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Dear Reader,

The future of human work is imagination, creativity and strategy, writes **Joseph Pistrui** in his 10 minutes read in our lead as he dwells on the debate about technology replacing jobs. He emphasizes that humans are strategic while machines are tactical, and that integrating new technology is about emotions. However, it does seem beyond debate that few industries, if any, will be untouched. Knowledge workers will not escape. The CEO and founder of Fetch Robotics, Melonee Wise, has sounded a note of optimism, however, and says that for every robot we put in the world, you have to have someone maintaining it or servicing it or taking care of it. The point of technology, she argues, is to boost productivity, not cut the workforce.

In our second lead **Rebekah Brandes** wonders where confidence comes from and how does one build more of it? Very importantly, relationships contribute to our life experiences, and our life experiences contribute to our levels of self-confidence. Ask yourself if the people you surround yourself with are boosting your feelings of joy and sense of self-worth or doing the opposite.

Ron Kaufman, the celebrated international service guru and Octara's prestigious associate, is back in our folds with an incisive piece on service actions that start off a chain reaction. "The next time you serve someone who is already in a good mood, just keep the good energy flowing," says Ron. "And when someone shows up in a bad mood, step up with your service to shift the mood and solve the problem. Be the person who takes an action that starts a chain reaction."

Back of the book we revisit 'Climate without borders', a highly relevant piece by Ali Tauqeer Sheikh in which he asserts that Pakistan's climate risks are rooted in shared ecosystems with its neighbors. From the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea, and from the Tibetan Plateau to the Pamir that link the Karakorum and Hindu Kush ranges, they are all part of the Himalayan mountain system defining Pakistan's water resources, ecology, economy, and cultural heritage. "As climatic changes unfold, new 'climate borders' may emerge, requiring a distinct form of regional climate diplomacy."

Stay safe and stay strong, and may Allah give us the strength to persevere and prevail, ameen 🤲

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INSIDE:

The Future of Human Work Is Imagination, Creativity, and Strategy

Juj Winn/Getty Images

By **Joseph Pistrui** | 10 min read

It seems beyond debate: Technology is going to replace jobs, or, more precisely, the people holding those jobs. Few industries, if any, will be untouched.

Knowledge workers will not escape. Recently, the CEO of Deutsche Bank predicted that half of its 97,000 employees could be replaced by robots. One survey revealed that "39% of jobs in the legal sector could be automated in the next 10 years. Separate research has concluded that accountants have a 95% chance of losing their jobs to automation in the future."

And for those in manufacturing or production companies, the future may arrive even sooner. That same report mentioned the advent of "robotic bricklayers." Machine learning algorithms are also predicted to replace people responsible for "optical part

sorting, automated quality control, failure detection, and improved productivity and efficiency." Quite simply, machines are better at the job: The National Institute of Standards predicts that "machine learning can improve production capacity by up to 20%" and reduce raw materials waste by 4%.

It is easy to find reports that predict the loss of between 5 and 10 million jobs by 2020. Recently, space and automotive titan Elon Musk said the machine-over-mankind threat was humanity's "biggest existential threat." Perhaps that is too dire a reading of the future, but what is important for corporate leaders right now is to avoid the catastrophic mistake of ignoring how people will be affected. Here are four ways to think about the people left behind after the trucks bring in all the new technology.

The Wizard of Oz Is the Wrong Model

In Oz, the wizard is shown to run the kingdom through some complex machine hidden behind a curtain. Many executives may think themselves the wizard; enthralled by the idea that AI technology will allow them to shed millions of dollars in labor costs, they could come to believe that the best company is the one with the fewest people aside from the CEO.

Yet the CEO and founder of Fetch Robotics, Melonee Wise, cautions against that way of thinking: "For every robot we put in the world, you have to have someone maintaining

it or servicing it or taking care of it." The point of technology, she argues, is to boost productivity, not cut the workforce.

Humans Are Strategic; Machines Are Tactical

McKinsey has been studying what kind of work is most adaptable to automation. Their findings so far seem to conclude that the more technical the work, the more technology can accomplish it. In other words, machines skew toward tactical applications.

