



# The Near Future of Work: The Time for Genuine Transformation Is Now!

Organisations will face difficult decisions about their workforce in coming months due to the economic slowdown. Like it or not, the slowdown is coming, although we don't know how long it will last. The most optimistic outlook and forecast for many business leaders, to whom we have spoken, is a significant reduction in their business for at least half of 2020.

Consequently, many companies are planning to streamline their operations and will eventually reorganise yet again. No surprise there. After all, reorganisation has become an essential and expected part of doing business, as leaders continually focus on ensuring the survival of their businesses in the face of unanticipated shocks and movements in the marketplace. This focus is exactly what they need to transform their organisations into resilient and sustainable entities in the long run. Any management team should consider this focus as their primary objective, superseding all others, with the result that much less time will be spent on other future management challenges.

## The Long-Term Solution

With regards to the coming slowdown, rather than pushing the same emergency button—that is, reducing operational costs, lowering headcount, ditching product or service lines, and so on—leaders have an opportunity to do something different. That new strategy is to establish the foundation for a more resilient and sustainable organisation, not only to address potential future shocks but also to ensure that the business thrives when the competition fails to stay above water.

Although the prerequisite for that foundation is very simple, it requires vision and strategic leadership foresight. It's all about people. Management teams must ensure that they hire, develop, and retain “only” the right people to grow the business, now and down the road. To achieve this goal, leadership should consider these questions in preparation for the “must-do” transformation into a sustainable organisation:

**Who are the “right people”?**

**Individuals who know why they are doing what they are doing and are willingly committed to contribute positively and add value to your business.**



**1) How do we know if we are hiring, developing, and retaining “only” the right people for our business?** Honestly, many organisations don’t have a clue. But you are not alone. There are ways and tools to fix that problem—if you are willing to take a long-term view and fix the situation for the long-term.

**2) Once we fix #1, how do we ensure continuity so as not to spoil what we have accomplished?**

These are the only strategic questions you need to answer to ensure a sustainable organisational resilience.

### **And Here Is the Reason**

Business leaders cannot afford not knowing if they have “only” the right people to grow the business. That would be equivalent to flying a plane without a GPS. Ignorance is not only dangerous, it also places all your resources at risk—including all stakeholders, shareholders, managers, employees, suppliers, clients, and so on. Without the optimal workforce, profits will disappear, brands will fade, employees will burn out, and the organisation will eventually fail.

You may not have had the opportunity to understand this point. You may have inherited a legacy organisation in which those “not so right people” occupy key roles in your operation. Regardless, you will eventually face the difficult question about whom to let go and whom to keep—probably resolved by legacy solutions that are all short-cuts (such as headcount costs, expenses, or operational investments that can be deferred).

Short-cuts pose a serious temptation. They are very practical, efficient (no one will likely ask you “efficient for whom?”), and provide quick short-term fixes. But at the end of the day, short-term success is a missed opportunity, a band-aid, a quick fix—nothing more.

### **How to Identify “Only” the Right People**

Who are the “right people”? Individuals who know why they are doing what they are doing and are willingly committed to contribute positively and add value to your business. They are not part of your organisation haphazardly. In fact, luck or unfair advantage do not play a role in their hiring, development, promotion, and performance.



They are in place because they are the “only” people who can do the finest job. They come to work because they want to be there, not because they have to be there. Their biggest advantage is self-knowledge aligned with what they really want to do—work for your company to create, contribute, and generate value for themselves and your organisation.

