RSI
RETHINK
SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES



SUMMARY REPORT | 2024

The Future of Work & Education is now and changing fast!

Are you ready?

"Working together, we could reduce energy consumption in our buildings by 50 per cent."

– Peter Love, President of Love Energy Consultants



FUTURES*ACTION*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report Team

Chief Strategist
Yasmin Glanville

Writers & Editors:
Madelyn Webb
David Gargaro

Contributors
Jennifer Knight
Chun Liang
Eliza van Weerdhuizen

Designer:
Lisa Killin

PART I:
Setting the Stage 4

PART II:
Connecting the Dots 5

PART III:
Harnessing Culture as a Superpower! 7

PART IV:
Future-Ready Skills and Jobs Needed Now! 11

PART V:
Future of Work 17

PART VI:
Future of Education, Talent, and Partnerships 20

PART VII:
Future-Fit Housing for Learning Communities 25

PART VIII:
Bringing It Together: Key Insights for Action 28

PART IX:
RSI FuturesAction Partners & Sponsors 31

PART X:
Visual Highlights and Contact Information 32

PART I:

SETTING THE STAGE - FOR A FUTURE FORWARD PATH



On June 11, 2024, RSI held its third event in the 2024 Futures Action series—The Future of Work and Education—hosted by and in partnership with George Brown College at their Waterfront Campus at 51 Dockside Drive in Toronto.

Catalyzed by industry-recognized speakers—leaders and experts from forward-thinking organizations in the fields of technology, AI, real estate, construction, energy, architecture, sustainability, education, and strategic foresight—everyone participated in a dynamic discovery of what to expect and how to reshape the future of work and education in Canada. They addressed:

- Converging disruptions (e.g., social, technological, environmental, economic, geopolitical) impacting traditional definitions of buildings and spaces for work, education, and living
- Pragmatic strategies and solutions that are being used now as a competitive advantage for creating future-ready work, talent, and education; this includes adapting buildings, spaces, and practices to help organizations thrive in the new realities of our fast-changing, multi-generational and hybrid workforce
- Proven concrete innovation accelerators, case studies, and projects
- How to bring it all together in action

The group of 120 attendees represented diverse and broad perspectives: post-secondary institutions, tech corporations, AI and smart-tech experts, CRE and multi-residential developers, REITs, constructors, energy producers and distributors, professional services (e.g., engineering, climate-positive energy, architecture, urban planning, HR), financial services, and next-generation leaders (students).

Darla Campbell, RSI Board Director and past Chair, welcomed everyone and set the stage for a meaningful, action-focused conversation about different ways of future-proofing work, talent, and education as a competitive and sustainable advantage for Canada. To make it more personal, she invited the audience to take a few moments to think about their future potential and what best describes their persona:

"Are you a leader, storyteller, hero, warrior or some combination of these traits and attributes?"

Michelle McCollum, Vice President, Facilities and Sustainability at George Brown College, invited everyone to take a few moments to quietly listen as she read the land acknowledgment. She thanked RSI for this partnership and opportunity to host the forum at George Brown Waterfront Campus, the only downtown college in Toronto. As a preamble to her presentation on Future-Fit Housing for Learning Communities, she highlighted the interconnectedness of education and solutions to the growing housing crisis facing Canadians including students.

Land acknowledgment: We are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy peoples. This land is home to many diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.





PART II:

CONNECTING THE DOTS



Herbert Sinnock

Sheridan College

For contextual continuity, Herbert Sinnock, Director of Sustainability at Sheridan College Oakville, presented key takeaways for action from the 2024 Future of Buildings & the Built Environment and Climate & Energy, and how they connect with work, talent, and education for building the required capabilities for mobilizing future-proofing recommendations.

Sinnock emphasized, *"We need right-fit talent, skills, mindset, and capacity to meet the escalating challenges of climate change impacting the built environment and society at large."*

He reinforced the need to rethink buildings as integrated living ecosystems versus isolated assets. We must invest in net zero and climate adaptation solutions, as well as effective climate education and communications. Sinnock also recommended emphasizing sustainability in institutional and corporate education, simplifying decarbonization solutions, and fostering public-private partnerships.



Future of Buildings & The Built Environment



ACCELERATE EVERYTHING

- VISTA: Vision for Integrated, Sustainable, Transit-Oriented Areas
- City planners for “neighbourhoods”, not islands
- Eliminate “employment zones”
- Mid-rise buildings along all major streets
- Permanent shift – massive incentives for carbon reduction

RETHINK AND REDO

- Buildings & communities as integrated living ecosystems
- Innovative construction materials and energy to advance net-zero carbon
- Industry partnerships & consortiums to transform fast
- Design and development by people for people
- Smart-tech communities, improved sustainability, occupant well-being

Future of Climate & Energy in the Built Environment



MOBILIZE NET-ZERO CARBON & CLIMATE-POSITIVE ENERGY

- Invest in net zero and climate adaptation solutions at scale
- Overcome bureaucratic and technological barriers to enhance green building resilience, communication, and policy implementation
- Effective climate education and communications
- Break through the status quo; embrace change + young change agents
- Integrate sustainability more deeply into education while simplifying decarbonization solutions and fostering public-private partnerships



PART III:

HARNESSING CULTURE AS A SUPERPOWER!



Yasmin Glanville

CEO, Futurist and Chief Strategist, CTR Inc. (Founder & Director, RSI)

This interactive talk set the stage for a complex challenge: how to create a better world of work, education, and life that drives higher productivity, greater engagement, and higher retention of key stakeholders. These stakeholders include employees, gig workers, customers, building tenants, strategic partners, and local communities.

Why culture? Culture underlies everything we do as individuals and as groups. Catalyzed by the escalating ***impacts of the pandemic, AI, cybersecurity, demographic shifts, climate change, and other converging disruptions to traditional business, work, education, and living,*** the world has changed too much to go back to "normal." So, what is the new "normal"? What is the greatest challenge and opportunity? How can leaders transform and harness culture as a superpower to build and strengthen relationships with workers, customers, and strategic partners as an evolving competitive advantage?

Everyone everywhere is affected by a tsunami of converging shock waves impacting people. Our planet, our economy, and the future of work education and built environment.