On the other hand, work that requires a high degree of imagination, creative analysis, and strategic thinking is harder to automate. As McKinsey put it in a recent report: "The hardest activities to automate with currently available technologies are those that involve managing and developing people (9 percent automation potential) or that apply expertise to decision making, planning, or creative work (18 percent)." Computers are great at optimizing, but not so great at goal-setting. Or even using common sense.

Integrating New Technology Is About Emotions

When technology comes in, and some workers go away, there is a residual fear among those still in place at the company. It's only natural for them to ask, "Am I next? How many more days will I be employed here?" Venture capitalist Bruce Gibney explains it this way: "Jobs may not

seem like 'existential' problems, but they are: When people cannot support themselves with work at all — let alone with work they find meaningful — they clamor for sharp changes. Not every revolution is a good revolution, as Europe has discovered several times. Jobs provide both material comfort and psychological gratification, and when these goods disappear, people understandably become very upset."

The wise corporate leader will realize that post-technology trauma falls along two lines: (1) how to integrate the new technology into the work flow, and (2) how to cope with feelings that the new technology is somehow "the enemy." Without dealing with both, even the most automated workplace could easily have undercurrents of anxiety, if not anger.

Rethink What Your Workforce Can Do

Technology will replace some work, but it doesn't have to replace the people who have done that work. Economist James Bessen notes, "The problem is people are losing jobs and we're not doing a good job of getting them the skills and knowledge they need to work for the new jobs."

For example, a [study](#) in Australia found a silver lining in the automation of bank tellers' work: "While ATMs took over a lot of the tasks these tellers were doing, it gave existing workers the opportunity to upskill and sell a wider ranges of financial services."

Moreover, the report found that

there is a growing range of new job opportunities in the fields of big data analysis, decision support analysts, remote-control vehicle operators, customer experience experts, personalized preventative health helpers, and online chaperones ("managing online risks such as identify theft, reputational damage, social media bullying and harassment, and internet fraud"). Such jobs may not be in your current industrial domain. But there may be other ways for you to view this moment as the perfect time to rethink the shape and character of your workforce. Such new thinking will generate a whole new human resource development agenda, one quite probably emphasizing those innate human capacities that can provide a renewed strategy for success that is both technological and human.

As Wise, the roboticist, emphasized, the technology itself is just a tool, one that leaders can use how they see fit. We can choose to use AI and other emerging technologies to replace human work, or we can choose to use them to augment it. "Your computer doesn't unemploy you, your robot doesn't unemploy you," she said. "The companies that have those technologies make the social policies and set those social policies that change the workforce ∎"

Source:
https://hbr.org/2018/01/the-future-of-human-work-is-imagination-creativity-and-strategy?utm_campaign=hbr&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social

Where Does Confidence Come From — And How Do You Build More of It?

Rebekah Brandes | 12 min read

For those who yearn to stroll smiling into a party with the certainty they'll make a good impression, or assuredly share their ideas in an important meeting, confidence can be the most coveted of psychological states.

But it's also a tricky subject to break down. On the one hand, confidence has been associated with increased mental health and job satisfaction; on the other, there's the Dunning-Kruger Effect, a cognitive bias in which the least-skilled people tend to overestimate their capabilities the most.

Suggestions for cultivating more confidence can come with caveats, too. Take power posing, for example, developed by social psychologist and former Harvard professor Amy Cuddy and made popular by her 2012 TED Talk. A kind of physical incarnation of the "fake it until you make it" mentality, power posing is based on the idea that when we assume certain "powerful" stances (like hands on our hips a la Wonder Woman), the brain takes a cue from the body, so to speak.

However, it frequently seems that as soon as an exciting concept like this gains traction, other research comes along to refute it. Cuddy and her team's small initial experiment proved difficult to replicate, and in 2019, the topic was taken on by Iowa State University

researcher Marcus Credé, who reviewed 40 studies on power posing and determined it had no actual effect.

And what of those who seemingly need not concern themselves with power poses or other life hacks of the sort; who've never experienced imposter syndrome, that feeling of being a phony despite having undeniable skills in a certain field; who merely are and always will be confident?

