



# Working Resources

*Helping Companies Assess, Select, Coach and Retain Emotionally Intelligent People*

## Newsletter

### The Future of Work

Not since the 1960's have so many Americans held jobs. Demand for labor in services, retail and technology has generated more jobs in some sectors of the economy than the number of available workers to fill them.

All this good news is infuriating to you if you have been laid off, and especially if your job is disappearing. In a ruthless, globally competitive market, companies can no longer afford the luxury of holding on to more employees than they need. Because of technology, some jobs are being eliminated completely.

Analysts predict that, in this century, employment as we know it is likely to be phased out in industrialized nations of the world. Human labor is being systematically eliminated from the economic process. A new generation of sophisticated information and communication technologies, together with new forms of business reorganization and management, is wiping out full-time employment for millions of blue- and white-collar workers.

Manufacturing, as well as much of the service sector, is undergoing a transformation as profound as the one experienced by the agricultural sector at the beginning of the last century. We are in the early stages of a shift from mass labor to highly skilled labor, along with increasing automation in the production of goods and delivery of services.

What do these changes signify for you? More evidence that there is a new economy— one that is booming for some jobs, and devastating for others. In the last two years, 1.35 million jobs have been lost.

What does this mean for working adults who depend on their jobs to shelter, feed and clothe their families? There is work, but it's not the same as it used to be. There are jobs, but not the same ones there were yesterday. More significantly, there is little job security these days. No one can depend on having the same job in five or ten years. Change is happening too quickly.

Dr. Maynard Brusman is a consulting psychologist and trusted advisor to the senior leadership team. He is the president of Working Resources, a human resources consulting, training, and executive coaching firm.



We specialize in helping companies assess, hire, coach and keep top talent; executive selection; leadership consulting; 360-degree feedback; change management; interpersonal communication skills; emotional intelligence; performance improvement; culture surveys; career development and executive coaching.

Dr. Brusman is a highly sought-after speaker and workshop leader. He leads mission, values, and vision retreats.

*"Maynard Brusman is one of the foremost coaches in the United States. He utilizes a wide variety of assessments in his work with senior executives and upper level managers, and is adept at helping his clients both develop higher levels of emotional intelligence and achieve breakthrough business results. As a senior leader in the executive coaching field, Dr. Brusman brings an exceptional level of wisdom, energy, and creativity to his work."*—Jeffrey E.

Auerbach, Ph.D., President, College of Executive Coaching

He has been chosen as an expert to appear on radio and TV, MSNBC, CBS Market Watch, and in the Wall Street Journal, San Francisco Chronicle, and Fast Company magazine.

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William Bridges (1994) in his landmark book *JobShift: How to Prosper in a Workplace Without Jobs*, says that the job as we know it is disappearing altogether. De-jobbing is a numbers game. The same work that used to require a hundred workers a few years ago can be done by fifty today, and maybe by ten tomorrow. The manufacturing sector of our economy produces five times as many goods as it did at the end of WWII with the same number of workers.

In another important book Jeremy Rifkin in *The End of Work* (Putnam, 1995) postulates that traditional jobs will be a thing of the past for millions of Americans. Rifkin warns that in the coming years, new more sophisticated software technologies are bringing about a near worker-less world. The impact on society and the economy must be considered.

## A Look at the Numbers

The process of de-jobbing is significantly increased when one considers the collapse of the Soviet Union and consequent huge cuts in our defense budget. Since 1989, there were 440,000 jobs lost in defense businesses, 300,000 lost by U.S. military personnel, and 100,000 by civilians at the Department of Defense. This amounts to two and a half times the jobs lost during the same period by downsizings at GM, IBM, AT&T and Sears.

It is not only the blue-collar jobs that are subject to head-count reduction strategies. Six out of ten American workers are white-collar workers and they have been losing jobs as well, particularly in middle management.

This shift in employment can be explained in several ways. Temporary and part-time workers are doing an increasing share of the work in American organizations. The temporary-employment agency Manpower employs 560,000 workers. Compare those numbers to those of other “giants” such as GM (currently 365,000) and IBM (330,000).

More than a third of companies in North America employ temporary workers in managerial or professional positions. Among them, 53 percent utilize accountants, 32 percent retain information systems specialists, 28 percent utilize human resource professionals, and 27 percent use administrative professionals. Forty-five percent of companies surveyed plan to increase their use of temporary employees during the next five years.

These temporary jobs are not just clerical or assembly-line, but include engineering and other professional categories. Temporary professionals are increasing twice as fast as the temporary workforce as a whole— and temporaries as a whole have increased almost 60 percent since 1980.

Peter Drucker estimates that the new workers who work with data instead of things, “already number at least one-third and more likely two-fifths of all employees.” The socioeconomic center of the work world has already moved to computers, biotechnology and other data-based industries.

According to U.S. Census and Department of Labor statistics, “more Americans work in the computer industry as a whole (equipment, semiconductors and computer services) than in the auto, auto parts, steel, mining and petroleum-refining industries combined. . . . More Americans work in the biotechnology than in the entire machine-tool industry. . . . Twice as many Americans make surgical and medical instruments as make plumbing and heating products” (Beck, 1998).