Tsunami of Converging SHOCK WAVES & Impacts

People. Planet. Economy + Future of Work, Education, Built Environment,

COVID. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. CLIMATE CHANGE. Technology. Digitization. Extreme Weather. **Power Outages.** Food Insecurity. **Affordable HOUSING SHORTAGES,** Skill Gaps (Trades), Demographic shifts. **ECONOMIC VOLATILITY. CYBERSECURITY. GEO-POLITICAL disruptions.** Rise in Cost of living. **Social Unrest. CULTURAL COLLISIONS…**



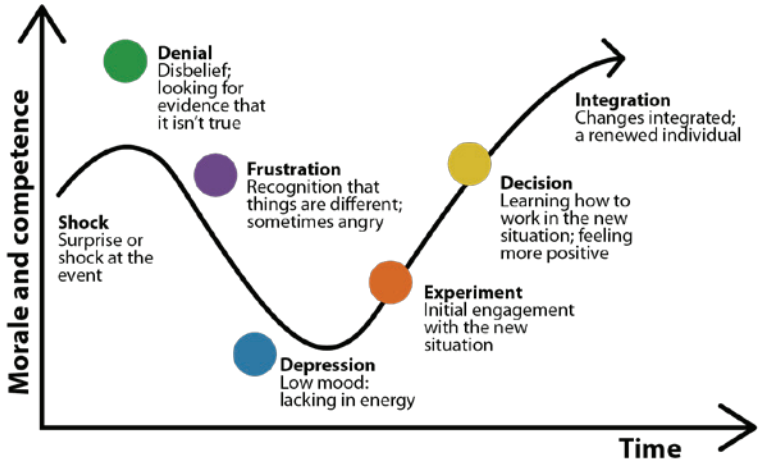


The scale, speed, and impact of these and other converging forces can be so overwhelming that it shocks our "normal reality," often resulting in denial, shutdown or numbness.

As shown in the illustration below (adapted from Dr. Kubler-Ross' change model), the normal human response to any sudden or unexplainable event is shock, followed by denial, frustration, and low energy, especially to events of the magnitude of the pandemic, city-wide extreme weather, mass job layoffs, etc. To transition out of that initial phase, we need to understand the "shock causing events and explore, with others, how to adapt, renormalize, and thrive!"

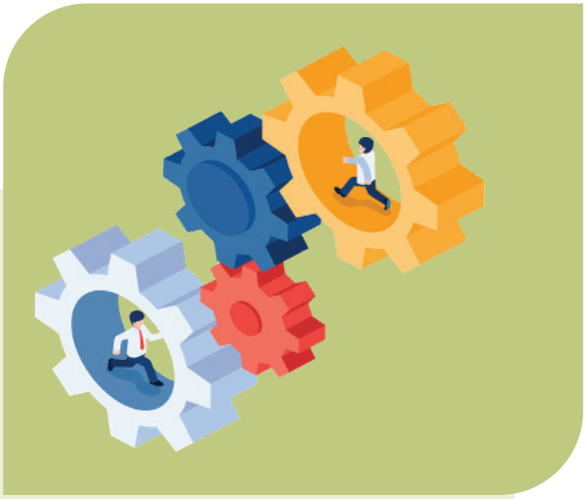
Shock Recovery Curve (adapted from Kubler-Ross)

Shock – Transition - "Renormalizing"



SO, WHERE ARE WE NOW? THE GREAT SHIFT!

Simply put, employees across all generations—especially Millennials—have shifted from a corporate or work-central existence to a life-first or person-centred culture nationwide.



Work-Central to Life-First Culture Examples:

- "Blended" life-first work and learning
- Growing concern for environmental, social and sustainability issues, affordable housing, and climate change
- Reprioritization of family, personal values, wellness, prosperity, and community



Converging Trends Accelerating the New People-Centred Culture

Hybridization is the new norm. Since the pandemic, people are increasingly comfortable working and learning remotely, especially with the advancement of tech-powered tools, platforms, and programs (Google Meet, Zoom, Teams, Slack, etc.) that enable real-time meetings, collaboration, and individual learning. Unless the "job" requires working on-site to deliver specific types of services, such as in the healthcare, food and hospitality, construction, and manufacturing industries, most employers have shifted to a hybrid, blended work and learning community model as the accepted new norm. In kind, companies have designed, or are planning to redesign, traditional offices into blended work-learn and social spaces. This is further explained by TELUS and Gensler in Part V on the Future of Work.

A four-generation workforce. For the first time in contemporary history, there are four generations in the workforce—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and the first wave of Generation Z—with vastly different expectations . With employees ranging in age from late teens to 70s, businesses must tailor management styles to a multi-generational workforce. Eddy Ng, professor and F.C. Manning Chair in Economics and Business at Dalhousie University's Rowe School of Business in Halifax, says,

"This can become a contentious issue when you have four generations at work with different value sets and expectations of each other. It makes it a bit more challenging for managers to handle."[1]

Ng adds that Boomers wrote most company policies to reflect their own work style—a standard day at the office featuring plenty of face time. That conflicts with what works for Millennials and Gen Zs who want more flexible work arrangements and people-centred culture for work and learning.

([1]Source: cbc.ca)



Three ways Artificial Intelligence will Change the Future of Work

1. AI will drive job creation.

Surveyed businesses expect AI to be a net job creator in the coming five years. Nearly half (49%) expect adopting AI will create jobs; 23% of respondents expect it to displace jobs. AI-linked roles such as data scientists, big data specialists, and business intelligence analysts are expected to swell by 30-35%. Employment gains are expected to be strongest in the automotive and aerospace industry, where 73% expect employment gains; the electronics sector follows closely behind. Workers in the oil and gas, real estate, media, entertainment and sports, and production of consumer goods industries predict a negative outlook regarding AI's impact on employment.

2. Businesses will prioritize AI skills.

AI and big data are the number one skills priority for companies with more than 50,000 employees. AI education and skills training will be key to making sure everyone is swept along by the wave of increased productivity.

3. Tasks will be augmented, not automated, by AI.

A growing consensus: AI will augment human performance rather than fully supplant it. Information gathering and simple decision-making are likely to be fully automated.

(Excerpts from 2023 World Economic Forum)





Artificial intelligence (AI) will revolutionize the future of work. Since ChatGPT burst onto the scene in November 2022, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has come to dominate the business agenda. But AI is more than ChatGPT. It is rapidly evolving and being applied to a variety of traditional people-powered jobs across several verticals: entertainment, manufacturing, transportation, oil and gas, construction, professional services, etc. A recent 2024 Gallup poll predicted that by 2030, 25% of today's jobs will be replaced by AI. Other impacts of AI on jobs are captured in a 2023 World Economic Forum (WEF) report on the Future of Work[2] The following report excerpts feature three specific ways that AI will change the future of work and education, briefly captured below on the Future of Work.

ESG, climate change action, and decarbonization. In Canada, these issues are driven by the common goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 to strengthen and build on existing measures that fight climate change, transform the economy, and avert the worst impacts of climate change.[3]

Additional changes impacting work and learning include digitization, power shifts from top-down command control, blended buildings and community ecosystems, and manager to coach hybrid teams on strengths beyond just the job.



Optimizing the Culture Shift

People-centred work, talent, education, and living ecosystems

- **Connect the Dots:** Take the time to understand the unique challenges, opportunities, and impacts on today's four-generational work and education culture
- Explore alternative future scenarios and approaches
- Invest in future-ready solutions that can be financed, piloted, and scaled
- Think people, planet, and prosperity!
- Narrow the focus to what's doable
- Create alignment with key stakeholders: employees, contractors, partners, and customers
- Maximize communication and education

To learn more about this culture-shifting topic, contact the author directly at: ***yasmin@ctr.ca.***

1. With 4 generations in the workplace, employers expected to juggle vastly different expectations (cbc.ca)

2. AI: 3 ways artificial intelligence will change the future of work | World Economic Forum (weforum.org)

3. Net-zero emissions by 2050 - Canada.ca



PART IV:

FUTURE-READY SKILLS AND JOBS NEEDED NOW!

