

FIVE GAME CHANGERS IN THE FUTURE WORLD OF WORK

As if the recent pandemic and current societal challenges were not enough, today's youth face a hugely disruptive future. Here are five 'game changers' which we see as impacting both the world of work and the way we prepare and support young people in this age of constant change.

1 THE FOURTH AND FIFTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTIONS

Anything that can be automated will soon be done by machines. Just visit your supermarket check-out area for proof.

The new industrial revolutions 29 will usher in AI, the internet of things, machine learning, driver-less cars and more. The workers of the future will need to master the skills that machines don't have. (largely soft-skills).

CAREER GUIDANCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are important psychosocial needs that good work has been found to meet, such as providing a sense of community, social inclusion, and allowing workers to feel they are contributing to their family and society 30. It is crucial that YP understand this aspect of work prior to starting a job and this is where career counselling (rather than careers information) is crucial. Career counselling is in part about helping young people to see where they get their self worth from and to adopt an agile, flexible and 'ready for change' mindset that will be increasingly important in the future work place.

3 MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

This generation has experienced both increasingly high levels of poor mental health pre-COVID 32 and a more significant deterioration in their mental health than older age groups during the pandemic 33. 'The relationship between mental health and unemployment is bi-directional' with poor mental health often making it hard to access work and 'unemployment causing stress, which can have negative consequences for people's mental health including depression anxiety and lower self-esteem.' 34

It is thus vital that we act to support young people with mental health issues to gain the skills and self esteem to begin to access fulfilling opportunities, and that we support capable young people into work to avoid the potential scars of unemployment.

CAREER GUIDANCE IMPLICATIONS:

Can career professionals better advise young people on work/life balance and equip them with the tools to be more resilient in times of stress? Can young people's mental health charities do more to produce resources on coping in new aspects of work - for example working from home, anxiety, social isolation, and social media 'compare and despair'?

2

CHANGING NOTIONS OF CAREER.

Many young people have 'new attitudes to employment, work/life balance and what constitutes a good job, placing greater emphasis on 'personal fulfilment and meaning, [and not just focusing on] economic stability' 35.

'Doing a job I find fulfilling' was most frequently chosen by young people in the top three most important things to consider when looking for a job 36. and according to a recent YouGov survey, '37% of working British adults say their job is not making a meaningful contribution to the world' 37. Furthermore, at least 5.6% of UK adults felt they 'rarely' or 'never' had 'the feeling of doing useful work' 38.

CAREER GUIDANCE IMPLICATIONS

Have we forgotten the powerful quote from Mark Twain, '**Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life**' ?

Addressing this underpinning issue will need us to undertake a seismic change both within the jobs market and more generally in how society allocates value, if all young people are to flourish in fulfilling roles. Career counselling is crucial to this and we all need to acknowledge the urgency of this to address this change in practice (including parents, employers and schools).

4 THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The climate crisis continues to impact the world of work, rendering some industries obsolete and leading to growth in other sectors. As such young people need to be supported to prepare for and positively shape this ever-changing reality.

CAREER GUIDANCE IMPLICATIONS:

Many of the jobs our children will end up doing have not been conceived of yet, but many will be in the green industries. Every career professional needs to inspire young people to start working for a solution to the climate crisis and promote the positive opportunities of working for start-ups and organisations pioneering new approaches to tackling the crisis.

5 THE GIG ECONOMY

The Gig Economy and zero-hour contracts may provide flexibility, but such contracts tend to favour the employer and are often low paid with few rights for workers. Many young people are trapped in low-paid work with poor housing prospects. This is reflected in the Findings by the RSA that 'more than half (56%) of young people in work are experiencing financial precarity. Only a third (32%) feel that their work provides them with enough money to maintain a decent standard of living and of those in financial precarity almost two thirds are worried about their mental health (61% and their future (64%).' 31.

CAREER GUIDANCE IMPLICATIONS

How many career professionals have ever worked in the gig economy? How many government ministers have championed young people's employment rights with companies such as Deliveroo, Just Eat and Uber ?

