



# The Evolution of Work:

*The Changing Nature of the Global Workforce*

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# Executive Summary



# The workplace of the future is arriving now. Changes in technology, culture, and economies are having an impact on the way people work at all levels around the world.

These changes have affected both the way employees engage with one another and the tools they use to get their jobs done. While these shifts may vary across geographic location, industry, or position, there is no doubt that employers and employees must adapt as quickly as these changes are taking place.

In order to understand how workplace trends are impacting the workplace, ADP Research Institute® (ADP RI) conducted an original qualitative and quantitative study among employers and employees in four major regions: North America, Europe, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific. This research provided insight not only into understanding emerging workplace trends but also the needs of employees. This approach provides a more long-term view than simply reviewing trends as they are developing today, and it also anticipates and addresses the new frontier of the global workplace.

- In this study of predominantly white-collar workers, employees around the world feel positively overall about most workplace trends, including those emerging now and those predicted to occur in the future. In the Asia-Pacific region, for example, where the population is younger and job growth is rapid, employees are fully ready to embrace new innovations. This is particularly true for those trends related to increased freedom, such as employees being able to define their own work schedules. In Latin America, employees are also open to embracing future trends, but economic setbacks and slow growth have prevented many from adopting current trends at the same pace as other parts of the world.

- While most employees in this study remain positive about the future, there are some trends that are viewed negatively, particularly those that may threaten an individual's stability, such as automation replacing certain jobs.
- Of all organizations that were surveyed, those most likely to adapt to specific workplace trends include those defined as multinational corporations, those that have been in business for fewer than 20 years, and those that are located in the Asia-Pacific region.
- In terms of where employees see the greatest impact occurring in their workplace, most respondents feel that rapidly changing technology and globalization are the factors that will affect them the most.
- Results of the study found that employers think more long-term, a dynamic that will be explored in more depth in this paper, while employees tended to think more in the short-term.

Understanding various perspectives on workplace trends and how they impact employees—from Millennials in Europe to Senior Executives in North America—is at the heart of this paper. Additionally, by understanding people's perspectives, business leaders and Human Resource (HR) departments can be better equipped to stay on the cutting-edge of trends in the workplace.

A diverse group of people, including a Black man and a white woman in the foreground, are smiling and clapping their hands. They are seated at a table with papers and a tablet, suggesting a meeting or presentation. The background is a bright, modern office space with large windows.

# Introduction



## Technological and cultural changes have always pushed the workplace forward, and now an even faster-paced global transformation is underway.

This work-based sea change varies among regions, job positions, and industries. However, the domino effect of rapid advancements in technology and mass shifts such as globalized competition, corporate communication, and talent mobility are having a significant impact on the way people live and work around the world. Technology in particular—perhaps civilization’s greatest game-changer—has introduced new flexibility to both employers and employees alike, allowing employees in some positions a greater sense of freedom, employers a higher degree of efficiency, and greater connectedness for both without the traditional limitations of time and place.

Modern work environments stand in stark contrast to days when work occurred during set hours at a common location. Today, many employees exercise more control and autonomy over their workplace conditions, with greater freedom to decide how, when, and where they work. Other large changes include the fact that more and more tasks are being replaced by machines, talent is now viewed through both a local and global lens, and today’s individual career paths tend to be non-linear. Add to this, today’s workforce is more and more guided by a search for meaning or doing important work rather than by simply earning a paycheck with good benefits.

These are just a few of the ways today’s global workplace is evolving. And these changes provide a useful lens for illuminating many aspects of the future. How will these trends continue to change over time? Who will they affect most? Where are they more likely to occur?

To answer these questions and accurately anticipate the workplace of the future, employees’ needs must be considered. While needs may vary based on environmental factors, industry, or access to tools such as computers, they tend to persist over time and apply to most workers, regardless of job title or location. For example, the term “workplace security” used to be defined as a regular paycheck with good benefits, while remaining devoted to one company for 20+ years, and looking forward to a big retirement party and a pension that would take care of you after retirement. With today’s changes in the workplace and employee mindsets, the definition of security is now seen in terms of the strength of each individual’s professional network and their ability to tap into that network to find a new job and create a long and varied career. A needs-centric perspective allows for a more long-term view into the future, while placing the people who will be impacted by these changes at the center of focus.

**Today’s workforce is more and more guided by a search for meaning or doing important work rather than by simply earning a paycheck with good benefits.**

## As employee needs evolve, employers must adapt.

While IT departments have already found new ways to meet the changing needs of employees and the shifting global workplace, HR departments have some catching up to do. Although HR departments have embraced the ability to search globally for the best talent, they still often struggle with onboarding new global employees. In addition, as organizations offer more flexibility to their employees and contractors who may work from home or other remote locations, HR departments haven't kept up pace with new programs and services to ensure that teams remain seamlessly connected.

ADP Research Institute conducted this study in order to help HR departments and employers understand workplace trends in such a way as to acquire, develop, and retain talent. Ultimately, a needs-first view provides a more stable platform on which to pave a pathway into the future. Illuminating this pathway is crucial for companies and individuals to innovate and strategize, ultimately maximizing the benefits of the future for the employees these changes affect. This paper will (1) address where the workplace is headed, and (2) illustrate how organizations can leverage this future state in decision-making to meet employees' needs today, while anticipating the trends of tomorrow.





# Methodology



# The ADP Research Institute<sup>®</sup> conducted an original groundbreaking qualitative and quantitative study with employers and employees around the world.

Throughout this study, significant emphasis was placed on incorporating diverse perspectives to provide a well-rounded view of how the global workplace is changing and will continue to change in the future. Some of the key audiences that were examined include:

- People living and working in the four major developed regions of the world—especially the emerging markets in Latin America and Asia-Pacific—to understand how different regions perceive and/or lead the charge for change.
- Both employers and employees were surveyed to explore the extent to which the two sides differ in their perspectives.
- A cross-section of age groups, including Millennials (defined in this study as those aged 18-34 who have been working for fewer than five years and are in junior to mid-level positions); Career Knowledge Workers (those aged 30+ who have been working for five or more years and are in junior to mid-level positions), and Senior Executives (those who are in senior-level positions, regardless of the number of years of experience) to gain insight as to how human needs manifest differently depending on a person's career tenure or position.
- Employees of smaller companies (250 to <1,000 employees) and larger companies (1,000+ employees) to examine how company size impacts the evolution of trends.
- White-collar and non-white-collar workers to explore how trends and individual needs differ depending on the type of work a person does. [Note that this study surveyed 90 percent white-collar employees and 10 percent non-white-collar employees, the sample of which provided a readable base upon which to draw key insights.]

At the onset of this study, an extensive review of existing research on the future of work, as well as interactive qualitative discussions with employers and employees from across the globe were conducted. This helped form the basis of understanding for the full set of workplace trends already occurring or beginning to take shape. It also provided initial insight into the deeper human needs driving many of these trends.

To build upon this initial understanding, full-scale quantitative research was launched to discern the extent to which certain trends are happening today or are expected to happen in the future, how trends will impact individuals, and the connection between each trend and deeper human needs among each audience.

The following reflects the study specifications for the quantitative work:

- 15-minute online survey was conducted from April 16 to May 5, 2015; ADP was not identified as the study sponsor.
- The sample was n=2,403 interviews across four regions (North America, Europe, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific).
- The study was translated into the native language of each country.
- The respondent profile included men and women aged 18 or older with a full- or part-time job at a company with 250 or more employees.
- Countries surveyed included the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Netherlands, Australia, China, India, and Singapore.

# What's Driving Global Workplace Trends

This study examined nineteen trends beginning to transform the global workplace (see Table 1 below) that can be classified into five overarching needs that employees all over the world relate to in one way or another.

## Table 1: Workplace Trends Reflect Needs of Workforce

Each of these nineteen workplace trends below reflects a basic human need, which crosses all demographics of employees surveyed. These five basic needs are **Freedom, Knowledge, Stability, Self-Management, and Meaning.**

Employees will be able to work from anywhere in the world.	People will choose to spend their time working on things that are of personal interest to them or have a broader impact on society.	Departments and hierarchy will no longer exist.	Employees will work wherever their skills are needed rather than remaining loyal to one company.	The need for employees to constantly shift roles will require learning new skills quickly.	Technology will allow for deeper personal connections across distance and time.	A standard retirement age will cease to exist; people will retire by choice.
Employees will do all of their work from a mobile device.	Employees will primarily rely on self-service and/or information from the Internet to solve problems and get their job done.	Companies will search globally for the best talent.	Organizations will take more risks in order to keep up with the pace of change.	Organizations will use technology to measure and impact the well-being of employees.	Social media will become the collaboration platform for work.	
Employees will define their own work schedule, based on what is convenient and effective for them.	Employees will be paid in real-time based on their work contribution (reaching a project milestone, etc.).	Companies will exclusively hire contract workers on a project-by-project basis (little to no full-time, steady employees).	People will use technology to learn anything, anytime, anywhere.	Technology (such as real-time sensors) will enable organizations to proactively adjust the performance of individuals and teams.	Automation, smart machines, and artificial intelligence will replace people for repetitive work.	

# The Five Basic Human Needs



## FREEDOM

People want the freedom to enjoy their lives. They want control and flexibility to do their work when, where, and how they want. This desire is evidenced by the increased choice employees are demanding and taking advantage of with respect to defining their own work schedules and working from home in another city, state, or country than from where their employer is located. This freedom of choice has largely been afforded to employees when feasible due to increased ability to get work done from a mobile device or laptop.



## KNOWLEDGE

People want access to the resources, tools, and information needed to get their work done. And they want the time to learn new skills while still accomplishing their work. While technology enables employees to accomplish much of their work in the same or less time than before, employers have increased expectations for employees to complete work at a faster pace than was previously possible. Technological advances and global resources allow employees to tap into these resources quickly to learn new things, solve problems, and keep their work moving. This on-demand learning helps employees develop new skills rapidly so they can meet their employer's need for a multi-skilled workforce.



## STABILITY

The increased level of technological interconnectedness enables companies to expand their search globally for both employees and contract workers. For employees, this could also be seen as a source of security, in that their skills may be desirable to multinational companies where there is a much larger pool of potential work than simply the jobs available at the geographic location where they live. As people adjust to a more fluid definition of a "career path," and as the movement to search globally for the best talent grows, people will realize they have a wider array of opportunities available.



## SELF-MANAGEMENT

Technology will allow more independence for employees to manage their productivity and performance, while also receiving feedback and recognition in real-time. This will remove barriers to collaboration and help redefine the relationship between workers and their managers. Recent advancements in automation, smart machines, and artificial intelligence are beginning to replace people for repetitive work. In the future, however, people's productivity will be enhanced by effectively partnering with these smart machines. With technology in place to help govern and maintain individuals and teams, a workplace where departments and hierarchy cease to exist may not be a far-fetched idea. In this type of future workplace, people will be free to focus more on work as opposed to managing others or being managed.



## MEANING

Today's workers are increasingly motivated to work by more than just earning a paycheck. Largely, employees are looking to work on projects that are personally meaningful, have a positive impact on society, and benefit people's well-being. While advancements in technology have enabled some workers to choose when, where, and how they will work, these shifts have also made it easier for some to choose jobs that meet more than just financial needs. Organizations and HR departments that recognize this need are now involving their employees more closely in the mission of the organization. By recognizing that each employee makes a significant contribution to the company's success, employees feel their work is personally meaningful.

Not only do people want to work for organizations that set goals aligned with what gives the person a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in their life, but they also want their employers to demonstrate their commitment to the people who work for them. Organizations such as Google experimented with this idea by earmarking 20 percent of each employee's time for working on anything they are personally passionate about.<sup>1</sup> This is just one example of how an organization can demonstrate it cares about its employees, which can make people more motivated and connected to their work.

# The Challenge of Rapid Change

The workplace environment is changing at a rapid speed. Many agree that these changes are being driven by Millennials, who have recently reached adulthood and are influencing every facet of work culture—from demanding increased freedom to choose their own work schedules and locations, to encouraging more collaboration on an even playing field, to driving innovation. This is especially the case in places such as the Asia-Pacific region, where the working population skews younger, and employees embrace change.

But there are challenges when things change at a rapid pace. For example, artificial intelligence and smart machines are replacing people doing repetitive work. Companies are also beginning to find ways to leverage new technology to augment the work of people in higher skilled jobs. Automation could threaten around 50 percent of the workforce, including administrative, clerical, and production jobs.<sup>2</sup> This is a particular concern in Asia, where a key to improving the standard of living is putting people to work. To the extent that automation limits that, or restricts wages that drive increased prosperity, this may be perceived as a risk for the region.

The upside of automation is it could free more people up to work on creative and interesting projects.<sup>3</sup> And, with social platforms like Google Hangouts, LinkedIn, and internal software such as IBM's SocialBlue (previously known as Beehive), new technologies are making it easier for people to connect and collaborate with others all over the world. People are increasingly working from home or co-op spaces, creating hours that work around their schedules as opposed to the traditional nine-to-five. And employers are beginning to weave meaning into day-to-day work life. General Motors, for example, has created a "mindfulness" program for their employees to facilitate positive energy and reduce stress around the workplace.<sup>4</sup>

According to the research, all of these transformations in the workplace can be grouped into three key areas, which will continue to experience tremendous periods of change in the next decade and beyond:

- 1 TECHNOLOGY
- 2 GLOBALIZATION
- 3 WORK STRUCTURE

<sup>2</sup> CNN Money, *Smarter robots put 50% of jobs at risk*, November 2015

<sup>3</sup> Fortune, *3 Workplace Trends for 2015 and Beyond*, December 2014

<sup>4</sup> Alternet, *How the Mindfulness Movement Went Mainstream — And the Backlash That Came With It*, January 2015

## In general, most new workplace trends are perceived positively with greater than 50 percent positive emotion attached to each trend (see Table 2).

This is particularly true for trends that create greater flexibility for employees, such as being able to learn on-demand, to work on projects that are personally meaningful or impact society, or offer greater choice over when and where they work. Trends that had the lowest rating of positive emotion were those that may affect job security, such as the trend toward automation and smart machines replacing people and the trend of companies hiring contract workers on a project-by-project basis.

These sentiments, however, vary across regions and among employers and employees. Regionally speaking, Europe remains the most wary regarding many of the changes, while Latin America and Asia-Pacific are optimistic about making changes in the workplace. In addition to cultural sentiments, some regions such as North America are better poised to welcome the future than a region such as Latin America, who, while excited, is also undergoing political and economic transformations that may hinder rapid growth.

With so many changes happening in the workplace at once, there are bound to be growing pains. Employers and employees around the world share several concerns:

- How do we ensure that systems, programs, and tools constantly stay up-to-date in a world where technology evolves so quickly?
- How can we improve knowledge sharing in an increasingly global workplace with teams that may shift and change frequently?
- What does a personal career plan or trajectory look like when it is somewhat expected that people will change jobs several times over the course of their life?

- With technology and smart machines driving an expectation that each person will be able to accomplish more work in less time, how do we ensure people don't hit workload overload?
- How can we create a true sense of "team" when most people work remotely on their own schedule?


However, according to the survey, employers and employees have mixed feelings about many of the trends at play. For the most part, the latter tend to look at the short term, while the former look at the long term. Therefore, the focus of employees is much more on the day-to-day, which has implications for how managers lead their teams.

In one area where employers and employees have differing perceptions, employees believe that the trends of searching globally for the best talent, constantly shifting roles, and using tech to learn anything are all happening today. The survey found that employers, on the other hand, tend to think that these trends, along with departments and hierarchies no longer existing are a bit further off in the future. These are not the only differences. While employees tend to feel more negatively about the threat that automation, exclusive contract work, and the lack of a financially secure retirement may have on their careers, employers look at these trends more favorably. This is likely because these trends will help them get their job done more effectively and optimally. But it can leave employees feeling like the loyalty they are providing their employer is not being returned.

## Table 2: Emotions Associated with Each Trend

### Amount of Positive vs. Negative Emotion Associated with Each Trend





## There are trends that could revolutionize not only people's work realities at the individual level (see Table 3), but the workplace as a whole.

The trend thought to have the most impact globally is the ability to use technology anytime, anywhere. Though technology currently plays a profound role in most people's work at the global level, the ability to use technology for learning on-demand will help people get the information they need exactly when they need it without depending on a human-centered training paradigm. A change such as this will have implications for more people-centered HR departments, as they move away from human training toward weaving in learning-on-demand technology into their benefit offerings.

Another trend thought to have great personal impact is the constant need to shift roles. Connecting to the need for stability, constantly shifting work roles would be a big change from how many people work today and have in the past, where roles remained the same from project to project.

Lastly, working from anywhere in the world is thought to have a great impact on people's lives. While this trend is already happening, working from anywhere will certainly shift the way people interact, communicate, and collaborate to get work done. It also changes how people will manage employees.