IMPACT OF AI, CLIMATE, AND ENERGY



Dr. Cindy Gordon
CEO and Founder
SalesChoice Inc.



Peter Love
President, Love Energy Consultants, and Chair of the Toronto 2030 District, and CCET (Founding RSI Director)

The common focus of both experts is the impact of AI, climate, and energy on future skills and jobs needed now to accelerate the transition to a net-zero carbon, healthy, and thriving future for business and society.

A summary of their respective insights is captured in this section.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: Future of Work

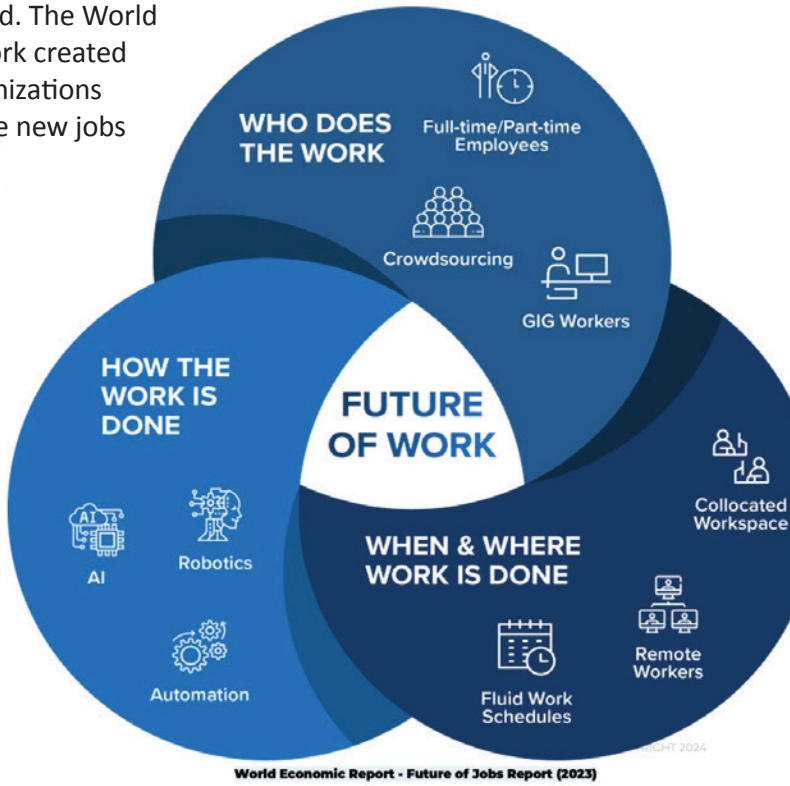
BY DR. CINDY GORDON, ICD.D., CEO, SALESCHOICE INC.

AI has huge implications for how we're teaching our children, how we're leading our organizations, and how we look ahead. The World Economic Forum's research report on the Future of Work created a framework with three dimensions to help guide organizations to plan for the new skills required and to identify where new jobs involving technological advancements will be required.

> Our Future of Work is heavily impacted by AI, Robotics, digital nomads and more high comfort work places.

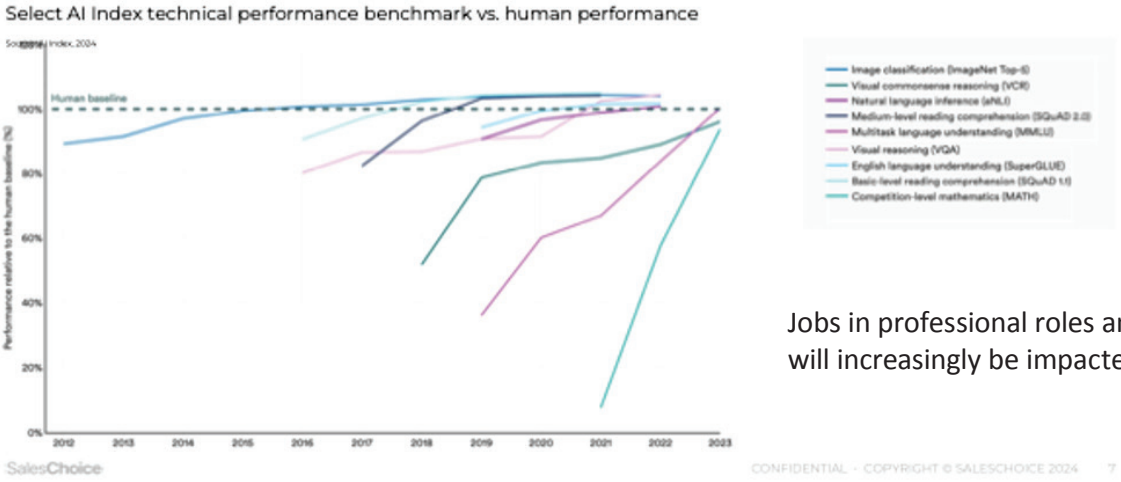
THE THREE DIMENSIONS INVOLVE UNDERSTANDING:

1. Who is doing the work
2. How the work is done
3. When and where the work is done



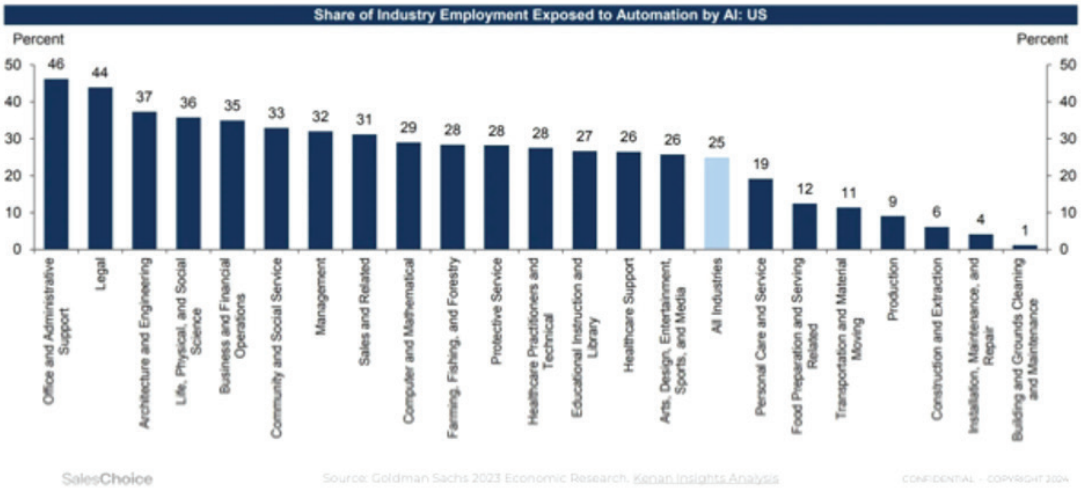
World Economic Report - Future of Jobs Report (2023)

AI is surpassing human intelligence



Jobs in professional roles and women will increasingly be impacted by AI.

