute to making the world a better place? Because it's not just ideology anymore {..} it's because it will be a necessity and we have a chance to contribute to that.*

Chris Shern, Director Henley Denmark

IMPLICATIONS ...

- Identify blinders from presupposed purposes, learned patterns of economic behavior, and narrow societal contributions AND find, understand, and applaud constructive rule breakers.

- Reconsider timeframes for your organisation's contributions to society.

- Expand the number of managers and employees involved in deep conversations regarding the organisation's purpose.

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IV. **TRENDS AND TRANSITIONS FOR 2028 LEADERS**

V. **ENABLING AND KICKING OFF YOUR ACTIVITIES**

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SIZE DOES NOT MATTER

— **Organisations' setup and transition capabilities are the name of the game**

Organisations as fluid people-tech eco-systems, co-creating organisms, with breathing boundaries and structures, organized in cells and communities

Large organisations will...
▪ ... either develop these features with small scale-up activities and trust in organisational/individual capabilities, reward proactivity – and thereby **survive**
▪ ... or remain inflexible and stuck in 20th century beliefs with a ballast of rigid organisational structures and routines – and thereby **disappear**

Start up–Scale up–Step up: Fast maturing SMEs step up – towards clear decision-making processes, gig involvement with sense of accountability, and a mutually demanding value proposition for new recruits and partners

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

Classic predictions about the future of organisations' setup:

- Fluid companies of people-tech eco-systems, breathing boundaries, cell organisation, flatter structures, ad hoc supplier networks, holocracies, hybrid units, community-based organisations, co-creating customers, organisation as host to freelancers for safety and predictability, partner model as a model for all

Growing and Large-scale organisations will have a choice between beauty and beast:

- Beauty, by nurturing small scale-up activities and their people: making a leap of trust, rewarding proactivity, giving liberty as motivation, allowing access to finance and support, etc.

- Beast, where size and dominance leave organisations stuck in 20th century beliefs, routines, patterns, and ballast

Start up–Scale up–Step up

- Fast-maturing Start-ups and SMEs challenged to step up – towards (un)clear decision-making processes; gig involvement with (in)sufficient accountability, a demanding value proposition for employees and the SME

FOR DEBATE …

- Big vs Small: how large do organisations want to be?

- Identification with the organisation or its cause?

- How to increase the appetite for decision-making and accountability in start-ups and SMEs?

Are we, as a corporation, with all our relics and baggage, really at a disadvantage compared to the agile start-ups? Can't we gain an advantage from our inheritance, separate from all stifling structures?

A study participant
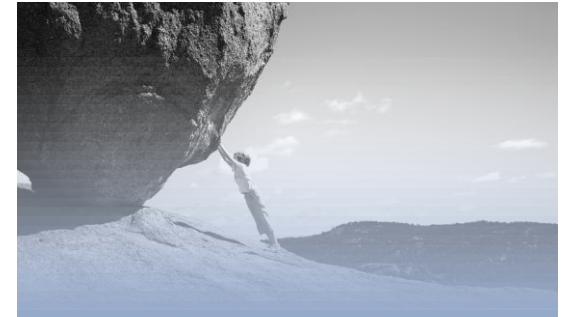
IMPLICATIONS …

- De-ritualizing symbols and routines of big organisations

- Bringing decisions and conversations closer to where the expertise lies

- Organisational growth along-side growth in accountability and fluidity – keeping the cause alive – Re-evaluation of organisational competencies – shedding and preventing ballast

- Integration and collaboration between big and small organisations

SCREWED-UP FAILURE CULTURE

Everyone proclaims a culture of proper failing, only few succeed

- A deep identity change is needed for a culture of suitable failing

- Successful organisations will walk the talk of suitable failing, beyond glossy communication and shallow implementation

- Top management re-enforces experimentation and genuine mistakes, to achieve real improvement

- Lifelong learning, failing, un-learning, and experiential work are integral elements of progress and attractiveness

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

Those organisations who succeed will walk the talk of properly failing

- Top management encourages and reinforces experimentation and allows for genuine mistakes in order to achieve real improvements

- Businesses harness synergized insights by enabling collaborative, cross-function activity and participative exploration and decision-making

- Businesses attract and retain young talent through experiential work and highly prioritized, flexible working patterns.

