

04



THE FUTURE IS
HUMAN



THE
MAGAZINE
FOR
LEADERS
WITH
AMBITIOUS
AGENDAS

WELCOME

To those returning to *M* after our previous three issues, we're ecstatic to be in your hands once more. If this is your first, a very warm welcome to Maximus and *M*, a magazine designed to balance inspiration, aspiration and utility for our clients and partners. As with each edition we produce, we are extremely grateful to those of you who have contributed.

Most of the time we spend at Maximus centres on equipping leaders with the mindset to navigate complexity: distinguishing signal from noise is becoming increasingly difficult. We see overwhelmed leaders struggling to get clarity and bring focus, grappling with increasingly massive and interconnected concepts and external influences.

We're an Australian company, so we want to ensure what we talk to is of utmost relevance to our local leaders. That said, in this edition we have looked to every corner of our shared world to explore a theme that hopefully helps with the struggle above. It is as relevant globally as it is locally.

This issue addresses our sentiment on how to distil complexity and build towards an optimistic future: with our core premise being that the future is human.

We live in an increasingly technology orientated world. Just as machines and automation have over time replaced human labour in physical tasks of increasing complexity, so too are computers taking over cognitive tasks that many believed could only be performed by humans.

The response to this change, generally, is and always has been one of fear. The question is: how do we embrace innovation with confidence in the information age?

At Maximus, we see it playing out in two ways. We encourage lower-level administrative tasks being automated, to leave space for the thinking that characterises and differentiates us, as humans. By focusing on the human qualities of curiosity, creativity, taking initiative, multi-disciplinary thinking and empathy, as Australian leaders we can build a better world and provide some much-needed optimism to our future generations.

Simultaneously, leaders need to develop their keenness and capability to see around the corner of what negative outcomes of this period of immense, broad and far-reaching change might be, and deeply consider how they might need to respond. The potential for inequality and human fallout from treading the wrong path is all too evident, possible and frightening.

We're unremorseful about exploring the more dystopian scenarios, but as with previous issues we're as inspirational as we are practical. We have some fascinating global examples of industries completely reimagined. We talk to the next generation of the workforce about the way they want to work. There are interviews with some extremely bright global faculty members on the addictive nature of technology, how to regain your attention, and how to be a future thinker.

We've left room to wow you with local examples of the burgeoning creative scene in Australia. And we begin our magazine with our boldest piece yet – on the components of leadership that we know are needed to lead us, unwaveringly, through this time.

There's a lot more to explore, so please do let us know what you want to see more of in future issues.



VANESSA GAVAN,
FOUNDER AND JOINT
MANAGING DIRECTOR



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It's more important than ever for leaders to elevate their humanity. To take teams successfully through digital transformation, into new kinds of jobs and truly sustainable futures. Here, we talk to our own leaders at Maximus about the path to self-disruption and share our learnings on how these fundamentally human characteristics drive positive action across industry; leverage humanity rather than control; and unlock emotional commitment, along with the will and motivation of those who follow you. Now is the time for a bold re-set of leadership capabilities...

THE HUMAN LEADER



PURPOSE

— BRENT DUFFY

Having a clear sense of purpose translates into a bigger, bolder, courageous aspiration in work and life. It provides the path forward to guide progressive action.

The DNA of our firm is built from our origins in psychology and entrepreneurship. We blend commercial nous with humanity and heart to have deep impact on the people and organisations with whom we work.

At Maximus we believe that understanding yourself with unflinching honesty is essential to realising your potential as a leader.

For me, it goes back to my background in rural NSW with my three brothers, my tradesman dad and my mum, who was always very busy looking after four boys. I was the first in our family to go to university. My parents saw it as the place to get qualifications, to get a professional job – perhaps a lawyer or a doctor or a scientist. What I worked out is that university was more than that. It is a place that teaches you to learn, and

that's what I loved. I've come to realise that my definition of hard work is not necessarily about putting in the most hours. Hard work is about openness to change, to do things differently and have the courage to try something new.

I remember one school holidays, when my mum – looking to entertain four boys – took us to the town courthouse and we sat in the gallery and watched a murder trial for a couple of hours every day. After each session, she'd ask us questions about the lawyers and the judge. My mum had a natural instinct to encourage us to explore things that we knew nothing about and led us on all those adventures to pique our curiosity. That curiosity built out our love of learning which – along with our parents' lifelong example of charity work, service and strong sense of self – really influenced how I show up as a leader today. I genuinely believe that if you don't know intrinsically who you are, you cannot permissibly expect others to follow.

Maximus has several ways to take leaders through intense journeys back to their own formative years – my own upbringing led me to understand a lot of critical things about bringing purpose to leadership, even though I didn't know what I was learning at the time! We know that creating a deeper connection between personal fulfilment and work fulfilment builds visionary leaders who run companies that are equipped not only to cope with the tides of disruption, but the agility and brains to surf them.

CONVICTION AND CLARITY

— VANESSA GAVAN

Leading well is at its core about making good choices. It's about thinking independently, rather than deferring to authority. It's about adding value beyond the path the business is on. Creating a conviction that offers true clarity for all who are contributing to the cause.

Our journey to truly understand what it takes to create clarity and conviction in leaders was circular. For several years, we treated the education of strategy as a thinking job to be done. It wasn't entirely wrong but there was much more to it. This was as much about the journey we needed to go on, as it was about the one we were to take our leaders on.

Deep strategic clarity was fundamentally important when I was a young psychologist, working for the right to contribute to strategic business conversations. Establishing Maximus, I knew we would have to be able to think and have perspective well beyond the norm to be the kind of progressive, credible firm we aspired to be. We spent years tackling every complex problem we could get our hands on and understanding every business model and theory known.

It wasn't until later in our evolution as leaders ourselves, that the role of conviction became

clear. Simply knowing what to think about was far from enough. Over the years we saw many different manifestations of strategic thinking in practice. Top executives who demonstrated incredible thinking but made really poor choices and compromises. Leaders who ran the business like it was a rolling forecast and the strategy was simply an evolution of how the numbers would unfold over a duration of time. Leaders who strategically gave the business a direction yet were completely oblivious of their role in creating a culture that would engender followership.

Today's executives need to create high-level clarity, and it takes work. You have to understand all your choices and be able to bring data and insight to your decisions. You must ensure you have both a sense of purpose and an eye on the future as you do this.

I get the complexities and live with them too, this is no small thing: to bring conviction and clarity in tune requires the head and heart of you *and* your people.

We talk to leaders about intellectual and emotional understanding and the importance of creating the right narrative to bring



a vision to life. In the past, there's been a tendency among some leaders to think it's fine to come up with a clever strategy and then bring in the creatives to sell the vision. In my experience this is a little limited. Intelligent workforces don't want all the thinking to be done for them. They want to experience the process and understand the subtleties, and need to be involved to bring their own conviction to life. Working in with their own leaders to bring clarity to it all is inspiring and it also creates real momentum.

Strategy and culture must be equal and integrated. The best strategic leaders shape the path of the two together without compromise, backed by the conviction and clever choices that only come from having done the work.

You need to engage the head and the heart to mobilise others. To be fulfilled, people need to be understood and belong. Mobilising people is both uniquely personal and environmental. Your people, your culture and your customers are the momentum that make it all happen. Underpinning all this is a simple truth that is too often ignored: leadership must be human.

Maximus has been doing a lot of work with leaders on emotional commitment. It's quite easy for senior leaders to rationally understand the effect that authentic, emotional connection has on teams. It's much harder for them to get to that 'a-ha moment', where they realise it's not all about the rational approach.

I've worked with capable, intelligent and well-regarded leaders on this and they find it really challenging. It's less about models, frameworks and content, and more about getting it to click for them – that this concept is beyond traditional leadership behaviour – and how they mobilise teams. What matters is how they're *being* while they're doing that.

When leaders truly make that connection between the head and the heart and understand how they can demonstrate their own emotional commitment in a very natural way, that's when they create genuine followership from their people. When a leader connects and gets that kind of commitment behind them, the collective becomes a hugely powerful force. These leaders can activate people to new heights of performance. It's not about incrementally adjusting the



dial of a person's capability, it's about keeping cadence with the level of growth they can tolerate.

To earn the right to stretch someone in this way, you have to have their trust and best interests at heart – it's a two-way emotional commitment. They have to know you see them, you are supporting them, but they are accountable. When this kind of connection happens, it focuses the mind, the drive, the heart and the skills of a person, stretching their performance beyond the normal curve.

I'm not saying that capability isn't important, because it is. Maximus' approach is that capability just gets you a ticket to play. When you make that authentic, emotional connection with your team and work in tandem, that's when it starts making a difference to an organisation.

I was working with a senior leader well known for his strategic capabilities and his ability to set direction. I was encouraging him to find his own emotional connection: what he stood for as a leader, his purpose, the way he applied that and the way that he was mobilising his teams around it. I asked him to construct the narrative around that and after two or three goes, you could see the frustration building as he tried to verbalise it: who he was as a leader, how he wanted to be seen and what impact he wanted to have.

A couple of weeks later, he called me, really excited, and said, 'Mark, I've got it, I get it! I understand what you're saying and the place you're trying to get me to. Let me describe this to you.' At that point, I didn't need him to say any more, because I could hear so clearly that he understood. When leaders reach that point, they have a new energy and enthusiasm. It's not about the words, it's how they're being.

Traditionally, workplaces were used to leaders being protective around emotional connection. That's not the case today. We demand leaders who are comfortable with who they are, are willing to be a bit vulnerable, to tell stories that connect to people and let people in. Leaders who operate like this – who are simply not worried about being judged for being human – bring themselves and their teams to life.

LEAVING A LEGACY

— CHRIS SLATTERY

The world we're all living in requires leaders to think beyond themselves as individuals and even beyond their organisations. Employees are demanding it: where do we fit in the world, how is our company working to ensure we leave it better than we found it? It's a very big movement.

We're working closely with leaders to help them envision and commit to a broader purpose, and a longer horizon. We bring real-world past and present examples to the experiences we create for this work. We have organisations that are setting shining examples of purpose right now, that we love to showcase and highlight how they are thriving.

One of the things we love to do is share the stories of successful and retired CEOs and board members who have lived a life of purpose. This can be illuminating because you are meeting people at a point where their strategic perspective is far and wide, and they have the headspace to reflect on what is and was important. It's inspiring for others and really brings clarity to leaders in the midst of their careers as they find the courage to commit to achieving their own legacy.

Hearing from leaders who describe their fulfillment from making a positive, tangible difference is an incredible motivator. Two recent conversations with CEOs come to mind.

One leads a member organisation of health, emergency and law enforcement employees. He told me his connectedness to them – his customers – permeates his whole being. I asked him to fast-forward to his retirement speech: who would he want to speak at it and what would he want them to say? He got quite emotional talking about the members and said he hopes he lives up to their praise, as well as his own aim to do the right thing and help them gain financial security.

Another organisation we're working with is in the infrastructure industry. They really take legacy personally and that's resulted in incredible energy

from the board to the CEO and every member of the executive team. They have a strong, long-term vision of the impact their project will have on the community, and it propels them through the complexity and long hours, and sees people tap into deeper levels of effort, motivation and capability. It shows me how powerful legacy is, right from the start.

Along with the shift in how CEOs are approaching it, is also a change in the language companies are using around legacy. 'Purpose', 'legacy' and 'the broader stakeholders we serve'



are being written into their values and mission statements, where not so long ago, you would only hear about 'profit' and 'shareholders'. When written down like that, it gets referred to when there are decisions to be made, so it permeates the organisation's culture and becomes intrinsic to the company's focus.

When we raise awareness in leaders about legacy, we ignite the passion that there's a much more enduring impact they can have beyond the next quarterly results. Once they tune into that prospect, it clears the path for leaders to become more focused on impact, purpose and performance. (M)

FUTURE FOCUS

We tackle the problems and opportunities that will face us in the future with human-based solutions and outside-in thinking.

+ UNRAVELLING THE INNOVATION APOCALYPSE

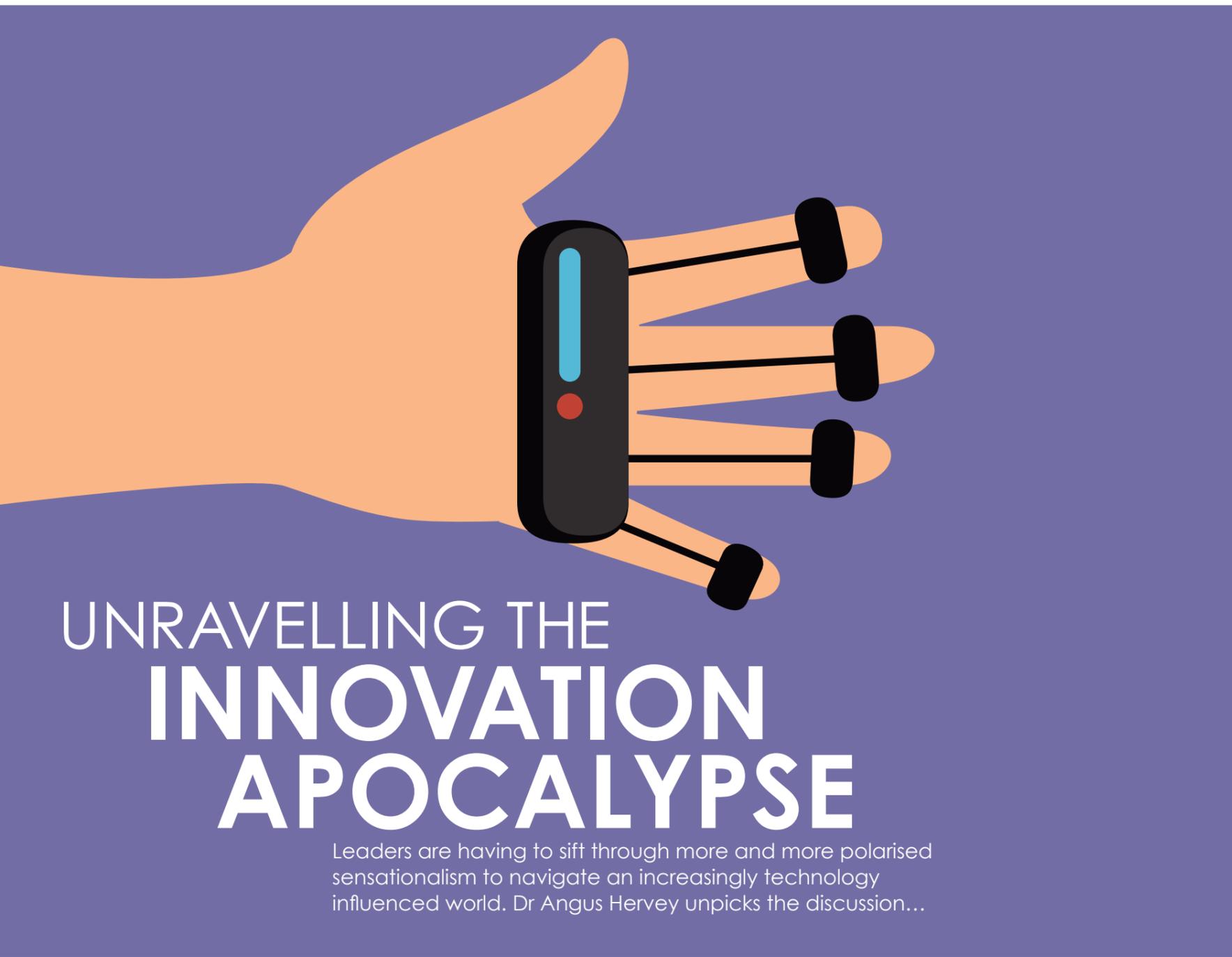
UNPICKING THE POLARISED REPORTS ON THE FUTURE OF WORK TO FIND THE RIGHT PATH FORWARD.

+ REIMAGINATION: A BUSINESS SUPERPOWER

HOW REIMAGINING YOUR BUSINESS CAN UNLOCK A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF GROWTH.

+ THE VALUE ARCHITECT

WE EXPLORE THE ROLE OF THE LEADER IN ARCHITECTING VALUE FOR ORGANISATIONS BY RE-ENVISIONING HUMAN CAPABILITIES.



UNRAVELLING THE INNOVATION APOCALYPSE

Leaders are having to sift through more and more polarised sensationalism to navigate an increasingly technology influenced world. Dr Angus Hervey unpicks the discussion...

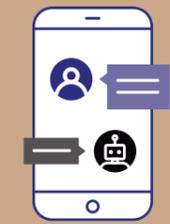
The reports

on the future of work arrive thick and fast these days. They vary in quality and rigour – from glossy 100-page monsters commissioned by the big end of town to blog posts and LinkedIn updates from freelancers or consultants – each trying to carve out space as ‘thought leaders’ in the scramble for influence. It’s not easy to pick your way through the mess (and who has time to read a report these days, anyway?).

If you do get a chance to dive in to a few however, you’ll find they tend to coalesce around two main narratives. The optimists tell us everything is going to be fine and most of us are going to live in a world where humans and machines work in glorious symphony together – ‘Automotopia’, a place with more than enough goods, services and leisure for everyone. The other, dystopian story (let’s call it ‘Automageddon’) also assumes quick and pervasive adoption of new technologies, but sees them displacing a huge number of jobs at most levels in the public and private sectors, and across industries and geographies, causing wide-ranging social disarray.