Related to this, but thought to have less impact, is using social media as a collaboration platform for work. Social media usage is fairly pervasive across the globe; however, people are unsure as to how it might be useful in the realm of work. While social media platforms have evolved to be more inclusive of work, workplaces struggle to develop an internal business social media strategy.

Both employers and employees also tend to think that the trend toward dissolving individual departments and a hierarchical structure will have little impact on their work, possibly because they do not believe that this trend will happen. There are signs that the hierarchical organization of companies may disappear, due largely to technology connecting people at all levels of an organization, as well as information increasingly being shared with a broader audience and more junior audiences. In the Asia-Pacific region, however, a move away from the hierarchical structure may not take hold as quickly due to social and cultural norms. Countries like India and China respect hierarchy and the resulting bureaucracy, so a move away from these norms will take time.<sup>5</sup>

Survey results showed two other trends which respondents believed would have little personal impact on them. One is the trend of allowing employees to work on projects that are of personal interest to them. Many companies are still very bottom-line driven and have yet to cultivate employees' needs for passion and personal-driven work. The other trend is that of having employees perform all of their work from a mobile device. Respondents in North America and Europe especially believe this trend will have very little impact on their work because they believe this is a bit further off in the future and not as likely to materialize. Whereas, emerging economies in Asia Pacific and Latin America have higher penetration for mobile devices than internet, and thus believe that this trend will impact them a lot.

## Table 3: Personal Impact of Trends

### Amount of Personal Impact Expected from Each Trend





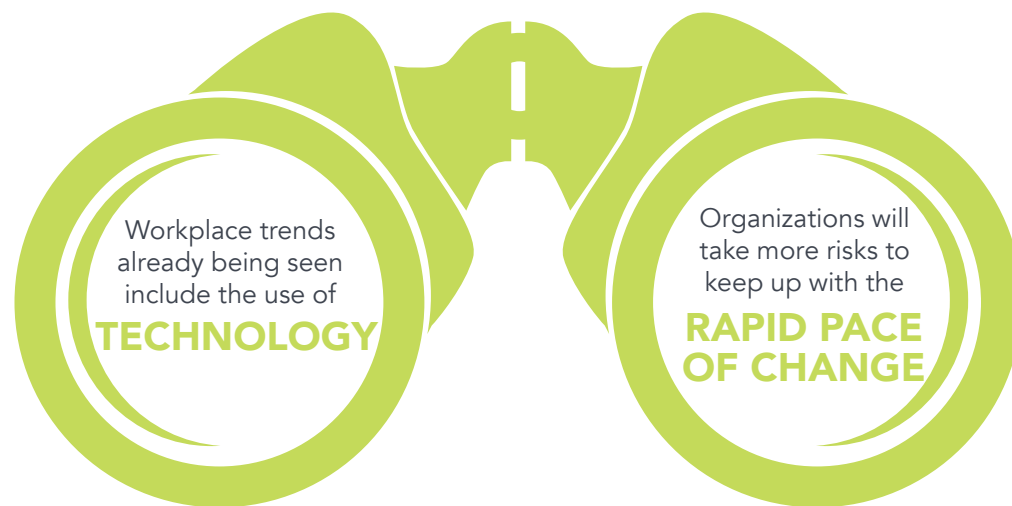
## Respondents to our survey had varying perceptions of when these trends will materialize in the workplace (see Table 4).

Many of the trends that employees believe are already happening—particularly in North America, Europe, and Latin America—are technology-related and tech-enabled. Workplace trends already being seen include the use of technology to learn anything at anytime and anywhere, the use of technology to allow for deeper personal connections across time and space, the ability to search globally for talent recruitment, and the need to learn new skills rapidly.

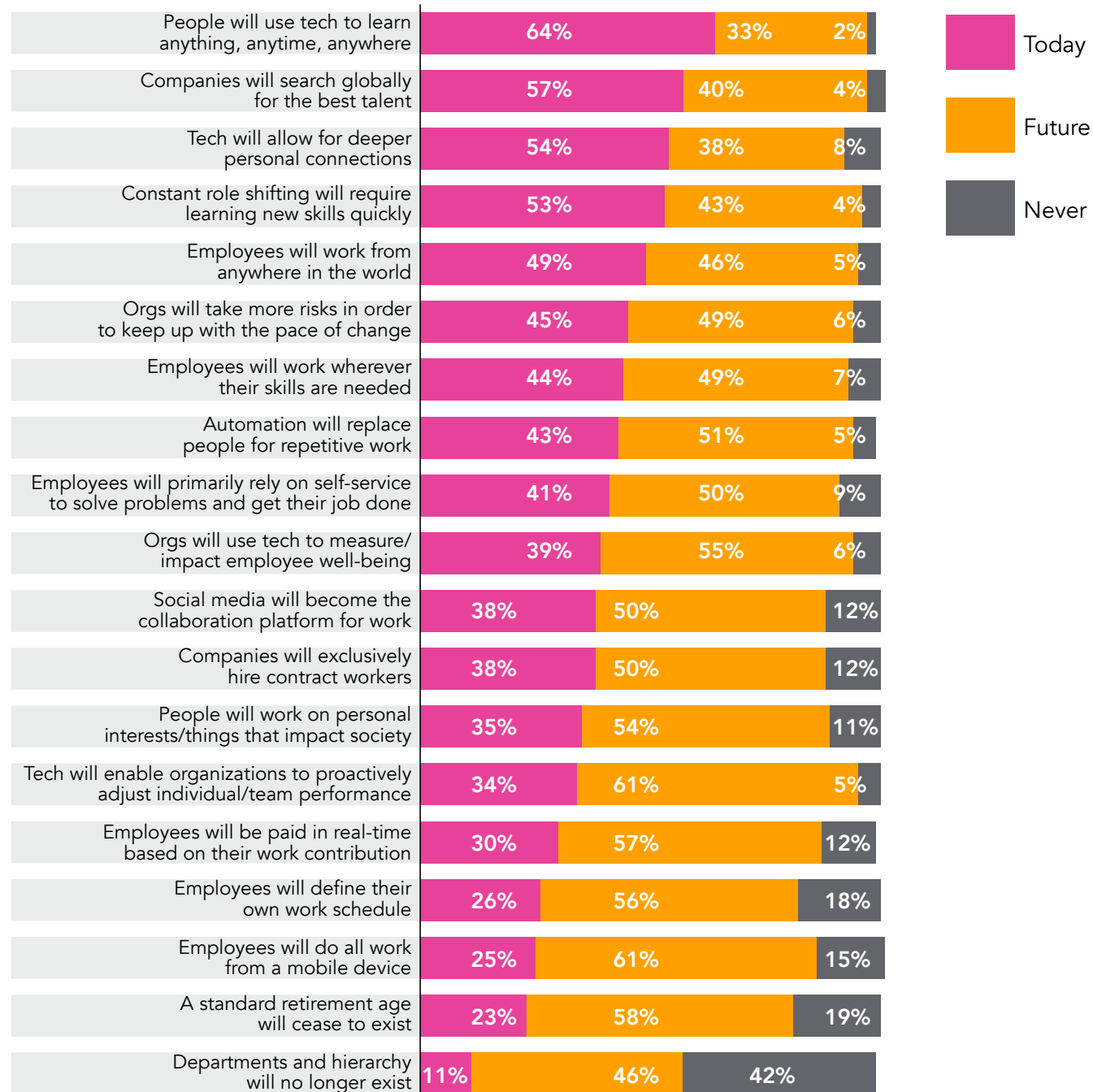
Trends projected to take hold soon also center around technology. These include organizations taking more risks to keep up with the rapid pace of change; using technology to measure and impact employee well-being, proactively adjusting performance; and increasingly relying on self-service to solve problems.

Then there are trends that people, particularly employers, think are a bit further off in the future. Indeed, this is the case for trends that emphasize freedom and flexibility for employees to get their work done in a way that is best suited for them. These trends include people defining their own work schedules, the standard retirement age becoming a thing of the past, and the ability to work on things of personal interest. Each of these potential trends undermines much of the current sentiment around work being solely a money-driven endeavor. Other top trends perceived as happening in the future include people doing most of their work from a mobile device, using social media as an online collaboration tool, and companies exclusively hiring contract workers for jobs.

Some organizations are more likely than others to welcome these types of changes in the workplace. Out of sheer necessity, multinational corporations will need to stay on top of technological changes, as well as any change that impacts doing business globally or impacts recruiting, hiring, and managing global talent. Companies that have been in business for fewer than twenty years are more likely to adapt to workplace shifts possibly because of newer systems and less established processes and procedures. In the Asia-Pacific region, many organizations are well-positioned to take advantage of many emerging workplace trends, as they have a younger workforce who is more likely to adapt quickly to new ways of working. Understanding the regional intricacies in more depth will illuminate the role HR companies and departments can play in helping address the evolving nature of the workplace environment.



## Table 4: Expected Timeframe for Trends



# Divergent Perspectives

## Employers vs. Employees

An important dynamic in the way that workplace trends manifest is the relationship between employers and employees—both from a rational and an emotional perspective. There is a strong “us vs. them” mentality that persists between these two groups. In general, employees do not believe that employers will address their evolving needs in the workplace.

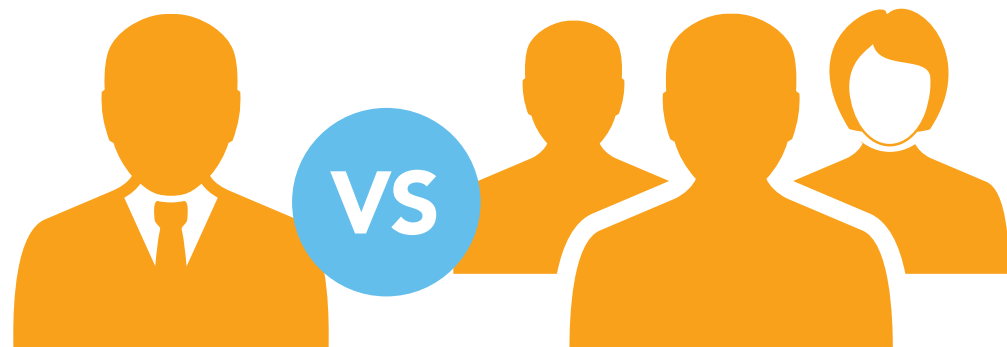
As mentioned earlier, the survey discovered that employees have a more short-term view of when trends will occur. Many trends that employees already see happening around them today are trends employers do not see happening for a couple years from now, such as:

- People using technology to learn anything, anytime, anywhere
- Companies searching globally for the best talent
- Employees needing to constantly shift roles, which requires learning new skills quickly
- Employees working from anywhere in the world
- Organizations taking more risks in order to keep up with the pace of change

Many employees are not convinced that their companies will adapt to new trends, and they tend to blame leadership for being too fearful of taking risks and making changes. The trends employees are most likely to believe their organization will not adapt to are:

- Departments and hierarchy no longer existing
- Employees defining their own work schedules
- Employees working wherever their skills are needed rather than remaining loyal to one company
- Automation, smart machines, and artificial intelligence replacing people for repetitive work
- People will spend time working on things of interest

Employers, however, are highly likely to believe they will adapt to most of those exact same trends. Because employees are skeptical that their company will adapt to changes, they are much less likely than employers to expect to be impacted by change. Employees who have longer careers ahead of them or who are in positions with less power may have more anxiety and fear about changes in the workplace and how their livelihood and future success may be impacted.



# Divergent Perspectives

The research suggests that both Millennials and Career Knowledge Workers (employees who have been in the workforce at least five years, but fewer than fifteen) feel most negatively about the following trends in the workplace:

- Companies exclusively hiring contract workers on a project-by-project basis
- Automation, smart machines, and artificial intelligence replacing people for repetitive work

In addition, Career Knowledge Workers also perceived the following trends negatively:

- The standard retirement age ceasing to exist
- Organizations taking more risks in order to keep up with the pace of change
- Employees shifting roles which requires learning new skills quickly
- Companies searching globally for the best talent
- Technology enabling organizations to proactively adjust the performance of individuals and teams

The research found that employers, on the other hand, likely feel more secure about the prospect of changes to the workplace—either because they are closer to retirement or because, as Senior Executives, they are in positions with more power or control. Employers therefore had a much more positive outlook on future changes, especially the changes employees felt may negatively impact them.



# Regional Differences

## North America

The perceptions and sentiments of employers and employees in North America are generally consistent with the global view. There are only a few slight deviations when looking at North America specifically.

Globally, the following perceptions are driven mostly by Career Knowledge Workers; in North America, they are driven mostly by Millennials:

- The belief that companies will not adapt to employees working wherever their skills are needed rather than remaining loyal to one company
- Negative sentiment toward companies searching globally for the best talent

Globally, while both Millennials and Career Knowledge Workers are much more likely to feel negatively about the following items, in North America, the following differences apply:

- Career Knowledge Workers more so than Millennials have a negative sentiment toward companies exclusively hiring contract workers
- Millennials more so than Career Knowledge Workers have a negative sentiment toward automation replacing people for repetitive work



# Regional Differences

## Europe

The perceptions and sentiments of employers and employees in Europe are also generally consistent with the global view. But there are some deviations when looking at Europe specifically.

The belief that other companies are already searching globally for the best talent, but that the company they work for will not adapt to this trend is primarily held by Millennials.

Contrary to how employers feel at a global level, employers in Europe are not very likely to think organizations will adapt to allowing employees to define their own work schedules or to using automation to replace people for repetitive work.

Globally, both Millennials and Career Knowledge Workers alike are much more likely to feel negatively about companies exclusively hiring contract workers. In Europe, Career Knowledge Workers feel this way more than Millennials.



# Regional Differences

## Latin America

The perceptions and sentiments of employers and employees in Latin America are generally consistent with the global view, with the following deviations noted when looking at Latin America specifically.

Globally, a negative sentiment toward the following trends is driven primarily by Career Knowledge Workers; in Latin America, the negative sentiment is mostly driven by Millennials:

- Employees having to learn new skills quickly in order to shift roles constantly
- Companies searching globally for the best talent
- Technology enabling organizations to be proactive in adjusting the performance of individuals and teams

Globally, it is primarily the Career Knowledge Workers who believe many trends are already occurring. However, In Latin American, both Career Knowledge Workers and Millennials believe the following trends are already occurring:

- The belief that organizations are already taking more risks in order to keep up with the pace of change (expressing a negative sentiment toward this trend)
- The belief that organizations will not adapt to employees working wherever their skills are needed rather than remaining loyal to one company



# Regional Differences

## Asia-Pacific

The Asia-Pacific region is the most distinctly unique region when it comes to perceptions and sentiments of workplace trends by employers and employees.

Globally, the following trends are being driven primarily by Career Knowledge Workers; in Asia-Pacific, they are mostly being driven by Millennials:

- The belief that other companies are already searching globally for the best talent, but that the organizations they work for will not adapt to this trend
- The belief that organizations will not get rid of departments and hierarchy
- The belief that organizations will not adapt to allow employees to define their own work schedules
- Negative sentiment toward organizations taking more risks to keep up with the pace of change
- Negative sentiment toward employees having to learn new skills quickly in order to shift roles constantly

Whereas globally the following trends are driven primarily by Career Knowledge Workers, in Asia-Pacific they are driven equally by Career Knowledge Workers and Millennials:

- The belief that employees can already work from anywhere in the world
- Negative sentiment toward organizations using technology to proactively adjust the performance of individuals and teams

Contrary to how employers feel at a global level, employers surveyed in the Asia-Pacific region do not believe that employees will work at many different jobs throughout their career, going wherever their skills are needed rather than remaining loyal to one company.



