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Business models across all industries are shifting. Talk to any executive about their challenges, the conversation will quickly turn to people — finding them, keeping them, motivating them. Their latest issue focuses on modern work through the lens of people, culture, automation, spaces and balance.

In people, Kristina Moullios delves into life after #MeToo rollicked every industry. She explores what life now looks like for people inside advertising agencies, how #MeToo has in some cases turned into a punchline for a very bad joke, and how it’s changing interpersonal dynamics. Kristina also explored the lives of foreign-born talent inside ad agencies, and how visa dynamics have created a limbo for these workers, hearing in their own words what it’s like to feel trapped.

We also explore Slack, and how this instant messaging platform is transforming how workers are organizing inside digital industry. She examines the death of the salaried retail job. At the same time, in the Culture section, we take a critical look at what it really means to be a company founded by women — and how it doesn’t necessarily result in a more “inclusive” culture.

For spaces, we examine the future of the office space, while Jill Manoff put together a scoreboard looking at some of the newest co-working spaces and how they stack up.

We also report on the future of automation in advertising, and in our Balance section, why Sundays have become the sacred, work-free zone, as workers attempt to set boundaries. The nature of work is changing. These changes are driven by technology, yes, but also a new generations of workers who are rejecting old norms and instead seeking a life of balance and meaning. The workplace is also changing, in many cases physically. The lines between work and regular life have blurred for a generation, but new companies need to transform themselves to cater to a new set of expectations.

For all inquiries, please email help@digiday.com
Sarah (not her real name), a female copywriter at a creative agency describes work life post-#MeToo as “gendered.”

In the two-and-a-half years since the movement transformed businesses and conversations around harassment all over the world, Sarah says she’s only had female clients; the art directors that she’s partnered with are female; that she hasn’t once been asked to lunch or drinks by her male colleagues and that the men she’d like to mentor her will barely answer her questions in the hallway, let alone spend any time with her. Post-#MeToo, Sarah says she’s missing out on opportunities because she’s female.

“I feel like it has shifted from sexual misconduct to sexual exclusion,” says Sarah. “The reason [women at agencies] are still feeling uncomfortable is that we’re still being judged for our gender — just in an entirely different way.”

In the years since #MeToo, alleged bad actors like former Droga5 CCO Ted Royer, Innocean CCO Eric Springer and Publicis Seattle CCO Andrew Christeau, among others, across the industry have been publicly outed and ousted, advocacy groups like Times Up Advertising have been created and ad agencies have routinely said that they want to root out sexual harassment.

But inside agencies the day-to-day mood is still unsettled as some agency employees say that men and women don’t trust each other, that agencies don’t trust men and women to be alone together, that some women feel like they’re being excluded and that some men are now regularly cracking jokes about #MeToo.

Post-#MeToo, employees say agency culture is deeply fractured, that it feels like there’s an open wound and not enough time has been dedicated to healing that divide. Most agree that while agencies have publicly advocated to dig deep and fix their internal cultures that it’s more lip service than action.

“It doesn’t feel like a cohesive environment right now,” says a female copywriter at a creative agency. “People from top to bottom are rethinking their entire personalities at work. The message we were trying to send was, ‘Don’t be shitty, don’t touch people at work and don’t use your power to influence people.’ It’s trickled down to this everyday weirdness. Treat me like I’m your copywriter, not your priest.”

The specific cultural issues vary by agency. Post-#MeToo, some employees believe that there’s now a lack of trust between genders, that men are less likely to mentor women or close the door when alone with a woman out of fear of being called out. Some agency employees say that there’s a constant heightened awareness now around what you say and how that could be perceived and that there’s a sense that no one is comfortable being themselves at work.

Others say that whether out of fear, defense or just to be snarky, men in the ad world are now routinely cracking jokes and turning #MeToo into a punchline. Overall, multiple agency employees interviewed for this piece—all of whom asked for anonymity— agreed that agency culture hasn’t altogether changed for the better and that there’s a new sense of discomfort among the genders.

Agencies weren’t alone in being changed by #MeToo. The movement is part of a national conversation that’s had an impact in nearly every sector from entertainment to politics to technology, among others, all of which are grappling with its long-term effects.

One of those effects is that men are generally less likely to mentor women. This past May, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg and Procter & Gamble chief brand officer Marc Pritchard co-wrote a piece for Fortune calling for men who refuse to mentor women to rethink their behavior and make a more deliberate effort to support women.

“I’ve heard this first-hand—male leaders telling me they avoid one-on-ones with female members of staff, or that they always ensure there is someone else in the meeting,” says Simon Monllos, Digidesign.com's culture editor.
Fenwick, 4A’s evp of talent, equity and inclusion. “I find this absurd and disturbing. That says two things about you: Either you’ve done something you’re afraid you might repeat, or you think you’ll do something you shouldn’t. Either way, that’s unacceptable.”

For Sarah, #MeToo changed who she works with and what she works on as the agency now groups men and women in teams by gender rather than personality. “You see these shifts, you see clients that are female getting female teams and the clients that are male getting male teams,” she says. “It’s also become less integrated like, ‘The guys will take the broadcast and the girls will take the social.’ There’s not a lot of mingling. It’s feeling very baby blue on the right and baby pink on the left. It’s very uncomfortable. ‘There’s not a lot of guys will take the broadcast and the girls to choose their words more carefully but deferred to women to make the call about whether or not the culture has changed. ‘[I’m] definitely more aware,’ says a male senior copywriter that is now working client-side, adding that he didn’t realize how our acutely aware and sensitive to how our approach and behavior towards others, especially direct reports, can impact people,” says Carl Fremont, CEO of Quigley-Simpson. “Company-wide mandatory training on what constitutes inappropriate behavior and its impact has been a positive outcome in the post-#MeToo era.”

When asked about agency culture post-#MeToo, agency leaders and industry groups like the 4As said they believe that significant change is happening within agencies—with initiatives like bias training and more women in leadership positions making an impact—but that change may be harder to feel day-to-day. “We are more acutely aware and sensitive to how our approach and behavior towards others, especially direct reports, can impact people,” says Carl Fremont, CEO of Quigley-Simpson. “Company-wide mandatory training on what constitutes inappropriate behavior and its impact has been a positive outcome in the post-#MeToo era.”

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"It’s a fair observation there is a long way to go," says TBWA president, Nancy Reyes. “That’s probably because we are fighting a patriarchal system that has existed for as long as we can remember and it is so pervasive it’s often difficult to feel progress … it’s going to get more uncomfortable before it gets better."

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As the agency business rapidly changes, a human resources manager tells us how difficult it’s gotten to keep up. By Kristina Monllos

The swift evolution of the advertising business over the past decade has presented abundant challenges for agencies’ human resources teams. As many agencies juggle more project work (instead of ongoing assignments) and even compete on bids with in-house agencies, human resources managers are charged with attracting and retaining the right type of talent to do the work. Digiday spoke with an independent agency’s HR manager about the pressures she faces in trying to lure top professionals to her agency. Since she also oversees her agency’s operations, she finds the budgetary stresses immense.

This conversation has been edited and condensed.

Is it harder to get people to work at an agency now?

It is. People have more choices now because they can go in-house or freelance, especially if (someone is) a really great copywriter, art director or designer. People want to stay freelance because they don’t want to deal with the bullshit of office politics and the revolving doors of agency life. Money, employees and new work rolls in like waves on a beach, and then money, employees and that work roll out. It creates an unstable environment for people, especially as they get older.

How does that affect your job?

From an HR perspective, it’s difficult to manage. People want to keep a healthy work-life balance in this world. So trying to retain the talent we have and recognize that they are people first — they’re not automatons — is important.

Also, we’re not just competing with other agencies for talent anymore; we’re competing with client-side and freelance [operations], too. That said, I totally get why people don’t want to work at agencies anymore.

Why do you say that?

I have a daughter who just graduated, and I told her to go do something else. It’s too unstable. There’s no business model. It’s not done shifting. No one knows what this industry will look like in a year. I just feel like we’re on a seesaw waiting for everything to change again. I’d rather be driving an Uber than be in advertising. I really believe that one day they’ll find a mutant gene and find that everyone who stays in advertising has that mutant gene. It’s a high-risk, high-reward industry, and you have to have a high tolerance level. It’s been shifting so much, and it’s not done shifting. No one knows what this industry will look like in a year. I just feel like we’re on a seesaw waiting for somebody to jump off.

Was there a certain point when agency life became so unstable, you wouldn’t suggest it?

Probably a year ago. To be perfectly honest, my daughter doesn’t have the personality to be in advertising. I really believe that one day they’ll find a mutant gene and find that everyone who stays in advertising has that mutant gene. It’s a high-risk, high-reward industry, and you have to have a high tolerance level. It’s been shifting so much, and it’s not done shifting. No one knows what this industry will look like in a year. I just feel like we’re on a seesaw waiting for somebody to jump off.

How does the shift to project work make it harder to staff?

It’s about being consistent with the size of the staff. Work comes in waves. Right now we’re crazy busy. Then there’s going to be a lull. We do use a lot of freelancers; we offset [the gaps in staffing] with a lot of freelancers when things get busy.

Don’t all agencies say they put their people first?

I’ve worked at other agencies that don’t put people first, and I never want to do that again. I’d rather be driving an Uber than be that person and be in that position to lay rounds of people off. It weighs on me. The hardest part of my job is knowing everything and having to balance it. Like if we lose a client or a piece of work, the first place I go to is, “Are we going to have to lose a body?” I don’t look at our people as numbers on a spreadsheet. They’re people with mortgages, rents and kids.

Does the shift to project work offset the gaps in staffing?

Yes, freelancers when things get busy. It offsets [the gaps in staffing] with a lot of freelancers when things get busy.

Other than the changing nature of the business, what’s the hardest part about being in HR?

You deal with a lot of personalities. Sometimes I feel like a therapist. It’s hard to take everyone’s energy all day long, and I can’t go talk to anyone about it. That would just betray confidences. That’s probably the hardest part of working in an agency. I do have a group of HR friends, and we all bitch to each other.

But I think hearing people’s problems is my most important function here, even if it is emotionally exhausting. I’d rather they feel free to come in here and barf it up in my office than act out on the floor. We take it all so personally, but I’d rather they feel free to come in here, even if it is emotionally exhausting.

How do you attract talent when the business is so unstable?

It does take me longer to find the talent that we want. That pool of [talented individuals whom we find desirable] seems to be getting smaller and smaller. I hired someone recently who was weighing going with us or going [to] the client side because she was tired of the agency hustle. I do have to try to woo people over to give us a chance. We put people first here, and that’s what I tell everyone — that you won’t just be [part of] a revolving-door [situation]. But we have had layoffs in the past and those are awful. It’s awful to know who’s going to get laid off beforehand.

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Slow Death

When big-box chains cut back, a manager is often among the first to be purged. By Anna Hensel

When Toys R Us closed all of its stores for good in June 2018, Maryjane Williams, an assistant manager at one of its Texas stores, swore that she was done with the retail industry.

Like many retail workers, she had not been able to properly celebrate Thanksgiving with her family in 20 years, thanks to Black Friday requirements. And Williams says her schedule was made even more demanding by the fact that she was one of the few salaried managers at her store. If an hourly employee missed a shift, she was responsible to cover for the person.

“When I became an assistant manager, I just kind of lost track of time,” Williams says. “If you walk up to the front of the store and see there’s a line, you can’t just walk out.”

When retailers seek to cut costs, salaried store employees can be the first ones to get the ax. Among those who do remain, many of them say that their job is becoming harder and the hours more unpredictable, according to five current or former salaried managers Digiday spoke with.

“You can PR talk the hell out of cutting salaried positions as bloat and whatever, and a lot of your hourly [employees] aren’t really going to complain too much because it wasn’t them,” says a full-time, hourly department supervisor at a Lowe’s in the Midwest who wished to not be named.

Madelyn Garcia, a former manager for a Toys R Us store in Florida, says it used to have a minimum of four to five salaried managers before the company went through a leveraged buyout in 2005. By the time her store closed in 2018, she was the only one left. She now is a leader for the retail workers advocacy group United for Respect.