Without being melodramatic, the debate can make it seem as though we are standing on a precipice, walking the tightrope between a world of plenty and a world where mega trends, wicked problems and catastrophic decisions at the highest levels of institutions, organisations and leadership lead us down a path of inequality, corruption and mass social dislocation.

For leaders, these multiple pathways of what ‘might’ be ahead can be overwhelming. The possibilities seem endless and equally exhausting. Which one of the outcomes are more likely? Is there something different about it this time around? Let’s discuss...

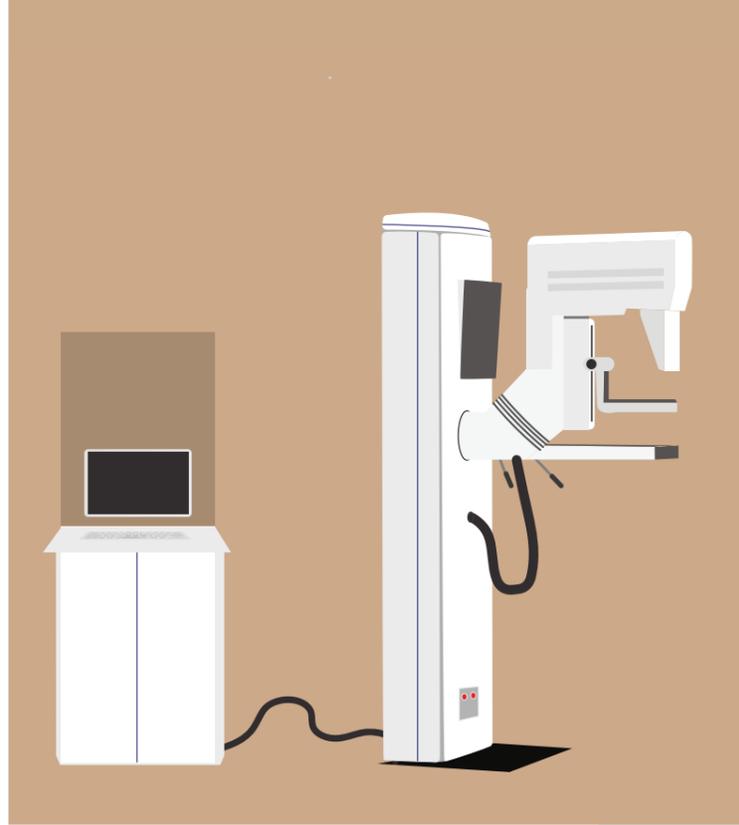


THE ROBOTS ARE COMING

“We are stumbling blindly into the automation era with no concept or plan to reconcile the need of workers for income and the need of business for cost-cutting and worker-displacing innovations,” wrote *The Nation* magazine in 1958.

Unsurprisingly, the stories of robots taking jobs have been the focus of a disproportionate amount of the attention. It is a story too good to be false. We are now well and truly into the steep part of the S curve when it comes to machine learning. The algorithms are getting increasingly capable – able to read through a legal document and pick out mistakes, identify fraudulent transactions in millions of bank accounts simultaneously, identify dangerous moles and tumours far more accurately than the world’s best physicians, or even carry out analysis on computational flow dynamics for jet engines. Tasks we once thought could only ever be the domain of humans are being swallowed up by lines of code at an extraordinary pace.

We are also embedding those lines of code into machines with cameras, sensors and chips made cheap by the smartphone wars of the last decade. Our machines



are evolving... from mechanical, to digital, and increasingly, to cognitive. Gil Pratt, chief executive of Toyota's research arm (TRI), says we are in the midst of "a Cambrian explosion in robotics." Robots are exploring the depths of Antarctica, mapping ancient Mayan ruins in Belize, cleaning wind turbines in Norway, dropping off medical supplies in Rwanda, and replanting forests in Myanmar. We're seeing a new wave of automation in how we produce and harvest our food; autonomous tractors in the vineyards of France and apple-picking robots in the orchards of New Zealand. Machines are fetching supplies for nurses in our hospitals and operating taxis without drivers in the suburbs.

In manufacturing, big, dangerous robots have traditionally been kept separate to workers, partitioned off by cages. Now though, thanks to advancements in sensing and improved dexterity, they're entering the workplace to work side by side

with humans, cleaning the floors, doing stocktake in supermarkets and fetching boxes for e-commerce in warehouses. Amazon is opening stores with no cashiers, and Walmart now has robots patrolling the aisles. Policymakers and analysts have looked at this onset of technological innovation and drawn dire conclusions. In a famous 2013 paper, Oxford's Carl Frey and Michael Osborne analysed 702 occupations in the United States and concluded 47 per cent of them were highly automatable. Research by MIT's Daron Acemoglu, based on data from 1990 to 2007, found that for every robot installed on a factory floor in the US, an average of six jobs were lost. In Australia, a 2015 report by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) predicted more than five million

jobs – 40 per cent of jobs that exist today – had a moderate-to-high likelihood of disappearing in the next 10 to 15 years. And a 2019 McKinsey report predicted the automation of up to 46 per cent of jobs in Australia by 2030. The report estimates 3.5 million to 6.5 million full-time equivalent jobs could be affected, with 1.8 million to five million workers needing to change professions.

The assumptions embedded in these Automageddon narratives make for terrifying headlines, and the narrative is enthusiastically promoted by an army of journalists looking to drive traffic to websites. However, the assumptions are questionable: that automation creates few jobs short-term or long-term; that whole jobs can be automated; that the technology is perfectible; that organisations can seamlessly and quickly deploy machine learning, that humans are machines who can be replicated; or that it is politically, socially and economically feasible to apply these technologies. Then there are the macro factors. With ageing populations, productivity gaps and skills shortages predicted across many G20 countries, the danger might be too little, rather than too much labour. Perhaps the biggest issue, however, is that each report fails to take into account what legendary Austrian economist Joseph

Schumpeter, called "the outstanding fact in the economic history of capitalist society": Innovation.

THE FLYWHEEL EFFECT

The view among macroeconomists for several decades has been that technology will always create jobs. The alarmists say this time is different and that it will destroy jobs. The truth is it's capable of doing both. In 1978, a Harvard Business School student named Dan Bricklin was sitting in a classroom, watching his accounting lecturer filling in rows and columns on the blackboard, erasing and rewriting to make everything add up, just as accounting clerks all over the world did every day in their paper ledgers. A two-page spread across the open fold of the ledger was called a 'spreadsheet'.

Bricklin, a computer programmer, thought a computer might be able to do a better job and wrote a program for the new Apple II personal computer – an electronic spreadsheet – and, on October 17, 1979, VisiCalc went on sale. Overnight, it was a sensation. The first 'killer app': a software program so essential you

would buy a computer just to be able to use it. Many accountants and business owners today divide their professional experience into two periods: *before* and *after* the advent of the electronic spreadsheet. It was the ultimate robot accountant, putting hundreds of thousands of accounting clerks out of work. In the US there are 400,000 fewer accounting clerks today than in 1980, the first full year that VisiCalc went on sale.

But there are also 600,000 more jobs for regular accountants.

In the age of the spreadsheet, the repetitive, routine parts of accountancy disappeared. Crunching numbers became cheaper, more versatile, and more powerful, so demand went up. What remained – and indeed flourished – required more judgement. And, the spreadsheet created whole new industries. There are countless jobs in high finance today that now depend on exploring different numerical scenarios – tweaking the numbers and watching the columns recalculate themselves. These jobs barely existed before. The point is not really whether 600,000 is more than 400,000: sometimes automation creates jobs and sometimes it destroys them. The

point is that automation reshapes the workplace in much subtler ways than "a robot took my job".

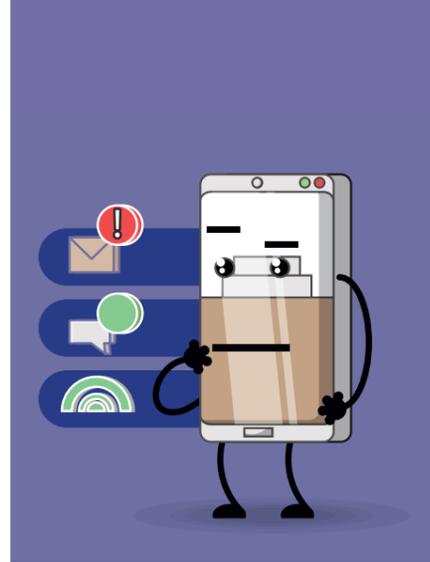
The airline industry provides another salutary example of this 'flywheel effect' in action. Today, most of the task of being an airline pilot is automated. On the average Boeing and Airbus flight, a human only manually controls the plane for a total of six minutes, mostly while the plane is taking off. That's changed the role of a pilot – they've been given more freedom to communicate safety issues. It doesn't always go right – as the executives at Boeing are all too aware – but of course nobody ever writes stories about the planes that land. Statistically, it's still safer to fly today than at any other point in history. And even though machines have taken over more of the task of flying, there has been zero decrease in the number of commercial pilots – in fact, quite the opposite. Airlines are reporting major shortages of pilots around the world. As safety has improved, costs have come down, flying has become more popular, and passenger numbers have increased, so it stands to reason that more planes, and pilots, are now required.

Or how about "The retail apocalypse" – a popular story in the US media that blames the internet for killing brick-and-mortar stores? Makes for great copy, but unfortunately it's just not accurate. While many older brands and large-scale department stores are getting smaller, or even going away, a 2019 research report from IHL Group reveals an entirely different saga playing out in the wider marketplace. For every one retailer closing a store, 5.2 are opening new locations, and that pattern holds true across the board. ➔

“ WE ARE USING ROBOTICS AND AI TO MAKE THE JOB SAFER AND MAKE IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO DO WHAT THEY DO BEST, WHICH IS BE CREATIVE AND USE THEIR MIND ”

JEFF WILK, CEO AMAZON WORLDWIDE CONSUMER DIVISION





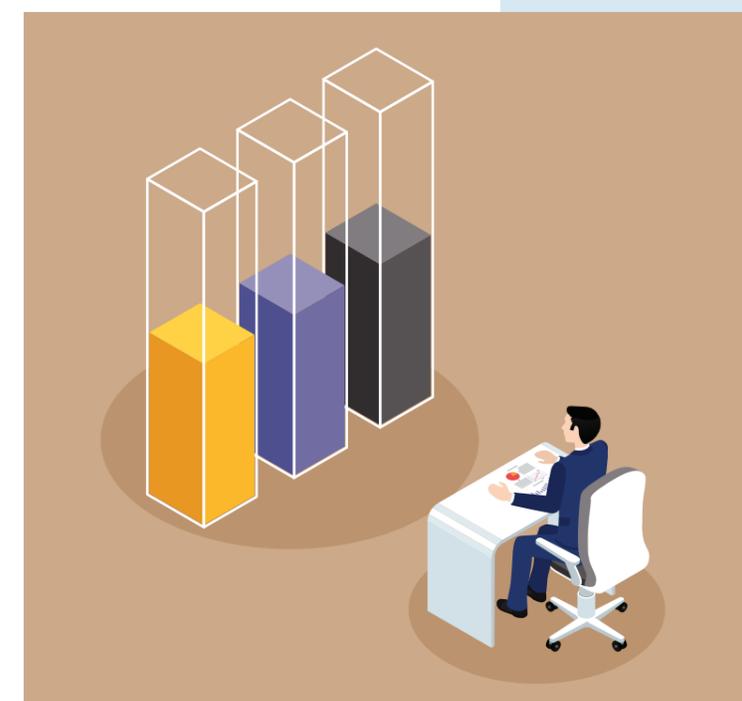
be a slight gain of 168,000 jobs (7.176 million created, 7.008 million displaced). What is startling here is that as time has gone by, the estimates for net job loss from automation have been disappearing to the point of being negligible. Companies such as global research firm Gartner are saying that starting in 2020, automation and artificial intelligence will cause industry to add more jobs than it takes away. “It will radically change many positions,” says John-David Lovelock, research vice-president at Gartner, “but at the end of the day it will end up adding jobs.” What the net figures mask, however, is the considerable disruption and shift in skills going forward, meaning serious qualifications to the Automageddon and job-loss narrative. And here is where the panic sets in.

IT'S THE POLITICS, STUPID

“We should not be haunted by the spectre of being automated out of work,” says US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. “We should not feel nervous about the tollbooth collector not having to collect tolls. We should be excited by that. But the reason we’re not excited about it is because we live in a society where if you don’t have a job, you are left to die.”

Ocasio-Cortez’s quote speaks specifically to the American workforce, but she has a point ... it’s not all rainbows. The figures on job creation still mask a deeper structural inequality, and don’t account for the people who have become so discouraged that they don’t bother looking for jobs in the first place. This is the real danger that’s all too often ignored in the simple utopia versus dystopia readings of automation. It’s not that the robots take away the jobs, it’s that in changing the nature of jobs, people get left behind. This is the much bigger storyline – globally, hundreds of millions of workers will need to change occupations, and/or need new mixes of skills in order to operate in future workplaces. Whether this is a likely cancelled or postponed Automageddon will depend on choices – on training, financial support, education, speed of automation and what the technologies are designed for.

Moreover, these choices will be made by governments, non-government agencies, corporates and individuals in the face of multiple factors and



ILLUSTRATIONS: ISTOCKPHOTO.

THE OECD COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF AUTOMATION ARE ALSO THE ONES WITH THE LOWEST LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

There are more companies opening stores than closing them in all retail segments – even department stores. In 2018, the overall number of US retail stores rose by 3100, according to Census Bureau data.

What’s true for an industry can also be true for an individual company. Amazon now has a global full-time and part-time workforce of 647,000 – 50 per cent more people than Alphabet, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft combined. Amazon employs more than six times as many workers as it did in 2010. It has been adding an average of 337 people a day and currently has 28,000 open positions. Far from taking over warehouse workers’ jobs, robots are actually helping Amazon pay people higher wages, according to the company’s chief executive of its worldwide consumer division, Jeff Wilke. “We are using robotics and AI to make the job safer and make it easier for people to do what they do best, which is to be creative and use their mind,” Wilke said in a recent interview. “Those small robots have made the job safer, and they’ve made it more efficient, which has allowed us to pay higher wages.”

The flywheel effect can happen in places we least expect it. There’s now a robot nurse called Moxi at Dallas General Hospital, who performs about 30 per cent of tasks nurses do that don’t involve interacting with patients, such as running errands or dropping off specimens for analysis at a lab. Nurses can set up rules and tasks so that the robot gets a command when certain things change in a patient’s record. If a patient has been discharged and their room is marked clean, Moxi will take a set

of fresh supplies to the room so that it’s all ready to go for the next person. That means nurses don’t have to remember tasks that used to be part of their daily job, which is a meaningful way to reduce their cognitive load. “We’re helping them augment their staff,” says Andrea Thomaz, one of Moxi’s inventors. “It’s hard to argue that we’re taking anyone’s job. Everyone is trying to make the nurses they have go further.”

NEW TECHNOLOGIES, NEW JOBS

New technologies create jobs we often could never imagine. According to James Manyika, the Director of the McKinsey Global Institute, if you look at any 10-year period, in most economies, developed and developing, about 10 per cent of occupations didn’t exist in the previous 10-year period. Ten years ago, nobody imagined a job like drone operator. Rwanda’s busiest airport, for example, is a drone port. It delivers blood

and other urgent medical supplies across the country. These drone operators have helped make more than 13,000 deliveries and the drones have flown over a million kilometres.

Capitalism’s capacity for creative destruction means that the picture of severe job loss painted by many policymakers earlier this decade has changed dramatically, though not necessarily in the headlines. The prospect of a robot apocalypse is, now at best, mixed. In 2018, the employment rate among people of working age was the highest ever in Britain, Canada, Germany, Australia and 22 other OECD countries. And the OECD countries with the highest levels of automation are also the ones with the lowest levels of unemployment. The World Economic Forum, for 2018-2022, found automation replacing 980,000 jobs while creating 1.74 million new ones. The Asia Development Bank has come out as positive on net job creation from automation. Price Waterhouse Coopers estimated that the net job effect of automation in the UK from 2017-2037 would

dynamic business, social, political and economic contexts. This means that automation is no longer a technological question, it’s a cultural and political one. In the past the economic benefits from new technologies have always been enough to create more jobs than were lost, but today, the location of jobs and the kind of work they involve are changing, and that’s what’s causing real pain to people and to local economies.

This is why building relevant skills throughout the population is paramount for Australia. If we do not, then the labour market will split into those who have the skills to work with new technologies and those who do not. A generation of workers unprepared for such a significant technological shock could suffer. It’s often instructive to look at different cultural attitudes to machines here. In countries such as Sweden and Norway, conversations around automation take on a very different tone – robots aren’t feared but embraced. A robust welfare state means people can be retrained. And in places such as Japan, robots are embraced because they need all the help they can get, thanks to a decreasing population and a rapidly ageing one too.

In the US, the UK and increasingly, Australia, the fears are a lot worse because there is less of a safety net: will we all be superfluous meat sacks in a world of metal and machine? Is automation a normal feature of society? Are our fears of the future misplaced? Are creativity and human skills really enough to set us apart?

