

The ever-changing new world.

When I started my own company about four years, I was at the time fascinated by the phrase “knowledge Economy”. It was my Fascination with this concept that led me to choose as my official title, CEO/Chief Learner. I believe now as I have since then believed that the future is for those who identify the right knowledge and seek it with all the possible resources they could find.

I have been a voracious leader as far back as I can remember; but up until the past couple of years, I generally read anything that I came by. As such, it is difficult for me to pinpoint what influenced my habits and my fascinations. However, I remember that when it came time to choose subjects to study in senior secondary school, my father, who is a lawyer, had only one compulsory recommendation: you must choose Literature-in-English and not Geography which was the alternative option chosen by most Science students. His excuse was usually that someone somehow had to read the many collections of books he had acquired as a lawyer. This was perhaps the best thing I was ever compelled to do, as even though I went ahead to study Electronics Engineering in the University, I loved Literature more than any other thing I was ever required to study in school. For this particular reason, I consider my father the first and best manager I ever had.

When It came time for me to find my own path through entrepreneurship, I only knew one direction to go, and that was, to read everything I could find relevant to running a business. I am not surprised then that in the bid to write this essay, I sought to read new things, so I chose articles written about Peter Drucker; instead of re-reading his books I had previously read. As I read through many articles, I saw thing I had so internalised as my own concepts that he was credited as pioneering and I am not

sure if it was in his works I encountered these concepts first or I actually thought them up on my own.

As I couldn't decide what I learnt from him and what I deciphered on my own, I decided to write this essay strictly based on what I believe is the future, not minding if he had already predicted it; or as Peter Drucker would prefer; Looked out the window and seen the future that had already happened. My efforts here are like that of a grass below a mighty tree, trying to cast its own distinct little grass shadows; so, for want of the right spot to stand, let me attempt anyways.

Profound and fundamental changes are happening across all aspects of human endeavour, courtesy of the extraordinary pace of advancements in digital technology. Most human roles appear to be under threat; or more appropriately, are being revealed to not be complicated enough for humans to remain the most suitable to continue doing them. Displacement is happening and will continue to happen massively for the foreseeable future in all areas which does not benefit most from unique human roles.

In regards to the current waves of change, management is not only affected but uniquely so. In an Instagram post from CNBC, I read a quote attributed to Peter Drucker that goes as follows: "management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things" I may have seen this quote elsewhere written as; "Efficiency is doing things right," "Effectiveness is doing the right things" but the one from CNBC serves my fancy better. If you dig this point of view deeply you may begin to recognise lots of practices in management which are essentially mechanistic. With this realisation, we should then not be surprised to know that robots, being themselves particularly

mechanistic in nature, would soon outperform us in many known aspects of management as it is presently constituted.

An endless spectrum of factors dictates human actions; whereas, robots function according to specific algorithms. Current Management knowledge, principles and frameworks would be repurposed as algorithms and inputs which in seeking to answer management questions of how, what and why, will be further reformed by artificial intelligence, to serve its own purposes better. In essence, both the data and the query would cooperate as essential inputs, to make the AI outputs better.

The roles humans will play as robots take over many current human roles, has to be essentially organic. In our organic nature lies our greatest strengths. For us to remain appropriately relevant in the future of work, we must design roles which leverage our organic nature the most. The values we will provide will depend on how well we are able to bring into play uniquely organic inputs. Despite all the various scenarios algorithms can consider and apply in its analysis, there would always be unique points of view only humans would be capable of considering. These types of viewpoints would be those that are rooted in human emotions, compassions, feelings, sensitivities and impulses that algorithms cannot precisely predict or approximate.

It is important to note that in the age of AI we will have also, the knowledge economy. The implications would include that the most important things management must continue doing would be to learn, unlearn and relearn. As such, the best pursuit of management, and indeed all aspects of human leadership, would be to identify all unique human inputs, and deploy all necessary resources towards learning how best to utilise them.

In the study of digital technology, it is known that the end of digital is analogue. This conclusion is informed by the fact that all digital systems are founded from first principle, on the logic of Boolean algebra. This Boolean logic essentially is a method of mathematical analysis and solution based on the closest approximation to the only two obtainable distinct values of 1 and 0. This need for approximation constitutes a limitation. Human beings on the other hand, are designed as analogue beings. We are therefore in the best sense of it, the perfect machines. True singularity in intelligence would only be achieved when we have super intelligent robots that are built using the real fundamentals of analogue systems, which is best represented as an infinite sine wave. The human system rather than approximate, takes into consideration all possible conditions as they are, without approximating to conform with any known logic.