“You go by [stores] and it’s like, ‘closing sale, closing sale,’” Garcia recalls about her days working as the store’s sole salaried employee. “You are running back and forth constantly — if the cashier needs something or the customer. You are running back and forth to the back to unload shipments of merchandise,” Garcia recalls about her days working as the store’s sole salaried employee. “You are running back and forth constantly” — if the cashier needs something or the customer. “You go by [stores] and it’s like, ‘closing sale, closing sale,’” Garcia recalls about her days working as the store’s sole salaried employee. “You are running back and forth constantly — if the cashier needs something or the customer.

“More than 3% of our store management teams started as hourly associates, and more than 60% of our workforce is full-time,” and adds, “We are proud to have promoted 265,000 people last year to jobs of greater responsibility and higher pay.”

The store management team at a big-box retailer typically consists of a salaried store manager and perhaps some co-managers, along with other salaried employees who each oversee a different area like the electronics or grocery department. At Walmart, this adds up to 13 to 15 salaried employees at a supercenter with 300 to 400 workers in total, a former employee estimates.

But a retailer can’t completely shed all of its salaried managers because these staffers are the ones who can pick up extra work without being paid overtime. And that’s the biggest pain point for many salaried managers. They can never predict when that extra work will arrive, and any cuts to the salaried managers because these staffers are the ones who can pick up extra work without being paid overtime. And that’s the biggest pain point for many salaried managers. They can never predict when that extra work will arrive, and any cuts to the salaried managers because these staffers are the ones who can pick up extra work without being paid overtime. And that’s the biggest pain point for many salaried managers. They can never predict when that extra work will arrive, and any cuts to the salaried managers because these staffers are the ones who can pick up extra work without being paid overtime. And that’s the biggest pain point for many salaried managers. 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“The dearth of talent, Jenkins says, has played a role in her team’s decision to not launch labs in some cities. “It’s not sensible for us to go somewhere where there’s literally nothing,” Jenkins says, explaining that where communities are experiencing a news desertification, the few qualified people available tend to either leave their area or just walk away from media jobs.

Thus, the lack of local talent creates a chicken-or-the-egg problem for those communities. Local news operations might need to experiment with new business models, ones focused less on print advertising and more on producing different kinds of information and services for readers, according to Karen Rundlet, a director of the Knight Foundation’s journalism program.

“For the most part, this is an economic issue,” says Chris Krewson, the executive director of LION Pubs, a nonprofit that guides several local, independent news publishers.

Yet some of the very people who are trying out new things say that producing local digital news is doable. Don Day, the sole proprietor of BoiseDev, says he sees a lot of reasons for optimism. His mission, to create the conditions for news as a good small business,” Krewson says. “If we do, more people who aren’t just story sources.”

For the most part, this is an economic issue: Small publishers, serving small communities with small advertising budgets, can no longer survive by using their current business models for producing news.

But an enormous problem is the lack of reporters and digital talent needed to cover these communities. Young people continue to gravitate toward big cities. And without enough people to create news products whose consumption can be monetized in a new way, fresh experiments are scarce. But such explorations are needed, if managers are to figure out what a reconfigured iteration of local news production could look like. Without open-minded people being willing to try new business models or product strategies, the prospects for news companies might become grimmer.

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In the months following Donald Trump’s presidential election, many media companies decided they needed to do a better job covering heartland districts where voters had contributed to Trump’s surprise victory. Vox advertised a “distressed communities” reporting position. A squadron of Huffington Post reporters embarked on a yearlong listening tour, roaming the country in a bus.

But the blind spot that national publications discovered in their reporting about smaller communities across America turned out to be a symptom of a much larger problem. After years of print advertising’s revenue shrinking, budget cutting by private equity managers and Google and Facebook changing their priorities, local news operations are in crisis.

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Local news teams need to experiment to find fresh business models. But they need to find local reporters first. By Max Willens

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Local news teams need to experiment to find fresh business models. But they need to find local reporters first. By Max Willens

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Visa Limbo

Under the Trump administration, uncertainty and wait times for foreign-born talent.

As told to Kristina Manilas

U.S.-based advertising agencies have long depended on international talent. Doing so has required those agencies to sponsor visas and wait for approvals from the Department of Homeland Security, a process that has only become more arduous under the Trump administration. Now, as the difficulty and complexity of getting a visa has increased, with longer wait times and more scrutiny, some of the international agency talent in the U.S. say they are more uncertain about their future in the country and less likely to switch jobs as their ability to live in the U.S. is tied to their visa and employment status. Below we hear from three international agency employees—all of whom spoke to Digiday on the condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation with their visas—about visa struggles and how the current climate could make agency employees feel trapped.

Media agency employee with a family in the U.S.

When you change jobs—aside from the notice period and everything else—there are a lot of issues. You have to resign from work and leave the country, so you have a bigger gap window of an uninsured period with health care because you’re out of the market. Even though I’m happy where I am, it does weigh on my mind when I talk to people about potential opportunities. There is a subconscious feeling of needing to put up with things [where I am] because it is so hard to transfer my visa. My previous agency discussed that. They said, “If you leave, you know that we have a right to cancel your visa.” You’re powerless in that situation. Everything is in the agency’s favor with the visa. And a lot of agencies tie minimum commitments to hiring someone with a visa. Recruitment is also more involved. If someone from an agency reaches out to you that’s the best outcome because you can deal with all these things up front. They can say it’s a problem—it’s probably discriminatory but you have to live with it because of the nature of your work visa. The one that’s really painful is if you’re actively trying to get out and you’re looking at sites to apply. If you look at some employment forms, they’ll ask you if you need to be sponsored like that and if you tick that box you’ll get eliminated straight away because a lot of companies will have a non-sponsorship position.

Overall, there’s a heightened sense of risk when you’re here with a family than as an individual. [If you change jobs and have to switch your visa] you have to pull your kid out of school and you don’t know where you are going to school them in the interim. I don’t have a home in my home market anymore to go back to [while waiting for a new visa]. That unpredictability is not pleasant. If you’re staying at your same job it’s a lot easier to deal with the visa and the renewal process. Honestly, I don’t think I could handle the stress of changing jobs purely based on the visa issues. The alternative is that you can take the view of some members of the population, which is if you’re not happy you can just leave. I’m not enlased to my agency.

A lot of people that I know who were on visas at agencies in the U.S. have left as of late. The current administration is giving a lot of agencies pause on what they do and making a lot of people think about having a back-up. I know people who are asking if themselves if the uncertainty and stress are worth it.

A copywriter who recently changed jobs.

Recently, I accepted a position at an agency in the U.S. I’m working with their lawyers to sort out the visa. I feel like I should be working at a stronger agency but, unfortunately, given how this year has played out in terms of places I’ve talked to, this one agency was the only viable option for me. I had to weigh taking it or holding out and keeping looking for something in the U.S.

I was job hunting and talked to a bunch of really great creative shops. One that I really wanted to work at told me the visa is a really big hurdle for them because I’m mid-level and that they weren’t sure if it was worth it to sponsor someone who isn’t super senior. There’s no right time to bring up the visa. We typically don’t bring it up until after the interviewing stage and when there’s a follow up. There’s a sense that you’ll wow them so much in the interview that they’ll want to hire you even if you have the visa. Most people wait.

I’m not entirely comfortable with the contract I signed with this agency but it is what it is. In terms of payback, if I leave within the first year I have to pay back 100% of the lawyer fees for the visa. The second year, it’s still paying back 100%. So it teases me for a bit [when I talk to people who’ve said that if you get a visa transfer to a different agency and you give them a signing bonus it can cover some of the cost of paying them back]. Still, there is a bit of a lock down feeling with the first year. The biggest thing is to not switch jobs before you are near the end of your visa. A lot of the pressures come from. The current administration is giving a lot of agencies pause on what they do and making the most of the opportunities.

I’ve talked to multiple people and recruiters are telling me that it’s harder to get approval now. Timelines are getting longer. There’s a lot of freedom in the first year and there are two other years that you can stay. After that first year, there are a lot of restrictions and no one tells you about them. After the first year, you cannot fire, you’re not allowed to accept any outside money and you have to work full-time. The feeling of being stuck extends across several different levels.

When I accepted my current job, realistically with my visa, I knew I’d be here for a little over a year—and a half. Because of that I shut down the idea of having any other job while in the U.S. That’s not a bad thing, necessarily. But I’ve also encountered a lot of prejudice from companies because of the visa status. I was offered a senior writing position at an ad agency and I made it all the way to the final round. I did the writing test, I met with the entire team, I made it all the way through and they told me they wanted me. Only when I was at the offer stage—and they knew about my visa status—did they say that they wouldn’t hire me because of my visa status.

The recruiters are so unaware of the nuances of the actual visa that it’s unfair for me to learn at the final stage. From my perspective, I didn’t understand why a huge advertising agency wouldn’t be enrolled in that program. A lot of people working in the U.S. are under the H-1B or the O-1, which is the talent visa. Because of that, you’re supposed to stay at your current company and that’s where a lot of the pressures come from. The new employee won’t want to go through the entire process just to take a bet on someone who could be replaced by domestic talent. I’ve been with companies who ask me but there’s always a complete eye that comes from being someone who needs paperwork even if I’m doing the paperwork myself.

Content strategist who will probably leave the U.S. next year.

I’ve been at [this agency] for a few years and now I’m nearing the end of my visa. There are agencies that will support you and many that don’t. How stuck you are depends on the visa that you have. I’m on a STEM OPT visa, which is an extension of the student visa. While on OPT, you can freelance and work part-time. There’s a lot of freedom in the first year and there are two other years that you can stay. After that first year, there are a lot of restrictions and no one tells you about them. After the first year, you cannot fire, you’re not allowed to accept any outside money and you have to work full-time. The feeling of being stuck extends across several different levels.

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Slacktivism

The messaging app has become a connective tissue that has facilitated organizing at media companies. By Max Williams

Last summer during an especially contentious stretch of negotiations between management and labor at Group Nine, media executive Anzilotti, who was one of the first people to join an alternate Slack that workers used to organize a union at Fast Company in 2018, remembers how Simmons has been among the first workplaces to widely adopt Slack, with publishers ranging from Quartz to The New York Times starting to use it in 2015. And today, Slack’s tools are part of most media workers’ daily routines, while the platform’s emoji, gif and other extensions have made Slack conversations into a kind of lingua franca.

Since then, media workers have opted to create private Slack workspaces, separate from the employer-run ones, where they can communicate without being surveilled. These private workspaces have frequently served as forums where organizing efforts have sprouted. In Fast Company’s case, a small group of employees created a private Slack channel to discuss their concerns after their editor-in-chief was fired in 2017. The topic of organizing first emerged there about a month later.

Beyond serving a channel where people can figure out who’s interested in an organizing effort, Slack has helped forge deeper bonds among the people involved, enabling workers to speak more candidly with one another, in a way that company-run channels do not readily allow, according to several sources who declined to speak on the record.

The Tech Workers Coalition, which has helped lead organizing efforts at different companies in Silicon Valley, says it does not recommend that workers use Slack to organize themselves because the platform is not secure.

But for some people, their comfort with the channel might outweigh the risks of using it.

Members of the Freelance Solidarity Project, a division of the National Writers Union, are currently deciding on a messaging service that they can use to communicate with one another. Slack is one possible tool the group is considering among several, including Discord, says Ciao Chang, a member of the project’s organizing committee.

“If you have a lot of people on a channel talking about things that are pertinent, bonds are formed, no matter what,” Chang says. “And for freelancers, that’s an important aspect of what we’re trying to do because it’s an isolating way to work.”

Red Flags

How 5 advertising managers figure out whom to not hire. By Kristina Monllos

Hiring the right candidate has always been a challenge. But agencies are now competing for talent at a time when unemployment is low — and they are strapped for cash, grappling with extended payment windows and companies offering project work or trying to do because it’s an isolating way to work.

Evidence and hard data

The older I get, the more disloyal I am to my institutions. What I mean by that is that it’s not just about enjoying someone’s company and liking their resume. Evidence and hard data are key. I heard a speaker recently note that before hiring someone, it would be really valuable to see the candidate’s reviews by Uber drivers, for example. I love that idea. In an interview you want to challenge and probe to see what’s behind the words on a resume and make sure that the individual’s experiences match expectations. Of course, we look for some signs of the things we as a company hold dear — honesty, integrity, fairness, creativity, personal strength and an interest … in the world.

