THE FUTURE WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE
10 Rules for Mastering Disruption in Recruiting and Engaging Employees
by Jeanne C. Meister and Kevin J. Mulcahy

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF
Disruptive technologies. The gig economy. Breadwinner moms. Data-driven recruiting. Personalized learning.

The Future Workplace Experience presents an actionable framework for meeting today's toughest business disruptions head-on. It guides you step by step through the process of recruiting top employees and building an engaged culture, one that will drive your company to long-term success. Two of today's leading voices on the future of work, Jeanne C. Meister and Kevin J. Mulcahy, provide 10 rules for rethinking, reimagining and reinventing your organization.

Everything we took for granted in the past, from what we expect from our jobs to whom we work with and how, is changing before our eyes. The strongest organizations today are "learning machines." New challenges require new solutions, and some organizations are finding them. If you want to compete in the years to come, you have to meet the future now. *The Future Workplace Experience* is your playbook for taking your organization to the top of your industry.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:
- The 10 rules to help your organization recruit and engage the best employees. What workers expect from work and how and why companies are creating employee experiences to mirror their best customer experiences.
- How technology transforms the workplace and can be both an enabler and a disruptor.
- The changing composition of the workforce driven by gender, generation and the gig economy.

Introduction
Everything we take for granted about work—what we expect from our work, where we work, how we work, when we work and with whom we work—is being disrupted. Workers of all generations and cultures will increasingly come to expect a workplace that mirrors their personal lives, one that is transparent, connected, personalized and offers choices. Understanding this future workplace experience will be a core competency of both business and human resource leaders.

Interviews and a global survey uncovered a confluence of disruptive forces that leaders are grappling with today, from the experiences workers expect in the workplace, to the myriad of current and next-generation technologies transforming how and where we work, to the diversifying composition of workers, representing multiple generations and cultures, in addition to various segments of workers such as breadwinner moms, boomers on the grid and economy, contingent workers. The results of the research have been synthesized into 10 rules to guide you, your team and your organization to master disruption in recruiting and engaging employees in the future workplace.

PART I: WHAT WORKERS EXPECT FROM WORK
Rule #1: Make the Workplace an Experience
There are several key drivers to intentionally designing employee experiences, including the fact that all generations of employees (not just millennials, born between 1982 and 1993) are

approaching the workplace with a consumer mindset. With the rise of mobile technology and a rapidly expanding on-demand economy, employees now expect a similar experience at work to the one they have in their personal life. At the same time, organizations are recognizing the need to create one seamless experience for both employees and customers.

The essence of the future workplace experience is to integrate all the elements of work—the emotional, the intellectual, the physical, the technological and the cultural—into one seamless experience for the employee.

- **Emotional experience:** Companies are increasingly seeing the importance of being a purpose-driven organization, and tapping into a set of core values to connect the employee to the company. This starts with asking what type of customer experience is the company providing and how can the employee mirror components of this and elicit core emotions of the very best customer experiences such as delight, surprise and engagement.
- **Intellectual experience.** Companies recognize that engaged employees take charge of their development and learn every day, often informally searching the web with their smartphone and finding what they need, when they need it. Qualcomm has created the Qualcomm Employee App Store for employees to access a number of apps from learning to communication, health and wellness, news and virtual-meeting facilitation.
- **Physical experience.** Research is proving the importance of giving workers control over selecting the workspace that suits them. Steelcase conducted a global study among 12,480 participants in 17 countries to examine key workplace behaviors around the topic of workspace. Interestingly, workers who have a greater degree of control over where and how they work, and are free to choose a workspace to fit their task at hand: either focused work or collaborative work, were more engaged at work.
- **Technological experience.** With the growing demand to work from anywhere, the future workplace will depend on organizations harnessing the power of smart technologies to drive employee engagement and satisfaction. IBM is one company that is leveraging its suite of cognitive technologies and social-engagement platforms to reimagine the performance-management process.
- **Cultural experience.** Transparency in the workplace is becoming the currency of leadership. At Airbnb, employees freely share why the company is a great place to work. Scan the Airbnb Glassdoor.com page and you will see comments like "This company is mission driven with an incredible culture and one where you are encouraged to be yourself." And just as important, Airbnb executives regularly respond to both positive and negative comments showcasing their transparent culture.