The answer is yes, and no. Business leaders need to recognise the difference and guide their actions accordingly. This is not a picture of what will happen. Rather it is what could happen if we don’t effectively heed the warning signs. The robots are coming, but it’s always going to be left up to humans to decide what to do with them. (M)

REIMAGINATION: A BUSINESS SUPERPOWER

بحثك. أسطورة. تراها



سمرست، المملكة المتحدة

Innovators, disruptors and large-scale problem solvers all possess the ability to reimagine – to recognise and implement a different approach. Maximus looks into how reimagination can change the way a business thinks and works.

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Big problems deserve big solutions, and in an increasingly globalised environment there are plenty of big problems looking to be solved.

These challenges are arising for several reasons. There's the fact that with each innovative solution, the frictionless nature of the new offerings causes expectations to rise. When we have a more abrasive experience as a consumer or as an employee, we automatically think there must be a better way.

That's what Sydney-based civil engineer Amanda Sequiera thought when she was employed to sit in an office all day, watching footage from sewer pipe inspection cameras. Her role was to identify damage that needed to be repaired, but the sheer absurdity of her job made her realise there must be a better way.

Sequiera reimagined a solution called VAPAR that uses artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to analyse footage much faster and far more accurately than a human. In doing so, she also freed up engineers to do the work they're passionate about.

The expectations of consumers and workers are rising, as is the capability of technology itself. Processing power, and the machine learning and AI wonders that it makes possible, has meant solutions that previously couldn't have been considered are now a reality.

Leaders and organisations capable of reimagination boast a competitive advantage more potent than any other. They can make disruption a part of their strategy, develop powerful solutions to fundamental human and organisational problems and, in doing so, unlock entirely new commercial potential.

How does reimagination work? It's thanks to three ideation techniques: 'Revolution', 'Opposites' and 'Related worlds'. Here, Maximus explores them all...

THE POWER OF 'WHAT IF?'

"The ideation technique known as 'Revolution' is about reimagining what's possible by developing new systems that don't look like the old systems," says James Aris, Head of Innovation, Offerings and Marketing at Maximus.

Take What3Words, for instance. The founders – a mathematician, a musician and a quiz-show host – considered the revolutionary idea of how to reimagine the world's addressing system after hearing tales of the frustrations experienced by professional musicians who'd been booked for gigs, only to end up lost.

The musicians would be given addresses for performance venues that would end up being the carpark entry gate to a sprawling music festival, the stage on which they're playing still hundreds of metres away. Or they'd be told to arrive at a remote chateau in France, only to end up on the wrong side of a valley. Or they'd be directed in Rome to a hole-in-the-wall bar which, to the untrained eye, was identical to the numerous other hole-in-the-wall bars on the same block.

What3Words began with GPS coordinates, but there were too many digits involved, meaning addresses would be too easily forgotten or miscommunicated. They moved to alpha-numeric codes, but the solution created similar issues. Then they realised a solution was not going to be found in the current addressing and navigation realm. A completely novel approach was required.

"There was a dictionary on the table and they realised if they had a pool of 40,000 words, and each address contained just three of those words, they would have enough three-word combinations to provide one address for every three-metre by three-metre grid on Earth, including oceans," explains Giles Rhys Jones, chief marketing officer of What3Words.

And so a patch of grass in Sydney's Hyde Park now has a unique address – `///winner.eggs.charm`. So does the middle patch of centre court at London's Wimbledon Tennis Club – `///metals.figure.crisp`. As does a remote point on the Nepal/China border, in the high Himalaya and on the slopes of Mt Everest – `///patriot.biggest.managements`.

"The UK emergency services are now using us," says Rhys Jones. "It means they can locate people more easily and quickly and therefore save more lives. We're also being used by postal services in Mongolia."



+ What3Words' out-of-the-box thinking has revolutionised location services on a global scale.

The chairman of Daimler was an early admirer of the work of What3Words, and the system is now embedded in Mercedes-Benz vehicles. Drivers can ask to be directed to a three-word address, rather than a street address.

"You get a certain group of people who hear the idea then suck their teeth and say, 'That's a bit weird, we've always used this system and it works'," Rhys Jones says. "We agreed that we're going to ignore those types of people and those types of industries. We instead focused on people who got it, and who don't mind the fact that they might have the word 'lettuce' in their address. These are people who we call 'ambitious innovators'."

`///timely.discovery.icon`

Anmatjere, Northern Territory



`///evaluate.video.nails`

Khuvsgul, Mongolia

Most importantly, the idea solved the very human problem of how to clearly communicate a precise location, even if it was in the middle of a forest. Better still was the fact that it was available via a simple app on a smartphone.

"Some systems and processes only require iterative change. But sometimes there's a perceived need for drastically different results and a frustration with the status quo," says Aris. "In fact, if you're feeling extremely frustrated about something and you're told, 'that's just the way it works around here', then you're almost certainly onto a winner from a value-creation perspective."

The 'Revolution' ideation technique first involves the development of a deep understanding of all of the rules around a particular problem, Aris says. For the What3Words team, these rules included the facts that addresses had to contain a street number, a street name, a region and a country name.

"We have had to develop a deep knowledge and expertise around many industries," Rhys Jones says. "We spend a lot of time in the automotive world. We spend a lot of time in the emergency services world. We spend a lot of time in the logistics world. Before we can implement our new solution, we have to deeply understand the challenges within those industries, and how their systems work."

Once the rules are confirmed, it's time to ask, 'What if?' questions around each of them. People should be unafraid to exaggerate, oppose, reduce or reverse assumptions.

"What3Words didn't start with the idea that they should reimagine the world's addresses," Aris says. "It began with the articulation of the problem. And the problem was very specific and simple. Musicians kept turning up at the wrong place. How do we stop that from happening?"

"Then they looked at the multiple applications of solving that problem and, in doing so, developed a deeply human insight into something that was not right in the world," he notes. "When you reimagine a solution, it typically bleeds across so many other industries and areas that it unlocks much more value than originally intended."

FALLING IN LOVE WITH THE PROBLEM

Sometimes a problem is strategy-based, product-based or customer-based. No matter the type of issue, it's vital to first develop a thorough understanding of the problem itself. If an organisation skips that step and immediately makes the leap to developing a solution, it's likely to be a Band-Aid rather than a cure.

"When we're working with leaders in ideation sessions it's fascinating to really spend time in the problem rather than rushing to a solution. It helps us to see what we can do in terms of different ways of looking at the (>)



+ X's Project Loon takes a radical approach to the expansion of internet connection, using balloons carrying transceivers.

RELATED WORLDS:

problem, and new, novel approaches,” says Laura Sturt-Addicott, Associate Director at Maximus. “One way we do this, particularly when time is short, is to employ the ‘Opposites’ technique.”

An organisation that models this technique admirably is X, also known as The Moonshot Factory. It’s a Google company that brings together inventors and entrepreneurs to launch technologies aimed at improving the lives of billions of people.

X is working, for example, on a project looking into how balloons suspended in the atmosphere might help bring internet connection to the most remote places in the world. Another is investigating how kites might be able to generate power in unexpected places. A third is experimenting with light beams, and how they can be used to transmit high-speed data across long distances, like fibre but without the laying of wires. Each began with an appreciation of a fundamental problem.

“At X, their philosophy is based on falling in love with the problem and not the solution,” says Sturt-Addicott.

An ‘Opposites’ discussion doesn’t necessarily result in a solution, but rather it helps people to see the problem, and potential solutions, through a different lens. It frees them from the shackles that decades of industry experience have placed around them and puts them in a space where they’re more open to new ideas. And interestingly, Sturt-Addicott says, it’s typically the most ridiculous opposites that generate the best results.

Consider discos, Sturt-Addicott says, and the fact they require loud music. The opposite would be silence, which at first seems ridiculous. But actually, there are now silent discos.

Sturt-Addicott also recalls a story of a sailing team that changed the winching system from one driven by hands and arms to one driven by legs and feet, taking advantage of the fact that legs are stronger and more powerful.

“At first everyone said, ‘You can’t possibly do that! It must be breaking the rules!’” she says. “But they did it and they won races and finally people realised there was something in the idea. It wasn’t so ridiculous after all.”

THE ANSWER IS OUTSIDE YOUR OWN INDUSTRY

When Qantas was looking at improving efficiencies across its network, it identified one problem as being the cost of maintenance, both in terms of revenue and time. The company drilled down through the problem and came to the root cause, which was that service and maintenance of aircraft between flights was taking too long. Qantas needed to get its vehicles in and out of the bays more quickly, but its ground crews were already working as fast as they could. Or were they?

Instead of looking within its industry, where most airlines performed similarly, Qantas looked for a ‘Related world’, an industry where the fast servicing of a vehicle was vital to a team or organisation’s success.

“Qantas spoke to Formula One teams to find out how they operate,” says Huw Thomas, Associate Director at Maximus. “The intention was to get the aircraft maintenance teams to operate like a Formula One pit crew.”

“They picked up different techniques, including mindset, processes and systems, and applied them to aircraft maintenance. It radically sped up their maintenance times and led to less mechanical issues and delays before take-off. From that a host of other benefits came, too,” Thomas says.

A current example of related worlds happening on a grand scale is Facebook’s attempt to re-shape the field of payment, with Libra. The social media giant has looked outside traditional finance to the world of cryptocurrency, but has invited major players from traditional finance to partner on the project. Whether it succeeds in its mission is yet to be seen, but the process of reimagination has been an interesting one.

How does ‘Related worlds’ work in an ideation environment? It begins with a simple question – what am I trying to achieve?

This is written as succinctly as possible, before the group is asked to think of other businesses, industries, leaders, examples from nature, etc., that reflect a similar challenge.

“In our normal work lives, we seem to get locked into a state of only being able to think in terms of incremental improvement,” Thomas says. “But if you look outside the organisation or industry it helps you to abandon all assumptions and rules and see how it’s done in a completely different but related world. It removes the technical rules and details that get in the way.”

Sometimes the answer is in nature – the design of high-speed Japanese bullet trains was modelled on the beak of a Kingfisher. Velcro was developed after burrs stuck obstinately to the pants of its inventor, and to his dog’s coat, during bushwalks.

“It’s about simplifying the problem to a very basic level and then asking where else you have seen this problem in the world,” Thomas says. “It’s actually quite a creative and fun process. It has to be a little bit outrageous. But those outrageous ideas, the more they’re discussed, actually become more practical.”

One essential ingredient for success in this, and other, ideation techniques is a diversity of people.

“This is also why businesses bring in consultants, because consultants ask plenty of dumb questions while they’re trying to understand how the business works,” Thomas says. “This process itself helps to influence a client to think in a different way. And, of course, consultants can provide different ideas from other industries and share what’s being done in other organisations.”

“WHEN YOU REIMAGINE A SOLUTION, IT TYPICALLY BLEEDS ACROSS SO MANY OTHER INDUSTRIES AND AREAS THAT IT UNLOCKS MUCH MORE VALUE THAN ORIGINALLY INTENDED.”

JAMES ARIS, HEAD OF INNOVATION, OFFERINGS AND MARKETING AT MAXIMUS

EXPLORING REIMAGINATION IN YOUR ORGANISATION

From an organisational perspective, reimagination can seem challenging – but it can become part of the daily process of the business. For instance, Maximus recommends leaders regularly run a simple process that identifies people who might not be so cognisant of the rules.

“One thing to do is embrace employees who are new to your organisation or, even better, new to the industry, because they’re not shackled,” Aris says.

“Many businesses are embracing this. You only need to look at the increasing appetites around hiring executives from different industries. An *Academy of Management Journal* study found that CEOs with ‘medium or moderate experience’ in a particular industry were higher performers than CEOs with high levels of industry-specific experience.”

At Maximus, we work with leaders to help them recognise opportunities and ways to encourage staff to delve curiously into adjacent industries, and to have the courage to consider change when thinking about these related worlds.

As in the case of an FMCG manager of whipped-cream-in-a-can products who solved a shelf-life problem by discovering a solution in the fire extinguisher industry, most problems an organisation is trying to solve have been solved very neatly elsewhere. Most importantly, Maximus helps to show businesses how to implement systems that encourage and capture even the wildest of ideas.

“You should never shut people’s doors of ideas, because while they might not be opening the right door, it might lead to another door,” Aris says. “And a brilliant idea coupled with a coalition of the willing can implement enormous change a lot quicker than you might imagine, even in more traditional businesses and economies.”

BY: CHRIS SHEEDY

THE VALUE ARCHITECT

Maximus explores the leader's role in architecting value through the responsible integration of technology and re-envisioning human capabilities.



Thought leaders in the corporate world are reframing how machines can best be used to add value and deliver economic benefit, by flipping the case from artificial intelligence (AI) to intelligent automation (IA).

Where AI is feared for its perceived potential to increase efficiencies by displacing humans in the workplace, IA promises to augment and unleash essentially human talents. Yes, it's toying with terminology, but redefining for IA promises to free people from drudgery and enable them to add value in uniquely human ways, so it's important for leaders to make the conscious shift.

US-based technologist and organisational psychologist Muriel Clauson defines the least automatable human capabilities as 'power skills' – a much-needed upgrade, she says, from the often referred to 'soft skills'. They include agile communication, critical thinking, innovative problem solving, recognising opportunities, leveraging information and experience to make better decisions, and seeing connections between systems and trends.

Clauson, who has for some years advised government and corporate leaders on workforce change, says "humans have so much incredible potential and we don't come close to leveraging that today."

The call is for business leaders and managers to add value in context: to engage humans in separating the aspects of their work that are multifying, to design the automated systems that can best replace those tasks, and to redeploy people – with the help of skills-development micro courses and mentoring – in more satisfying roles.

As part of this process, leaders may choose to tailor available software and hardware platforms to their company's needs. And, where necessary, develop industry or company-unique technology solutions that take over the precise and repetitive tasks that don't tap into human power skills.

The recent Maximus whitepaper, *Curating Culture: Mobilising People*

in the Age of Disruption, called on leaders as architects of value within organisations to "allow people and teams the freedom to be curious and to innovate, by empowering them in processes and technology".

Laura Sturt-Addicott, Associate Director at Maximus, welcomes the evolution of thinking from computers competing with humans for work, to machines assisting humans in their quest for more meaningful roles in the economy. "Leaders and managers need to reframe the concept of teams and individuals from being executors of tasks to becoming opportunity finders," she says.

ORGANISATIONS DON'T NEED ANOTHER HERO

Another important mindshift is towards collective success. To leverage the collective thinking of diverse teams into novel solutions, managers need to focus on a 'we' rather than 'I' culture. "They need

to reward for team-based outcomes, rather than for individual tasks," says Sturt-Addicott.

In most scenarios, digitalisation is likely to offer solutions to a percentage of employee tasks, and the opportunity is to productively use the proportion of time gained to combine people's accumulated and varied experience of their industry, coupled with their creative capacity, in new directions.

"The number-one thing I say to leaders who are worried about their organisations and how they need to prepare people for change, is to get serious about learning what people actually do in their jobs at the individual level," says Clauson.

Clauson has formed a company, Anthill AI, to develop a digital platform that helps people and managers explore individual skills potential. "We have a cultural norm that nobody works in private. >

AUTOMATING FREE OF BIAS

As a board member of the not-for-profit organisation Humans for AI, Clauson also advocates for diverse human input into the automated systems we choose to design.

For architects of value within organisations, she says it's critical they involve employees in the development of their new automated 'colleagues'. Bringing a variety of people into the process of designing automation tools is the only way to create more inclusive AI, says Clauson.

Kriti Sharma, Vice-President of Artificial Intelligence at software giant Sage, said in an April 2019 TED talk that more relevant than our fear of robots replacing us at work

is the decisions AI can make about us.

For example, AI decides that a person named John is likely to be a better programmer than someone called Mary. Why? The AI picks up the fact that as an employer you hire more men than women for tech roles. "From that, the AI learns that men are more likely to be programmers than women, then it's a very short leap to 'Men make better programmers than women,'" Sharma explains.

Future society relies on us ensuring at every stage of automation design that it aligns with and reinforces the values and ethics we want to pervade our lives.

To do that, we need to involve

people with varied backgrounds, ages and sexualities in the creation of automated systems... Ideally, they will not all be coders. Some may be storytellers, domain experts, problem-solvers, behavioural scientists – their perspectives further broadening the inclusiveness, creativity and empathy that informs our automated assistants.

Sharma says that given diverse input, AI can be used to make the world a more equal place, delivering services and opportunities that don't yet exist to people isolated by circumstances or geography; and architecting positive value into a richly human future society.

Anyone can access what someone else is working on at any point in the development process," she says. "Our thinking is we don't expect anyone to be perfect. We're all learning as we go and sharing; no one is expected to be a genius. We end up with better results."

Clauson's approach requires leaders to create a culture where people are willing to embrace a digital mindset. This doesn't mean leaders or their teams need to be experts in the technology, but that they be open to the possibilities of what can be created and enhanced by integrating technology into new work practices. Among the keys to this culture is that leaders provide opportunities for people to learn by increments as they test and try technology, as well as new ideas, in a psychologically safe environment.

RESHAPING BUSINESS MODELS TO MAXIMISE ROIA

Australia's Digital Opportunity, a September 2019 report by AlphaBeta, calculated that Australia's technology sector could contribute greatly to GDP if the country caught up to global leaders. It identified investment in technology platforms and the adaptation of business models to make better use of intelligent automation, as being crucial.

