

# Forbes

December 28, 2016  
Rick Devine  
CEO of TalentSky

## Five Ways The Workplace Will Recognize Real-World Influences in 2017

If I were to sum up everything I have to say about the state of work in 2017 into a single word, it would be engagement. That is, employees' real-world emotions, including the need for validation, connectedness and relevance — and knowledge that they're developing as they go — will have a far greater influence over work performance than factors like compensation, game tables in the break room, or free lunch.

Having spent the last 30 years working in the talent system, I've had unique access to the thought processes and motives of professionals navigating their careers as well as C-level executives and hiring managers navigating their growth and business needs. In both cases, employment decisions are part of a larger strategy, but both parties aren't always working with a shared purpose. Companies, for instance, have gone to great lengths to shield themselves from — or to simply ignore — the real-world human emotions of their workforces. The problem with that is that today's workforce cares more about intrinsic rewards than extrinsic.

Here are five ways the workplace will recognize these influences in 2017.

### 1. There will be more social media-like tools in the workplace.

A new market is emerging to address the fact that most enterprise applications aren't being actively used in the workplace (unless they have to be), but social media tools are being used everywhere. The result will be a proliferation of new consumer-centric technologies reminiscent of the social media platforms employees use habitually in their daily lives. These "for-the-user" products will connect into the enterprise, but will also be portable so that employees can take them with them throughout their careers.

The rise in these new technologies is a reflection of millennials' growing impact on workplace culture. They're faster to adopt new technologies, yes—but beyond that, they simply don't engage if they get bored. To keep them engaged, they must always be learning and focused on forward-looking actions. Smart companies will get proactive about equipping millennials with the tools and opportunities they need to learn, develop their skills, and stay engaged.

### 2. Real-time performance feedback will replace annual reviews.

The workplace is one of the few remaining institutions that places such a great distance between "action" and "reaction"—at least when it comes to performance feedback and reviews. Whereas on social media, you post something one minute and immediately begin receiving feedback the next, in the workplace it's still the norm to let your workforce go an entire year before offering focused feedback on performance.

This is due, in large part, to the static tools we've traditionally used to communicate about and express our work (for instance, the resume or basic online work profiles). But now, thanks to new dynamic networks that adjust in real time to account for new information entered by users, employees finally have a "living" tool for managing — and communicating about — their ongoing development, including the use of new skills and day-to-day accomplishments. This new forward-looking approach leaves little room for backwards-looking annual reviews.

### 3. A move toward a system of skill supply and demand.

Emerging technologies will additionally usher in a culture of real-time "signaling," or the ongoing expression of employees' skills, skill proficiency, and ongoing accomplishments. This is in comparison to the not-so-distant past when the only time employees were motivated to update their career profiles was when they were actively seeking new opportunities.

SOURCE:

[www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2016/12/28/five-ways-the-workplace-will-recognize-real-world-influences-in-2017/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2016/12/28/five-ways-the-workplace-will-recognize-real-world-influences-in-2017/)

# Forbes

Understanding where employees excel and need to grow at any given moment is helpful to employers who are eager to understand how to develop and engage their workforce. It's also helpful to potential employers when looking for new talent. An employee might not necessarily be looking for new opportunities, but might entertain the right one should it find them. The old (or current) approach to sending out signals only when you're actively available leaves too much riding on timing and chance. With ongoing signaling, opportunities will find employees when they're a fit for them.

These career development and growth incentives will inspire employees to send signals about their continued skill development to current and future employers around the clock via regular progress updates. And these updates will further equip employers with real-time data about internal and external talent, which they can use to supercharge talent-related decisions.

#### **4. New skills visibility will fuel innovation.**

This year saw a number of mass layoffs followed by subsequent hiring sprees — two tell-tale signs that a company is in the process of innovating, but without a clear path to staffing that innovation. No one wins when loyal employees are let go instead of re-trained or when companies have to spend millions on recruiting and training. What we've learned from layoffs at companies like IBM, Intel and others in 2016 is that innovation is no longer a novelty; it's here to stay, so we've got to find a better solution for staffing it.

This new solution will stem from increased visibility into employees' skills and opportunities to develop them for evolving demand. In the years leading up to huge direction shifts at companies, management teams will be equipped with the information they need to predict their emerging skills needs in advance and to identify the employees who — with training and guidance — will be able to join the company in its evolution when the time comes.

#### **5. Companies will finally act on low engagement.**

According to Gallup, 52% of U.S. employees are not engaged. Gallup further estimates that the resulting loss in productivity costs the U.S. \$450 to \$550 billion per year. Considering these numbers have been stagnant since 2000, why will 2017 be the year that companies finally do something about engagement?

Organizations now see a potential solution for getting employees to engage with the aforementioned new technologies. Employees' focus on their own development becomes a major form of engagement, which we can measure by the frequency of updates.

As companies begin seeing increased interaction with these technologies, they'll also begin seeing how engagement makes employees feel more connected to their work — and how this results in more success for the company as a whole.

In 2017, leveraging technology to help employees feel more connected to their futures will be the new normal.