- Lifelong learning, failing and un-learning are integral elements of progress and development

FOR DEBATE ...

- For years, organisations have been aware of the above – but it rarely works!

- How about throwing superficially embedded learning culture concepts in the bin?

- To change culture and allow lifelong learning, which hard and sustained steps are needed?

- Is a learning culture only something that is nice to have? Will a culture of proper failing and collaboration survive a downturn in the economic landscape?

> **"** *The structure of the organisation, what it supports and sanctions [could pose a hurdle]. The eagerness to experiment plays a big part, and it starts with school. [..] Making mistakes is supposed to form a part of learning. How am I supposed to learn, if I am not allowed to make mistakes once in a while?* **"**
>
> *Silke Luinstra, founder of „Augenhöhe", film producer, consultant*

IMPLICATIONS ...

- Wanted! A deep identity change in organisations – redefining the organisation's attitude to learning, experimenting, and failing

- Space for pioneering activity in collegiate systems – encourage and endorse outlier thinking

- Trusting employees' intentions and capabilities in experimenting – a challenging endeavor!

- Focus on identification of hurdles and outstanding cases for tangible, company-specific steps

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ANALOGUE AS TWIN OF DIGITAL

A deep divide on how to build durable work relationships

The view on building strong and trustworthy work relationships is divided:

- A face-to-face position: real interactions to get to know each other – labels digital encounters as lacking whole-person connections

- A virtuality position: tech-based, non f2f digital interactions to get to know each other's data, which tells all about a collaborator's purpose and attitude – labels f2f as a romanticized, out-of-touch activity

- The mediated option: Holographs, Virtual Reality, Hyperloops are familiar intermediaries.

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

The face-to-face position:

- Ongoing need for f2f interactions – getting to know each other for durable and strong relationships.
And: Digital encounters are porous relationships and lack whole-person connections

The virtuality position:

- Tech-based, non f2f, digital interactions – getting to know each other's data, which tells us all about a collaborator's purpose and attitude and allows a strong relationship that is worthy of trust
And: Face-to-face encounters are a romanticized, out-of-touch activity

- Or we will see the mediated option – Holographs, Virtual reality, Hyperloops, Robots as familiar intermediaries?

FOR DEBATE ...

- Does your organisation address the overly stretched promise and romanticized view of f2f?

- How will the socialization of employees work without f2f?

- Can we facilitate a network of regional mini-'Valleys' – localized pools of agglomeration and workspaces for socializing and innovating?

- Can we go directly from Forming to Performing – in virtual team-building? Is Storming and Norming a thing of the past?

" *On the other hand, there is a need for physical contact points to strengthen human interaction. Part of my observations have been that regular touchpoints in real life are essential for teams to perform effectively.* "

Sebastian Hopp, Director of Opportunities, innogy

IMPLICATIONS ...

- Push hard for the best of both worlds: define the true contribution of f2f as an element of digital spaces and work

- Identify the value of digital work relationships to abolish ritualized, empty meetings

- Monitor centrifugal forces of digital relationships for purpose-richness, shared commitment and engagement

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WORK IS ALL OR NOTHING

**Unlocking new understandings
of work**

The path to new meanings of work in society
is a path of controversies about:

- The level of life-work integration

- The variety of places of work

- A work-income (dis-)connect

- Work as a place of belonging or of pure transactions

- Work as a positive personal stretch or life necessity

- New gig-work, by choice or forced insecurity

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

Contentious pathways to new meanings of work:

- Life: Work and non-work are indistinguishable and inextricable, by choice OR Life will be protected from work – for healthy boundaries

- Places: Work happens everywhere AND co-located work with defined benefits

- Income: The work-income connection has disappeared AND there was never a consensus on societal basic income

- Identity and Belonging: Purpose-rich and meaningful work facilitates a personal life purpose and a focus for belonging OR work as a pure transaction in gig relationships, without personal attachment to a cause

- Loyalty: High-speed loyalty and high-speed disconnect from tasks and organisation in support of own purpose

- Attitude: Work and stretch at work as fun OR work as a necessity of life

- Distribution: Employment down AND concentrated organisational assets up

- Agency: New work as freely chosen OR new work as forced upon one due to insecurity?

FOR DEBATE ...

- Is the aim to keep work and life separate a lost battle?

- Do organisations accept that peoples' lives intrude on work – as they expect work to intrude on private life?