While our perceptions of these individuals may be colored by our own desire to be as self-assured as they appear, and, in fact, speak little to what's actually going on in another person's mind, it's certainly true that some are more confident than others.

So where does self-confidence — or the "trust in one's abilities, capacities, and judgment," per the American Psychological Association — come from? Is it innate? Fostered through experience? Increased through intentional practice? The answer is a bit of everything.

Where Confidence Comes From

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Genetics

According to psychologist Barbara Markway,

author of *The Self-Confidence Workbook: A Guide to Overcoming Self-Doubt and Improving Self-Esteem*, between 25%-50% of personality traits linked with confidence may be inherited. Writing for *Psychology Today*, she cited the neurotransmitters serotonin and oxytocin as being involved in boosting confidence and noted that the amount of each our brain can access is influenced by our genetic makeup. She also pointed to temperament as something that influences our behavior, making us more or less inclined to act in an uninhibited manner.

In a 2009 study out of King's College London, 3,785 pairs of twins between the ages of 7 and 10 were asked to rate their abilities on several academic subjects. Researchers determined that the children's levels of self-confidence were influenced 50% by nature and 50% by nurture — also known as life experience.

"The specific genes involved in academic self-confidence remain to be identified, but we expect them to be many genes of small effect size, and their effects will be probabilistic rather than deterministic," lead author Corina Greven said at the time. "That is, just because self-confidence is partly genetic, it does not mean that self-confidence cannot be changed by environmental influences."

Life Experience

Beginning in our youth, everything we experience — from traumatic events to gender-based societal conditioning — can impact the people we become.

"Scores of studies show women are socialized to worry more about how they're perceived and, therefore, to take

fewer risks," Markway explained in *PT*. "Racial and cultural background and sexual orientation can make a difference, too. If you've been on the receiving end of discrimination, you may have internalized some negative, untrue messages about your potential and whether you 'belong.'"

It's not all bad, of course. Life experience includes the positive relationships we've built, whether with parents who heaped on positive encouragement and created safe spaces for us to try new things, or with friends who cheer us on.

Confidence is also born from our past achievements, times we've set out to do something and succeeded, particularly when the task involved overcoming obstacles.

How to Get More of It

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Though the idea of power posing as an elixir for self-assurance may have conflicting data behind it, there are some more general ways to help cultivate confidence even if you feel like neither nature nor nurture is on your side.

Mastery Experiences

Self-efficacy is a closely related concept to confidence: Per the APA, it "reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment."

Stanford social cognitive psychologist Albert Bandura developed our definition and understanding of self-efficacy and elucidated the important role it plays in our lives. He also enumerated four essential ways of building it, the first and foremost being "mastery experiences."

"The most effective way of creating a strong sense of efficacy is through *mastery experiences*," Bandura wrote in his 1995 book *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies*. "They provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed."

One way to tap into the power of mastery experiences is to set goals for yourself that require some effort and hardwork but are overall attainable and realistic. Using the SMART goal system is a great way to do this. Learn about it and other science-backed methods here.

Learn Something New

Going hand-in-hand with the former entry, learning a new skill offers the opportunity to watch yourself evolve and accomplish something. Choose an activity that speaks to your interests or curiosity rather than one you think you should do, and then enjoy the process.

"Being a beginner again is tough, but it shows you can still accomplish new things and find

enjoyment in them," Fred Silverstone, founder of the Successful Aging through Group Engagement program at Harvard-affiliated McLean Hospital, explained in a [Harvard Medical School blog post](). "This also reminds you that it's OK to make mistakes, so you can improve and grow, which helps build self-confidence."

… Or Do More of What You're Already Good at

We feel good about ourselves when we're doing things that showcase our skills or talents, things that we already possess some degree of self-assurance in. So if you're stuck in a daily routine that doesn't involve many of your strengths, it stands to reason that an overall sense of self-confidence may start to evade you.

Make sure you're partaking in the activities in which you shine, be that playing trivia at a pub or baking treats for your friends and coworkers. On a larger scale, it may be helpful to take stock of whether or not you're in a job that utilizes your gifts to the highest degree.