Sir Kenny Robinson, in one of his famous TED talks on education, said: "The role of leadership in education at all levels, is not and should not be command and control. The role of leadership should be climate control. Create a climate of possibilities and if you do that, people will rise to it and achieve things that you completely did not anticipate and couldn't have imagined." For so many reasons, I find this line of thought particularly appealing as we try to foresee the role of humans in the future of management. Managements role would be same as suggested above for the role of leadership in education. Management must reinvent itself to become a type of climate control mechanism fashioned for the purpose of creating the most suitable environment for learning to take place. To this extent, human centred management would mean creating the climate for human centred learning. By human centred learning here, I mean such learnings that explores the vast spectrum of human

abilities to determine and focus on building human capacities in management areas that are uniquely best suited for humans to stay in charge of.

We must not take for granted that management itself is not a given. Within the right climate, management as we know it can be transformed and new disciplines and methods evolved to stand in its place. Such a climate, is just one possible scenario in the sea of possibilities that AI will create in the future. Roles would change for humans as well as purpose; and what would emerge would be profound and possibly as of now, unimaginable.

We must actively seek ways to rightly hand off such roles that robots prove to be better at performing. We need not be in charge where robots can better be. Hard as it might be for us to make the shift and trust robots to take over, it is a task that must be done. In reality, we won't just be moving over to let robots do our jobs; rather, we will be giving robots these jobs, so we can go perform those other roles which we are better at than the robots. The conditions – options, opportunities and possibilities we will have due to the advancement of robots, would create the right climate which we will rise to and do things we have not yet thought possible and cannot now clearly expect.

Using unique, sometimes similar but never identical strokes, the abstract painter creates his work with purpose, and with a vision of the final output in mind. Though the input and output process would not be repeatable or reproducible with exact precision, like copy and paste in digital systems; this is the very fact that gives human handmade art works their custom uniqueness value. The imperfections as it were, of the human input is valued for its uniqueness. This is the essence of the

practical impreciseness allowed in the analogue system that humans are. This very nature, informed by our peculiar imaginations, creativity, empathy, emotions and a host of other unique unreproducible attribute will define the value humans will provide in the age of robots.

In a 1998 interview of Peter Drucker at his home by the writer Harriet Rubin for *Inc.*, he showed her this passage from a book on Japanese art: *"The Zen-inspired painter seeks the 'truth' of a landscape, like that of religion, in sudden enlightenment. This allows no time for careful detailed draftsmanship. After long contemplation, he is expected to be able to seize inner truth in a swordlike stroke of the brush...."*

In a somewhat similar vein, I predict that the role managers will play in the age of robots would tend towards something like what the custom handmade painter does. As such, the worth of the value managers would create would be similarly measured and evaluated as custom made paintings are. The quality of the managers contributions to stay current, appealing and relevant to unique human abilities would determine how their performance would prove valuable.

With knowledge advancing at an unprecedented pace in the age of robots, humans must fashion ways to learn at an equally unprecedented pace. I foresee in all this that the robots themselves will be of great help in our effort to figure out ways to stay ahead of them. We will make them show us their weaknesses, and we will rightly capitalise on them and build strength where they cannot be strengthened enough to displace us.

The machine intelligence would be a tool like other innovations before it. It would aid humans and give them better vantage positions to apply their intelligence.

I would want to say that the platforms of today will become the channels of tomorrow; yet my meaning here is not in terms of a change of nature, rather, it is a change of metaphor. As platforms are for frameworks, channels would be for fluidity. The managers of tomorrow would not be acting on platforms or within frameworks, they would be navigating on a sea of possibilities within the channels of their imaginations and creativity. This sea of possibility created by AI will be fluid and in continuous motion; so, the manager must be an adept sailor with the confidence of a custom paint artist, and must sail his organisation to a desirable destination, guided by his unique human attributes and aided by AI.

At the point when the elixir of AI shall completely transform our roles today as managers, we would not find a place for such questions as whether management should be human centred. The contexts may evolve and both the roles and players change, yet everything would remain about humans. This is in my opinion the real essence of human centred management. This management approach championed by Peter Drucker would be put to question as much as we would put to question whether an artwork made by an artist with a physical brush and that made with a digital brush are both human made artworks. If we recognise AI as a tool which it is; albeit an advanced and remarkable one, we can more clearly see how things would change and yet remain the same.

If we recognise the attributes of our analogue and organic nature and design new roles which are most suitable for these and other unique abilities we will always possess, we must necessarily remain in charge and continue to navigate the future towards our best interests.

It is a remarkable and beautiful thing to live in this age of transformation. Many things which previously appeared as givens are now being shown to be just imperfect models that must evolve or go extinct. Today we see a lot of things we were previously inclined to take for granted, become things we must look at carefully and critically and ask ourselves the implications of their existence in the future. Knowledges and authorities held as complete truths are being debunked by revelations from AI. These are wonderful times. We should engage it and find out all we can as we go along. Our future depends on how we manage this change or better still, how management advances itself with this change.

The new world is just around the corner. Like change, it is coming and will continue to come. There is no end to change, just like there is no end to human imaginations and possibilities. Human possibilities are limited only by human imaginations which is itself infinite.