25% of job tasks will be impacted by AI, or displaced and 21% more women will be impacted



The growth of robots needs to be understood. As most of you know, robots are adept at jobs involving routine tasks. They will take over clerical and administrative jobs, as well as jobs involving computers and technology. But they will go beyond that. Robots are being trained to understand human emotions and read body language; we already know about deep fakes made possible by imitating human voices. These developments will result in an explosion of virtual avatars.

More than 800 million jobs are estimated to be lost in less than ten years. This is the cultural shock I want everybody to understand. You have to prepare now.





One area of interest is the growth in robotics, in particular friendly CoBots. Right now, the industry has about 14 billion. It's projected to reach well over 55 billion by 2050. In Asia, research and development is going on in dentistry; imagine having your teeth cleaned by a friendly CoBot that also speaks to you. We also have research on augmenting nursing roles, such as Nurse Grace from Hanson Robotics.

China and Japan are at the forefront of robot technology. They have a vision for retail lights out (full automation), which has been adopted by the China Construction Bank. Robots run it; there are no humans. The only way to speak to a human is to have over $1 million in your bank account, and then you can only talk on the phone.

Another development is a robot for children. Hanson Robotics has Little Sophia, who will help educate your children on science-related learning needs. And she can walk and talk. You can ask her questions in the science and mathematics domain. This little bot will know what is in every university book. Our world of education will be turned upside down.

The Cybersecurity Aspect

First of all, there are a few stats that are important to internalize. 2015 doesn't seem that long ago. At that time, only 2 billion people had accessed the internet. In 2020, about 56% of the global population has Internet access. In the next three years, we should reach 80%. And by 2030, we'll be over 95% of the global population with access to the internet.

We're not thinking enough about the dark web and its implications. Now, on the bright side, anybody that goes into cybersecurity will be in demand. George Brown College has a program to accelerate learning for people who want jobs. Cybersecurity will be one of the top job areas for recruiting.

But sustainability specialists are number two for job growth right now, ranked globally. It’s important to know about this balancing dynamic. The largest employment gains involve heavy truck and bus drivers. We must move goods. We have a supply-chain-driven, economic infrastructure.

As we look ahead as leaders, we must lead with more corporate purpose. I recently wrote a research paper with Dr. Sara Diamond on “Corporate Purpose and Technology”; it can be found here: *https://navltd.com/insights/ccpc/putting-corporate-purpose-at-the-core-of-technology-decisions*

I have come to the following conclusion about advancing modernized technology, building AI software products, and commercializing them:

“The most important message I have related to education is that the foundation of learning has to be totally values-based. We have got to teach value-centric leadership starting in Junior Kindergarten.”



We must ensure that humans are at the heart of our solution designs. We must integrate corporate purpose very carefully into work practices. We need to develop stronger regulatory and risk management frameworks and laws to help govern AI in the world.

In summary, every leader or parent must ensure we do not lose our creative and critical thinking skills. We must increase our skills in emotional intelligence, empathy, holistic thinking, and analytics.

Understanding how to interact with chatbots means you have an infinite number of questions to explore because bots learn an infinite number of possibilities. Those who get excited when they get one response are not your leaders. Smart leaders will know it takes multiple probes in different directions to get a more accurate response.

Looking ahead, we must proactively prepare for the future of work and education, as changes are happening faster than ever. What we learn quickly becomes obsolete. And not in days, but sometimes in seconds.

So, we must be wired to always be learning, which is our best strategy as humans to remain relevant.

We must understand we are entering a new world where we must answer the question of what it means to be a human. We must then decide how far we plan to advance technology that could actually harm humans.



You can reach Dr. Cindy Gordon, CEO, SalesChoice, at cindy@saleschoice.com. You can also visit ***www.saleschoice.com*** to learn more about their research and proven SaaS innovations advancing AI in sales and employee engagement offerings.

Key Issues, Trends, and Actionable Solutions Impacting Future Jobs in Cleantech

by Peter Love



There is a growing consensus in Canada that actions must be taken to address the worsening impacts of climate change.

More than two-thirds of Canadians agreed that Canada will continue to grapple with extreme weather events and 62% agreed there is a need to tackle climate change[1]. There are two critical numbers that are key to addressing climate change: 82% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions (which are the main drivers of climate change) are from the production and use of energy[2] and Canada currently loses more that 60% of its primary energy in conversion losses[3].

It is estimated there are about 400,000 Canadians currently working in the environment/cleantech sectors with 22% in utilities, 19% engineering, 15% service, and 12% manufacturing[6]. A recent study found that this could increase more than seven times to three million by 2050[6]. Interestingly, 56% of Canadians believe that addressing climate change will result in job creation[7].

A more detailed assessment of the employment potential within just the energy efficiency portion of the environment/cleantech sector found that under an aggressive but achievable future scenario, more than 200,000 new jobs could be created a year[8]. The figure below summarizes the breakdown of these jobs by industry segment.

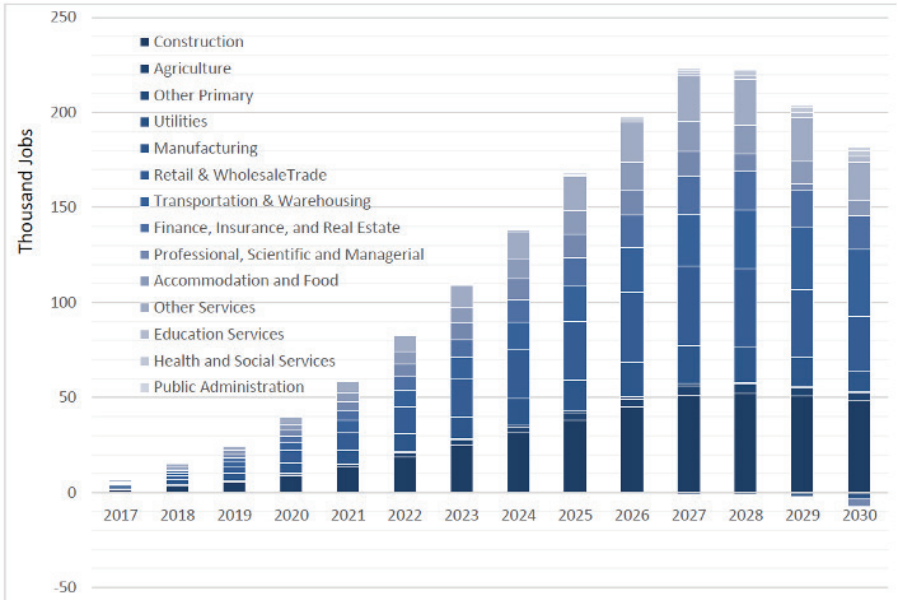


FIGURE 1. Total Annual Net Employment in Canada by Industry Segment (2017-2030) – PCF Scenario

Source: Dunsky. 9

The decline after 2027 is due to the modelling assumptions that 2030 is the end year for the analysis. Under the aggressive scenario, there would be almost 2.5 million jobs in the energy efficiency sector alone by 2030.



