

3 BIG CAREER QUESTIONS

This article is excerpted from the new book, [The Long View: Career Strategies to Start Strong, Reach High, and Go Far](#) by Brian Fetherstonhaugh, chairman and CEO of OgilvyOne Worldwide, and is printed with permission from Diversion Books. Next Avenue previously published an [interview](#) with Fetherstonhaugh, “A CEO’s Advice for the Third Chapter of Your Career.”)

Since careers last so long and are so deeply embedded in our lives, when we talk about the future of careers we need to grapple with some pretty cosmic questions:

- **Will I be replaced by a machine?**
- **Where and how will I find work in the future?**
- **How will I spend my time?**

Will I Be Replaced By a Machine?

There is no question that the machines are getting smarter. A 2015 report by the BBC said: “Boston Consulting Group predicts that by 2025, up to a quarter of jobs will be replaced by either smart software or robots, while a study from Oxford University has suggested that 35% of existing UK jobs are at [risk of automation](#) in the next twenty years.”

Many of the most vulnerable jobs, according to Oxford, are ones that are mechanical and repeatable. Office workers who do repetitive jobs such as writing reports or drawing up spreadsheets are easily replaced with software. Factory workers are becoming increasingly vulnerable as machines with better manual dexterity are developed.

By contrast, roles requiring employees to come up with creative and original ideas hold a significant advantage in the face of automation. This can be good news for artists, designers or engineers. Additionally, occupations involving tasks that require a high degree of social intelligence and negotiating skills, like managerial positions, are considerably less at risk from machines, according to the study.

My advice: Make sure you have human skills that are differentiated and complementary to what machines can do. If all you are doing is routine calculating, reporting or execution, you should worry. If you are pursuing a job with high repeatability and low social inputs, you should *really* worry. And you should act.

Build a skill set that is abundant in the ability to invent, judge, build human trust, interact socially, teach the machines and create test hypotheses.

Where and How Will I Find Work in the Future?

Looking 10, 20 and 30 years into the future, where will we find work and how will we find it? One model that is certain to get some serious airplay is “data-driven career matchmaking.”

We have already seen the massive expansion of digital job posting sites like Indeed, [Monster.com](#), Glassdoor, CareerBuilder, and others. [LinkedIn](#) has become a global talent powerhouse. If digital technology and data can already post hundreds of millions of jobs, where can the matchmaking of job seekers and talent-hungry companies go in the future?

LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner is on a mission to create a global “economic graph” within a decade. He aims to include all the job listings in the world, all the skills required to get those jobs, all the educational institutions who teach those skills, all the professionals who could fill them and all the companies and nonprofits at which they work. In this new world, job seekers would be better able to “shop” for employers and for the educational institutions who can help them build the most personally relevant and in-demand skills. Before long, we will be seeing “predictive career planning” where the huge skill marketplaces like LinkedIn can begin to predict where the supply and demand of skills will go — right down to the individual.

In this future world, career-minded individuals would need an even firmer hand on their career destiny — listening to their hearts, to the job opportunity marketplace and becoming savvy shoppers for skills and work.

How Will I Spend My Time?

There is no doubt that we are going to see “[long-tail careers](#)” that extend well into our late 60s, 70s and even 80s. The nature and objective of the work will likely change. Traditionally, careers have focused primarily on the corporate sector and on “making a good living.” In the future, I see a dramatic expansion of [entrepreneurial](#) and freelance options, and a more diverse set of goals for work.

Creating a business where you can sell goods and services online is already becoming a pervasive source of income and engagement for many people in late-stage careers, and this will accelerate.

Freelance work can be a great pillar in a long-tail career of the future. It offers “mastery for hire” in exchange for income and advances in technology and social networking are making it easier to find and perform freelance assignments. Freelance assignments can provide interesting work and interaction at a time when you have a lot more time on your hands.

We should all think hard about our long-tail careers and how we will [find purpose](#), flexibility, refreshment and income in the years past typical retirement.