Additionally, [doing good for others can boost self-esteem](), another closely related concept to self-confidence. It could also prove to be a way of discovering new talents or building new skills. Take a look on [Volunteer Match]() to find opportunities near you.

Practice Mindfulness

It sometimes seems like mindfulness is being offered up as a cure-all for everything these days, but it may be helpful in this arena insofar as *not* being mindful could impede the self-confidence you're trying to build. When you're focusing on the present moment, you're not focusing on [negative self-talk]() — the last thing you need during a presentation or a social event you're nervous about.

A mindfulness meditation practice can help

you learn to disengage from your inner critic by acknowledging that those thoughts are simply thoughts, and do not dictate or define who you are. [Learn about improving self-esteem via mindfulness](), and [try this three-step meditation for countering negative thoughts]().

Spend Time With Positive People

As we discussed previously, relationships contribute to our life experiences, and our life experiences contribute to our levels of self-confidence. Ask yourself if the people you surround yourself with are boosting your feelings of joy and sense of self-worth or doing the opposite.

"The people you spend time with can influence your thoughts and attitudes about yourself, perhaps more than you realize," writes licensed clinical social worker Amy Morin for [Verywell Mind](). "So, pay attention to how others make you feel. If you feel bad about yourself after hanging out with a particular person, it may be time to say goodbye."

As we get older, it can be harder and harder to find new friends we connect with. If you're looking for more positive vibes, consider joining a running group or book club, taking part in a volunteer opportunity, getting involved in your religious community, or [downloading a friendship app]() to meet new people.

Remember: Although it can be uncomfortable to try something new and expand our circles of connection, it's in these moments that we grow confidence and prove to ourselves just how capable we are of accomplishing hard things ∎

Source:

https://nicenews.com/health-and-wellness/where-confidence-comes-from-and-how-to-build-more/

Take a Service Action that Starts a Chain Reaction

Ron Kaufman | 4 min read

As service providers, we go to work each day and think about the customers and colleagues we serve. We listen, ask questions, and try to understand. Then we take action to answer questions, solve problems, and satisfy needs.

When we succeed the result is a satisfied customer, which can be satisfying for a service provider, too. A customer's smile makes you feel better. A colleague's appreciation feels good, too. You might even earn a compliment in person or online – a win-win for both parties. It's a two-way street: your positive attitude and action comes back to you.

But what about when customers and colleagues are in bad moods, impatient or angry, or even hurling accusations? When that happens you need to work harder. You have shift their mood and solve their problems, put a smile back on their face and answer their questions.

This is more challenging, but can also be more satisfying to achieve. Why? Because the good feelings you create will keep on going. Because the next person they meet won't bear the brunt of a bad mood. Your positive service action becomes a chain reaction.

For example: a customer calls you in an angry mood and lets you know how frustrated they are with a problem. Before you tackle the problem, you take time to acknowledge their feelings, listen to all they have to say, and show genuine empathy for their situation. After your patience solves the mood problem, then you go to work on their other problems. Your customer leaves with both problems solved, and the next person your customer meets feels the difference.

For example, a colleague comes to you in a huff and in a hurry. Instead than asking them to calm down, you speed up and say "I can see this really matters to you. Let me do everything I can to get this done quickly." Your colleague sees you working top-speed and their anxiety settles down, and the next person your colleague serves feels the difference.

What if everyone embraced this point of view? What if our measure of success was not just doing our job and getting things done, but working right

> **What if everyone embraced this point of view? What if our measure of success was not just doing our job and getting things done, but working right through the person we are serving now to touch the very next person they meet**

through the person we are serving now to touch the very next person they meet?

Surely this is a bigger task than is written in your job description. And it's not likely to be captured in your KPIs or your bonus plan. Then, if it's not mandatory or measured, why put in this extra effort? Why should you care about the next person your customer or colleague sees, or says hello to, or serves? The answer to this question is simple: at some point, the next person down the line is YOU.