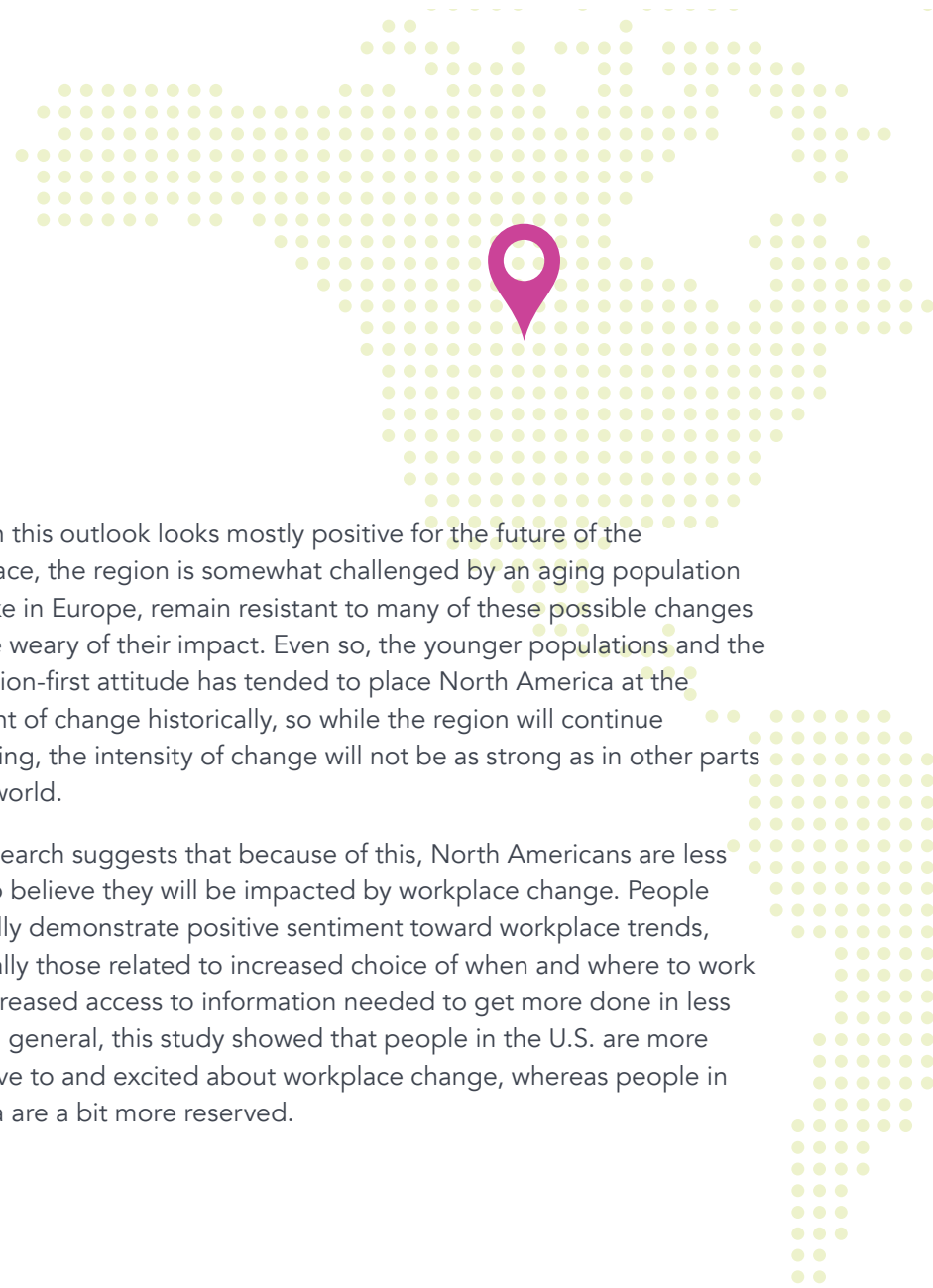


Looking below the  
surface by region

# North America



# North America: Embracing Change



While the more recent sources of global growth, such as China, are slowing, the North American economies are poised to accelerate in the near future with continued impact on the workplace. The region possesses profound advantages, such as a relatively liberalized business climate, a strong culture of innovation and entrepreneurialism, agile capital markets, small firms that can create and capitalize on technological advances, and a start-up culture that is well-suited to adapt to the future.<sup>6</sup>

Canada's banking system, for example, has proved to be among the soundest in the world, and its oil and gas sector remains strong, even as it has been challenged by last year's downturn in oil prices. Industries in the entire region, including energy, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and information technology are thriving.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, job growth is projected to remain stable, which can support and fund many emerging workplace trends such as automation and using technology for well-being.

Though this outlook looks mostly positive for the future of the workplace, the region is somewhat challenged by an aging population who, like in Europe, remain resistant to many of these possible changes and are weary of their impact. Even so, the younger populations and the innovation-first attitude has tended to place North America at the forefront of change historically, so while the region will continue advancing, the intensity of change will not be as strong as in other parts of the world.

The research suggests that because of this, North Americans are less likely to believe they will be impacted by workplace change. People generally demonstrate positive sentiment toward workplace trends, especially those related to increased choice of when and where to work and increased access to information needed to get more done in less time. In general, this study showed that people in the U.S. are more receptive to and excited about workplace change, whereas people in Canada are a bit more reserved.

<sup>6</sup> [ForeignPolicy.com](http://ForeignPolicy.com), *North America: the Next Great Emerging Market?*, June 2015

<sup>7</sup> [ForeignPolicy.com](http://ForeignPolicy.com), *North America: the Next Great Emerging Market?*, June 2015

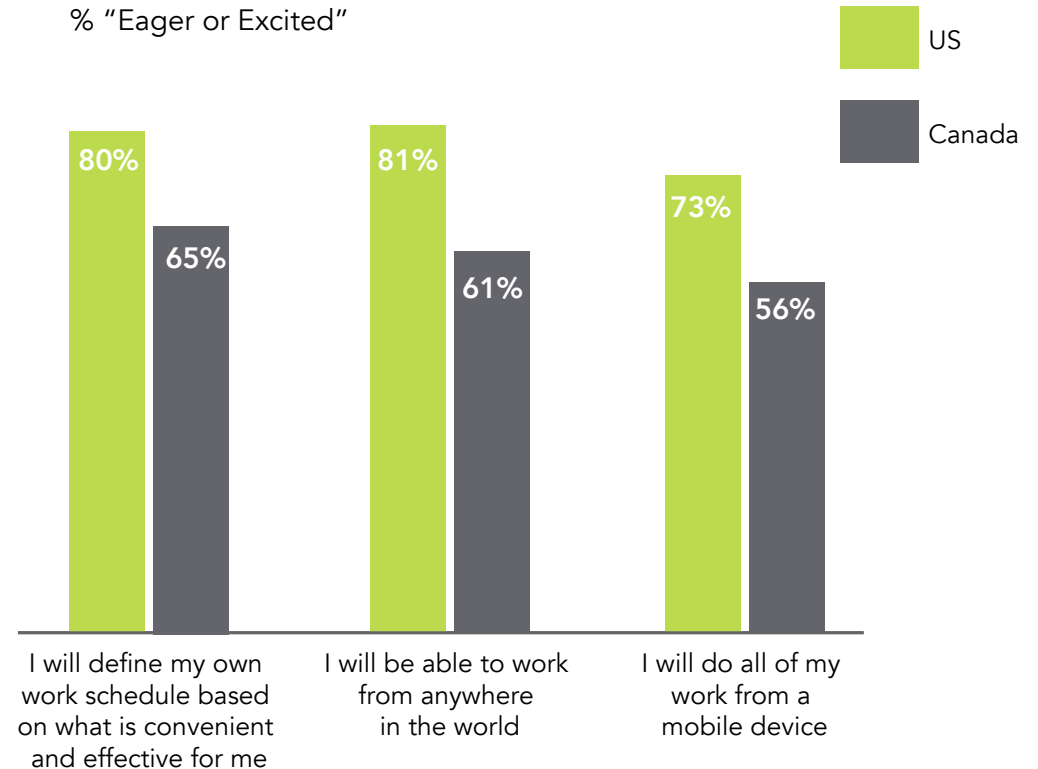
# Freedom

Employers and employees in North America feel they are already well on their way to having increased control and flexibility to do their work when, where, and how they want. Those who have not already been impacted by the ability to define one's own schedule, work from anywhere, or get more work done via mobile devices believe they will be impacted by these changes within the next five years. Most people in North America are excited about these sorts of changes because they strongly desire this increased flexibility and they are fairly confident organizations will continue to adapt (See Table 5). It is primarily workers in the U.S. who are driving excitement about these changes; people in Canada do not share the same level of positivity.

The higher levels of excitement about increased choice over schedule and work location observed in the U.S. is perhaps a natural outcome of cultural and economic changes that have been underway there for quite some time. The attitudes and aspirations of Millennial men and women are converging, with both placing high value on work-life balance. Companies that demonstrate they value their employees as whole people with full lives, not just as employees, will be more likely to retain and advance talent.<sup>8</sup> In addition to this, soaring home prices are causing people to flee from major cities that have long been important centers of work such as New York City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. As more people leave these cities and potential new residents are scared away because of a cost of living that seems unattainable, companies will have to find ways to fill in their workforce with remote workers.<sup>9</sup>

## Table 5

% "Eager or Excited"



<sup>8</sup> Business Value Exchange, *Marvelous Millennials Don't Turn Generation Y Into A Commodity*, May 2015

<sup>9</sup> Bloomberg News, *These Are The Top 20 Cities Americans Are Ditching*, July 2015

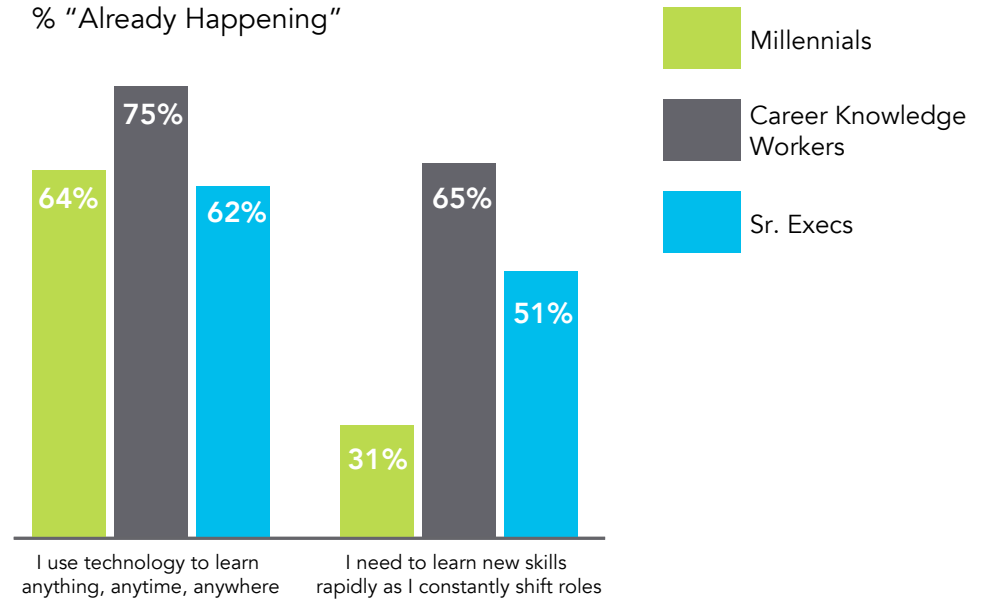
# Knowledge

In line with the overall sentiment of people in other regions, North Americans believe they essentially already have access to the people, tools, and information needed to get their work done, and overall they believe they have the time to learn new skills while still accomplishing their daily work (See Table 6). As such, many people are already feeling a positive impact from being able to connect with their global professional network and learn on-demand via technology (See Table 7).

Although about two-thirds of North Americans in the study are excited about the opportunities for growth that stem from a workplace that demands new skills be learned rapidly, people still feel an element of pressure and stress related to this (as observed in all regions). Companies are employing unique practices in order to combat stress felt by employees and to help them view continual learning as a positive. Last year, a company called Udacity partnered with technology companies to create online courses geared toward teaching a set of discrete, highly prized technical skills—including mobile programming, data analysis, and web development. Students who completed these courses were awarded a “nanodegree,” a credential by Udacity which was created in partnership with Google, AT&T, and other companies to become a new form of workplace certification.<sup>10</sup> It can be expected that more and more of this type of approach to on-the-job learning will come about in the next few years.

## Table 6

% “Already Happening”



## Table 7

% “Eager or Excited”



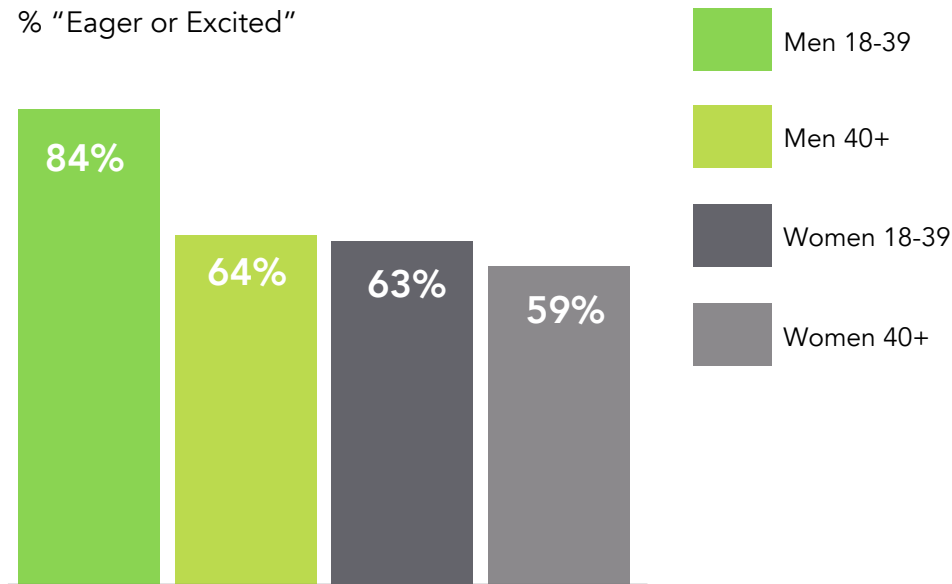
# Stability

Although certainly not to the extent observed in Europe, stability is somewhat of a concern for people in North America, particularly older men and women of all ages. Many people believe companies are already searching globally for the best talent and beginning to shift toward more contract work on a project-by-project basis.

This breeds a level of uncertainty related to long-term job security, which is observed in all regions, but is more prevalent in the U.S. and in Europe (See Tables 8 & 9). The majority of people in North America, however, remain excited about the opportunities that will come from a more global workplace with fewer expectations that employees remain in one job or at one company for an extended period of time.

## Table 8

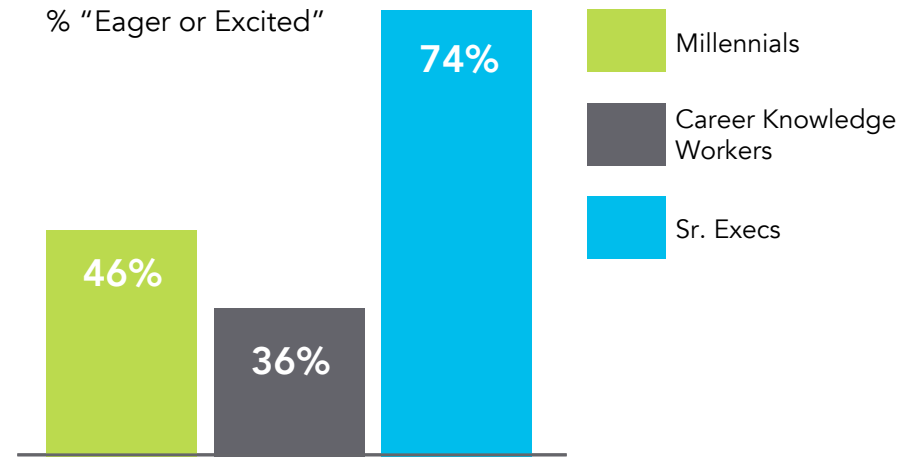
% "Eager or Excited"



Companies will search globally for the best talent

## Table 9

% "Eager or Excited"



Companies will exclusively hire contract workers on a project-by-project basis

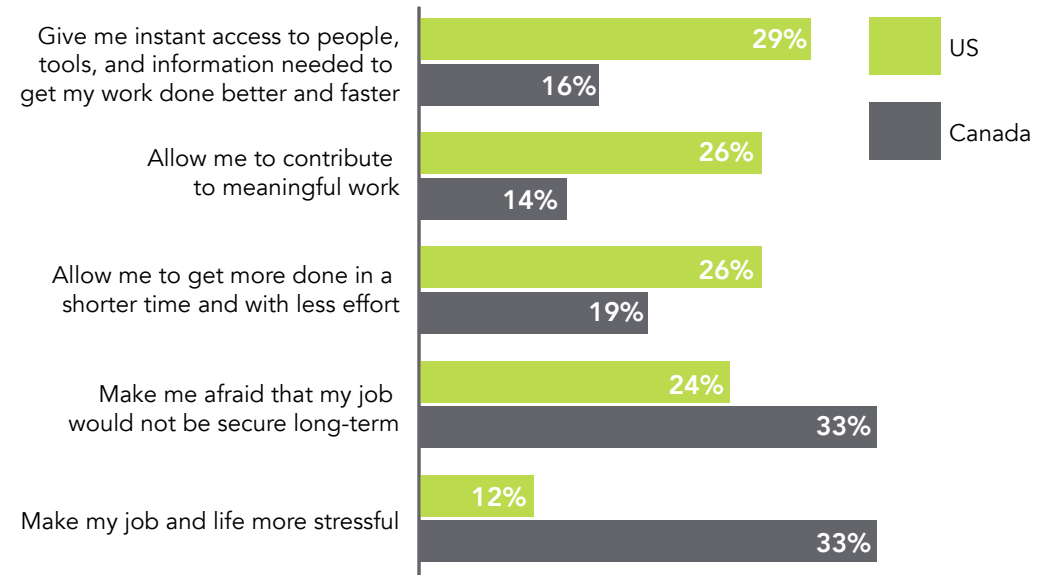
# Self-Management

Technology that allows for more independence for workers to manage their productivity and performance while receiving feedback and recognition in real-time is generally believed to be well along the adoption curve in North America. If not already, people expect that within the next three years repetitive work will be completed via automation and smart machines, and that technological tools will be used by organizations to monitor and adjust the performance of individuals and teams. There is a lot of eagerness about tools that will help people better manage their time and output. Although the majority of people are excited about an increase in automation, there is less excitement about this trend versus other workplace trends in North America. While those in the U.S. are able to see some positive benefits to having their work augmented with smart machines, those in Canada are more worried about the potential negative impact from having decreased job security (See Table 10).