Cleantech Jobs Required in the Future

In most cleantech sectors, there are three categories of jobs that will be required in the future:

- **Policy development, implementation, and evaluation.** While the final design of such policies is made by governments, environmental groups and industry associations are also active in promoting particular policy solutions. Examples of such policies include carbon pricing, energy efficiency provisions in building codes and appliances, mandatory energy efficiency programs funded by ratepayers, etc.
- **Program development, implementation, and evaluation.** Again, while most programs in Canada are managed by governments and their regulated utilities, private energy service companies are active in the design, implementation, and evaluation of these programs. In fact, evaluations are best done by an independent third party.
- **Technical.** These include architecture, design, contracting, construction, manufacturing, and even sales of cleantech solutions.

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1.Global News. "Canadians want urgent climate action, but most not willing to pay more tax: poll." Global News, September 20, 2023.

2. Environment and Climate Change Canada. "National inventory report: greenhouse gas sources and sinks in Canada: Executive Summary." Environment and Climate Change Canada, May 2, 2024.

3. Canadian Energy Systems Analysis Research. www.cesanet.ca. University of Calgary, Calgary, 2018.

4. Love, Peter. "Past, Present and Future of Energy Conservation in Canada." Love Energy Consultants, 2024.

5. Verriere, Pierre. "The future passes through old buildings." Canadian Climate Institute, 2020.

6. Foresight. "Jobs and Skills in the Transition to a Net-Zero Economy." Foresight, 2022.

7. Brown, Carol-Ann et al. "Building Canada's Net Zero Workforce." Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2024.

8. Dunsky. "The Economic Impact of Improved Energy Efficiency in Canada." Clean Energy Canada, 2018.

To achieve these emission reduction targets, there are six fundamental issues that need to be addressed[4]:

1. Decarbonization. Replace fossil fuels to heat buildings/water with clean electricity (heat pumps, geothermal) and switch to electric vehicles.

2. Existing buildings. More than 70% of buildings standing today will still be in use by 2050[5] so it is not enough to just build net-zero new buildings.

3. Equity/social justice. We must ensure all can upgrade, not just the rich or middle class.

4. Codes and standards. They are boring but effective.

5. Carbon price. We need to continue both consumer and industrial (OBPS) price on carbon.

6. Culture of conservation. We have done this before with the blue box, anti-smoking, and drunk driving.



PART V:

FUTURE OF WORK

NAVIGATING KEY TRENDS AND SHAPING A NEW WORKPLACE PARADIGM



Mary Verissimo
Director, Real Estate Services, TELUS



Kevin Katigbak
Strategy Director, Principal, Gensler

With a focus on the Future of Work, Mary Verissimo and Kevin Katigbak presented their respective views on how and why companies are transforming traditional offices into mixed-use work—learning-social destinations for employees and clients—and how this impacts people, business, and the real estate footprint.

1. THE LONELINESS EPIDEMIC

The World Health Organization has declared loneliness a global public health concern, establishing the WHO Commission on Social Connection in 2023. The pandemic significantly impacted professional networks, with research by King and Kovacs revealing a 16% shrinkage in these networks. Younger workers, in particular, were more likely to lack trusted personal and work relationships, with nearly half (45%) reporting they did not have trusted workplace relationships. This lack of connection has severe health consequences, comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, emphasizing the importance of fostering personal connections in our lives.



THE FUTURE OF WORK:

Navigating Key Trends and Shaping a New Workplace Paradigm

The speakers explored five key trends that are shaping the future of work and how we, as leaders and organizations, can navigate these changes to create a more productive, inclusive, and connected workplace.

1. **The Loneliness Epidemic**
2. **Employers' Role in Supporting Their Employees**
3. **Backlash Against Rigid Return-to-Office Policies**
4. **The Growing Importance of Flexibility**
5. **Office Design Enabling Collaborative Work**



2. EMPLOYERS' ROLE IN SUPPORTING THEIR EMPLOYEES

Employers play a crucial role in preventing loneliness and increasing connection among employees. The workplace has a direct impact on how lonely we feel. By fostering a supportive and connected work environment, we can enhance the well-being and productivity of our employees.

3. BACKLASH AGAINST RIGID RETURN-TO-OFFICE POLICIES

There is an ongoing trend and backlash against rigid return-to-office policies, which will continue to gain momentum in 2024 and beyond. A survey of Canadian business leaders indicated that 55% predicted a full return to in-office work within the next three years. However, companies that mandated a return to the office experienced higher attrition rates, with 42% of firms, including Ubisoft, Amazon, Apple, and Google, reporting this issue. Additionally, 29% of companies struggled with recruitment. Two-thirds (64%) of the workforce would consider looking for a new job if required to return to the office full-time, with younger people (18- to 24-year-olds) being the most reluctant (71%) to return full-time. This highlighted the importance of adopting more flexible approaches to return-to-office policies.

4. THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF FLEXIBILITY

"Flexibility" remains a top priority for both employers and employees. Employees greatly appreciate flexibility as it leads to better work-life balance. We are no longer looking at work as a place to go but as tasks to be completed. Workers are increasingly asking for added flexibility and options to work remotely, including the ability to blend personal and professional responsibilities. A MetLife study found that all generations consider flexible work important, though their reasons may differ.

5. OFFICE DESIGN ENABLING COLLABORATIVE WORK

Office design needs to align with principles of well-being, sustainability, and performance to create a stimulating workplace destination. While employees appreciate the flexibility of remote work, they also recognize the value of face-to-face meetings for collaboration, relationship-building, and social activities. The work done in the office should be different from the work done at home, focusing on purposeful in-person engagements to enhance teamwork and strengthen connections. Creating spaces is only one piece; activating these spaces to create a compelling, engaging in-person experience is key to the future of work.

In conclusion, facilitating collaboration and social connections to meet the needs of a multi-generational workforce, addressing the challenges of loneliness and mental health, and creating a physical workspace that is flexible, inclusive, and connected are crucial for all aspects of the future of work. By embracing these trends, we can shape a more productive, fulfilling, and sustainable work environment for all.



The future of the Workplace will be Measured by Performance, not Presence

Since 2005, Gensler has been studying the workplace in an effort to understand the changing nature of work and what employees truly want in the office. This year marks Gensler's largest and most comprehensive research to date, as our global study captures responses from over 16,000 workers in 15 countries.

Through this research, we know that while organizations continue to grapple with the new era of work post-pandemic, one thing is clear: the future of the workplace will be measured by performance, not presence. Likewise, our research shows that workplace performance is no longer defined by building efficiency and space effectiveness; it's also measured by the emotional response to space (i.e., the workplace experience).

This is important, as both the quality of the workplace and experience it provides has a direct impact on employee performance—at the individual, team, and organizational level. While Canadian employees rank the effectiveness of the workplace to be higher than the experience it provides, on both fronts, Canada ranks behind the global average. Yet less than one-third of workplaces (28%) have been redesigned in the past three years.

Given that working in the office positively impacts employees in high-performing workplaces up to three times more than low-performing workplaces, it is crucial for organizations to stay ahead of the curve.

After all, high-performing workplaces can lead to better employee retention, job satisfaction, health and well-being, productivity, and more.

