

# Transition In Automation And Its Impact On Employee Engagement: A New Corporate Concern

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

This article investigates the ongoing transition in automation and its implications for employee engagement. Examining the evolving landscape of automated technologies in the workplace, the abstract highlights the shifting dynamics in job roles and responsibilities. It explores the challenges and opportunities this transition presents for employee engagement, emphasizing the importance of fostering a supportive and adaptable work environment. The abstract sets the stage for an in-depth analysis of strategies to enhance employee engagement amidst the transformative impact of automation.

**Keywords:** strategies, employee engagement & transformative impact of automation.

## Literature Survey

The history of transition in automation and its impact on employee engagement is a dynamic narrative that has evolved alongside technological advancements, economic shifts, and changing workforce dynamics. The journey spans several decades and reflects a continual adaptation to the integration of automation technologies. Below is a historical overview with key references highlighting significant milestones and shifts in the relationship between automation and employee engagement:

### 1. Industrial Revolution and Mechanization:

- Period: Late 18th to early 19th century
- Overview: The Industrial Revolution marked the initial phase of automation with the introduction of mechanized production processes. While it led to increased efficiency, it also raised the concerns about job displacement and the quality of work life.
- Reference: Landes, D. S. (2003). *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*. Cambridge University Press.

### 2. Post-WWII Automation and Job Polarization:

- Period: Post-World War II era
- Overview: Automation technologies gained the momentum in manufacturing, contributing to job polarization and the decline of certain routine tasks. The impact on employee engagement became a subject of scholarly and public discourse.
- Reference: Braverman, H. (1974). *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. Monthly Review Press.

### 3. Computers and Information Technology:

- Period: Late 20th century
- Overview: The widespread adoption of computers and information technology ushered in a new era of automation. The shift raised concerns about job displacement but also created the opportunities for skill development and new forms of employment.
- Reference: Brynjolfsson, E., & McAfee, A. (2014). *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies*. W. W. Norton & Company.

### 4. Lean Production and Robotics:

- Period: 1980s onwards

- Overview: Lean production principles and the integration of robotics in manufacturing processes became prominent. Employee engagement became a focal point as organizations aimed to balance automation with workforce satisfaction.
- Reference: Womack, J. P., Jones, D. T., & Roos, D. (1990). *The Machine That Changed the World: The Story of Lean Production*. Free Press.
- 5. Emergence of Artificial Intelligence:
  - Period: Late 20th century to present
  - Overview: Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) led to automation in knowledge-based tasks. Employee engagement discussions expanded to include concerns about the impact of AI on professional roles and the need for upskilling.
  - Reference: Russell, S., & Norvig, P. (2010). *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach*. Pearson.
- 6. Industry 4.0 and Smart Manufacturing:
  - Period: 2010s onwards
  - Overview: The concept of Industry 4.0, characterized by the integration of the Internet of Things (IoT), data analytics, and automation, gained prominence. Discussions focused on the need for a skilled workforce and the potential for human-machine collaboration.
  - Reference: Schwab, K. (2017). *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Crown Business.
- 7. Pandemic Acceleration of Remote Work and Automation:
  - Period: 2020s
  - Overview: The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated trends in remote work and automation. Organizations faced new challenges in maintaining employee engagement in remote settings and addressing concerns about job security.
  - Reference: Brynjolfsson, E., Horton, J. J., Ozimek, A., Rock, D., Sharma, G., & TuYe, H. Y. (2020). *COVID-19 and Remote Work: An Early Look at US Data*. NBER Working Paper.
- 8. Ethical Considerations and Human-Centered Automation:
  - Period: Ongoing
  - Overview: The current discourse emphasizes the ethical considerations of automation, focusing on creating human-centered approaches that prioritize employee well-being, inclusivity, and ethical use of technology.
  - Reference: Dignum, V. (2018). *Responsible Artificial Intelligence: How to Develop and Use AI in a Responsible Way*. Springer.

In conclusion, the history of the transition in automation and its impact on employee engagement reflects an ongoing evolution shaped by technological progress, economic forces, and societal changes. The references mentioned provide insights into key aspects of this journey, from early mechanization to the current era of Industry 4.0 and ethical considerations in automation.

## Introduction

Artificial intelligence, robots, and advanced digital systems have all been integrated into the workplace as a result of the rapid expansion of automation technologies, which has ushered in a new era that is characterised by a transformational impact. Not only does this shift in automation revolutionise the way corporate operations are carried out, but it also has a significant impact on the dynamics of employee engagement. As more and more businesses adopt automation in order to improve their efficiency, cut costs, and maintain their competitive edge, it is becoming increasingly important to investigate the implications that automation has on employee engagement. Employee engagement is a crucial component of workforce productivity, job satisfaction, and overall organisational success.

