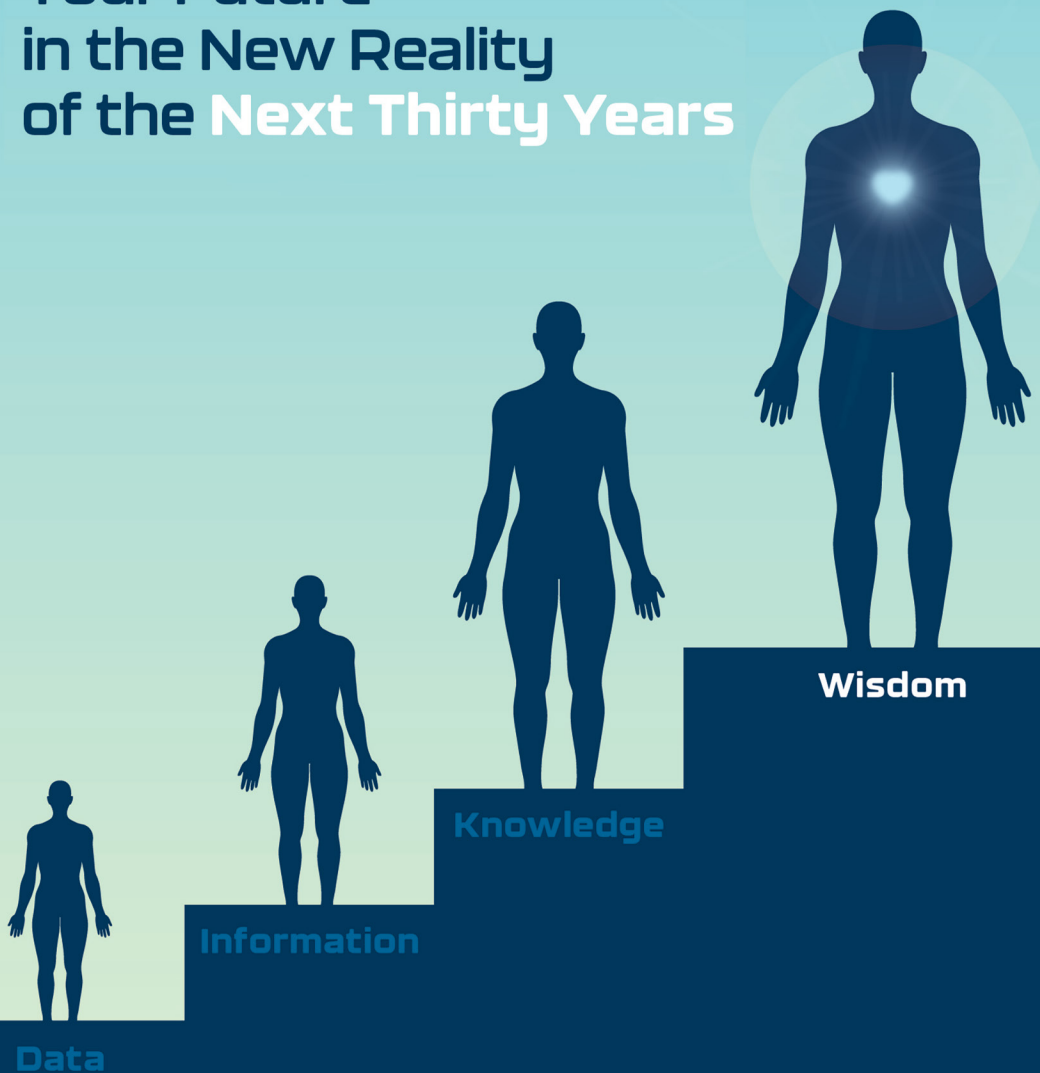


Adapt or be left behind – that's the reality for businesses of the future.

The Potentialist

Your Future
in the New Reality
of the Next Thirty Years



A special report from Sales & Marketing Management and Meryl Moss Media Group



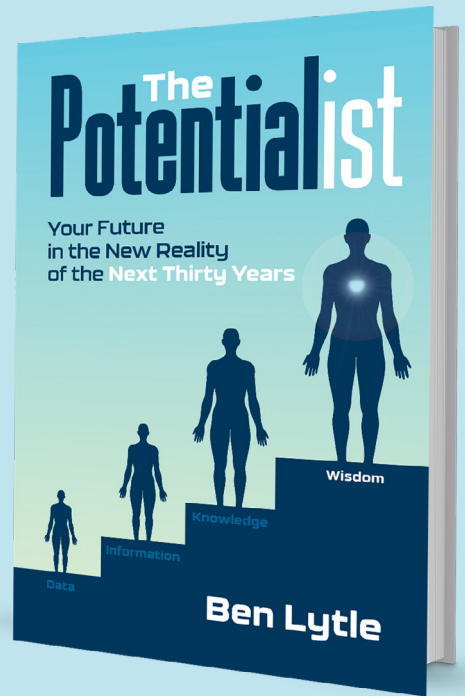
MERYL MOSS MEDIA GROUP
SMARTWORKSCOLLABORATIVE

Meet Serial Entrepreneur and Visionary, Ben Lytle

Any company that doesn't understand what's on the horizon is bound to fail, according to Ben Lytle, a longtime business executive and author of the book "The Potentialist: Your Future in the New Reality of the Next Thirty Years."

"Regardless of your feelings, these innovations are coming, and you will have to decide if and how you will assimilate them into your life," Lytle writes.

Lytle's insights represent a survival guide for sales and marketing managers in the 21st century — the very things you need to know to thrive in a changing work climate.



Understanding them, and knowing how to adapt accordingly, will mark the difference between staying in front of future trends and falling behind.

This collection of articles, which are based on key themes from "The Potentialist," provide a roadmap for tomorrow's marketing and sales leaders, and tackle such topics as business relationships, collaboration, differentiation, customer expectations and careers.

The way we work and the jobs we perform will continue to transform in the coming decades. How you respond will make the difference between your company setting trends and becoming irrelevant.

Consider this a warning. Or an opportunity.

How to Future-Proof Your Sales & Marketing Strategy

Lytle is presenting a free webinar on **How to Future-Proof Your Sales & Marketing Strategy for Sales & Marketing Management Connect**.

