A Disruption Guide: How Jobs and Careers Are Being Transformed

# A Disruption Guide: How Jobs and Careers Are Being Transformed

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## Why now?

This article is written with two objectives in mind. First to explore the accelerating change, and disruptions that are occurring in plain sight in almost every organization, and secondly to define the new skills and capabilities that people need to invest in to ensure their career viability and even relevance, as an employee is in place for tomorrow.

To help navigate we have identified resources from a variety of sources and added them throughout this paper as a means to explore and build your skills and capabilities.

## Disruption is the 'new norm'

2020 was a year that will be remembered as a turning point for many of us. Concerns about our and families health, job security and safety, fundamental changes in how we interact with one another and even how we interact with the world around us.

In this 'new normal' organizations and people have been forced to adapt. Organizations that did not have faded away. People are more resilient and to a large extent determined how to 'get through' the uncertainty and chaos.

Today we are living in a permanent new normal. Change and massive disruption are understood to be a defining factor in how we operate. The challenge is to determine the skills and capabilities that we will need to thrive as members of an organization, playing a role that will surely evolve as change continues around us. This paper explores the skills and capabilities that people need to invest in to be relevant and to have the opportunity for a successful career in the years to come.

For a deep dive into how Business Transformation is being planned, designed and implemented, given the successes and lessons from the last three years, consider reading the free white paper **Business Transformation 2.0.**

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**Everything is changing**

Let step back and do a reality check. The world around us is in constant and increasing disruption. Not only is Mother Nature holding us to task with viruses and global warming, but technology keeps innovating while our competition is up all night thinking up ways to capture our customers while those very customers are shifting their values and behaviors. At no other time in human history has change and the very nature of disruption impacted our species to such a degree. While disruption is perceived as a threat or a risk by some to our organizations, others recognized what continuous disruption is really about. An opportunity. Leaders who embrace change and continuous disruption recognized that what is perceived as chaos and uncertainty for some, represents a strategic differentiation for others.

Consider a few of the **disruptors** that are unfolding right now. Each will have different implications for your organization and the skills people will need to navigate the immediate future:

- **Global warming** is on the verge of threatening hundreds of millions of people living in low coastal areas. This is forcing governments to think about massive relocation of populations in the coming decades if water levels continue to rise. This will not only affect those directly impacted but also the remainder of the global population as we watch a potential disaster unfold.
- The entire **energy sector** is aggressively moving away from fossil fuels to alternative sources of energy. As a result, power companies, traditionally fueled by oil, coal and gas are reinventing themselves into energy companies. In early 2021 Exelon, a Midwestern energy supplier, announced it was separating its utility and power generation business. A clear decoupling of delivery from new ways to generate energy.
- **Sustainability** is no longer just an Al Gore bumper sticker. Customers are switching their purchasing power to companies who practice sustainable manufacturing, have a zero-emission strategy, and recognize the income gap forced on workers in undeveloped nations. Today most organizations have recognized that these new considerations must be incorporated into their business strategy.


Thank You, Al Gore.

- Even the **internet** is changing. Elon Musk is putting over 42,000 satellites into orbit (over 1,000 are already floating overhead) to provide **Starlink**, an internet service, at greater speed to everyone on the planet, regardless of where you live. There are already 10,000 paying customers with more being added every day.

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Companies like Comcast, Verizon and others who rely on fiber optic cables and cell towers are at risk of becoming obsolete.

- And finally, **online education** and e-learning are part of the educational system. Covid-19 fast-tracked the e-learning and online education industry. During 2020, 190 countries have enforced nationwide school closures at some point, affecting some 1.6 billion people globally. All education is being affected, be it middle and high school or college as well as ongoing professional development in critical disciplines like Business and Digital Transformation.

These are just a few of the massive disruptions occurring. The challenge for leaders, managers of people, organizations and individuals is how to shift one's mindset from thinking about change and continuous disruption as chaos, to embracing this as simply the 'new normal'. This will require all of us to learn, invest in and build new skills and capabilities, not just to survive but to thrive.

**To survive and thrive requires new paradigms**

Before we delve into the new skills and capabilities that people need to invest in, let's explore the very foundation that organizations are built on so that we can understand why the skills we have now were relevant only until recently. Paradigms define the world around us. Be it the historic agricultural or manufacturing paradigms. Or the new digital paradigm which redefines how the world operates.