RULE #2: USE SPACE TO PROMOTE CULTURE

Increasingly, organizations are strategically redesigning their workplaces to better align with their core values, attract the right talent and achieve superior results.

Five drivers influence how companies align their workspace and culture. Taken together, these drivers provide business and HR leaders with a framework to rethink how space can drive culture, choice, wellness, engagement and community.

- **Drive culture.** Workplaces are physical manifestations of a company's culture. A company promoting a culture of high-paced innovation, creativity and a sense of fun at work will find it hard to promote these values in a bland, gray, cubicle-filled workspace that often saps employees' energy rather than inspires employees to achieve creative breakthroughs. Leading organizations recognize this fact. Building an employee-centric workspace is a long-term planning project. The space needs to be organic and flexible enough to facilitate future generational changes and shifts in working-style preferences. The workspace design should promote engagement and collaboration among employees.
- **Enable choice.** In a TED talk, Susan Cain made the case that workplaces were "designed mostly for extroverts and their need for lots of stimulation." She highlighted how

introverts are highly talented individuals with a very different set of characteristics, which need to be encouraged by moving away from the prevailing norms of workplace design. So companies need to ask, "How can we accommodate both our introverts and our extroverts in our workspaces?" Four simple questions are suggested for business leaders to probe where employees choose to work and why: Where do you go to do your best work? Where do you go to get the job done? Where do you avoid meeting or working? Where do you go to recharge?

- **Promote wellness in the workplace.** The demand for healthy workplaces is on the rise. This has led to the creation of the WELL Building Standard (WELL). The WELL Building Standard measures, certifies and monitors the performance of building features that impact the health and well-being of employees. WELL provides companies with a framework to create a healthy workplace by focusing on seven concepts, including air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and mind.
- **Enhance engagement.** The new thinking about workspace focuses on creating space where employees want to be and giving them choice over the type of space and the tools they use so they can best collaborate, concentrate, and network with colleagues.
- **Nurture community values.** A co-working space is more than just renting out desk space; it is a chance to engage with workers who hail from many different industries and kinds of expertise. It is a chance to share an identity, work within a community and participate in networking events with other members. Not only are co-working spaces growing (currently numbering more than 3,000 with We Work as the largest) but a number of FORTUNE 500 firms, (GE, McKinsey and IBM) are sending their intrapreneurial teams to work at these co-working spaces so they benefit from the sense of community.

Rule #3: Be an Agile Leader
In the future workplace, a new generation of leaders will be needed who are agile and can adapt to the rapidly shifting business landscape. These agile leaders demonstrate seven leadership traits and include the ability to both produce results and engage with people.
The first dimension focusing on the *ability to produce results* includes:

- **Be transparent.** Modern employees want a culture of regular communication and straight talk, along with clear expectations for how to excel. These elements build trust, which is the foundation of great teamwork and the key to attracting and retaining the best talent.
- **Be accountable.** Being accountable means recognizing both your losses and your wins. Such leaders not only own their mistakes; they learn from them and feel empowered to take responsibility for the good results they produce.
- **Be intrapreneurial.** Never have so many companies actively encouraged employees to act like entrepreneurs on the job—to be intrapreneurs inside their organizations. Intrapreneurial leaders motivate others to think, imagine and act in bold, enterprising ways, to take ownership of ideas and to innovate within the organization.
- **Be future-focused.** Organizations that "let go at the top"—avoiding hierarchy, incrementalism and the safety of resting on past successes—will be the ones that are agile enough to leapfrog from opportunity to opportunity in the future.
- The other dimension focuses on the *ability to engage people:*
- **Be team intelligent.** While HR departments have traditionally focused on individual employees—recruiting them, developing them and assessing their performance—we are beginning to see the advent of a new capability, one of developing team intelligence, the practice of making team performance great.