— Joe Kelly, IPG’s svp of talent

Not a team player

Evidence and hard data
Chemistry Lessons

How these co-founders discovered their counterparts. By Danny Parisi

Alex Waldman, right, and Polina Veksler, founders, Universal Standard

One popular image of a cofounder is that of a creative type — someone who designs a product, dreams up branding and serves as the face of the company. Then there’s the business type — the person who works behind the scenes and handles the financials and any acquisition deals. But for every brand, there’s a unique story. Here’s the magic behind how four real-life cofounders met and today share their duties.

UNIVERSAL STANDARD

Alex Waldman recalls one New York evening and the Fifth Avenue crisis that prompted her and her friend Polina Vekler to cofound their New York-based women’s fashion brand Universal Standard in 2015.

“There was a moment when she was going to an event but I wasn’t because I didn’t have anything to wear,” Waldman says. “I told her there wasn’t a single store on Fifth Avenue that had clothing for me. I took her to some of the stores and showed her. From there, that’s where the whole idea for the company really developed.”

They consider their differences in professional training to be a source of strength.

Waldman had creative experience, first working as a fashion journalist and then as a marketer. Vekler had toiled in the finance and private equity world, managing accounts in Russia, Kenya and the U.S.

Today the two like to joke that Vekler is a human Excel spreadsheet while Waldman is a walking Photoshop whiz. As creative director, Waldman designs everything related to their products, leaving most of the financial decisions to Vekler, who serves as the company’s CEO.

“It’s an arrangement that works great for us,” Waldman says.

DAGNE DOVER

When Melissa Mash and Deepa Gandhi decided to launch their New York-based direct-to-consumer handbag company Dagne Dover in 2012, they knew they needed to find someone to handle the creative side of the business. The two had met socially years ago through a mutual friend. While they had prior career-based backgrounds — both of them had spent time in the fashion industry — Gandhi as a merchantile planner at Club Monaco and Mash as a senior account executive at Coach — they didn’t personally know any designer types. That’s why Mash searched online, only to learn about Jessy Dover. She is now Dagne Dover’s third cofounder.

“For Jessy, I looked on the Parsons [School of Design] website,” Mash recalls. “At some point you could just search and find people’s resumes.”

She explains, “I searched for people with handbag design [experience] and asked them [about making] something like Longchamp meets Louis Vuitton sleekness. Only Jessy could really do that and she was a perfect fit.

In the early days when trio represented the only three employees, they worked directly with one another. Their roles were not clearly defined, they multitasked. These days the company has partnerships with Apple and Nordstrom and has begun exploring setting up a physical retail presence, drawing on the progress of a New York pop-up opened in June 2018. The cofounders now meet less frequently to deliberate over joint decisions.

“When it was just the three of us, we had to overthink every little thing to make sure we didn’t mess anything up,” Mash says. “But now, we don’t make every decision together.”

Addie Mash: “We each have our strengths. We talk, of course. But for financial stuff, Deepa takes over, and for creative stuff, Jessy does.”

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY

Gihan Amarasiriwardena bluntly rejects the notion of a “business guy” and a “creative guy.”

While students at MIT, he and Aman Advani had independently tried to develop a good startup idea. A professor connected the two after separately receiving an idea for a clothing company from each engineer. Within a year, the two were collaborating on prototypes; they launched the company in Boston as Ministry of Supply in 2015.

Instead of splitting their duties into “creative” and “business” slots, Amarasiriwardena relies on a different metaphor to describe their division of labor.

“We both have kind of similar backgrounds; we’re both interested in product and marketing,” he says. “But I came across this idea of the maker and the manager. The manager works in half-hour sprints, solving all these little problems and getting things done,” explains the maker sinks three or four hours into getting deep into a larger problem or product.

“For us, I’m more the maker, and Aman is the manager,” Amarasiriwardena says. “It’s a little different than how other people describe their work style. But I’ve found that that’s the best way for us.”

DIA&CO

Lidia Gilbert and Nadia Boujarwah met while carpooling to an outlet mall. They became fast friends as they attended business school and then decided to cofound plus-size fashion retailer Dia&Co in 2015. The company’s name draws on the last three letters of their first names.

The business school chums bonded over their shared fascination with the way that the definitions of beauty and style were changing; this informed their early conceptions of their company. Working at their New York headquarters early on, Boujarwah says, they easily plunged into their preferred areas of expertise, giving their partner permission to handle what she felt most confident about.

“We do gravitate toward different things,” Boujarwah says. “Lidia has always gravitated toward the operational parts of the business, and I’ve always loved the brand merchandising and community side of things. We divide and conquer.”

Both women say their close friendship has been key to having a good working relationship.

“I think about this all the time,” Boujarwah says. “What you hear so often when starting a business is, don’t start one with friends or family. But I can’t imagine starting a business with somebody who I didn’t have this personal trust and relationship with. I think we have a stronger relationship now after working together than we did before.”
As he does every weekday morning, an agency executive opened up the professional networking app Fishbowl one Wednesday in March and idly ran through some anonymous threads. He froze when he saw on some threads a mention of his agency citing its purported loss of a major account and planning layoffs. The exec knew this account was not true. But the rumor had seemingly taken on a life of its own: On the app as well as the company’s Slack threads, everyone was discussing this. “We had managers try to dispel the rumors, but in some ways it was almost too late,” he recalls. “It took on a life of its own.”

Gossip has probably always existed in the workplace. Researchers say it can serve as a glue to cement relationships and bring a jolt of energy to normally drab life in offices. Research by psychology professor Frank McAndrew at Knox College has suggested that gossip possibly evolved as a part of natural selection. His theory: Knowing more about people means someone can figure out whether to trust them. And the people one chooses to share more with are those more trusted. Never mind that gossip isn’t always completely accurate.

But the proverbial water cooler in recent years has been replaced by Slack, Gchat and other instant messaging tools. With the workplace ever more connected, productivity tools have been weaponized as unofficial company news services. “We look at gossip as a form of sentiment,” says an agency CEO who declined to speak on the record. “There are now more places where the chat materializes. There’s Slack and Fishbowl and the comments section on blogs and Twitter. We’re in a culture of venting.”

Technology is weaponizing gossip. Here’s how agencies are handling this.

By Shareen Pathak
This culture of venting is also driven by another, more difficult to pin down force: the very ways people are working today.

People are spending more time at work. For individuals who are just entering the workforce, the lines between "work" and "not work" are blurred. Work friends are also regular friends. That means that workplace discussions are also discussions between friends. This can be good for workplace bonding but potentially problematic if it leads to the rapid spread of misinformation.

"Gossip travels differently in siloed channels like IM or Slack than on open networks where people know exactly workers are concerned about. At another agency, its communications and PR teams use the app Fishbowl, as part of the morning routine.

A PR lead at one indie agency caught misinformation about her organization and used it to get ahead of the nonstory: "We are all forced in all ways to care more about what people are saying," says the agency’s CEO. "One of the corollaries to everyone gets a trophy is everyone gets a voice."

Agency executives say it makes sense to try to be on the alert. One advertising employee says her coworkers leaked gossip to outlets like the now-defunct blog Agency Spy when "they felt like agency leadership wasn’t being transparent." She adds, "It was a way to force leaders to address things, and it worked."

According to Fishbowl founder Matt Sunbulli, "Gossip travels differently in siloed channels like IM or Slack than on open networks where people know leadership is reading" comments. Sunbulli says he has witnessed agencies’ reaching out for information after reading certain comments on Fishbowl. "I won’t disagree that gossip is being weaponized," he allows.

With this as the new reality, advertising companies like The Martin Agency of Richmond, Virginia, are sharpening their focus on transparency and trust, says talent head Tina Chamberlain. The idea is that if they can get ahead of potential situations by being truthful, they can avoid gossip.

And things have shifted quite a bit at Chamberlain’s agency, where about two years ago the longtime creative chief Joe Alexander departed after alleged sexual harassment claims surfaced. When Kristen Cavallo became the new CEO, the agency put its "values" front and center, says Jacklyn Ruelle, who is Chamberlain’s partner in this effort.

"The agency is a brand, and the people are part of the brand," says Ruelle. The Martin Agency’s director in charge of cultural impact. "Our values have to be focused on candor. Gossip happens every day, but the key now is to be on the front foot," she observes. "If we’re open and honest about what is going on, then that mitigates (against material from) closed channels popping up on Slack. That can prevent instances of trivial gossip."

"It goes back to the movie ‘Player.’" He adds, "All rumors are true."

"All rumors are true."

The Future Is Female

(Founded)

Lola workshops its caring, inclusive culture at its women-led startup. By Katie Richards

Inside Lola’s Manhattan office, boxes of tampons and pads are casually strewn across virtually every surface, while text about the company’s personal lubricant product adorns the walls. A cotton plant greets visitors in the lobby — a nod to the company’s focus on offering subscribers 100% organic cotton tampons and sanitary pads (certified by Cotton Inc.), along with sexual wellness products.

In some workplaces, a public display of sanitary pads — not to mention daily conversations about sexual health — might be unwelcome, even taboo. But Lola’s leaders treat such matters as routine, part of what arises at a company where employees focus on various aspects of a woman’s life related to periods and sexual wellness.

"We’re a female-founded company that is focused on operating in a very intimate and stigmatized category — reproductive health," says Lola co-founder Alex Friedman. "We have a certain level of understanding and empathy for [consumers] and we hold that same standard for how we build, manage and operate our business and team. We want employees to feel... this inclusivity every day they come to work."

Implementing such practices can be challenging, though. Several relatively new women-founded companies like Lola with products marketed to women have opened their doors at a time when being exclusionary in any way could result in a business being “canceled” by consumers or called out on social media.

In 2017, Thinx cofounder and CEO Miki Agrawal exited her company in the wake of the airing of an explosive complaint of sexual harassment. Thinx makes what it calls “period underwear,” undergarments designed to absorb menstrual blood.

These types of scenarios at growing DTC companies are not uncommon. Earlier this month, Away CEO Steph Korey stepped down from her role after a report from The Verge called Korey out for building a culture of bullying at the DTC luggage company.

Employees spoke of working long hours with no overtime pay...
and having limitations put on their paid time off as the team at Away looked to grow the business quickly. Snippets of Korey’s conversations were published in the investigation via screenshots from chat app Slack, showing Korey critiquing employees and withholding paid time off. Korey has since been replaced by Lululemon’s Stuart Hastelden.

The Wing experienced backlash for allowing only women inside its co-working space; in March 2018 the New York City Commission on Human Rights opened an investigation of the company, cofounded by Audrey Gelman and Lauren Kassan. (The Wing has since changed its policies.)

“ ”There is a very fine line between having values as a company that represents an underserved demographic and then using it as a mechanism to get women to buy more things,” says Polly Rodriguez, CEO of sexual wellness company Unbound.

And direct-to-consumer bra company ThirdLove was called out after a September 2019 Vox article cited complaints that its workplace was male dominated, allegedly underpaid employees and encouraged bullying; social media commentators jumped all over this since the company (cofounded by Heidi Zak and her husband David Spector) leans heavily on inclusive marketing, showcasing women of diverse backgrounds and sizes.

“When these company values and internal policies don’t align with employees, it needs to be discussed,” says Ali Kriegsman, cofounder and chief operating officer of multi-brand retailer Bulletin.

“ ”Building a business and growing fast is really complex.”

Growing pains
After they launched Lola in 2015, Friedman and cofounder Jordana Kier wanted to rapidly expand its operations, bringing in large amounts of venture capital. Indeed, Lola raised $24 million in Series B funding in 2018, after three other infusions totaling $11.2 million.

Friedman says she and Kier desired Lola to be a growing business organization yet one that would reflect a caring attitude toward employees. Initially, though, Lola lacked a parental leave policy. In March 2017 after Friedman shared with Kier the news that she was pregnant, the two co-CEOs sat down to write Lola’s parental leave policy. Friedman was the first employee to use it; subsequently Kier relied on the policy, followed by Friedman again.

Today Lola has 40 employees. About 10% of them are now expecting a child, Friedman says. Lola’s current parental leave policy provides all new parents (mothers, fathers and adoptive parents) 12 weeks of paid leave. The Family and Medical Leave Act guarantees certain employees 12 weeks of unpaid leave.