The recognition that massive disruption is now 'normal', organizations are rethinking the paradigms that influenced their organizational strategy, operating models and ultimately the investments that are made in building capabilities for the future. If we are forced to more frequently evaluate and re-imagine the underlying paradigms and our organization's strategy, new and more adaptive skills will be required in today's knowledge workers. In 1999 **Dilbert** poked fun at a rigid annual strategic planning cycle. That was the world of yesterday.
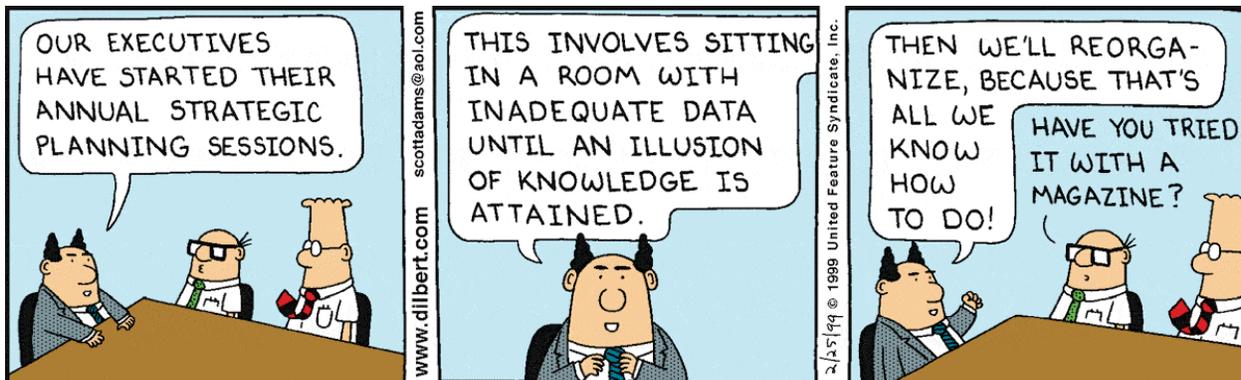
Today strategic planning is gone.  We are in a world where strategy is constantly evolving as conditions, innovations, competition, change, and disruptions unfold.  The luxury of planning once a year has been replaced with "Continuous Strategic Planning". This is a process that recognizes constant change and disruption and is constantly updated with immediate feedback (provided by ever more valuable and meaningful **business analytics**) so that rapid changes and course corrections can be made as needed.  For more on how businesses are transforming themselves by understanding and anticipating paradigm shifts, check out **How Business Paradigms Drive Transformation.**

### Rethinking what an operating model is

Given that we have moved to a new way of strategic planning, the underlying operating model that the organization is based on has also shifted.  Wikipedia's definition is as follows: "Operating model is both an abstract or visual representation (model) of how an organization delivers value to its customers or beneficiaries as well as how an organization actually runs itself." Deloitte describe it as "the configuration of the organization to deliver its strategy".

The old static operating models are being replaced with '**intelligent composable operating models**' which are the organizations that are able to dynamically adapt and fundamentally rearrange their structure based on the needs of change or disruption.  As organizations accelerate digital business strategy to drive faster digital transformation, they need to be agile and make quick business decisions based on currently available and actionable information.
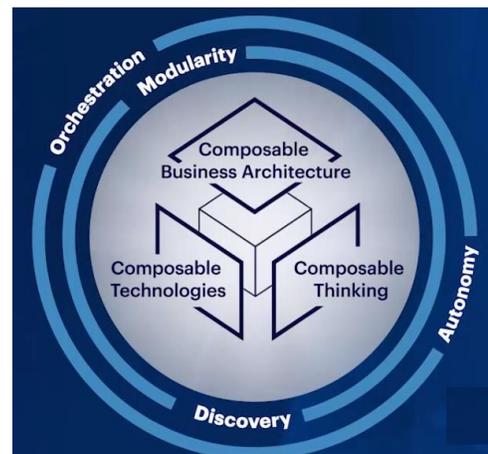
So why is this important to understand in terms of the capabilities that people need to have in order to succeed?  Because jobs are going away, and the new roles require different skills and capabilities.

### The role of people in today's workforce is rapidly changing

As technology continues to automate and eliminate jobs, it becomes critical for everyone to reskill and adapt to the new ways technology is used.  In addition as the nature of business and its organization evolves to be ever more adaptive and flexible, people will need skills to both define the new business environment and to operate in it. As a result knowledge workers need to excel in what they specialize.

If they do not, they may find themselves in a position where they do not add value. This need to upskill is moving faster as the trend to automate is accelerated with Hyper Automation. This trend is based on the idea that anything that can be automated in an organization should be and will be to keep up with the innovations of your competition.
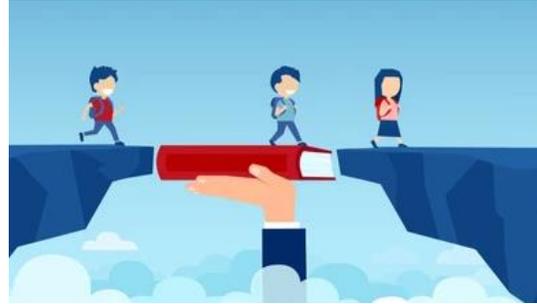


In addition, this increasing automation is moving from traditional 'back office' functions to processes and decisions that require higher level human intelligence. The fact is that modern automation technology runs on rules that define the business operation. Modeling and mining the rules so change can happen quickly will become a specialty – as will many other key components in driving application definition and generation. This is being quietly done all around us with the implementation of smarter digital solutions that are just the tip of Artificial Intelligence. At its core, Hyper Automation is driven by a response of vendors to the need to deal with legacy business processes that are not streamlined, creating immensely expensive and extensive issues for organizations.