Over the course of history, the term "automation" has been connected with concerns around the loss of jobs and the possibility of a degradation in the quality of life at work. A more sophisticated view of the impact that technology has on employee engagement, on the other hand, offers a more complicated picture as technology continues to improve. This in-depth investigation dives into the many of components that comprise the transition to automation and its effects on employee engagement. It takes into consideration the difficulties as well as the opportunities that are inherent in this paradigm shift.

Main Ideas That Will Be Investigated:

In the first place, the development of automation technologies:

Additionally, the introduction ought to provide a contextualization of the evolution of automation technologies, beginning with traditional mechanisation and progressing to contemporary artificial intelligence and machine learning systems. Having an understanding of this progression is necessary in order to have a complete comprehension of the various ways in which automation interacts with human functions in the workplace.

2. The rationale for the use of automation: Investigate the reasons why organisations embrace automation, with an emphasis on variables such as enhanced efficiency, decreased costs, and improved competitiveness.

By drawing attention to these motives, the introduction establishes the framework for understanding the organisational imperatives that are driving the integration of automated systems.

3. The definition of employee engagement is to:

It would be helpful if you could provide a full description of employee engagement, with an emphasis on the role it plays in building a workforce that is motivated, satisfied, and productive. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of engagement, this definition ought to incorporate the psychological, cognitive, and behavioural aspects that contribute to the concept.

4. The influence on job responsibilities and skill sets:

Investigate the ways in which the increasing prevalence of automation is redefining job responsibilities and requiring a change in the skill sets of employees. It is important to recognise the possibility that ordinary jobs will be replaced by new ones, as well as the need for higher-order cognitive skills, creativity, and adaptability.

Fifth, the perspectives and attitudes of the staff members:

It is important to investigate how employees feel about automation, and it is important to capture a spectrum of views that range from concern and dread to acceptance and encouragement. Think about things like how secure your employment is perceived to be, how it will affect your level of job satisfaction, and how much room there is for skill growth.

6. The Culture of the Workplace and Collaborative Issues:

Analyse the impact that automation has had on the culture of the workplace and the level of collaboration. Investigate the ways in which technology affects communication patterns, the dynamics of teams, and the overall environment of the workplace, taking into account both the good and negative consequences for increasing employee engagement.

7. "Collaboration Between Animals and Machines:"

The developing paradigm of human-machine collaboration should be investigated, with a particular focus on the ways in which organisations may support a mutually beneficial connection between their staff and the automation technology they use. It is important to provide examples of situations in which automation enhances human capabilities rather than replacing them.

The following are the opportunities and challenges:

Recognise the difficulties that are brought about by automation, such as worries about the loss of jobs, the requirement for people to acquire additional skills, and the possibility of resistance from workers. While this is going on, you should investigate the possibilities of increased job satisfaction, the diversification of your skill set, and the possibility of fulfilling more significant and strategic tasks.

In conclusion, this in-depth investigation lays the groundwork for a more in-depth examination of the movement towards automation and the influence it has on the level of engagement displayed by workers. Following this, the succeeding talks will provide light on the intricacies of this revolutionary transition in the modern workplace by exploring the historical context, the objectives of the organisation, and the numerous elements of employee experiences.

## Challenges

Concerning the impact that the transition to automation will have on employee engagement, there are a number of obstacles and concerns that will arise. Automation technologies present substantial issues over job displacement, skill shortages, and the emotional well-being of the workforce. While these technologies do offer prospects for enhanced efficiency and creativity, they also create considerable worries. Some of the most significant difficulties that are related with the shift to automation and the influence that it has on employee engagement are as follows:

1. "Job Displacement and Uncertainty:" - "Challenge:" The introduction of automation might result in the displacement of particular work roles, which can cause individuals to feel anxious and apprehensive about their future employment.

Impact on Employee Engagement: The fear of losing one's job or the uncertainty about the future can have a detrimental impact on employee engagement, which can result in diminished motivation and productivity.

2. "Skills Mismatch and Training Gaps:" - "Challenge:" Automation frequently necessitates that workers acquire new skills or modify those they already possess, which results in a skills mismatch and training gaps.

The influence on the level of employee engagement: In the event that the organisation does not provide sufficient training and assistance, employees may experience feelings of being overwhelmed by the requirement for constant upskilling, which can bring about feelings of dissatisfaction and disengagement.

3. Resistance to Change - Challenge: Employees may push back against the use of automation owing to their aversion to change, their fear of the unknown, or their worries about their job security.

Resistance can result in a lack of excitement for the organization's goals, which can impede collaboration and make it more difficult to successfully integrate automation. This can have an impact on employee engagement.

