

# Developing skill sets that match emerging jobs

As technology assumes the leading role in defining future occupations, the youth need to be better prepared to embrace new technologies when they arrive, or risk being sidelined by businesses.

According to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2018 *Future of Jobs* report, by 2022, emerging professions are set to increase their share of employment from 16% to 27% of the total employee base while the employment share of declining roles is set to decrease to 21% from 31% last year.

"Given that the skill requirements of emerging roles frequently look very different from those of roles experiencing redundancy, proactive, strategic and targeted efforts will be needed to map out and incentivise workforce redeployment," says the report.

In this context, Malaysia is facing a two-pronged dilemma: absence of high-skilled jobs and mismatch of skills of the workforce produced by the country.

Bank Negara Malaysia's 2018 annual report shows that the economy had not created enough high-skilled jobs to match the number of tertiary graduates entering the workforce from 2010 to 2017.

The central bank reported that 173,457 diploma and degree graduates entered the workforce annually during the period while 98,514 high-skilled jobs were created each year on average.



**The common pitfall that we ... must avoid is complacency.**  
— Khusahry

From the looks of it, our employees are not equipped for the tech-driven future as the skills obtained by the graduates in school may not be as relevant to their occupation today as they were when they started their studies.

It has been reported that education syllabuses — such as the courses in technical and vocational education training (TVET) — are not up to date with the skills industry and market needs.

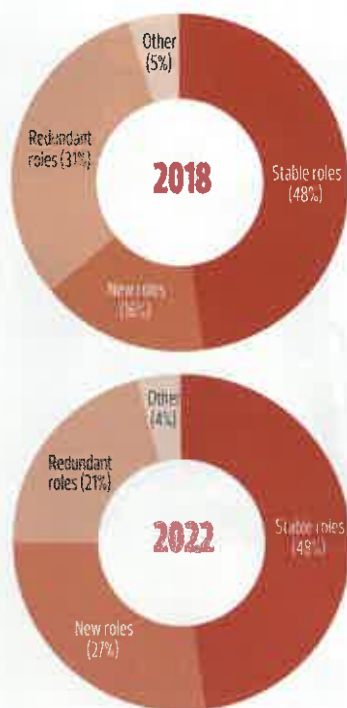
Kalel Khusahry, Accenture Consulting Asean Talent and Organisation Lead (Resources) senior manager, concurs, saying that the bulk of the workforce is not ready for the transition to this new labour market context.

In this case, self-initiative plays a big role where individuals can opt for online courses from around the world to add to their skills and subsequently increase their value to employers.

One thing to note is that as technology advancement picks up pace, so too does the need for employees to be reskilled.

"The common pitfall that we, as the workforce in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, must avoid is complacency," Khusahry stresses.

## Share of stable, new and redundant roles 2018 versus 2022 (projected)



SOURCE: WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

"One may be competent in a few digital skills, such as Java or Python and UX design, today. But we are already moving on to a post-digital era and those skills will soon become common while new technologies, software, platforms and business models are emerging, not in years but in months."

Thus, it would be useful if workers kept an eye on emerging trends beyond just the latest gadgets, and explored new areas where they could acquire additional skill sets, he adds.

### Do not take soft skills lightly

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that some of the skills considered necessary today — analytical ability, emotional intelligence and complex problem-solving, among others — will continue to be relevant to the digital age.

"Technology-related and non-cognitive soft skills are becoming increasingly more important in tandem, and there are significant opportunities ... to experiment and invest in new types of education and training provision in this new labour market context," says the WEF report.

Indeed, demand is rising for workers with technology-linked hard skills as companies continue to pivot to the new business environment on the back of digital transformation.

"[But] there is a misconception that hard skills related to digital technologies are the only in-demand skills due to the rise of digital transformation," says Khusahry. "Most companies need a combination of soft and hard skills in their workforce to be competitive in today's environment."

One clear example is the gig economy, which is projected to make up 40% of the entire workforce in the next five years. Effective communication will play an extensive role on top of the hard skills required to conduct the essential tasks, as presentation and delivery will also impact employees' personal brands, which will be essential for landing more jobs going forward. **E**