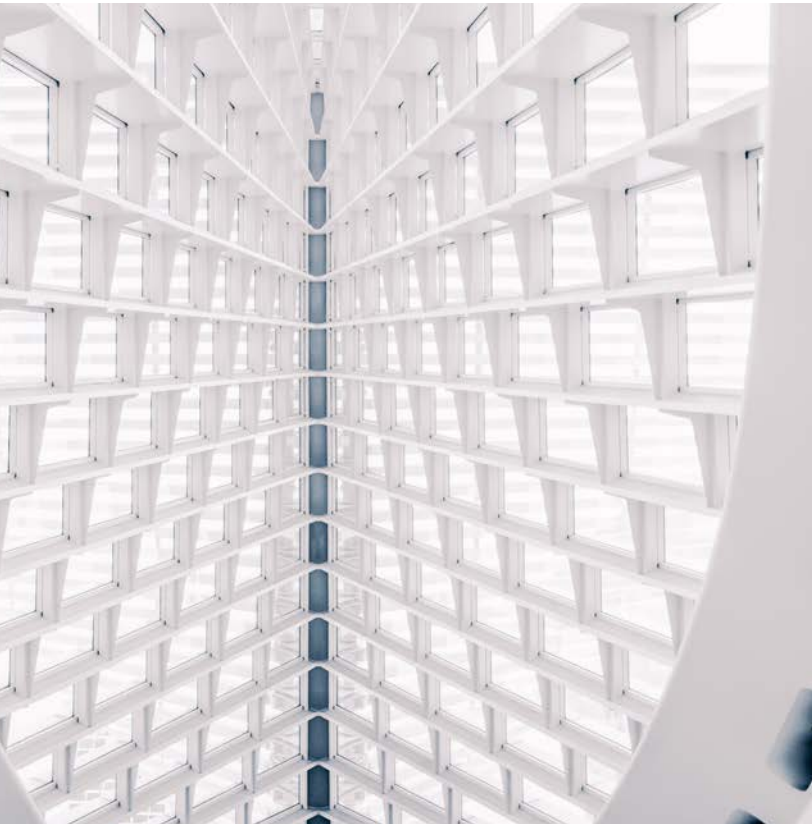
Those who strive to achieve self-knowledge take a number of paths—perhaps inspired by a role model, coerced by family pressure, or the need to follow their own passion. Yet, others passively wait for someone else to discover their talents and skills and finally realise their dreams for them. You don’t want those type of people in your organisation, as they consume the most resources and add the least value to your efforts. Individuals who consider their path haphazardly, attempt various endeavours, and fail to realise any satisfactory outcome are unhappy people who become (and remain) unproductive and inefficient. The bottom line is that everyone pays the price, including the employer.

Separating the wrong people from the right ones is the first step in leading the organisation down the road to financial viability and productivity.

### **Self-Aware Employees Are Critical...Now**

The market will always experience ups and downs. To survive and grow, in spite of the odds, management must possess a workforce that is willing to take responsibility and play its part. Only when employees comprehend what makes them tick as individuals can they successfully participate as members of an engaged and motivated workforce. To assist their efforts to acknowledge such an active role—and benefit the company simultaneously—leaders need to ask employees the following questions and be open to the responses:

- What do they, as employees, desire in the workplace?
- What type of work and environment are they enthusiastic about?
- How do they envision their future?
- What skills and know-how do they need to acquire to achieve what they desire?



- How does their desire match the company's wishes and overall mission?
- If they are at odds, what steps do both parties need to take to align their desires?

Despite some skeptics' viewpoint, self-knowledge is not simply a "feel good" factor. Self-aware employees gain the ability to discover the best job for their talents, thereby achieving satisfaction in meeting their own goals, as well as what the company requires of their efforts.

Take a long view of your business. It is better for all stakeholders in the end. And now is the perfect time to do that.

*About the Author:*

*Ali Kursun is a Managing Partner at sparkChief & Co., a consulting firm that helps clients develop sustainable strategic workforce planning, talent management, career, and rewards solutions.*

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## sparkChief & Co.

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25 Route de Lullier  
1254 Jussy, GE, Switzerland

Tel +41 22 346 24 05  
[inquire@sparkchief.com](mailto:inquire@sparkchief.com)  
[www.sparkchief.com](http://www.sparkchief.com)

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