- What is the role of society and regulation in defining new meanings of work?

> **"** The lines between work and life are blurring more and more. These are spheres which we would still like to keep separate, at least in Germany [..] I think it will be increasingly impossible to achieve this. We have only one brain: so when I take a walk, I will also think about work-related things. **"**

A study participant
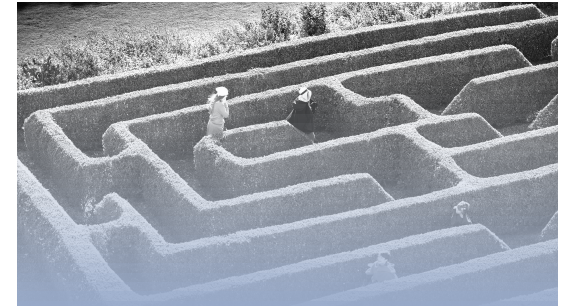
IMPLICATIONS ...

- Through intense debate, reinvent the meaning of work – for employees, your organisation, collaborators and society, along the lenses of ... life, place, income, identity, belonging, loyalty, attitude and agency...

TECH-DRIVEN RADICAL TRANSPARENCY

— Jump-start to govern everything-everywhere insights at work

Organisations face a balancing act between demands for control, transparency, collaboration, trust and needs for data protection and security

Contradictions of new, tech-driven work engagement
We will see an era of radical transparency
… about information, data, behavior and decisions
… among employees, managers, peers and external collaborators
… where evidence of people's contributions, value and problematic perceptions is completely transparent in the organisation

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

We will see an era of radical transparency of information, data, behavior and decisions among employees, managers, peers and external collaborators

- With transparent sources to give evidence about people's contributions, value and problematic perceptions

- Where meetings or digital debates are recorded and accessible for all

- Where demands for Control-Transparency-Collaboration-Trust are balanced with those for data protection and security

FOR DEBATE …

- Transparency a chance to spot real and hidden contributors?

- They know all about me… how do I remain relevant as an employee/contributor?

- How to address the risk of manipulation? By whom?

- What is the case for selective sharing or for radical transparency between organisations?

One example I am thinking of is [a hedge fund][..], and they have a culture, which is really about radical transparency and also algorithms [...] What they do is they videotape every meeting and anybody can watch any meeting with any other person, no matter how painful that meeting is.

David Day, Professor, Claremont McKenna College

IMPLICATIONS …

- Co-create principles and ethics for dealing with radical transparency in an organisation's eco-system

- Identify blinders, real hurdles and business opportunities of radical information-sharing between enterprises

EPISODIC LOYALTY

**People and organisations as temporary
life companions**

We see an era of episodic loyalty, where organisations, employees
and collaborators connect to engage in/disengage from/re-engage
in cycles of defined duration

... Internal episodic loyalty: regularly changing identification
following tasks, projects or roles
... External episodic loyalty: staying outside the organisation but
regularly engaging in mutual identification inside its boundaries

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

Episodic loyalty:

- Over the course of employees' careers, organisations, employees and collaborators will go through numerous, temporally defined cycles

Internal and external episodic loyalty:

- Internal: Staying inside an organisation but changing mutual identification while undertaking new tasks, projects, roles
- External: Staying outside the organisation overall but regularly embarking on mutual identification inside its boundaries

FOR DEBATE …

- How much loyalty/identification do both organisations and employees invest in the partnership?
- What will serve as employees' anchor for loyalty: the organisation, overlapping purposes, the meaning or the societal contribution of the work?
- What will serve as organisations' anchor for loyalty and how can they reflect, communicate and act upon this with clarity?
- How to balance episodic loyalty with organisations' long-term activities and the need for knowledge-retention?

