

JobShift: How to Prosper in a Workplace without Jobs

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Where Have All the Jobs Gone?

"America has entered the age of the contingent or temporary worker, of the consultant and subcontractor, of the just-in-time work force - fluid, flexible, disposable. This is the future. Its message is this: You are on your own. For good (sometimes) and ill (often), the workers of the future will constantly have to sell their skills, invent new relationships with employers who must, themselves, change and adapt constantly in order to survive in a ruthless global market." -- Lance Morrow, "The Temping of America," *Time*, 1993.

Jobs as boxes in an organization chart with regular duties, hours, and salaries are gone. They should be gone because their rigidity causes inefficiency and inhibits change. There is still plenty of *work* to be done, it will just be packaged and organized differently.

Technology is driving this change in the following ways:

- "Informating" the workplace. Workers no longer manipulate materials, they manipulate data about the product they are building or delivering.
- The business of data.
- Communication technology as "multiplier". All players in a market get the same information instantly and can all react at the same time.

These changes allow work to be delocalized, blur the distinction between home and office, and cause constant reengineering of business processes. Turbulence erodes job outlines just as a cloud appears to be changing slowly on its outside when inside it has rapid updrafts.

The Rise and Fall of the Good Job

The new definition of "job" is similar to its pre-industrial one; that of a unit of work to be done, something that has a beginning and end and definite results.

The American economy is leading the world economy in the process of "dejobbing". The job, the concept of full time employment, was created by the Industrial Revolution. Then the job seemed just as unnatural in comparison to rural or village subsistence and home crafts as dejobbing seems to us today. Dejobbing in the post industrial world will be just as disruptive to individuals and society as the Industrial Revolution was but it will ultimately yield comparable benefits.

All work is contingent and temporary, lasting for the term of the project.

The focus has shifted from responsibilities to what needs to be done. (Where does this leave skills that take a long time to learn and concentrated effort to maintain? Not everybody can do every task needed on a project, but clearly we all need to be as flexible in assignments as our skills allow.)

Old rules of employment

- Located the employee vertically in organizational hierarchy
- Located the employee horizontally in functional area.
- Job description
- Career path

New rules of employment

- Everyone is a contingent worker.
- Workers must demonstrate their value to the organization in each successive work situation.
- Worker must view themselves as vendors in business for themselves.
- Companies will build benefits into this assignment-oriented work rather than as add-ons, e.g. higher pay while working to make up for time out of work.
- Workers take primary responsibility for career and life needs like professional development, health insurance and retirement.
- Work will be organized by project teams where the group, not the manager, is the responsible party. Rapidly change among tasks, work on multiple projects, without clear job descriptions.
- Frequently change organizations. No long-term employment.
- Companies will provide information, training, counseling during this transition.

Everything Is a Market

Loyalty is no longer an asset.

Security depends on:

1. Employability
2. Vendor-mindedness (what HP calls customer focus) - employees have "clients" more than "customers".
3. Resiliency

Organizations unbundling their operations and sticking with their core competencies creates new markets. Markets create work by need, not by orders.

Looking for Unmet Needs

Identify your customers inside and outside the organization to find the needs they have that are not yet being effectively or economically met by other vendors either inside or outside the organization.

1. Change creates unmet needs by opening up gaps between available resources: the "missing piece" phenomenon.
2. Change creates unmet needs by creating new interfaces. Like supply chain managers when mfg. is outsourced.
3. Change creates unmet needs by introducing new technological or economic possibilities waiting to be capitalized on. Technology changes the way business can be done and organized.
4. Change creates unmet needs by rendering obsolete - thus needing replacement - existing technical, economic, or organization arrangements.

Marketing basics

1. Your environment, on both sides of the organizational boundary, is a market.
2. Markets are made up of individuals who are best understood as customers.
3. Your relation to them must be based on need satisfaction.
4. All markets are changing very rapidly.
5. Change, by its very nature, creates new needs constantly.
6. The vendor-minded employee must develop an eye for unmet needs.

Survey and Recycle Your D.A.T.A.

To start your new plan, survey your:

1. Desires - What do I really want at this point in my life?
2. Abilities - What am I really good at?
3. Temperament - What kind of person am I and in what kinds of situations am I most productive and satisfied?

4. Assets - What advantages do I have ... or what aspects of my life history or life situation could I turn to my own advantage?

Recycle these to meet the new work situations looking at how your core competencies, rather than specific experiences, fit.

Run "You & Co." As a Business

See yourself as a self-contained economic entity, not as a component part looking for a whole within which you can function, even if you are on an organization's payroll.

The outsourcing exercise

Pretend your job has been outsourced and you are asked to bid for it against other vendors:

- What product are you offering to your organization?
- What organizational needs will your product fill?
- How will that product be made and delivered?
- Why do you think that you and your product are better qualified to meet the organization's needs than other vendors and vendor products would be?

Managing the composite career

The job-based career is a sequence of employment in organizations and assignments like a chain while the new composite career is an interleaved set of assignments and projects for various clients like a woven cable.

A worker must seek out the experiences and education he feels he needs to go where he wants to go, not be ruled by what is assigned him. No one in the organization is looking out for the worker's career anymore.

You create your own job or career.

The Psychological Impact of Dejobbing

Our identity, self-worth, and social network are frequently tied to our jobs.

Alfred North Whitehead (philosopher): "The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order".

Improve your ability to manage change

1. Expectations. Be realistic.
2. Habits. Keep up with all the economic, societal, political, technical changes that affect your work.
3. Contacts. Needed to find work and to learn from
4. Personal "rules" that are really fallacies:
 - Don't leave a job when good jobs are so hard to get.
 - The best jobs go to the people with the best qualifications.
 - Don't try to change careers after forty
 - Getting into the "right business" assures a secure future.
 - It doesn't matter what you want. It's what "they" want that counts.
 - You have to be a salesman to get ahead today.
 - If you have "responsibilities", you can't leave the world of jobs.

Contain the changes within new, unchanging frames of meaning

- The frame of integrity (wholeness) /identity - who you are
- The frame of life journey or dream - where you want to go
- The craft as a frame - loyalty to what you do (your profession) rather than who you do it for.

- Create islands of order - home, family, friends, faith

Running the Post-Job Organization

Little hierarchy. Teams assembled for the project then disbanded and members recycle to next project. Team members report to each other.

Organization has four components, among which people may even rotate:

1. Core employees
2. Vendors & subcontractors
3. Temporary and term hires
4. Customer & clients, who actually may do some of the work themselves

Management becomes coaching and providing resources, not making sure the work gets done. Big growth in what HP calls "program management" that doesn't involve wage and personnel management. Managers become executive with responsibility for an area, not dominion over people.

What Society Needs to Do about Dejobbing

Need to merge the present business development centers and career development centers into business and career development centers (incubators).

Portable, self-directed benefits. New laws on home business. More reliance on professional associations and unions to function more like old guilds or professional assocs. New social safety net.