- **Be inclusive.** Inclusivity is very different from diversity. Diversity is typically a question of whom you recruit, while inclusivity is about how you include them. It is about creating and—crucially—listening to individuals or teams that represent many different voices. It is a way to foster diversity of thought, encourage more creative problem solving and integrate the input of all stakeholders. It is about building diversity and inclusiveness as cultural values within the organization.
- **Be a people developer.** In the future workplace, being a people developer requires enabling on-demand individual and peer learning. When forward-looking companies provide easy ways for employees to update skills and capabilities, they will be rewarded with a more engaged, longer-lasting workforce.
- Companies that practice agile leadership do so starting with the hiring process. They screen for cultural fit. No matter how well qualified someone might be, the candidate must fit the culture to be offered the job. Culture is the glue that binds the dimensions of agile leadership together.

PART II: HOW TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS THE WORKPLACE
Rule #4: Consider Technology an Enabler and Disruptor
Staying ahead of the technology curve has never been more difficult for corporations. Four questions highlight the key technology drivers converging to create an unprecedented opportunity to transform the workplace experience for both employers and employees.

1. **Enabler.** How do we enable our workflow?
2. **Enhancer.** How do we enhance our capabilities?
3. **Advisor.** How can we make better decisions?
4. **Disruptor.** What roles will be disrupted and automated?

ENABLER OF OUR WORKFLOW
- Communication is more interactive and visual. Communications at work have become "omnichannel." New forms of communication are being deployed to better suit the evolving work habits. Michael Frendo, Polycom's executive vice president of Worldwide Engineering, says "We are seeing a huge trend toward video communications, especially among Millennials, as active users of FaceTime, Skype and Google Hangouts; they are bypassing audio communications and going right to video for all types of needs, from group collaboration to coaching and mentoring."
- The number of collaboration and video tools available to workplaces reinforces the need to rethink how we work. As communication in the workplace morphs into team collaboration, there is a new way to motivate employees called *digital motivation* (also known as *gamification*). Digital motivation takes the essence of game attributes—such as fun, play, transparency, design, competition and, yes, addiction—and applies these to a range of real-world processes inside a company, from new hire on-boarding to recruiting to learning to career development.

ENHANCER OF OUR SKILLS
- Wearable technology is changing what we know about workers, how work gets done and how skills are developed. The spectrum of wearable technology at work has rapidly expanded to now include quantification and measurement, implantable and ingestible, strength and endurance, augmented reality and virtual reality. For example, wearable devices can track the position of employees or soldiers, providing real-time data about their location to remote data centers. Implantable chips and ingestible sensors are also being piloted today. Virtual reality (VR) is a fully immersive digital experience. The goal of VR is "to engage a user to interact with a simulated auditory, visual and kinesthetic environment as if it were real." VR technology is ideally suited to be used in on-boarding new hires, and developing employees.

- Recruitment, goal alignment and operations efficiencies are among areas where organizations are applying technology to inform decision making. IBM Watson is taking this to the next level using cognitive computing to learn at scale, reason with purpose and interact naturally to answer simple queries from employees. IBM Watson uses data mining, natural language processing and pattern recognition to improve and simplify experiences ranging from banking to healthcare.

DISRUPTION AND AUTOMATION—EXPONENTIAL GROWTH AHEAD

- Much media commentary has been on job elimination due to technology, but not enough focus has been on how technology will disrupt and at the same time augment jobs. For example, a chatbot is an artificial intelligence computer program designed to simulate a conversation through written or spoken text. Facebook's AI virtual assistant called M can make restaurant reservations and complete other tasks that combine AI with a team of "trainers" and customer-service experts to ensure M is performing each task requested of it. The botification of the workplace will exponentially expand and allow knowledge workers to work smarter.
- To understand the impact of technology on the workplace experience for ourselves, our teams and our organization, we must be committed to continually experiment with new technologies and ask ourselves, how can these be used to deliver a transformational workplace experience?