If you had a crystal ball that could predict the future, how would you use it to shape your sales and marketing strategy and build your team? Visionary entrepreneur and founder of insurance giant Anthem, Ben Lytle, presents what you need to know to succeed in the 21st century. This riveting webinar is based on his prescient new book, “The Potentialist: Your Future in the New Reality of the Next Thirty Years.”

Lytle will provide a roadmap for tomorrow’s marketing and sales leaders and will discuss:

- **Leadership:** The Top 7 new world realities leaders will face in the coming years.
- **Customer Experience:** How new technologies might provide a seamless experience.

- **Collaboration:** Everything is about to change. Here’s why removing barriers to collaboration will open up new paths of innovation.
- **Entrepreneurship:** The traditional 9-to-5 career model is over. Here’s what’s next.
- **Branding:** Ways to exponentially increase relationships—and make branding a whole new ballgame.

The way we work and jobs we perform will transform in the coming decades, and how you respond will mark the difference between your company setting trends or becoming irrelevant. This isn’t a warning; it’s your chance to seize opportunity.

The webinar is scheduled for December 13 at 11 a.m. PT. ■

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER TO ATTEND THE DEC 13TH WEBINAR](#)

How To Empower Your Company With Superhero Leadership

BY DAN GOOD

Ben Lytle knows superhero leadership.

The self-made serial entrepreneur-CEO has spent his life and career looking ahead at how innovations will impact workplaces and communities. Vision and foresight aided his guidance of companies like the health

benefits behemoth Anthem, which he founded, and those themes are the subject of his book “The Potentialist: Your Future in the New Reality of the Next Thirty Years.”

I recently spoke to Lytle about the emerging tools and technologies bosses of the future will have at

their disposal — some of which will make them feel as though they’re the heroes of their own comic book movie franchise. The next generation of leaders will be sharper, quicker and more adept at leading teams with maximum efficiency and impact.

Here are seven of the new world realities that Lytle envisions leaders facing in the coming years.

1 MIND AND MACHINE

Zoom meetings are just the beginning. Future leaders will have access to an arsenal of new tools that will help them not only streamline everyday tasks, but also better connect with the minds and feelings of their team.

Lytle says voice-based or thought-based brain-to-computer interfaces (BCIs) present the chance to compose email or create presentations with nothing more than your mind, a direct connection between brain and machine.

“With thought activation, you won’t need to type, speak, or look at a monitor to engage the virtually unlimited power and information available in the cloud. You would no longer need to text or call anyone—simply think and it happens,” Lytle wrote in “The Potentialist.”

“With thought activation, you won’t need to type, speak, or look at a monitor to engage the virtually unlimited power and information available in the cloud.”

In the coming years, managers will also be able to analyze employees’ brain signals through wearable devices, which poses a lot of potentially ethical concerns. As Alexandre Gonfalonieri wrote in a 2020 essay for Harvard Business Review, “At the end of each annual performance review, are we going to also analyze and compare attention levels thanks to our BCIs? Your brain information may be of interest to your employers, allowing them to keep an eye on how focused you are, and allowing them to adapt employees’ workloads accordingly.”

Having access to so many tools and so much information will empower managers like never before. Instead of getting buried in mundane tasks, future bosses can focus on the details that matter most — and better keep employees engaged with work that fulfills them. Workers will have access

to lifelong, personalized learning that will be available anywhere, ensuring that they are staying at the forefront of opportunities and expanding their skillset.

2 LONGER LIFESPAN

People in the future are going to live longer — maybe a lot longer. Some experts believe that the first person to live to 150 has already been born.

“When you extend life expectancy, it’s like stretching a rubber band,” Lytle told me. “The stages of life expand. Kids grow up slower. They get married later. They have children later.

“People are really at their best from about 45 or 50 to about 70. They are physically very strong, typically their health is good, they are at their peak intellectual power, usually the peak of their career. They are smarter and wiser and don’t have so much to prove.



Now, imagine those 20 years becoming 40 years or 60 years. What could people do with their lives? It's just an astonishing thought."

Living and working longer will make it more likely that people will make more career and employment transitions.

3 WITH GREAT POWER...

With any emerging technology, as well as enhanced physical and intellectual power, there is always the potential for misuse. And leaders of the future will need to be guided by wisdom.

Those empowered by emerging technology "will become supermen and superwomen, but a few will undoubtedly attempt to become supervillains like Superman's evil



archenemy Lex Luthor," Lytle states in "The Potentialist."

Web 3.0 is going to democratize information and wisdom across the team, and it will also offer a deeper focus on human development, providing experienced-based training and resources on how to seize your potential and accelerate your wisdom.

The moral obligation for future leaders is reflected by the unofficial motto Google embraced during its early years: "Don't be evil." Technology can have positive and negative applications, and it will be up

to future leaders to ensure that emerging technologies are used for good.

4 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

The Cloud, the network of servers that support a host of digital tools, will be the main driver for development in the coming decades. Cloud technology is poised to disrupt everything from the use of money to meetings, shopping and travel.

Metaverse technology presents opportunities for training and upskilling employees, hosting virtual meetings and events, and collaborating in new ways. The cloud has the potential to create a more connected, less siloed business environment. But, according to Lytle, "The challenge for you will be deciding, to the degree possible, how fast and to what extent you become cloud dependent and what you can do to protect yourself and your career, or employer, from the risks."

As the cloud becomes universal, we will have the opportunity to give people all over the world — people in the worst situations — the greatest education and business opportunities they've ever had.

But with the potential of cloud technology also comes the need for privacy and security protections, a power struggle between good and evil. Before our world becomes totally cloud-dependent, many issues need to be addressed.

"The name of the game is agility, but without increasing your risk," Talia Gershon, Director of Hybrid Cloud Infrastructure Research for IBM, **said during a virtual summit**, "The Future of Hybrid Cloud," hosted in April by Fast Company and IBM.

For leaders, that means weighing risks and rewards and acting decisively in deploying cloud technology for your company's processes and strategies.



5 SHARING AND CARING

We communicate in so many different ways. Text messages. Email. Phone calls. Company messages and video conferencing. And communication stands poised to evolve further in the coming decades.