For more information on Gensler's 2024 Global Workplace Survey, visit: ***Global Workplace Survey 2024 (gensler.com)***



PART VI:

FUTURE OF EDUCATION, TALENT, AND PARTNERSHIPS



Dr. Julia Christensen Hughes
President and Vice Chancellor, Yorkville University



Michelle Meehan
Vice President, Marketing, PLUM

What academic Institutions and private sector are partnering to identify and close skills gaps and optimize new future readiness ways to succeed in the new normal world of continuous learning, disruption and innovative accelerators.

A projection of emerging talent needs, AI and how academic institutions and the private sector are partnering to identify and close talent and skill gaps and optimize AI and other future readiness requirements to succeed in the new normal world of continuous learning, disruption, and innovative solution accelerators.



Mounting Pressures for Change in Canadian Higher Education:

A THREE-PRONGED CALL TO ACTION by Dr. Julia Christensen Hughes, Yorkville University

A Perfect Storm.

There are many profound pressures for change confronting Canadian higher education institutions today. Unprecedented financial challenges exist, both immediate (e.g., tuition freezes, reductions in government grants, restrictions on international student enrollments) and systemic (e.g., rising costs from inflation, growing pension obligations, the need to shore up aging physical infrastructure). The current situation is financially unsustainable for many institutions across the country.[1]

Beyond financial pressures, expectations for the role of the faculty are also changing. Today, faculty are facing increasing class sizes and the unique needs of underprepared "post-COVID" students, while being expected to: competently facilitate student engagement, both on campus and online; support intensifying student mental wellness needs; ensure inclusive class environments (positive DEI dynamics) while navigating global unrest and divisive campus protests; and contribute thoughtfully to the decolonization of the curriculum.



And, of course, there is the relentless impact of technology. With the advent of GenAI, it is now technologically possible for a student to submit a paper and receive a grade without either the student or the faculty member having thoughtfully engaged with—or even read—the work!

All of this has amplified the need to revisit fundamental questions about what students should be learning, and how that learning should be facilitated, assessed, and credentialled for the benefit of both students and employers. And while pockets of innovation have long existed on university campuses, visionary, systemic change remains sorely lacking, with students independently embracing opportunities for continuous, "just in time" learning from multiple venues to fill in perceived gaps in their education.

It is within this environment that important stakeholders—families, employers, governments, and NGOs—are questioning the value proposition of higher education and calling on institutions to reconsider the talents (transferable foundational skills and values) students should have the opportunity to develop, and the types of careers and professional credentials they may successfully pursue as a result.[2]

1. As one example, Queen's University is projecting a deficit of $36 million (for 2024-2025), on top of a deficit of $28 million (for 2023-2024), despite having already implemented hiring freezes and many cost savings measures, such as "voluntary retirement and early exit incentives, reductions in general spending, and operational improvements" (Queen's, 2024).

2. Within Canada, the Council of Ministers of Education (2020) have identified such qualities as "Pan-Canadian Global Competencies", including critical thinking and problem solving, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, learning to learn/self-awareness and self-direction, collaboration, communication, and global citizenship and sustainability.

(https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/407/Sustainable%20Development%20Goal%204%20in%20Canada%20EN.pdf)

A CALL TO ACTION: A THREE-PRONGED STRATEGY

Unfortunately, rather than embracing such calls for change, many universities are cutting back, or cancelling all together, the innovations that help students develop these types of essential skills. Operating outside of base budgets, and taught by precarious staff, learning and teaching innovations are notoriously vulnerable to the priorities of short-sighted administrative leaders facing monetary challenges.

From my point of view, there are at least three essential components to the innovation needed. The first is a fundamental rethink of what students should be required to learn. At Yorkville University, we have identified eight Signature Learning Outcomes (SLOs). These outcomes, inspired by the work of the United Nations and CMEC, amongst others, are common to all our programs: incorporating a fundamental knowledge of skills layered under program-specific knowledge; providing students with the opportunity to become competent at "doing"; bringing together the knowledge, skills, and confidence that will help them acquire professional roles; and the habits and tools needed to future-proof their careers.

One example of this approach is Yorkville's Bachelor of Interior Design (BID) program, Canada's only fully online CIDA-accredited degree. The program provides unparalleled access for students from across the country, teaching them core skills while incorporating elements of sustainability, health





and well-being, and environmental and social justice considerations throughout. Students work independently and in groups, produce, present, and defend actual designs, and receive meaningful critique from peers, faculty, and industry representatives.

The successful development of foundational skills occurs when students are supported by caring faculty who are well-skilled at employing an active pedagogy and are committed to providing authentic, formative, real-time assessment. The second essential component needed to foster innovation within higher education is therefore a fundamental rethink of the faculty role. This will require new approaches not only to the selection criteria of faculty, but for assessing educator development and performance as well. At Yorkville, we are undergoing a "role clarity" project to enumerate faculty expectations (both of and by educators) in keeping with this philosophy. Central to our vision and a point of pride is our small class size (typically fewer than 20 students), which allows faculty members with their strong academic and professional experience to act as mentors and learning coaches, a dynamic not readily available to the more common 30-year-old+ student gathering.

The final component in our blueprint for fostering innovation in higher education is the recognition that the elite ivory tower institution model is unsustainable and that a new approach is needed, one that calls for a fundamental rethink between institution and community. Through an "embedded" or "ecosystem" strategy, critical stakeholders must be identified at the program level (regulators, accreditors, professional associations, employers, alumni, etc.), mutually beneficial relationships established, and partnerships formed. Through this approach, students will be more likely to learn what is needed and valued, including developing the capacity to make a positive impact in their communities and career.

In Yorkville's BID program, while our faculty are credentialed professionals, often running their own practices, they are supported by members of the interior design community at large, who participate on advisory councils and as judges when our students are presenting their culminating projects. We also actively participate with professional and accrediting bodies, such as the Association of Registered Designers of Ontario (ARIDO), Interior Designers of Canada (IDC), and the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA). Graduates also meet the necessary educational requirements to take the NCIDQ exam, with the opportunity to become a registered interior designer. Through these types of professional partnerships, our students can be assured that they are learning what they need to learn to pursue their chosen career.

There is no question that higher education needs a reset.

Fundamentally revisiting what students should be learning, the skills and dispositions faculty will need to competently assess and support the development of those skills, and a partnership orientation are all key to the essential work that needs to be done.



NAVIGATING THE FUTURE OF WORK TO RECRUIT AND BUILD RIGHT-FIT TALENT

POWERED BY AI TOOLS AND DATA-DRIVEN APPROACHES by Michelle Meehan, Plum

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, the pace of change presents unprecedented challenges for corporations and entrepreneurs alike.



The "Accelerating Pace Paradox," as described by futurist Ira S. Wolfe, underscores the critical mismatch between technological advancement and our ability to adapt, highlighting two primary pain points: the rapid obsolescence of hard skills and the need for agility in talent management.

Plum addresses these pressing issues through its platforms, PlumFlourish and PlumThrive, which empower individuals and organizations to thrive in this dynamic environment.

PLUMFLOURISH: Empowering Individuals for Future Careers

PlumFlourish is designed to assist individuals in navigating career transitions in a fluid job market. Leveraging advanced data science and psychological insights, it provides personalized career planners and self-guided learning resources. This empowers individuals to understand their unique strengths and growth opportunities, ensuring they stay agile amidst shifting job landscapes.