> " *I am now settled with a colleague who has know-how which cannot be tied down for 15 years, as he is likely going to move on to another gig within a space of six months.* "

A study participant

IMPLICATIONS …

- Organisations, employees and collaborators need to understand, accept, and engage with the cyclical nature of episodic loyalty
- Organisations require a functioning mechanism for constructively engaging in, disengaging from, and re-engaging with employees and collaborators
- Organisations should consider employees as organisational alumni

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THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY OF LEADERSHIP

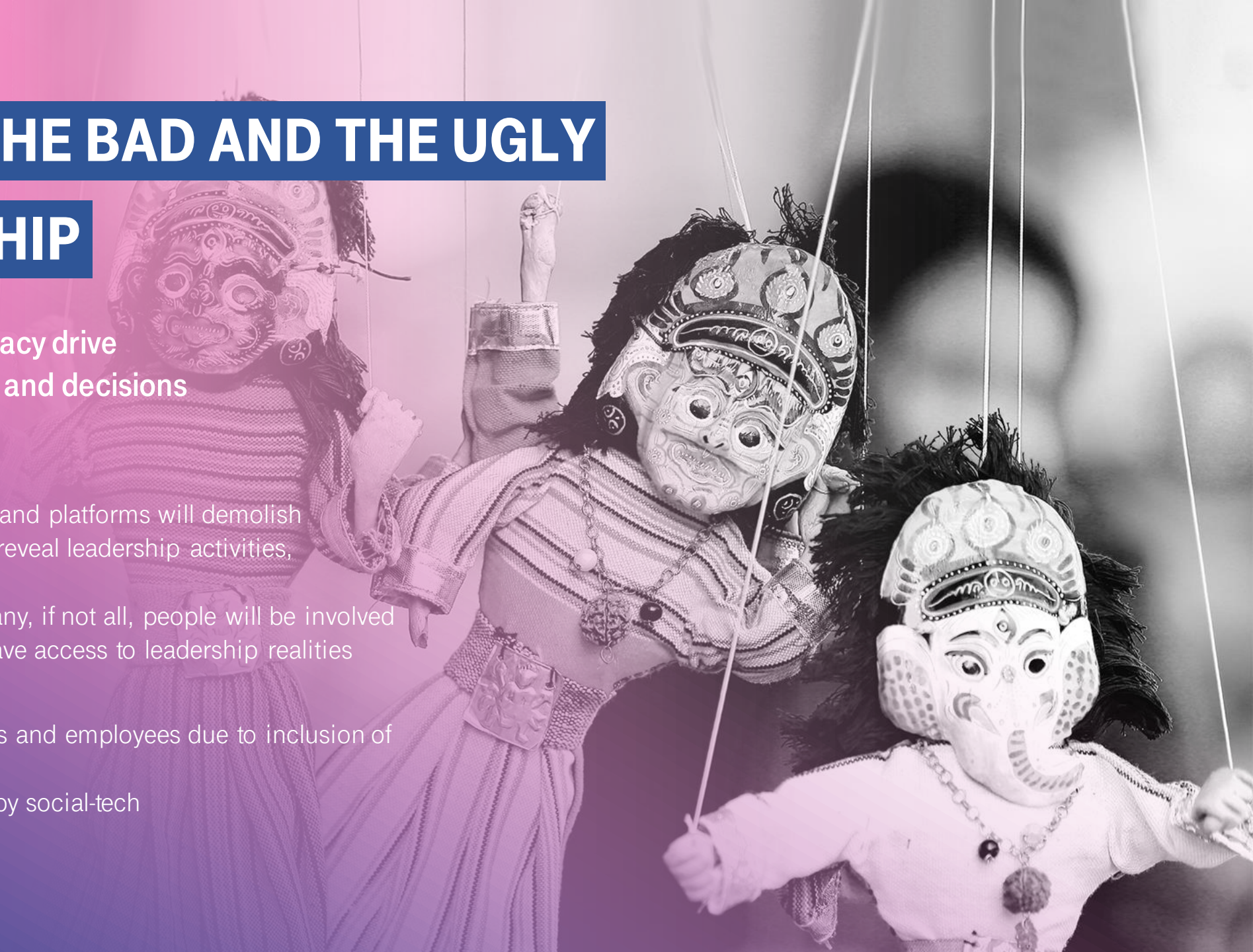— **Transparency and immediacy drive democratized information and decisions**

Leadership transparency:
... tech perspective: digitization and platforms will demolish leadership privacy at work and reveal leadership activities, decisions and contributions
... people perspective: Since many, if not all, people will be involved in leadership and , therefore, have access to leadership realities

Leadership immediacy:
- Proximity between managers and employees due to inclusion of many people
- Immediacy will be elevated by social-tech

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

Leadership transparency

- A tech perspective:
  Digitization demolishes leadership privacy
  at work – social platforms reveal activities, decisions
  and contributions in leadership processes. What
  leadership actually does and means becomes public

- A people perspective:
  Many or all people in organisations being involved in
  leadership means more people with access to
  decisions, information and sense making

Leadership immediacy

- Proximity between managers and employees
  is the new context for leading and engaging

- Solution and decision focus allow for the deep,
  rapidly increasing inclusion of many people

- Immediacy is elevated by social-tech multi-channel
  access

FOR DEBATE …

- How can managers, employees, and organisations
  benefit from leadership transparency and intimacy?

