



INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript

Welcome to the Inclusive Future of Work podcast, which explores solutions for building a future where all workers have the motivation, means and opportunity to adapt to and thrive in the digital economy.

My name is Francesca Fernandez and in this first episode, we will be sharing a live recording from the Inclusive Future of Work launch event for the St. Louis community, where more than 80 employers, government representatives and community partners from Missouri convened to discuss how to prepare today's existing St. Louis workforce for tomorrow's jobs.

You'll be hearing a fireside chat between Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez, Managing Director of Strategy and Innovation for Accenture Global Corporate Citizenship, and Eva Sage-Gavin, Accenture's Global Lead on Talent & Organization. In this conversation, they cover the context, challenges and – crucially – the solutions for equipping individuals with the skills for lifelong learning-and-employment.

For the last couple of years, reports have been circulating from newsrooms to boardrooms about the projected scale and impact that intelligent technologies – such as Analytics, Big Data, Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) – will have on employment and the future of work.

Employees need to be equipped to step away from roles and activities that can be done by machines and apply their skills in ways that add more value than a machine is capable of at this point in time. And employers need to be able to staff sufficient talent to wield these intelligent technologies to their full potential.

This is where the Inclusive Future of Work comes in, both as a vision and an initiative. The vision is a future where all workers have the motivation, means and opportunity to adapt to and thrive in the digital economy. The initiative is about working towards just that.

INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript - Continued

In this podcast series, we'll be spotlighting pioneers that are not waiting to see what the future will bring – but instead, engaging in it and shaping it today. Hopefully this recording sparks ideas about where in the world you think there is an immediate need to begin working towards an inclusive future of work? And what each of our roles – and yours – might be in building it? Let's dive in!

Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez: Good morning St. Louis.

So, Eva – let's talk about the research, [Inclusive Future of Work: A Call to Action](#). Let me just share that when we created the research, we intended to set this apart in three ways.

First of all, we aimed to shift the conversation from all these scary statistics to talk about solutions, and what really can be done to transition mid-career workers in more routine less-complex roles to thrive in the digital economy.

Second, we framed this research with action pilots. This is a call to action, and we're inviting all of our ecosystem partners to join us in taking bold steps and to try to build this future. We're excited to have our first set of projects being kicked off now in St. Louis and in Tottenham, which is a deprived area of London, with what we call the Envision project – which is a project that helps workers imagine what their futures could hold based upon the strengths and experiences they already have. And the third differentiator here is to write this research from the worker's perspective. We conducted over 60 ethnographic interviews during the course of the research and we continue to do more and more ethnographic research and interviews to this day. So, we really want to design solutions based upon, what are the barriers that workers in the space are really facing and what will really make a difference? So, what's your perspective on what's really novel here?



INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript - Continued

Eva Sage-Gavin: Well, I think, one of the things you said Lisa I want to talk about (and it has come up in the room already this morning), is the idea of recognizing individuals from the voice of all of us doing work and letting or unleashing their potential. We chatted a bit about some of our workforce systems, and I'll speak for a second about persons we've hired. I used to hire about 172,000 of people a year and some of our systems were screened technologically to look at – did the person have a GED? A community college degree? A four-year degree? A PhD, depending on the role? What's awesome about the way we are thinking about the world now in some places where there is low unemployment is: what else does that person have? Technology is giving us a way to think about a set of skills, and so – working in a lot of high velocity industries like retail and consumer businesses – if someone has creative skills, extracurricular activities, outside of work life experiences, we now can see that.

And we can use technology to say, 'this person has six hidden skills, that weren't previously understood and can absolutely prepare them for jobs that we didn't previously consider them. And what I love, the second thing you said Lisa is practical, practical, practical. I'm an operating executive and the reason I'm at Accenture is, we get things done and we help our clients get things done. And so, we can see the patterns: we know that 65% of our first graders will be in jobs that we can't even imagine today. So, it's one thing to see the problem; how are we going to solve the problem? And so, the idea that we will have to have Lower volume of audio when Eva says "Get things done"

INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript - Continued

students who can be lifelong learners, who can be self-enabled, who can come up against opportunity and begin to use technology to open doors and make it an inclusive access. And that's kind of the last point, I'm kind of working my way back, which is this idea of inclusion. I chatted a bit earlier about when you can see data, you can also see people screened in and screened out. And this idea of technology as a positive force. We worked with radiologists in Boston, screening mammograms, and we found that when we gave these great radiologists technology – these are well trained professionals that save people's lives – they could find 130,000 cases that would have been underdiagnosed. Imagine, that you are one of those 130,000 families, who that woman in your family got a diagnosis that didn't catch a problem early enough to have the best possible outcome.

If I'm a radiologist and I now have an enablement – so instead of screening everything, I could screen the high-risk cases and have a really high accuracy rate – how much does that change how I think about my job and saving lives?

Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez: I'd like to push you on this topic just for one moment. If you think about it from that radiologist's perspective, the worker's perspective, and now technology has been brought into my world, and it's showing me things, possibly where I've made a mistake, and I'm interested in your perspective as an HR executive who is trying to perhaps introduce new technologies into the workplace and thinking about this from a worker's perspective, how do we bring technology into the workplace in a way that helps our workers be more productive and not be somehow discouraged by the technology, and not feel like, "Wow, I should have caught that mistake that I didn't," and to feel somewhat discouraged, or the GPS phenomenon that we all have.

INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript - Continued

When we have GPS in our cars, maybe we don't need to learn how to drive around the city anymore because we just follow blindly and we kind of forget/lose that cognitive skill. You talked about cognitive skills earlier. So, how do we introduce these new technologies in a way that accentuates the positive for workers.

Eva Sage-Gavin: You know, we talked about this idea of lifelong learning, but also the idea of self-learning. And, think about – we'll stay with medical for a second and then shift – If you're a brain surgeon, wouldn't it be great to be able to do virtual surgeries before you operate on a human being? Just to increase your confidence, your skill? Earlier this morning someone talked about their early learning was dealing with crisis and having lots of diverse ways to respond. Think about it the same way. A lot of the work we do – I just returned from our innovation lab in Ireland and in Bangalore, and I'm going to use a less scary example than brain surgery, but, anyone know anyone who has a fear of public speaking? Right! ...

Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez: (Lots of hands going up.)

Eva Sage-Gavin: ... From the top three fears in the world, fear of flying, fear of public speaking – we work in a professional setting a lot with people for whom to progress, they have to speak to clients and they have to be really good at it. And if it's their number one fear, and they have an extreme anxiety response, how do you make sure that you help them through that to get to a confidence response, to a competence response, to an expertise response? So, I'll give you a fun example – we tested this with a team of 100 professionals. We gave them a chance to wear wearables that would measure response rates to a speaker. Then we also had the speaker –

Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez: Wearables mean something on your wrist?

INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript - Continued

Eva Sage-Gavin: Wearable on your wrist, so it's checking things like your pulse, your heart rate, and what it's looking for – and some of you may have neuro backgrounds – does this person express physical interest in what the speaker is saying? We did the same thing with the speaker. Right – are they feeling anxiety?

Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez: Were you the speaker?

Eva Sage-Gavin: I was one of the speakers who volunteered, because I wanted to get better. Long, complicated story short – you sit down at the end with our data analysts and you see where the audience was most engaged, where they were least engaged, and you leave that room, and you go into a laboratory and you put on a virtual headset, and you say I want to create an environment. I'm speaking to 100 people on a technical topic, for 40 minutes, and I want to have a 10% improvement in engagement level and my expertise.

And then you practice. Nobody sees your score, the virtual reality is as if each of you were avatars giving me feedback and I've done it three times, and I got better each time.

Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez: That's pretty cool. That reminds me of another product we've created in our Bangalore labs called 'Motion Analytics,' which is for mid-career workers, and it's a 24/7 AI interview prep agent that lets you practice for your interview, giving you feedback. It has emotional intelligence, and voice and facial recognition, giving you feedback about your voice tone, quality, or level of excitement and interest to the listener. So, these are great examples of AI being applied to bring out the full potential of our talent. Let's shift gears here into the real practical, actionable insights topic. And so, what do you think are the really big game changers that will allow us to build life long learning into our workforce at scale?



INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript - Continued

Eva Sage-Gavin: This idea, I think, of technology enablement on both sides – those who need to find great new skills and those who have them but feel they are hidden or overlooked or not valued. And I chatted a bit about living in the real world and saw this in action. If you think about, for example, I worked in the retail industry. A lot of times, we'd be saying, we have technical jobs we can't fill – supply chain jobs, analytics jobs, merchandise analysts, you know, moving goods around the world across 50 countries. And the idea was, well, you have to have a four-year college degree, and you have to have certain badges or pedigrees and that maybe store employees who started in cashier, or fitting room, or stock rooms – probably aren't in the talent pool for that. Well, we tried new things to open up and say, you know, "Emily might be working on her graduate degree, and she has a math undergrad and she's working, you know, part-time on weekends in retail to supplement and pay for her education."

So, opening up these talent pools that might have been dismissed to say, what's that whole person's skill set, where do they exist, how do we match it, without worrying about their credentials and pedigree is the breakthrough. What we found in that example, and I'm talking about a practical example, is we realized we were hiring four-year college degree people who would turnover at 100% within 18 months because the job wasn't aspirational, and it wasn't a good fit. We changed to brand new talent pools, with more high school graduates and community college graduates and some without full graduates who love to do customer service, problem solving, who wanted to be able to better opt into shifts, and turnover dropped dramatically. We went from 210% turnover to 55% turnover in 24 months. Starbucks is testing, where some people may have had challenges in their youth, and they've released the credential that says if you have had any kind of a felony, that you are no longer screened out to be a Starbucks Barista.

INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript - Continued

So, brand new ways to think of the talent that is right in our community that we might have been screening out because we were looking at badging pedigrees and other stop signs that we don't look at today, in some of the most progressive companies.

Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez: So, let's say I'm trying to find hidden talent. I'm an HR Director for a small or a large organization. What is really hard about that? You know, we talk about screening for potential over pedigree but maybe that's not done all the time. So, I'd love it if you could share with us what's really hard about doing that at scale and at speed, and if you had three pieces of advice for an HR director, what would be those three things that would help you make a difference?

Eva Sage-Gavin: Well, one of them is in the room today, and it's community partnerships. You don't have to solve this problem alone.

So, last night we had a dinner with various leaders. So, people who are hiring at scale for multiple industries. We have people here who are experts in workforce development, who are helping prepare the workforce. And then we have people who are trying to open up new channels of access that might have been closed. The reality is, just take for a second, you are an HR professional, you have 100,000 open jobs, and your days open is starting to be 200 days. The shareholder pressure for jobs that are unfilled at any point, create a competitive disadvantage and you can't grow. So, I recently left a CIO convening in New York, and CIOs got up and I actually felt like they were all Chief HR Officers. They were like, "I could get capital, I could get equipment, I could get investments, I can't fill the jobs." And our colleague that just talked about cyber security: 1.5 million jobs, 10,000 people trained. So, the coolest thing that I think is happening, this is why I'm so excited about this research, is we sometimes don't look at the people we have.

INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript - Continued

And, so, just going back to say “Okay, look I had 340,000 people at Gap, my number one mission was what’s all the potential in the people we already have, who show up every day, that work really hard, that maybe have hidden talents that we’re not fully appreciating. And, giving them full access and then saying if you want access to learning and opportunity, how do we open the door to things like an open bidding marketplace?” Last night, I don’t want to share anything the person wouldn’t share, but they talked about they’ve increased their capacity so much by letting people train against areas of their opportunity, they now have excess skill, and they’re starting to stand up on bidding offers within the firm where you can go on a 6-week special project to solve a really hard company problem. That’s been so successful, they’re now creating consulting squads, who are now saying we have this really serious customer issue over here, we have this serious supply chain issue. And you can bid to go work on that and show your newly trained skill.

In retail we used to call it shopping your own closet. Know what you have, that’s great, value it, and then leverage it. Don’t just always be focusing on “I’m going to exit people and hire people.” How about if we keep the people we have and unleash their potential. So, that’s what I’m most excited about.

Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez: We’re going to ask for one question from the audience.

Audience member: Okay, well, what effect could you do to find that hidden talent since the world is going online? I think those hidden talents are going to continue to remain until there is a competitive product that shines light, and that would be a great product I think that could be a moneymaker.

Eva Sage-Gavin: Thanks for your passion around giving people an opportunity, not just putting them in a box. Leaving the CIO conference, one of the things that’s changing is the idea of in these talent constraint areas, making it fun.



INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK

PODCAST EPISODE ONE – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH EVA SAGE-GAVIN

Podcast Transcript - Continued

Online applications for most employers are not fun. What CIOs are finding and IT professionals with Topcoder and Hackerrank is gamification. And you get to exhibit your real live raw skills with no pedigree or badging about problem solving, and the more you solve the problem, the higher problem you get. It also allows you, if you think you have an applicant who looks strong, maybe they have all the right words, to put them through it and see where they really are. So, you're hiring them against current skill level but you're getting a good sense of if they need training in other areas. So, a lot of the ideas of what we use in consumerism right now, like we're all really impatient, right, our average drop time on a website is 27 seconds – if we don't get what we want in a response as a consumer. We're finding the same thing with our high demand skills and our high demand adult learners. If they're not seeing immediate results, and they feel like a company is stretching to meet them, they're moving on.

So, we talked a lot about people who are seeking opportunities – there are people who have many opportunities, who are very choosy. And the minute they feel they're not valued, and not being developed, they move on. So, watch, keep an eye on brand new ways to engage in gamification and have fun with learning and screening.

Lisa Neuberger-Fernandez: Thank you very much for joining me today and to everyone for listening in.

Eva Sage-Gavin: Thank you.

Hopefully you enjoyed that fireside chat, and that it offered a sense of what it was like to be in the room for that St. Louis launch, among pioneers and changemakers, all working to build an inclusive future of work. And going back to the questions I asked earlier: if this has sparked any ideas of where and how *you think* there is opportunity to co-create an inclusive future of work, we would love to hear from you. That's all for this episode, thank you for listening and catch you next time!