The importance of clear communication across teams was reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many teams worked remotely across scattered workplaces trying to replicate face-to-face communication with a hodgepodge of virtual meetings.

Future communications technology will encourage relationship-building through methods like shared experiences — bringing down barriers that have stifled innovation since Biblical times. Imagine employees across the world communicating in real time and understanding each other despite speaking different languages.

But Lytle says those forms of communication will also create shared simultaneous experiences that eclipse anything we have encountered before. Imagine watching the same movie or reading the same book or witnessing the same historical speech simultaneously with others from around the world and interpreting it just as others are, responding to their real-time reactions.

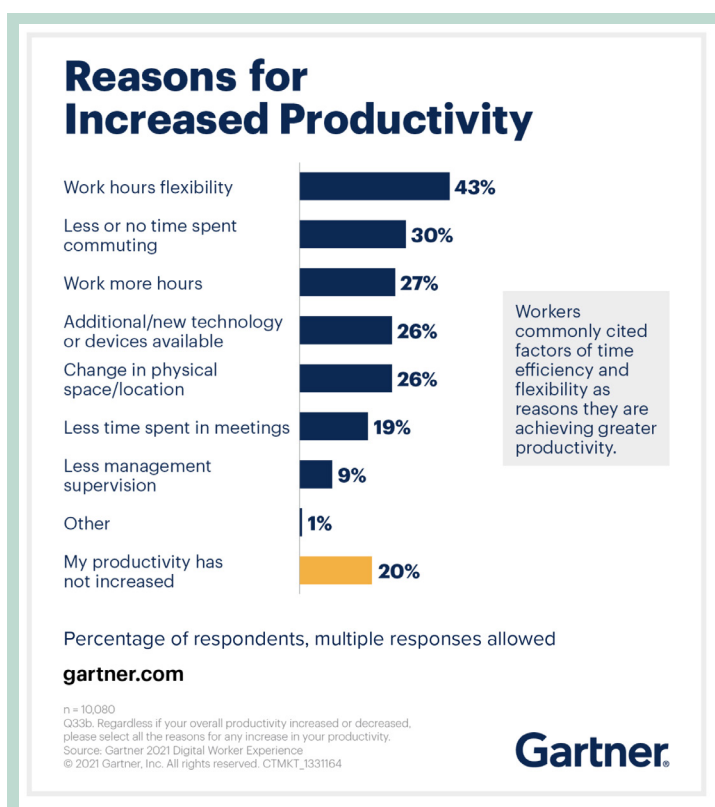
Managing in the New Reality means rethinking company communication and harnessing the emotions of shared experiences. Work meetings will never be the same.

6 INTEGRATION VS. BALANCE

A career is a calling card and a means of earning a living, but it can mean so much more, a chance to build rapport with coworkers and customers.

Work is a major facet in our lives. For full-time employees, work can take up roughly a quarter of our time in a given week.

The structure and means of completing that work is becoming better integrated in employees' lives. Work-life balance



has made way for “work-life integration,” which blends personal and professional elements congruously.

It’s important for managers to embrace flexibility in this new workplace model. Workers are more inclined to be juggling work and personal tasks, and it’s becoming more and more unrealistic to expect workers to be available — or at their best — for typical eight-hour shifts.



This is especially true in an age of globalization when teams could be based in all corners of the world.

Forty-three percent of workers believe flexibility in working hours helps them achieve greater productivity, according to the [Gartner 2021 Digital Worker Experience Survey](#). Added flexibility could additionally help teams recruit and retain top talent and avoid the dreaded burnout that can come from companies being run in hierarchical ways.

7 DELIBERATE LEADERSHIP

Management of the future will need to be much more deliberate.

With so much information available to managers — from deeper metrics on employee efficiency and attentiveness to customer shopping insights — the tried-and-true methods of trial and error won’t work so well anymore. The days of learning from your mistakes will be replaced by largely avoiding them. Accelerated innovation will compress the time we have to react or make decisions, and decisions will be more complex than ever before.

And with so much advancement, it’s going to be crucial for leaders to stay in front of emerging technologies. Otherwise, other team members are liable to become experts themselves and rise to the front of the group.

As Lytle writes, “We need not abandon our old ways entirely. But we need to act much more thoughtfully and deliberately when adaptation cannot wait until the last minute and the consequences are severe.” ■



New Technology Presents New Opportunities In Customer Experience

BY DAN GOOD



A seamless beginning-to-end positive customer experience is crucial to buyers and will shape the sales landscape in the years ahead, shifting the focus away from tried-and-true benchmarks like price alone. That sort of customer experience includes everything from billing to website navigation, an all-encompassing sentiment that factors in the interactions and platforms used between buyer and seller.

The six characteristics below help to define whether an organization will prosper in the ultra-competitive CX landscape.

Customization

As author and business leader Ben Lytle wrote in his book “The Potentialist: Your Future in the New Reality of the Next Thirty Years,” “Consumers want custom, personalized results instead of standardized commodity goods and services. They want to become what author Alvin Toffler called ‘a market of one.’”

That CX customization should extend not just to the products or services, but also the purchasing journey. Some customers know what they want and how much they want to pay.

Others, however, “aren’t motivated to make big decisions at the start. Instead, they’re eager to get a taste of excitement as soon as possible. Only later, once they’ve become more involved in the journey, are they willing to invest in a major purchase or subscription,” Ahir Gopaldas and Anton Siebert wrote for *Harvard Business Review* in 2022. The challenge for companies is cueing purchasing decisions at the perfect time.

B2B buyers can have very diverse and unique demands, and it’s vital that they get customized, personalized

care. They're interested in more than just products and don't want to be treated like every other similar business. They want to build a relationship.

Consumer Emphasis

A focus on CX means putting yourself in the customer's shoes and viewing their interactions — and possible pain points — with solutions in mind, no matter where they are in your sales funnel. Their interactions should be efficient and effective, useful and enjoyable.

Streamlining processes and platforms to meet consumer needs can be especially difficult for large organizations and those with legacy systems.

At its heart, customer experience is about understanding the customer and being willing and having the capability to adapt your processes, your products, your services, so that they meet those customer expectations, goals, and desires.

