

# : The Talent Wave



By [John Gatherer](#)

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One of the biggest strategic imperatives facing the business world is how to find innovative and pragmatic approaches to attracting, developing, engaging and retaining talent.

The famous report from Mckinsey in 1998 rocked the corporate world on the War for Talent and it is our view that all the actions over the past 15 years have still not been enough to win the war.

Talent management covers a broad array of topics such as retention, skills development and succession planning and has certainly earned a huge amount of exposure over the last decade. Companies are investing huge amounts of time and money in this area but from our exposure to numerous engagement surveys across our international travels; it is still evident that there is some significant work still outstanding!

Young talent are increasingly demanding to be treated as a whole person with needs, values, aspirations and a life beyond work and are a great deal more challenging of their career status. More and more often, one is hearing them question their purpose, meaning and relative achievements of their work.

*I spend 12 hours of my life at this job. What am I doing with this if it doesn't mean something to me?* Or young executives saying, *If it doesn't mean anything to me in the next year, I'm outta here!* The workplace has become frenetic and highly competitive and it takes a lot of skill and political savvy to cope and survive within it, let alone progress up the next rung of the career ladder!

## Managing and coping with Change

One of the biggest challenges facing people from all walks of life is how well they handle *CHANGE*.

The world of work is in a constant state of flux in which business demands, stakeholder expectations, operational requirements, product competition, technological changes and legal compliance all inter-connect, creating the backdrop of both turbulent yet exciting times.

Vast challenges as well as opportunities abound. It is not surprising that employees often find the pressures and strains of work life overwhelming, in that traditional work practices, corporate uncertainties, employer demands and even the nature and complexity of work itself are changing at an increasingly fast rate.

**Change is avalanching...**

Let's refer to the context of change by reflecting on a quotation from Alvin Toffler, the world renowned futurist. *Change is avalanching on us and we are grotesquely unprepared for it!* The reason for our choice of this quote, as a symbol of change, is not so much for the dramatic words and imagery expressed, but the fact that this quote came from his best-selling book "Future Shock" that was published in 1970!! The rate of change that the futurist Alvin Toffler anticipated in the early 1970's has accelerated exponentially beyond all our imagination and expectations.

There are a plethora of massive change scenarios and predictions published by progressive organisations and futurists that require step changes in thinking and behaviour just to keep up.

Some of these changes include the following:

**The energy crisis and the critical role that energy will play in our lives in the 21st century**

**The innovation economy - the transformation of the global economy based on the convergence of free trade, technology, new markets, talent migration, competition, peace and security;**

**The new workforce - more multicultural, diverse, globally competitive, marketable, mobile, knowledgeable, flexible and team oriented;**

**Future science and technology - it will transform every aspect of our lives, culture and the economy, i.e. AI, virtual reality, teleportation, Nano biology, genetic engineering, etc.**

**Climate change - how the environment is changing and how we need to prepare for increased global warming, pollution and threats to health and the environment**

**International security and instability - increasing amount of conflict, terrorism, natural disasters, religious and ideological protests and expression**

**Globalisation - the new realities of global trade and competition, the rise of China and India, the clash of culture and values, and the ideological battle for the future**

**The generation conflict - the 'geeks and the geezers', work ethic, quality of work/life balance, personal aspiration differences, high mobility of Generation Y, employability**

**Access to information - the power of the information super-highway, instant knowledge access and interactive communication through electronic media such as Google, Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, iPads, iPhone, etc.**

**Ageing population - greater healthcare options, longer lives, lower birth rates result in large numbers of ageing baby boomers with specific lifestyle, travel and healthcare needs**

The business environment, workplace and job market are in constant flux, changing at a staggering pace and being impacted by global and national events. In this information age, the workplace has been characterised by leaner and flatter structures, the advent of the knowledge worker and work teams that form and reform to meet organisational needs, multiple roles and technological innovation.

The changing nature of work also demands greater flexibility and mobility from workers, in a greater variety of workplaces, with greater use of contract labour, the emergence of small business and a greater reliance on social networks.

The employee's social environment has changed significantly with more system support for virtual work, more integration of learning into everyday work experiences and an increased focus on connectedness, delivery and high performance.

For individuals to succeed within this dynamic environment, they need a variety of coping and survival skills to advance in their careers.

## ABOUT JOHN GATHERER

John has co-authored the best-selling book, "I am Talent", focusing on developing individuals' potential, self-mastery and career aspirations, has written numerous articles and presented at conferences, locally and internationally.

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