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MAN VS. MACHINE: HOW EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WILL BE JOB SECURITY IN THE FUTURE ECONOMY

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with research update

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AI may be transforming organizations, but uniquely human traits, like emotions, creativity and self-awareness will never be obsolete.

You and I are living in a third-wave of business transformation. AI and adaptive processes are ushering in an era of unprecedented possibility – and uncertainty – in the early 21st century, just as Henry Ford’s assembly lines did one hundred years ago, and the widespread adoption of computers in the workplace did in the 1970s and 80s.

While the assembly line increased production and lowered costs, it also demanded laborers work more hours and fundamentally changed the nature of the work they did. Computerization and automation sent productivity soaring but rendered many back-office jobs obsolete. Now, AI and cognitive computing automate and streamline once-prohibitively-complex, time-consuming big data analysis, providing access to actionable intelligence in minutes or seconds instead of days or weeks. But, like a factory worker in 1913 or a bookkeeper in 1977, we, in 2018, are caught in an unstoppable wave of business transformation, and we’re asking, “Where do I fit in?”

The answer is vital, and the deadline for finding it is fast approaching. According to studies conducted at Oxford and MIT 50% of jobs – across economic sectors - will be obsolete in the next 10 years, due to AI. It’s estimated that AI will create 2.3 million jobs in 2020 while eliminating 18 million.

John Henry or Luke Skywalker?

We have two choices. We can adopt John Henry’s adversarial attitude toward transformation – in his case a steam drill, in our case AI - and resist it to the death (or unemployment), or we can take a lesson from Luke Skywalker’s eventual taming of ‘The Force’; he learned how to work with it, adapt himself to it and channel it to his advantage.

Face it, AI is smarter and faster than we are. In a cold analytic, computational sense a human can never hope to match a machine’s ability to collect and assimilate data, as demonstrated most visibly in 1996, when a supercomputer, IBM Deep Blue, beat world champion Gary Kasparov in a chess match. In a business context, we humans don’t stand a chance - AI is akin to competing against 800 Harvard MBAs!

Emotional Intelligence & Cognitive Collaboration

Interestingly, Kasparov, apparently taking a lesson from this loss to Deep Blue when speaking at the Train AI conference in San Francisco this past May, advocated for the Luke Skywalker approach, arguing that humans must find a way to merge with AI, rather than try to beat it. ‘Augmented intelligence’, he calls it.

I prefer the term ‘cognitive collaboration’.

Where AI’s strengths end, human opportunities begin. AI is like money, not intrinsically good or bad. A computer is the ultimate logical, dispassionate entity, every decision it reaches is the product of algorithms, rendered in black and white, no gray exists. Only when AI’s cold calculations are augmented with ‘emotional intelligence’(EI) – uniquely human qualities, like self-awareness, motivation, creativity, and empathy - do entirely new (and likely better) alternatives emerge. It’s worth noting a recent twist on the ‘Deep Blue’/Kasparov chess experiment: a human and computer, working together, defeated a computer alone.

To put the concept of EI in real-world CRE terms, location strategy is one of the most significant matters organizational leaders may face. The decision of whether or where to relocate a headquarters or consolidate multiple facilities into one, for instance, directly impacts lives. AI will approach the question mathematically, generating recommendations based on objective, quantifiable metrics, like cost, square footage, lease terms, proximity to airports, and more. Conversely, EI injects human capabilities – intuition, empathy, gut-feel - into the equation. A broker involved early in the decision-making process can assess the question and influence the decision in subjective terms, such as the impact on corporate culture and the employee experience.

The optimal decision will emerge from a cognitive collaboration, drawing from both worlds - AI and EI. The lesson for all of us – the key to ensuring job security in this third wave - is to identify those points of confluence, where the qualities that make us human also make us indispensable.
RESEARCH UPDATE

BY DR. MELONY BETHALA
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The shift towards using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in the workplace is happening quickly. McKinsey Global Institute predicts that as technology becomes more sophisticated, the demand for higher cognitive skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and decision-making will grow.1

As technology advances, AI has begun to take over tasks associated with highly-skilled professions such as those of doctors, teachers, financial advisors, stockbrokers, and business consultants.2 Artificial intelligence and machine learning enhance many professions rather than replace them. Machines, for example, can conduct imaging diagnostics for doctors because they have high accuracy rates and are able to process thousands of images at a great speed. To succeed in a changing world of work, we must understand the importance of emotional intelligence and how it complements new technological advancements.

Emotional intelligence involves the ability recognize, understand and control one's own emotions; it also involves an ability to recognize, understand, and influence the emotions of others.3 Individuals who will be successful in the future workforce are those who can interact with, motivate and assess people—abilities that machines have only just begun to replicate.*

What are machines capable of, and how can we increase our emotional intelligence? In a 2017 article for the Harvard Business Review, Megan Beck and Barry Libert discuss the extent of machine capabilities.

Exhibit 1: Many skilled jobs follow the same general workflow:

Source: Harvard Business Review
Doctors and advisors alike perform tests, analyze the results, and recommend a course of action. These and other skilled professionals are valued because they can go through rote tasks quickly and accurately, can determine an appropriate course of action, and can help clients navigate that course.

**Exhibit 2:** Three tasks associated with highly skilled labor:

- **FIRST TASK**
  Ability to go through rote tasks quickly and accurately

- **SECOND TASK**
  Determine a course of action

- **THIRD TASK**
  Help clients navigate a course

**Source:** Harvard Business Review

AI and machine learning will be able to take over the first two capabilities, but the ability to help clients navigate a course of action will be an important skill for people to develop. Falon Fatemi, writing for *Forbes* magazine, recommends that we embrace the changes that artificial intelligence will bring, but that we should also invest in developing our emotional intelligence. Lifelong learning is an important way for individuals to expand their skill set, and to learn new abilities that will make them relevant in the workforce of the future.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


3. Ibid.