—MICHAEL KRIGSMAN

Industry analyst and host of executive discussion platform CXOTalk, told [Harvard Business Review](#)



Customer experience requires a mindset shift and a culture centered on real-time insights and agility. Without that agility, competitors are liable to develop more effective CX strategies, cutting into your company's market share and eroding your customer base. It also requires a deep commitment to understanding customer needs and recognizing emerging opportunities.

Price is certainly an important factor for B2B buyers, but it isn't the only factor. There could be barriers and pain points and delays and inventory problems driving them to consider other options.

Customer loyalty only goes as deep as the customer's satisfaction. If a buyer's experience doesn't match their expectations or a seller can't deliver, the buyer is

liable to pursue other options now or when their contract is up for renewal.

Strong consumer emphasis requires unity between marketing and sales. Where B2B funnels have typically involved marketing generating leads and sales working with those leads, future B2B is poised to see marketing and sales working more closely alongside one another, with

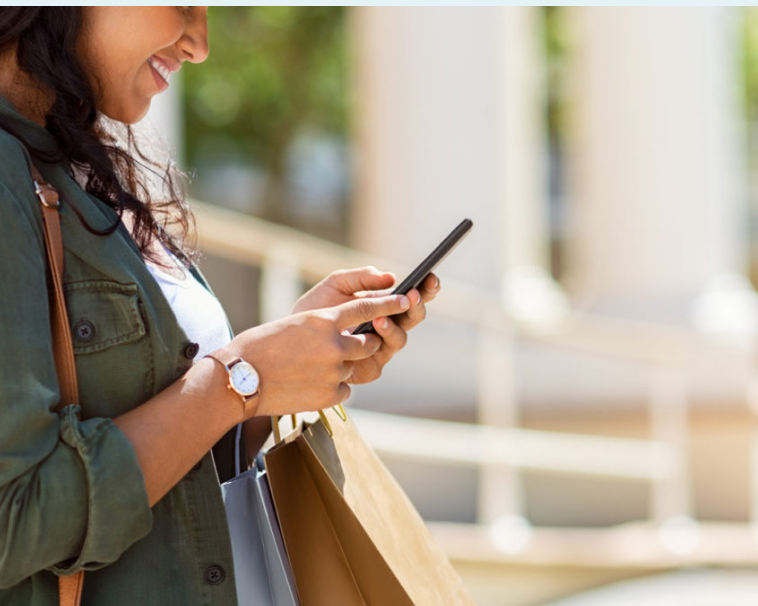
marketing “leading the B2B organization’s quest to identify opportunities, architect strategies, orchestrate execution, and ensure profitability revenue growth, through a relentless focus on delivering value to existing and future customers and stakeholders,” according to a [May 2021 report](#) on future B2B marketing written by Lori Wizdo for Forrester.

Maintaining a consumer emphasis is tantamount. From there, all things are possible.



Choice

Choice is great when you’re an individual customer buying clothes—and in the future, customers will effectively be able to choose which items get displayed in their own personalized storefronts.



But more choice isn’t always so helpful when it comes to B2B sales, when buying decisions can involve lots of stakeholders and long-term planning. Too many options can lead to “analysis paralysis” and second guessing.

Thus, the need for prescriptive and easy selling—cutting through to the customers’ needs, providing recommendations to fulfill those needs, envisioning pain points and purchasing hurdles, and working on ways to sidestep those obstacles.

The easier the buying process, the less likely that any hindrances, including choice, will get in the way.

Direct and Instant

Successful businesses will flatten and remove the steps between the consumer’s decision and fulfillment.

The customer should feel like they are directly involved in the design of the product, or that their insights are being taken into account.

It's empowering for customers to be able to guide their own buying process. And if they want to speak to someone because they have an issue or a question, that option is available, too, first through AI chat and next, through human interaction.



Collaborative

Customers' voices will ring louder and louder. Consumer feedback — in the form of customer ratings and reviews — will fuel or inhibit purchasing decisions and influence improvement. Polls, chatbots, AI and social media interactions provide opportunities for feedback and communication.

Crowdsourcing is also becoming more popular for companies wishing to test products with customers. You wouldn't think of a corporate giant like Coca-Cola in terms of start-up culture, but the iconic company in recent years [launched a crowdsourcing forum to](#), among other things, "embrace an agile, test-and-learn mindset." Employees

develop and pitch product ideas to a panel of senior company leaders, and winning ideas are given a market trial.

Other companies such as LEGO, Starbucks and NASA have also used crowdsourcing to develop new products, innovations and experiences.

Such efforts give customers a sense of input on product offerings and let them know that they are being heard.

Maturation

Democratization doesn't happen overnight. It happens "in stages with time and experience, much like personal maturity," Lytle writes. As such, it requires steady, consistent innovation. Products and services are refined and improved.

We've only scratched the surface on the potential of cloud-based technologies and their impact on sales. But progress has been encouraging.

Retailers have begun launching digital dressing rooms where your personal avatar, from the privacy of your home, can try on as many items as you wish. There's no worry about deceptive mirrors or a door that doesn't seem to lock.

The insights gathered by sellers will help to make the buying process more informed and more personal. Data and insights will fuel reforms and innovations, and CX innovations will become industry standards, creating new baselines for customer experience expectations.

Through continuous innovation and improvement, the impossible will soon become possible, with entirely new services and products helping to cement customer loyalty and foster long-term relationships. ■

Becoming Journey Orchestrators for a Personalized B2B Experience

With B2B sales, in-person and phone sales calls of yesteryear are making way for other forms of personalization, such as video chats and procurement portals. A hybrid approach can provide buyers with better access to subject matter experts — loyalty that can keep them satisfied, and not looking to switch suppliers because they don't feel like they're being heard or properly prioritized.

Companies that offer personalization in business-to-business sales are liable to develop deeper relationships with their customers by helping them solve their unique problems. In this way, salespeople become “**journey orchestrators**,” knowing customers' unique needs and leading them to proper channels.

