

# 2022

TOP 10 PREDICTIONS



THE MANSFIELD AREA CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

WHAT WE CAN EXPECT IN 2022

## #1 The Great Reshuffle

Professional nomading has become a more accepted way of life. The 20 somethings and the 30 somethings are more likely to work remotely and switch locations every few months. “Work from anywhere” may also become the ultimate perk that many employees insist on. Flexibility at work has become a priority and people just aren’t willing to go back to the 9-5 punch in and out format.

## #2 Mental Health

In 2022, the world will need to reckon with the trauma the pandemic has left in its wake. But the supply chain issues we are experiencing don’t discriminate. There is a shortage of clinicians, some grappling with their own burnout and the demand for mental health care continues to grow. The digital platform for health across will be at the forefront of treatment. Especially since the nomad community (see #1) also continues to grow. Again, flexibility in services is key.

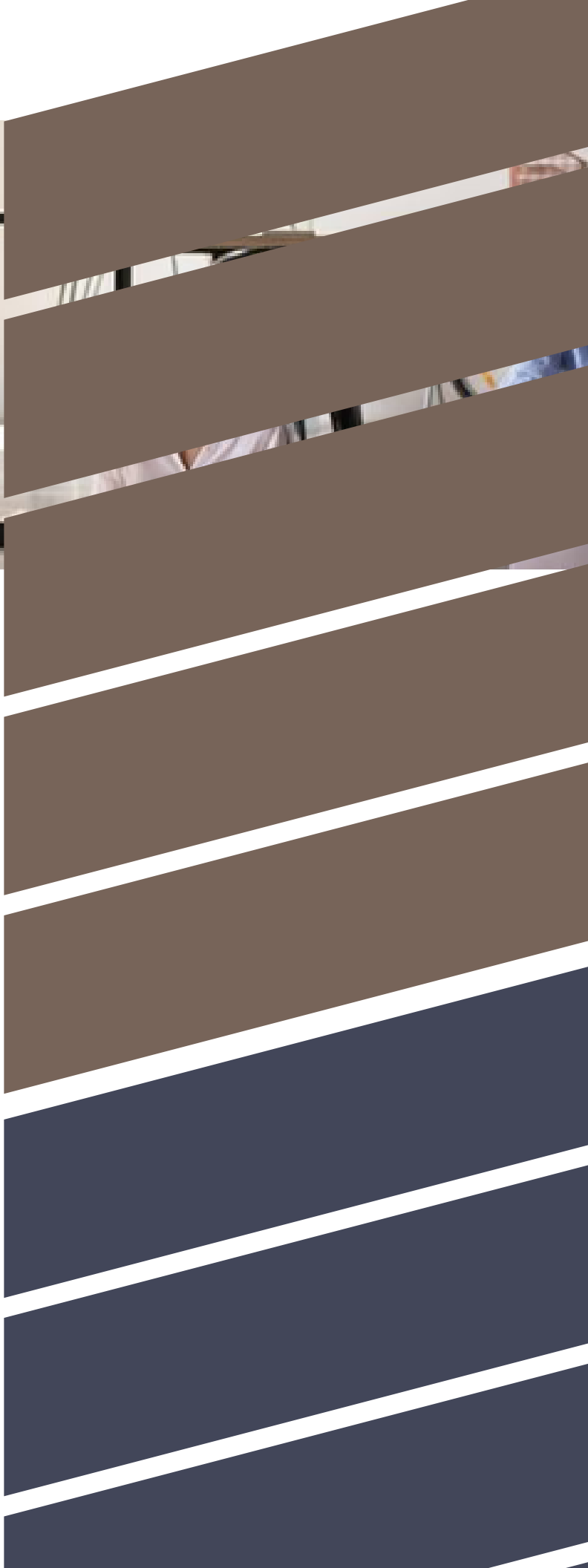




## #3 THE 4 DAY WORK WEEK

This will become a competitive advantage for companies. During The Great Resignation, millions of people have been doing more than walking away from their jobs. They've been rethinking the role that work plays in their lives. There's a growing number of talented, motivated people who are interested in doing a great job in less time.