Rule #5: Build a Data-Driven Recruiting Ecosystem

Research from Indeed.com, the job listing site, suggests that technology has all but eliminated passive candidates. The implication is that most candidates should now be regarded as continual job searchers, always on the lookout for new gigs—whether full time or freelance. The process of continual job searching has been made much easier with apps like Anthology, Jobr and Switch, as well as proprietary apps developed by employers themselves, each designed to quickly match job seekers' skills with open positions and introduce job seekers to recruiters. A recruiting ecosystem intentionally builds the employer brand, uses analytics to vet candidates, leverages employees to pursue referrals and communicates in a transparent fashion every step along the candidate experience.

- **Manage your employer brand.** As companies search social media sites for potential new hires, they must also realize job seekers are doing the same thing in search of potential new employers. Building a strong employer brand, one that communicates the tenets of your workplace culture, is critical in this increasingly transparent job-search process. Your employer brand is essentially what your business is all about, the "what and why of the things we do at this company." Organizations that build strong employer brands and focus on culture become magnets for continual job seekers.
- **Train before hiring.** Job seekers and recruiters are incorporating training before hiring into the recruiting process. Algorithms are helping recruiters to create and refine job seeker skill sets. Data analytics also helps employers better understand what in-house skills are needed to develop their company's teams, achieve their organization's goals and successfully fill open positions.
- **Use smart sourcing.** Smart sourcing is becoming a crucial way for companies to find talent and predict their success on the job. Identifying and amplifying skill sets among promising job seekers is one aspect of a broad and proactive data-driven approach to smart sourcing. Two companies that are using people analytics in new ways to source talent include LinkedIn and JetBlue. In both cases, smart sourcing starts with data to find optimal candidates—whether the candidate sought is a software engineer or a flight attendant.
- **Tap employees for referrals.** Evidence indicates that internal referrals are a significant factor in recruiting success. In the area of employee fit and retention, an iCIMS Hire

Expectations Institute study finds 60 percent of internally referred job seekers make strong matches with company culture, and 59 percent stay with the organization longer than other types of hires.

- **Be transparent with job seekers.** There are two types of transparency that job seekers look for in the workplace: first, potential new hires want to work in a culture that is transparent; second, job seekers want a talent-acquisition process that is transparent. Ideally, these elements of transparency should form a through line, a complete interview-to-exit experience of open communication and frankness about salary, benefits, promotions, career development, company culture and the expectations business leaders set for employees around growth, behavior and work style.
- According to Jill Larson, SVP of Strategic Talent Acquisition, People Planning and Services HR at Cisco, there are four new capabilities recruiters must build in their skill set, namely, be data driven, possess a deep organizational knowledge of the business and industry they operate in, understand and build into their people processes the growing importance of employer rating sites, and commit to becoming a brand ambassador for the company.

Rule #6: Embrace On-Demand Learning

The future of learning requires reimagining how we help learners learn at the speed of business. There is a movement for workers to become serial learners as one way to avert technological unemployment, defined as the loss of jobs caused by technology disruptions. Helping learners learn at the speed of business requires revisiting every aspect of the learner experience while scaling and measuring differently.

- **Shift mindset to on-demand learning.** The education marketplace is going through a seismic shift. The size of the education market in the United States, as estimated by GSV (Global Silicon Valley), is $1.6 trillion. This is projected to grow to $2.0 trillion in 2020. The lifelong learning sector is projected to grow 30 percent. The transformation of learning from designing formal training to creating on-demand learning experiences requires leaders of corporate learning to shift their mindset, budget and resources from developing content to identifying learning from a number of open sources.
- **Rethink the vision for learning.** Best-of-breed learning leaders should consider themselves intrapreneurs who run the business of learning inside their organization. They must have an understanding of where the company's business is going and what mix of skills and capabilities employees need to reach the strategic goals of the organization. For HR and learning leaders, this starts with creating a compelling vision of why and how a company is providing learning to its workers. The adidas Group vision statement for learning is simple: "You Learn, We Grow." This shows the power of a vision statement that is inspiring, memorable and concise. The lesson for learning leaders is, rethink why the investment in learning is so important and develop a concise and memorable vision that resonates with your company culture.
- **Expand learning opportunities.** The process of identifying the skills and capabilities needed for success on the job has resulted in a fixed set of learning offerings pushed to employees. This is changing as learning leaders shift their focus to create more of a consumer experience in how, when and where workers access learning. Why? Because employees expect an experience that parallels how they order a movie on Netflix or a book on Amazon. General Electric is doing just this with the development and launch of BrilliantYOU, a marketplace for learning and development, which operates much like the Apple Store for Learning.
- **Build learning partnerships.** According to data from Class Central, the total number of students who enrolled in at least one massive open online course (MOOC) has reached 35 million, up from 18 million since inception in 2012. The revolution in MOOCs has moved from higher education to corporate learning as a way to incorporate credentials,