Some direct-to-consumer startups, like many other companies, are now trying to offer above and beyond that. Women’s clothing company M.M.LaFleur, founded by Sarah LaFleur, implemented a 12-week paid parental leave policy in 2014. And after a new CEO, Maria Molland, joined Thinx in 2018, she instituted a parental leave policy with 12 paid weeks; she later expanded this to 16, with an optional, additional unpaid transition month. For these new women-founded companies, robust child care policies are table stakes. These days Lola’s founders sit down with parents before they take their leave to discuss how in touch with the company they want to be — if they desire total silence or weekly, even daily updates. And Lola tries to ensure that its workplaces are family friendly, inviting employee’s kids to social gatherings like Halloween costume contests. At Lola, inclusivity also means making sure new moms have access to spacious and comfortable rooms for pumping breast milk. The lactation room is as large as some of its conference rooms. “We want it to feel like a second home,” Friedman says.

Friedman says she wants all employees, not just parents, to feel free to take advantage of the company’s flexible work schedule. Employees can work from home or negotiate flexible hours to fit their needs, Friedman says, noting, however, that managers must be sure people do their jobs.

D
Digital Nomads

3 adventurers share what it’s like to work remotely while traveling the world

By Deanna Ting

Roaming the globe while working is becoming increasingly popular. A 2019 MBO Partners report found 7.3 million Americans had identified themselves as remote workers who travel, many more than the 4.8 million cited in the 2018 report. For people with media and marketing jobs, new technology makes this lifestyle feasible. But is being a digital nomad really as glamorous as it seems?

Three such workers share their experiences.

In 2018 Matt Oney, a digital marketer for a San Francisco startup, traveled with the help of Remote Year, a company that arranges accommodations and group trip itineraries for digital nomads. He even received a promotion that year. He now is a full-time remote employee who lives in San Diego.

I had a full PowerPoint presentation to present to my HR department and our CEO [on how it would work] from their perspective. Most [employers] think, Why would you ever want to incur this risk of sending an employee on a yearlong vacation? Time zones are a very real thing we had to tackle — and transparency. I set up weekly updates and meetings.

In some other industries, digital nomadism won’t fly. You need to be there in person; Slack is not enough. You can’t get your job done from a café.

One time in Cape Town, my work hours were from 12 noon to 9 p.m., so I woke up early and went to the ocean and swam with seals for a few hours, then worked a full day.

I was the youngest person in my program at age 25, but one of my best buddies was in his 50s. Exploring the world is for anybody. We had couples, singles, freelancers, full-time workers. There’s no age that you can’t do this.

Consultant Rebecca Stone worked full-time last year as a research analyst for a business-to-business media company while traveling abroad with the aid of Remote Year.

I once took a long weekend to go sailing and a manager said to me, “What is going on vacation to someone who works remotely?” I wanted to die a little bit. Letting your work justify your behavior is a constant battle in a world that doesn’t believe in working remote.

[Yet] I’m way more productive when I’m not in the office. You just have to be self-motivated. I actually wrote the same number of research reports that my colleague did.

It’s hard to be in the room [at the main office because] sometimes you miss the context of something that gets said. Because you’re exposed to a wide variety of ways of working and knowledge sharing, you’re not just meeting cool people, but you’re also learning about different industries. I learned about graphic design from a Swedish friend, film writing from a guy from LA.

You are your own worst enemy when you’re in a foreign country. You’re going to want to go to everything — every museum, attraction, restaurant. But you can’t lose sight of the fact that you’re also focused on your career.

Freelance journalist Jennifer Dienst also owns Row33 Travel Co. In 2016 she launched her digital nomad lifestyle by participating in Remote Year’s program but left it after three months.

Freelancing is a world that doesn’t believe in working remote. I was a woman traveling alone, but there are a zillion other women doing this, too. There are things you have to think about that men don’t, but I’ve had fantastic experiences. It may not be a permanent solution … but depending on your goals it can be incredibly valuable. So why not give it a try?

(”Remote Year COO Sam Pessin tells Digiday that from 2015 to 2017, its company’s programs sometimes fell short in the quality of accommodations or internet service provided. After investor funding arrived in late 2016, Remote Year’s customer feedback scores “have gotten a lot better and since then they’ve continued to stabilize and increase a little bit over time,” he says, adding that participants also receive an International SOS subscription to address safety concerns.”)

“Letting your work justify your behavior is a constant battle in a world that doesn’t believe in working remote.”
In the fall of 2018, rumors flew among employees of online publisher Mic.com. The avocados in the office were getting progressively “sadder,” the snack shipments were getting smaller and less frequent and the coffee had been switched out for a cheap brand that tasted terrible. That could only mean one thing: layoffs were coming.

“People definitely noticed when the snack supplies were running low,” one former Mic.com staffer said, adding that many staffers took it as a sign of “impending doom.”

That November the company laid off most of its staff, and announced a sale to Bustle Digital Group.

Free food, snacks and beverages are now a staple at many media and marketing-related companies. Their prevalence has even become something of an economic indicator of the health of the sector: If the flow of chips and fruit-flavored seltzer starts to slow, brace for a downturn.

But for companies picking up the tab for food, drinks and other convenience perks, justifying such expenses has typically been more of an art than a science. Conventional wisdom says catering, massage services and the like might help retain staffers and boost employee engagement and collaboration. But employers have no clear-cut metrics for assessing this.

As companies of all stripes aim to become more data driven and efficient, however, such blind spots are being examined more closely. And with the cost of food, drinks and other perks continuing to grow, so do attempts to quantify their impact.

“The short answer is that it’s very difficult to measure specifics,” says Michael Wesson, a specialist in human resources analytics and a business professor at Auburn University. “It’s just never going to be a company is spending X amount on food and is going to get Y back.”

While it might not be possible to track the impact of something as granular as potato chips, companies are increasingly setting up frameworks to measure how their overall benefits and perks package might influence significant business metrics.

Perks such as free food, drinks and yoga classes are now ingredients in the complicated calculus of many companies in assessing how to aid their efforts to improve recruitment success, bolster employee engagement and happiness — and mitigate employee turnover. Such efforts are often far easier to assign a dollar value to, and improvements to a company’s bottom line are attractive to an employer.

“Some companies are happy to just take a leap of faith” with the perks they offer, “but companies with good HR analytics programs know exactly how much turnover costs them [and] are comfortable investing in ways to limit it as a result,” Wesson says.

As a result, the areas where employers have made the largest investment increases tend to be closely related to employee happiness or associated with health and

The ROI of Snacks

How companies track the impact of free snacks and other employee perks. By Jack Marshall.
wellness initiatives. This includes efforts designed to keep employees comfortable in the office and ultimately spending less time outside it due to sickness or a lack of engagement.

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, the percentage of U.S. companies offering free snacks to employees rose from 20% in 2016 to 32% in 2018. Among organizations that increased their benefit spending in 2018, 44% also enhanced their investment in health and wellness-related offerings.

Investing in such programs is hardly inexpensive, though. While the cost of individual perks may seem small on a one-time basis, they add up over time. For smaller companies such expenses can represent yet another cost to consider if they are wrestling with how to meet payroll expenses each month. And for large, established companies, offering a range of perks to tens of thousands of employees amounts to a significant investment.

Google, for example, now employs nearly 100,000 staffers worldwide and offers the majority of them as much as three free meals a day through its 200 on-site cafes and restaurants. Its main New York City office alone features seven different themed cafes as well as smaller kitchens and snack bars scattered about.

A company spokesperson declined to comment on specific metrics Google tracks related to its catering program or other perks but says the provided food is intended to help drive "big innovative thinking, collaboration, and productivity among employees." Some companies now consider offering free food not just a chance to foster positive employee sentiment but almost a requirement. In an economy where competition for talent is fierce, many media, marketing and technology businesses decide they have little choice but to try to compete with the offerings of competitors. That may not translate into offering three catered meals a day. But in major technology and media hubs like New York many companies deem it important to have a story of their own to sell beyond their provision of a salary, health care and perhaps a 401(k).

"For whatever reason, the reality is it’s expected now," says a founder of a small Manhattan digital marketing agency, which offers employees free snacks at the office in addition to monthly happy hours at a local bar. "We can’t compete with chefs and yoga in the office, but for us it’s about making a gesture," he adds.

And some media employees admit that company perks are now something they weigh when evaluating potential new roles and employers. As cultural attitudes shift about work, wellness and work-life balance, many individuals now consider convenience perks a meaningful part of their compensation.

"I obviously wouldn’t say it’s a major reason I joined the company, but things like free meals are an attractive part of the overall package," says one Google ad sales staffer. She does not credit the policy with directly influencing collaboration or business outcomes but says she believes eating with coworkers helps foster closer office relationships. But companies serving up such perks should be aware that employees start to consider them as part of their compensation, according to Wesson. Once a business begins to offer something, it’s nearly impossible to remove it without employees feeling they are taking a pay cut. The downsides of removing perks almost always outweigh the upside of introducing them in the first place, he notes.

And Wesson advises employers with a sticky financial situation, “Maybe it’s better to be the company that removed the snacks than to be seen as the company that didn’t do everything it could to avoid laying people off.”

Many companies are offering employees paid subscription services, ranging from news and music services to personal and professional development sites like MasterClass. Others, such as PayPal and Box, are providing access to paid online communities such as Chairman Moms, a private social network for working women. Subscriptions and memberships

Companies are offering employees paid subscription services, ranging from news and music services to personal and professional development sites like Masterclass. Oftentimes, employers, such as PayPal and Box, are providing access to paid online communities such as Chairman Moms, a private social network for working women.

Gender transition assistance

Many insurance policies do not cover gender transition procedures. As a result, employee communication software company Jellyvision began offering its employees financial assistance for gender transition this year.

Egg freezing and fertility treatments

A few years ago, some technology and media companies started paying for fertility treatments. Now companies including Apple, Facebook and Spotify help employees cover the cost of oocyte cryopreservation and other fertility procedures.

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In-office wellness services

As employees’ concerns for wellness, self-care and work-life balance rise, companies have in years rushed to provide staffers related perks. Chair massages and yoga classes have gained traction. The Penny Hoarder now offers employees twice daily meditation sessions.

Pet adoption leave

Sometimes dubbed “pawternity” leave, paid time off is granted to employees who adopt rescue animals by companies including customer data platform provider mParticle. “I want to make sure that people who work here feel like they have a good work-life balance. If we can find people who are passionate about animals and animal welfare — and they’re also passionate about technology, we should hopefully be at the very top of their list,” says mParticle CEO Michael Katz.
Exploring the evolution of fashion and beauty

Glossy.co
First Impressions
4 Gen Zers report on their plunge into the workforce
As told to Kayleigh Barber

Ready or not, Gen Z is arriving in the workplace—and don’t think they’re just like millennials. 50% to 72% of Gen Zers want to pursue a side hustle or work for themselves, according to Robert Delcampo, Ph.D., professor of management and organizational behavior at the University of New Mexico.

“This group is the ultimate self-educators,” noting that he has personally observed some instances of Gen Zers exhibiting a “self-motivating, self-starting nature,” he says.

Digiday spoke to four Gen Zers; here are their initial impressions of the world of work.

Rebecca Newall, 23, is a visual designer at digital marketing agency Huge in Detroit, Michigan. She currently works on creative projects for Fiat Chrysler, Automobiles Jeep and Ram brands, but she’s been driven by her entrepreneurial spirit since she was a kid.

“I was 11 at the height of the recession. As a child, I was not capable of doing anything to help out my family, but I was aware of money being tight and the stress of that. I knew that I couldn’t support my family but I could make money on the side so I can go to the movies. So I started a business making websites for friends and family.

I taught myself to code using HTML when I was 10 while I was trying to perfect my MySpace page. I got really into web design. Then I transferred that knowledge to Yahoo GeoCities and I made my mom’s friend a website for her car washing service. I would charge $20 a pop. Every job I’ve had stems from a want to be independent and not be a burden.

In the short term, I’d love to try out different things in-house that go beyond my current role and my managers have been good about letting me do that. Ultimately, though, I am inspired by brands like Warby Parker and Away and I’d love to work at a start-up. I think it would be a possibility. It’s so competitive.

My first job offer was for a communications job at a small firm in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania but it wasn’t exactly in line with what I wanted to do, so I turned it down. It gave me confidence that I could find a job in the field I wanted, though.