So the next time you serve someone who is already in a good mood, just keep the good energy flowing. And when someone shows up in a bad mood, step up with your service to shift the mood and solve the problem. Be the person who takes an action that starts a chain reaction ■

Source:

Source: www.upliftingservice.com/blog/take-a-service-action-that-starts-a-chain-reaction

Nature Calling for Action Stations (NCfAS#31)

Javelin spearheads cross-border détente – Mothers on the front foot

Itchy trigger fingers

Arshad Nadeem and Neeraj Chopra have pretty much taken the world by storm, in particular the 1.75 billion souls that reside in the Pak-Indo area that's often been described as the 'most dangerous place in the world.' While itchy trigger fingers on both sides of the border have fuelled dread-filled thoughts of nuclear Armageddon, and kept the so-called civilized world on tenterhooks, Nature has decided to lend a hand in delivering death and destruction to us ingrates through its twin agents of global warming and climate change.

Climate change does not respect borders

In his highly thought provoking piece 'Climate without borders' (Dawn August 15, 2024), Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, **an Islamabad-based climate change and sustainable development expert, has seemingly stated the obvious, that** climate change does not need passports as it does not respect borders. Pakistan's climate risks are rooted in shared ecosystems with its neighbors. This particular penny has failed to drop amongst policymakers on either side of the very hostile, very hard borders rooted in obtuse attitudes that have extracted far more than their due pound of flesh and pint of blood.

Our climate threats originate in regional climate systems, often located in neighboring countries, writes Ali Tauqeer Sheikh. "As climatic changes unfold, new 'climate borders' may emerge, requiring a distinct form of regional climate diplomacy."

Compound extreme weather events

From the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea, and from the Tibetan Plateau to the Pamirs that link the Karakorams and Hindu Kush ranges, they are all part of the Himalayan mountain system defining Pakistan's water resources, ecology, economy, and cultural heritage. As the entire region is recording profound changes in monsoon patterns, all our climate neighbors have begun to experience compound extreme weather events (CEWEs), whereby each climate disaster triggers another one.

Like Pakistan, our climate neighbors have also been witnessing CEWEs. In the South Asian landmass, dry areas have become drier with less than normal precipitation coupled with less cooling off at night. The frequency of hot summer days and hot summer nights has increased in the region. Record-setting daily temperatures have become more common. We have seen that heatwaves have often triggered torrential rains as experienced recently in several parts of India and Pakistan, and which continue unabated causing massive losses of both life and property.

Flooding = weak governance

Record-high temperatures in Delhi and Lahore have resulted in record-breaking rains in both cities. It should be recognized that flooding is often attributed to weak governance rather than climate change. We have seen severe heatwaves in the upper Indus Basin result in downstream flooding. Record-high temperatures in Balochistan, Sindh, and KP have invited heavier monsoon rains in several parts of the country.

> **"Climate change does not need passports as it does not respect borders. Pakistan's climate risks are rooted in shared ecosystems with its neighbors"**
>
> – Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, climate change & sustainable development expert

Emerging trends in slow-onset climate events have also become perceptible in recent years. Monsoon currents have begun to visit the upper mountain reaches in Chitral and Swat. Tropical storms in the coastal

> **"Emerging trends in slow-onset climate events have also become perceptible in recent years. Monsoon currents have begun to visit the upper mountain reaches in Chitral and Swat"**

belts of Balochistan and Sindh are now influenced by disturbances in weather patterns in the Arabian Peninsula, affecting the frequency and intensity of rains in the Gulf region. Easterly winds from the Arabian Sea are resulting in increased torrential rains in Balochistan.

Climate refugees

Many urban centres in South Asia, from Karachi to Kolkata, have seen that droughts, heatwaves, and floods in their hinterland have spurred outward migration. Seasonal and permanent displacement and migration have become major sources of rapid urban growth. It is perhaps felt nowhere more strongly than in Karachi that has provided refuge to a steady stream of migrants from Dadu and Jacobabad propelled by high temperatures, from Tharparkar accelerated by prolonged droughts, and from Sajawal, Badin and Thatta because of seawater intrusion and salinisation.

