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Book Review

The 2020 Workplace: How Innovative Companies Attract, Develop, and Keep Tomorrow's Employees Today

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The book foresees a picture of a future that cash in on those workplace tools that many of us have never heard. The book is grounded in data, including two quantitative global surveys and a significant number of qualitative case studies.

The book is segmented into three parts followed by a glossary of social media terms. The first and foremost section comprises of two chapters where author throws light on ten forces that will define the new world of work in 2020. The author talks about changes in the composition of the workforce based on shifts in gender, ethnicity and generational breakdown. It is about how organizations are dealing with four generations and are likely to include five by 2020 and each will bring its own values and beliefs and a different perspective to a workplace.

The second part of the book discusses some thorough practices already being used in various organizations to keep its employees engaged. It talks about the Workplace Engagement 2020 Model (WE 2020) which can be used by organizations to build engaged employees for now and into the future. The third part discusses twenty predictions for the workplace in 2020, and how employees, executives, and human resources personnel can start preparing for this workplace of the future.

The book opens with Part I of The 2020 Workplace 'The Changing Workplace' which reviews the drastic shifts in workplace today that will affect the future. Part I of the book 'The Changing Workplace' begins with the first chapter titled 'Ten Forces Shaping the Future Workplace Now' where author discusses ten factors that will define the new world of work in 2020. The author says that the constant demographic shifts in the workplace is a significant challenge and opportunity for the organizations which will be critical for attracting, developing and retaining the top talent comprising of diverse workforce. The author emphasizes on the fact that in the coming future, most workplaces will have five generations working together. The fierce expansion of digitalization will lead to enormous challenges in the workplace for employees as well as employers.

Second chapter entitled 'Multiple Generations @ Work' focuses on various needs, expectations and values of all the five generations viz, Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Generation 2020. In this chapter author throws a light on differing expectations, career needs, communication styles and learning preferences of all five generations which will help companies in motivating, communicating with, developing and engaging the members of each generation. The chapter also incorporates "The Generations @ Work" Global Survey which was conducted to identify certain core traits possessed by each generation.

Part II of the book 'Practices in Action Today' opens with the third chapter titled 'Principles of 2020 Engagement' which draws attention on certain principles at workplace adopted by the organizations to keep employees engaged. In this chapter, the author presents the Workplace Engagement 2020 Model (WE 2020), a set of principles any organization can use to build engaged employees for now and into the future. The WE 2020 model features five principles viz, Collaboration, Authenticity, Personalization, Innovation, Social Connection. The model focuses on four practice areas that will enable competitive organizations to recruit and engage top talent in the future. i.e., Social Recruiting, Uber Connection, Social Learning and Accelerated Leadership.

Fourth chapter titled 'Social Recruiting Emerges' directs the attention of the readers on the importance of social recruiting. Forward thinking companies are redefining recruiting to be social, personal, transparent and collaborative as a way to attract the 2020 workforce. Companies are becoming more virtual talent scouts and utilizing a range of social media tools, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and Second Life, to draw and engage tomorrow's workers. Organizations need to be visible on various social networks in order to make candidates learn about their employer brand.

The chapter fifth "Uber-Connect Your Organization" encompasses critical success factors in becoming an uber-connected organization. Many companies are now using range of Web 2.0 tools associated with the social web. Companies need to equip employees with access to the same social Web tools they use in their everyday lives to communicate, collaborate and connect with one another. The chapter illustrates how companies are embarking on this journey through a five stage process viz, Accelerate, Broadcast, Collaborate, Design and Engage employees.

Sixth chapter entitled 'The Social Learning Ecosystem' deals with the concept of social learning within the organizations. As defined by the author, social learning is the acquisition of knowledge and skills through methods that are collaborative, immediate, relevant, and presented in the context of an individual's unique work environment. It incorporates social media, gaming, real time feedback and advanced on-the-job methodologies. The author discusses the 70/20/10 model of learning in which 70 percent involves learning via experience i.e. informal learning, 20 percent of learning occurs through feedback from peers and mentors and final 10 percent learning is through formal training programs. The challenge for the organizations is to figure out how to 'formalize the informal learning'. A model 'The Social Learning Ecosystem' has been proposed by the author for creating create platform to enable learning interaction within an organization. The model consist of four quadrants, named as, guided competency development, guided contextual learning, social competency development and social contextual learning.

Seventh chapter 'Accelerated Leadership' focuses on what leadership may look like in 2020 and ways in which 2020 leaders can be developed now. The author talks about the 2020 Leader Model which consists of five leadership areas viz, Collaborative mindset, Developer of people, Digitally confident, Global citizen and Anticipating and building for the future. Each of these areas require certain management behaviours for being this kind of a leader. In the changing workforce where five generations tend to work together, leadership styles have to be tailored differently for audiences of different generations.

Part III of the book 'Envisioning the 2020 Workplace' opens with eighth chapter titled 'Twenty Predictions for the 2020 Workplace'. In this chapter the author predicts twenty trends that will occur in time for the 2020 workplace. The most important, according to the authors, is that individuals will be hired and promoted based on their reputation capital, the sum total of their personal expertise, and the breadth, depth and quality of their social networks. Other crucial predictions include recruiting focused on social network sites, work-life balance being replaced by work-life flexibility, team hiring, shift

from outsourcing to crowdsourcing, social media literacy. These predictions provide an excellent summary of the expectations, and how you can prepare your organization, your team, and yourself for the future.

The chapter ninth 'Get Ready for the Future Workplace' suggests some measures that can be adopted to implement both short term and long term solutions to the issues an organization will face in 2020 and beyond. The authors have identified some HR initiatives and capabilities as well as individual skills that will aid in facing the challenges of 2020 workforce. There is also a list of social media tools that everyone needs to develop.

The book is grounded in data, including two quantitative global surveys and a significant number of qualitative case studies. Despite this, it's not a "theoretical" book, nor is it filled with academic jargon.

It's an easy read and flows pretty smoothly. Some of the more useful elements include chapter summaries and lists of social media terms and modern web resources. This is a useful book not only for current leaders but also especially for those who aspire to be leaders in a potentially confusing cross-cultural and cross-generational workforce. From well-respected human resources and corporate training experts Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd, a must-read guide to the innovative strategies that the best companies are using to create a workplace that the best talent chooses - both today and in 2020.