The fact remains that it takes fewer and fewer humans to produce more goods faster and cheaper. Even service industries are being taken over by voice-recognizing computerized systems.

William Bridges is firm: “The disappearance of jobs is, with every passing month, more and more a ‘change that has already happened.’ It is also a change that can be exploited by individuals and organizations that know how to do so. Even if you are not innovation-minded, you need to deal with this change, for it is one of those shifts in the socioeconomic environment guaranteed to render obsolete the people and institutions that deny it.”

Peter Drucker reminds us that in predictable times we try to guess what will happen next, but in more turbulent times like ours, we need to ask, “What has already happened that will create the future?”

All this brings up the question of how to cope with constant job insecurity and never-ending change. What is the future of work?

How do you develop a proactive and positive approach? What is the best way to make yourself a valuable employee? Experts agree that job security lies in the person, not the position.

## 7 Keys to Job Security

Each approach requires serious introspection. Take these steps with a coach or mentor who can help by providing honest feedback and guidance.

**1. Find passion in what you do.** It is important that you choose work that you can get excited about. Passion gives us energy like no other feeling. When you have passion, you have purpose. You can speak about your work with enthusiasm. Discover on a more specific level what it is that excites you. Find out what it is you really love doing in your work.

2. **Find excellence in what you do.** What is it that you're really good at? These may be specific skills or more general attributes. You can be really good at fine-tuning something technological or in handling difficult customers. When you have identified your core competencies, you will feel good about letting others know that not only you love what you do but are confident in those areas. You will also be able to see how those competencies can transcend to other jobs when the job changes— as it will.

3. **Become a life-long learner.** Constantly improving and diversifying your skills is critical to lifetime success and employment. This may mean working with a coach or a mentor. Learning is key because of the rapid changes that are occurring in job descriptions.

In today's world jobs are changing so fast, they require flexibility and a wide-range of skills on the part of the worker. If you are not reading, taking courses, or surfing the web on a regular basis, then you are not keeping up with demands. You will be left behind in the informational revolution with skills and abilities suitable only for yesterday's job.

Every quarter, review your skills with an eye toward the future. Identify two new skills to acquire, then take classes, study or read books to master them.

4. **Be flexible.** Become aware of new opportunities every time there is change. Instead of becoming part of the group that whines every time there is a new change on the horizon, look for how you can take advantage of a new need, a new opportunity to make yourself valuable. Get proactive and positive.

5. **Focus on productivity.** Look for ways to save money, time and energy to improve the company, as well as improving your individual performance.

This means a shift in focus for many. For years we were taught to stay within the boundaries of our job description. Each job had a specific and well-defined boundary and to go beyond that meant that you might be encroaching on somebody else's territory.

Today, the job descriptions are changing so fast that one has to be more flexible and fluid to keep up. You are told to go "outside the box." When you actively look for ways to improve your productivity and efficiency, you are seen as a valuable part of the company.

Your efficiency will be seen as a major asset. Imagine yourself as an entrepreneur within your company: an "intra-preneur", looking for new ways to improve efficiency.

6. **Be a team player.** Extend yourself to help your co-workers. This will contribute to a more congenial workplace and improve your reputation as a valuable asset to the company.

Today's work force is made up of teams working on projects. Never forget the value of expressing genuine appreciation for your co-worker's contributions.

7. **Market yourself** to both internal and external customers. Since job security is tenuous, think of yourself as self-employed. You are the CEO of You—and your company has a reputation to create and maintain. This does not mean bragging or promoting yourself to the detriment of your team workers.

Let people know about your enthusiasm for your work. Both outside customers and those people you deal with inside the company need to know what you are doing. Be open and honest without being overly self-promoting.



## Jobs for the Future

In a book titled *Next: Trends for the Near Future*, authors Matathia & Salzman (1999) identify five trends changing the face of employment.

1. Full-time employees will decrease in number; outsourcing will continue.
2. Computers replace humans.
3. Small offices and home offices grow.
4. Equal-opportunity growth continues.
5. There will be a boom in certain new occupations.

Here are what the hot jobs for the future are, according to Matathia and Salzman.

1. Onsite repair services. Expect manufacturers to be able to send out technicians immediately to repair electronic equipment.
2. Equipment leasing and business sites. Rather than investing in expensive electronic equipment, more and more small offices and entrepreneurs will lease the needed equipment or rent a cubicle or meeting space as needed from a business super site. Videoconferencing centers will show important growth. Technology consultants who advise small businesses on information technology purchases and leases will also be on the rise.
3. There will be an increasing need for skills trainers. These people will be called on to train workers in technological change for current employees of a company and also for freelance contract workers.
4. Executive coaches. There will continue to be growth in work for those who coach busy people to prioritize and manage their business and personal lives.
5. More digital specialists including multimedia software designers and intranet coordinators.

Every society creates an idealized vision of the future— a vision that serves as a beacon to direct the imagination and energy of its people. . . . For more than a century utopian dreamers and men and women of science and letters have looked to a future world where machines would replace human labor, creating a near-workerless society of abundance and leisure. The high-tech Information Age is now on our doorsteps. Will its arrival lead to . . . continued emphasis on endless production, consumption, and work? Or will it lead to . . . finally freeing humanity to journey into a post-market era? —Jeremy Rifkin, *The End of Work*



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