> **"In the South Asian context, transboundary climate risks include shared rivers, mountain ranges, melting glaciers, flood disasters, and cross-border risks to infrastructure, and livelihoods"**

Karachi has attracted communities from Balochistan and KP's newly merged districts, plagued by land degradation and deforestation. Southern Punjab has also been contributing migrants in response to increasing hill torrents from Koh-i-Suleiman, a mountain range that separates the arid regions of Balochistan from the more fertile areas of Punjab, KP, and parts of Sindh.

New climate frontiers

A fundamental difference between traditional and non-traditional security challenges is the emergence of new climate borders. While traditional security is fundamentally concerned about geopolitical borders, the new climate frontiers are defined by transboundary impacts and the implications of change in climate systems and their cross-border impacts and implications.

'Adaptation without Borders'

The just-released Global Transboundary Climate Risk Report 2023 by the Stockholm Environment Institute and others partnering in the initiative on 'Adaptation Without Borders', has drawn attention to some critical blind spots in national climate policies as well as the solutions offered by international climate diplomacy. It is an important report as it has pointed out — based on nine case studies — that transboundary climate risks also include those transmitted by national adaptation responses. The report has observed that national adaptation measures can have both positive and negative results across borders. In some instances, these can be negotiated to deliver shared benefits.

> **"National efforts to respond to climate change cannot succeed without understanding transboundary climate risks"**

Climate risks impact local livelihoods, and critical sectors, such as finance, health and global supply chains, including agricultural commodities and manufacturing components. In the South Asian context, transboundary climate risks include shared rivers, mountain ranges, melting glaciers, flood disasters, and cross-border risks to infrastructure, and livelihoods.

Blind spots in climate policy

The transboundary risk report has presented case studies, many of them of interest to Pakistan: agricultural commodities and food security, industrial supply chains, energy and sustainable energy transformation, finance, human health, mobility, livelihoods, well-being and equity issues. Amnesty International and other activist groups have long argued that climate justice must transcend national borders as climate hazards in one country have an impact across borders and affect its neighbors.

Each case study carries a message for Pakistan; perhaps the most central one is that policymakers and opinion leaders need to address their blind spots in climate policy.

More global cooperation on adaptation

These risks are triggered by a climate hazard in one country affecting communities across the border. Likewise, adaptation actions in one country can be detrimental for neighboring states. The risk report has called for more global cooperation on adaptation, with
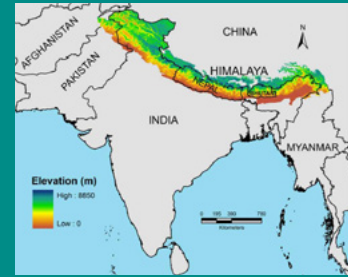
international policy fora as key drivers. National efforts to respond to climate change cannot succeed without understanding transboundary climate risks.

"Managing regional climate threats that do not respect national borders, will need process-oriented approaches that are not zero-sum but, instead, aspire to win-win scenarios"

In a nutshell, the challenge is to rethink the way in which we manage climate risks and plan adaptation. The report sets out four potential areas to build resilience: i) create opportunities for innovative research on transboundary climate risks, ii) develop national/ regional indicators to track transboundary climate risks, iii) strengthen research based on climate scenarios, modelling and projections, and iv) negotiate preferred options to mitigate transboundary climate risks.

Not zero-sum but win-win scenarios

In order to manage regional climate risks and climate threats to security, non-traditional responses will be needed. Since most climate disasters are transboundary by nature, they require regional management approaches. Managing regional climate threats that do not respect national borders, will need process-oriented approaches that are not zero-sum but, instead, aspire to win-win scenarios.

Million dollar question

Kudos for Ali Tauqeer Sheikh for putting the matter in such stark perspective. The million dollar question, no doubt, on the minds of the 1.75 billion beleaguered souls of Pak-Indo is whether Arshad and Neeraj can parlay their Olympic gold and silver, and the brotherhood that they have built there upon, endorsed in no uncertain manner by their respective mothers, into a lasting softening of hitherto hard and brittle borders? ∎

Column by Adil Ahmad, Correspondent, TCS Octara.Com