

Companies have to adapt to the New Worker and the New Buyer

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TF: What are the biggest changes concerning the work environment that we have to face during the upcoming ten years?

There are a few things. One of them is remote work, as technology enables more and more people to accommodate their lifestyle into their work. A single mother with two young kids is one example for the need to work remote. There are tools now that enable this mother to be just as productive as she used to be by working at home, working on the road, working wherever she is.

The attitude of companies is shifting towards remote working responding to the demand for talented workers. With our new working environment companies have to adapt to the demands of their skilled personnel in order to prevent them from moving on to another company.

Remote working is one aspect, but i also think that the whole company culture will change in the upcoming years.

If we look at the most successful companies now like Google or Apple, they encounter a completely different way of treating their employees than traditional companies. The companies provide for day care and offer coffee shops, gyms, drycleaners, etc. on their premises. Life and work is integrated in a way that enable employees to save time and ressources in order to concentrate on work. Companies are going to have to adapt to the way workers act today which is a

big challenge.

Another point is globalization. As a company, whether you like it or not, you are going to have competitors you never had before. For example, when it got competitive in the United States in online travel, Priceline went to Europe and Asia. It was hard to compete and be profitable in the US so Priceline went to look at other markets, non US markets. Moving to Europe was a way to keep growing a company when it was tough to keep growing in our country. I think companies will see that everywhere. They have to start looking at globalization and expanding in other markets on one hand, but they are also have to start looking at competitors that never came into their market before.

For small companies globalisation presents an enormous opportunity. Using the internet people are able to form themselves into interest groups online. As an example, there's a company in your industry that offers services in Africa. You can find that company online and build a partnership without having to actually go there.

TF: What do you think are the biggest challenges we have to face in the working environment?

I think with the use of social media the whole buying and decision making process is going to change.

In the past if a girl was going to buy a dress from a certain company, she went to the shop and she talked about it to people of the company. Or the company there tried to sell her the dress. Most of her conversation was between the sales associate at the dress store and her.

Today she might not even go there.

She will talk to her friends via social networks, she will make a picture of the dress and pass it around, ask her friends if they like it, if they think it would fit her and if they new somebody who bought a dress from this company and what their experiences were.

Her whole buying decision will have very little to do with the sales person of the store and a lot to do with the interaction between her and her friends in the social network(s) she is using. So the use of social networks changes our buying and decision making behaviour significantly. The way we buy things now, is completely different than the way it used to be. The challenge is to adapt to the new behavior and make use of different tools if we want to market our products.

TF: What do you think are the biggest opportunities for us in the ever-changing working world?

I think the world moves very fast now. While you sleep things happen, the world changes, new technologies, new opportunities, new markets pop up. So every single day there is a chance to launch new business models and use new technologies but people have to be paying attention.

TF: What is your vision?

I have been on a world tour for a couple of years now. My personal mission is really about identifying eco-systems. What do we do in each place to help the local communities? For example we can all go to Africa to help these kids but what we really need is the people in Africa that say: "We help our own youth". Because there are so many young people out there with brilliant ideas to improve the lives of their community or at least change their life or the lives of their families who need support and the right tools. The goal is a combination of inspiration and education which is required to fortify more people around the world to help.

I was very encouraged when this morning I received a note from from Papua New Guinea, from people which i meet on my travels, saying that they are going to form the first ever business angel network in their country. That's the progress we are hoping for. That the local business people start to encourage and support their young entrepreneurs. So my hope is that we inspire more people to say: "we want to help our country to

make it better“.

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