I’m a contractor, so I’m full time but I’m paid hourly. I recently got my six-month contract extended. I don’t get paid that well, but I think it’s right in the mix for what someone should get paid for my type of work. I typically file one to two stories a day and that’s pretty much a dream scenario for my first job.

When this opportunity presented itself I couldn’t pass it up, even though I’m not making as much as I could’ve made outside of the industry. I hope to move up within the next six months to a year, but if that’s not the case, I’ll start the job search all over again.”

Maggie Kroenberg, 22, is a digital producer and social media assistant at Brides.com in Manhattan, New York. While she is currently in a contracted position, being able to write every day made the tradeoff of a salary and benefits worth it.

“During my senior year, I started applying to any jobs in communications. I’ve always wanted to work for a magazine in New York, but since they’re mainly going digital now, I didn’t know if that was it.”

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Carolina Sullf, 22, is a marketing associate at workplace consultancy Tier1 Performance. While her current job is rooted in the business-side of communications, she is optimistic that she can find ways to incorporate her love of creative writing and journalism into her career.

“I was attracted to Tier1 because it seemed more stable than the other places I was applying to. And I especially think that kind of job appealed to me right now because a lot of the writing that I was doing in college felt like it could be more based in freelance. I like journalism a lot, but it felt a little less clear or stable and I was less willing to take that risk to go full force into the industry.

As a creative, though, the side hustle is so prevalent and I’m starting to think about how that fits with my career. There’s a mentality that you can always do both—have your nine to five and then pursue creative things on the side. In the next phase of my career, I want to look at how some of my creative stuff can fit in with my full-time job.

I think my side hustle would be in the vein of running a website or content platform when I was writing and maybe eventually other people would write too. Or I like the idea of doing some freelance writing work.”

Cultural context
The term ‘Gen Z’ is often used to describe the generation born between 1995 and 2009. This generation is known for its technological proficiency, social media usage, and impact on consumer behavior.

As for the additional information provided, it seems to be related to a student named Maggie Kroenberg, who is a digital producer and social media assistant at Brides.com in Manhattan, New York. She has shared her experiences of working in the media industry and her thoughts on finding a balance between a full-time job and a side hustle. The article also mentions the challenges faced by Gen Zers in the job market and their desire to pursue a side hustle or work for themselves.
We honored finalists and announced the winners of the Digiday Awards, Digiday Worklife Awards and Digiday Technology Awards this past November at the Digiday Fall Awards Gala in New York City. Congratulations to this group of honorees.
What's Trending

The workplace is changing. We spoke to workplace experts and advertising employees to find out what 2020 will bring.

By Shareen Pathak

1. Not working is the new working

There is a movement against the entrenched mechanism of work. Whether it’s because millennials and Gen Z think differently about what work is, as well as more research and knowledge about the effects overwork has on mental health, one shift is that “not working” has taken hold. Josh Cohen, a clinical psychologist who also wrote a book called “Not Working,” says that more people are realizing there is, as the adage goes, more to life than work, and finding room during the workday to actively zone out — and “aimlessly drift.”

2. Crying at work is OK

Some of the same forces, says Cohen, are also leading to movements like bringing your “whole self” to the office, popularized by author Mike Robbins. Work used to be about work, but as people spend more time in the office, they’re also bringing everything from their likes, dislikes, hobbies, opinions and more. Some of that also means bringing emotions — hitherto thought of as the one thing you keep away from the office environments — into the workplace. Crying at work is no longer seen as a weakness, but as something natural. “Crying at work is OK, because laughter at work is also OK,” said one ad agency employee.

3. Mental health at work

“Last week, someone on my team asked me why I was taking time off for a day. I told them it was because I had to see my therapist,” says Omer Nisar of Digitas. “If I normalize it, it gets normalized.” Mental health and burnout are now more openly discussed — and diagnosed. As company executives become more open about it, so too does talking about anxiety caused by work — and figuring out how to fix it. “Being part of a workplace and being vulnerable is OK,” says Rabia.

4. Salaries become transparent

Google sheets with people’s job titles, locations and salaries across industries, from media to ad agencies to retail, are just one way one of the last workplace taboos — discussing salaries — has been broken. Pay secrecy, research shows, can be used to mask inequities by gender or race — finding out how much people are making in your level can help guide salary negotiations and ensure people ask for the right range. Pay secrecy is getting outlawed in many states — it already is illegal to retaliate against employees who discuss compensation for those with contracts with the federal government. “If you look at content like Refinery29’s Money Diaries, you can really see how people are more comfortable discussing what they make, and how they spend it,” says TBWA’s Rabia.

5. Side hustles

Generation Z sees work differently from their antecedents. Careers and work are important, but thanks to growing up during the golden age of influencer marketing and battered with entrepreneurial examples around them, many are starting “work” earlier and doing more than one job at a time. The Open University in 2017 found that 95% of this generation wants to start their own business — compared to 47% of millennials. And 53% of Gen Z don’t plan to rely on only their job as their sole income source. Rabia says this brings a new meaning to what “work” is. 79% of Gen Z wants to be doing multiple roles within one org, her research has found. “They want change and they want it constantly.”

How important are the following factors to your day-to-day satisfaction at work?

Sample: 195 publishers   Source: Digiday November 2019 Publisher Culture Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Time-off</th>
<th>Healthcare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: 195 publishers   Source: Digiday November 2019 Publisher Culture Survey
The End of Workwear

Clothes are just clothes, as work becomes a 24/7 pursuit. By Jill Manoff

So much for lengthy deliberations over desk-to-dinner attire.

As technology has led to work’s evolution from a 9-to-5 commitment to an always-on mentality, so, too, has the clothing people put on. Workwear has evolved so employees can simply travel without a costume change from their job to their leisure pursuit, home office to company headquarters, the airplane to a planning meeting. The idea of a separate work wardrobe is falling by the wayside, as the demand for styles with ready-for-anything versatility rises. “The shift reflects the new way of doing business,” says Ray Li, founder and CEO of 3-year-old custom workwear company Sene. “You need clothes that can work in a bunch of different settings. They make you feel put together, but they also travel well.”

In other words, comfort is key but not at the expense of style. To answer demand, fashion companies are increasingly producing pieces with classic silhouettes, of nonrestrictive materials that are suitable to wear to the gym.

Among Sene’s best-selling styles is its FlexTech suit made with athleisure fabric from a mill also used by Lululemon. Women’s workwear brand M.M.LaFleur’s suit made with athleisure fabric from a mill also used by manufacturers Schoeller Textil AG, which works with athletic wear companies including Under Armour. And Walmart-owned Bonobos, best known for its men’s work pants, is increasingly using performance fabrics. “The vast majority of our offering is now stretch garments,” says Micky Onvural, Bonobos’ CEO.

In step with the rise of streamlined, wear-everywhere clothing is Americans’ growing obsession with a simplified, Marie Kondo-inspired lifestyle. At the same time, consumers are shifting their budgets from things to experiences. Spending on fashion is falling out of fashion.

Trends in workwear throughout history have reflected the socioeconomic climate of the times. In the 1980s, women used power suits to signal their new economic power and establish authority in the traditionally male-dominated workplace. In the 1990s, Silicon Valley startups dictated style: Other workplaces took their cue from the booming tech companies, which set their dress codes to attract young talent as they aimed to disrupt the status quo. By that decade’s end, 95% of the U.S. businesses surveyed by the Society for Human Resource Management had established a regular casual day — typically Friday — compared with 24% in 1992.

The notion of a work uniform lingered, reinterpreted with the embracing of color: “Women have more awareness that it’s an embrace of color,” says Sali Christeson, founder and CEO of Argent. And though the suit has long served men as a no-brainer dress-to-impress option, that style whether worn today by a man or a woman sends the wrong message, Li says. “Corporate isn’t trendy; the people who are now respected don’t fit the stereotype of being corporate,” Li says. “They tend to break the rules, and they have range: They have their feet in content, and they’re also in tech, but they’re not hard-core tech, and they’re also in media.”

Declares Li: “People who just wear a suit aren’t seen as having that versatility.”

The idea of providing a capsule work collection or uniform still seems to resonate with consumers, but rather than its being casual or formal, the garments are pegged somewhere in the middle. M.M.LaFleur recently updated its signature Bento Box offering, of mix-and-match styles said to compose a complete work wardrobe, to a version titled Omakase; that’s Japanese for “I’ll leave it up to you.” Shoppers can now select from a variety of themed capsules, from a polished “Power Player” option to a travel-focused “Frequent Flyer” set. Other women’s fashion brands embracing work-ready capsule collections include Misha Nonoo and Wardrobe NYC.

For women, the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have also informed workwear choices. And women are now using their clothes to find comfort and assert control, says LaFleur. She referred to comfort as M.M.LaFleur’s top trend, based on strong demand for its styles made of an ultrasoft Italian fabric, which she says feel like “adult Snuggies.” What’s more, women are again striving to show men who’s boss through their attire.

“There’s a feeling of ‘I’ve had enough, and I don’t have to hide anymore. I’m going to show up, and I’m going to own the room,” says LaFleur. “They’re wearing more vibrant color, and they’re being more bold.”

Christeson also says she’s seen an upswing in women’s embrace of color. “Women have more awareness that it’s an uneven playing field and they have to fight harder, and being informed is leading to more confidence,” she says. “They’re aware that how they show up and what they wear matters, and they’re using style to reinforce who they are in the workplace. It’s an extension of their personal brand.”

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LaFleur points to the fact that fashion tends to be flashy when the stock market is rallying, so women wearing athleisure suits in a look-at-me color could be a temporary trend during an up market.

But all those interviewed agree, the comfy-making components once restricted to casual wear will stick — for Friday and every other day. | DIGIDAY 42 | CULTURE
By the Numbers

We surveyed agency and media employees to ask them about the realities of work. Here’s a snapshot of the results.

The majority of agency employees believe their jobs are secure.

Do you think your job is secure?

Source: 148 agency employees surveyed by Digiday, November 2019

Almost half of all publishing employees say their job is secure.

Do you think your job is secure?

Source: 192 publishing employees surveyed by Digiday, November 2019

A third of all agency employees say they’re worried about their mental health at work.

Are you worried about your mental health at work?

Source: 148 agency employees surveyed by Digiday, November 2019

A quarter of all publishing employees say they’re worried about their mental health at work.

Are you worried about your mental health at work?

Source: 195 publishing employees surveyed by Digiday, November 2019

Most publishing employees work under 44 hours a week.

How many hours per week do you work?

Sample: 195 publishers
Source: Digiday November 2019
Publisher Culture Survey

How many hours per week do you work?

Sample: 195 publishers
Source: Digiday November 2019
Publisher Culture Survey

A quarter of all publishing employees say they’re worried about their mental health at work.

Are you worried about your mental health at work?

Source: 195 publishing employees surveyed by Digiday, November 2019
You Can't Work With Us

A number of ultra-exclusive shared workspaces touting themselves as gathering spots and community hubs have sprung up. Here's how they stack up. By Jill Manoff

The Wing
Self-described as: “A network of work and community spaces designed for women of all definitions”
Funding: Raised $118 million in five rounds, with 24 investors including actress Kerry Washington
Locations: 13
Annual membership: $2,350 annually, $235 monthly
Waitlist: 35,000 in the U.S.
Member criteria: Must show their commitment to The Wing’s mission, according to the company. As of early 2019, following a discrimination lawsuit, men can become members.
Application process: An online application that, notably, does not include a prompt to upload a photo
If you’re lucky, you’ll see: Fashion designer Rebecca Minkoff and VC “celebrities” like Soraya Darabi, said a member

Dress code: “Very AYR and Mansur Gavriel, with a splash of Khaite and select designer items. No LV logo bags here -- think understated luxury,” said the member

Order: The Notorious RBG cocktail, made from vodka, orange, lime, sage simple syrup and cranberry
Amenities: An in-house cafe, a beauty room, showers, and a pump room
What people are actually doing vs. working: Select high-profile meetings occur during the day. Evenings are when most of the powerhouse women come out, usually to attend one of the programmed events.
Insiders know: It gets loud and crowded, and the private rooms get filled fast. But it has the best vanity and bathroom of all the clubs. “There are great products for skin and hair, and rooms to relax and get prepped to go out.”

Spaces
NeueHouse

Self-described as: "The private workspace and cultural home for creators, innovators and thought-leaders.”