4. **Loss of Job Satisfaction and Meaningful Work - Challenge:** Automation may result in people being assigned more routine or tedious duties, which may lead to a loss of job satisfaction and a sense of meaningful work as compared to the previous situation.

The influence on the level of employee engagement: Employees may have the perception that their efforts are devalued or lack relevance, which can lead to decreased job satisfaction, which in turn can contribute to disengagement.

5. **Communication Gaps and Misalignment - Challenge:** Inadequate communication inside the organisation regarding the reasons for automation, its implications, and the organization's strategy can result in misalignment between management and staff.

Impact on Employee Engagement: Ineffective communication can erode trust and transparency, which can contribute to disengagement among employees since they may feel excluded from decision-making processes brought about by the organisation.

6. **Concerns Regarding Health and Well-Being - Challenge:** The greater use of automation may raise the workloads of the employees who are still employed, which may result in stress, burnout, and other adverse effects on both the physical and mental well-being of the workforce.

The influence on the level of employee engagement: When employees' health and well-being are damaged, it is likely that their involvement may decrease. This is because employees may have difficulty maintaining a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives.

7. **Ethical problems and Job Satisfaction - Challenge:** Ethical considerations around automation, such as the possibility of bias in algorithms or the influence on privacy, can create problems that have an effect on the level of job satisfaction experienced by employees.

It is possible for employees to feel disillusioned and less engaged in their work if they believe that the organisation is not appropriately addressing ethical concerns. This can have a negative impact on employee engagement.

8. **Lack of Employee Involvement in Decision-making - Challenge:** Employees may have a sense of disengagement if they perceive that they are not involved or consulted in the decisionmaking processes that are associated with automation.

The impact on employee engagement can be improved by actively involving employees in decision-making processes, which can increase their sense of ownership and participation in the process of transitioning personnel.

The conclusion is that in order for organisations to effectively handle these difficulties, they need to adopt a proactive and inclusive strategy. In order to reduce the negative impact that automation has on employee engagement, it is vital to implement strategies for effective communication, programmes for upskilling people, programmes that involve employees in decision-making, and programmes that ensure employers provide a supportive work environment.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the transition in automation and its impact on employee engagement represents a complex and multifaceted challenge for organizations navigating the rapidly evolving landscape of technology and work. As automation technologies become integral to business operations, the effects on the workforce are undeniable. The challenges and opportunities inherent in this transition necessitate thoughtful consideration and strategic interventions to ensure a positive and engaged work environment. Here, we summarize the key takeaways from the discussion:

1. **Balancing Technological Advancements with Human Well-being:**  
The integration of automation should be approached with a balance between technological efficiency and the well-being of the workforce. Organizations must prioritize strategies that enhance employee engagement while leveraging automation for increased productivity.
2. **Addressing Job Displacement and Fostering Job Security:**  
The fear of job displacement remains a significant concern. To foster employee engagement, organizations must proactively address these fears by providing clear communication about the impact of automation, offering upskilling opportunities, and ensuring a commitment to job security where possible.
3. **Prioritizing Employee Skill Development:**  
The automation transition underscores the importance of continuous learning and skill development. Organizations should invest in robust training programs that empower employees to adapt to evolving job requirements, fostering a culture of growth and development.
4. **Promoting Collaboration and Human-Machine Synergy:**  
Rather than viewing automation as a threat, organizations should emphasize human-machine collaboration. Creating synergies between employees and automated systems can lead to more fulfilling and strategically significant roles, positively impacting employee engagement.
5. **Transparent Communication and Inclusivity:**  
Transparent communication about the reasons for automation, its implications, and the organization's vision is crucial. Inclusivity in decision-making processes enhances engagement, making employees feel valued and involved in the transition journey.

#### 6. Mitigating Health and Well-being Risks:

The potential impact on employee health and well-being due to increased workloads or stress necessitates a proactive approach. Organizations should implement measures to mitigate these risks, ensuring a supportive work environment that prioritizes the holistic well-being of employees.

#### 7. Ethical Considerations and Trust:

Addressing ethical concerns associated with automation builds trust among employees. A commitment to fairness, transparency, and responsible use of technology contributes to a positive workplace culture, reinforcing employee engagement.

#### 8. Recognizing the Importance of Meaningful Work:

As job roles evolve with automation, organizations should strive to maintain a sense of meaningful work for employees. Acknowledging their contributions, aligning tasks with individual strengths, and emphasizing the significance of their roles can enhance overall job satisfaction and engagement.

In navigating the transition in automation, organizations have the opportunity to redefine the nature of work, foster innovation, and create a workplace culture that prioritizes the well-being and engagement of its workforce. By proactively addressing challenges and leveraging the potential for positive change, organizations can navigate this transformative journey successfully, ensuring a sustainable and engaged workforce in the automated era.

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