



## The future is now – is your organisation ready?

By Caroline Cassar Reynaud

When we perceive the organisation of the future and think about the ideal place to work, many facets come to mind. Emotionally intelligent leaders, engaged millennials, transformational leadership, as well as innovative organisation structures that encourage agile job rotation, internal mobility and flexibility. Organisations should not simply state that this is the way of the future. In this context, the future is essentially here and now and the ability of each company to ready themselves determines just how successful they will be.

Talent and Human Resources network conversations often centre on present challenges as well as areas for potential collaboration. Time and time again, we hear about how it is an employee's market and not an employer's market and the challenge to attract and retain talent consequently becomes even more complex. Furthermore, we hear how the skillsets that educational institutions provide today's generations do not necessarily translate into skills required for jobs of the future. We hear of organisations offering the workplace of the future and gearing up their workforce to learn new skills. Teams are now made to be more agile allowing people to mobilise and deliver on different projects rather than performing tasks repetitively and not being exposed to a variety of work. So the question to ask is how do you gear up to be future ready when the future is here and now?

Hearing about how millennials are demanding different working patterns that may be causing your organisations to change is a common enough occurrence, as is the fact that our working methods have always been appropriate for the way things are done so why should we change now? Undoubtedly, most organisations have been faced with certain bureaucratic and painful processes; yet, because this is the way things have always worked, there appears to be no need to change them. In an effort to retain the status quo and not ruffle any feathers or push people out of their comfort zone, there has never really been a pressing need to change anything.

We can all certainly relate to similar such situations and are also cognisant of the fact that it is easier to sit back and say you want to change things whilst in actual fact the reality of driving and implementing actual change requires much more effort to get going. That said, today's organisation cannot be complacent as there is too much to lose in an already fiercely competitive market. Too many opportunities exist both locally and beyond and potential recruits are simply not swayed if you cannot offer the workplace that suits their needs and embraces the same values and purpose that they do.

Having packed my bags fresh out of university and set off for 3 months to live and work in Japan many moons ago, I recall my parents concern that I had decided to leave Malta to travel so far with traditional communication such as a telephone, fax or postal service being the only point of contact in addition to the relatively new email technology. To me it was all about pushing myself out of my comfort zone and learning to adapt and I soon found myself sticking out like a sore thumb in Tokyo with no choice but to get my act together and find my way around. From the lovely lady at the grocery who could only say good morning in English at any time of day or night, to the code of conduct and behaviour required in the corporate boardroom, this was an incredible learning experience for me. I would do it again in a blink of an eye given the chance - the lessons were invaluable and possibly more important than any lecture I had attended before that.

Fast forward 20 years and the world is so much smaller thanks to technology, social media and communication tools that allow us to feel more connected and closer to home if needed. In fact, packing up and spreading ones wings has become the norm today as mobility is now often a standard option in recruitment offerings. Rightly so, this has increased the opportunities for the existing talent pool, consequently creating a bigger challenge for local organisations to keep up or get out of the race unless they are able to transform fast enough.

How do you make an organisation future ready, to achieve its goals? While there is no simple answer, certain aspects can be observed to ensure the right direction is being taken.

1. **Talk to your people** – your most valuable resource. It is key to gauge perceptions and have a finger on the pulse of your organisation. Your people on the ground are your beacons of information – listen to them wisely.
2. **Talk to your clients** – in an age where effective, high quality service is required and expected, it has never been a more crucial time to check in with your clients. Very often, the constant race against time and endless list of tasks may cause us to lose sight of the very reason for an organisations existence.
3. **Actions speak louder than words** – you cannot be perceived to be credible if you are not delivering on what you have promised to your stakeholders.
4. **Check in on your leadership** - what style of leadership do your managers display? Does it reflect the values and purpose of your organisation? Are your people looking to leadership for empowerment? Does your organisation reflect one where people are able to grow to their full potential?
5. **How emotionally intelligent is your organisation?** There is much research around this topic that we hear about all too often. Just what does it mean and how relevant is it within the context of organisational behaviour?

Emotional intelligence has been described as ‘the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions’ (Salovey & Mayer, 1990)<sup>1</sup>. Mayer & Salovey went on to refine their definition of emotional intelligence further in 1997 whereby this is the process of one’s ability to ‘understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth’<sup>2</sup>. Daniel Goleman, , defines this as the ‘capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships’<sup>3</sup>.

Different people display different levels of emotional intelligence and being aware of these levels allows one to regulate the effect that this has on themselves and essentially plays a role in the wellbeing of that person<sup>4</sup>. The ability to regulate the effect that one has on another person is not only a consideration at leadership level but should also be relevant within the context of team members. Ultimately, the engagement of employees will be dependent on more than just the behaviour of the leader.

A brief look at some definitions on this widely researched topic already starts to set the scene in terms of its relevance. How often do we stop to actually consider the impact of our own behaviour on other people we work with? What impact do we have, be it as leaders or as team members, by displaying our ability or inability to be aware of this effect and to adapt our behaviour to ensure that we may ultimately bring the very best out in our teams?

While there is no easy answer to establish how ready an organisation is, the objective here is to provide a kick-start to the thought process - in terms of where efforts may be focussed for steering an organisation in the right direction, if that is a genuine concern. In an age where digital transformation is occurring at a faster pace than we can keep up with, many jobs and skills that we know today are almost redundant for the jobs of the future. We are therefore left with little choice other than to seek to fully understand just how prepared our organisations are for the future that is now.

For more information, please visit [www.deloitte.com/mt/humancapital](http://www.deloitte.com/mt/humancapital)

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4. Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1993). The intelligence of emotional intelligence. *Intelligence*, 17(4), 433-442.

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