

consumerdirections

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The SECRET

to building the team
of the future

DIVERSITY
MANAGING THE CONSUMER MIX

MISSING AT WORK
PRESENTEEISM TOLL ADDS UP

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Futurist Gihan Perera
gives business leaders a glimpse into what's ahead - and how they can become fit for the future. Here, he shares with *Consumer Directions* the real secret to crafting the team of the future, and you'll be surprised what is in store for all of us.
Are you ready?



When it comes to iPads, video production, and Apple technology, my technology consultant is my 11-year-old niece Abbey.

When Abbey was born, there was no YouTube, no social media, no smartphones, we didn't have a street directory in our pockets, we only took cameras on holiday, and we couldn't carry an entire library with us.

If the world has changed so much in the last decade, just imagine how much more it will change in the next. As leaders, we're expected to prepare our teams and organizations for that unknown future.

Our world is changing so fast that the skills you need for the future aren't the skills you have now. It's impossible to know exactly what skills we will need in the future, but you can bet they won't be technical, task-oriented skills that will become obsolete

through automation and artificial intelligence. Instead, the most future-proof skills will be higher-order thinking skills.

The Institute for the Future, based at the University of Phoenix in the USA (iff.org), has identified 10 such skills. They identified these skills by examining six global megatrends and drivers of change, and assessing the skills most valuable for coping with (and leading) these trends.

Briefly, these are the 10 skills, grouped into three areas:

ASSIMILATION

Absorbing information from the outside world:

1. Cognitive Load Management: Managing large amounts of information
2. Computational Thinking: Being "good with numbers"
3. Novel & Adaptive Thinking: Innovation (in old and new situations)

INTEGRATION

Applying information to the outside world:

4. Sense-Making: Understanding meaning, significance, and connections
5. Transdisciplinarity: Working across different disciplines
6. Design Mindset: Creating new systems and processes

COLLABORATION

Managing relationships with other people:

7. Social Intelligence: Empathy
8. New Media Literacy: Using new communication technology
9. Virtual Collaboration: Working with remote teams
10. Cross-Cultural Competency: Embracing diversity

extend
evolve
embrace
embed
enrol
expose

ENGAGE YOUR TEAM

As a leader, it's not enough to just consider whether you have that skill. If you want your team to be fit for the future, you must take responsibility for developing these skills in your team members.

Start with a fair (and honest!) assessment of your current level of competence with this skill, based on the level of engagement of your team:

1. **Expose:** They happen to bump into the skill X from time to time, but not by design.
2. **Enrol:** I make a deliberate effort to involve them with X.
3. **Embed:** They actively do X as part of their regular work (In other words, it's part of our day-to-day operations).
4. **Embrace:** X is an integral part of our product/service (In other words, it's part of what we deliver).
5. **Evolve:** We're constantly working to integrate X more into our team and organisation.
6. **Extend:** We look beyond just X to the future of X.

Think of this as a hierarchy, from low to high engagement (with higher levels being more engaged – and hence better):

For example, let's consider the skill of New Media Literacy, and look at one aspect: social media. Clearly, this is fast becoming a vital skill now for complaints handling and customer interaction.

The six levels of engagement could look like this:

1. **Expose:** I occasionally ask team members to engage with customers on social media.
2. **Enrol:** I make sure everybody does this for at least an hour a week.
3. **Embed:** Social media is just like any other channel, and everybody in the team uses it when appropriate.

4. **Embrace:** Social media is a standard feature of our product/service, not just a channel for handling customer complaints.
5. **Evolve:** We constantly work with each other to raise everybody's standards with engaging on social media.
6. **Extend:** We actively look for new media channels – such as live video, running webinars, or virtual reality.

This honest assessment helps you identify key areas where you can develop these skills in your team. It also helps you identify strategic initiatives to champion for the organisation as a whole.

MAKE THE CHANGE

The biggest challenge with building these skills is that they take time. You can't just send somebody to a time management course and claim they have mastered Cognitive Load Management, or let them enrol in a social media MOOC and tick the New Media Literacy box.

So don't try to do everything at the same time. Choose one of the 10 skills,

assess your current competence, identify your desired level of competence, and set a 90-day goal with your team to reach that level.

If you truly commit to this, it will set you apart from most leaders – and will give your team a competitive edge. That's the real secret to building the team of the future.

Since 1997, Gihan Perera has worked with business leaders, thought leaders, entrepreneurs, and other change agents - helping them with their strategy for thriving in a fast-changing world. Forbes Magazine rated him the #5 social media influencer in the world in his area of expertise.



Hear Gihan Perera in his **The Skills for the Future Workforce Speaker's Tour** presented by **SOCAP** in Melbourne 22 March and Sydney, 23 March, 2017. **Bookings open now.** Visit socap.org.au to register your place or call 02 8095 6426 now.