Funding: Raised $78 million in four rounds from investors including Barry Diller and Diane von Furstenberg.

Locations: 3 (1 in NYC, 2 in Los Angeles)

Annual membership: $900/month for a non-permanent desk in a communal workspace to $4,500/month for an enclosed office.

Waitlist: All locations, number undisclosed

Member criteria: NeueHouse seeks members who are changing the world or the way we see it,” said a company spokesperson.

Application process: Your photo is required, a committee approves.

If you’re lucky, you’ll see: Members Salman Rushdie and Frieda Pinto

Dress code: No gym clothes allowed

Order: Cauliflower pizza or an Impossible Burger … if you dare (see below).

Amenities: A green room for featured panelists, a mothers’ room and a lounge space.

What people are actually doing vs. working: Meeting with executive coaches about monthly, in groups of 8-10 members.

Insiders know: The food is bad.

Chief

Self-described as: "A private network focused on investing in and supporting female leaders.”

Funding: $25 million in two rounds

Locations: 1 in NYC’s Tribeca, with a few to come in early 2020 including one in NYC’s Flatiron neighborhood, said Chief co-founder Carolyn Childers.

Annual membership: $5,400/year for vps, $7,800 for C-suite members

Waitlist: 7,000

Member criteria: Women executives vp- and higher level or above

Application process: Must report the number of people and the size of the budget you manage and what you’re looking to get out of a Chief membership. The latter meant to weed out those looking to abuse the access to executives.

If you’re lucky, you’ll see: Member Justin Timberlake

Dress code: Casual, no suits to foster a non-corporate atmosphere

Order: A Cleanse “elixir” or an $18 Dirty Steak from the Club Menu

Amenities: Cowshed spa, offering cryotherapy and laser treatments, hotel slippers, and personal shopping

What people are actually doing vs. working: Attending meetings, sipping cocktails or attending programmed events like film screenings.

Insiders know: Photography is forbidden, calls are restricted to certain areas.

Soho House

Self-described as: “A global private members’ club for people in the creative industries”

Funding: Raised $610 million over four rounds

Locations: 27 worldwide, 8 in the U.S.

Annual membership: $3,300 for all-access, $2,160 for local location only; members under age 27 pay half

Waitlist: 36,000 names globally

Member criteria: “We aim to assemble communities of members that have something in common — namely, a creative soul,” according to the website.

Application process: Requires letters of recommendation from existing members, personal photo

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Spring Place

Self-described as: “Workplaces and social spaces to build community, foster creativity, and spring new ways of creatively connecting.”

Funding: Funded by founders and co-chairs Alessandro Cajratti Civelli and Francesco Costa

Locations: 2 (NYC and LA)

Annual membership: Starts at $3,000/year, top-tier members pay $14,400/year and get a dedicated desk

Waitlist: Yes, number undisclosed

Member criteria: “Startups and entrepreneurs in creative and innovative fields,” according to a spokesperson

Application process: An online form, requiring social handle and a photo

If you’re lucky, you’ll see: A supermodel, in NYC, umbrella building Spring Studios is an official NYFW venue.

Dress code: Business casual attire enforced; no sandals, mene shorts or activerewear

Order: Sliders and mini crab cakes served by James Beard-nominated chefs

Amenities: A concierge offers members childcare, pet walking, appointment booking and personal shopping

What people are actually doing vs. working: Shopping. Retailers like Luisa Via Roma regularly host pop-ups in-house.

Insiders know: The rooftop sundock offers some of the best views in Manhattan.
The past 20 years has seen the spaces in which work happens change drastically, particularly for companies in media, marketing and technology. Since the early 2000s, offices have been seen by many companies as an expression of their identities. Technology companies installed slides to traverse floors and break out spaces made from reclaimed cable cars to inspire creativity; agencies used giant art installations as desks as a way to demonstrate their creativity and ingenuity to clients, and digital media companies distanced themselves from stodgy “legacy media” with warehouse-like office buildings and rooftop gardens.

But as the nature of work changes quicker than ever, and as cultural attitudes center more heavily around themes such as work-life balance, inclusivity, wellness and sustainability, approaches to workplace design are evolving rapidly too. Many companies are now focused less on the messages their offices send, and more on the type of practical environments they create for their employees. And of course, the continued acceleration of technological change is driving these shifts quicker than ever.

Adaptability and flexibility

As a result, experts say progressive workplace design is now focused squarely on adaptability. Companies that have the luxury of designing their own office spaces are no longer doing so for needs they have today, but are instead attempting to create spaces that are ready to adapt to technologies, job functions and business models that may not yet exist. This dynamic is particularly pronounced in the fluid industries of media and technology.

“You have to design for change. The world of work is changing, people are changing, clients are changing, our clients’ clients are changing. We work hard to make architecture that’s nimble to support that. It’s also just the sustainable thing to do,” says Colin Macgadie, chief creative officer at consultancy BDG Architecture and Design.

Workers themselves crave more flexibility, too. They perform best, they say, when a variety of spaces are available to them. But there’s no one-size fits all. According to Capital One’s latest annual Work Environment Survey, 85% of employees say a flexible design is important to them, and 77% of respondents said they perform better at work when they have flexible spaces available. Millennials also place more emphasis on it than older generations.

For companies, flexibility is about more than just flexible desk arrangements, breakout areas and collaboration spaces, however. Rather, it’s about creating spaces that can not only serve multiple purposes, but can be easily reconfigured. At a practical level that often means simple changes like less drywall, and more non-fixed furniture that can easily be rearranged.

The good news is this approach can also save money. Simple advances in technology such as wifi and long-life batteries mean that employees are now mobile then ever, so limiting them to desks, cubicles and “pods” is not only unnecessarily restrictive, but potentially uneconomical when teams and job functions are shifting so rapidly.

Measurement and analytics

But as in most areas of business, data and analytics are rapidly working their ways into workplace design, too. Concepts such as flexibility and adaptability are meaningless without the understanding of how spaces are being used and how they can be better optimized. And, of course, investors, boards and shareholders are increasingly calling for data to back up spending decisions.

As a result, definitions of workplace utilization are evolving, as are the methods through which they’re tracked. Sensors and other intelligent building technologies are now often used to measure how buildings and spaces are being used, and everything from movement to temperatures are often being tracked.

But according to Macgadie, companies are becoming more sophisticated with how they think about that data. Rather than simply looking at real estate utilization and the number of bodies that can be safely squeezed into a certain square footage, they’re increasingly attempting to tie use of space to more tangible business outcomes and metrics.

“It’s becoming less about efficiency and more about effectiveness. It’s not about density, it’s about whether a space is performing a certain task really well. If the output from that space can be quantified and is exceedingly high then that space is really effective,” Macgadie says.

Wellness takes centerstage

Health and wellness is another trend that’s rapidly working its way into the workplace. Companies are rapidly introducing perks and policies designed to keep employees happy and healthy during working hours, but that’s steaming into office design as well. Access to natural light is suddenly at a premium, for example, and companies say they’re increasingly looking to provide environments that promote movement and activity.

“The trend has rapidly moved up the agenda, and clients want to deliver a healthy environment that benefits their staff. Nobody ever designs workplaces to be bad for people’s health, but when people are selecting a job it’s increasingly something they take into consideration,” Macgadie said.

The features that employees say they’d most like to see include on-site gyms and workout areas, dedicated rest and relaxation spaces, access to outdoor areas, plants and natural light and healthy snacks, according to Capital One’s survey.

Meanwhile, companies are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their ability to tie features such as these to their overall performance. Human resource analytics programs are increasingly showing that investments in these areas might actually help them reduce costs associated with employee turnover, burnout, and disengagement.
The Great Sucking Sound

While automation threatens to displace millions of jobs in agencies, it’s poised to create millions more. By Seb Joseph

Unplug the router, cut the power cord, code the algorithm. Automation and artificial intelligence are becoming better at doing the jobs of advertising execs. The days of sealing ad deals by phone, emailed insertion orders and the occasional liquid lunch are no more.

While industry folks have deliberated the man-versus-machine question, automation in the form of programmatic advertising has upended the media buying process, changing many of the jobs required to run a campaign. Machines are simply better and faster when it comes to gathering insights, testing ads, learning what works and optimizing the result. But the dirty secret of programmatic advertising is that it still requires an awful lot of people.

“The promise of automation has led to more people needed to do more complex things but that’s because of the existing general infrastructure for campaign management that revolves around spreadsheets, notebooks and Post-it notes,” says Adam Ray, CEO of independent media agency 59A.

This is a story that’s largely played out across the global economy. While many preached doomsday scenarios for automation obliterating work, unemployment rates in most advanced economies are at historic lows. Economies tend to adapt to technological change and for every job lost to automation, a new one is often created, albeit sometimes requiring different skills.

This is broadly the story taking
place in ad buying. By taking away the easy parts of running campaigns, automation has made the harder parts of an ad buyer’s job even harder. Dated campaign reporting methods still seem to be the norm rather than the exception, despite the automation of the media buying process. Half of the campaign reports assembled by programmatic advertising traders from November 2018 to January 2019 were created manually, according to 60% of the 93 respondents surveyed by ad tech company CtrlShift. Just because a job can be automated does not mean this will happen. A cacophony of economic and organizational factors within agencies has restricted the spread of automation to all parts of campaign management.

Tighter constraints on a campaign, whether its viewability, brand safety or the potential for fraud, mean more work; each one of those variables requires a report; such reporting is often submitted on a weekly basis, Faulkner says. Once fully automated, Mindshare’s campaign reporting will be available to agency execs from a dashboard that collates how the ads are performing in real time. Rather than spending all their time aggregating information from different sources, the agency’s traders can sift through the data and more quickly react to it.

“Automation hasn’t made the operational process of running campaigns any easier,” says Alexis Faulkner, who heads Mindshare’s performance division Fast in the U.K. In fact, her team is spending a considerable amount of time these days making sure campaigns meet advertisers’ specific needs. When advertisers want to be sure that a particular client has the best possible chance to see its ad paired with a news story from a trusted site and not one about a contentious topic, those conditions are often manually entered, Faulkner says.

As inefficient as these processes can be for agencies, when algorithms and software platforms work in harmony, the results can be lucrative. Mindshare’s sister agency Essence has built its own campaign management platform Olive, which the company claims can outperform the effectiveness of human media buying decisions 40%, while lowering costs 35%. And the success of this platform appears not to have cost jobs. Essence is currently advertising on LinkedIn 93 jobs (including trader and data scientist positions), with 70% of the openings focused in some way on buying media or managing the technology that does so.

“It’s important to acknowledge that a lot of roles in programmatic have changed, but if anything there are more of them now, not less,” says Amir Malik, an Accenture Interactive digital marketing expert. “The way that these roles develop in the next couple of years will be really important. As with any automation technology, its role should be clear — to enhance the role of the human, not to replace it outright.”

Fewer people with arts and humanities skills are being recruited in favor of individuals with science, technology, engineering and mathematics knowledge, says Richard Dance, the chief digital officer at Publicis Media agencies Blue 499 and Spark Foundry. “We’re looking for a blend of high emotional intelligence and strong analytical skills,” he says.

As the programmatic advertising matures, agency recruiters are trying to keep pace. After all, it’s one thing for a trader to trust that an algorithm has good data but another to just let it do all the work. Gone are the days of trusting mysterious algorithms. Consequently, automation is reshaping agency workforces. And it will transform 80% of the jobs within agencies by 2030, Forrester has predicted, with agency execs starting to see the beginnings of this transformation next year. Account executive and project manager roles will begin to merge, per Forrester. But this transformation won’t come without sacrifice. Roles linked to skills in production, project management, account management, strategy and creative tasks will have many of their responsibilities automated via workflow platforms and automated media and creative technologies, according to Forrester.

“Traditionally, we would’ve employed people who were good with clients and whose job it was to book inventory,” Faulkner says. “Now, we need technical people. We need specialists who understand how to run campaigns on different platforms. The problem is, clients want generalists who can talk across all their marketing.”
CloudKitchens has reportedly raised as much as $400 million in venture capital. Kalanick is one of several entrepreneurs who see dollar signs in this reimagination of the restaurant industry. Others include Kitchen United, Reef Technologies and Zuul Kitchens. While all incorporate the general concept of building commissary kitchens to rent to delivery-only businesses, some of the business model details differ. CloudKitchens, for example, appears to have its own restaurants selling meals exclusively through delivery apps. Zuul is catering to already-prominent fast-casual establishments like Sweetgreen seeking growth while bearing lower costs.

