How to succeed by cultivating adaptability for the future of work

Story by SETHURAMAN PANCHANATHAN

All jobs require critical thinking skills that allow us to assess situations, projects and directives, make informed judgments, and pivot as necessary when changing circumstances and priorities dictate. In today’s workplace climate, the term adaptability takes on new meaning. Jobs and career paths are in a state of flux. This presents opportunities for dynamic growth and advancement, particularly if you can demonstrate to a current or potential employer your understanding of this changing paradigm.

As an advisor to the White House American AI and Industries of the Future initiatives, I am innately aware of the nation’s perception of the advancement of automation and its potential impact on the ways we live, learn and work. With the recent, rapid advances in technology and artificial intelligence (AI), we’re all looking for ways to position ourselves to be successful in the future of work. I encourage an attitude of optimism, as we collectively embrace a world in which machines and humans work together to accomplish things neither could do alone. It’s imperative that as lifelong learners, we continually strive to adapt to evolving workplace dynamics in the following ways:

**Develop and employ an entrepreneurial mindset.**

This doesn’t always mean you have to launch your own business, but rather, it’s a matter of finding ways to innovate, to grow, take calculated risks, and expand and excel in your profession.
Be aware of factors that stand to change the fundamentals of the way you work. Is automation playing an increasing role in how your company operates? Are new hires expected to have particular skill sets that you don’t have? Pay attention to what’s coming through the pipeline and be proactive in adapting as necessary to ensure you remain relevant.

Be enthusiastically prepared to evolve with your company. This could mean requesting mentoring to come quickly up to speed on institutional knowledge, cross-training to learn the needs and operations of other departments, or upskilling and reskilling as necessary to advance and thrive in your company.

Expect and embrace change and prepare accordingly. Develop not only your professional abilities, but other skills, like critical thinking, empathy and creativity. Being well-versed and well-rounded in your mindsets will ensure you are an asset to your employer (or employers) throughout the course of your career.

As the future of work continues to evolve, corporations will be drawn to lifelong master learners who possess an innovative, creative mindset. As such, being adaptable in today’s workplace includes recognizing and accepting that change is continuous. Choose to go with changing the tide rather than fight against it.

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