As observed in Latin America and Europe, many North Americans believe the corporate structure of having multiple departments and a set hierarchy will always exist within the workplace—especially people in the U.S. (See Table 11) If such a change were to happen, the majority of North Americans would have positive feelings about it, but only about half of the survey respondents in this region think companies will adapt to what could be perceived as a lack of structure. Canadians are more hopeful that such a shift will happen in the future, as they believe a reduction in hierarchy would help them maintain better work-life balance.

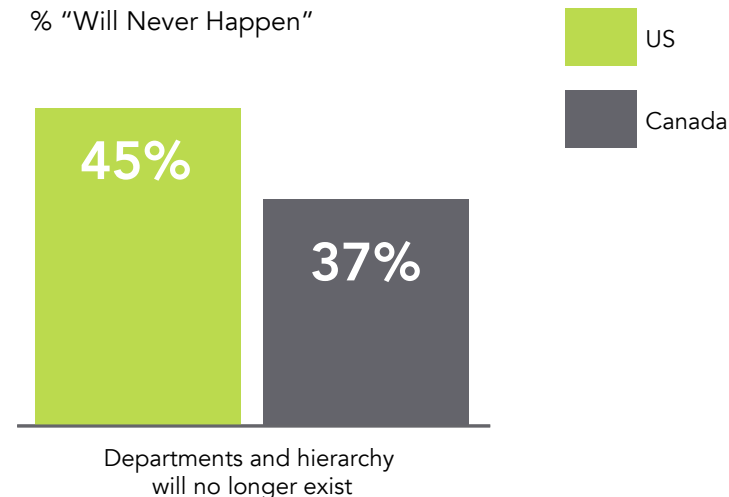
## Table 10

Ways in Which Increased Automation Will Impact You



## Table 11

% "Will Never Happen"



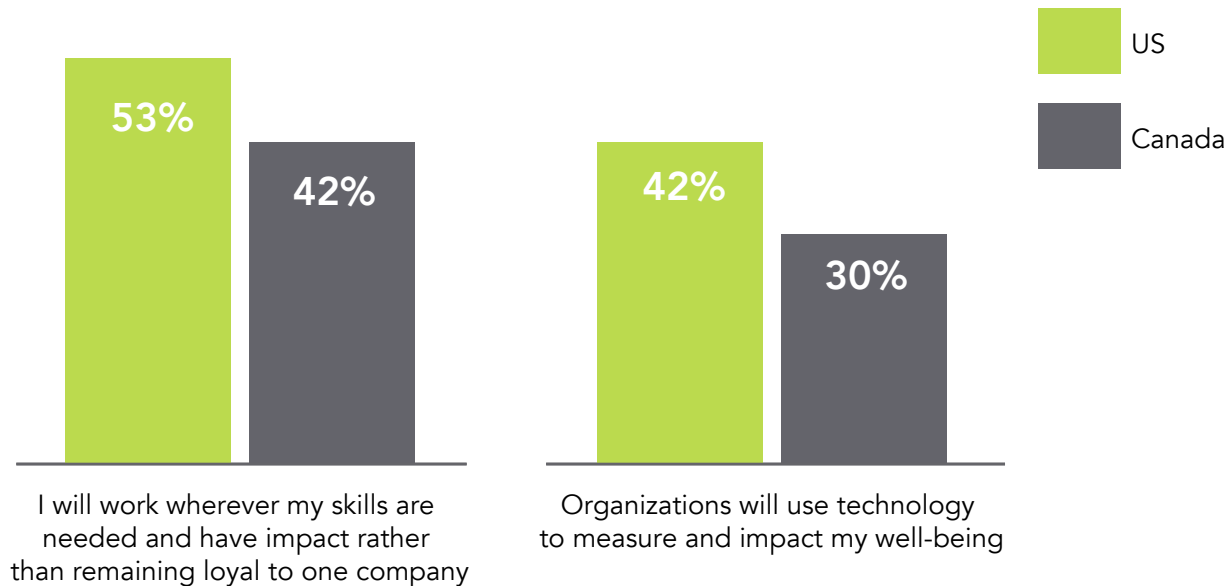
# Meaning

As many North Americans are already gravitating toward opportunities that align their skills to their growing need for a sense of purpose, companies in the region are beginning to adapt by increasingly using tools and technology to impact employee well-being and help people live healthy, meaningful lives (See Table 12). This is especially true in the U.S. as compared with Canada. People in North America are excited about increased opportunities to contribute to meaningful work at companies that demonstrate a greater commitment to their employees.

One example of how employers can use technology to help employees maintain their well-being in order to continue to contribute to meaningful work comes from the oil and gas industry. Baker Hughes, an oil and gas drilling services contractor based in Texas, is developing a new smart helmet technology with sensors to track the user’s vital statistics (heart rate, oxygen levels, blood sugar levels) for safety purposes. This type of technology could be used in many different jobs to help ensure workers are at their best and help people learn how to improve their well-being.<sup>11</sup>

## Table 12

% “Already Happening”





Looking below the  
surface by region

# Europe





## Europe: The “Old World” View

As a region, Europe tends to be most apprehensive about change in comparison with the rest of the world. Our study shows this is because of the distinct divide many Europeans have between work and leisure (and the associated fear that new trends may threaten this), as well as the resistance to change that is characteristic of much of the region’s large aging population. Germany, for example, currently enjoys shorter working hours than many of its European counterparts, but it also has the most productivity.<sup>12</sup> This is due to the working hours being a time of intense focus and direction. In fact, the German government is even considering banning work email after the hours of 6:00 p.m.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, much of Europe possesses a “work to live” mentality. Like Germany, the working population in the Netherlands carefully plans their private and working lives, but their progressive approach to business makes them well-equipped to take on the tasks of the future workplace.<sup>14</sup> On the other end of the spectrum, working people in the UK work long hours, and more than a quarter of the population is reportedly unhappy with their work-life balance, particularly those with demanding careers such as those in finance, health, law, and teaching.<sup>15</sup>

Ironically, though fear exists among the region around change, many European countries are embracing and even leading in technology and education, inevitably building a workforce for the future. France is on the cutting-edge of big data and digital technology, and both France and the UK are avid users of social media.<sup>16</sup> Germany, Europe’s powerhouse, will continue being a leader for exports to developing Asian countries. Ultimately, how the region utilizes these tools and adapts to its growth will be key.

As mentioned previously, people in Europe overall are the most apprehensive about changes in the workplace that are already happening or are expected to happen in the next few years. Fear or anxiety is particularly acute for any trends that may bring about decreased job or financial security. In addition, Europeans feel somewhat threatened by an increase in competition with people in Asia-Pacific and Latin America for jobs, as they believe this may alter their long-standing lifestyles of being able to keep reasonable work hours and take time off for vacation and family leave.

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<sup>12</sup> Huffington Post, *Why Germans work fewer hours, but produce more: A study in culture*, November 2014

<sup>13</sup> Huffington Post, *Germany to consider ban on late-night work emails*, September 2014

<sup>14</sup> The Guardian, *Going Dutch: why the country is leading the way on sustainable business*, September 2013

<sup>15</sup> Independent, *A quarter of UK professionals are unhappy with their work-life balance, survey finds*, February 2015

<sup>16</sup> [Gouvernement.Fr](#), *9 things you didn’t know about France and #digitaltechnology*, March 2015

## Freedom

In line with other regions, most Europeans in our study believe people can either already work from anywhere in the world or will be able to do so in the next five years. While about three-quarters of survey respondents in Europe expect to be impacted by this increased choice of work location, most of them only expect to be impacted “a little.” This is more akin to how their North American counterparts view this trend and is very different from how it is viewed in Asia-Pacific and Latin America where a greater impact is expected to be felt.

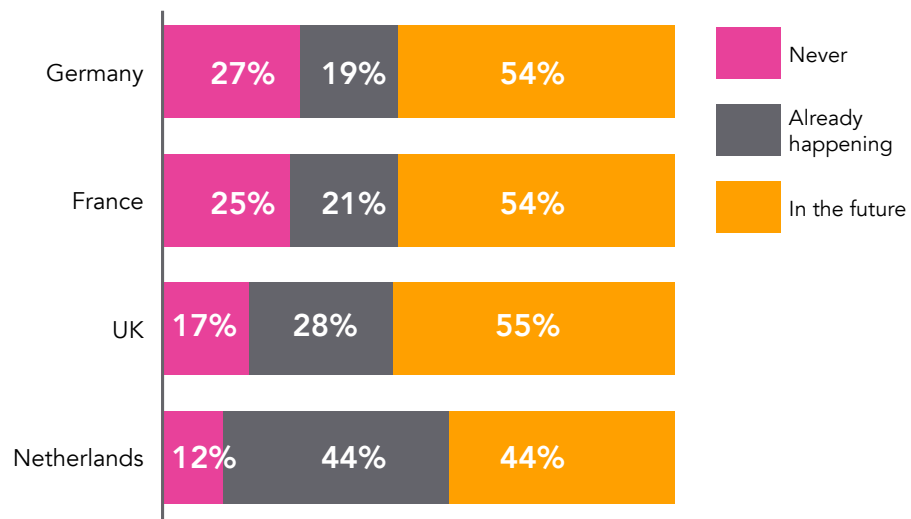
There is mixed opinion in Europe related to whether or not people will be able to define their own work schedules or get all of their work done via mobile device (See Table 13). While nearly one-quarter of Europeans believe these changes will never happen, roughly the same proportion of people believe these changes are already happening. Fewer Europeans expect to be impacted by this trend when compared with those in other regions, especially those in Germany.

Although most Europeans surveyed are eager or excited about having increased choice in work location and schedule, as well as being able to get all of their work done from a mobile device, their level of excitement is still the lowest among all regions. Most believe companies will adapt to providing increased choice in work location and the ability to get work done from a mobile device, but there is a bit more skepticism when it comes to defining one’s own work schedule—especially in the UK (See Table 14).

Regardless of how people in Europe feel about these changes, new technology will have a dramatic effect on how and where work is done and on how Europeans will be effected. The accelerating adoption of mobile technologies and the migration to cloud computing will provide a transition point to “empty” or “thin” office space. The proliferation of data warehouses will enable corporations to centralize computing to large offsite facilities or to leverage external cloud services dynamically for needed computing capability (for example, Amazon Cloud).<sup>17</sup>

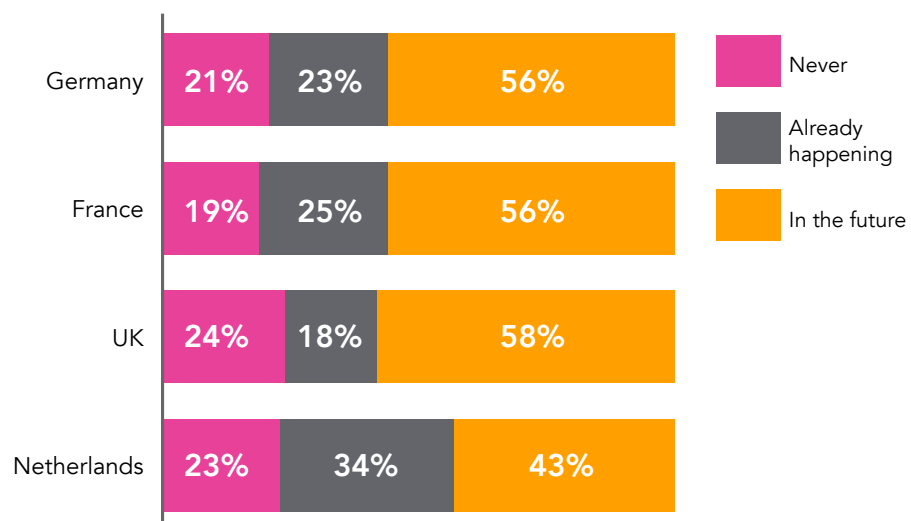
## Table 13

I will define my own work schedule



## Table 14

I will do all of my work from a mobile device



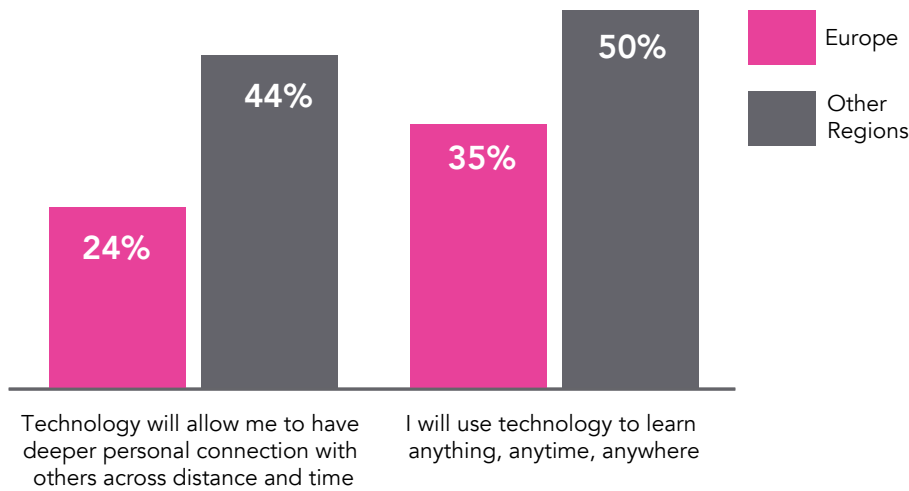
# Knowledge

The majority of Europeans in the study believe that technology is already allowing them to have deeper personal connections with others across distance and time, and is also allowing them to learn anything, anytime, anywhere. Since many workers have already adapted to these shifts, the level of impact and excitement felt by Europeans is a bit less

than when compared with workers in other regions (See Table 15). While most survey respondents in Europe believe social media will be used as a collaborative tool for work at some point in the future, a sizeable proportion is skeptical that such a change will ever come about (See Table 16).

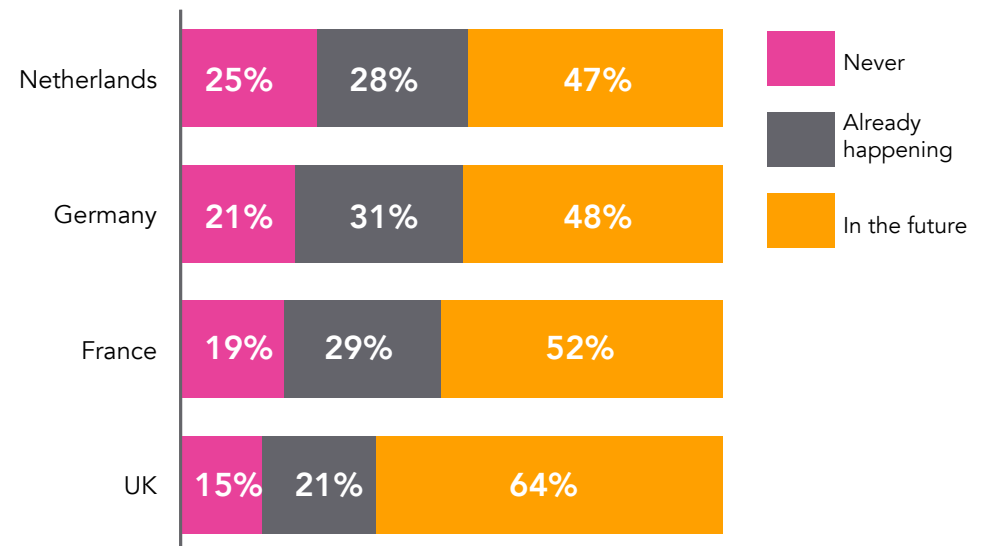
## Table 15

% Expected to be Impacted "A Lot"



## Table 16

Social media will become my main collaboration platform for work



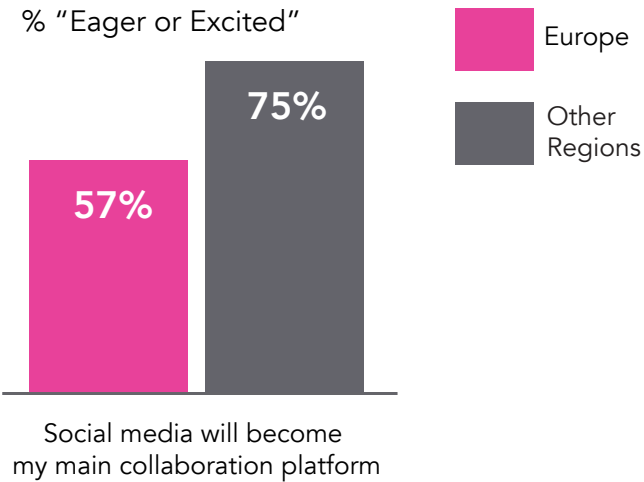
# Knowledge

This skepticism is driving somewhat lower excitement about the possibility of using social media to collaborate for work among Europeans when compared with those in other regions (see Table 17).

