

External Change Drivers that will Impact Work and Professions in 2020 and beyond

Description

In my previous post, [What's Driving the Future of Work and Professions?](#), I mentioned PESTLE as a helpful framework for classifying external forces that act on all of us and the companies for which we work. In this article, I present a list of them for you to consider. It's not encyclopedic, but it's a good start.

As you do, ask yourself:

- What was the old norm?
- What is the new norm?
- What does a person need to thrive in the new norm?

To remind you PESTLE stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental. Each of these areas is addressed, below:

• Political

- COVID impacts, countries' responses and the economic fallout
- Healthcare issues—costs, availability
- Wealth inequality and redistribution, differences in educational opportunities
- Cross-border trade and supply chains, protectionism vs. globalism
- Urban, suburban, rural differences and partisan polarization, adversarial government and the inability to push forward legislative action
- Climate change and denial, green initiatives, energy-related tax incentives and policies
- Immigration policy discord and changing demographics, mass migrations, differences in birth rates
- Overpopulation, impact on the ecosystem and strain on quality of lives
- Chinese, Russian, Iranian and Saudi aspirations
- New political systems, decline of Liberalism, nationalism, protectionism
- Asymmetric and Cyber warfare, Tech cold war, foreign social media influence and election tampering, data privacy and security

• Economic

- Productivity increases, quality of life improves, poverty decreases but inequality increases; perceived justice issues spur distrust and unrest
- Geo-economic issues, money flows, globalism, rise of the 3rd world
- National and individual debt
- Population growth, fewer opportunities, differences in birth rates, greying of populations
- Impacts of COVID, climate change
- Remote Work, decline of cities, strain on food, restaurant, sports, travel & entertainment industries; increasing gig and contracting work

- New jobs and forms of competition and cooperation will emerge, robotics displaces or permanently alters massive number of jobs; new entrepreneurial opportunities emerge

- **Social**

- Impact of social media, loss of social cohesion, disinformation runs rampant, social unrest; increasing numbers of people believe blatantly false information
- Resentment and anger, tension, differences in expectations, inequality of wealth and opportunities, politics of grievance
- Norms, such as religious beliefs, shatter; new sects emerge (e.g., QAnon)
- Loss of privacy, risks of mega companies
- COVID restrictions disrupt in-person events of all sorts, COVID deaths
- Work from anywhere, new forms of management, new definitions of work
- End of or disruption in careers, diminishing work opportunities, end of institutions, end of elites
- Education- higher education business model disrupted, companies will offer education opportunities as a perk or an inducement, lifelong learning will be mandatory

- **Technology:** SMACITâ€™ social, mobile, analytics, cloud and Internet of Things, and others

- **Social Media** displaces face to face interactions, accelerates fads and trends; AR/VR will make its way into business and social interactions
- **Mobile**, anywhere, anytime connectivity pushes the merging of work and personal lives. Work from anywhere will create arbitration opportunities for hiring companies to drive down pay scales for contractors and employees
- **AI** drives decision-making and displaces what were formerly human interactions; it increasingly enables and augments on-line marketing and selling, among other things
- **Cloud** becomes the foundational infrastructure for everything and a delivery mechanism for services.
- **IoT** will flood the information ecosystem with real-time data. Things like healthcare and package delivery will evolve substantially.
- **Robotics**â€™Anything physical that can be automated will be automated. Manufacturing jobs will diminish, though a higher level of employee that can program, manage and service robots will emerge. 3D printing will displace manufacturing and assembly processes. Software robots will process an increasing percentage of day-to-day transactions. Increasingly smart AI will drive out the need for human decision-making for everyday things.
- **Blockchain** will become the foundational transaction processing substrate for interactions among governments, companies, NGOs and people.
- **Software development**â€™Whatâ€™s now done by programmers will increasingly be generated autonomously.
- **Apps for everything**â€™interactions between customers and providers (companies, government, NGOs, others) will be displaced by apps.

- **Legal**

- Political polarities and power politics will impair the ability to evolve laws at the rate that society is changing, laws on privacy and data protection, in particular. All-or-nothing ethos will prevail.
- International laws will evolve unevenly, power will shift as alliances do

- Legal mechanisms are perceived as unfair, existing mechanisms for consensus cease working
- The filter for decision-making and problem solving will increasingly be risk.
- Rise and risks of global elites will provoke responses and engender legislation
- Ageism becomes an increasing problem as the population ages.
- Technology will increasingly be incorporated into legal interactionsâ€”blockchain, smart contracts and AI, in particular.

- **Environmental**

- Climate change has profound impacts, making some areas inhabitable while making others habitable. Food production may become impossible in many areas. The costs of some food products may soar. Others may simply disappear.
- Carbon-producing energy and power-consuming industries and equipment will get displaced over timeâ€”electric vehicles will displace internal combustion vehicles
- Dirty industries that pollute 3rd-world countries will be forced to curtail their activities to a large extent. Internet-enabled piece work alternatives to manual labor done by local populations may change the economic trade-offs on such operations.
- Provenance of goods will be much more widely and closely tracked and the information may impact a lot of international trade. Supply chain monitoring automation will proliferate.

Now, give some thought to the following questions about your chosen profession:

1. Whatâ€™s your reaction to this list? Is anything missing that is relevant to your profession?
2. What drives the business model of your profession?
3. What major changes have you seen over the past few years and do you see coming in the next few?
4. Which of them do you think will be the most impactful? In the near-term? In the longer term? Which will be most difficult to navigate and why?
5. How do you think your profession will have to change to adapt?
6. What advice would you give to anyone contemplating entering or remaining in the profession?

We have enlisted the help of some noted practitioners in a number of professions and gotten their answers to these questions. We will be posting these interviews over the next several weeks.

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Author

howardmwiener