For example, initiatives like Cyber Nations showcase Plum's dedication to preparing individuals for critical roles like Cybersecurity Analysts and Incident Responders. These roles are crucial in tackling increasing cyber threats. With a growing skills gap in cybersecurity, Gartner predicts that by 2025, about 50% of security breaches will result directly from a talent shortage.

It simplifies navigating this complex landscape by quickly identifying individuals' strengths to enable candidates to explore career paths they might not have initially considered but are well-suited for. The added value of psychometric data addresses immediate workforce needs and aligns with the evolving skills required to meet new challenges.

PLUMTHRIVE: Strategic Talent Management for Organizational Success

According to Forbes, 75% of companies report difficulty finding the right talent, with role mismatches leading to high turnover. The cost of this turnover, estimated to be 33% of an employee's annual salary, can quickly add up, draining resources that could be better invested elsewhere. PlumThrive offers comprehensive talent analytics to optimize recruitment, development, and retention strategies to address these issues head-on.

It identifies the best-fit individuals for specific roles by analyzing objective data on candidates and employees. This data-driven approach minimizes the risks associated with outdated metrics, ensuring organizations build agile, high-performing teams that are 322% more productive as a result. And with abundant ATS integrations, your HR suite can accomplish more in one place.





Looking ahead, strategic partnerships will play a pivotal role in accelerating competency development and broadening engagement beyond traditional sectors. For example, collaboration with universities and academic institutions can facilitate the integration of cutting-edge research and curricula tailored to future job demands.

FUTURE JOB TRENDS AND COMPETENCIES

As demands evolve, the traditional HR methods we consider "standard practice" today will look vastly different within the next several years. But we already see what the future holds thanks to trailblazers like Scotiabank. As part of its intern and co-op hiring process, the team at Scotiabank has eliminated the traditional resume, opting to replace it with the PlumThrive platform. In doing so, they've doubled their retention rates, expanded their talent pool, and enhanced their quality of hire.

This will also be of value in high-volume hiring scenarios as the industry continues to move toward skills-based hiring practices. High-volume hiring has remained a challenge to even the most veteran HR teams. The prioritization of speed often overshadows role and cultural fit before making a talent decision. The result? Massive financial losses, significant organizational continuity, and team dynamics disruptions. Tools help alleviate these issues without losing the acceleration needed to fill thousands of vacancies. Strategies informed by psychometric data significantly boost long-term job satisfaction, organizational loyalty, and more decisive role matches. This way, organizations can foster a deep alignment between a candidate's capabilities and role, fostering long-term retention and operational stability.

And that's only some of what's expected to change; new jobs and competencies will emerge across various sectors based on evolving market trends and client demands. As technological advancements like AI reshape industries, roles such as AI Ethics Specialists and Virtual Reality Designers will likely see increased demand. These positions will require a blend of technical skills and ethical understanding, reflecting the evolving nature of work in hybrid/virtual environments. According to the World Economic Forum, half of all employees will need reskilling by 2025 due to these developments, with 4X the accuracy of predicting on-the-job-success than a resume.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF TALENT AND EDUCATION

Both Hughes and Meehan concluded that as the pace of change accelerates, embracing agility and leveraging innovative solutions becomes imperative. Individuals should prioritize continuous learning and skills development to remain competitive, while organizations must adopt data-driven talent strategies and cultivate strategic partnerships to stay ahead.



PART VII:

FUTURE-FIT HOUSING FOR LEARNING COMMUNITIES



Michelle McCollum
Vice President, Facilities and Sustainability
George Brown College



Jody Becker
COO & EVP infrastructure Services and Technology
Ellis Don

AFFORDABLE, INCLUSIVE, AND HEALTHY HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR LEARNING COMMUNITIES: WHY, WHAT, AND WHO

Michelle McCollum emphasized that we have to put people at the centre of what we do. We know there is a crisis. The housing and affordability crises need to be approached by all stakeholders working together. Government and industry partnerships are an important part of the mix.

Students are facing the same problems as entry-level professionals, caregivers, families, etc. As it becomes more costly to live in the GTA, the challenges of attracting students, nurturing talent, and retaining employees become greater.

BUT WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT HOUSING?

The shortage of affordable housing is a growing challenge for many of our community members, students, and employees alike.

As living in the Greater Toronto Area becomes even more costly, inaction could lead to mounting challenges in attracting talent, ensuring student success, and retaining our invaluable employees.

If we think about Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the need for shelter before we can get to our cognitive state, for students to understand and be able to concentrate, focus, and learn in a classroom, they need to have their basic needs met, including housing.



Removing the stress of housing allows students to concentrate, focus, and enter a productive cognitive state.



To deepen the understanding of how the housing crisis affects George Brown students, a number of surveys were conducted, with some key findings summarized below:

- 24% of GB students spent more than 1 hour commuting to campus and 22% spent more than 1.5 hours commuting.
- Of the 65% of students living in conventional rental accommodation, only 11% considered their housing costs to be “affordable” while 86% said housing costs were either “somewhat affordable” (48%) or “not at all affordable” (38%).
- 21% of students reported living with parents, while the balance either lived on campus (4%), in homestays or other type of housing. 2% reported housing insecurity.
- Looking at the type of housing unit preferred by single students, both the “nano” unit and the double occupancy “two-bedroom” unit polled popularly.
- Among students with families, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units were the most popular.

Jody spoke on several future-fit housing themes: the importance of strategic partnerships, including EllisDon’s partnership with George Brown College; and future-proofing housing and how this connects with addressing the impacts of the climate crisis.

Governments say the solution to the housing crisis involves three things: building more homes, making it easier to rent, and helping Canadians who can't afford it. This seems simple, but it's a little bit more complicated than that.

Although slightly lower interest rates have created a bit of optimism, we still need to build 3 million new homes to address the current housing gap. Considering Canada's largest homebuilder constructs about 8,000 units a year, we have a very large gap in our capacity to solve this crisis.

In addition, rental housing demand is growing, as many people are finding homeownership unattainable. Again, we certainly can't keep up with the demand right now.

At EllisDon, we are approaching the housing crisis by thinking differently, developing additional tools, and harnessing the power of technology.



By helping to solve housing issues for GB, we are also helping to address the housing issue in the broader Toronto market.

THESE APPROACHES ARE ADDITIONAL TOOLS FOR OUR TOOLBOX:

- Treat housing the same way we approach other infrastructure. Can we build faster? Yes. In London, Ontario, we built 140 modular apartment units in one year.
- Analyze sites for building conversion, as the most sustainable building is the one that is already built. In partnership with Gensler Architects, we are using their algorithm, based on five factors, that quickly determines whether a building is suitable for conversion. As part of the process, we look at the conversion from a financial and constructability perspective to help determine whether the project is feasible.
- Decarbonize through sustainable building retrofits that achieve LEED status and even go all the way to net-zero carbon. To solve this crisis and avoid additional ones in the future, we must make housing both affordable and sustainable. These are the kinds of buildings that people want to live and work in. This is also important because 70% of buildings that are going to be here in 2050 have already been built.
- Use technology to understand your building's behaviour to better target retrofit activities and maximize your capital investments. Using artificial intelligence (AI), EllisDon has developed a digital twin platform, EKO, that converges all primary building systems, customer facing systems, the Building Information Model, and the Computerized Maintenance Management System. The platform then uses AI to analyze what's happening within the building, offering users information, insights, and tools to enhance how they live and work in the built environment. In addition, EKO provides information regarding energy usage, determines how much carbon a building is producing, and optimizes energy consumption across units in a building.