- Will we still see different forms of gatekeeping and
  hierarchal dynamics? How can we ensure
  constructive sharing?

> **“** *And with visible, I mean you can't hide in
> the office anymore. I think the leader will sit
> much more in the business and be more
> visible and accessible. He/she will be the one
> who creates the right teams and the right
> focus rather than providing expert knowledge
> and influence.* **”**

Tommy Olofsen, MD Crew Management, OSM Maritime

IMPLICATIONS …

- Prepare people for
  transparent, public and visible
  leadership thinking and
  activities

- Facilitate management
  meetings as public arenas that
  everyone can attend or watch

- Prepare people for immediacy
  and to see direct leadership
  access as an opportunity

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GIG LEADERSHIP

Rotating and episodic leadership involving the many

- Managers, employees and collaborators rotate episodically in taking the helm of leadership, driven by complex organisational purposes and tasks, and based on complementary qualities and capabilities

- Interim status will be permanent: interim and gig leadership will be permanent solutions with multiple and diverse actors (co-leadership, people-tech ecosystem leadership, and peer-to-peer leadership)

- This can take even longer than the next decade!

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

- Leadership rotates episodically in the space between managers, employees and collaborators

- Complex purposes and tasks of organisations and people's complementary qualities and capabilities drive who is taking the helm of leadership during a given episode

- Interim status is permanent: interim and gig leadership are part of the permanent nature of multi-directional leadership

- New forms and spaces of leadership: Multiple and diverse actor leadership, co-leadership, people-tech ecosystem leadership, leadership in which everyone engages, peer-to-peer leadership

- Expansion of the sphere of influence of personal leadership via digital technology and networks

OR the other position: Not much will change in leadership – instead we will see the rise of disciplined activity

FOR DEBATE …

- Who has the ability to move in and out of leadership roles rather than sticking to a single leader role?

- What about leadership with more diverse people and diverse appearances?

- Will we see willingness to take on accountability beyond a 'gig' when decision-making is fluid and rotating?

> " […] and this contradicts all previous manager socializations. A manager is supposed to be in control and plan. All of a sudden, we get into this different stream of things, where he cannot do this anymore… he can put the boat into the water, but at the same time, has to let it go and trust his colleagues to steer it well. "

Markus Väth, co-founder Humanfy Think Tank

> " This is also the greatest challenge: to be a totally committed leader, but to also be able to say I have the sovereignty to step back. "

A study participant

IMPLICATIONS …

- Use rotating leadership, as a place for identifying and experimenting with leadership talent, skill and expertise

- Allow employees to experiment and succeed in multiple, diverse and inclusive leadership constellations

- Rotating leadership is hard work: enable it and make it work

- Develop new ways of assessing leadership success and promotion of decisions for rotation

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LEADING HYBRID WORK FORCES

— **Preparing leaders to guide people-machine ecosystems**

- Managers, employees and collaborators move to leading new entities: people-tech ecosystems and digital arenas which consist of people and artificial intelligences, robots, machine learning, cognitive computing and social platforms

- Rise of a new generation of input gatekeepers around data, decision-making criteria and algorithms

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

- Leading involves the use of technology as a platform for celebration and critique

- Managers, employees and collaborators face the task of leading people-tech ecosystems and digital arenas

- Leading eco-systems means leading their interfaces and the interactions within them between people and artificial intelligence, robots, machine learning, cognitive computing and social platforms

- There will either be a new generation of input gatekeepers (data, decision-making criteria, algorithms) or the demise of the information holder

FOR DEBATE ...

- Can technology actively lead and/or follow?

- Who is accountable for tech-AI-initiated interventions and decisions?

- What is the demand for compensating for the lack of a socio-emotional side in robot-AI environments?

  - How does a robot show empathy/ socioemotional engagement?

  - Will we need to inspire and motivate robots and can we convince them "to go the extra mile"?