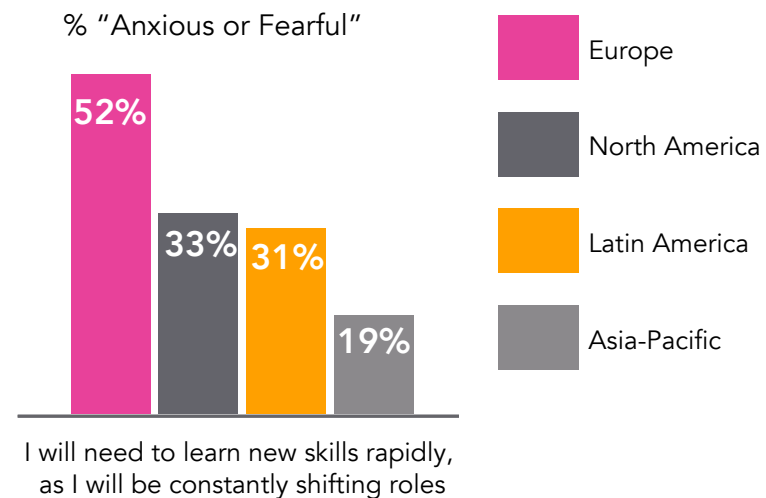
With increased access to the people, tools, and information needed to get work done in less time and effort comes an increased expectation from employers that employees will be able to learn new skills rapidly in order to move fluidly between roles. This will lead to reformed approaches to education from a very early age in order to properly prepare students for life and careers in the technology-driven 21st century. In France, Germany, and the UK, younger students are being groomed as a generation of entrepreneurs as curricula focus on the four Cs—communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. These skills will be central to working in teams, and flatter teams comprised of people able to think about issues from a variety of perspectives will be the go-to structure in modern working environments.<sup>18</sup>

More than half of Europeans in our study feel anxious or fearful when thinking about having to learn new skills rapidly in order to shift roles constantly (See Table 18). Such emotion in this area strongly differentiates people in Europe from people in other regions of the world where the overriding sentiment is positive. The thought of constantly having to learn new skills and move fluidly between roles brings up concerns for those in Europe that they will have increased stress in their job and life and that, if they are not able to keep up with their peers in an increasingly global talent pool, they will have decreased long-term job security.

### Table 17



### Table 18

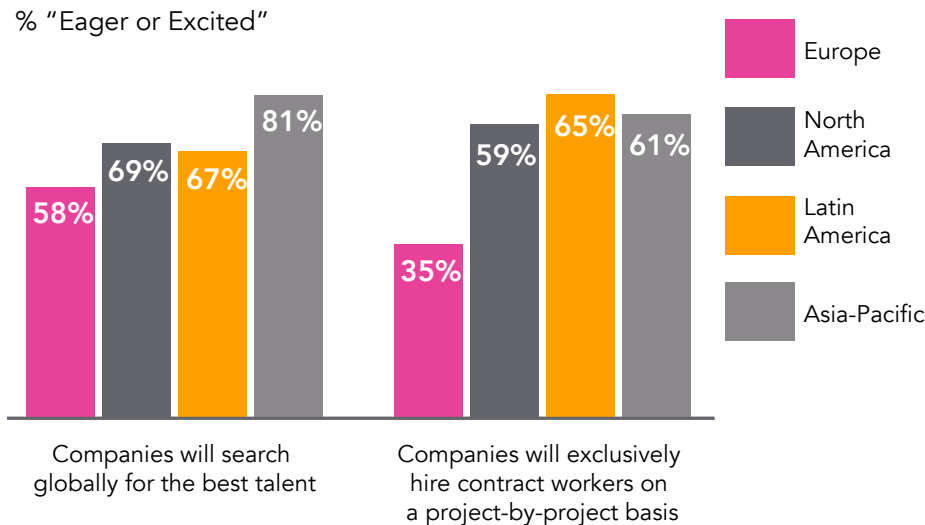


# Stability

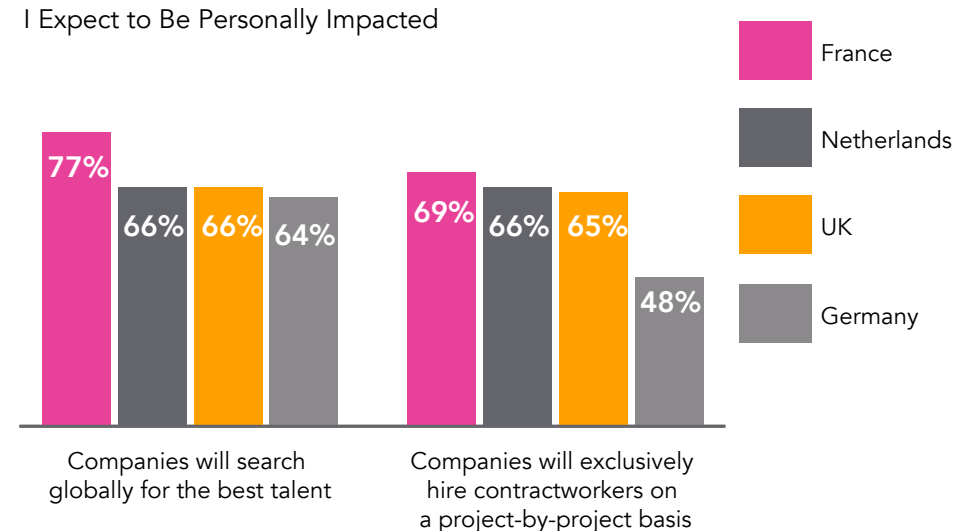
The need for stability is already a big concern in Europe. Most people believe a shift to searching globally for the best talent has already happened and that a shift to exclusively hiring contract workers on a project-by-project basis will come about in the future (See Table 19). Although Europeans in this survey demonstrated the least amount of positive emotion related to these shifts compared with other regions, they did not believe they will be personally impacted by them quite as much as people in Latin America or Asia-Pacific will be (See Table 20). However, more impact is expected to be felt in France and the Netherlands, particularly for shifting to contract-only work.

Europeans' concerns about their long-term job security and the perceived impact to their stress levels both at work and at home have some merit. In much the same way as we recognize global centers of expertise in the traditional industrial economy (e.g., fashion from Paris or Milan, carpets from the Middle East, consumer electronics from Japan), knowledge-based centers of expertise are beginning to take form.<sup>19</sup> Soon, specific skill labor shortages will likely force businesses to leverage a larger percentage of workers from varied sources, including contract pools, academic collaborations, open innovation challenges, and crowd-sourcing.<sup>20</sup> With Europeans able to see these changes on the horizon, their initial reaction is a very real emotional one. Employers should be aware of this heightened level of concern and anxiety in order to help workers in Europe through this transition.

## Table 19



## Table 20



<sup>19</sup> Cognizant White Paper, *The Future of Work: A New Approach To Productivity And Competitive Advantage*, December 2010

<sup>20</sup> Intel Labs White Paper, *The Future of Knowledge Work*, October 2012

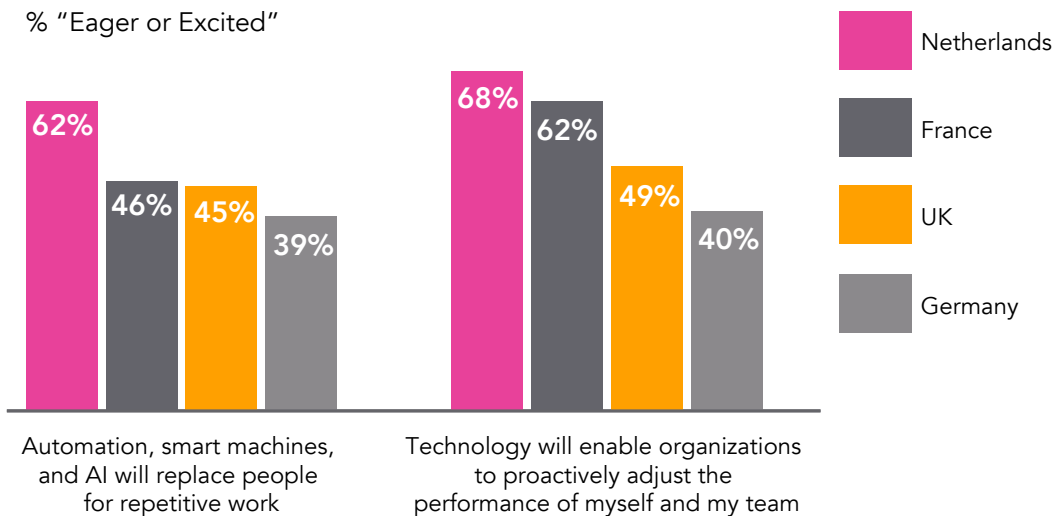
# Self-Management

Our study showed that most workers in Europe believe some of the shifts that will enable self-management are already happening or will come about in the next three years. Most expect to be personally impacted by an increase in the use of automation and technology to help organizations adjust the performance of individuals and teams. However, only about half of respondents in Europe are excited about such shifts due to fears over long-term job security and an increase in stress (See Table 21). Anxiety about these issues is not quite as pronounced in the Netherlands and France, however.

Even more so than in other regions, workers in Europe are quite skeptical about organizations eliminating departments and hierarchy (See Table 22). This is especially true among Career Knowledge Workers. Europeans would generally be eager to work in an environment without hierarchy, although some think it will add stress to their lives.

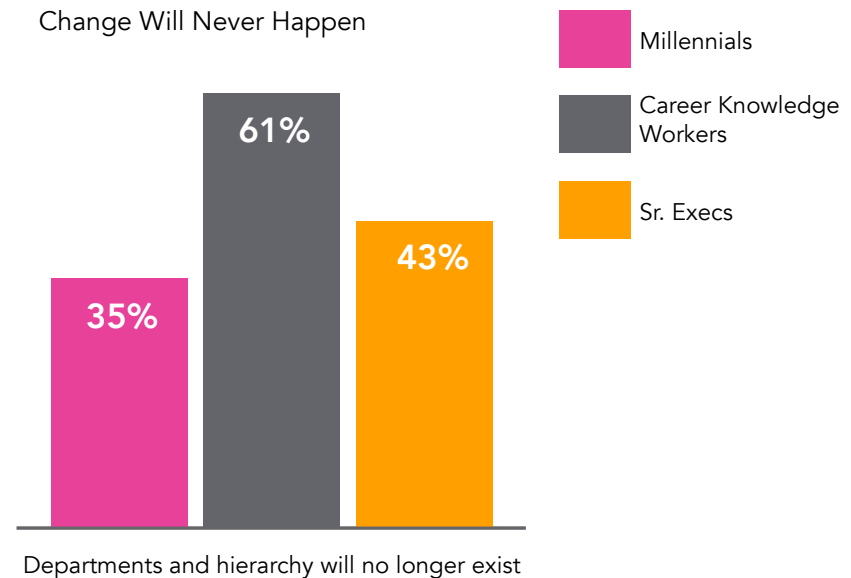
## Table 21

% "Eager or Excited"



## Table 22

Change Will Never Happen



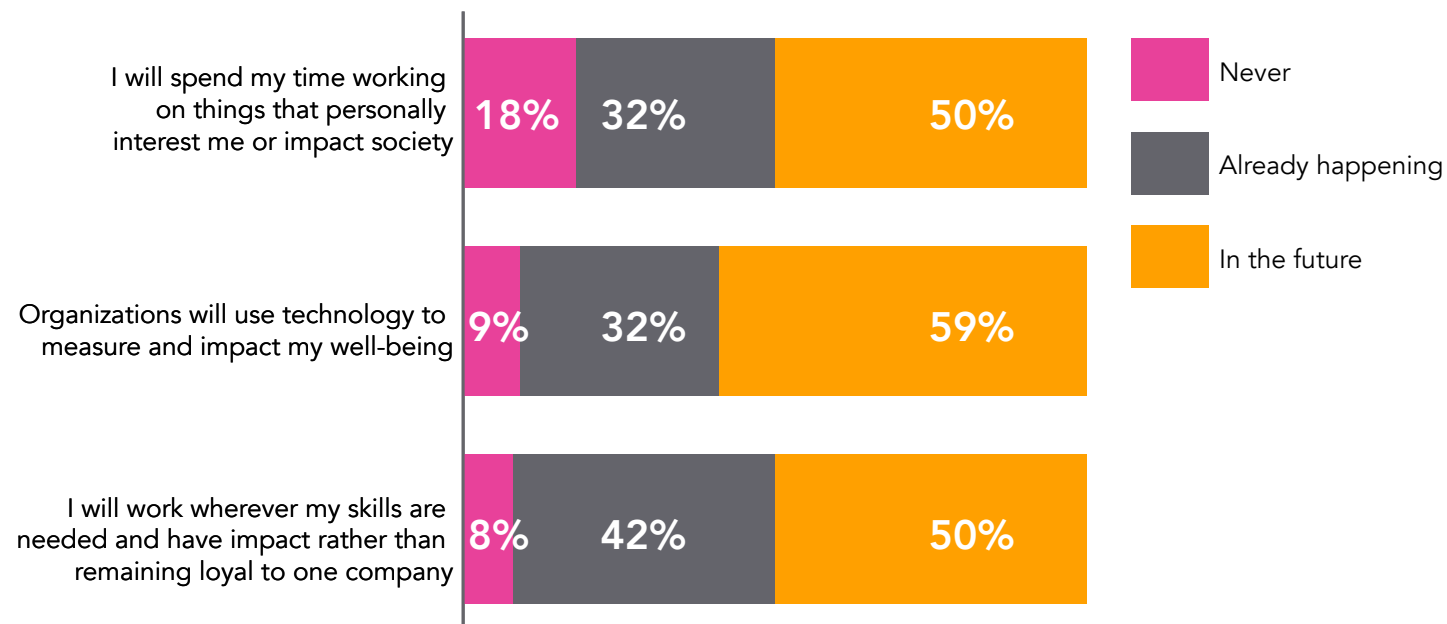
# Meaning

Most survey respondents in Europe believe a shift is already happening toward finding work that gives people a deeper sense of purpose, as well as working for companies that care about the people who work for them. Most respondents believe these trends will continue over the next five years (See Table 23). In line with how Europeans feel about these workplace trends, most expect to be impacted by these changes but to a lesser degree than people from other regions. While Europeans are

very excited about being able to choose work that personally interests them and impacts society, they have less excitement than other regions about shifting jobs often in search of such meaning. In addition, Europeans have less excitement than workers in other regions about companies leveraging technology to help people maintain their well-being (See Table 23).

## Table 23

Expected Timeframe For Each Trend





Looking below the  
surface by region

# Latin America





# Latin America: Hopeful but Skeptical



Though Latin America appeared to be particularly well-poised for growth over the last decade, a steady decline in economic growth over the last several years—particularly in Brazil—poses a challenge to the region today. Once the region’s economic beacons, Brazil and Argentina have witnessed slow paces in growth largely due to decreasing commodity prices, a slower Chinese economy, and shrinking investments, which have an impact both on technology infrastructure and adoption of workplace trends.

The region is not all characterized by a poor outlook, however. In the past decade alone, Latin America has managed to lift more than 70 million people out of poverty while expanding the middle class by more than 50 percent.<sup>21</sup> Better quality education, infrastructure, security, and healthcare services have become part of the core demands of Latin America’s rising middle class. Chile, for one, a globally integrated, entrepreneurial country, is set to become the region’s tech hub with burgeoning start-ups and an increasing exports industry.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Mexico is emerging as Latin America’s economic winner.<sup>23</sup> Manufacturing in Mexico remains a bright spot for the country.