The report offers the notional example of a manufacturer that undertakes automation of a production line and deploys intelligent human capital to change up its product development and redesign marketing strategies. Such "marginal improvements", says the report, "accounted for six per cent of the total economic value generated by digital innovation in advanced economies between 2000 and 2018".

Maximus's *Curating Culture* whitepaper expands on this concept, saying the conditioned thought processes of leaders must shift from modelling company strategies on what happened in the past. As architects of future value, they will redeploy human capital with curiosity and power to implement technology; this in turn can "foster strategic planning and articulation of value-creation around what could be".

"Re-shaping business models to create value means leaders need to think differently," says Sturt-Addicott. "At Maximus, we work to expand leaders' thinking, to enable them to look beyond their own organisations and industries into new markets which tackle challenges differently.

We maintain focus on such opportunities by bringing international perspectives to Australia, through research and partnerships with progressive global thought leaders."

A recent global survey, *Easing the pressure points: The state of intelligent automation* by KPMG in the US, cautioned that many organisations that have adopted IA are struggling to demonstrate significant impact from their investment. Most notably, this is because they have not incorporated the technology into the vision and purpose of the organisation, nor structured their teams and workflows to take advantage of the digital assistance.

To realise the full potential of automation beyond cost savings, organisations must incorporate change management at every stage of machine integration by investing in their most valuable resource: their workforce.

"There is a need for leaders to ensure they have a strong vision for their organisations, departments, teams and people they work with in order to be true value architects," says Sturt-Addicott.

AUTOMATING RESPONSIBLY

"We know that parts of people's roles are going to be automated, that jobs will be different and both companies and employees will have to adapt," says Sturt-Addicott. Where that lands in terms of reskilling or upskilling existing staff is still very varied in the Australian business landscape.

"Leaders need to think about automating responsibly and ask, 'If I'm going to automate half of the work my team does, how do I build my people for the future?'," she says.

In a now-famous example of inclusive IA, Australia Post's accounting services department challenged its team to identify 'new

pathways' for managing the almost crippling volume of accounting tasks inherent in keeping track of services and products across more than 4300 post offices Australia wide.

After a successful pilot program using Automation Anywhere's robotic process automation (RPA) system, AusPost automated 25 processes. The resulting restructure of workflows, and annual saving of 18,000 hours, enabled team members to "reinvest their time towards improving the experiences of customers", a report on the project states.

Steven Morris, Head of Accounting Services at Australia Post commented

that, "leveraging RPA, our team members were able to identify new ways to automate and scale, contributing to the growth and productivity of the entire department".

Retraining can be expensive but firing one sector of the workforce in favour of rehiring fewer, more appropriately skilled workers for new roles may be more so. The labour market can also be left in tatters by employers chopping and changing: "Cutting talent that no longer suits the needs of an organisation and hiring new talent can lead to massive skills gaps in the market," says Clauson.

+
Laura Sturt-Addicott,
Associate
Director at
Maximus



CUSTOMER SERVICE: TECH-ING IT UP A NOTCH

Victor Dominello, the NSW government's first Minister for Customer Service, is a passionate advocate of digitalisation as a humanising tool.

He likens the conditions in agencies that handle high volumes of information and regulation without the help of automation to forcing people to work in an 'iron lung'; whereas, given "a good working environment, enabled by smart technology, it's a joy to serve", he says.

The minister of a growing department in terms of increased service centres and employee numbers, Dominello says, "It's not about job losses, but around job creation in things people do best – like people engagement. The human aspect is critical. AI and technology can only go so far. We need to ensure that people are there to assist people."

Six years ago, the NSW government embarked on its digital strategy to fast-track service transformation. Since then online digital services, such as simplified car registration, a business concierge to help constituents navigate the

regulations and requirements for setting up new businesses, and MyServiceNSW which streamlines customer transactions with government, have increased Service NSW customer-satisfaction rating to 97 per cent".

In 2017, Service NSW was awarded 24th place in the *Australian Financial Review's* list of Australia's '50 Most Innovative Companies', and following its re-election last March, the Berejiklian government doubled down on digital transformation with a focus on deeper cultural change.

Dominello believes every aspect of public policy making and service delivery can be improved by intelligent automation, however cultural change, says the minister, is the hardest part of digitalising any organisation. In September he accelerated the state government's internal systems for funding tech projects by radically consolidating the number of ministerial committees that run the state to three: Cabinet, Treasury and new customer-focused committee dubbed the Delivery and Performance Committee (DaPCo), which is chaired by Dominello

and the Premier. DaPCo will interrogate applicants for tech funding on the data architecture of the project, the digital design and the customer lens. If they satisfy committee criteria, projects can go straight to Treasury and request funding based on return on investment or a cost-benefit ratio.

Leaders and employees may understandably be fearful when they're uncertain of the future, says Dominello, but the do-nothing response will lead to them falling ever further behind.

"By leveraging technology to frame and speed up everyday decision making – and disseminating the mindset for their teams to do the same – leaders will find themselves capable of getting up and out, while also increasingly adding value at an organisational level," says Sturt-Addicott. "The single worst thing that can happen in these situations is that leaders narrow their focus on their silo and fail to recognise the organisational advantages and value opportunities of embracing technology." (M)

BY: NATALIE FILATOFF

*SERVICE NSW ANNUAL REPORT 2018; ILLUSTRATIONS: PAULO LIM / THE ILLUSTRATION ROOM; PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK BOND.

DESIGNING FOR PEOPLE



PHOTOGRAPHY - COURTESY OF CALIBRA.

Taking in human lessons from the worlds of anthropology and Gen Z, we look at how trust and connection can help future-proof growth in a changing world...

+ TALKING ABOUT YOUR GENERATIONS

WE TALK TO GEN Z ABOUT CHANGE AND THE WORKING WORLD THEY EXPECT TO GRADUATE INTO.

+ THE TRUST TRANSACTION

HOW CRUCIAL IS INSTITUTIONAL TRUST IN DRIVING LONG-TERM PROSPERITY FOR AUSTRALIA? WE LOOK INTO IT...

+ THE RISE OF THE TRIBE

EXTOLLING THE VIRTUES OF DEEP HUMAN CONNECTION IN AN INCREASINGLY ARTIFICIALLY CONNECTED WORLD.



Millennials are so last century (literally). We're kidding, but even as some leaders grapple to connect with that previous generation, here comes the next one. Maximus urges leaders to do a better job of connecting with Gen Z – understanding the aspirations and frustrations – and creating future-focused environments that they actually want to be a part of.

m Move over Millennials, according to Bloomberg, 2019 was the year that demographers predicted that Generation Z (Gen Z) would outnumber them and represent about 32 per cent of the world's population. The broad consensus is that Gen Z – aka iGen, aka Centennials – started arriving on the planet around 1995 and kept joining us through to 2012 (we're now up to Gen Alpha, in case you were wondering). The youngest Gen Zedder alive today is seven years old and the oldest 24.

They're a complex generation, born into a post-September 11 world, a post-truth society and – they believe – a post-privacy existence. Unlike any previous generation, Gen Z are born fluid, they exist naturally in this fast-paced world, they are native to it. Case in point: the fact that social media means "you can go viral overnight," says Kaben Clauson, CEO and co-founder of innovative US polling company TruePublic, which collects opinions anonymously via an app.

"In one moment, you could be famous in a positive or negative way," he says, and Gen Z are completely at home with it.

They are a generation born into the technology world and they don't fear it, or its possible effects, on their future career and job prospects like many older people do. Yet they choose human contact, prefer face-to-face interaction and: "most young people think they're going to be worse off than their parents," says Clauson. "That's unique to this generation."

All of this makes it a generation that understands each other deeply. "A Gen Z person will have more in common with someone who speaks a different language and was born in a different country but is from their own generation, than they will with a neighbour from the era above them," says Brent Duffy, Joint Managing Director of Maximus.

And when it comes to work? They have even higher expectations of the environment, the purpose and the ethos of their surroundings, than that of Millennials. "With the last generation, we saw the

rise of open-plan offices, ping-pong tables and scooters," says Duffy. "Gen Z values autonomy, but they want genuine growth opportunities, too. 'How am I going to be developed in this role?' And what connection will I have?'" They're also prepared to drive this, unlike generations before, Duffy notes. "Previously Millennials would put this request in the hands of their manager. Gen Z will expect the organisation they work for to clear the path or get out of the way."

"And while they want the flexibility to, say, work from home," Duffy says, "they want face-to-face interaction and real connection with the people they work with, too."

Leaders need to tune-in to the reality that values and purpose truly matter to Gen Z, a trend that Millennials kicked off. Financial incentives and even flexible work are no longer enough to hold them. "This generation won't think of a job in the way that it has been defined in the past. They will see it as a means to have impact. A job will be a platform. They are experts in platforms: Samsung, Apple, Insta, Snapchat... as long as the leader or organisation can provide the right conditions, they will stay." But, warns



Duffy, "they will also move to a different platform if they're not getting what they want."

"Salary has less primacy than before," adds Clauson. "And Gen Z are much more resilient around the rapidly changing workforces than Millennials – they know they will have to change careers and they'll have an advantage there. They're more prepared for the side hustle and the freelance culture is accepted."

How, then, can leaders effectively and authentically – because Gen Z will call out fakery – connect with the next generation of our workforce? "It's about mindset and approach," says Duffy. "Look at how Google has shifted from KPIs (key

performance indicators) to OKRs (objectives and key results). Rather than telling the new generation, 'This is what I want you to do by this date', it's communicating to them, 'This is where we want to take the business, what's going to be your role in getting us there?' Leaders need to be really authentic about the true direction and give Gen Z the support and the autonomy to get there."

"There's less of an appetite to follow a boss's orders and do repeatable tasks that someone has given to you," says Clauson. "Each person wants to create their own

A CONVERSATION WITH GEN Z [CASE STUDY 1]

"I've been applying for a few electrician apprenticeships and it's been a bit more difficult than I expected because everyone thinks we're coming towards a recession and fearing the worse. I think that will be one of the biggest impacts to my career. Also, everyone's shifting to a more democratic approach to employment... more ideas coming from each rung of the ladder of the hierarchy. That's changed a lot and will be completely different from how it was for my parents. For them it was very structured, authoritarian, with the bosses on top and no flexibility in decisions.

The casualisation of the workforce is going to impact everyone. It's cheaper and employers can get whatever skills they want when they need them, without ever having to deal with redundancy pay. They can remove any sector of the workforce with no rules around it. I think job stability would be wonderful – I'd love to stay in a job."

DYLAN, 18

A CONVERSATION WITH GEN Z [CASE STUDY 2]

"My main concern about entering the workforce is the lack of opportunity to move between social barriers. Younger people aren't the first priority for the people in charge. I read something the other day about the top-paid CEOs in America – and it's much the same as in Australia – they're getting paid \$45 million a year or more while people in their company doing the same amount of work or more get paid minimum wage. It worries me that they don't want an equal playing field.

I don't see myself working in a corporate job or aspiring to become a CEO. I'm more interested in academia and the histories and I'll probably become a teacher. But even at school there's a hierarchy. There are head teachers, normal teachers who are paid less, the principal gets paid double... it's not an equal workplace. Teachers should be paid more because they're the foundation of society. Education is what allows you to find gainful employment and do something that you enjoy."

SACHA, 17

TALKING ABOUT YOUR GENERATIONS

autonomous environment and we consistently see that across our data.”

Leaders must actively listen to Gen Z, both to keep them engaged and to leverage their can-do attitude. “Gen Z are digital natives,” says Duffy. “A Gen Xer or Baby Boomer might be frightened that technological disruptors, such as artificial intelligence (AI), will take their jobs. The Gen Z approach is, ‘It’s not going to take my job – I’m going to be the one creating it!’ They really have a growth mindset.”

“This generation have only known exponential change. They are disappointed if the latest iPhone isn’t radically different to the one before. They don’t blink an eye when change in their world is significant. They expect it, want it,” continues Duffy. “I still hear many organisations talking about change fatigue. This next generation doesn’t have any concept of what change fatigue is.”

Maximus consultant George Schneider, himself a Millennial, worked with Gen Z when he was a facilitator at The Global Leadership Institute. “I saw overlap between Millennials and Gen Z – they’re both highly emotionally intelligent and adept at using their access to a lot of information over a wide range of areas,” he says.

This will play into the workforce becoming “less



profession-based and more skills-based”, Schneider says. “It will be if you have the skills to perform these particular tasks, rather than are you an accountant or are you an engineer? It’s an entrepreneurial mindset, that you can make something out of nothing. It’s approaching it as ‘OK, I don’t know this yet, but I can learn it.’ Whereas my parents’ generation are in the mindset, ‘This is not something I know, this is not something I can do.’ Gen Z are about test, fail, test again.”

Duffy points out that the fluidity of borders will also have a great impact on employers. Confident in their ability to learn – or to use Google Translate – Gen Z see job potential anywhere they choose. “It means that the competition for talent is intensifying,” says Duffy. “Gen Z have been raised in a borderless environment. Gaming, collaborating, chatting with someone on the other side of the world is not unusual, it’s the norm. They don’t think in terms of

**A CONVERSATION WITH GEN Z
[CASE STUDY 3]**

“All of my friends are picking their careers out of a desire to help people, which I always just assumed was kind of teenage idealism, but maybe it’s generational. I want to be an economist and what I’d like out of my career is to help people who are disempowered by the system as it is, and who have traditionally been marginalised again. Technology will have a huge impact on the way our generation works, because we’ve grown up with it. I think it will be different in terms of the type and the composition of work that we do. My generation will not have typical nine-to-five jobs in the sense that our parents and grandparents did. So, I think it will be quite disrupted compared to what we have now.”

GRACE, 17

national boundaries, like the Baby Boomers for instance, who are a generation defined by war(s) and raised on deep national pride. This new generation will open up global mobility in the workforce like we have not seen before. It will heighten the competition for talent on a global scale.”

It’s not all confidence and clarity, however. This generation also feels disenfranchised from such things as home ownership; they have the ‘preparation gap’ to combat – the space between higher learning and the job skills they will need in the workforce; and a very real burden of mental health. It’s going to be important for leaders to help them navigate these uncertainties, too.

“There’s an unprecedented level of mental-health concerns for this generation,” says Duffy. “Perhaps it’s because they’re more vocal about it than previous generations, but it’s real and we need to pay attention.”

A WORKFORCE INSTITUTE SURVEY FOUND THE TOP 3 LEADERSHIP TRAITS GEN Z LOOK FOR ARE:

- › TRUST
- › SUPPORT
- › CARE

Making sure wellbeing is part of every organisation, leaders should also look for pathways to help Gen Z and plug gaps left by high school and university education. “There’s a common sentiment across this generation known as the preparation gap, they don’t feel work-ready,” says Schneider. “Managers should look at training to give Gen Z skills such as networking, negotiating and conflict resolution, to enable them to apply their knowledge in the workplace.”

It’s up to the incumbent generations to connect and inspire this dynamic group of people. “I am a Gen X leader with more and more Gen Z coming into our firm. I am also raising four Gen Z humans at home,” says Duffy. “I can see they want to have impact. To lead this generation we will need to flip some of the ways we have led in the past. Things like providing context, showing genuine care by leaning into relationships with honesty and being open-minded enough to truly listen to them to unleash the power of their passion.”

BY: JANE NICHOLLS

**A CONVERSATION WITH GEN Z
[CASE STUDY 4]**

“I do lie awake at night worrying about climate change, and I find it really upsetting that most of the adults who are in charge seem to be happy to ignore scientists and not act as they would in a normal crisis. My friends and I have been to all the student climate strikes, and then some adults say we’re just skipping school. No, we’re trying to get your attention. This is so urgent. For a career, I’d like to work in the music industry.

You have to be passionate about your work. I’d like to earn a bit of money, but if I have enough to get by, I’d always take the job that’s going to make me happiest.”

ROSIE, 15



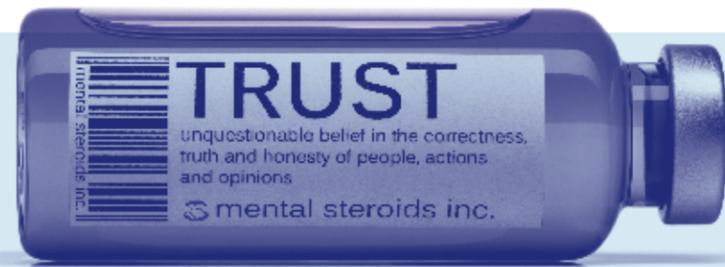
CASE STUDIES COMPILED BY: JANE NICHOLLS. ILLUSTRATIONS: GREEDY HEN / JACKY WINTER GROUP. STATISTICS VIA TRUFPUBLIC.COM; WORKFORCE INSTITUTE @KRONOS; “MEET GEN Z” JUNE 2019 REPORT.

**TRUFPUBLIC POSED THE FOLLOWING QUESTION TO GEN Z:
WHICH IS THE BIGGEST FACTOR IN YOUR DREAM JOB?**



THE TRANSACTION

Why rebuilding trust in institutions from the inside out is crucial to initiating a new era of growth and prosperity for Australia.