> **"** *They [hedge funds] use a lot of AI in the trading schemes that they invent. Now, people are still a big part of that, but the algorithms augment a lot of the hard-nosed human decision-making.* **"**
>
> *A study participant*

IMPLICATIONS ...

- Identify a set of company-specific leadership and work principles for people-tech ecosystems

- Use organisation as a navigator for leading people-tech ecosystems

- Define accountabilities in people-robot-AI systems

- Consider the decreased sources for empathy and socioemotional engagement

TOP MANAGEMENT AS CENTRAL HUB

Transitioning into the nurturing nucleus of an organisation

The Central Hub is....
- ... guardian of being essential to the organisation's purpose
- ... guardian of human-centricity and humanity
- ... responsible for pulling together disparate organisations
- ... responsible for destroying what the organisation is good at
- ... responsible for taking risks for long-term activities
- ... responsible for enabling people to flourish and learn

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

The central hub...

- Serves through noise and distractions as the guardian of purpose/clarity/essentiality and of accountability to the stakeholder

- Is the guardian of human-centricity and humanity

- Pulls together and coordinates increasingly disparate organisations

- Makes decisions within a sea of data that provides only limited insights

- Destroys what the organisation is good at in order to help the organisation re-invent itself

- Takes risks courageously for long-term action and to remove roadblocks

- Enables by shaping conditions and systems for people to flourish in and allowing lifelong learning

- Transforms to a sense of collective contributions and achievements in top management teams

OR the other position: Not much will change in leadership – instead we will see the rise of disciplined activity

FOR DEBATE ...

- Who is part of the central hub? How porous are the central hub's boundaries? What will be the fluid size of an effective central hub?

- When do people progress to the central hub from the people-tech eco-system?

> *So I interviewed a gentleman who was a prominent CEO in Danish business [...] he stood up at the sales conference - instead of saying 'This is what we're going to do and this is our vision' [...] he stood up and said 'You don't work for me. I work for you [...] we are going to figure this out together.*

A study participant

IMPLICATIONS ...

- There is a need to identify learning needs for true leadership and the leadership strengths of the organisation's central hub

- The central hub/top management teams must embrace the fact they are developing and learning entities

- Must change climate in the central hub – create comfort with new ways and elements of hub leadership

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LEADING FOR RADICAL

HUMAN-CENTRICITY

Embodying multifaceted leadership capacities and deep personal qualities

Employees, managers and collaborators in people-tech eco-systems or episodic, rotating leadership constellations face dual demands from human centricity

- Demand for multifaceted complex capacities: Leadership in networks of relationships and as an enabler with judgment and cross-boundary capacities

- Demand for evolving personal qualities: Leadership with deeply seated attributes and self-directed, generative and survival qualities

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

Employees, managers and collaborators in people-tech eco-systems or episodic, rotating leadership constellations face dual demands from human centricity

Demand for multifaceted complex capacities:

- Leadership in simultaneously stable and fluctuating networks of relationships (e.g. adapting to permanently changing patterns of relationships in people-tech eco-systems)

- Leadership as an enabler - listening and facilitating inclusive decision-making (e.g. approaching leadership as care for individual humans; but motivation is not the task of a leader: people need to motivate themselves)

- Judgment and cross-boundary capacities (e.g. fast decision-making with limited information and a sea of data)

Demand for evolving Personal qualities:

- Leadership with deeply seated attributes (e.g. vulnerability as well as resilience)

- Leadership with self-directed, generative and survival qualities (e.g. personal purpose, lifelong learning, digital confidence)

FOR DEBATE ...

- How do we deal with new recruits who bring unsuitable primary and secondary education and limiting, non-explorative value sets?

- Will organisations see a separation between scientific/technological people and judgement/decision-making people?

> " Leadership and personal development go hand in hand. To be a true leader, you have to be a better human being and to be a better human being you have to be a genuine individual. You have to have enormous self-insight. [...] I think it was much easier [in the past] to get by being a good manager, a strong manager, and in the future there will be no need for managers. "
>
> *David Day, Professor, Claremont McKenna College*
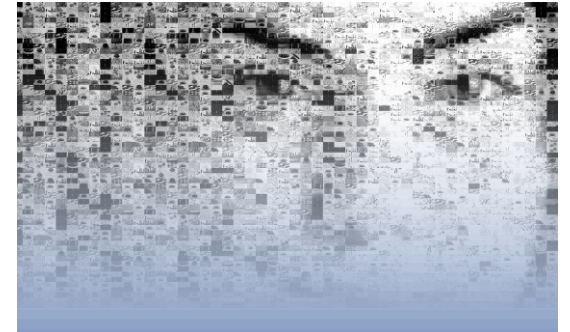
IMPLICATIONS ...