**Capabilities for job and career survival … and beyond**

So let's get to it. Companies today are realizing that the capabilities that built their success today, will become obsolete tomorrow. As traditional roles are increasingly automated, organizations are becoming more adaptive and flexible. As this trend increases, we are recognizing that the remaining employees will be increasingly focused on 'what's next'. This will become a key issue that relates to each person's knowledge, experience, and skills – training. In fact the e-Learning platform **MyCareerTransformation** was created to address this very real need.

Those people who have specialized knowledge on the company's operation or its rules, and thus have special value, will need ongoing training programs to keep up with the changes in the company's operation and in their industry. To be and remain relevant people need to invest aggressively in building out their own skills sets and taking control of their personal careers and competencies.



This is a reinforcing loop. Organizations need the next generation of capabilities to remain competitive, and employees need the next generation of capabilities to be relevant. Let's look at each of the three domains individually, explore the specific capabilities that they include, and the resources available to build them.

<u>Organization Agility:</u>

- Anticipating and planning for **massive disruption.** For more information check out the recent white paper on **Business Disruption** and the Business Transformation course entitled **Disruption and Business Transformation**
- Recognizing and defining new **business paradigms** to ensure differentiation is designed and delivered into every customer interaction. To learn more, explore the newly released course **How Business Paradigms Drive Transformation**
- Reevaluating your essential **business capabilities** and determining which to deprioritize, which to invest in and which new capabilities to acquire. Capability Modeling is a capability most often found in the Business Architecture community. A great course to explore is titled **Build Your Capability Model**
- Building **continuous business transformation** into the fabric of leadership and across the organization. This is about recognizing that transformation never ends, and it needs to be focused on evolving the business, rather than deploying the next generation of digital solutions. For an executive view explore the course titled **Business Transformation: Executive Insights**

<u>Team Effectiveness</u>

- Implementing different **work practices** that focus on outcomes and results, and do not reward firefighting, endless unproductive meetings and decisions driven by hidden self-serving personal agendas. A curriculum has been tailored for leaders and managers of people titled **Leadership Playbook**
- Embracing the work from **anywhere paradigm** while keeping your people motivated, connected and loyal. The course **Re-Establish Employee Commitment** is laser focused on building this capability



- Leaders of people will need to learn how to **manage from afar**. In some cases managing teams that you may never come into physical contact with. While this has been occurring with the outsourcing of jobs and functions around the world, the results have been mixed. To deliver on the level of customer interaction and experience of tomorrow, managers will need to apply lessons from outsourcing failures and develop new delivery models.
- Making the **combinational effect** work with disbursed teams. In other words how to ensure that people who are working in tandem far exceed their abilities when deployed separately working on only piece parts of a solution. This requires greater alignment and the ability to integrate problem solutioning from both an inter- and intra-company perspective. Employees will need to be

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equipped with these new ways of collaborating. An interesting course that builds teams by equipping them with tools to make change around them is **Mobilize the Entire Workforce**

Digital Capability

- Partnering with the business to **rethink the business rules** that were developed over the last 20 years to ensure they enable new business strategies rather than constrain them with forgotten and undocumented rules and requirements that force bad decisions and actions. An innovative course titled **Business Process Transformation** explores exactly how to build the next generation of business processes.

- Hardening and building digital flexibility to weather any disruptive event. The investment in Technology and the cost of providing digital solutions continues to grow.  As this trend continues, your technology environment needs to be made 'future proof' to the next disruptive event. This goes beyond the traditional disaster planning exercises. For newly released in-depth course with the latest methods and tools check out **Digital Agility and Resilience: Future Proofing Against Disruptive Events**.
- Implementing **all things digital** across all business processes. A great source of thought leadership that is independent of the big software and consulting firms is **Jim Sinur's Digital Topics for All blog.**
- Applying Artificial Intelligence Engineering to create dynamic processes and customer experiences.  This is a rapidly developing discipline that is evolving constantly as new and innovative applications are being designed and implemented. Universities like **Texas A&M** and **Northwestern** are pioneering learning programs in this area.

**Business reimagined**

In this 'new normal' there is no going back to yesterday.  Leaders and their organizations will need to:

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- Accelerate the business strategy cycle which incorporates shifting business paradigms as a foundation to future survival
- Redefine their business, revenue, and profit model
- Rethink the operating model
- Create adaptive and flexible organization structures that ensure that people focus on results and reinforce an 'anywhere' work environment
- Aggressively implement Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence while rethinking the underlying business rules that govern decision making and service delivery

We need people with the skills and capabilities now to address these and many other opportunities as organizations continue to evolve and grow.


**A path forward**

Knowledge workers are looking at the future with last years 'normal' in mind.  People are now recognizing that the skills and capabilities that made us successful are not enough.  As you witness the changes around you, we invite you to dig deeper.  What are the paradigms that are shifting, how are organizations adopting Continuous Strategic Planning and putting in place adaptive structures that flex rather than break when the stress and chaos of change and disruption hit again?



With understanding comes the recognition that new learning is needed.  We invite you to explore the many links to resources provided throughout this paper.

If you found this of value, please share it with your peers.  For any comments, feel free to reach out to me directly at KeithLeust@MyCareerTransformation.com

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