

# TOP 4 TRENDS IMPACTING THE WORKFORCE IN 2018 AND BEYOND

The nature of jobs is evolving at a rapid pace due to the innovation and adoption of new technologies. On average, about one-third of businesses and workers anticipate considerable change in the next five years to the nature of work and required job skills.<sup>1</sup> Artificial intelligence continues to climb, and it's likely that more occupations will become at least partially automated. Technology is enabling increased automation, enhancing efficiency and supporting a more agile workforce. As businesses become even more multi-generational and multi-cultural, and people work longer and embrace agile work arrangements, traditional career models will no longer apply.

## BELOW WE EXPLORE SOME TOP TRENDS AND HOW BUSINESSES AND WORKING AMERICANS CAN BE PROACTIVE AND BETTER PREPARED.

**1 Technology is enabling an on-demand workforce**  
Shifting to a more agile workforce is building momentum among employers of all sizes to better meet the need for on-demand, seasonal or temporary labor. Technology is impacting where we work, enabling us to work from any location. Today, remote workers comprise 18% of the U.S. workforce and several sources predict that figure will rise to as high as 30% by 2025. Work/life balance is being replaced with “work/life blend” due to device proliferation.

**2 Automation is Requiring an Enhancement of Workforce Skillsets**  
Technology is transforming the nature of work, and reshaping the economy in dramatic ways, touching businesses in nearly every sector. Even in the highest-paid occupations, machines may complement human capabilities and increase an individual's work capacity, freeing him/her to focus on work of higher value. Workers' future success may depend on their ability to learn new skills and adapt to job-related changes.

**3 Employers are Reinventing Talent Recruitment**  
Employers are experiencing widening gap between the skills employees possess and the skills employers desire. Job openings are in occupations that require a high-level social or analytic skill set; physical or manual skills are fading somewhat in importance. Employers are experiencing a mounting challenge in finding the right talent with increasing technology-enabled workplaces. Nearly 38% of employers indicate that staffing is a top business challenge for their organization.

**4 Varying Workplace Demographics Requires Different Strategies for Adoption**  
Among working Americans, the extent of expected change differs by generation and is highest among younger workers; millennials (who account for the largest proportion of the U.S workforce) expect the most change in the next five years. More than 6 in 10 millennials already use intelligent personal assistants (e.g., Siri, Alexa) vs. just 40% of Boomers and Generation X – perhaps foreshadowing the role of artificial intelligence in the future of recruiting and training.

**SO HOW DO ORGANIZATIONS AND WORKING AMERICANS ADDRESS THESE TRENDS?** *Continue reading on the next page.*

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, source for all statistics cited is The Guardian Workplace Benefits Study<sup>SM</sup>: Fifth Annual, 2017

**SO HOW DO ORGANIZATIONS AND WORKING AMERICANS ADDRESS THESE TRENDS? FOLLOWING ARE FOUR STEPS EMPLOYERS CAN TAKE TO BUILD THE OPTIMAL WORKFORCE FOR A MORE AUTOMATED WORKPLACE.**

- **Make Recruiting and Learning a Top Priority:** Modernize the workforce by implementing non-traditional recruitment strategies to unearth new talent; refresh job training and education methods to include experiential, retraining and cross-training programs, mentoring, e-learning initiatives and college tuition assistance.
- **Establish an Agile Workforce:** Anticipate and respond to on-demand talent needs and secure specific skills required to remain competitive in a fast-paced, rapidly changing digital world.
- **Prepare for Demographic Shifts:** Adapt workplace strategies for those who embrace a new work paradigm and choose flexible or remote work arrangements and non-traditional career paths.
- **Evolve the Organization's Culture:** Implement a change management strategy that enables the organization to adopt automation and digital solutions that can help overcome barriers such as poor communication and organizational silos, and improve customer centricity.

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The 5th Annual Workplace Benefits Study was fielded in the Spring of 2017 and consisted of two online surveys: one among benefits decision-makers (employers) and another among working Americans (employees), allowing us to explore benefits issues from both perspectives. The study was conducted for The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, New York, NY, by Zeldis Research, an independent market research firm located in Ewing, NJ.