Trust is critical to being responsive, adaptable and innovative in a rapidly changing context. German sociologist and author of the 1979 book *Trust and Power*, Niklas Luhmann, noted that in the absence of trust, people would not even be able to get up in the morning. When trust in fellow humans, in basic infrastructure, in the wider institutions that support and govern our existence is so fundamental, it stands to reason it will be required for us to achieve the extraordinary. Trust is the tensile strength, the confidence in the integrity of people and things, that allows us to step into the unknown, or tackle the seemingly insurmountable.

The importance of trust has recently been illustrated, yes, by the failures revealed in the Hayne Royal Commission, but also by the way it has entered every discourse and become a metric for our current and future health. Consider the annual *Edelman Trust Barometer* which in 2019 tapped 33,000 respondents in 27 countries for their level of trust in institutions, and the fact that CSIRO's second-ever *Australian National Outlook (ANO)*, published mid-2019, prioritised the rebuilding of trust in Australia's institutions as instrumental to achieving an "inclusive, resilient and prosperous economy".

James Aris, Head of Innovation, Offerings and Marketing at

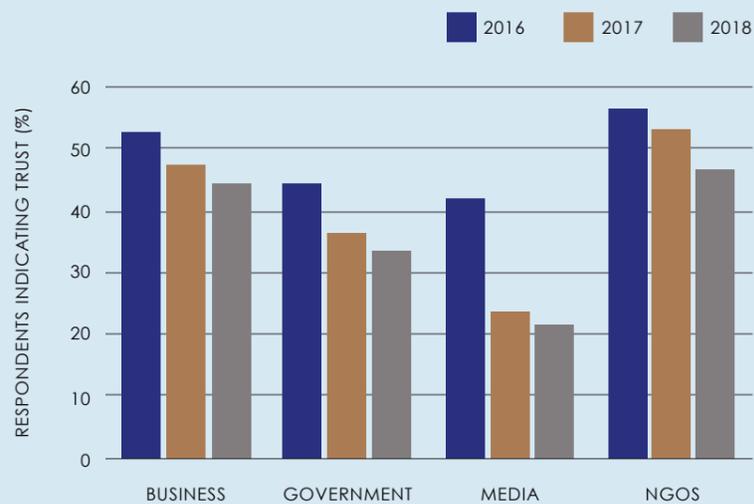
Maximus, highlights climate change as a macro example of how, despite being faced with overwhelming expert evidence, a lack of trust impacts institutions' overall capability and impetus to act. "We're seeing a breakdown in people's social contract with institutions and expertise as a whole, driven by decades of abuse of trust. A structurally sound social contract is critical to drive appropriately transformative and positive action," he says.

Peter Chamley, Executive Chair in Australasia of the respected

engineering and infrastructure design company, Arup, says Climate Strike and related protests, of which he notes he is a strong supporter, are another measure of the breakdown of trust between people and institutions. "Governments are failing us in not listening to the people, and not taking a longer view to really address climate change and its many impacts."

Although Australian respondents to the *Edelman Trust Barometer* recorded a modest increase in trust year-on-year across all categories of institutions – business, government, media and non-government

TRUST IN AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTIONS



SOURCE: CSIRO AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL OUTLOOK 2019 REPORT.

Note: This figure shows the percentage of respondents that indicated they had trust in an institution to do what is right. A list of institutions was supplied and, for each one, general population respondents were asked to indicate how much they trusted that institution to do what is right using a nine-point scale (1 = do not trust them at all; 9 = trust them a great deal). Edelman recently published their 2019 Trust Barometer, which showed a small rebound in trust compared with the 2018 results. However, trust remains a significant issue for Australian institutions.

organisations (NGOs) – only business (52 per cent) and NGOs (56 per cent) cleared the 50 per cent distrust barrier to achieve a 'neutral' rating. (A true relationship of trust is defined by a rating of 60 per cent or more.) Our low level of trust, says CSIRO's ANO 2019, "threatens the social license to operate for Australia's institutions".

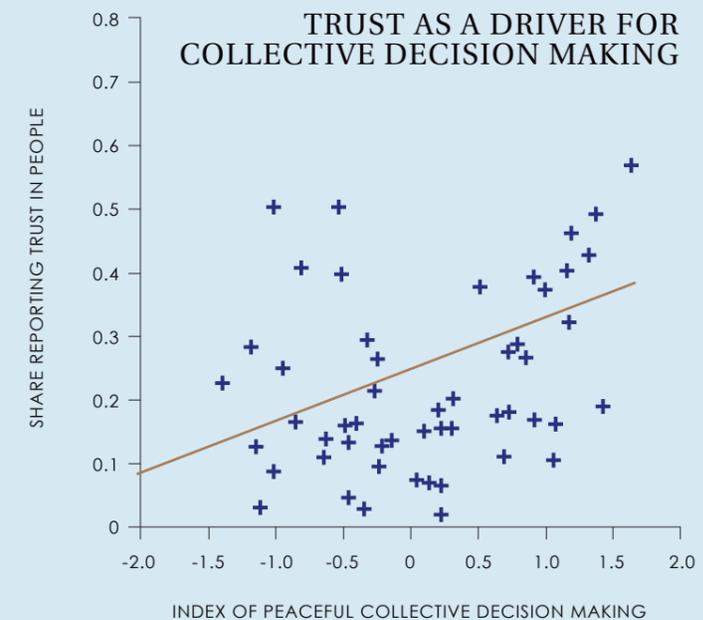
LICENSE TO DRIVE THE ECONOMY

Dr Kieren Moffat, chief executive and co-founder of Voconiq, a CSIRO spin-off (see over page), says that trust is fundamental to an institution's social licence to try new approaches – to innovate. He says 10 years of accumulated data gathered in a dozen countries has shown "trust is central to the relationship between a company or an industry and the community it interacts with".

"Trust acts as this vehicle that translates experience and expectation into acceptance," explains Moffat. One of the outcomes of a trusting social contract built over time, he says, is that "you have more benefit of the doubt when things go wrong – people don't immediately jump to the conclusion that it's through negligence."

Voconiq uses scientifically gathered insights to inform business practice and development, with the aim of strengthening social license and enriching the understanding and experience of all stakeholders in an enterprise or project. "One of the things that's interesting to me," says Moffat, "is that those companies that are able to build trust inside the building, within their teams, are able to build trust most effectively outside the building."

Vanessa Gavan, Founder and Joint Managing Director



SOURCE: WORLD BANK WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT, 2013.

of Maximus says that today's employees, customers and the public in general expect more transparency from corporate leaders than ever. Communicating values with candour, conviction and integrity is essential to gaining trust. "We trust what we know," says Gavan, "and if we never allow people to really know us, we can never really expect to be trusted."

CO-CREATION: AN INCLUSIVE MODEL FOR INNOVATION

At Horizon Power in Western Australia, Chief Executive Stephanie Unwin knows exactly what this means. When Unwin began her role in March 2019, she set about clarifying the energy provider's mission, values and objectives, by consulting with its 400-plus far-flung employees. Horizon Power's vast service area covers 2.3 million square kilometres in WA, with various small concentrations of population in tourist towns, mining camps, indigenous communities, regional centres and remote agricultural properties.

Operating in one of the most disrupted industries in the world

to provide enabling electricity that powers the varied ambitions of Horizon Power's constituents, Unwin embarked on a schedule of travelling to, and with, regional customer managers and service staff to better understand their challenges and the communities they seek to serve. "A core value to me is creating a shared vision. In order to do that, you've got ask your people, who are really the most insightful of anyone you could draw upon, 'What is it that we ought to be doing? And how should we be doing it?'"

Horizon Power's refreshed guiding principles have been developed from the inside out. "The first thing we stand for is community involvement, so we're not just going to give you something, we're going to co-create and deliver something together," says Unwin. "We seek to deeply understand what each of our communities want, and how we can, as the power system evolves over time, help to deliver into that."

Unwin says that Horizon Power's guiding principles –

71% BELIEVE CEOS SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD ON CHANGE RATHER THAN WAITING FOR GOVERNMENT TO IMPOSE IT

SOURCE: 2019 EDELMAN TRUST BAROMETER: EXPECTATIONS FOR CEOS REPORT

commitment to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; a cleaner, greener shared environment; and regions first – “translate into what we define as helping our communities to thrive, and as a result having the social licence to operate”.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU FORMS THE BASIS OF TRUST

Part of being known is being prepared to express opinions on contentious topics from climate change to public policy. “Twenty years ago, leaders had no business having an opinion on whether gay marriage should be legalised, or taking a position on climate change,” says Gavan. “Now it’s an expectation. And that’s where the authenticity comes in: as a leader you have to do the work and make sure that you really know what you are about and what you care about, because your choices and decisions must also be congruent with that.” The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer: Expectations for CEOs found that 71 per cent of global respondents are looking to their employers for leadership around such issues.

If communication and congruence are at the heart of engendering trust, achieving the right balance between strength and vulnerability requires more

complex judgement calls, says Gavan. Moffat has found in his work with Voconiq that clients who practise vulnerability in a safe place, within their own leadership teams, are more relaxed with expressing vulnerabilities in the broader realm, with stakeholders.

“Companies that don’t exercise those skills find it really challenging,” he says.

REINVESTING IN HUMAN POTENTIAL IS KEY

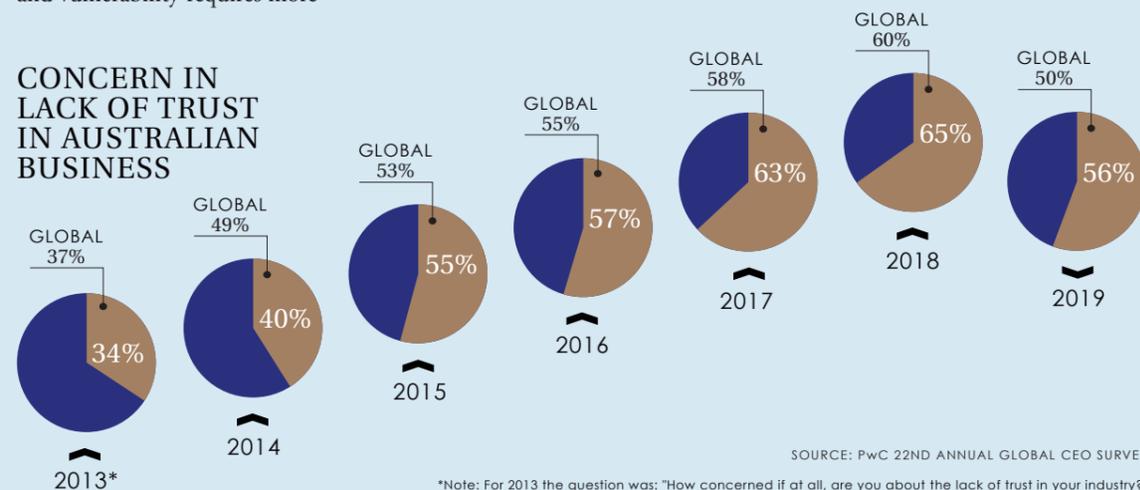
Moffat’s research also shows that many companies have, over the past 10 years, allowed their trusted standing with employees to deteriorate as they rush to meet other challenges: “They might have moved to short-term contracts or to employing more casual workers.” Such decisions, poorly managed, “really undermine the esprit de corps, the connections within companies, and people’s commitment to the organisation,”

he says. Consequently, employees are “less likely to defend the company, to promote the company, or to talk in favourable ways in public about what it is doing”.

Trust is both an attitude and an action, notes Gavan. “While individual ‘willingness to be vulnerable’ is essential, there must be action that follows for trust to be made real. This is the choice to trust,” she says. “In conditions where there is perceived psychological or personal risk, that choice is unlikely to be made.”

Gavan believes that emotional commitment and discretionary effort are the greatest things an organisation can ask of its people. “You can’t ask for emotional commitment to your company,” she says, “unless you’re willing to give commitment in return; where

CONCERN IN LACK OF TRUST IN AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS



SOURCE: PWC 22ND ANNUAL GLOBAL CEO SURVEY

*Note: For 2013 the question was: “How concerned if at all, are you about the lack of trust in your industry?”

everyone does their best work, to the best of their ability, and strives to create value in the organisation.”

Arup is known for its commitment to nurturing a diversity of talent. “We set out to find good people from whatever background and we’re clear that we want to be a diverse organisation,” says Chamley. “Our colleagues and people are at the heart of what we do. We are owned in trust, which is a form of employee ownership.”

The values of the company’s late founder, Ove Arup, pervade the global organisation of 14,000 ‘specialists’ working to “shape a better world”, as its website describes it. Chamley says Arup studied philosophy before engineering and had a ‘humanist’ approach to life: “His ethos of straight and honourable dealings and being very human in what we do was incredibly important to him and remains incredibly important in our organisation.”

“Trust-building is a dynamic process,” says Gavan. Typically, the focus is on the trustworthiness of the leader, however, an underestimated factor are the needs of individuals. The safety of each team member and their natural propensity to trust will precede their assessment of trustworthiness. Until information is available that supports trust, the trustor will base their decisions on their own internal dialogue. “Getting to the heart of the individual and matching follower needs with early leadership behaviours is what builds longer-lasting trust,” she adds.

Trust within Arup inspires employees to rise to any challenge, and the company is “trusted to deliver”, says Chamley of Arup’s relationship with its clients. “We started in Australia with the Sydney Opera House, which was a bit of a challenge,” he smiles over the

phone, “but we never shied away from the complexity.” He says the way Arup responds to both the straightforward and the wickedly challenging, means that “clients continue to put their trust in us”.

TRUST BUILDS CONSENSUS AND ENABLES ACTION

“Trust matters,” write the authors of the ANO 2019, because “it enables businesses to leverage their relationships with employees, stakeholders, regulators, customers and clients to invest and innovate, and it empowers governments to make necessary changes to policy and programs”.

ANO 2019 is designed to focus Australians, and particularly leaders in all sectors, on what it will take to achieve a Vision Outlook – the most positive future scenario of a thriving society and a robust, resilient economy. Trust is part of the identified necessary culture shift that will enable healthy risk-taking in Australia, and encourage engagement, curiosity and collaborative problem solving.

“What comes out of the CSIRO report,” says Gavan, is “if we want to be a nation that innovates better, that’s going to ultimately improve economic conditions for Australian organisations and our economy, we have to have a more exploratory nature and think longer range”.

Rebuilding trust with employees and the public will, perhaps paradoxically, confer greater freedom on leaders to test new paradigms and approaches and to act decisively. “Trust allows you to be more agile,” concludes Gavan. “It takes unnecessary process and protocols out of the equation because the people around you are enabling and supporting you. It’s critical to unlocking longer term thinking and growth.”

BY: NATALIE FILATOFF

VOCONIQ: CSIRO’S TRUST SERVICE

In 2007, Kieren Moffat was mid-PhD and working as a leadership consultant to a mining company. Each day he would drive into the NSW mine site. One day, placards at the gate might say, “Mining is killing the earth”; the next, they read: “Get a job, you hippie!”

“This conversation between different groups in the community was much more interesting to me than what I was doing inside the fence, so I applied my studies and research to understanding that conversation and trying to facilitate a more constructive one,” says Moffat. Improving mutual trust and the social licence to operate could only benefit both groups, he reasoned.

Over a period of 11 years at CSIRO, Moffat and his team developed a system of voluntary surveys, and analysis of the resulting data, which shares scientifically proven insights between industries/governments/companies and communities.

Voconiq (which stands for “voice-connected IQ”) was formed in 2019 to bring the rigorously tested platform to market. The company’s first service, Voconiq Local Voices, is now working to give voice to community members all over the world.

While many companies realise they can no longer expect to simply maximise profits to shareholders without considering customers as community members, their approaches to conflict resolution and relationship building are still “top down. “There’s real work to be done, and that’s the space we operate in,” says Moffat.

Currently under development is a version of Local Voices specifically designed to give voice to Australia’s Indigenous people and other First Nation groups around the world. “It’s a long, long journey,” says Moffat, but “the Indigenous voice has real value, and if we can find ways to amplify it, that’s the start of building trust.”

PHOTOGRAPHY: ISTOCKPHOTO. TRUST AND POWER BY NIKLAS LUHMANN, PUBLISHED BY WILEY, \$39.95.



THE RISE OF THE TRIBE

In this tech-heavy age, human connection is vital. Leaders who understand this ensure their workplace fosters a healthy culture ultimately benefiting everyone, says Maximus Founder and Joint Managing Director, Vanessa Gavan.

I have to begin by stating a sobering fact: we are living in an age where the rates of depression and anxiety are unprecedented. Safe Work Australia reports that a staggering 91 per cent of all workers' compensation claims were related to mental health in the five years to 2015, listing causes such as poor support, poor workplace relationships, poor environmental conditions and poor organisational change management.

Knowing that we have unhappier workforces calls for an urgent rethink of how we as leaders can help to create environments that encourage better human connections at work. How do we ensure that there's space for personality, for play, for individual purpose and for conversations that have, on the surface, nothing to do with daily business, but in reality are key to its success?

We have lost the places and methods of how people connect and belong to communities at work, and as a result organisations have lost their place in

participating in those communities. Clever leaders see that and are finding ways to bring those communities back. The productivity agenda has been well entrenched for decades and is unlikely to change, yet we need to carve out space for it to be productivity *plus* community.

It's not a case of returning to the *Happy Days* era, much less the destructive hedonism we saw play out on *Mad Men*. We have achieved so many great things in modern society and through the evolution of tech, but we've also traded off some things that are fundamental human needs. The need to connect and the need to belong sit at the top of the list.

THE MIGHT OF MICRO-TRIBES

I am not saying this is a binary issue and our workplaces are void of these things. I am urging you to cast your mind to the lessons of anthropology and reflect on the essential notions of tribe and how it solves age-old needs for people.

The first one is the human need for connection at a deep level – being known, accepted and belonging to a group addresses that need. Tribes experience the culture together and enjoy its rituals, traditions, food, family and achieve together.

Tribes also hold onto a narrative about what's right, what's wrong, what works, what's dangerous. They meet each other in their need for safety, security and survival. They have these in-built safekeeping behaviours on how to thrive. In traditional cultures, stories and legends were vessels for essential advice: where to find food and what to be careful of.

Only a century or so ago, a village was a tribe: growing food together and sharing it and enjoying each other's company and caring for their community and environment holistically.

In modern life, we have lost touch with some of these fundamentals: the time to grow food and connect with nature, time to connect without agenda, even at the extremes the space to enjoy family time and sustain deep relationships with friends. Knowing that people are feeling isolated – and seeing the evidence in our depression rates – how can we continue to ignore the signals? How can we capture the things that have fulfilled tribes for decades, making them relevant to modern life?



An organisation is already a natural home for micro-tribes – subgroups that have found common ground connecting them. But as we evolve in the current context many continue to be stifled. Perhaps by increasing pressures at work, by the constant flow of information through technical rather than personal channels and via a mindset that has switched off to paying attention to the things that make it thrive. We might still have a water cooler, but we rarely stand around it to chat. Several things play into it, but I regard the mental-health crisis as intrinsically linked to a diminished sense of purpose, connection and belonging at work.

It's a misstep to believe you can influence an organisation's tribes and culture solely from the top down. With the flattening of hierarchy and trust in peer feedback, there is much power in peer relationships. I believe human social organisations must be evolved through both the people and the leadership collectives.

Within the people communities, it's natural for micro-tribes to spring up. They operate with a set of common objectives, ways of working, and a narrative about the organisation, its people, its leaders. They connect around the fact that they share a similar view of the world. Imagine if their view is one of commitment to the agenda and evangelism of the business, including what is unique and special about it? Instead, in many workplaces, the narrative is positive about their peers and the work they perform but emotionally disconnected beyond a special few, and the company and collective leadership are often viewed

with skepticism. This is the equivalent of a tribe that doesn't trust their chief.

We work with great companies who do intense work with their leaders on connection and purpose, and we see such success there. We have seen leaders totally shift in their emotional commitment as a result of clarity of purpose and conviction. This is wonderful but only valuable when it filters through to the people in the broader organisation they are leading. This means leaders within organisations must consistently engage differently around the emotional commitment of their people, finding less traditional ways to achieve it.

For leaders, the challenge is to genuinely connect and influence performance at scale through their tribe's sense of belonging and commitment. Driving performance and the culture creed from the top is still a strategy being adopted across the market, yet many are seeing the value of complementary social approaches to bringing performance, commitment, connection and culture to life through the business. The first step towards a new, more progressive approach is aligning on the foundations of how communities thrive and a recognition of the things that exist in your world and those you need to bring to life for your people.

CREATING PATHS TO PLACES OF CONNECTION

When the tech companies led the charge in offering employees great food and places to share it, we soon found that it was so much more than a cool perk. Meals have always been something communal. In the

“THE ‘TRADITIONAL’ TRIBES THAT STILL EXIST IN OUR WORLD STRIP EVERYTHING BACK TO THE MOST COMMON DRIVERS FOR HUMAN BEHAVIOUR.”

NATALIE PETERS,
ALUMNA OF
MAXIMUS
AND RECENT
EXECUTIVE
OF TELSTRA

tiny micro-tribes of our families, most of us really put a lot of importance on coming together for meals. It's a struggle to make happen sometimes, but most of us still hold a shared meal with family as precious time.

I'm not saying food answers everything, but that movement across tech industries was clever, because everyone was competing on benefits and offering all sorts of material incentives. But with food, the tech companies were saying: "I'll provide the biggest benefit: connection." By making a place where cultures could naturally develop around that communal sharing of good food, connection follows naturally. The concept of placemaking is used across the market from the shaping of cities, to retail, to our workplace dynamics.

At Maximus, we do the same. We're a boutique firm, so we must be strategic and deliberate about our benefits, but great food is one of the things we offer and it's part of a lot of social interaction. Some of it's just catching up over breakfast in the office, but a lot is barbecues, lunches and celebrations, and it connects us all to each other. We have a sense of tribe in the firm that is connected deeply, physically and digitally.

Ironically, the material benefits become less important when people feel genuinely connected to your company, to the culture, which is when they are prepared to give an organisation much deeper commitment, and more discretionary effort because the company is a connected part of their life.

Once leaders become adept at identifying these micro-tribes, they can step into them and leverage their influence. Needless to say, this requires maximum emotional intelligence and it must be genuine... it's not infiltration, it's joining in. Once you understand the make-up of these groups, you can see them as coalitions of the willing – they're the people who are going to get into organisational challenges and help solve problems, and leaders who give such groups those opportunities will reap the rewards.

In this multi-method, always-on age, we need to carve out the space for some of those special rituals that are community building. Organisations must step into it in a way that they're naturally part of it. It's about creating the conditions for it, it's social things and rituals that are culture building rather than this purist-productivity focus. (M)

TRANSFORMING TELSTRA'S CULTURE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Natalie Peters, alumna of Maximus, spent several years at Telstra, where she led a major organisational transformation as the executive for 'Ways of Working'. Here, she shares the experience of shifting the Telstra culture, and how she became drawn to thinking about it anthropologically...

"My last significant role at Telstra was changing the nature and structure of the organisation using agile methodology. When

I got into it, I knew it was about culture but I felt there was a human element missing to how I was thinking about the transformation. So, I went looking for answers and engaged in some study on social and political anthropology with Oxford University.

I learnt about the genesis of human connections and how globalisation has blurred our judgement on understanding individuals and how communities exist. We studied Australian Aboriginal

tribes, as well as tribes in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Africa. This helped me to appreciate how rituals connect people, the importance of every individual in a tribe and how communities coexist.

In large corporate organisations, one can feel like a commodity. Perhaps people have been grouped and the essence of the individual can get lost. In many ways the individual ceases to exist and it therefore becomes easy for one to lose empathy

and connection to a purpose. The exposure to this study during the transformation at Telstra was really helpful as it raised awareness and I worked hard to ensure we kept bringing our focus back to the human elements.

I was curious to understand more deeply about cultures. The 'traditional' tribes that still exist in our world offer so much insight. These communities strip everything back to the most common drivers for human behaviour.

COMPILED BY: JANE NICHOLLS
ILLUSTRATION: THE PROJECT TWINS / THE ILLUSTRATION ROOM.

I learned that every individual within these tribes plays an important role, and the roles are very clear, so there's a purpose for everyone within a tribe.

In PNG, the tribes can be very adversarial, however one tribe for example may have land and the other might have crops. They know they need each other to coexist and subsequently there are rituals in place to keep these tribes in a state of contentment. One example illustrated this to

me: members from one tribe travel a dangerous journey to deliver a necklace, which really has no monetary worth, to another tribe. But the very act of going on this mission, means peace and trade is maintained. There's a sense of reciprocity: 'I'm giving you the necklace, you will help me protect my land', or 'I'll get access to your crops'.

The corporate world can be transactional – 'what have you got for me?' 'When can I get it?' 'I'll work out if I want

to give you something...' Where's the sense in this being the right place for people to thrive?

To make an organisation shift its culture and change how people work, you simply must create a true sense of community and a stronger sense of connection to a greater and deeper purpose.

However you articulate the current disruption to mankind – globalisation, automation – when you're going through a change as we experienced at Telstra,

there must be something greater than the headline reason for change. Humans need a mission and a purpose to align with their identity, particularly in all that noise of organisation change. When you can truly offer that, people connect to it and embrace it and from there it's extremely powerful for people, the broader organisation and ultimately the customer."

» Natalie Peters is now head of human resources at SKY UK, London.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY



PHOTOGRAPHY: ISTOCKPHOTO.

In this section we encourage leaders to lean into some of the major trends and challenges technology is presenting us with.

+ INDISTRACTABILITY: CREATING SUPERHUMAN TEAMS
MAXIMUS DISCUSSES TECH ADDICTION WITH NIR EYAL.

+ DECONSTRUCTING LEARNING
DISSECTING AND SIMPLIFYING HOW HUMANS AND MACHINES LEARN DIFFERENTLY.

+ SIGNAL V NOISE
VANESSA GAVAN DELVES INTO HOW LEADERS CAN IDENTIFY WHAT'S IMPORTANT AND WHAT'S NOT, IN THIS NOISY WORLD.



As technology wrestles for our attention in the workplace, how do leaders ensure their workforce can manage distraction and afford the crucial time needed for deep thought, innovation and human connection? Maximus investigates...



Several years ago a critical discussion began about the ethics of technology, specifically the intentional design of distraction and addiction into hardware and software.

The bottomless scrolling on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, the constant vibrations, beeps and buzzes of smartphones and the ease with which people could be invited to meetings, messaged while working at their computer and contacted at home were used to explain why workforces are becoming increasingly distracted, anxious and burnt-out.

Some of this conversation was attributed to a seminal document, a 141-slide PowerPoint 'manifesto', released internally at Google in 2013 by Tristan Harris. Then a design ethicist with the

+ Leading author, lecturer and investor Nir Eyal rejects the notion that social media platforms are 'addictive'.



INDISTRACTABILITY: CREATING SUPERHUMAN TEAMS

search giant, Harris argued the attention of users should be better respected by designers of software and hardware.

Soon though, the conversation matured to allow for the fact that humans were capable of independent thought and were not slaves to the machine. The focus turned to what individuals and organisations could do to make the most of the benefits that technology offers, while avoiding the pitfalls.

Researchers investigated how much time was stolen by technology and other distractions. Depending on who you believe, staff have somewhere between 90 minutes and two-and-a-half hours of productive time per day once emails and meetings are removed. Links have been drawn between constant connectivity, anxiety and burnout. The UK's Mental Health Foundation says the increasingly demanding work culture and the always-on nature of today's jobs, thanks to technology, is the "biggest and most pressing challenge to the mental health of the general population".

So what? Computer science professor Cal Newport, author of *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World*, says about 30 minutes of focus is needed before residue from messages and emails dissolves. In other words, workers are now in a permanent state of reduced cognitive capacity, making them frustrated and dissatisfied as a result.

For leaders, there is added complexity: the responsibility and accountability held by senior leaders mean there is an expectation to be available, while finding a way to integrate work and life meaningfully.

Today's leaders are also expected to manage the effects of technology on their people. The abundance of technology results in a paucity of attention. Attention is required for deep thought. Deep thought is required for innovation and problem solving. But when the greatest distraction is in our pockets, around our wrists, by our bedsides and on our desks, is it even possible to take back control?

The answer is yes, and the solution begins with the leader. For guidance we spoke with Nir Eyal, speaker, thought leader, angel investor, Stanford Graduate School of Business lecturer and author of *Indistractable: How to Control Your Attention and Choose Your Life*.

[Q&A]

MM MAGAZINE: IS THERE AN ARGUMENT THAT SOME TECHNOLOGY HAS ADDICTION INTENTIONALLY BUILT IN?

NIR EYAL: This question is often asked but the word 'addiction' is the wrong terminology. Addiction denotes a pusher, a dealer and mind control. That is not what's happening here. We're not freebasing Facebook and we're not injecting Instagram. That's ridiculous. These products aren't addictive to most people. People get addicted to alcohol; it doesn't mean everyone who drinks is an alcoholic. Not everyone who plays poker is a problem gambler. So why do we have these double standards for technology? When we use such language, it makes us free of responsibility. Instead, we should call it what it is, which is a 'distraction'.

MM: SO WE NEED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR OWN BEHAVIOURS TO FIGURE OUT WHY WE'RE DOING THIS?

NE: That's right. Do we think if Facebook shut down today, people would start reading Chaucer and Shakespeare? Of course not. We'll go back to doing all the things that distracted us in the past. Distraction's nothing new. ☺

What is new is that it is easier than ever to be distracted because technology is more pervasive and persuasive than ever before. It's right there in your pocket.

MM: RESEARCH TELLS US THAT PARTLY AS A RESULT OF TECHNOLOGICAL DISTRACTION, INDIVIDUALS DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME FOR DEEP THOUGHT AT WORK. WHY ARE SOME BUSINESSES STILL PERFORMING WELL AND OTHERS FALLING BEHIND?

NE: When you mix technology into a toxic work culture, bad things happen. If your boss calls you at eight o'clock on a Friday night and says they need you to do something, what's the source of distraction? Is it the telephone he used to call you, or the email account he used to reach out to you? Or is it the crappy boss? What you find is that technology at the hands of an organisation with bad company culture creates terrible results. But technology is not the root cause. We love to blame technology, but technology is the tool. The real culprit is company culture.

MM: SO MANAGING DISTRACTION AT WORK BEGINS WITH CULTURE CHANGE?

NE: That's right. First, we need to realise people can't do their best work when constantly distracted. Knowledge workers have one job – to come up with novel solutions to hard problems. That's how we beat the competition and improve our customers' lives. But we can't



PRACTICAL STEPS FOR DISSOLVING DISTRACTION

Nir Eyal offers four top tips to reduce distraction in the workplace. None of these, he stresses, replace a culture that supports intractability.

STEP

Train staff to plan their day, every day. If they don't plan their day, somebody else will.

STEP

Spend 15 minutes taming your tech. Switch off notification settings and engage 'Do Not Disturb' settings on your various devices during certain hours.

STEP

Agree on a physical sign that indicates somebody is not to be disturbed. It might be a red card that sits on top of a computer monitor, for instance. Ensure these signs are respected.

STEP

Use a focus friend (an actual colleague who can keep an eye on you and keep you honest), and/or an app that takes away access to distractive software, to ensure you stay on track.

do that to our full capability when constantly distracted, and the sad truth is that the average employee is constantly reacting to emails, group chat messages, to meetings, etc. The average knowledge worker only has about 90 minutes for everything that is not emails and meetings. There's very little time for real work and as a result the real work gets done after work. Our families, our health and our sanity pay the price.

MM: ONCE A BUSINESS ACCEPTS FOCUSED WORK ADDS TO PROFITS AND STAFF SATISFACTION, WHAT'S NEXT?

NE: The harder sell is to help folks realise that copying another company's practices

doesn't work. I see this all the time. Leaders say, 'We're going to do what this other company did by giving everyone email-free Fridays, or no-meeting Wednesdays'. It doesn't work because you're copying someone else's test answers. The real problem is something else. It might be a company culture where people can't talk about their problems, for example.

MM: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE WHEN A COMPANY GETS IT RIGHT?

NE: There are three attributes of a company that doesn't have a problem with distraction. Number one, the company offers employee psychological safety. That means staff can voice a concern without fear of retribution. Number two is that these companies give employees a forum to discuss their comments, concerns and questions, and senior management acknowledge and respond to those concerns. The third, and most important, attribute is that management must exemplify what it means to be intractable.

MM: DO YOU OFTEN SEE MANAGEMENT EXEMPLIFYING THE CORRECT BEHAVIOUR?

NE: In almost every meeting I attend, if somebody is using the phone when they shouldn't be, it's the person with the highest salary. This is toxic. Soon, everybody is checking their devices and nobody is present in the meeting. Leaders must start practising being intractable, showing people how much better life is when they are intractable. Then they can infect others with what we call 'social antibodies'. Culture flows downhill like water. (M)

HOW SLACK MANAGES DISTRACTION

Team collaboration app Slack has been both praised for improving productivity and accused of causing distraction. Nir Eyal visited the company's headquarters to see how it handles distraction.

"If you think technology is the source of the problem, then the people at Slack should be the most distracted people on Earth, right?" Eyal says. "They use their product more than anyone, and yet that's not the case."

At Slack, he says, by 6pm the office is empty. There is little-to-no communication on weekends "because the culture is to respect people's time off and give them time to think."

A sign on the wall of the company headquarters says, in large, bright letters, 'Work hard and go home'. That's the culture, summed up in five words.

INTEGRATE WORK AND LIFE MEANINGFULLY

Many of the leaders Maximus encounter struggle to integrate work and life in a meaningful way, says Dr Nora Koslowski, Associate Director, Leadership Research at Maximus.

Koslowski's research has revealed that people tend to blame technology for the lack of control they feel over navigating work-life tensions. While technology is part of the problem, Koslowski says, it's not at the root of the cause.

"Saying that we merely respond to technology is dangerous because it absolves us of responsibility," she says. "How you use technology is how it gains its meaning. So, if you're a senior executive then you have the responsibility to role model. The way you use technology

impacts other people, who will watch you and model their behaviour on yours."

For leaders, she says, it's important to reflect on the public messages that their own use of technology broadcasts. While the magnitude of many senior roles does mean an increased expectation of availability, leaders at all levels can be equipped to make choices to integrate work and life with clarity and intent-driven action.

"Do you connect, or are you distracted during meetings?" Koslowski asks. "What sort of agency do you practise over technology? Do you choose not to make or take a work call at night? Do you choose not to send emails at the weekend? Do you have your laptop in

front of you during meetings? Do you take a call during a one-on-one meeting?"

These questions are at their core about presence and about spending your time wisely, whether at home or work.

All this is important for two reasons. One is because it's a productivity issue. Technological distraction impairs our ability to produce quality work. The deep thought that knowledge work requires is far more difficult if attention span is limited to the minutes between distractions. "The second is that people are personally feeling it," Koslowski says. "We know it's a problem. We know we're constantly distracted both at work and at home. There's a personal cost and a lot of associated guilt."

ALL COPY WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY CHRIS SHEEDY. PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF NIR EYAL.

DECONSTRUCTING LEARNING

(AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW HUMANS AND MACHINES LEARN DIFFERENTLY)

As machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly take on work within service organisations, it's up to leaders to distinguish how machines and humans vary when it comes to learning and leverage the opportunity for improved human performance.

In 2016 Microsoft experimented in the 'conversational understanding' realm with a Twitter chatbot it called Tay. The aim was for Tay to draw on public data and scour Twitter to build on its library of knowledge... the more people chatted with Tay, the smarter it would get. Well, that was the plan.

Within a day of launching, Tay was spouting rather a large

proportion of racist, misogynistic and nonsensical remarks among its 96,000 tweets. Some were a simple echo of the trolling messages that mischievous Twitter users had sent; others seemingly constructed from some of the nastier utterances from deep within Twitter's databases.

"When AI gets wired on something that then scales, the impact can blow out quite quickly," says Daniella Aburto Valle, founder of the Australian chapter of Humans for AI, a group of experts in data science who aim to bring diversity to AI development.

This example of good AI gone bad speaks volumes to the speed at which technology can pick up information and run with it, but is it always a good thing? And what part does the human element have to play in learning for the future?

It's an exciting and hugely disruptive time for organisations and for societies globally as we face the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution': a nexus of technology where ubiquitous mobile communication, machine learning and AI, robotics, the Internet of Things and fast-advancing science herald an increasingly complex future.

Humankind has finally worked out how to outsource thinking. Now that we can teach machines how to learn, AI can help us fast-track all kinds of work and achieve goals previously impossible.

Service organisations are already seeing disruption as chatbots become skilful enough to serve customers – and this is just the edge of the wedge.

Capturing the magnitude of this opportunity sits in understanding nuance. Machines learn differently to humans – and understanding the intricate differences between how machines and humans synthesise new information is one key to finding new roles and the right application for each in tomorrow's workplace.

Dr Amanda Allisey, Principal Consultant at Maximus, works with organisations at the cutting edge of introducing new technologies to the workplace, and believes that the advent of intelligent machines opens up opportunities for more interesting and diverse roles for human workers within organisations.

"The challenge for leaders is to find ways to create environments where humans thrive, and to help humans create ways of working that extend and leverage organisational performance," says Allisey.

"The relationship between humans and their environment will change to include a new intermediary: machines that can learn and can perform 'thinking' tasks for humans. The architecture of how this plays out sits in the hands of the human," says Allisey.

MACHINES WITH BRAINS: SIMPLY EXPLAINED

Those outside the computer science field often use the terms AI and machine learning interchangeably, but there are some distinctions between the two – and some experts also differentiate between several levels of AI.

Machine learning involves programming that uses neural networks – a set of algorithms designed to recognise patterns.

In machine learning, a human must program the information into the machine, select the data and run hours of training programs, then test the computer's response and fix any problems spotted in the data.

Netflix and Amazon use machine learning to make suggestions for movies or products that you might like based on your previous choices, for example. But machine learning can only choose a solution based on data it has received – so outcomes are often literal, small-minded and annoyingly pedantic.

AI is one step beyond machine learning, taking data that has been learned, including past experiences, and then changing its own future behaviour. Examples include speech recognition, which improves as it becomes accustomed to your voice, and image classification – like the photo tagging in cloud-based programs such as Google Photos and Pinterest.

Various experts suggest three different 'types' of intelligence: artificial narrow intelligence, which can only do one thing; artificial general intelligence, which can do a broad range of things (as a human does); and artificial super-intelligence, which – at this point – is a hypothetical final step in AI.

"We are giving leaders the exposure, insight and learning to work across this continuum. They must have a curious digital mindset and be able to understand and enable the application of these capabilities to their unique business requirements," Allisey explains.

THE DIFFERENCES INFORM THE OPPORTUNITIES

We must move beyond the narrative that machine learning and AI will step in and take over tasks that humans perform. The



narrative should recognise there is just so much that machines cannot do. It must focus not on loss but on leverage, opportunity and responsibility.

Humans can take intuitive leaps, connect seemingly disparate bodies of knowledge and draw meaning from them. We are programmed to ignore many distractions in our environment, allowing us to focus on the things that matter.

That makes humans less capable of painstakingly sifting through large datasets and applying consistent rules to each – we get bored and make mistakes. Humans are far better at responding to a new event, drawing on a vast range of experiential information and applying it.

Research shows that many human behaviours are instinctual. “Infants, for example, have innate moral judgment and can recognise right from wrong,” says Allisey.

Humans also rapidly assimilate many disparate social cues to assess mood. “Most people can walk into a meeting and instinctively recognise whether people are hostile, welcoming or indifferent.”

“Humans use context in order to learn,” Allisey continues. “A human

can extrapolate based on prior experience. We make models in our brain that we use to interpret future situations.”

Computers learn in a far more linear way, using ‘brute force’ of sifting through vast amounts of data and information as fast as possible to solve a problem with the most likely probability.

There have been various attempts to design an AI that learns in a more human way.

One example is Google’s DeepMind neural network which includes AlphaGo, an AI program designed to play the board game Go. It used a supervised learning protocol, where it analysed large numbers of games that humans played against each other.

In 2016, AlphaGo beat Lee Sedol, the human world champion Go player, in a five-game match, and AlphaGo has used its learning from Go matches to regularly beat itself in games of Go – and extrapolate these lessons to games of chess.

DeepMind is now using reinforcement learning, where it combines a policy network –

which assesses probabilities – and a value network, which assesses its own performance.

Machines – at present – have far less to work with than humans, who are still far quicker to make snap character judgements and identify creative new solutions.

But because machines don’t filter out much of the extraneous ‘noise’ which humans ignore to make quick judgements, they are very good at assembling meaning from huge datasets. For example, in 2018, DeepMind’s AlphaFold program solved a huge challenge in science in helping to predict 25 of 43 protein structures based on amino acid sequences.

AI FAIL IS ALL AROUND US

Author and AI research scientist Janelle Shane says AI is already everywhere – and one of the ways to work out how to use it best is to find out where and how AI performs at its worst.

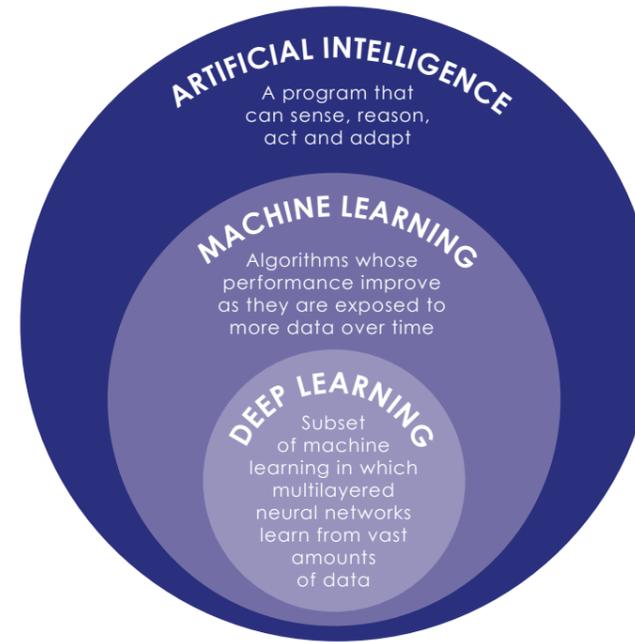
In her new book, Shane writes that AI “... shapes your online experience, determining the ads you see and suggesting videos while detecting social media bots and malicious websites.”

The book, *You Look Like a Thing and I Love You*, released in November 2019, has emerged from her blog, *AI Weirdness*, which documents interesting experiments with AI.

“Companies use AI-powered resume scanners to decide which candidates to interview, and they use AI to decide who should be approved for a loan,” Shane writes.

However, she warns, AI is not flawless. “Ad delivery haunts our browsers with endless ads for boots we’ve already bought. Spam filters let the occasional obvious scam through or filter out a crucial email at the most inopportune time.”

One of the many examples of AI fails that Shane lists on her blog



includes the time when she ran a photo of Darth Vader through an automated image recognition program. (“It declared that Darth Vader was a tree and proceeded to argue with me about it,” she writes.)

“Pranking an AI – giving it a task and watching it fail – is a great way to learn about it.”

KEEPING TABS ON DIVERSITY

Daniella Aburto Valle’s expertise in the merging of data science with large-scale renewable energy development saw her engaged in a major project with GE Digital, where complex software algorithms were used to optimise equipment life expectancy in wind farms.

Valle says that it’s early days in business, and most applications involving machines that learn operate in data-rich environments where machines don’t need to move beyond their programming.

“The mechanical, repetitive jobs are the low-hanging fruit when it comes to automation; inputting data, cycling information from one place to another – we are already seeing that, because the cost-benefits are really compelling,” she says.

She believes that as a society, we need to think both strategically and ethically about the jobs that will provide opportunities for the next step: AI where machines use previous interactions to improve future decisions.

The dilemma is that AI can reinforce and amplify undesirable biases, she says. “As you leverage AI, you’re wiring certain responses and creating algorithms that harden a specific point of view or a response that you have.”

This is because both AI and machine learning are based on huge volumes of existing data. Research shows that when AI builds algorithms for further learning based on real-world data, such as Google news, it will replicate and then amplify stereotypes – such as associating women with domestic chores and men with sports.

Another example is a chatbot, created using online responses. “If those responses are created taking in mind only one population or one perspective, then you’re hardening that bias,” says Valle.

These examples all show that without an instinctual moral sense, nor an ability to make social judgements from disparate information, machines are likely to need human intervention for the foreseeable future.

Humans for AI helps organisations develop AI that includes diverse views from the outset and which employs strategies to avoid shutting out large sectors of the population. For example: there’s extensive work on voice recognition so

that it recognises people speaking English as a second language.

“Human-centred design is the key,” says Valle. “Putting your customers front and centre, and making sure you understand how they’re going to be experiencing your product – a chatbot, for example – and how you can make it more eloquent.”

Whatever the development, Valle believes there will always need to be a place where a human steps in. “Having humans in the loop allows you to have an intervention with that linear thinking of AI,” she says.

“The key difference between the way that machines learn and the way humans learn, is that humans form mental models, using innate learning, emotion, context and concepts as well as past experience,” says Allisey. It’s important to remember, adds Allisey, that humans created machines, based on our own fundamental understanding about how we learn. (M)

BY: FRAN MOLLOY

“A HUMAN CAN EXTRAPOLATE BASED ON PRIOR EXPERIENCE. WE MAKE MODELS IN OUR BRAIN THAT WE USE TO INTERPRET FUTURE SITUATIONS”

DR AMANDA ALLISEY, PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT AT MAXIMUS

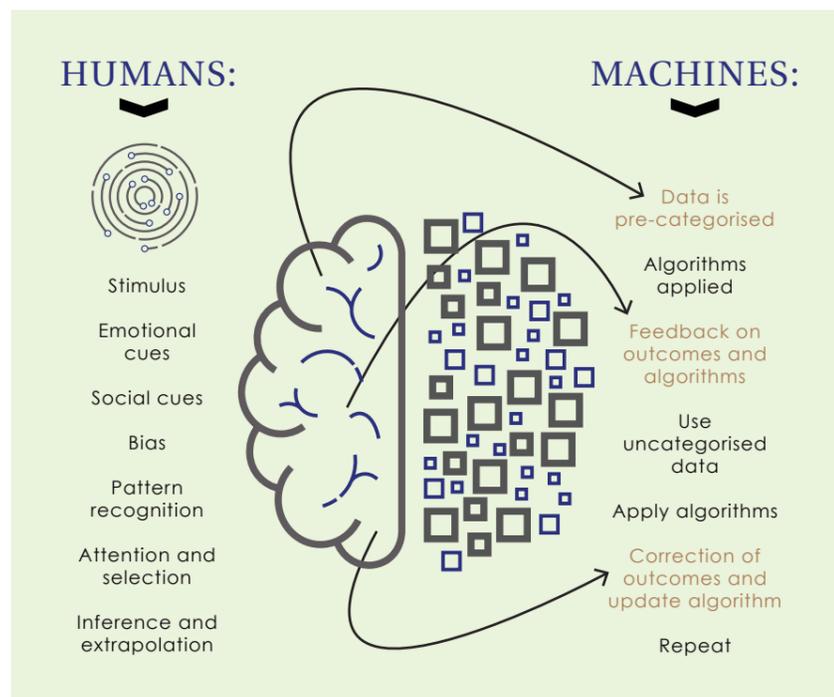


ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCKPHOTO, YOU LOOK LIKE A THING AND I LOVE YOU: HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WORKS AND WHY IT'S MAKING THE WORLD A WEIRDER PLACE, BY JANELLE SHANE, PUBLISHED BY HACHETTE, RRP \$52.95.

Maximus Founder and Joint Managing Director Vanessa Gavan wades through the fracas in our tech-orientated world to distinguish what leaders should intrinsically tap into and what they should ignore.

SIGNAL VS NOISE

We have long known that as leaders progress through the hierarchy of an organisation, and their roles expand and diversify, the biggest challenges they face are navigating the increased complexity, significant demands and widening breadth of responsibility. The expectations of impact drastically scale as one progresses to the top and tolerance for mistakes and experimentation narrows.

With organisations flattening and boundaries ahead of leaders becoming less visible, this challenge is more complex than ever, and more and more the burden of navigating through each stage sits firmly with the leader themselves.

A fundamental capability to thrive, as leaders progress into each new space – and achieve continued success – is the ability to evolve. Time as a resource is so critical and paramount to effective evolution, as is the capacity of bringing perspective and focus to the right things, at the right

time, for the right purpose... to separate signal from noise.

More vertical structures have in some ways enabled a breaking down of the challenge. However, with full diaries, complex lives, technology that is always on and (let's face it) distracting, there are aspects to all roles making it difficult to get lost in the noise. Having an agile approach and clear intention means one can pivot to bring focus to the big issues and opportunities.

Today's leaders can easily be full, busy and productive. The question is, are they differentiating their performance to the very top levels and evolving effectively by being value creative? The modern leader needs better perspective and context than ever and a sharp ability to recognise signal from noise is key to achieving it. How can people – in an age of immediacy, technology and stimulation – rise to the challenge, progress and become strategic?

A **SIGNAL** is a theme among the commotion. An anchor that pulls random data, thoughts and evidence into an integrative point of view or focus. Strategic leaders are deliberate, intuitive, skilled at what they focus their mind to. They show discipline with how, when and what they connect with. They can stop, think and reflect to bring focus to the right things and steer away from the lure of the action addiction.

This is logical to understand, but much harder to have the discipline to bring focus to and deliver upon. There are a few key dimensions to it. First, leaders need clarity on their direction and a discerning approach. Second, they must have clear intent and discipline around habitual behaviour, which includes the way you set boundaries professionally but also technologically. Last, you must develop the ability to leverage through others.

To leave a business better as a result of their impact requires the removal of distractions that derail and a cadence for action that is founded in clear intent. Develop a keen eye and ear for signal, and ruthlessly deprioritise the noise. Not only will you thank yourself, but so will the broader organisation and your people.

In this context, **NOISE** is about the constant flow and magnitude of information, cues and accountabilities we consciously and subconsciously attend to. The tasks, the people, the projects, the deadlines, the scenarios you are anticipating. It is all there swimming in our mind. The challenge in the amount of noise we attend to in today's environment is in its consequences. Getting caught up in ongoing noise can lead to "action addiction" – the unproductive and counter-intuitive addiction to the immediate gratification that comes from a consistent flow of completion and achievement of actions. We see this "action addiction" every day, culturally role-modelled by executives: the standard response we hear to "how are you?" is "busy" and "so much on". But rarely do we ask whether they're the right things and actions: are they the actions that will deliver our greatest impact and success? 

LEAVING SPACE FOR THE THINGS THAT MATTER

This whole edition has spoken to the importance of embracing the human behaviours that differentiate us, and in all this we must not forget the importance of purpose and connection – both things that can unwillingly be traded off when caught in the noise.

ILLUSTRATION: LISA BALEMI-HUGHES.

BEYOND THE OFFICE



PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF JACKALOPE GROUP.

Looking beyond the office to a future of creativity, purpose and holistic decision-making.

+ LEADING LIGHT
MEET LUCY KEELER, THE FIRST FEMALE LIGHT WALK CURATOR AT VIVID SYDNEY FESTIVAL AND A CHAMPION FOR VISUAL ARTS IN AUSTRALIA.

+ IMAGINATION AND COURAGE: TOOLS OF THE FUTURE THINKER
MAXIMUS TALKS TO AUTHOR BINA VENKATARAMAN ABOUT WHY WE STRUGGLE TO MAKE GOOD LONG-TERM DECISIONS AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.





Sydney artist Lucy Keeler has an enormous role. Her appointment last year as the Light Walk curator – as part of the Vivid Sydney Festival – after several years working alongside Destination NSW (DNSW), has allowed her to tap into her artistic vision for the iconic outdoor winter festival, as well as her passion for leading and nurturing the next generation of artists in Australia.

Her purpose: to bring art outside the ‘white cube,’ and to inspire and to admire. “I’ll always be ready to make an opportunity for someone with a great idea that they are passionate about, and that they are prepared to work hard to bring to fruition,” she says. For Keeler, art is about community, it’s about connecting with a wide audience, embracing technology and change – and learning, always learning.

[Q&A]

M MAGAZINE: YOU’VE BEEN ONE OF VIVID SYDNEY’S CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS SINCE THE FESTIVAL BEGAN, AND RECENTLY TAKEN ARTISTIC DIRECTION OF THE LIGHT PROGRAM (VIVID SYDNEY HAS THREE PILLARS: LIGHT, MUSIC AND IDEAS) AS THE VIVID SYDNEY LIGHT CURATOR. HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR JOURNEY?

LUCY KEELER: My first job for Vivid Sydney was splicing, mounting and hole punching PIGI projector film for Brian Eno’s ‘77 Million Paintings’ on Sydney Opera House, for The Electric Canvas. I was in my early 20s and fell in love with architectural projection. There is something about the technical complexity of storytelling on a building, which struck me as a compelling nut to crack and an exciting new way to make art. Vivid Sydney is an extraordinary incubator for artists working with light.

MM: WITH SO MANY YEARS INVOLVED WITH DNSW, WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD? HOW HAVE YOU STAYED FOCUSED, ENGAGED AND PASSIONATE THROUGHOUT EACH INSTALLATION OF VIVID SYDNEY?

LK: I am passionate about broadening perceptions in Australia around what is considered to be ‘art’. Light art all around the world is bringing people into the streets to see and feel something together. Australia still has some way to go in embracing light-based practice as art, and considering those who make it, to be artists. Light speaks across all

languages, ages and socio-economic divides, so what motivates me is taking art off white gallery walls and placing it outside in public spaces for *all* people. Art is for everyone and an artist is not always what you expect. If there’s one thing that really motivates me, it’s fostering artists from non-traditional and unlikely backgrounds (like mechatronics engineering or mathematics). It’s why the Vivid Sydney Light Walk is such an inspiring project to curate, because we showcase such an array of incredible works from artists who come from so many different walks of life.

MM: AT MAXIMUS WE TALK ABOUT DISRUPTION WITHIN INDUSTRIES AND HOW IT CAN BRING ABOUT CHANGE IN A POSITIVE WAY. CAN YOU DISCUSS THE DISRUPTIVE – AND PROMISING – CHANGES YOU SEE OCCURRING WITHIN THE ARTS WORLD AND WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE FOR UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS?

LK: Outdoor light and technology art is in an uncomfortable early stage of (non...) validation in the hallowed white cube of Australia’s fine art world, but I say ‘wake up’. The contextualisation of light-based practice within art history is quite simply in the post-contemporary present. Light belongs to all, and is experienced by every socio-economic, racial group and age, equally.

We have also seen a return of the traditional structured atelier system, by the nature of the collaborative, yet skill specialist, production of work within animation studios and light installation workshops. Contemporary western art throughout the 20th and early 21st century has seen the phenomenon of the ‘solo artist’ working alone in their studio, as standard professional practice. Light art is seeing the return of the assistant (or junior artist) learning their craft alongside senior or established artists, under a structured system of skills development.

MM: GIVEN THE NEED TO BALANCE COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL GOALS WITH THE LIGHT FESTIVAL, HOW HAS YOUR LEADERSHIP SHADOW SHAPED THE CULTURE AT VIVID SYDNEY?

LK: The culture at Vivid Sydney is one of work fast, do the work required to make good decisions, do it yesterday, and communicate effectively at all times. I love my job and feel a great sense of purpose in supporting and growing the artist community around the festival. I’m not interested in casting ☺

LEADING LIGHT

As the curator for Vivid Sydney’s Light Walk festival, Lucy Keeler melds her own creative talents with her pragmatic purpose in building and nurturing Australian artists. Here, she talks to Maximus about her artistic direction, her passion for this imaginative community and her love of lights...



A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR WOMEN

In 2019, Destination NSW launched 'Vivid School', a vocational education program for teenagers, which gave an opportunity for young people to meet the artists and technicians behind the projections and light installations in the festival program. The first session to be programmed and also to book out was 'Delicate Pixel Work (Girls Putting the 'A' in STEAM)'. "I'm very proud to be actively advocating for it," says Keeler. "And as the first female Light Walk curator, also be a part of an important change that's under way."

a leadership shadow. Not by myself. I walk toward the sun side-by-side with my team.

Vivid Sydney is owned, managed and produced by DNSW, the state government's tourism and major events agency. Vivid Sydney has been led by the DNSW CEO Sandra Chipchase*, who is also executive producer of Vivid Sydney, and is delivered by a large team at DNSW who all contribute something vital to the success of the event. Our festival team needs key leaders who work from within the group (not from outside of it), who can laugh heartily, work extremely hard and appreciate the hard work of others around them.

MM: WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP OR LEARNINGS?

LK: I enjoy pushing and evolving things. If there's a better way to do something, or a more effective way to display or experience a design then count me in, I'm happy to do the extra work to make it happen.

MM: WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER SUCCESS TO LOOK OR FEEL LIKE?

LK: The best part of my job is joining an audience, or walking around the light walk precinct that I've poured months of my soul into. Anonymity is a powerful way to get feedback because raw honesty is what you're going to get every time! Through the years I've heard it all – the good, the bad and the downright soul destroying, but I've also seen people cry with happiness, parents share a brief moment of wonder with their child, and even a few marriage proposals. The feeling for me, of real success, is quiet, anonymous and deeply satisfying.

MM: RECENTLY YOU SPOKE TO GUESTS AT MAXIMUS' "THE REAL. THE CURIOUS. THE RESOLUTE" EVENT ABOUT THE SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND PLANNING THAT GOES INTO BRINGING THE VIVID SYDNEY LIGHT WALK TO FRUITION. HOW WILL YOU CONTINUE TO INNOVATE FOR VIVID SYDNEY 2020?

LK: I love those words. The Real. The Curious. The Resolute. Because you can't be any one of those things without the others. I firmly believe that artists can, and should, earn a respectable living from their work. A creative ecosystem is continuing to grow year-on-year around the festival which sees more and more artists, technicians, architects, academics, mechatronics and electrical engineers join Vivid Sydney's unique artist community. As a result, Australia is currently producing some of the most sought-after light artists in the world. I don't care if you call yourself an artist or not. I'm going to show you that you are one. 

[FACT]
KEELER'S
VIVID
SYDNEY BY
NUMBERS

11
YEARS
AT VIVID

319
LIGHT
SCULPTURES

15
PROJECTION
ANIMATIONS

19
INDUSTRY
AWARDS

COMPILED BY: NATALIE CURR, FRAN MOLLOY AND PIPPA DUFFY. PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF DESTINATION NSW AND PAUL MCMILLAN. *SANDRA CHIPCHASE HELD THE POSITION OF CEO, DNSW AT TIME OF GOING TO PRINT.

IMAGINATION AND COURAGE

– TOOLS OF THE FUTURE THINKER

Will we leave time bombs or heirlooms in our wake?
Much depends on applying foresight and good judgment
to decisions made today, as Maximus discovers...

“To exercise foresight is to weigh what we know – and what we don't know – about what lies ahead, making the best call not just for the present, but for the sake of our future selves,” writes Bina Venkataraman, author of a new book, *The Optimist's Telescope: Thinking Ahead in a Reckless Age*.

For the past seven years, Venkataraman, a former journalist and climate adviser to the Obama administration, has investigated how individuals and leaders of organisations can overcome short-termism to make insightful decisions for improved outcomes on every metric. Now a teacher in Science, Technology and Society at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US, Venkataraman spoke with Maximus about the reasoning behind her book, and her belief that everyone can hone their ability to exercise good judgment. “There's a misconception that thinking ahead is the province of monks of a bygone era or the truly exceptional, but it's a capacity that we all have. A lot of it depends on the choices we make,” she says.

Surrounded by clouds of information, people tend to narrow their forecasts and sacrifice the good judgment that would lead to positive future consequences, in favour of instant gratification or immediate problem solving.

Examples of short-termism include scrambling to meet quarterly profit forecasts at the expense of investment in R&D, a source of future

prosperity; and the elephant in every boardroom – decision making that plunders the present, regardless of effects on our planet's dangerously changing climate. *The Optimist's Telescope* engages readers in historical and contemporary accounts of failed foresight, but also of rewarded future thinking.

WHY ARE WE SO TERRIBLE AT PRIORITISING THE FUTURE?

“Many of us understand the criticality of future thinking, but we don't prioritise it,” says Danielle Moore, Organisational Psychologist and Associate Director at Maximus. She explains, “A powerful reason for

this lies in our neurology: the part of our brain responsible for our sense of self has no empathy for our future self because the connections haven't yet been made.” Consequently, says Moore, “we struggle to set ourselves up for the future.” This is only exacerbated by “the pace at which we now operate – at work and at home,” she adds.

Venkataraman also identifies the pace of work and its myriad demands as a challenge to engaging foresight. She describes the common response to such manic environments as “a pattern of 

80% OF CEOS & CFOs ARE WILLING TO SACRIFICE R&D SPENDING

& 50% WOULD DELAY NEW PROJECTS

THAT COULD CREATE GREATER LONG-TERM VALUE FOR THEIR COMPANIES, IN ORDER TO MEET A QUARTERLY EARNINGS TARGET

THE OPTIMIST'S TELESCOPE



+ Author Bina Venkataraman shares her insights on how leaders can embrace the future with success.

executives believe “a longer-term horizon would be better for both financial returns and innovation”.

We all experience the desire to act on behalf of the future more than we actually do. Venkataraman describes it as a yearning “for our lives to have meaning as a stitch in the long, intricate fabric of time... We aspire to do right by future generations... We suspect that if we could learn to think ahead, we might have more money, live healthier... Businesses could earn more profits, communities could thrive and civilisations could avoid foreseeable catastrophes.”

Maximus has long referred to the fact that people in leadership roles underestimate their power to influence big-picture outcomes. Venkataraman calls it the “understated potency of each individual leader’s impact”. To channel that potential, she invites leaders to think of themselves as ancestors, to envisage the heirlooms they would like to leave for future generations. “Some leaders,” she explains, “leave their future thinking about heirlooms at home”, in the realm of family. “I think it’s really important to bridge the personal and professional realms, to bring that aspiration, that value to think about the future, into the workplace.”

THE OPTIMIST'S TELESCOPE: THINKING AHEAD IN A RECKLESS AGE, BY BINA VENKATARAMAN, PUBLISHED BY RIVERHEAD BOOKS, NEW YORK, 2017, RRP \$35.00. PHOTOGRAPHY: ISTOCKPHOTO / DARIA BISHOP.

FINDING COURAGE TO ACT IN THE NOW AND COMMIT TO THE FUTURE

When everyone in your competitive set is focused on the quarterly share price, there can be a short-term downside to being the maverick outfit that looks ahead.

The tension between short-term and long-term objectives is “a real challenge for leaders to navigate,” says Moore. Organisational incentives and cultures are often set against leaders who want to make decisions with the future in mind. But Maximus coaches leaders to tap into their convictions to meet long-term goals, while delivering successful outcomes day to day.

“Courage is an interesting construct,” says Moore. “Some people say you either have it or you don’t. At Maximus we believe in a more nuanced approach.”

To create the conditions in which leaders can demonstrate their courage, Maximus begins by helping them to identify the experiences and beliefs that get in the way of making bold, foresightful decisions. It then builds on people’s natural strengths, their sense of purpose, and their desire to act for future benefit.

“By gaining insight into people’s values, we help them to navigate the

suppressing urgent fires without attention to what might still be smoldering”. Corporate culture, living moment to moment, Venkataraman says, typically overburdens workers and rewards emergency intervention rather than incentivising investigation of root causes and prevention.

She cites research showing that “doctors who are very pressed for time and often overscheduled, will more frequently over-prescribe antibiotics in situations where they’re not needed”. This is just one driver of the collapse of antibiotic efficacy across the population. Nonetheless, it’s terrifying to contemplate that the time-poor environment in which GPs operate is influencing our future ability to treat infections. One antidote to such compressed decision-making is for individuals and organisations to create “slack”, aka “the capacity to orient towards long-term goals”, suggests Venkataraman.

“It’s our responsibility to own the space where we engage in thought processes required for tackling long-term problems,” says Moore. Importantly leaders need to identify the long-term outcomes they want to achieve, so that their reclaimed thinking time can be deployed towards those objectives. “If we get better at envisioning the future, then setting the

short-term goals that enable us to get there will help us connect the dots between what our current self does and what our future self needs,” says Moore.

She takes this a step further, explaining that productive future thinking, as opposed to wishful thinking, requires people to be clear around their purpose – their reason for being. “In our work at Maximus, we find that many people in leadership roles haven’t done the work required to be clear on their purpose. They can’t be committed to something that’s little more than a distant maybe. But when we connect to a higher purpose, to something that we care deeply about, this care and conviction anchors our future thinking.”

A NEW MEASURE OF THE FUTURE YOU

Asked how people in leadership positions can harness their potential to think ahead, Venkataraman says, “The very act of being focused on the future requires some imagination.” Leaders can adopt tools that help them better envisage future outcomes – for example, what they choose to measure becomes

“BY GRASPING INSIGHT INTO PEOPLE’S VALUES, WE HELP THEM NAVIGATE THE TOUGH DECISIONS THEY NEED TO MAKE”

DANIELLE MOORE, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AT MAXIMUS

FUTURE THINKER WITHIN

Author of *The Optimist's Telescope: Thinking Ahead in a Reckless Age*, Bina Venkataraman identifies three strategies to help M readers train the future thinker within:

- › Pick an “heirloom”, a value you want to perpetuate, or an ambition for the community that exists around you or your industry. Think about what you need to align in the present to make that heirloom persist across generations.
- › Begin to envision future scenarios to help extend your imagination; then work back from them using prospective hindsight.
- › In the business context, take an objective look at what you’re measuring and how you’re rewarding what you measure. Ask yourself whether they are milestones on a path to future prosperity, or merely metrics linked to the short-term picture.

tough decisions they need to make for the longer term,” says Moore.

In a similar vein, Venkataraman suggests leaders engage their teams in a technique called “prospective hindsight”; that is, imagining a desired outcome, or a worst-case scenario and working backwards from the future to identify the decision tree that might lead to either point. “It helps you to see the ways in which you have agency and choice to shape particular futures,” Venkataraman says.

She raises the caveat, however, that leaders should not expect to make perfect decisions. There is risk involved. But then, part of being a leader is “having the courage to admit uncertainty and make decisions to build something that has meaning and value over time.” (M)

BY: NATALIE FILATOFF



STAY

WHAT: Ecohuts at Kimo Estate

LOCATION: Gundagai, NSW

WHY IT SUITS THE DISRUPTIVE LEADER: Located on a 7000-acre working farm in Gundagai, these completely off-the-grid Ecohuts are a stunning escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Perfect for a long weekend getaway, they are designed to allow you to switch off and reconnect with nature.

JAMES CHAPMAN, PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT

INSIGHTS

What the Maximus team is excited about seeing, trying, eating and reading right now.



EXPERIENCE

NAME: Rain Room

LOCATION: Jackalope Pavilion, St Kilda, Victoria

WHY EXPERIENCE IT: A 100-square metre field of continuous rainfall, Rain Room is a responsive environment engaging all the senses, allowing you to be fully immersed in the rain without getting wet.

LEAH BRANCO, SENIOR CONSULTANT

READ

TITLE: *The Infinite Game*

AUTHOR: Simon Sinek

ABOUT: Facebook's saying "We are 1% done", recently adapted by Canva, is a perfect expression of this book. Simon Sinek's *Start With Why* holds legendary status for most leaders, and here he explores how enduring businesses of the future will play an infinite game based on just causes, not a finite one based on short-term performance.

JAMES ARIS, HEAD OF INNOVATION, OFFERINGS AND MARKETING



DINE

NAME: Cho Cho San

LOCATION: Potts Point, Sydney

CUISINE: Japanese

WHY IT SUITS A DISRUPTIVE LEADER: Cho Cho San's menu is a modern take on Japanese cuisine. There is a relaxed and informal vibe, with just a hint of Japanese precision focusing on quality produce, inventive cocktails and exceptional service.

EYDIE MCLEOD, DESIGN LEAD

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF CHO CHO SAN, THE JACKALOPE GROUP, KIMO ESTATE, THE INFINITE GAME, BY SIMON SINEK, PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN GROUP, RRP \$25.95.

**The real. The curious.
The resolute.
Industry makers.
Independent thinkers.
True believers.**

These are the leaders with whom we partner. They're committed to leading with purpose and authenticity. Brave enough to bring about change. And we are privileged to work with them. We are for leaders with ambitious agendas.

We exist to move minds, transform businesses and leave a legacy of proven value. We turn beliefs into a movement, transforming organisations, and the leaders within.

WE ARE MAXIMUS.



