Abstract

While change is the only constant of an ever evolving business landscape, organizations are increasingly exploring how to craft new workforce and organization models. The business imperative is to enable deep collaboration and social inclusion while innovating and being responsive to steady change. With decades of experience in digital transformation, Infosys believes in the future of the algorithmic organization built around purposeful ecosystems with an extended workforce.

In an algorithmic world, the traditional distinctions between customer and product, human and machine, etc. - are all blurred. Infosys strongly believes in the Live Enterprise that continuously evolves, learns and innovates. In this model, the key to competitive differentiation is to amplify workers everywhere and build purposeful and customer-centric ecosystems relying on autonomous teams.

Part 1: Expanding the concept of the workforce

In mid-2019, Infosys conducted a worldwide study, surveying over 1,000 senior management executives globally, at companies with over US $1 billion in annual revenue to understand the demand drivers of digital talent, the rising demand for skills, the skill gaps and what leading companies are doing to address them. Some startling statistics:

- 75% of hiring managers agree that finding digital talent with adequate technical skills is difficult,
- 65% of employees agree that keeping up with skill requirements is hard

Infosys research highlights the pressing need to find new workforce models not only to meet the current organizational requirements but also to anticipate the future ones. Indeed, if you look at hard skills such as IT architecture or Analytics, an expert today will be a novice tomorrow.

In this context, contingent workers and independent contractors contribute to the growing gig economy where organizations harness the power of highly skilled individuals to close their talent gap. Managing the related contracts and talent pool is not the only headache for HR who must also address the challenges arising from the growing instances of human-machine interactions. While there is a consensus on leveraging machines to amplify human potential by complementing each other’s strengths, there is no standard recipe to achieve a balance between ethics and development.

Focus: The liquid workforce, opportunities offered by blending employment

The term Liquid Workforce describes a form of workplace organization that relies on fluid teams of workers that come together, from anywhere in the world, to work on projects. In the Liquid workforce report, Accenture predicted that by 2025 we will see at least one new global 2000 company with no full-time employees outside of the C-Suite.

This emerging trend is not a new concept but it is amplified by the advances in technology (automation, AI, etc.). Tapping in on-demand workforce can be a key differentiator in the new rules of the economy as illustrated here.
Part 2: Towards the algorithmic organization

Traditional organizational models are increasingly battered in an era of exponential change. Becoming a live enterprise that continuously evolves, learns and innovates, is the new business imperative. Indeed, the algorithmic organization grows and blooms by:

• Developing purposeful ecosystems with the extended workforce and partners

Focus: Grow the Robotics Quotient within your organization

Robotics Quotient which designates a set of skills allowing humans to work effectively alongside robots will become a key competency. Organizations need to integrate this dimension in their training curriculum and also their cultural change roadmap. Let’s explore some of the soft skills associated to the Robotics Quotient:

• **Cognitive flexibility**: the ability to switch between thinking about two different concepts, and to think about multiple concepts simultaneously will be useful to collaborate with hybrid teams (digital colleague, cobots also known as collaborative robots)

• **Conversational Intelligence**: the ability in all humans to connect, engage and navigate with others as defined by Korn Ferry Institute

• **Humility**: the ability of learning and seeking inputs within and outside the organization from multiple talents and sources.

In a nutshell, the algorithmic organization paves the way to new forms of doing and thinking to engage, mobilize, reskill and energize the extended workforce while building a flex operating model to respond effectively to change.

DEVELOP YOUR ROBOTIC QUOTIENT

• Conversational Intelligence
• Cognitive Flexibility
• Critical Thinking
• Empathy
• Humility

Work is changing. Not just with new technology, but also because of business environments that are increasingly complex and unstable. We will provide in the next section actionable insights to chart your path towards the algorithmic organization.
Part 3: Setting the course for transformation

Is your organization ready to embrace the algorithmic age?