- Investment in deep personal qualities within the reality of collective leadership – without returning to leader-centric development

- Need to explore the nature of human-centric complex capacities specific to your organisation

- More time and space for connecting and allowing (accidental) collaboration

- Reform of the societal system through generative links with education

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

UNLEARNED

— **Towards disruptive, uncomfortable and transformative development**

Novel foci for leadership learning with
- Whole-person development

- Emphasis on collective and multi-level leadership learning

- Long-term and cross-career, episodic, non-linear, disruptive leadership learning and unlearning

Novel constellations for developing leadership capacity
- by leadership learning for all employees

- in episodically rotating constellations and people-tech ecosystems

- in gig workers

2028 FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

Novel foci for developing leadership capacity

- Whole-person development that embraces human-centered leadership

- Emphasis on collective and multi-level leadership learning

- Long-term and cross-career capacity building with episodic, non-linear, disruptive leadership learning and unlearning

- Multifaceted leadership capabilities and deep structures of personal qualities in the center

Novel constellations for developing leadership capacity

- Developing all employees throughout the entire work-life – not as a special privilege for the top

- Developing episodically rotating constellations and people-tech ecosystems

- Developing gig workers despite episodic work relationships and loyalties

FOR DEBATE …

- Is your organisation ready to nurture whole-person learning and people-tech system development?

- Which new foci and constellations for leadership learning are most pressing?

- What drivers and hurdles are there to developing leadership in gig workers with episodic work relationships?

- How can managers experience periods of late career second- or third-time business adolescence?

- What happens to whole-person development in crisis?

> " *I think a big trend is moving away from leader-centric notions of leadership and its development to more distributive, shared, collective. It's one where everyone has to take responsibility for being a leader when needed, even if they cannot be the leader. {..} so how do you prepare for that [..] because where things are lagging is that development is still very 20th century. [..] I think there has to be more collective intervention.* "

A study participant

IMPLICATIONS …

- Embed long-term episodic and cross-career, non-linear and disruptive leader-ship learning and unlearning into work

- Build human-centered leadership and lead people-tech systems to develop leadership in the entire organisation

- Facilitate all-organisation leadership learning – Impact, time and finance

KEY IMPLICATIONS ...

... FOR SHIFTING SOCIETIES IN 2028

2028

UBIQUITOUS DIGITIZATION ...
- Balancing individual responsibilities, collective support, and accountability for transitioning into new, technology-driven work.

INFORMED DISORIENTATION ...
- Move beyond generalizations: tech penetration needs industry- and company-specific context and consideration.

NEED FOR BELONGING ...
- Define meaningful touchpoints for episodic employees and partners and support people's readiness for working in a global village.

A CRY FOR SOCIETAL PURPOSE ...
- Identify blinders from presupposed purposes, learned patterns of economic behavior, and narrow societal contributions – in broad debates about an organisation's purpose.

... FOR ORGANISATIONS IN 2028

SIZE DOES NOT MATTER ...
- Identifying and integrate the specific best in both big and small organisations.

SCREWED UP FAILURE CULTURE ...
- Wanted! A deep identity change – Redefining the organisation's attitude to learning, experimenting, and failure.

ANALOGUE AS TWIN OF DIGITAL ...
- Pushing hard for the best of both worlds by defining the true benefit of F2F in digital spaces and work.

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KEY IMPLICATIONS ...

2028

... FOR WORK IN 2028

WORK IS ALL OR NOTHING ...

- Re-invent meanings of work for employees, organisations, collaborators and society along the lenses of life, place, income, identity, belonging, loyalty, attitude and agency.

TECH-DRIVEN RADICAL TRANSPARENCY ...

- Co-create principles and ethics of dealing with radical transparency in an organisation's eco-system.

EPISODIC LOYALTY ...

- Organisations require a functioning mechanism for constructive cycles of engaging, dis-engaging, and re-engaging with employees and collaborators.