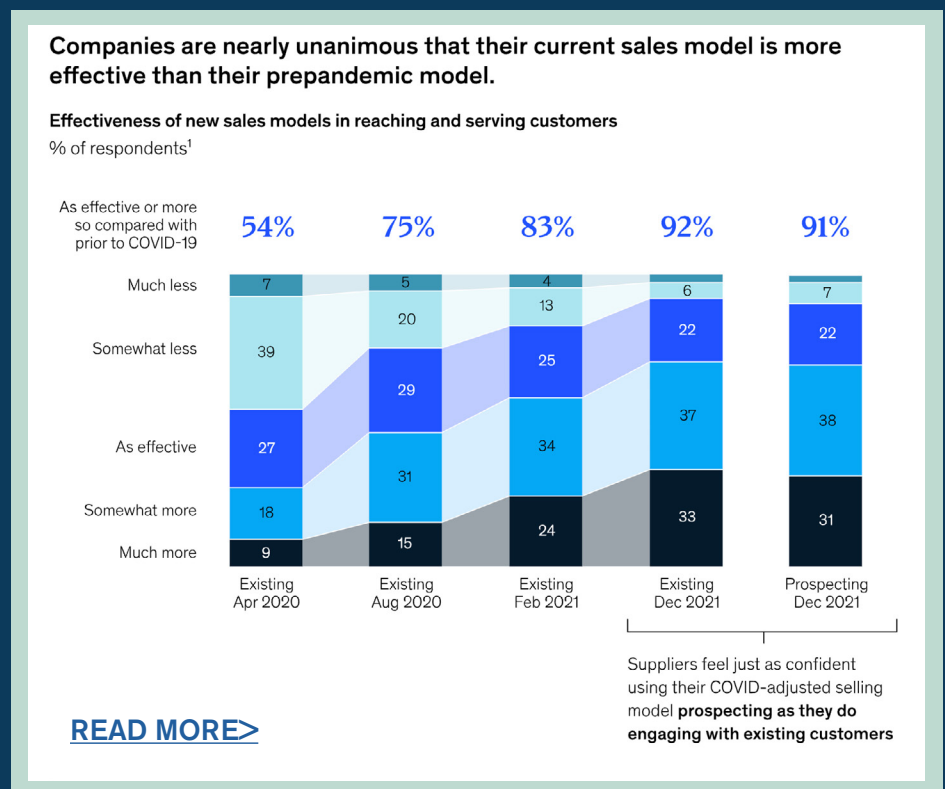
Such an approach can provide transparency and insight for B2B buyers into supply chains and availability of inventory and also ensure that purchases are made in the proper time frame, given that they can take months to complete.

Deep understanding of data and analytics will help companies better tailor their interactions for each client.

That shift is reflected in a recent [Gartner study](#) which anticipates that 65% of B2B organizations will transition to data-driven decision making by 2026, using technology that pairs workflow, data and analytics.

Data can help shape the way sellers approach workflows, messaging and tactics—ensuring that they are communicating the right messages at the right intervals.

Automation, through chatbots and other products, also offers a feedback loop that can help sales teams refine and improve the customer experience and recognize when buyers need more personalized attention. ■



Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014; O*Net; McKinsey analysis.

Zoom Into The Future of 3d Virtual Meetings

BY DAN GOOD

You arrive for your meeting, and the customer ushers you in.

You have a longstanding relationship with the customer's company, and you wanted to give them an update on your newest products. You pull up a chair and fall into your usual routine, catching up on the latest developments in your personal and professional lives, and after a productive meeting you shake hands and promise to meet again in a few weeks.

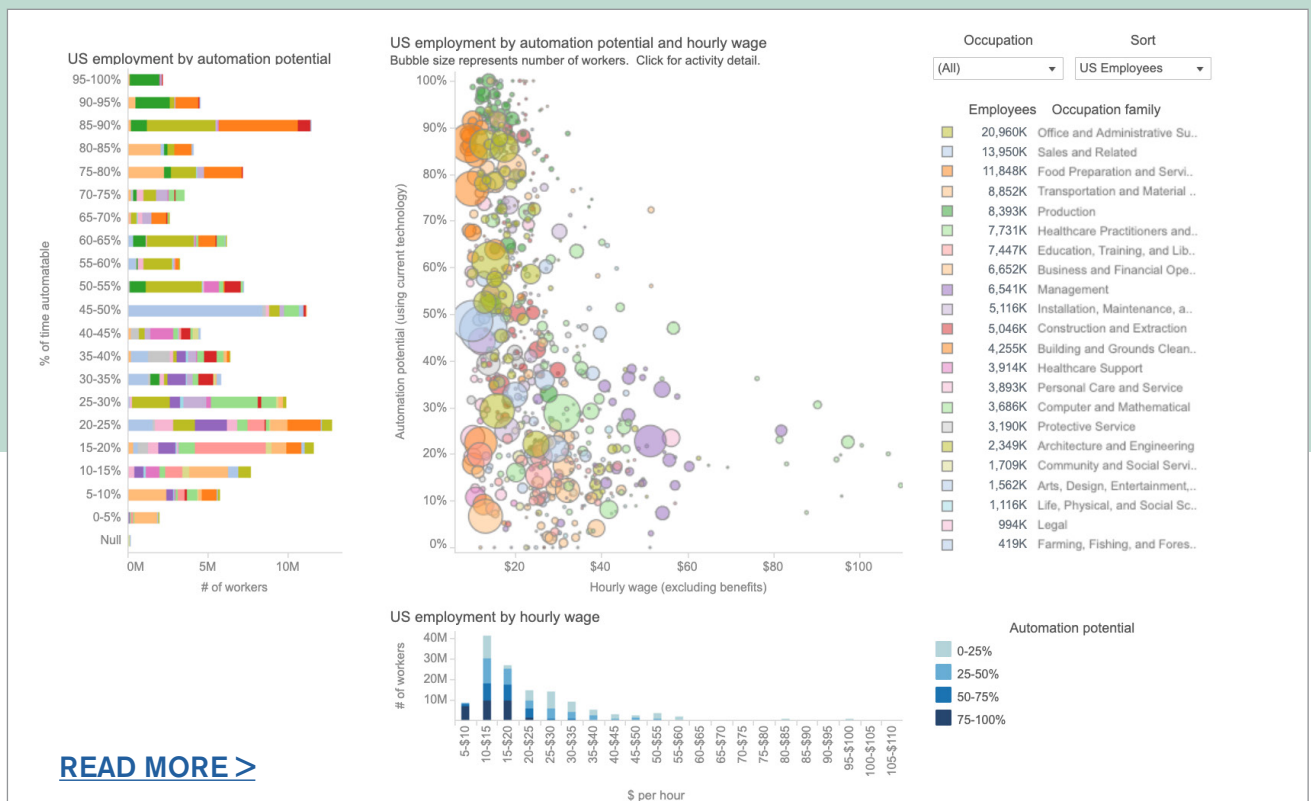
And then you tap a button on your virtual reality headset and arrive for your next meeting with a new client located 1,000 miles away.

