



## **Challenges that work will be facing: examples and initiatives that prefigure the future of work**

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Advice to business leaders:

- to become role models (human dignity and the common good)
- principle of subsidiarity
- foster a spirit of initiative, increase the competence of the employees, co creators.

40 to 50 % of the jobs will change in the next five to ten years: need to manage this without making people redundant: strategic workforce planning. Shared in broad terms with the European Works council and then further discussed at the national level (subsidiarity). Training programs have been put in place. We have partnered with Coursera, one of the large MOOC companies and give our employees access to the best global trainings. This is not enough.

New ways of working: more and more working from home, usually up to two days a week. No fixed desk. 0.7 to 0.8 desk per employee. Less opportunities to meet around the coffee machine. Requires better managers who are capable of managing based on objectives and results rather than tight oversight. Again, requires learning of subsidiarity.

More subcontracting and less salaried employees. Means no job protection. After the dissolution of the family ties across three generations, the social bonding provided by the company in which people spent 35 to 40 years is disappearing. The loyalty of the firm to the employees is vanishing and as a counterpart, the loyalty of the employee to the firm goes away, especially for the younger generations which have a different relation to their job.

Technology, smartphones, laptops and tablets mean that the employees are always connected. You need to redefine the rules so that their stress remains manageable and work does not encroach too much into the family life. At AXA I has installed rules called Working better together: no meeting before 9am or after 6pm. No need to answer emails sent during the night or on weekends. Meetings starting and finishing on time and lasting no more than 45 minutes. Presentations sent in advance of the meetings so that most of the meeting time was used for discussion.

The respect of those rules has also been a way to promote diversity: when working hours extend late at night, this puts women at a disadvantage because still now a majority of the caretaking of the children falls upon them.



It is also a way to avoid or limit the risk of burnout. There is a massive increase of psychiatric issues provoked by the current working conditions and we need to be sensitive to this.

I was also mentioning the reduced loyalty of the employees and particularly the younger generations. Most large companies and many smaller ones have embraced the topic of corporate social responsibility. This is becoming a key hiring and retention argument, more so when this is closely aligned with the strategy of the company. At AXA, we say that our noble purpose is to protect our clients to help them live a better life. Because our business is insurance, we have been very vocal on climate change, and acted accordingly. We sold all our investments in coal and oil sands and stopped insuring coal producers and energy producers using more than 30% of coal. Because we are health insurers we also divested from tobacco and stopped insuring tobacco manufacturers. And we are investing in green energy, in promoting safer housing in disaster prone regions, in research on flood forecasting, etc.

One of the challenges of large companies is the creep of bureaucracy, sometimes encouraged by regulation. Therefore we have to promote simplification. How to achieve it in practice ? Simple means fast. We promote fast decision making with deadlines that have to be met. Another challenge is to allow initiatives from the lower level employees to prosper, to allow them to work with startups. This remains a challenge. The pace of adoption of innovation remains disappointing. We have created a startup incubator inside AXA, but its innovations which are developing fast are seen as external by the rest of the company who as reluctant as if they were coming from Mars. We have taken shares in Fintech companies. Same issue.

We also encourage volunteer work by our employees. Our internal NGO AXA Hearts in Action created 25 years ago by Claude Bebear gives financial support to NGOs in the countries in which our employees are volunteers and it provides employees opportunities to give some of their time to the NGOs. 20% of our employees have an engagement in AXA Hearts in Action. We also allow our employees at the beginning of their career, midway through their career or as they approach retirement, to work part time or for 3 to 6 months for an NGO.

But as business leaders, we need to reconcile the fact that we are earning a high income with our individual impact on society. I have launched an initiative “changing by giving” (*changer par le don*) where all the signatories commit to give 10% of their annual income or 10% of their wealth to NGOs, associations and foundations and to get involved personally in these associations and foundations. Because I am convinced that innovations and transformation of society will come as much if not more from non profit initiatives than from the government or for profit corporations.