Your journey should start with the “why” to ensure the notion of data is embedded in purposeful strategy and ecosystem. Then consider the following questions as your preliminary assessment to craft a workforce model enabling deep collaboration and social inclusion. More than just deploying new systems and applications, becoming an algorithmic organization is about fostering a data-driven mindset that is pervasive in your business strategy, processes and culture.
The overall question at stake is “How would you define your ways to the algorithmic organization if you could start over with the ability to leverage AI and automation?” Performing this exercise will help you define an achievable target operating model that will fully reap the opportunities offered by AI, machine learning, and automation. Indeed, thinking from scratch like start-ups brings fresh perspective to incumbent organizations with complex systems.

**ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE**

- **How do you reengineer your processes towards data-driven organization?**
  Turning data into insight and acting upon that insight requires new capacity and operating model with embedded feedback mechanism.
- **How do you build trust on AI systems prescriptions or decisions?**
  Hybrid decision-making where you run automated and classic decisions in parallel may help analyse benefits and drawbacks of each system.
- **How do you review your employee and enterprise performance measures?**
  Towards fluid principles guiding behaviours to empower and engage employees rather than structured indicators and processes.

**CULTURE**

- **How do your current corporate values fit in an algorithmic world?**
  Transparency and accountability for example are must have to avoid the ‘black box’ effect.
- **How do you make Data the DNA of your organization?**
  Extracting and interpreting knowledge and insights from data should become the daily norm of employees across all job categories and levels, not the exception.
- **How do you revisit your ways of working such as project management, meetings, etc.?**
  Constant flow of data and feedback must be integrated effectively in your practices, e.g. switching meeting objectives from command and control to creative development.

**EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT**

- **How would you rate learnability – e.g. the ability to learn, unlearn, relearn - in your organization?**
  Fostering life-long learning is a key differentiator as the nature of business becomes more complex, unpredictable and dynamic.
- **How do you mitigate the imbalance between hard and soft skills in your training curriculum?**
  Soft skills once developed and practiced stay relevant contrary to technical skills. As highlighted with the Robotics quotient, empathy or humility will be critical in addition to the standard teamwork or communication.
Our conviction: Reimagining workforce and organizational models to accelerate your digital transformation through purposeful ecosystems

The time is now to revisit the concept of workforce and what it takes to build a thriving organization in the algorithmic age. As Emmanuelle Blons, Organization Change Management and HR Infosys AVP stated, “Over the next few decades, it is work that will make the world even more human. The algorithmic age constitutes a historic opportunity for the de-automation of human work. It would be a mistake to be paralyzed by the fear of the future. The future of work will unleash the talent for which human beings will keep a monopolistic position for a long time to come.”

Sources
1. INFOSYS TALENT RADAR: How the best companies get the skills they need to thrive in the digital era
2. Accenture Liquid Workforce report
4. Introducing the Robotics Quotient: A new means of measuring organizational readiness for automation and AI
Emmanuelle Blons
Associate Vice-President

Emmanuelle is Associate Vice-President in Organization Change Management, based in Paris. She brings over 20 years of experience at the forefront Change Management and HR. She specializes in Organizational Transformation, Transition Management and people challenges linked to outsourcing for large scale programs. She is the author of ‘Augmented HR, How AI can re-humanise HR’ (2019)

Emmanuelle_Blons@infosys.com

Frédéric Beynel
Senior Industry Principal

Frédéric is a Senior Industry Principal in Organization Change Management, based in Paris. With 18 years of experience at the forefront of IT projects, he has proven experience leading large scale ERP and transformation programmes and Agile change management programs where he is now focusing on best /next learning practices.

Frederic.Beynel@infosys.com

Emilie Labidoire
Industry Principal

Emilie is Industry Principal in Organization Change Management and Open Innovation, based in Paris. She has over 15 years of experience delivering large Transformation projects for clients in Europe. She is currently exploring how to unlock AI potential for business.

Emilie_Labidoire@infosys.com

About the authors: