BUSINESS CASUAL

Embracing The Future of Work Report

Created for Business Casual by: Sara McCabe Consulting

A Tapestry of Possibilities

As we navigate **an era marked by political upheavals**, global conflicts, and **economic uncertainties**, the contours of trust in institutions are reshaped, permanently impacting the fabric of our work environment.

Once viewed through a narrow, linear lens, **work is being redefined** as we begin to recognize the dynamic and complex nature inherent in both individuals and the broader cultural context.

The future of work is not a straight line but a tapestry woven together through trust, skills, adaptability, and cultural transformation. This report aims to guide you through the complexities of the evolving workplace and help you positively impact the future.

OVERVIEW

From Linear to Dynamic

HARMONY IN DIVERSITY

The future of work requires breaking bureaucratic barriers, bias, and fostering experimentation and true collaboration.

SKILLFUL HORIZONS

In an evolving work landscape, a skills gap highlights the need for complex cognitive skills like tolerance for ambiguity, critical thinking, and resilience, calling for a shift in workforce development.

DECENTRALIZED DYNAMICS

Amidst a backdrop of frustration and distrust in hierarchical and profit-driven systems, we are in a time of rapid and unforeseen change, calling for a departure from traditional structures in organizations.

DECADE OF DECOSTRUCTION

Did the pandemic kick off a period of societal change? We're in a transformative era of work, values, and goals, which require organizations to adapt and support non-traditional paths.

MAXIMIZING IMPACT, MINIMIZING EFFORT

The question of doing more with less resonates in teams feeling overwhelmed by technology, with a growing desire for meaningful contributions without sacrificing well-being.
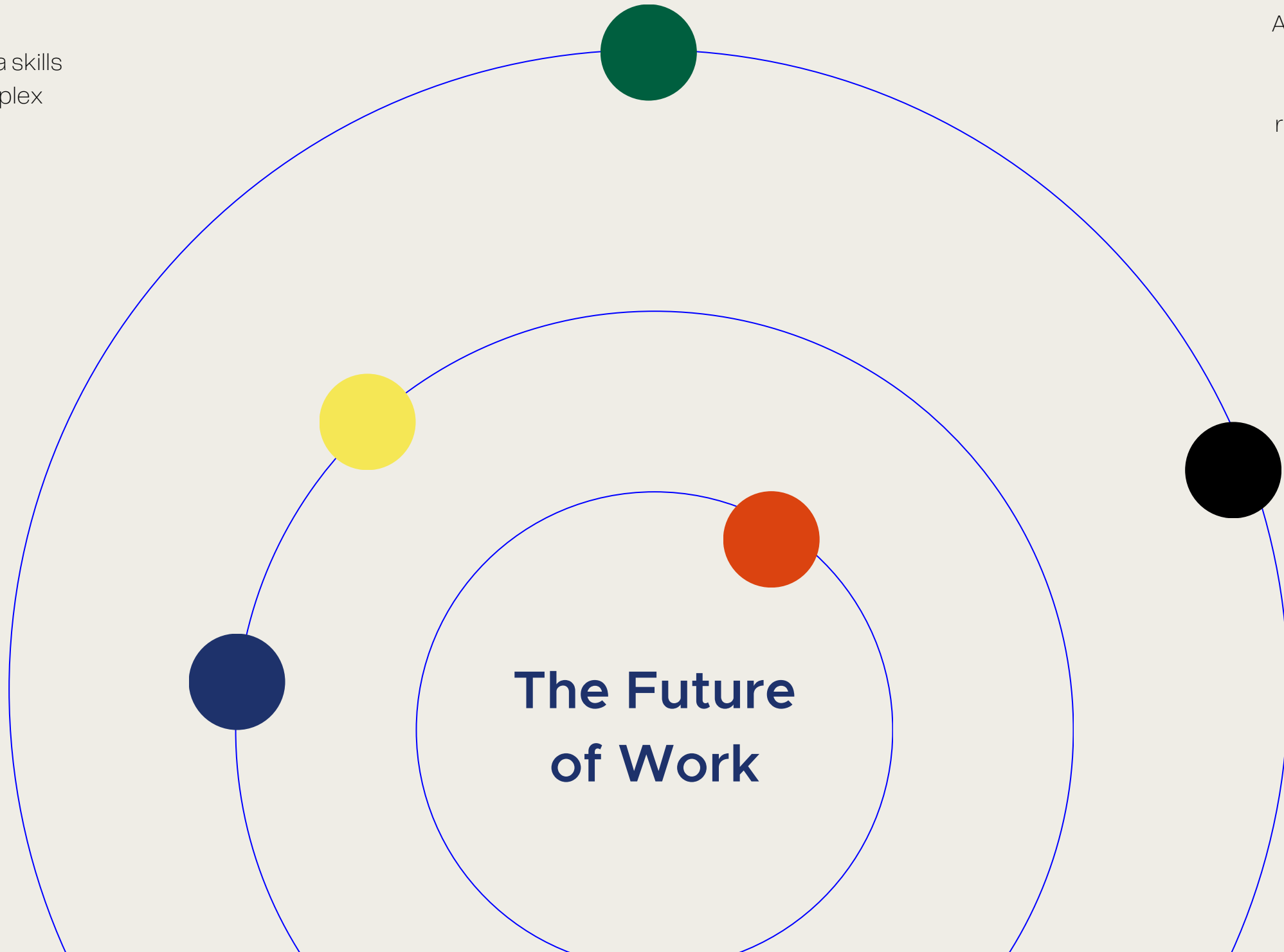
The Future of Work

Decade of Deconstruction

Did the pandemic act as the catalyst for a decade of deconstruction?

We are currently living in a time of constant change and progress amidst what can be aptly described as a poly-crisis period. **The very essence of how people work**, the goals they aspire to, and the values they hold dear have **undergone a profound metamorphosis.**

The rapid transformation of society **urges organizations to adapt fluidly and support individuals navigating unique and unconventional ways of working.**

65%

OF EMPLOYEES SAY THE PANDEMIC HAS MADE THEM RETHINK THE PLACE WORK SHOULD HAVE IN THEIR LIVES.

Gartner Insights

OF RESPONDENTS SAY THEY PLAN LESS THAN A YEAR INTO THE FUTURE, OR NOT AT ALL

48%

Accenture Life Trends survey, August 2023

33%

IN 2023, MORE THAN A QUARTER OF SURVEYED EMPLOYEES SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TO THEIR CURRENT WORK CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS WORKING IN A NEW INDUSTRY OR CHANGING CAREERS.

Gartner Modern Employee Experience and Manager Development Survey

What to think about

- **Human Centric:** What steps can your workplace take to enhance resiliency and flexibility to better support your people as they navigate a poly–crisis world?

- **Embracing Change in Employee Aspirations:** How can you proactively facilitate and support these aspirations within your organizational framework?

- **Aligning Work with Life Values:** How can you align organizational practices to ensure work complements, rather than conflicts with, the evolving values and priorities of their workforce?

- **Facilitating Career Transitions:** You could proactively establish programs or resources to support career transitions within the organization. This might involve mentorship initiatives, training programs, or flexible pathways to accommodate diverse career trajectories.

- **Beliefs, behaviors, and values:** What behavioral or value–based change might be needed within your organization to ensure that leadership adopts and embraces new approaches to work?

What to do

Skillful Horizons

In today's ever–changing landscape, there is a **widening gap between the essential skills required and the training provided by companies.** Traditional hiring methods no longer suffice for the nuanced skills needed for success in contemporary roles.

The call is clear: people need complex skills to navigate complex landscapes. Cognitive skills such as creativity, critical thinking, resilience, and tolerance for ambiguity must now take center stage. This shift is critical to address the pressing needs of the workforce and overcome the challenges of the rapidly changing nature of work.

57%

SURVEYED EMPLOYEES ARE PURSUING TRAINING OUTSIDE OF WORK BECAUSE COMPANY TRAINING PROGRAMS DO NOT TEACH THEM RELEVANT SKILLS, ADVANCE THEIR CAREER DEVELOPMENT, OR HELP THEM STAY COMPETITIVE IN THE LABOR MARKET.

Future of Jobs Report 2023

OF WORKERS' SKILLS WILL BE DISRUPTED IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. COGNITIVE SKILLS ARE REPORTED TO BE GROWING IN IMPORTANCE MOST QUICKLY, REFLECTING THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF COMPLEX PROBLEM-SOLVING IN THE WORKPLACE.

44%

Future of Jobs Report 2023

92%

EMPLOYERS BELIEVE THAT SKILLS-BASED HIRING IS MORE EFFECTIVE FOR IDENTIFYING TALENTED CANDIDATES THAN RESUMES

Test Gorilla 2023 Survey

What to think about

- **Revolutionizing Talent Development Strategies:** How can you revolutionize your talent development strategies to equip employees with the complex skills needed for success in contemporary roles?

- **Empowering Self-Directed Learning:** How can you create a culture that encourages and supports employees in pursuing relevant skills independently to advance their careers?

- **Skills-Based Hiring:** What strategies can be employed to identify and attract talented candidates based on their skills rather than relying solely on resumes?

- **Personalized Learning Paths:** Leaders could implement personalized learning paths. These paths could be tailored to individual roles, incorporating cognitive skill development alongside technical expertise. Providing employees with the autonomy to choose learning modules that align with their career goals.

- **Skills Assessment**: Give candidates an opportunity to showcase their practical skills in real-world scenarios. This provides a more comprehensive evaluation than traditional resume screening and is a better indicator of a candidate's potential than a static resume.

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What to do

Decentralized Dynamics

Against a backdrop of growing frustration and distrust of prevailing systems centered around hierarchy, control, and profit rather than serving the collective, we find ourselves in a time marked by accelerated and often unexpected change.

This landscape requires a departure from conventional structures, pushing organizations to adopt more agile ways of organizing work to adapt effectively.

As talent shortages persist, workers are demanding increased autonomy, and technological advancements continue to redefine our capabilities, the call for decentralized dynamics is resounding.

Decentralized Dynamics

55% OF WORKERS SAY THEY ALREADY HAVE, OR ARE LIKELY TO, SWITCH EMPLOYMENT MODELS THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREERS—FLUIDLY MOVING FROM PERMANENT FULL-TIME JOBS THROUGH PROJECTS ON INTERNAL TALENT MARKETPLACES, FREELANCING, OR GIG WORK.

Deloitte Insights

22% EVEN AMID ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY, NEARLY ONE-QUARTER OF RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE A PAY CUT TO KEEP OR OBTAIN THEIR PREFERRED WAY OF WORKING. IT'S EVEN HIGHER AMONG LGBTQIA+ EMPLOYEES (28%.)

THE WORKHUMAN IQ SPRING 2023 INTERNATIONAL SURVEY REPORT

85% OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES SAY THAT ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD CREATE MORE AGILE WAYS OF ORGANIZING WORK TO SWIFTLY ADAPT TO MARKET CHANGES.

Deloitte Insights

40% THERE IS A 40% INCREASE IN HIGH PERFORMERS WHEN AFFORDED FLEXIBILITY OVER "WHERE," "WHEN" AND "HOW" THEY WORK.

GARTNER INSIGHTS

What to think about

- **Adapting Organizational Structures:** What steps can you take to redefine your organizational structures and foster agility in response to the evolving demands of your workforce?

- **Navigating Talent Shifts:** How can you strategically navigate these shifts in talent preferences to attract and retain a dynamic workforce that values autonomy and flexibility?

- **Leveraging Flexibility for Performance:** How can you leverage flexible work arrangements to enhance employee performance and well-being, and what policies or practices should be in place to support this shift?

- **Agile Organizational Design:** Recognizing the call for more agile ways of organizing work, you could initiate a comprehensive review of your organizational structures, exploring agile frameworks that prioritize flexibility, cross-functional collaboration, and decentralized decision-making.

- **Open Approach:** Develop plans that recognize and appreciate the unique contributions and needs of all workers, regardless of whether they are internal or external to your organization.

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What to do

Harmony in Diversity

Collaboration has long been considered crucial for success. However, traditional structures have often hindered genuine collaboration and diversity of thought due to bureaucratic barriers, bias, ineffective communication, and a reluctance to experiment. **The future of work requires a transformative shift that compels leaders and companies to actively deconstruct these inhibiting frameworks.**

It's time to break down bureaucratic silos, harmful biases, and foster environments that encourage experimentation. Let's use supportive technology to facilitate seamless communication and empower individuals instead of acting as a micromanaging agent.

I was the future once...
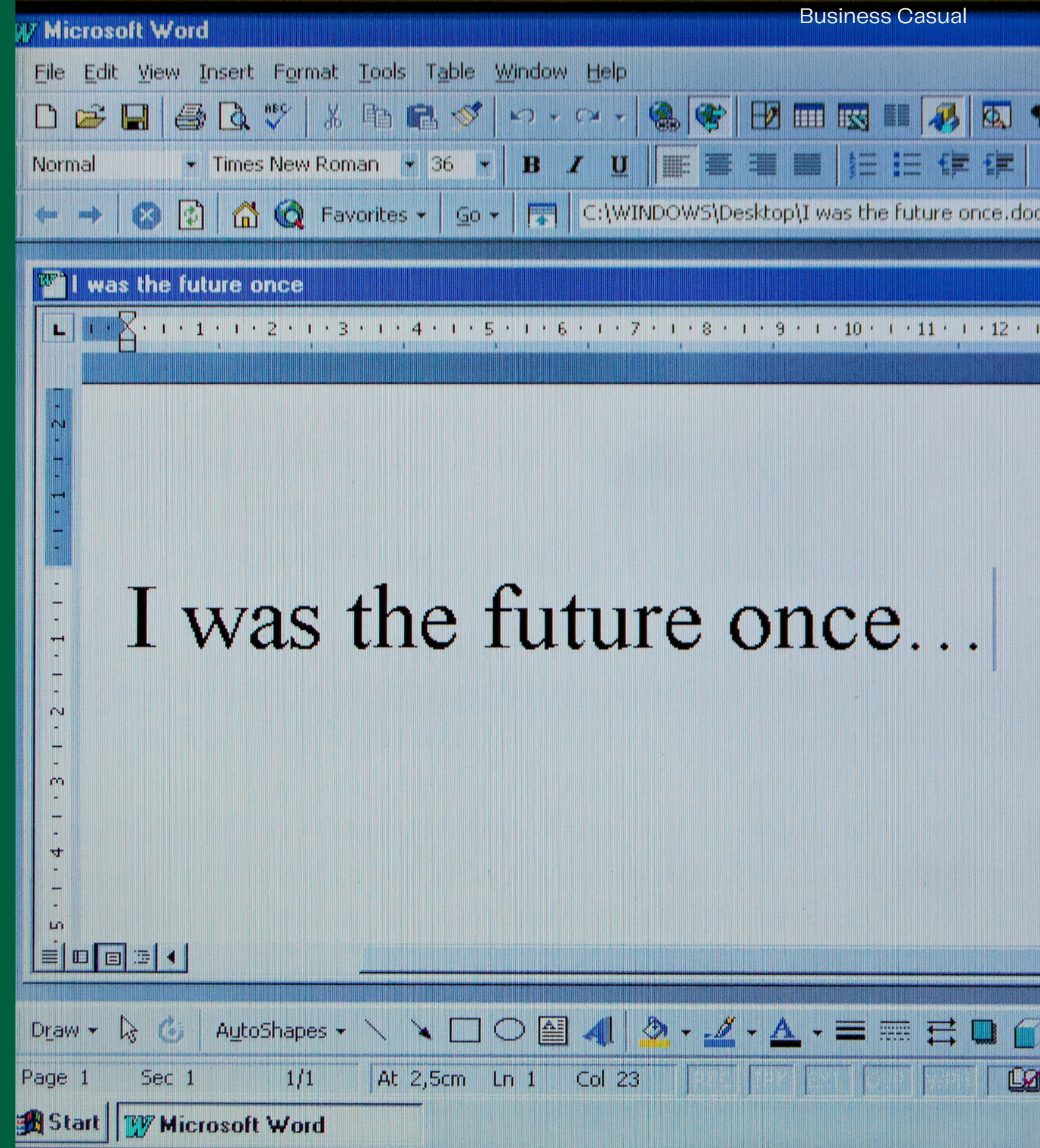
Autonomy drives greater innovation and employee collaboration

"ALLOWING THE STAFF TO PURSUE THEIR OWN IDEAS DURING WORK HOURS PROVIDES TIME TO OBSERVE, EXPERIMENT, AND SPECULATE WITH OTHERS. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE VITAL FOR INNOVATION OUTCOMES."

The role of employee autonomy for open innovation performance
Business Process Management Journal

68%

GEN Z WORKERS ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THEIR ORGANIZATION'S PROGRESS IN CREATING A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT.

Future of Jobs Report 2023

How different generations define 'good' collaborative teams in the workplace

- **AGE 18-24, TRUSTING COLLEAGUES TO DO GOOD WORK IS A TOP COLLABORATION CONCERN.**
- **25-44 RANGE PRIZED CLEAR RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE KEY TO GOOD COLLABORATION.**
- **45-65 CHARACTERIZE GOOD WORKPLACE COLLABORATION AS BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH COLLEAGUES EASILY.**

Future of Jobs Report 2023

What to think about

- **Overcoming Collaboration Barriers:** What strategies can you employ to actively dismantle these barriers and foster an environment that encourages the full spectrum of diverse perspectives?

- **Empowering Through Technology:** How can you leverage technology to empower collaboration without overwhelming your teams, ensuring it enhances, rather than hinders, the collaborative process?

- **Workforce Expectations**: How can leaders proactively address and meet the expectations of the workforce, ensuring a culture that values diversity and inclusion?

Structural Redesign for Collaboration:
Introduce changes that prioritize collaboration and the diversity of thought. This may involve reevaluating reporting lines, fostering cross-functional teams, and implementing agreements on how teams collectively make decisions.

Tech-Enabled Inclusive Collaboration:
Recognizing the importance of technology as an enabler, rather than a hindrance, to collaboration, leaders could invest in tools and platforms that support inclusive collaboration. This would allow all members of a team an opportunity to process, digest, and work in a format conducive to their needs.

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What to do

Maximizing impact, minimizing effort

How can we do more with less? That's the question echoing among teams who increasingly feel technology is happening to them rather than for them. As burnout and overwhelm become pervasive in our workplace, there's a palpable hunger for a way to contribute to meaningful change without sacrificing health and well–being.

Supportive policies and tools are not just fixes for burnout; they're the keys to a culture where meaningful work isn't just a goal but an everyday reality. It's about enabling people to put their energy into endeavors that align with their values and make a genuine difference in the world.

Maximizing impact, minimizing effort

82%

OF EMPLOYEES AGREE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THEIR ORGANIZATION SEE THEM AS A PERSON, NOT JUST AN EMPLOYEE.

Gartner insights

47%

OF RESPONDENTS FIND THE SPEED OF NEW TECHNOLOGY OVERWHELMING

YouGov Global Profiles Q2, 2023

71%

OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE COMPANIES SHOULD CREATE SOCIETAL VALUE AND UPHOLD THEIR OWN COMPANY, EMPLOYEE, AND COMMUNITY VALUES. HOWEVER, FEWER THAN 1 IN 3 RESPONDENTS GAVE THEIR OWN EMPLOYER AN EXCELLENT RATING IN ANY ONE OF THESE VALUE AREAS.

Weber Shandwick, in partnership with Powell Tate and KRC Research

63%

IN A RECENT GARTNER SURVEY, 63% OF CANDIDATES RATED "FOUR-DAY WORKWEEK FOR THE SAME PAY" AS THE TOP NEW AND INNOVATIVE BENEFIT THAT WOULD ATTRACT THEM TO A JOB.

Gartner Candidate Survey

What to think about

- **Fostering Meaningful Work Cultures:** What strategies and initiatives can be implemented to enable employees to channel their energy into endeavors that align with their values and create a genuine impact?

- **Employee–Centric Cultures:** What concrete steps can organizations take to create environments where employees feel valued and supported, both professionally and personally?

- **Innovative Benefits for Talent Attraction:** What creative and innovative benefits can you introduce to attract and retain top talent while promoting work–life balance?

- **Recognition and Appreciation:** Provide a space for colleagues to acknowledge each other's contributions on a personal level. Leaders can actively participate by recognizing and appreciating employees, fostering a culture of mutual respect and recognition.

- **Values–Based Performance Metrics:** Leaders can incorporate values–based performance metrics. By incorporating metrics related to societal impact, employee well–being, and community values into performance evaluations, leaders send a clear message about the organization's commitment to holistic success.

What to do

CONCLUSION

> "Employees are people, not just workers; work is a subset of life, not separate from it; and value comes through feelings, not just features"
>
> –Carolina Valencia, VP, Gartner.

As organizations face unparalleled challenges and opportunities, the path to success lies in embracing change, fostering inclusivity, and prioritizing the well-being of our most valuable asset—our people.

Let's work together to navigate this transformative journey, where the pursuit of meaningful work, continuous learning, and innovative collaboration pave the way for a future that transcends the traditional boundaries of the workplace.

A MESSAGE FROM (ME) SARA MCCABE

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Hi, I'm Sara McCabe👋, a seasoned **People and Business Development consultant** who brings over **12 years of experience transforming businesses and teams across North America.** From spearheading growth initiatives to facilitating and creating countless training programs, I've navigated the diverse landscapes of startups and corporate giants alike.

As a **certified Learning and Development Specialist**, I've taught in organizations like Global Startup School, Grow Tech Labs, Viatec, and Futurpreneur Canada. My firm belief is that there's a better way to do business — it starts with putting humans first, always.

In a world of rapid change, I focus on the overlooked skills that are the keys to success in the modern landscape. If you ever need guidance, have questions, or simply want to explore how to create a more human-centered and successful work environment, don't hesitate to reach out. Let's connect and shape the future of work together.

Sara McCabe

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10/10 would recommend your workshop series on the future of collaboration. The workshops were so useful, engaging, and supportive. The facilitators did a great job ensuring that everyone had a chance to voice their opinions, which, for me as a leader, was so valuable.

-Partner at The Social Circle