Additionally, Mexico’s unique proximity to the U.S. works in the country’s favor. The weak peso makes exports more competitive, and Mexico is aided by imported technology. Companies such as Ford and Coca-Cola are projected to continue thriving in the region along with other industries that contribute to job growth and hiring.<sup>24</sup> Even in places such as Brazil, where the economy has plummeted, workers continue to be well-cared for and enjoy many labor-friendly protections.

So, even though the region as a whole remains a bit slower to growth compared with the rest of the world, changes are still facilitating growth toward the future, and workers’ sentiments reflect that. Respondents to our study are excited about the increased sense of understanding and freedom to be gained from rapidly accelerating technology and flexible work locations. Compared with other regions, those in Latin America are generally more likely to expect to be strongly impacted by workplace change. Even though almost two-thirds of people believe organizations in the region will adapt to shifting employee needs, Latin America is the most skeptical about organizations changing along with the times. Countries within Latin America tend to share similar views on the future of the workplace. Where differences occur, however, it is usually Mexico that shows the most excitement about upcoming changes and the most confidence that organizations will adapt.

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<sup>21</sup> [Worldbank.Org](#), *Latin America Overview*, 2015

<sup>22</sup> [Stanford.edu](#), *Technology trends in Latin America*

<sup>23</sup> CNN Money, *Mexico is Latin America’s success story as Brazil stumbles*, September 2015

<sup>24</sup> *Forbes*, *Expert Opinion: How Stable Is Mexico’s Economy?* September 2015

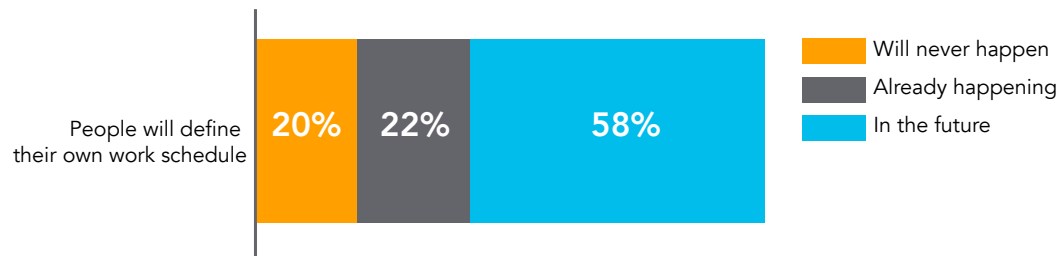
# Freedom

More than half of those surveyed in Latin America believe that workers can already make the choice to work from anywhere in the world, and (along with Asia-Pacific) they are much more likely than workers from North America and Europe to be feeling a strong impact from this. Interestingly, feelings are much more mixed with respect to whether or not people will be able to choose their own work schedules. Roughly the same proportion of Latin Americans believe they can already do this as those who believe such a shift will never happen (See Tables 24 & 25). Latin Americans are generally excited about the prospect of choosing their own schedule, particularly in Brazil, even though they are least likely among all regions to believe organizations will allow it. Such skepticism is especially true of Millennials in the region. In general, workers in Mexico are the most excited about an increase in

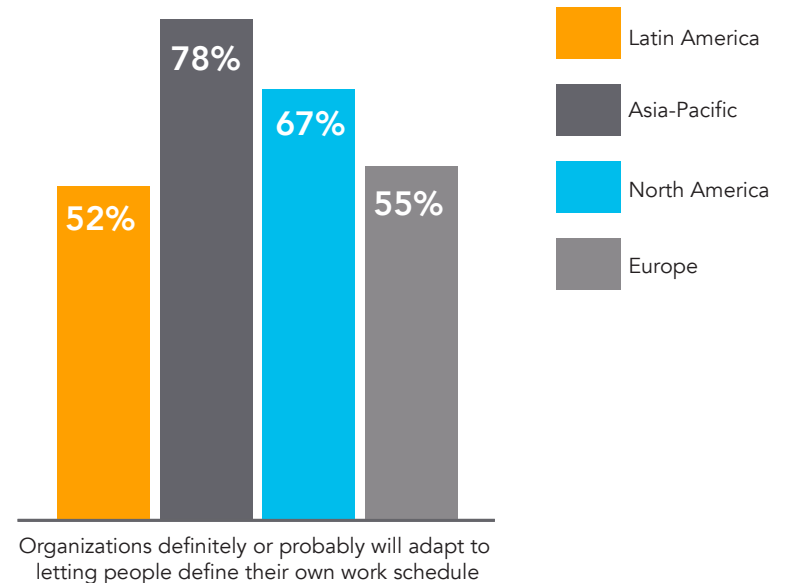
choice of location and schedule when compared with other Latin American countries.

Many of those surveyed in Latin America believe that doing all work from a mobile device is something that either already can be done or will come to fruition in the next three years. While those in Latin America are much more eager and excited about this change than workers in North America and Europe, they are still far less excited about it than people in the Asia-Pacific region. A dip in the level of excitement is likely due to a fair amount of skepticism that organizations in the region will adapt to allowing employees to complete work on a mobile device. Additionally, in places such as Brazil, while mobile phone usage is pervasive, smartphone adoption is still growing.

### Table 24



### Table 25



# Knowledge

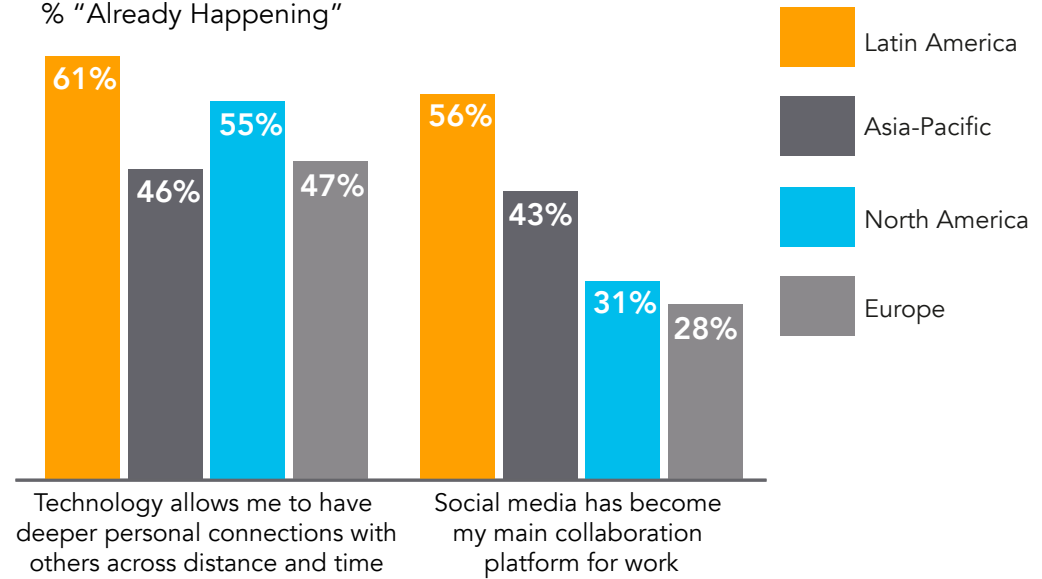
Most people in Latin America—far more so than people in other regions—believe that technology is already creating opportunities for deeper connections across distance and time (See Table 26). This may not be all that surprising, given that countries such as Costa Rica have declared Internet access to be a basic human right.<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, Latin Americans are also significantly more likely than people in other regions to believe that social media has already become a collaboration platform for work—especially Millennials. As such, the Latin American region is more likely than other regions to feeling personally impacted by these changes. While those in Latin America are generally a bit less excited about such changes than people in the Asia-Pacific region, those in Mexico feel particularly eager to take advantage of them.

Along with people in North America, Latin Americans are much more likely to believe that they can already learn on-demand (See Table 27). And, similarly to workers in the Asia-Pacific region, those in Latin America expect to feel a much stronger impact from this ability than people in other regions. Those in Brazil are less enthusiastic about on-demand learning than those in other Latin American countries.

With an increased ability to learn new skills and information rapidly through better technological platforms comes an increased expectation from employers that employees will be able to shift roles constantly. This expectation is something that over half of Latin Americans believe is already happening, with another quarter believing constant role shifting will be the norm in the next three years. Like people in all other regions, nearly everyone in Latin America expects to feel a strong impact from such a shift in expectations.

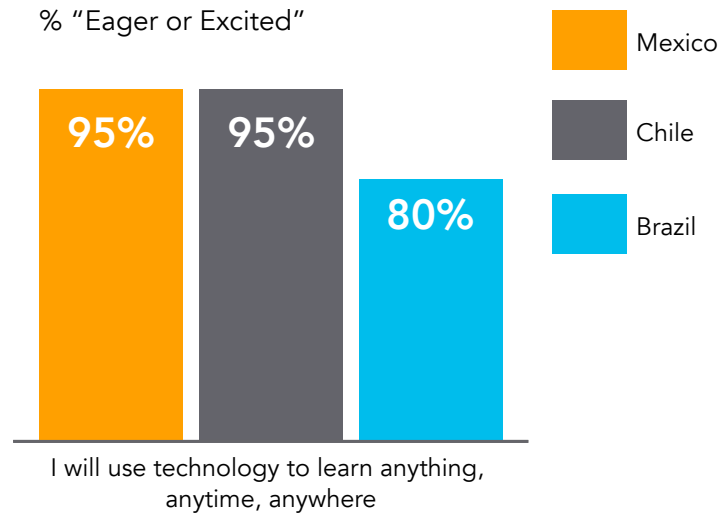
## Table 26

% "Already Happening"



## Table 27

% "Eager or Excited"



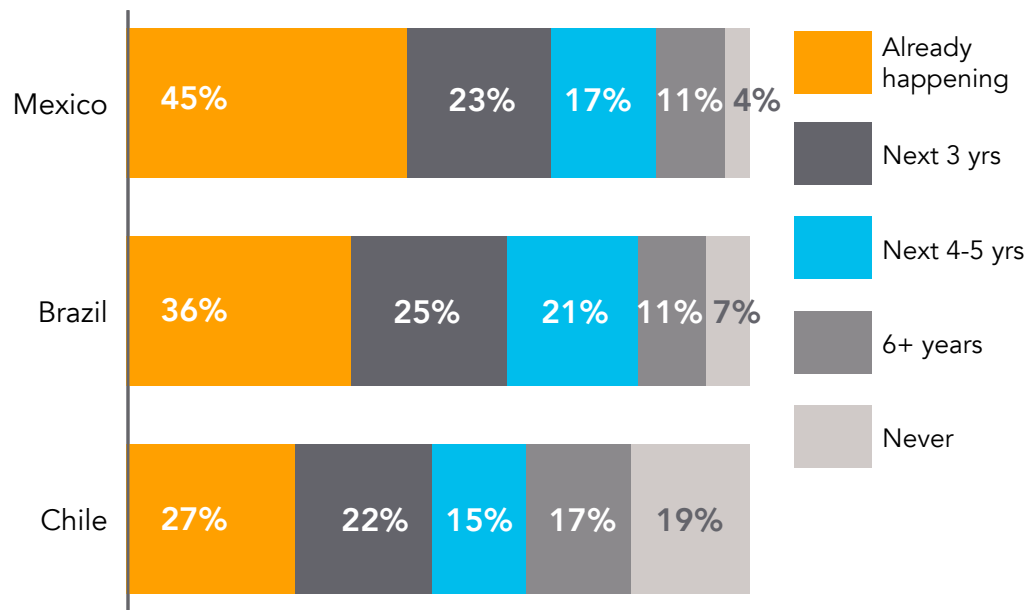
# Stability

Along with those in Europe, our study shows that people in Latin America are more likely than those in other regions (especially Asia-Pacific) to believe companies are already searching globally for the best talent. And like all other regions, Latin Americans believe a shift to contract-only work is something that will come about, but likely not for at least three to five years. Mexico is the only exception to this. More people in the country are already seeing contract jobs, likely because of the growing economy, which is largely based in manufacturing (See

Table 28). In many cases, companies prefer to contract people by job rather than pay employees a salary over a long period of time. Latin Americans are more likely than others to believe they will personally be impacted by these changes—although they just barely edge out people in the Asia-Pacific region in that respect. Most are excited about competing globally for jobs and doing contract work, especially in Brazil where the economy is beginning to slow and contract work provides new opportunities (see Table 29).

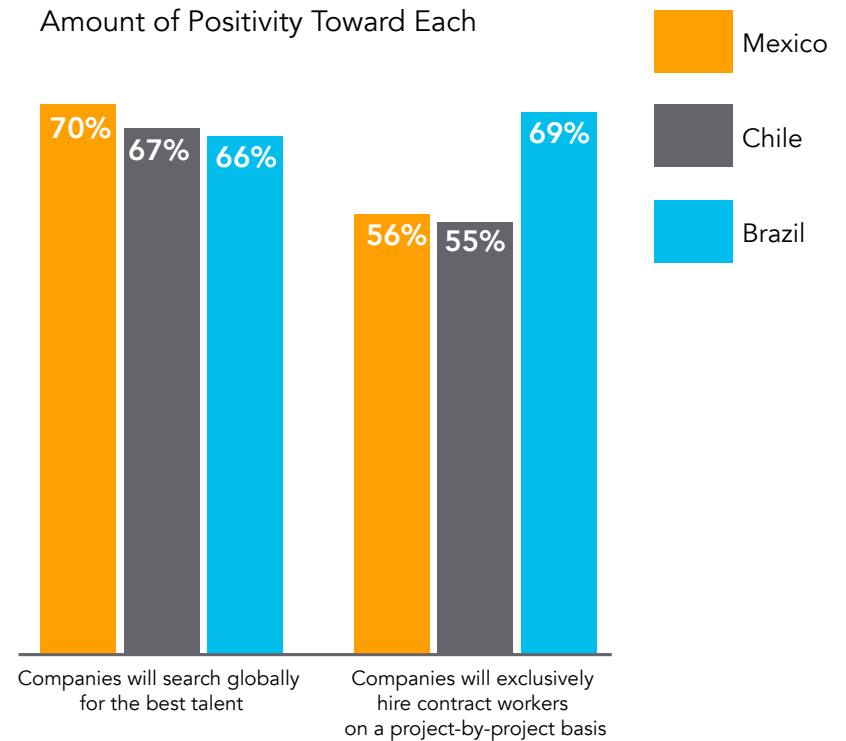
## Table 28

Companies will exclusively hire contract workers



## Table 29

Amount of Positivity Toward Each



# Self-Management

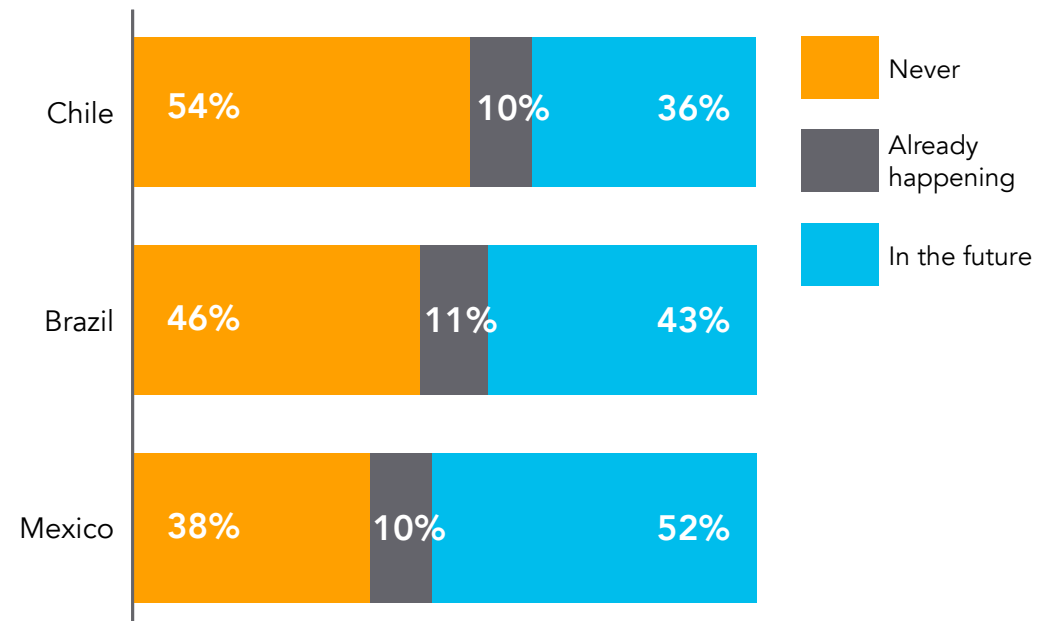
In line with those in North America and Europe, about half of Latin Americans believe departments and hierarchy will always exist—although those in Mexico are slightly more likely to believe such structure may not exist at some point in the future (see Table 30). While the majority of Latin Americans have positive emotions toward the possibility of this change in the workplace, this region is the least likely to believe that companies will adapt to such a change.