According Zuul cofounder and CEO Corey Manicone, the biggest issue city restaurants face is the cost of real estate. "Gone are the days where you can open up 15 brick-and-mortars across New York City," he says. "The future of the market is going to be one or two flagships." He bases his business thesis on data. Delivery services generate as much as half of the revenue for fast-casual and quick-service restaurant establishments, he claims: "The signs are leaning toward delivery being a massive component of the restaurant ecosystem."

Manicone’s past business history may also inform his current ambitions. His father rose through the ranks of a Colorado IHOP and eventually owned his own franchise. Then he decided to open up his own bar and grill, which proved less successful and was shuttered while Corey was in college. "I told myself that eating at an establishment was going to be the extent of my [restaurant] involvement," Manicone says. What killed his father’s business was quite simple: Running restaurants can be expensive. They require high rents, low-margin products and lots of labor. The figures differ by region, costs and demand, but most restaurants have a profit margin in the low- to mid-single digits.

Founders and investors doubling down on the ghost kitchen phenomenon claim they are simply tapping into a growing consumer demand for dining services. But another important element is part of the equation: labor. A food business that serves its customers exclusively off premises need not rely on front-of-house employees, including waiters and bartenders. "It’s really just the food prep, the sous chefs and chefs," says University of California, Santa Cruz sociology professor Chris Benner.

Thus, the business model for ghost kitchens relies heavily on lower-paid positions while outsourcing or dispensing with some expensive ones. "The food system is where the dominant number of low-paid jobs in our economy," Benner says. From his perspective, "the only living-wage jobs in restaurants [are] in the front of the house and bartending." Chefs are perhaps the only traditionally non-low-wage position that remain in the ghost kitchen schema.

The other part of the ghost kitchen calculus involves demand. Analysts consider food delivery to be on the precipice of explosive growth. L.E.K. Consulting, for example, forecasts restaurant delivery sales to grow 300% faster than on-premises sales over the next three years. This shift has yet to be fully realized, however, and many analysts likely overemphasize urban locales and certain types of establishments. "For most restaurants," Benner says, "the delivery portion is single digits of their total revenue."

And brand recognition remains important. "The vast majority of home delivery of prepared meals is from restaurants that customers already know," he says. Businesses like GhostKitchens — relying on new restaurant entrants renting out hidden spaces and marketing themselves — are betting on consumers being comfortable about ordering from establishments they have never visited.

The trend is still in its infancy, but change is afoot. For Manicone, Zuul is perhaps a circuitous mea culpa for his father’s restaurant failure. The cutthroat, low-margin business didn’t work for his dad, and he’s discovered another way. Manicone doesn’t philosophize too deeply: "Me and Zuul are trying to skate where the puck is going to be," he says.
**Robot Attack**

Why journalism professor Nicholas Diakopoulos doesn’t fear the automation of newsrooms...

By Deanna Ting

The idea of journalists being replaced by bots seems downright terrifying, but Nicholas Diakopoulos wants people to stop worrying.

In a new book, “Automating the News: How Algorithms Are Rewriting the Media,” he argues that far from destroying jobs in journalism, artificial intelligence appears to be creating them.

Digiday caught up with Diakopoulos, who oversees Northwestern University’s Computational Journalism Lab, to gain his perspective on how AI will affect journalism processes.

We’re not talking about entire jobs going away. We’re talking about tasks, things that a person might do over the course of a day being done by algorithms instead: recording, listening and responding, negotiations with sources, pushing back. AI can’t do any of those things.

AI can often augment the work that journalists do. It can make people more efficient. It can enhance the quality of journalism processes.

We should think about the hybridization of journalism and automation. We should not be so afraid of jobs going away as much as jobs changing, new rules and new tasks emerging. And more [often] than not, what I found in my research is that AI creates new types of work.

What will these jobs look like?

Take the Associated Press’ automated writing program. Its systems create new tasks where people have to configure systems and add parameters and knowledge bases. They have to [compile] data sets and write templates. It’s a distinct activity from the normal writing process that journalists would have.

These new types of tasks are more data oriented but also editorial in nature.

First things first. Will AI take away journalism jobs?

One of the early things about AI in the newsroom is that everyone was worried it would take away jobs. That really wasn’t what I found in my research. It’s estimated that only 15% of a reporter’s job and 9% of an editor’s job could be automated using technology.

We’re still sorting that out. Hopefully these jobs will be human centered to enable work that human journalists need to get done, and it can take a lot of forms.

With automated writing systems, journalists need to write with what I refer to as an “alien word processor,” which allows for inserting data and logic. That’s a different type of writing that requires journalists to learn to write or think in a slightly different way. To do that kind of template writing, organizations might look for journalists who have an affinity for data or writing in more abstract ways.

I could probably teach a whole class on this. What will Writing 101 look like for automated writing? We will see more automated writing systems; the BBC will cover the upcoming elections using semiautomation, for instance.

There’s also this notion of editorially informed automation, taking core journalistic values and thinking about how we incorporate those values into the algorithm and into automation. An example of this would be a public-service recommender algorithm for a news feed that curates content differently for different people and there are opportunities to build tools so editors can make better informed decisions about content.

What will be some new ways we’ll see more automation in journalism?

One thing we’re researching in the lab is whether we can personalize article content itself. Can we adapt writing to the reader’s location or preferences? Can we organize facts in a different way to appeal to different kinds of people? We’re exploring some different applications of that.

The New York Times blog said that its editors pick sections of the homepage to be personalized and localized. Based on where you are visiting, it might chance the selection of editors’ picks they show you. They saw a 55% boost in click-through rate when they did that.

My own opinion is that as organizations like the Times adopt more of these approaches that we typically associate with Google, Facebook and Apple, there’s a really interesting opportunity for having an algorithm curate content differently for different people and there are opportunities to build tools so editors can make better informed decisions about content.

“AI can often augment the work that journalists do. It can make people more efficient.”

[They] might not look like today’s journalism jobs, but they’re not purely technical jobs. They’re hybrid jobs.

How much hybridization will this involve? That is, how much of the work will be automated and handled by AI and to what degree will the tasks be handled by humans?

We’re still sorting that out. Hopefully these jobs will be human centered to enable work that human journalists need to get done, and it can take a lot of forms.

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There’s also this notion of editorially informed automation, taking core journalistic values and thinking about how we incorporate those values into the algorithm and into automation. An example of this would be a public-service recommender algorithm for a news feed that curates content. AI is a new medium in which journalists can express and inject their editorial values through code that they invent.
Scandinavian Living

Nations across Scandinavia are known for their progressive social policies, generous parental leave programs and publicly funded health care. They also offer some of the best employee benefits packages in the world. Sweden provides a two-year shared parental leave allowance. Meanwhile companies in Norway grant certain employees country vacation cabins for their use during the summer months.

Could this be why the region regularly earns high scores on the United Nations’ World Happiness Report? Here, three denizens of the region explain local secrets to maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Laila Dahlen, Schibsted Media Group’s chief product officer in Oslo, Norway

“For me, it was a life choice to move back to Norway. I would have had less time to spend with my daughter if I continued to live and work in the U.K.

The Scandinavian model is based on mutual trust and flexibility. Men are really encouraged and expected to take their part of the parental leave: 15 weeks of the total leave [of 46 weeks in Norway] are reserved for the father.

In a workplace like Schibsted, both the company and colleagues understand and respect that people need to have their family life sorted out. This means that we often know quite a bit about our colleagues’ families. For instance, on a Sunday in December, employees’ children are invited to the office to make holiday decorations together.

The most important message is that to have this work-life balance does not affect your career in a negative way. Rather, it’s seen as necessary for all of us to contribute our best at work.”

Linnéa Falsen, human resources partner for Pernod Ricard in Sweden

“In order for us to get ambitious people, we need to offer great benefits. Here, people work to live rather than live to work; it is a culture. They want to leave at 3 p.m. to get to their families. I leave at 3.30 p.m. some days.

In all aspects we need to be flexible. Previously benefits we offered were more favorable for people with young families. So in January 2019 we introduced benefits more suited to one-person households, like increasing the sum for keep-fit activities, subway tickets, movie tickets, massages, grocery delivery and home construction — while people with families get child care services and study buddies. We’ve tried to incorporate both.

The flexible system hasn’t been live for a whole year yet but in a survey across 61 organizations [carried out by benefits tech platform company Benify], our employees are 31.3% more satisfied with their benefits offering compared to the average.”

Øyulf Hjertenes, director of Schibsted Coast in Bergen, Norway

“There are leaders who say that they can’t take leave. I hate to break it to you; it’s an illusion.

A lot of leaders, men and women, myself included, are appointed and promoted just before [taking] parental leave. This makes way for people coming up. It’s a great way of developing competencies, developing people and making a more robust company that can take on changes more easily. Someone staying in the same position for 10 years is too rigid [of a practice]. This is the modern way of doing things.

For the generation coming up now, the work-life balance and purpose of what we are doing is important for our teams. In parts of Europe longer leave is difficult [to provide] because of the financial situation. But Germany, France, the U.K., everywhere needs talent. And this [could be] a way [in such countries] of making it attractive.”

Workplace offerings include paternal leave inducements, cabin retreats and perks for one-person households. By Lucinda Southern
Each week, Wendy Clark is typically on the road for four days. As the global president and CEO of DDB, Clark’s job is based in New York but she lives in Atlanta. To avoid uprooting her family after moving from Coca Cola to DDB in 2016, Clark configured a travel schedule that allowed her to move to the agency and maintain her home base.

“I do what I call extreme flying, which means there’s not a 6 a.m. or red eye flight that I haven’t been on at some point,” said Clark. “I usually say my office is in the sky.”

The global role, which Clark assumed in February 2018, has her traveling even more frequently and, as to be expected, all over the globe. While it’s unclear how many miles she has traveled in the last year, Clark calculated that she’s flown over 2 million miles total on Delta, her primary airline. To understand how to manage that kind of travel — and get tips on how to maintain it while staying sane — Digiday caught up with Clark.

Sleep math is a must
I’m focused on maximizing my time at home and time away, so I have to do the math on sleep. I don’t have an adjustment day. I typically land, take a shower and go to a meeting. I have to be mentally and physically ready. Therefore, I have always done the math on what time zone I’m going to, when I will next get to sleep on the time zone and how many hours I’ve got to be sharp and awake, not just awake. I do my sleep math where it’s like, OK, I can sleep on the first flight but I cannot on the second flight because I’ve got to be really tired by the time I land.

Hotels will probably open their gym for a traveler — even at 2 a.m.
A whole day on two or three hours of sleep that can be tough. The remedy for that for me is exercise. If you go to the gym right when you get to the hotel and exercise it gives your body added energy. The proxy for sleep, if you can’t sleep, is exercise. I am well known for getting off a plane and going to a gym. You don’t do vigorous exercise but breaking a sweat and doing some cardio is really helpful. I have asked hotels to open gyms because I’m awake at three in the morning. People should know hotels will open a gym for you.

Road warriors will quickly figure out where the Wi-Fi gaps are
Wi-Fi is important. These flights are long and you can use them to catch up. Every now and then I’ll get texts like, “I see you landed,” because 60 emails go out. I was on a flight with some colleagues and up near the Arctic Circle the Wi-Fi always goes out. A colleague came up and he’s like, “Is your Wi-Fi working?” I looked at the map, “I was like it doesn’t work up here.” I can tell you the gaps and blackouts in the global Wi-Fi coverage. I plan around them.

Pre-empt the delays that come from checking a bag on an aircraft
I am violently against checking a bag. Some way, somehow get that stuff in one bag. The trick is using the same shoes because shoes taking up the most room. I’m an advocate of the OGIO suitcase. It’s designed well for you if your goal was never to check.

On the plane, dress for maximum comfort
During the summer months I always wear flip flops on a plane and I dress for maximum comfort. I don’t always look like the CEO of the global network. I’m in jeans, flip flops and my hair in a clip. I don’t wear makeup because it’s only going to crust on your face for 12 hours. Be really low maintenance and be dressed for comfort. You can take a shower on the other end.