Technological advancements are poised to upend the way sales employees work, removing barriers to collaboration and encouraging new paths of innovation. Cutting-edge tools such as AI, the cloud, robotics, and the metaverse will also change the manner of work itself, eliminating many jobs that are dangerous,

repetitious, or physically demanding.

Up to half of the tasks currently performed by salespeople are able to be automated, [according to a McKinsey study](#). Some of the tasks most primed for automation include order management, pricing and quotas and contracts, and post-sales follow-ups.

Even with automation, there remains a deep need for highly skilled salespeople in complex selling



Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014; O*Net; McKinsey analysis.

environments. Lead identification and action plans require creativity and forethought and can't be easily automated.

As author Ben Lytle wrote in his new book “The Potentialist: Your Future in the New Reality of the Next Thirty Years,” “Teams are highly effective at complex tasks; the challenge has always been assembling the teams and getting them to work together effectively.”

Technology will change not only the jobs being conducted and the training necessary for those jobs, but the manner in which we collaborate across teams.

Job Losses vs. Job Gains

How many total jobs will be lost or gained to automation in the coming decades is anyone's guess. McKinsey Global Institute in 2021 estimated that figure at **25% of the U.S. workforce**, or 45 million Americans. Those estimates fail to account for the creation of new jobs—ones that will be more creative and involve deeper levels of problem-solving.

Retail and administrative support roles will be lost to automation, while millions of new jobs will emerge.

“The jobs of the future are expected to be more machine-powered and data-driven than in the past, but they will also likely require human skills in areas such as problem-solving, communication, listening, interpretation and design,” according to a Deloitte [report on the future of work](#).

“As machines take over repeatable tasks and the work people do becomes less routine, roles could be redefined in ways that marry technology with human skills and advanced expertise in interpretation and service.”

The Need for Collaboration

All of that automation will require effective collaboration. As Lytle writes, “People who previously performed narrow, specialized



ThisisEngineering RAEng/Unsplash

jobs in relative isolation will need to think and act very differently if they want to excel in collaborative problem-solving and innovation.” As Lytle sees it, mass production of problem-solving and innovation could be the biggest social benefit of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

People and organizations will need to perform more effectively and think outside the box to tackle the problems of the future, integrating technology like virtual reality and augmented reality into their operations and assembling teams in the most dynamic ways.

Assessments and Adjustments

But as we experience new work models and new technologies, there will be a continual need to assess their effectiveness and any adjustments that need to be made.

One of the obstacles that many teams endured during the COVID-19 pandemic was the loss of face-to-face contact.

Video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams provided remote connectivity, but in a flattened, two-dimensional format that can often feel isolating and empty.

Workers have adapted to a world of virtual meetings, but that doesn't mean they necessarily love the webcam being trained on them. A study published in November 2021 by the *Journal of Applied Psychology* aimed to quantify "Zoom fatigue" and found a link with camera use and how "women and employees who are newer (i.e., lower organizational tenure) are likely to have higher self-presentation costs that make them experience more fatigue."

New Possibilities

Virtual meetings don't have to be fatiguing. And meetings of the future are poised to diminish the disconnectedness and isolation of today's video conferencing technology. The metaverse offers the opportunity to host

meetings anywhere, even on the moon, or to host 3D walk-throughs of the building, stopping people (avatars) in the break room or hallway for a quick virtual chat.

There are newly emerging crossover opportunities to order books or takeout food within the metaverse and have them arrive to your home.

Technologically enabled collaboration as we know it is only in its infancy. As London-based economics and technology advisor Mark Purdy wrote for [*Harvard Business Review*](#), "The metaverse opens up new possibilities to rethink the office and work environment, introducing elements of adventure, spontaneity and surprise. A virtual office doesn't have to be a drab, uniform corporate environment downtown: why not a beach location, an ocean cruise or even another world?"

What a nice idea for your next metaverse meet-up with your longtime customer. You could share a cruise trip together or head on a new adventure, going anywhere you imagine. ■

gremlin/Getty Images



Will Entrepreneurship Replace Traditional Careers?

BY DAN GOOD

The traditional career model is being upended.

Instead of workers bouncing from high school to college to long-term workaday jobs, New Reality careers will involve more creativity and more entrepreneurial choices.

“Your career model will be quite different from that of your parents’ and grandparents’ and will diverge further in coming decades,” author Ben Lytle writes in his book “The Potentialist: Your Future in the New Reality of the Next Thirty Years.”

“Their careers were straightforward: high school or college, jobs with one to four

employers, compartmentalized work and homelife, stable social institutions, and typically a short retirement before death (often from neglecting their health). All that is over — the career and lifestyle of your forebears is not going to be your path.”

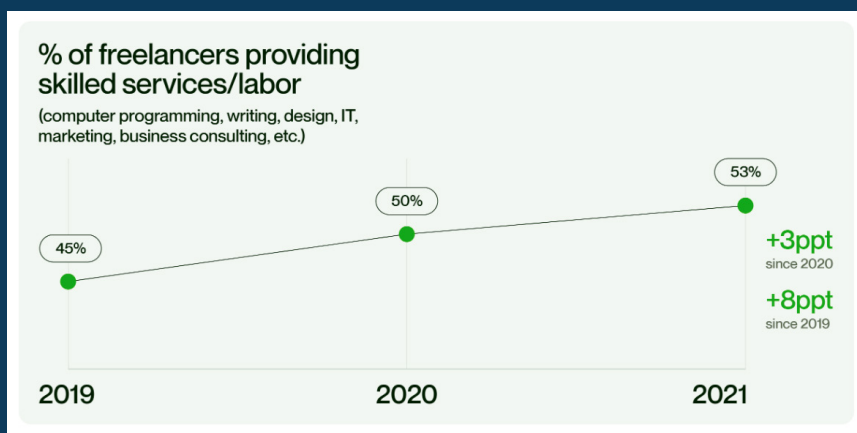
More and more workers in the coming years are bound to choose entrepreneurial careers over traditional employment. Entrepreneurs — think of them as “inspired value creators” — bring creative force to ensure greater decision making. They are fueled by an unquenchable desire to create something of value and be rewarded with wealth, respect, changing lives and the world.