Latin America is the most likely of all regions to believe organizations are already being proactive in using technology to adjust the performance of individuals and teams. This is especially true for Chile, where nearly everyone is feeling or expects to feel personally impacted by it. While only about two-thirds of Latin Americans are excited about the use of this type of technology, people generally feel it will be useful to help them get more done in less time or with less effort.

Similarly to how those in North America and Europe feel, about half of those in Latin America believe automation, smart machines, and artificial intelligence are already replacing people for repetitive work. Latin Americans, however, are much more likely than those in other regions to think they will be personally impacted by such a shift. This may lead to anxiety or fear about long-term job security for about half of Latin Americans.

### Table 30

Departments and hierarchy will no longer exist



# Meaning

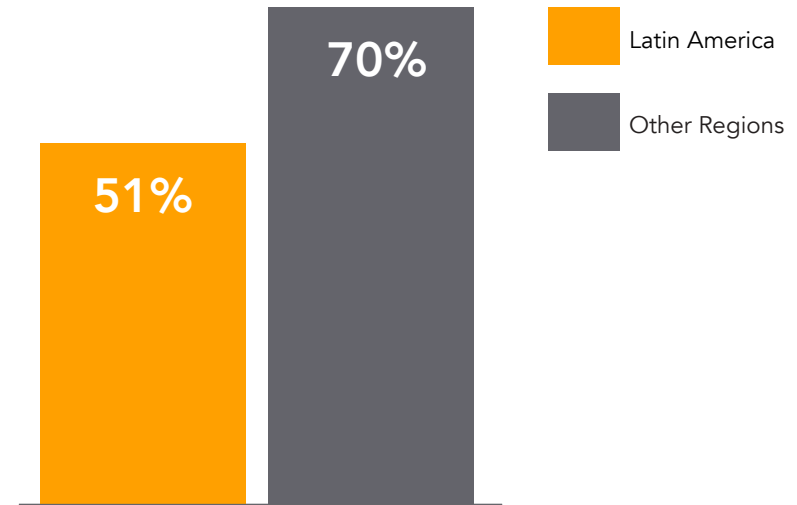
As with other regions, about one-third of Latin Americans believe people are already choosing to work on things that personally interest them or will have an impact on society. An additional quarter of people believe this will be widespread within the next three years. Although the Latin American region is more likely than other regions to think they will be personally impacted by such a shift, they are least likely to think organizations will adapt, which makes it more difficult for them to feel a benefit (See Table 31).

More than two-thirds of Latin Americans, especially males, believe organizations are either already using technology to measure and impact the well-being of their employees or will be doing so in the next three years (See Table 32). Most expect to be personally impacted by this change and they are excited about it, especially Millennials.

While many Latin Americans believe people are already starting to work wherever their skills are needed rather than remaining loyal to one company, this region (along with Asia-Pacific) is more likely than other regions to think this won't really be widespread until sometime within the next three years. Latin Americans, like their Asia-Pacific counterparts, are more likely than those in North America and Europe to believe they will be personally impacted by this and to be excited about it. The Latin American region is the least likely, however, to believe companies will willingly adapt to such an environment, although those in Mexico are slightly more likely to believe that companies will change.

## Table 31

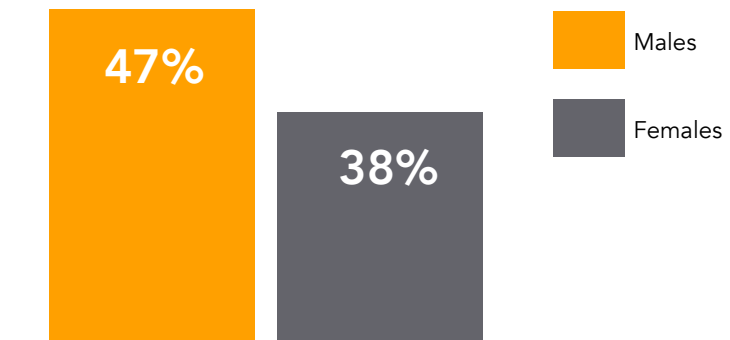
Companies "Definitely" or "Probably" Will Adapt



People will choose to work on things that personally interest them or impact society

## Table 32

% "Already Happening"



Organizations are using technology to measure and impact my well-being

Looking below the  
surface by region

# Asia Pacific



# Asia-Pacific: The Young and the Restless

Today, Asia-Pacific is defined by continued rapid economic growth, technological development, and large populations of workers who tend to skew younger. This makes the region not only excited about workplace changes, but also largely well-equipped to handle them. For the past decade and more, China has led regional growth, but the country's growth will likely begin to taper after the next year as it shifts to a model more dominated by domestic consumption and services. This change will most likely impact the workplace both in the region and around the world. India is moving to take the lead over China as the region's most quickly growing country with continued large investments in science, technology, and telecommunications industries. Even with China's slowing economy, the developing Asia-Pacific countries will continue to offer the world's highest and most rapid growth rate for the next ten years, which will greatly affect the way work transpires in the region. In Singapore alone, where nearly all citizens own smartphones, high tech infrastructure will continue evolving.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the growth of biotech, manufacturing, and mining industries in Australia will continue innovating against many of the trends mentioned in this study.<sup>27</sup>

It is no surprise then that people and organizations in the Asia-Pacific region are particularly well-poised to adapt to this rapid growth in the workplace. This region is more excited about workplace changes and people are even more likely to believe they will be positively impacted by change than people in other regions. In particular, people in Asia-Pacific are excited about technological growth and increased personal choice, which will provide them with more freedom, meaning, and greater ability for self-management. It is interesting that people in Asia-Pacific see this type of future, as significant changes in many countries will be required in order to realize it. Rigid hierarchies, family-led conglomerates, and traditional cultures that impact business norms are all environmental forces that would favor the status quo remaining dominant in the future.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> TodayOnline, Smartphone penetration in Singapore the highest globally: Survey, February 2015

<sup>27</sup> BusinessInsider, 6 trends that will define the workplace in 2015, January 2015

<sup>28</sup> WorldBank.org, East Asia Pacific Economic Update, October 2015



# Freedom

Most people surveyed in the Asia-Pacific region believe that the ability to work from anywhere in the world, the ability to define their own schedules, and the ability to do work from a mobile device are trends that are already occurring or will occur in the next three to five years (see Table 33). Nearly all respondents expect to be impacted by these changes, and they are eager and excited about the prospect (see Table 34).

Contrary to other regions, Asia-Pacific Career Knowledge Workers and Senior Executives are more likely than Millennials to believe that increased freedom is already being given to workers and that companies will adapt and feel very positively about it. Companies that have been in business for fewer than twenty years are more likely to adapt to giving people more freedom because, as the data from this study shows, those organizations were built on modern IT/connectivity systems that enable greater coordination across distance and time.

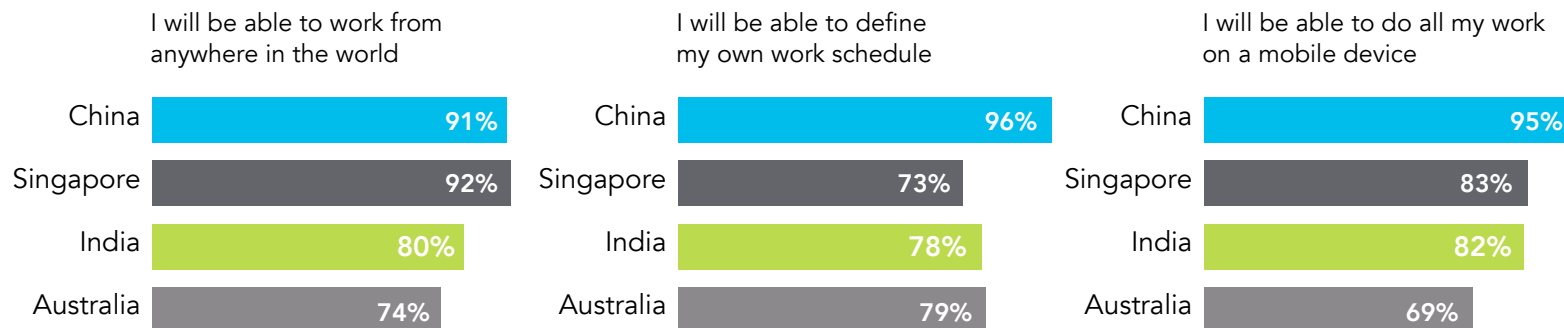
“I will be able to work from anywhere in the world.”

Already happening:  
 › Australia  
 › India  
 › Singapore

Will happen in the next three years:  
 › China

## Table 34

Level of eagerness or excitement about various trends related to freedom:



## Freedom

The demand for increased choice and mobility among those in Asia-Pacific should not be a surprise. In Japan, younger people are unaware of the once-prominent corporate employee who was fiercely devoted to his employer. This helps demonstrate the difference in work attitudes between older people in Japan, who were brought up to believe private time should be sacrificed for the good of the company, and the young, who place more importance on achieving a work-life balance.<sup>29</sup> And across Asia-Pacific, the youth of the population (particularly in markets such as Indonesia and the Philippines) is a key differentiator compared with other parts of the world. These younger populations have already been and will continue to push the boundaries of how mobility can impact every facet of their lives.<sup>30</sup>

Another factor that will undoubtedly force employers to accommodate employees' desire for increased flexibility will be shifts in the supply and demand of labor. By 2030, many countries in Asia-Pacific (including China, Australia, and South Korea) will be faced with specific skill labor shortages, whereas other regions (such as the U.S. and South Africa) will have a specific skill labor surplus.<sup>31</sup> As such, employers will resort to using advancements in technology to recruit and manage a global workforce.<sup>32</sup> The legacy of labor arbitrage from North America and Europe to Asia-Pacific will continue to impact how countries manage these shortages. As labor costs rise in countries such as China, multinational companies are exploring new markets where costs remain low. Operating more remote plants across the Asia-Pacific region will increase the need for talent mobility from the home country to manage operations, which will require more flexibility in how and where people work.



<sup>29</sup> Japan Times, *Almost 30% of Young People Don't Want To Work For A Company*, August 2015

<sup>30</sup> McKinsey & Company, *Microsoft's ASEAN Experience*, August 2015

<sup>31</sup> Boston Consulting Group, *The Global Workforce Crisis*, July 2014

<sup>32</sup> Intel Labs, *The Future of Knowledge Work*, October 2012

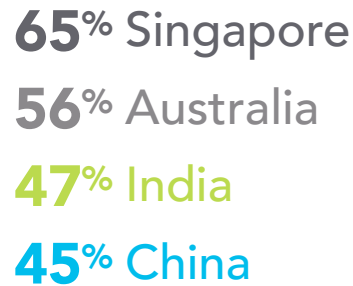
# Knowledge

Most people in Asia-Pacific believe they already have increased access to the people, tools, and information needed to get their work done (see Table 35). They are already being impacted by these

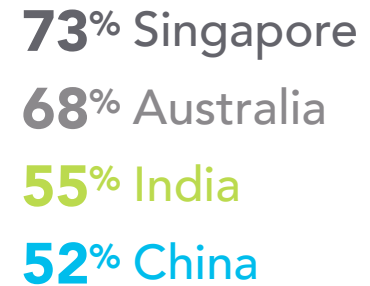
changes and are very excited about them (see Table 36)—although the increased expectation of contributing in multiple ways is viewed slightly less positively.

## Table 35

“Technology already allows me to have deeper personal connections with others across distance and time.”

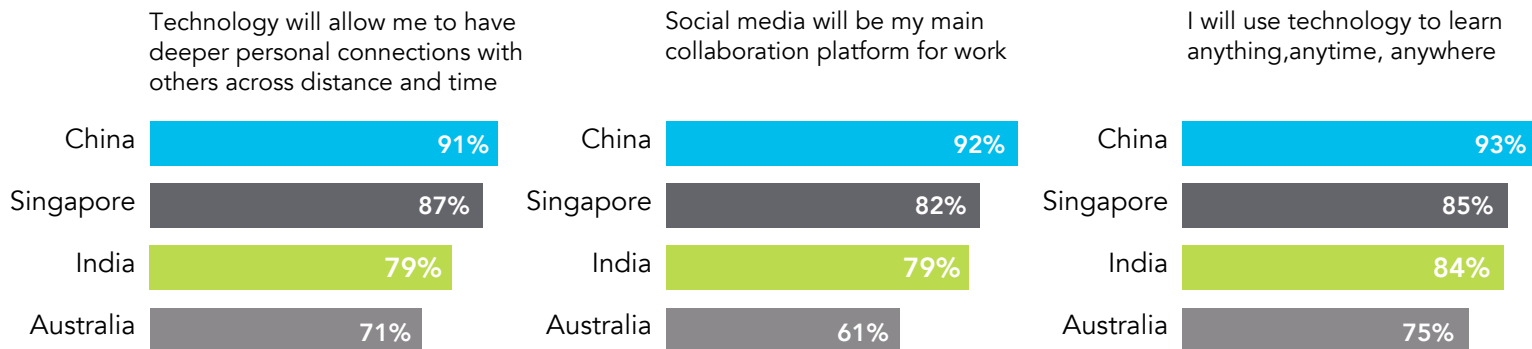


“I already use technology to learn anything, anytime, anywhere.”



## Table 36

Level of eagerness or excitement about various trends related to knowledge:



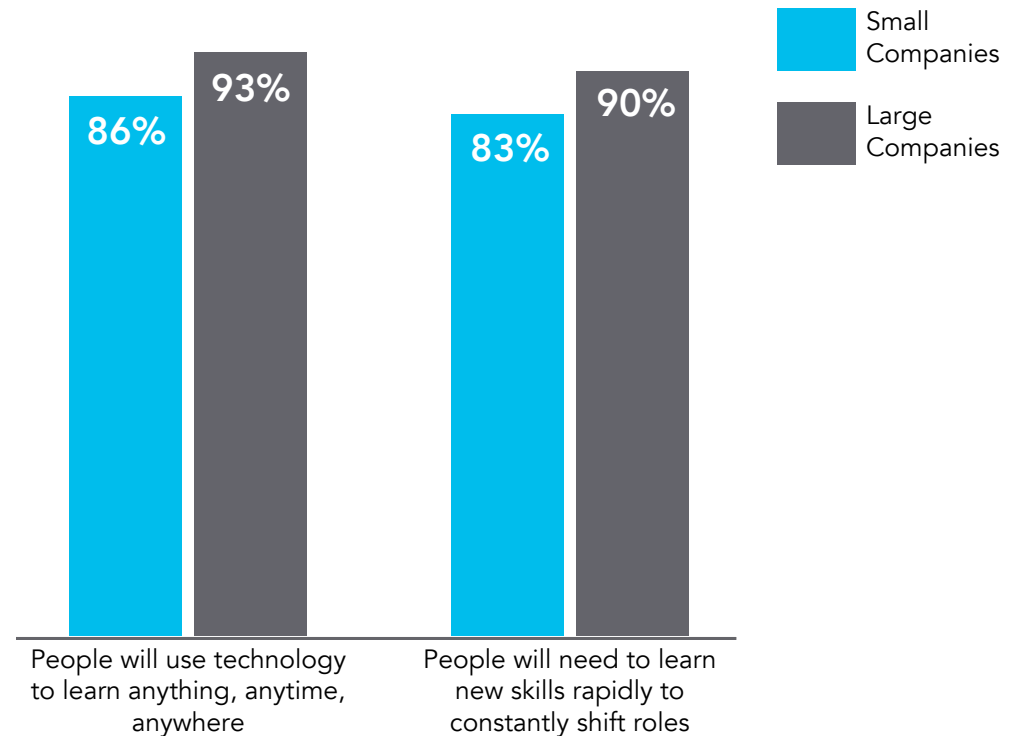
# Knowledge

Countries in Asia-Pacific are at the forefront of carrying on-demand learning through technology into the future. Larger companies with greater resources are more likely to adapt to investing in giving employees increased access to people, tools, and information needed to get more work done in less time (see Table 37). As might be expected, Senior Executives are driving the need for people to learn quickly and contribute in multiple ways.