Book a hotel that’s within walking distance of the office
While an absolutely fabulous hotel might be on the opposite side of town, I’m the person who wants to be walking distance to the office. I’m not there for myself. I’m there for the team and to do business.

Parents should own how much they travel
When my kids were younger, there would be moments when I would be leaving and we’d have tears or “Mommy don’t leave.” Every part of you wants to say, “I don’t want to leave.” But you shouldn’t say that because then you’re like given a nine-year-old a dilemma to figure out. You’re leaving but you said you don’t want to and they don’t have the mental processing to figure out why you can say that and still go. So the one thing I did was say, “Mommy is excited about going.” You have to own it.

Don’t be afraid of turbulence
The reason I’m not afraid of turbulence is I have quite a Zen feeling about it — there’s absolutely nothing you can do at that point. If the plane is going down, the plane is going down. You panicking, grabbing stuff, hyperventilating is only going to mean that the end of your life was not as peaceful as you might want it to be.
Sacred Sundays

Workers are increasingly taking to Instagram to announce they’re closed on Sunday. **By Jill Manoff**

Today’s workforce is claiming Sunday as a sacred, work-free zone. The workweek is no longer "the time." "There’s no longer a natural work time," says Ashley Merrill, CEO of luxury sleepwear company Lounya, which includes in its collection a Renter set that include pajamas, a sleep mask and a candle. "Our cellphones follow us everywhere. Everything is at our fingertips, and you could be communicating with people from work all the time." She adds, "It’s created a whole shift and conversation about balance that we never had to have before. You have to actively create moments, days for yourself to unwind because the hustle never stops." The reason Sunday has become the important wind-down day is because workers use Saturday as a buffer day, to case out of being in work mode, Merrill asserts. Emily Parr, founder of HollieFrog Skincare, says she dedicates her Sundays to self-care, which for her includes taking back-to-back workout classes, walking her dog in New York City’s Central Park and ordering in (usually cooking a meal). "The #SelfcareSunday movement came from the fact that everyone is trying to slow down a bit on Sunday — and because of that, they actually have the time to do that face mask," says Parr.

Merrick echoes this theme, saying the impulse for Sunday—me routines stemmed from people becoming more purposeful about the ways they spend their free time. "Now you can do so much at home: You can order your dinner from Postmates, you can watch Netflix," Merrill says. "You get time back when you do things at home, rather than go out. More people are choosing to spend it feeling like their best self," she adds.

Maritana Hewitt, cofounder of vegan skin-care company Summer Fridays, says she takes time for self-care on Sundays to ensure that she will be prepared for what Monday brings. "If I don’t take that time off, I don’t feel rested, and I don’t feel motivated or excited to start work up again," Hewitt says. "I have work mode and I have time-off, and giving myself boundaries and balance has made Sunday not too scary anymore," she says, citing another popular hashtag, #SundayScaries. She named her Summer Fridays brand, launched in early 2018, after the wonderful feeling of claiming some personal time off, Hewitt explains. And Hewitt’s skin-care company isn’t the only one piggybacking on the #SelfcareSunday trend. Influencer marketing platform provider Tribe Dynamics detected that the hashtag is driving an increase in earned media value for the top 50 skin-care brands. (EMV measures comments and likes about a brand on third-party social media content.) In the first 10 months of 2019, these 50 brands’ total EMV associated with #SelfcareSunday was 81% higher than all of 2018. Some people started documenting their self-care routines when, after pricey juice bars and boutique gyms multiplied, wellness became a status symbol, Parr asserts. "Flaunting your wellness on social media has become a very cool thing." Parr says. "People love to show a picture with their trainer; they love to snap their smoothie. "Self-care’ has become synonymous with providing trendy [social media] content."

But for Parr, "When I’m practicing self-care, I’m not documenting it or taking the time to style a perfect picture," she says. "I’m just present."
Making Short Work (Of It)

More people are talking about the Four-Day Workweek than ever, who knows? That’s a brief synopsis of the changing story arc in coverage about the four-day workweek. It’s undoubtedly the Himalayan Yeti of routinized labor schedules. The most recent organization to trumpet the truncated workweek is Microsoft Japan, which boasted about its four-days-a-week trial last summer. The company gave more than 2,200 workers Fridays off but paid them the same. The result, according to Microsoft’s own report, were generally good; the company saw on energy costs and productivity increased.

In the wake of these preliminary findings, the online content machine pounced. Dozens of news articles appeared as outlets, from CNBC to the New York Post and NPR, covered the findings. This small experiment produced what was deemed some potentially positive results — along with a barrage of dramatic headlines, almost productivity porn. Microsoft Japan is now hedging a bit on the takeaways from last summer, saying it might try the shortened workweek this winter but not promising to.

While the four-day workweek might sound like a dream to some people, few organizations have initiated large trials. And some experiments underwent decision-makers. In 2008, the state of Utah, for example, adopted a 10-hours-a-day schedule for its state workers, four times a week. Officials embraced the change because of the then growing expense of gas. Yet state planners detected only a modest uptick in energy conservation, NPR reported in 2009, adding, however, that they found the new arrangement resulted in few savings. In 2011, Utah returned to its normal five-day workweek, save for a couple of cities and departments. Some advocates of the condensed schedule maintain, however, that the state didn’t give the trial a fair shot.

An estate planning company in New Zealand, Perpetual Guardian, has recorded perhaps one of the most well-documented experiments with a four-day workweek. In 2018 its 200-person organization did away with Fridays in the office, and a few months later gave the trial a resounding endorsement: The company permanently adopted a four-day work schedule. Perpetual Guardian’s employees and its CEO frequently discuss the matter on the record. “What we’re trying to do here is to frame the debate in a way that makes it easier for companies to say, you know, what, let’s give this a go,” CEO Randy Gutti says in November when his company reported its third-quarter earnings. But even with more organizations testing the idea, Steinman insists the real benefits won’t be reaped until many people press for its large-scale adoption like labor unions’ push for the eight-hour day. “A lot of the big benefits of the four-day workweek [don’t] happen until it’s society-wide,” Steinman says.

First it was a failure, then it was a success. Then it was a failure again, now it’s, er, who knows? The idea makes sense — jobs require multiple skills that transcend roles — the implementation is difficult and confusing. As a result, most companies that used matrix management came back to normal reality. Steinman insists the real benefits won’t be reaped until many people press for its large-scale adoption like labor unions’ push for the eight-hour day. “A lot of the big benefits of the four-day workweek [don’t] happen until it’s society-wide,” Steinman says.

First developed by Motorola in the 80s, then taken up by GE in the late 90s, Six Sigma is a pedagogy to try and improve organizational processes. The intent was to remove as many defects as possible by testing the quality of processes method at every step. Gamification: In the late 2000s/early 2010s, enterprise gamification was all the rage. It was essentially injecting fun, game-like elements into employee tasks and trainings to keep them engaged. While companies like Cisco and Deloitte have used gamification in various ways over the years, a 2014 Gartner study said that 80% of the applications using the tactic would fail because of poor design. Holacracy: The idea behind holacracy is that management is decentralized and employees are given more autonomy to self-organize. Its cheerleaders say it provides better transparency, and removes organizational red-tape that leads to inefficiency. Companies like Zappos and Medium adopted the program in the early 2010s — and some thought it to be the next big wave in management. — Cala Guthrie Weissman
The Elephant in the Room

How Drunk Elephant’s founder learned to be a boss. By Emma Sandler

Tiffany Masterson, Drunk Elephant’s founder, never intended to start a skin-care business in 2013, let alone sell it in October for $845 million to Shiseido Group. She describes her transition from someone with no management experience to chief creative officer of a company with more than 100 people.

I had zero leadership experience before starting Drunk Elephant. I never had any job position where anyone worked under me. And as the youngest child in my family, I was also bossed around my whole life. It’s an interesting twist in my life that I have ended up in a situation where I do have people reporting to me. I can’t say being a boss has come naturally for me. The only role I’ve ever had in my life as a boss has been as a mom, so I tend to lead that way.

That is to say that I love all my employees, and I am careful about whom I hire. I love to hire people with like-minded values and my company’s culture is important to me. I am a people pleaser by nature, and I like people to be happy and I don’t like to say no. I don’t like confrontation. So it has been hard for me to step into this role, although I do have discipline. It took me a while to learn ... how to tell employees I don’t like something or that something is not allowed.

At the end of the day, I lead by saying what I want, how things need to be and what I want people to do. I have a lot of great people who can execute around me, but I also don’t keep yes-men around me.

For the first two years of the business, it comprised ... one investor, my contract designer and someone to handle the books. Once we started selling through Sephora in 2014, our designer joined the company as our first official hire. I lead by finding people whom I trust and share values with and who allow me to make choices. But they don’t take advantage of my nature. I know what I know. And for what I don’t know, I have hired people with shared values who understand and respect my vision and can adjust their own, because we do things differently. The brand is coming from my gut, but I have learned to let people with more experience guide me. I have sat in on interviews with people before who say, “I don’t settle for less. I’m No. 1. I’m going to kill the competition.” [That] to me is not the point, which is to do something you love and actually help people with their skin.

We have about 113 people and we will definitely grow that with the Shiseido acquisition. I was very clear in my negotiation that the company should remain the same. I wanted to sell to a company that would let us have cultural autonomy. I decided early on ... that I wanted to take care of all of my employees and made them all owners of Drunk Elephant. It was a big part of how I showed my employees my appreciation of coming together and working toward a common goal.

“I have a lot of great people who can execute around me, but I also don’t keep yes-men around me.”
Recently, an exasperated top media executive asked me a question: “What is a progressive media company to do to keep their people happy?” He ticked through the various programs the company had in place, its strong culture, comparatively good pay. It is a discussion that plays out in most conversations with top execs. No matter where the starting point, conversations tend to veer to issues that make up the wild world of the modern work experience.

For years, these issues — entitled and flaky employees, infantilized work cultures (thanks Google), constant pestering for unearned promotions — were best filed under “WTF millennial.” Now, however, it’s clear that the changed nature of work and the office is more than yet another skirmish in the rolling generational wars. For starters, millennials aren’t new to the workforce, they’re your boss. The oldest millennials are now 38. Instead, younger workers have caused a reexamination of the place of work in a fulfilled life. There is a broad rejection of many aspects of work that were taken for granted for too long.

On the surface, this is a strange time for a bottom-up revolt. Few people would have predicted the revival of unions in media a decade ago. In the time since the financial crisis, the economy has shed many jobs in certain sectors — manufacturing, apparel, media — but it has added many more. The U.S. economy is at functionally negative unemployment. There are more jobs than people to fill them. The U.S. gross domestic product has expanded for over a decade. And yet there is rising discontent. This baffles many bosses.

What I told the exasperated exec over coffee is that, in my view, companies are being held accountable not just for their own shortcomings but the overall failures of an economic system that is patently out of whack. Younger people have simply felt the brunt of it more. They are graduating from college with a total of $1.6 trillion of outstanding student loan debt. Home ownership in many cities is an absurd fantasy. Yes, the S&P 500 is up 27% this year. That’s great for the half of Americans who own stock, but a junior employee struggling to pay rent doesn’t.

Companies themselves bear their fair share of the blame. Corporate profits have expanded to high levels. The 2017 tax cuts for companies expanded these even further. Some companies used the extra cash to pay down debt, some to pay dividends to shareholders or enact tax buybacks, few passed the extra cash in a meaningful way to workers. Too many workplaces have focused on “culture” in ways that are wearing thin for stretched employees. Endless activities can make the modern office feel like summer camp. The free snacks, outings and team building exercises are nice-to-haves, but they don’t make up for rising health care costs that are passed on to workers. Oh, and workers are onto the open-office scam being about saving costs, not fostering collaboration.

On a day-to-day level, many workers are also rejecting the entire idea of “suffering” as a requirement for getting ahead. Seasoned workers — that means older, by the way — love to regale the young on how they had to put up with untold amounts of humiliation and deprivation on their way up the career ladder. Their charges aren’t buying it, dismissing it instead with a terse “OK boomer.” And they have a point. The saga at luggage company — sorry, travel brand — Away is a great showcase of the divide. Steph Korey, Away’s former CEO, was simply a hard-charging startup exec in the views of her backers, often the well-off investor class. But to those not tweeting from their vacation homes, Korey’s vicious Slack messages were another corporate monster, taking her place on the org chart as license to behave atrociously to those without similar power.
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