... FOR LEADERSHIP IN 2028

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY OF LEADERSHIP ...

- Prepare people for transparent and visible leadership practice with high immediacy and direct leadership access

GIG LEADERSHIP ...

- Use rotating, episodic leadership to identify leadership talent and new ways of assessing leadership

LEADING HYBRID WORK FORCES ...

- Identify company-specific principles for leadership and work in people-tech-ecosystems – define accountability in people-robot-AI systems

TOP MANAGEMENT AS CENTRAL HUB ...

- Create climate change in the central hub towards leadership strengths and being a learning entity

LEADING FOR RADICAL HUMAN-CENTRICITY ...

- Invest into deep personal qualities and multifaceted leadership capacities, while changing society via generative links to education

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT UNLEARNED ...

- Embed long-term, cross-career, episodic, non-linear leadership (un)learning – towards human-centricity, leading people-tech system as a capacity of entire organisations

BEWARE OF EXTERNAL

HURDLES ...

... THAT HOLD YOU BACK ON YOUR TRANSITION TO 2028

2028

EDUCATION WITH LIMITATIONS
- Subject-specific versus targeting complex capabilities and deep personal qualities
- Education stuck in 1905
- Responsibility, judgement, risk and room for mistakes underrepresented in curriculum

REGULATION
- Lack of regulatory support for new flexible nature of work, organisation and leadership

NATURE AND SPEED OF CHANGE
- Increased pace of change in relevant environments
- Urgency of needed transitions
- Radical, eruptive change on a regular basis – need for constant reinvention

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BEWARE OF INTERNAL HURDLES ...

... THAT HOLD YOU BACK ON YOUR TRANSITION TO 2028

LIMITED DIGITAL KNOW-HOW AT THE TOP
- Business with lack of digital acumen

WHAT TO INVEST IN AND WHEN
- Investment in tech with limited evidence for success
- A bias towards excessive data collection rather than data exploration

SUSTAINED RIGID MIND-SETS AND VESTED PERSONAL INTERESTS
- People in power prevent transitioning and progress to safeguard own benefits
- Once in position, young leaders fall in love with power and protective behavior that prevents fluid structures
- Leadership as a prerogative for positions of power

BARRIERS AT THE TOP
- Low risk and conservative business thinking
- Limited developmental orientation
- Lack of letting go at the top
- Lack of persistence in trend implementation – dipping in and out

TALENT AND CAREER PATTERNS
- Huge differences in individuals' preferences for self-leadership and decision-making.
- Identifying high potential based on present and past, not on future expectations
- Rigid, risk-averse structures prevent identifying and nurturing innovative talent
- In-industry search versus outside-industry talent

ROBUSTNESS OF RIGID CULTURE
- Lack of critical employees
- Higher levels of obedience
- Lack of support for outliers
- Sustained emphasis on status/titles

PROHIBITIVE STRUCTURES AND INCENTIVES
- Incentives that simulate and reward stagnation
- Gap between existing ways of working and what actually works, results in disengaged workforce

THE LURE OF PAST AND CURRENT SUCCESS
- Overly treasuring the golden legacy
- Routine of short-term goal setting for immediate returns

2028

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GETTING STARTED WITH ACTIONS FROM YOUR OWN INSIGHTS 2028

STARTING CONNECTED AND GENERATIVE CONVERSATIONS

Who do you need to share trends and insights with immediately?
!_____ !_____ !_____
Who do you need to start a conversation with from your team and sounding board?
!_____ !_____ !_____

MOST STRIKING?

What are your reflections?
What is the most striking trend – within the current frame of your organisation?
!_____
!_____

What is the most striking trend – which sounds foolish for your organisation?
!_____
!_____

Which factors are driving the trends?
!_____
!_____

What effects will the trends have?
!_____
!_____

TO EXPLORE TAKE PRIORITIES IN TURN

The highest priorities, as you rank trends personally. Why?
!_____ !_____ !_____
The lowest priorities, as you rank them personally. Why?
!_____ !_____ !_____

THE ONE!

If you could experiment with one trend, which would it be and what would be your first thoughts for action?
!_____

THE CONNECTIONS YOU SEE.

If you were to draw a map, which trends and actions would be connected? Visualize steps you can take towards a sustainable transition towards 2028.

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