

transforming work

INNOVATION UPDATE: DECEMBER 2019

2020 is crunch time for business and for all of us, argues Jonathan Winter

One of my business heroes is Paul Polman. As CEO of Unilever for ten years, he scrapped short-term reporting and set out on a [remarkable mission](#) to achieve business growth without increasing the company's environmental footprint. Recently I had the chance to hear him in person at the business school here in Oxford. Forthright and full of facts, he held the audience as he talked passionately about climate change, global inequality, and the role of business.

How much has the world of business really changed? It is hard to tell. Polman would have us believe there's a leadership gap that politics isn't filling, and that business could. I consulted this year's [Edelman Trust Barometer](#). Remarkably, business is up there alongside NGOs as the world's most trusted institutions. People believe CEOs can and should change things for the better. The most trusted relationship of all is 'my employer'.

This is at the same time encouraging and perplexing. Despite the advent of B-corps and

purpose statements, not much has really changed, according to Professor Colin Meyer. In his [new report](#) for the British Academy he claims the UK has one of the most extreme forms of capitalism in the world. Polman was excoriating about big tech companies that have minimised their tax around the world. I think many of us would agree that radical change is needed.

Here in the UK the Labour party [proposes big change](#). Their manifesto includes one of Meyer's proposals, to enshrine social purpose in corporate law. However Meyer is less positive about their programme of nationalisation. I'd say neither of the main parties here tick all the boxes.

Those of us in business who care about the future will, in the end, largely be left to shape our own destiny. And [that's how it should be](#). Our political choices are important – it matters how we vote – but in the end it will be our daily choices that define us. It is by the way we live and do business that you and I can rewrite the rules of success and shape the world for the better.

YOUR UNTAPPED OLDER WORKFORCE

They say talent is in short supply. We say it's plentiful, but needs releasing.

One oft-neglected source of talent is older workers. It's a talent pool that is growing, aided by the phenomenon of 'unretiring'. (Apparently 25% of people who retire later decide to reverse it.)

Some say older workers:

- Get sick
- Are tech. dinosaurs
- Are less entrepreneurial
- Resist change
- Cost too much

These are [all myths](#). There's a hidden talent pool. Are you missing out?

Read how to unlock talent [via mid-life career support](#)

YOUR UNTAPPED PERSONAL POTENTIAL

Not keeping up with automation? Awkward person at work? Or simply need better work-life balance? Whatever is causing you to doubt yourself just now, this is a good time to take stock, take advice, and take action.



We developed the Be Bold course to achieve many of the benefits of a coaching programme, at a fraction of the cost. It continues to get great reviews. Why not try it?

Put the colour back in your life [Join Be Bold in your Career](#)

DOES GOOD WORK MAKE YOU HEALTHY?

It's a dangerous question to ask - touching a nerve [on welfare policy, health policy](#) (eg social prescribing), and in the US [on Medicaid](#).

I can understand the critics. Bad work can be deadly. And if you're retired, your lack of work per se doesn't render you miserable.

Fortunately, [we're all getting smarter](#) on what makes a [healthy workplace, and good work](#). And aside from the wealthy and retired, we need to work. So I'd argue: rather than questioning whether work is good for us, let's get on and create more 'good work' – and make the business case for investing in it.

How to create healthy work? [Tell us what you think](#)

LEARNING TECH GETS PERSONAL

If you want to create an inspiring workplace, 'growth' should top your agenda. Talented people want learning and career development, in a firm that's learning and growing too.

New technologies can help. [Learning Experience Platforms](#) make it easier to find knowledge. Companies like [Gloat](#) match people with jobs, projects and mentors too. Internal marketplaces are coming of age, and HR tech is moving fast.

What else? Strategy. The tools may be getting smart, but they're only as good as the thinking you put in.

Here's what it takes to have [a career strategy](#)

HOW TO MANAGE MILLENNIALS

Here's a constant refrain: What do talented millennials want from their work?

As it turns out, they're [not a lot different](#) from the rest of us.

Most people want:

1. A good boss
2. The chance to grow
3. A sense of purpose

If it's your job to be the 'good boss' don't worry, it [doesn't have to be complicated](#).

The [new skills for leadership](#) are really as old as the hills. Difficult? Maybe. The secret is to spot just one or two things to do differently. Then try them today, at work or at home.



Not rocket science?

Here's a model from the Ulrichs [Four soft skills for success](#)

HOT LINKS:

- [How talented people fail in their career](#)
- [Ethics: Hiring algorithms 'too opaque'](#)
- [Danger in Silicon Valley: Microdose LSD](#)
- [How AI is redefining the role of a manager](#)
- [Do we need rating scales? If so, which?](#)
- [When neuroscience meets coaching](#)
- [Video: Neuroscience](#)

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The Career Innovation Company helps you create an agile, happier, healthier workplace – one conversation at a time.