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With a new U.S. Jobs Study revealing that “tectonic changes are reshaping U.S. workplaces as the economy moves deeper into the knowledge-focused age” amid the stark reality that lifelong skills development and training have evolved into mandatory, mission-critical facets of one’s sustained career success, it’s clear the 4th Industrial Revolution (i.e., the age of automation, artificial intelligence and robotics) has ushered in a brave new workplace. One reportedly prompting a society-wide reckoning relative to skills proliferation and other key next-gen concerns. And, rightly so, as the only thing constant in today’s tumultuous job market is change. We are entering an unprecedented economic era rife with peril and opportunity, alike.

Career Killers to Circumvent in 2017


by Merilee Kern, MBA

For some industry insider perspective I connected with jobs economy analyst, personal branding coach, visionary and futurist Larry Boyer, President of Success Rockets LLC—a firm that helps people and businesses anticipate, prepare and respond to the volatile and dynamic changes caused by disruptive technologies, economic turbulence and omnipresent business failures by building the business of you.

During our conversation, Boyer underscored a recent White House report, *Preparing For The Future of Artificial Intelligence*, acknowledging that, while “artificial intelligence will likely increase productivity and create wealth, it may also affect particular types of jobs in different

ways, reducing demand for certain skills that can be automated while increasing demand for other skills that are complementary to AI. However, artificial intelligence is only one component of the broader economic shift that the World Economic Forum has termed ‘the 4th Industrial Revolution’ where, over the course of the next few years and lasting decades, we will see fundamental transformation in industries, businesses and careers.”

According to Boyer, while policy makers and business leaders talk about how new jobs will offset those lost due to technological change, what’s missed are the impacts to individuals suffering those job losses. “People losing jobs to technology will not easily find work comparable to



their prior positions and, as we already see, the new jobs created often go unfilled due to skills gaps," he asserts. "In today's fast-changing business climate driven by digital transformation, career-minded professionals must have a long-term business plan for themselves, helping them adapt every single day to not only to thrive, but even just survive."

Boyer warns that executives must do a better job of democratising mentoring. Most companies do mentoring ad-hoc upon employee request on an individual basis. With increasing concerns over corporate cutbacks, companies must do more to develop their workforce and ensure they are being trained to make a valuable contribution as the economy continues its meteoric shift towards more efficient technology solutions.

Given that in 2017 we'll be inching, and in some cases taking giant leaps, toward increased disruption in business and technology—inevitably leading to career troubles for many people, I asked Boyer for insight on specific career killers up ahead. "More than the rapid changes we've seen in the last decade, we're poised to see some sudden, dramatic changes that can affect your career and ultimately your bottom line," he said, also offering these three career crushing trends to beware in 2017 and beyond:

Disruptive Technology Can Disrupt Your Career

More and more we are starting to see disruptive technology, and not just the simple evolution from one product to the next version of it. Instead, we're seeing entirely new technologies seeming to come out of nowhere and change the way we work. Virtual Reality, 3-D printing, self-driving cars, drones and artificial intelligence are just a few examples. Dubbed, the 4th Industrial Revolution by global business leaders at the World Economic Forum, changes in technology along with how we interact with that technology look to transform both how and how much we work. If you're paying attention and learning these technologies, they can lead to enhancing your career. However, if you're not looking ahead to how technologies could shape your industry and your job, you could end up finding yourself replaced.

Political Change Creates New Winners and Losers

The United States has a new president promising to shake up the way the US conducts business – both inside and outside of the country. Any change of administration brings with it differences in emphasis and direction. Pay attention to where the opportunities are opening and closing. As an example, President Trump has criticised Boeing for costs related to the development of a new Air Force One as well as the sale of planes to Iran. Whether those deals go through or not will impact the jobs and livelihoods of everyone involved with the sales and

building of the aircraft. Pay attention as what's happening in Washington will ripple through to your industry, company and ultimately you.

New Business and Employment Models

The idea of working for one company for a lifetime is long gone. Having a full-time job may be the next thing to go. The combination of increased employment costs (such as health care) and the need to adapt to rapidly changing business environments and technology are increasingly leading companies to stop hiring full-time employees in favour of contractors and part-time employees. While for some types of work, such as retail, it's easy to see the reports of these trends in the news. However, this issue hits home to an increasing number of employees in an increasing number of fields – including programming and IT functions.

"What makes dealing with disruptions like these particularly difficult is that rarely is the disruption first seen at the level of a person's job," noted Boyer. "Rather, the disruption happens somewhere else first and then flows silently, almost unnoticed until it hits you like a tsunami after an earthquake. In order for you to navigate your career through today's rapidly changing and disruptive business environment, you need to be aware of industry trends and new technologies, and how they will flow through to the work you do as well as the financial health of the company you work for. It doesn't matter how safe you think your job is if your company is disrupted and has to close."

In order to ensure a lasting career for yourself, don't just watch and comment on the news. Think about how what you are seeing and hearing will impact the company you work for and your job specifically. What can you do to start preparing today for tomorrow's changes?