In addition, EllisDon has collaborated on several housing projects with colleges and universities across Canada. These include residences at Huron College, University of Victoria, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia Community College, and St. Mary's University.

Adding to the complexity of the housing crisis, we must think about how various elements of city living intersect with housing. These include commuting times, the health of city residents and their healthcare, and other elements of city infrastructure, such as energy and water. All these considerations intersect with the climate crisis. Above all, we need to think about social equity.



The main message I want to leave you with, and that's where we started today's dialogue, is partnership. The housing crisis and the climate crisis will only be solved through collaboration. No one person, organization, company or government alone can solve this. We must all work on it together.

PART VIII:

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

KEY INSIGHTS FOR ACTION

A summary of key takeaways for action–from speakers, delegates, and discussions–for you to consider in preparing yourself and your organization for the future of work and education follow.



OPTIMIZING THE CULTURE SHIFT

To transition from work-central to people-centred work, talent, education, and living ecosystems, we need to take time to understand the unique challenges, opportunities, and impacts in a four-generation work and education culture. Explore alternative future scenarios and approaches. Invest in future-ready solutions that can be financed, piloted, and scaled. Think people, planet, and prosperity! Narrow the focus to what's doable. Create alignment with key stakeholders: employees, contractors, partners, and customers. Maximize communication and education.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

Our future of work is heavily impacted by AI robotics, digital nomads, and high-comfort workplaces and will continue to impact virtually every aspect of work, education, and the types of jobs that will be in demand in the fast-emerging future. Two jobs at the top of the list are cybersecurity and sustainability.

The World Economic Forum reports three ways that artificial intelligence will change the future of work and will likely augment rather than automate.

1. **AI will drive job creation.** Employment gains are expected to be strongest in the automotive and aerospace industries, followed by research, design and business management services, information and technology services, and electronics sectors.

2. **Businesses will prioritize AI skills.** AI and big data are the number one skills priorities for companies with more than 50,000 employees. The ability to boost business performance using artificial intelligence is the main focus of investment in skills training for large companies.

3. **Tasks will be augmented, not automated, by AI.** Despite technological strides forward, a growing consensus is that artificial intelligence will augment human performance rather than fully supplant it. Only information gathering and simple decision-making are likely to be fully automated, and leadership and imagination skills will be largely unaffected by AI.

(SOURCE: World Economic Forum).



JOBS FOR BUILDING A NET-ZERO CARBON FUTURE

Under an aggressive scenario, there would be almost 2.5 million jobs in the energy efficiency sector alone by 2030. In most cleantech sectors, there are three categories of jobs that will be required in the future:

- **Policy development, implementation, and evaluation.** While the final design of such policies is made by governments, environmental groups and industry associations are also active in promoting particular policy solutions.
- **Program development, implementation, and evaluation.** While most programs in Canada are managed by governments and their regulated utilities, private energy service companies are active in the design, implementation, and evaluation of these programs. In fact, evaluations are best done by an independent third party.
- **Technical.** These include architecture, design, contracting, construction, manufacturing, and even sales of cleantech solutions.





THE FUTURE OF THE NEW WORKPLACE IN A HYBRID WORLD

Five key trends that are shaping the future of work and how we, as leaders and organizations, can navigate these changes to create a more productive, inclusive, and connected workplace include:

1. The Loneliness Epidemic
2. Employers' Role in Supporting Their Employees
3. Backlash Against Rigid Return-to-Office Policies
4. The Growing Importance of Flexibility
5. Office Design Enabling Collaborative Work

In conclusion, facilitating collaboration and social connections to meet the needs of a multi-generational workforce, addressing the challenges of loneliness and mental health, and creating a physical workspace that is flexible, inclusive, and connected are crucial for all aspects of the future of work. By embracing these trends, we can shape a more productive, fulfilling, and sustainable work environment for all.

Likewise, as Gensler's research shows, workplace performance is no longer defined by building efficiency and space effectiveness. It's also measured by the emotional response to space. Therefore, creating the right workplace experience is also essential.





FUTURE-READY TALENT AND EDUCATION

As the pace of change accelerates, embracing agility and leveraging innovative solutions becomes imperative. Individuals should prioritize continuous learning and skills development to remain competitive, while organizations must adopt data-driven talent strategies and cultivate strategic partnerships to stay ahead. There is a critical role of educational reform in creating a generation capable of leading in sustainability and innovation.

ECONOMIC MODELS CAPITAL AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

Reconciling economic activity with emission reductions led to discussions on venture capital scarcity in Canada and the need for a fundamental change in the Bank Act to support cleantech and sustainable projects. The perceived lack of venture capital in Canada forces many IPs abroad, highlighting the need for better financial support for clean technology within the country. Innovative financing models and intellectual property regulations were highlighted as crucial for fostering Canadian technology and sustainability solutions.

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND MULTI-SECTORAL COLLABORATION

It's time to harness the power of inter-sectoral collaboration between academia, industry, and the financial sector to accelerate the energy transition and innovation in sustainability.

FUTURE-FIT HOUSING FOR LEARNING COMMUNITIES

To participate in learning and work in-person, students and faculty need to be able to afford to live close to educational facilities and social hubs. This requires an accelerated effort to build sustainable, affordable, inclusive, and healthy housing and infrastructure for learning communities. A version of this inclusive approach also applies to future workspaces for blended work-learn-live and thrive communities.



PART IX:

RSI 2024 FUTURES ACTION PARTNERS & SPONSORS

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ABOUT RETHINK SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES (RSI)

Rethink Sustainability Initiatives (RSI) is a trusted think-do accelerator that uses foresight, collaboration, and systems thinking to shape a thriving future. We bring together leaders and experts from business, institutions, and communities to discover and use scalable sustainability and resiliency solutions.
We convene and partner with leaders and experts across all sectors, to rethink, discover, and use innovative and scalable strategies and actions for shaping a more positive, sustainable, and resilient future, together.

RSI is a not-for-profit organization, incorporated in 2011 to discover, unlock, and shape scalable solutions to the sustainability and resilience challenges facing our world. **www.rethinksustainability.ca**



PART X:

VISUAL HIGHLIGHTS: CONNECTING LEADERS TO SHAPE THE FUTURE



















FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION

If you are interested in discussing this report, learning more about future proofing challenges, solutions, and opportunities for collaboration, sharing your own action-focused insights or other action partnership opportunities, send us a note at: **Communications@rethinksustainability.ca**

For more information about RSI: **www.rethinksustainability.ca**

Thank you.

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