provide access in multiple languages, and, importantly, redesign e-learning using an engaging cohort model. Perhaps the biggest reason the MOOC movement has entered corporate learning departments is the power of the MOOC design to engage, inspire and personalize the learning experience.

- **Communicate the value.** Most organizations measure training success based on the learner's satisfaction. "Did the employees like the training?" Instead, analytics should drive an organization's decisions on recruitment, development and engagement. By applying Simon Sinek's model of the Golden Circle in his best-selling book, *Start with Why,* use three simple yet powerful questions to frame a company's learning investment in the language of business. The first question is "*Why* is the investment being made?"— what is the business problem that the training is solving for? The next question is "*How* is the organization analyzing the data?" In other words, what methodology is being used to measure learning? Finally, the last question is "*What* specific business impact is being measured?"

PART III: THE CHANGING COMPOSITION OF THE WORKPLACE
Rule #7: Tap the Power of Multiple Generations

When organizations encourage employees of diverse ages and cultures to work together, products and processes are approached in new and innovative ways. Quite simply, age diversity drives the type of creative thinking that leads to greater engagement and innovation. Multiple generations in the workplace is the new normal. Workers are staying in their jobs longer. The growth of older workers is driven in part by an increased life expectancy.

What is the implication of living and working longer? We will see more employee compensation packages that include not only salary, bonus and stock options but also generous learning allowances funding skill development for employees. Another implication is younger bosses managing older workers. This phenomenon is already prevalent in industries like IT, professional services and accounting, and it will likely become the norm across all industries as companies promote millennials and Gen Xers into leadership positions while boomers remain in the workplace.

Generational intelligence is the ability to understand the similarities, differences and expectations of each generational cohort. Understanding multiple employee generational cohorts is important to serving multiple generations of customers. Generational intelligence requires a constant focus on the benefits an age-diverse workforce can bring to the organization.

The Workplace Generational Intelligence Framework shares what is important to each generation on three levels:

- **Personal level:** What do workers want for themselves?
- **Team level:** What do workers seek of colleagues?
- **Organizational level:** What do workers expect of the organization?

The opportunity for leaders is this: Use workplace diversity to your advantage, and build an inclusive work environment where diversity adds to innovative thinking.

RULE #8: BUILD GENDER EQUALITY

In the United States, women are the more educated part of the workforce even though they only earn 78 percent of the salaries of their male counterparts. According to *Lean In* and McKinsey's survey of 30,000 men and women at 118 North American companies, women held 45 percent of entry-level jobs at the companies surveyed, but their ranks thin out as they rise in the organization. Women are underrepresented at every level of the corporate pipeline, and this disparity is greatest in senior leadership.

Catalyst, a nonprofit organization focused on promoting inclusive workplaces for women, defines unconscious bias as an implicit association or attitude about the characteristics of an individual—such as an individual's race or gender—that operates out of our control, informs our perception about a person or group of people, and can influence our decision making and behavior toward a person or group of people—even without us realizing it is happening. Companies are recognizing that unconscious bias can seep into hiring and promotion decisions, causing roadblocks in diversity and inclusion programs.