Keeping Incentives Aligned

Alignment of incentives is one of the keys to business, and is especially important for managers trying to keep their teams engaged and working cohesively toward a common goal.

That entrepreneurial mindset has been on display through the so-called “Great Resignation.” Millions of workers have shirked traditional jobs in order to strike out on their own.

Instead of getting paid simply for their time, current and future workers are focused



Source: <https://www.upwork.com/research/freelance-forward-2021>

on getting paid for value and want to feel connected to what they do. Employees are becoming more self-reliant and less beholden on power structures of the company of the past.

Upwork’s **Freelance Forward Economist Report** spoke to these trends, with two qualities reigning over everything else: career ownership (68%) and the ability to work remotely (54%).



Kris Lindahl, a real estate expert and founder of The Marketing Team

[READ MORE >](#)

Future leaders will need to reconsider their concept of teams and act decisively in order to retain top-tier talent. That means being inclusive and flexible, and making sure that workers feel valued and aligned with the company's ambitions.

The Right Mindset for Marketing and Sales

An entrepreneurial mindset is especially important for marketers, who need to be able to articulate a company's mission and vision.

"If you can't keep your messaging clear and simple, you will lose customers. Single-mindedness about your core message is essential here because it keeps the marketing plan focused," Shama Hyder, the CEO of Zen Media, a B2B PR and marketing firm, [wrote for Forbes](#).

That mindset is [also needed for salespeople](#), who typically guide sales in defined areas and often need to find creative solutions to clients' problems. As a client-facing company representative, salespeople are quick to learn about issues facing current clients, as well as opportunities in reaching new customers.

Engaging Your Team

It's vital for companies to foster and encourage that entrepreneurial mindset. A [2021 study by Microsoft](#), "The New Future of Work," found that employees who received more direct support from their supervisors were 2.5 times more likely to maintain their productivity levels and work-life balance, and that 1:1 times with their managers correlated with reductions in weekly working time and a diminished meeting and email load.

Face time with their boss — even remotely — allowed employees to "prioritize work and resolve issues faster," according to the study.

Organizations that engage their team members are poised to prosper, while those that fail to adapt will wither and disappear. Think of Uber and the taxi service industry, or Netflix and video rental stores like Blockbuster.

Engaged employees are more inclined to speak up about a company's perceived threats and suggest solutions. They are more likely to remain engaged in the company's success.

Leaning Into Change

Individuals adapt faster than organizations to change.

“Individuals can make decisions and change their lives overnight because they have few, if any, other people they need to consult,” Lytle wrote. “However, organizations have many conflicting constituencies to convince and processes to adapt—both of which can take months, years, or even decades. An organization’s owners, leaders and employees may be vested in preserving the status quo, causing them to deny or resist change even if inevitable.”

In this era of hyper-speed change and disruption, companies that are slow to respond to challenges are poised to fade away and disappear. These changes make quick-thinking, innovative managers a crucial safeguard in protecting the company from threats and team unrest.

“Individuals can make decisions and change their lives overnight because they have few, if any, other people they need to consult.”

The way to keep a team — especially a future team — working toward the same goal is to empower their collaboration. That means offering just wages and stability and a deep connection to your company’s mission.

With increased offerings and disruption and democratization, the trend of employees staying at a company for their entire career through the ups and downs — something common for our parents and grandparents — is gone. Instead, entrepreneurial employees will constantly be looking for the best fit for their services. ■

...Younger workers are more concerned about not getting sufficient training from their employer (44%) and are more worried that technology will replace their role (38%) compared to baby boomers (29% and 19%, respectively).

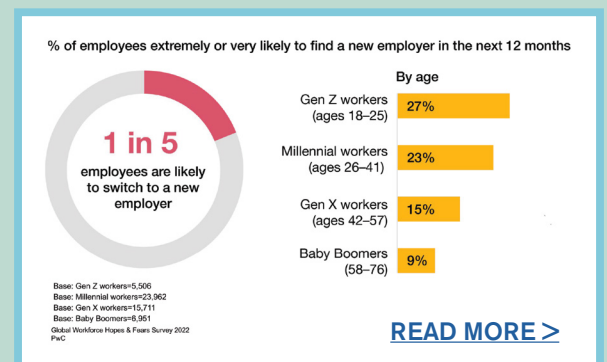
Specialized Training is Key to Workforce Retention

A Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey published by PwC in May 2022 highlights the feelings of today’s workers—and the challenges and opportunities for their employers.

According to the survey, 29% of workers said their country “lacks people with the skills to do my kind of work.” The study also found that workers with specialized skills and training felt more empowered than those whose jobs do not require specialized training.

Additionally, younger workers are more concerned about not getting sufficient training from their employer (44%) and are more worried that technology will replace their role (38%) compared to baby boomers (29% and 19%, respectively).

The survey included 52,000 workers spread out across 44 countries and territories.



Source: PwC’s 2022 Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey of 52,195 workers across 44 countries and territories

It's A Whole New Branding Ballgame

BY DAN GOOD

Your company's brand is a priceless treasure that you need to protect at all costs.

In a time of diminished consumer confidence and increased choices, buyers have more and more reasons to seek services elsewhere — and companies have more customer touchpoints to cover.

Every transaction leaves an impression that you may never be able to change. A

single negative transaction can destroy your brand and a chance of a relationship, making brand trust the crucial element between consumer and company.

That trust, fostered through positive consumer relationships, can help companies stand apart and differentiate themselves from competitors.

A study by [Adobe](#) showed that brand trust resulted in

71% more purchases, along with more recommendations and positive comments. Faithful use of data is a key to maintaining that trust.