One example of how Asia-Pacific has begun to set a precedent for pushing on-demand learning and more efficient access to information can be found by looking at Mitsubishi Electric’s air conditioning division. They use Augmented Reality (AR) glasses technology to show instructions within the field technician’s field of view so that they no longer have to carry manuals for hundreds of models of air conditioners with them everywhere they go.<sup>33</sup>

### Table 37

“Definitely” or “Probably” Will Adapt To Each Trend



<sup>33</sup>Tractica, *Enterprise Wearable Technology Case Studies*, Q3 2015

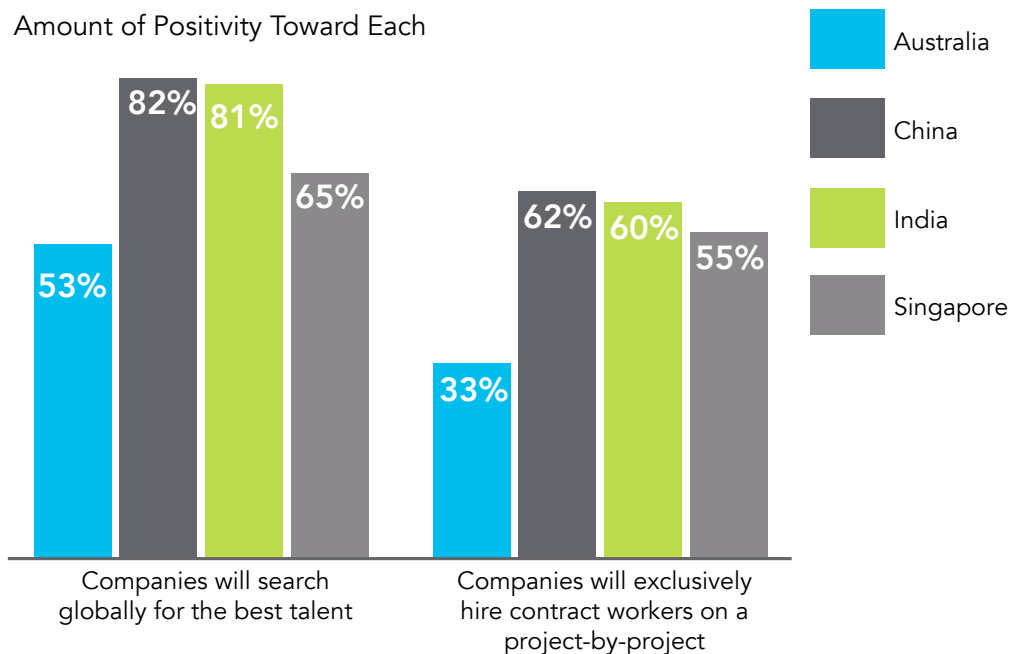
# Stability

The technology-enabled ability to search globally for talent and hire contract workers instead of long-term employees is largely perceived by people in Asia-Pacific to already be happening. While people, especially Senior Executives, feel very positively about the ability to compete for jobs across the globe, there are more mixed emotions about an increase in contract-only work—particularly among older

males and Millennials of both genders (See Table 38). Survey respondents in Asia-Pacific believe that in the future people will have their own “brands” and will sell their skills to companies that need them. This could potentially lead to a world where workers view themselves as members of a particular skill or professional network rather than as an employee of a specific company.<sup>34</sup>

### Table 38

Amount of Positivity Toward Each



# Self-Management

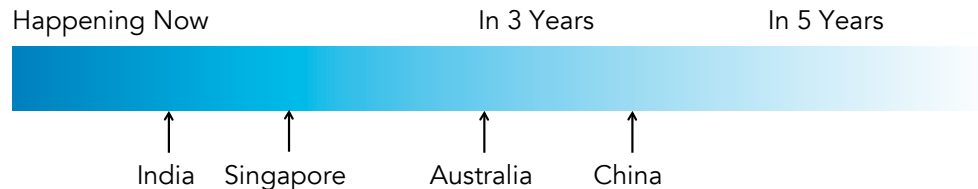
The technology needed to enable workers to have more independence, better manage their productivity and performance, and receive feedback and recognition in real-time (through productivity sensors, automated smart machines, etc.) is believed to either already exist or to be imminent within the next three to five years (See Table 39).

Contrary to other regions, most people in Asia-Pacific believe that the current structure of having many departments and a distinct hierarchy will dissolve at some point in the future (see Table 40). This is an

interesting statistic, because many countries in Asia-Pacific are more culturally hierarchical than those in Europe and North America. Some people believe such a change could come in as soon as three years. Those in China are very excited about a shift to less hierarchy. For some, a decreasing faith in the hierarchical Communist Party amongst the wealthy and a rapidly growing middle class is likely driving this excitement. Many of these individuals do not believe in the state ideology, yet still comply with it. And many wealthy Chinese are acquiring offshore assets, property, and bank accounts, while sending their children to Western universities.<sup>35</sup>

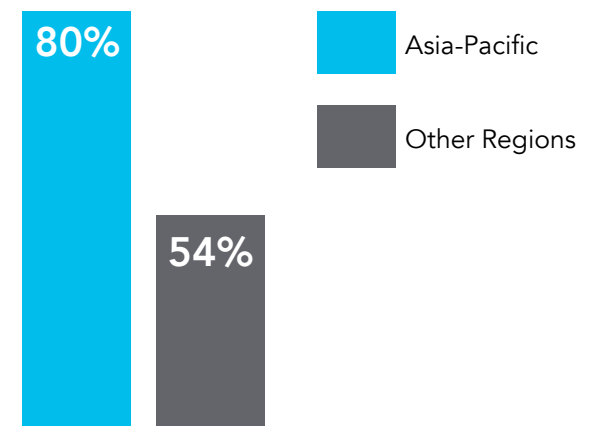
## Table 39

“Technology will enable organizations to proactively adjust the performance of myself and my team”



## Table 40

Believe departments and hierarchy will no longer exist at some point



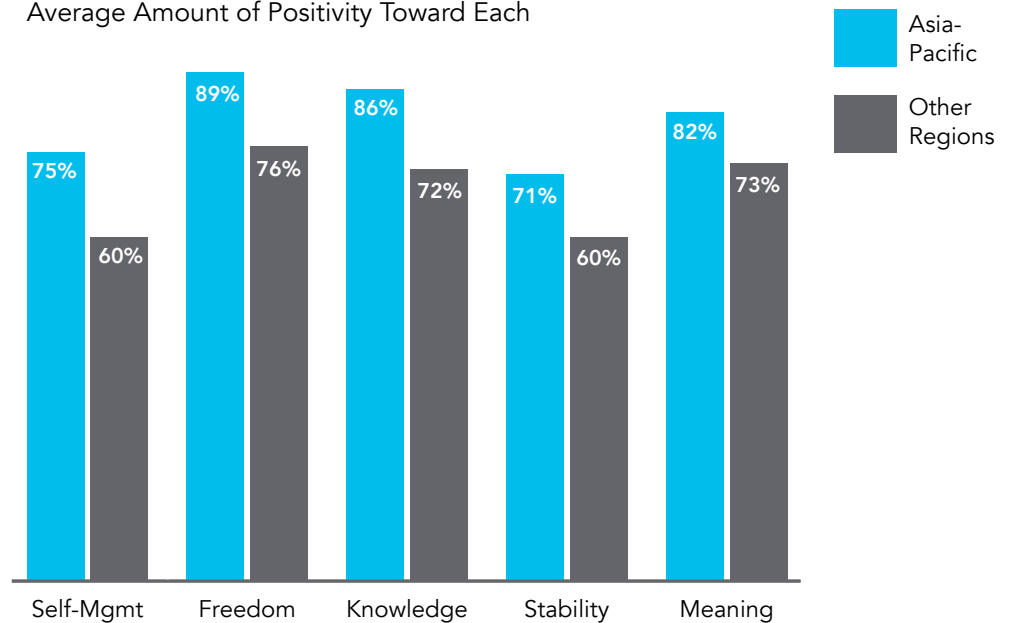
# Self-Management

Although most people are excited about the impact these changes will have on them, and while those feelings of excitement are much greater than the level of positivity observed in the rest of the world, Asia-Pacific is not as excited about self-management as they are about other changes (see Table 41). This could be because people are unsure of exactly how to navigate a work environment where they have significantly increased their reliance on technology and smart machines to augment their work and have reduced their reliance on a set hierarchy to define their roles.

There are, however, many examples of self-management already at work in Asia-Pacific. Deep Knowledge Ventures, a venture capital firm in Hong Kong, has appointed a decision-making algorithm to its board of directors.<sup>36</sup> Police departments in China may begin to use robots to direct traffic. Royal Enfield Motors Ltd.'s factory in India replaced human painters with robots that can do nearly four times the work of humans while using less paint and making zero mistakes.<sup>37</sup> InfoBeans, an Indian company, uses a software system called Buddy to analyze exactly how employees are spending their time to help them eliminate distractions and cut down on the number of necessary meetings.

## Table 41

Average Amount of Positivity Toward Each



<sup>36</sup> McKinsey Quarterly, *Manager and Machine: The New Leadership Equation*, September 2014  
<sup>37</sup> Bloomberg, *India Robot Invasion Undercuts Modi's Quest to Put Poor to Work*, August 2015

# Meaning

Across Asia-Pacific, the traditional cultural values of contributing to the greater good are now coinciding with global trends among the younger generation. Three ways the Asia-Pacific workplace may be affected by this broader global shift are:

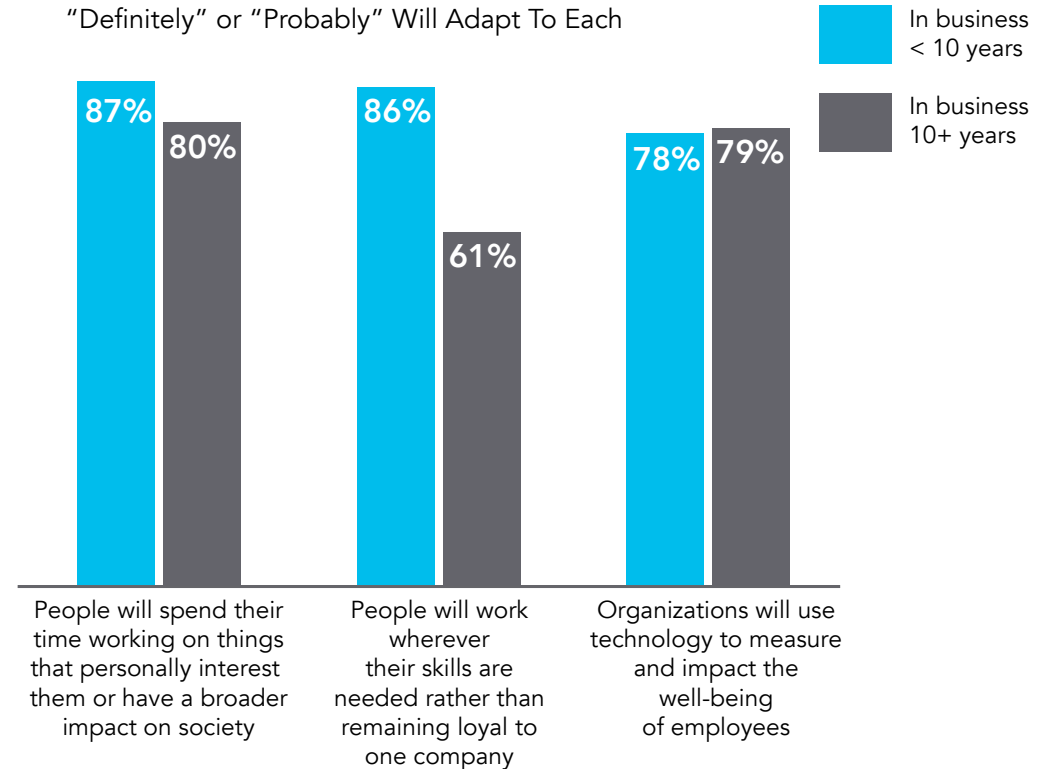
- People may gravitate toward opportunities that match their need for meaning
- Companies will need to adapt their organizational goals to reflect the increasing need for meaning
- While adapting to people’s needs to contribute to meaningful work, companies should also begin to focus on their employees’ well-being

The vast majority of people in Asia-Pacific are excited about being able to do work that is personally meaningful. Most are also excited about the ability to search for work at organizations that show a commitment to the well-being of their employees.

Younger, smaller companies in the region are more likely to adapt to aligning organizational goals to aspects that create individual purpose (See Table 42). Older, more established companies are less likely to adapt and expect to feel a greater impact from this change. Senior Executives across Asia-Pacific, particularly those working for larger companies, are more likely to adapt to using technology to measure and impact the well-being of their employees.

## Table 42

“Definitely” or “Probably” Will Adapt To Each





# Conclusion



## Conclusion

The findings in this paper help point HR departments and companies toward solutions that can benefit both employers and employees today and in the long-term. In understanding people's needs around the world, strategies can be developed to help people navigate changes in the workplace and help them feel equipped to embrace them. While the pace of change may vary across regions and industry, rapid evolutions in technology can be expected to trickle down and eventually impact workers in nearly every region of the world.

All of the basic workplace needs discussed in this paper will likely transform people's work realities in the not-too-distant future, but the following needs and their corresponding workplace trends present rich areas of inquiry for how to help address each of them. By exploring the following areas around these particular needs and trends, HR leaders can begin to understand how these changes may be addressed, in order to usher in a more productive, contented, and successful workforce.

The most pervasive and overarching workplace need—the need for freedom—has undoubtedly increased the desire for workers around the world to define their own schedules, work from anywhere they want, and do a majority of their work from a mobile device. While employees desire more freedom, employers need to find a way to hold people accountable for their work. Thus, there may be a disconnect between an employee's desire for freedom and what may be feasible for efficiency. On one hand, employers could offer to pay less for jobs that offer increased freedom. Or, on the other, employers who provide more freedom to their employees may recognize added benefits for providing more freedom to their employees—benefits such as having

happier, more dedicated, and satisfied employees, as well as the added benefit of enjoying a sustainable talent pool.

Ultimately increased workplace freedom is likely to be made available more to workers in white-collar positions than in blue-collar positions, which could create an even wider disparity between these two groups. In order to help people incorporate freedom into their careers over time, employers should consider how to help employees work around a need for flexibility in regards to schedule, location, and working from a mobile device. How can the concept of workplace freedom be offered to those in service or manual labor jobs? How can employers balance work schedules such that employee contributions are fairly and equally distributed? How can collaboration occur effectively among people with different work schedules? How can collaboration tools be utilized to help teams feel like they are working together in real-time? In regard to location, can all types of jobs in different industries be performed remotely? How can “working from home” increase productivity for both employers and employees? Additionally, workplace flexibility and working from anywhere present concerns about corporate data security. How does the ability to work “anywhere” impact security? Lastly, how can employers ensure data security when work is done exclusively from a mobile device?

When thinking about the workplace need for knowledge, the way employers and employees accrue knowledge in the workplace is quickly changing due to the increase of tools and platforms available to people at their jobs. Perhaps the most pervasive of these tools is social media, which is largely used today for personal communication. There is already a movement toward customer and partner management

## Conclusion

social media, as well as increased movement toward industry/special interest platforms that are external to the employer but approved by the employer for employee use. Given this, how can current social media platforms be leveraged to increase day-to-day collaboration between teams? Additionally, rules around proprietary information will become important and need to be managed, which begs the question of who will be managing this information to best meet the needs of the organization and its employees?

In regard to the need for stability—the need most associated with current fears in the workplace—workers need a sense of understanding how they can remain relevant over time. With competition for jobs moving increasingly to a global level, it will be important to understand exactly what this means for individual employees. While workplace competition is certainly moving toward being worldwide, a consideration for employers will be to understand how to weave culture into the global search, and perhaps, more important, whether this can be facilitated to allay employee fears around increased competition.

Arguably, the workplace need having the greatest impact on current trends may be that of self-management. This need is increasingly important, particularly in regard to trends such as automation, which may eventually replace a large number of people doing repetitive work, as well as some work that requires complex decisions that involve more critical thinking. The result is that there will be fewer jobs available for individual employees, while the impact on a company's profits could be great in regard to increasing productivity and lowering costs. From a more positive perspective to the employee, however, self-management can empower individuals to grow and learn. To navigate these

opposing ends, employers should consider the following: How can employers retain employees in an atmosphere of uncertainty while keeping them productive? How will initiatives such as new laws around automation or supply and demand of labor shape what employers can do with this trend? Can employers truly adopt automation completely? Can departments and hierarchy be truly lessened, phased out, or abandoned?

Lastly, the need for meaning has certainly evolved over the years. Today, the younger generation of Millennials places more of an emphasis on a search for meaning within their jobs than previous generations, who tended to look for meaning outside of work. With this generational difference in mind, questions to consider before implementing initiatives to provide a more meaningful workplace include: how can employers keep the up and coming Generation Z (post-millennials not yet in the workforce) engaged as today's currently employed generations move up in their careers? Will individuals in Generation Z and Millennials require a different business model? If so, what will that look like?

The above considerations provide a useful platform for companies and employers to understand how employee needs are driving workplace trends. By aligning the organization's work paradigm with the basic needs of its workforce, instead of insisting that employees fit the corporate mold, employers can better anticipate how the workplace culture can continue to evolve in order to build a more dynamic, productive workplace. The better that companies, organizations, and employers position themselves to attract a global-oriented, age-diverse, agile workforce, the better it will be able to thrive in the future.



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