What can you do to move from awareness of unconscious bias to action? Interviews uncovered seven strategies organizations can consider:
1. Measure: It's hard to know you're improving if you're not measuring. Track gender representation across all standard business activities by job level.
2. Be mindful of subtle cues: Who's included and who's excluded?
3. If you see something, say something to challenge examples of bias.
4. Promote employee-resource groups to supplement formal training on unconscious bias.
5. Hold yourself and your team accountable for how you source and promote individuals different from yourself.
6. Create a clear process in advance for making decisions.
7. Pay attention to prevailing gender assumptions.

Rule #9: Plan for More Gig Economy Workers
The workforce of the future won't be all full-time employees. It will be made up of consultants, contractors, freelancers, part-time employees and other independent workers collectively known as the gig economy. By the year 2020, Intuit predicts 43 percent of the U.S. workforce—or 60 million people—will be gig economy workers. This data indicates that HR leaders will need to plan for a shift from managing a workforce of almost all full-time employees to managing a more blended workforce of employees and independent, gig-economy workers.

Both employers and workers are driving the rise of the blended workforce. Qualified independent workers are now easier to find, while workers themselves seek greater flexibility. HR leaders have identified several benefits that companies are realizing by incorporating gig economy workers into their workforce. The top benefits include being able to create flexible teams based on business needs, more immediate availability and access to niche skills on demand. Managing lower labor costs is also an influencing factor. Since companies don't pay social security or Medicare taxes, make unemployment insurance payments, or provide benefits for contractors, the cost of hiring a contractor is often 30 to 40 percent lower than hiring an equivalent full-time employee.

Organizations must determine how to best source, develop, manage and engage gig economy workers. Take a total talent-management approach to the blended workforce. This approach helps HR leaders optimize the supply of independent workers, make faster and better-informed decisions about talent, and reduce the overall labor and infrastructure spend. Here are six strategies to help HR leaders on the path to a total talent-management approach:
1. Develop a strategic approach to sourcing gig economy workers.
2. Define governance and success criteria for managing gig economy workers.
3. Build a partnership between HR and IT to support and manage a blended workforce.
4. Develop a range of strategies to ensure the performance of gig economy workers.
5. Use analytic tools to optimize engagement of gig economy workers.
6. Mitigate legal risk through systematic compliance management of gig economy workers.

RULE #10: BE A WORKPLACE ACTIVIST

A workplace activist is someone who gives voice to making the changes we all desire in our organization, industry and workplace. Workplace activists can lead these changes in three ways:

Recognize your job is not your job: Ask yourself, "What really is my job?" Fred Kofman, philosopher and vice president at LinkedIn, says "Your job is not what you do but the goal you pursue. So if you are a corporate trainer, instead of saying 'my job is to design and develop learning programs,' you should think of your job as facilitating continuous learning so your company wins in the marketplace." Now ask yourself what your job is. Challenge your team members to ask the same question of themselves.

- **Reframe your job description:** Ask, "What do I include in my job to help my organization succeed in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (otherwise known as VUCA) workplace?"
- **Rethink how to break HR:** Which of our HR processes need to be reimagined for navigating the new world of work? Jayesh Menon, the Singapore-based leader of Global Organizational Effectiveness at Micron Technology, believes the best way to deal with the gap between how HR sees itself and how its clients view HR is to reimagine HR through the lens of a customer. Menon sees the need for HR to assume the role of a workplace activist, identifying big and small changes that HR can create to develop a more compelling workplace experience. This may range from rethinking performance management, to abolishing rigid policies for personal time off and vacations, to creating opportunities for employees to learn when and where they desire.
- The 10 rules are opportunities for you to transform and reimagine your workplace. The future workplace will be shaped by each of you as you embark on your journey to become activists and give voice to the changes you see needed in your organization, on your team and, importantly, within yourself!

The Authors

Jeanne C. Meister is a best-selling author, internationally recognized workplace-learning consultant and a founding partner of Future Workplace, a consulting firm dedicated to assisting organizations in rethinking, reimagining and reinventing the workplace. Kevin J. Mulcahy is a frequent speaker, workshop facilitator on workplace trends and entrepreneurial thinking and a partner of Future Workplace. He is an Adjunct Lecturer at Babson College and an executive coach at the Harvard Business School.