On the flip side, customers who lost confidence in a brand were liable to stop purchasing from the company. Common behaviors that turn off customers include unwanted tracking and excessive messaging.

Sales and Marketing Efforts in Alignment

“The branding ballgame has changed,” author and futurist Ben Lytle wrote in “The Potentialist: Your Future in the New Reality of the Next Thirty Years.”

“A brand mindset accepts that, like it or not, our brand opens or closes doors to relationships. Relationships were the foundation of business and life success long before the cloud, but the cloud exponentially expands the number of possible relationships we can form and the speed at which they can be created or destroyed.”

In the coming years, sales and marketing efforts are going to become more and more



aligned and customer-centric, which will make companies **much stronger at closing deals.**

“Sales data can give marketing insight into customer pain points, which can be preemptively addressed with prospects via awareness campaigns,” Joe Cumello, SVP and CMO for Ciena, [wrote in Fast Company](#) in a July 2022 essay.

“At the same time, marketing data on how a lead has interacted with the brand can give sales a head start on the best approach to engage a particular customer type.”

Consumers Demand More

That alignment of sales and marketing is especially crucial in helping brands establish competitive advantages as consumers [demand even more](#) of the brands they choose to support.

As [Anna Madill](#), CEO of the B-Corp digital marketing agency Avenue, describes it, “Gone are the days of shiny, feel-good ‘cause marketing’ campaigns, now a prerequisite, and here to stay are the days where brands are held accountable to living their values, walking the talk through their actions and committing to purpose-driven impact every single day.”

Madill highlighted three components to building a durable brand promise: values, action and impact.

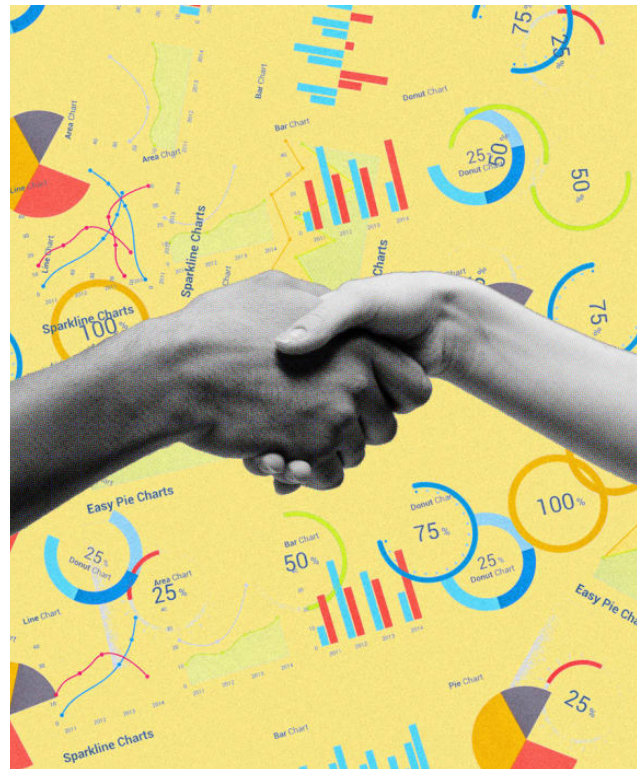
A Level Playing Field

Falling short on one or more basic brand promises can be devastating for companies.

“Consumers react by not buying the product again. They give poor online ratings and tell others about it,” Lytle wrote in “The Potentialist.” “People express dissatisfaction the same way in interpersonal relationships, but we often never know exactly what went wrong.”

Consumers have more and more information at their fingertips. And the availability of information means companies need to keep evolving and fostering their brand.

“The shift of power from brands to consumers, and from uninformed to fully informed, has truly leveled the playing field. What’s changed? Everyone has a voice, and the strongest brands of tomorrow will be



the ones that listen, inspire and engage. The brands that shout the loudest because they have the largest budget will not always be guaranteed success — and to millennials, that seems fair,” marketing guru Jeff Fromm [wrote in an online essay](#).

While loudness can work in getting attention, brand trust and authenticity, fostered by an alignment of sales and marketing, are more effective in keeping attention. Because If you don’t define your company’s brand, others are liable to do it for you. ■

Future B2B Relations Will Require Open Channels

Relationships have always been at the center of B2B sales. Businesses want to partner with companies that share similar values as theirs. Nurturing a B2B relationship requires consistent communication, trust, care and attention. The strongest B2B relationships can last for years and mutually benefit both companies.

While the value of future business relationships will not change, the manner in which those relationships are forged and nurtured will. B2B suppliers of the future will have to employ an omnichannel approach in order to maintain their relationships with customers.

In the future, “relationships will become more important, not less. They will be easier to form with greater numbers of people digitally,” Ben Lytle wrote in his book “The Potentialist: Your Future in the New Reality of the Next Thirty Years.”

Democratization will diminish the barriers of doing business, making B2B buyers more self-reliant.

Channels of Growth

B2B customers are using more and more channels through which to make their buying decisions, and companies that enabled purchases through additional channels have gained market share.

B2B customers are becoming better at understanding their relationship needs. According to a [February 2022 McKinsey study on B2B sales](#), those needs have increasingly centered on *five different factors*:

- 1 Performance guarantee
- 2 Product availability shown online
- 3 Ability to purchase from any channel
- 4 Real-time customer service
- 5 Consistent experience across channels



*“What customers want from omnichannel is more — **more channels, more convenience and a more personalized experience**,” the authors of the McKinsey study wrote. “And if they don’t get what they’re looking for, they’ll take their business elsewhere.”*

From Sales to Sense Makers

That isn't to suggest that business relationships will be replaced by digital sales channels. Future sellers, instead, will need to be positioned not as the source of information, but "sense makers" who help customers make sense of everything they're learning, irrespective of source or channel," Kelly Blum wrote for Gartner in a study about the [future of sales in 2025](#).

That shift is especially important due to the rise in so-called "everywhere customers," of meeting customers where they already are.

"As face-to-face interactions with customers decline, suppliers still need to find ways to influence buying decisions. A good place to start is by understanding the reasons buyers make purchase decisions," Blum wrote.

The next generation of sales could involve commercial hubs connecting sales, tech, data and analytics, with data insights helping to align sales reps where they are needed, and making face time with customers count. ■



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