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Plan for a Changing Workforce

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An organization doesn't need a crystal ball to understand that the workforce is rapidly changing. And we're not just talking about changes in generational demographics.

The primary focus for today's employers is the need for new and advanced skills from the working population. A majority of employers see a "significant" skills gap in today's workforce. An even larger number plan organizational change within the next year and have major concerns about finding the workers they need. There are nearly 7 million jobs available in the United States right now and a lack of qualified people to fill them.

The challenge isn't that the nature of work is continually evolving, but that it's doing so more rapidly than ever before. Think about it: Uber driver. Applications developer. Social-media influencer. These are jobs that weren't around a few years ago. It's estimated that over 60 percent of grade-school kids will eventually have a job that doesn't exist today. Many of these will be in the so-called "gig" economy that fosters an independent class of workers. This aligns quite neatly with the career goals of the younger workforce and is a cultural phenomenon that organizations must reckon with, and soon.

How can your organization meet this challenge head-on? It starts with understanding and leveraging the business climate that shapes your workplace. Know your current environment: what resources and assets do you have, and what will you need? Understand the always-changing role of technology, and how you can make advancements in areas like artificial intelligence an advantage in a competitive world. Challenge your organization's leaders to prepare for the future with financial modeling, business forecasts, and workforce plans. These are just a few of the tools that can help determine what skills and successful behaviors are critical to the organization's prosperity.

Also, make sure you comprehend the nature of talent acquisition in this day and age, and embrace the fact that it is truly an art form when done correctly. We all know the up-and-coming workforce is tech savvy and major users of social media. They're also the "curious generation" that wants to learn. They're very altruistic, with an enhanced sense of community, and they value diversity and inclusion. Put this knowledge to good use when you attempt to attract top, young talent to join your staff. Sure, many of them are "job hoppers," but the more an organization can provide the kind of work environment desired by this current and next wave of difference-makers, the better they will be poised to reach the goals they've set as they sail toward the future.