More employees are recognizing that you can excel in your work and care about your workplace without making it the dominant priority in your world. Companies that offer 50 extra days of freedom a year will have an easier time attracting and retaining talented people.



# #4 POWER SKILLS ARE PRIORITY

## **(AKA SOFT SKILLS)**

These are core competencies that all employees need – whether they're in a financial, technical, administrative, sales, or marketing role. Skills related to leadership, teamwork, communication, productivity, and wellness are critical to every employee's performance. This is why it no longer makes sense to call them "soft skills," as if they represent a less important set of skills in the workplace. These skills aren't just nice to have. They're essential for changing the workplace. These are the skills that give employees power. Business growth hinges on employee engagement, which employers can reinforce by investing in their talent through career development and learning opportunities.

## THE FUTURE OF WORKPLACE MODEL WITH 3 FORCES OF CHANGE:

### Three forces of change:

Experience Economy

Technological

Demographic

### Workforces redefined

Gig economy workers

New blended workforce  
plus AI assistance

### Impact on:

Individual workers-  
Continuous learning

Desire for skill development

Team- intelligence / full-  
timers plus gig workers

Organization- new power  
skill

Digital badges

### Twenty core power skills needed for the future of workplace

1. Complex problem solving
2. Critical thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordination
6. Emotional intelligence
7. Service orientation
8. Judgment
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility
11. Strategic thinking
12. Executive presentation
13. Project management
14. Analytical skills
15. Understanding the impact of AI
16. Leadership ability
17. Change management
18. Team intelligence
19. Digital literacy
20. Computational thinking

As new technologies, artificial intelligence, and automation replace jobs we thought were safe from automation—such as knowledge-based work in insurance, legal, and journalism professions—it will become increasingly important for workers to develop uniquely human skills.

It's important to acknowledge the ever-shorter shelf life of skills and the growing importance of “learning to learn.”

### **#5 FLATTER, MORE AGILE ORGANIZATIONS**

Traditionally, organizations have been very hierarchical and rigid in their structures. But that is changing, as leaders recognize the need for flatter, more agile structures that allow the business to quickly reorganize teams and respond to change. It is also, in part, a response to the changing nature of work, particularly the proliferation of freelance and remote workers. This is the age of flatter organizational structures, which are more like flexible communities rather than a top-down pyramid structure.

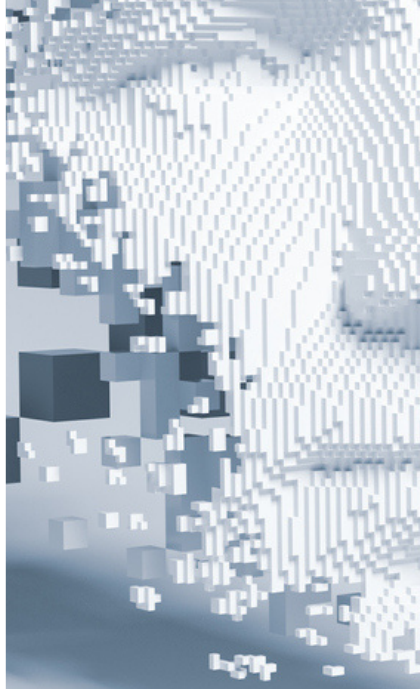
### **#6 AUTHENTICITY**

Today's consumers are seeking a more meaningful connection with brands. And this need for connection has given rise to authenticity as a business trend in its own right. Authenticity helps to foster human connections – because, as humans, we like to see brands (and business leaders) display important human qualities like honesty, reliability, empathy, compassion, humility, and maybe even a bit of vulnerability and fear. We want brands (and leaders) to care about issues and stand for more than just turning a profit.



### **#7 PURPOSEFUL BUSINESS**

Linked to authenticity, this trend is all about ensuring your organization exists to serve a meaningful purpose – and not just serve up profits to shareholders. Purpose defines why the organization exists. (Not what the organization is or what it does or for whom. Therefore, purpose is different to mission and vision.) Importantly, a strong purpose has the promise of transformation or striving for something better – be it a better world, a better way to do something, or whatever is important to your organization.



# #8 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS IN EVERYTHING

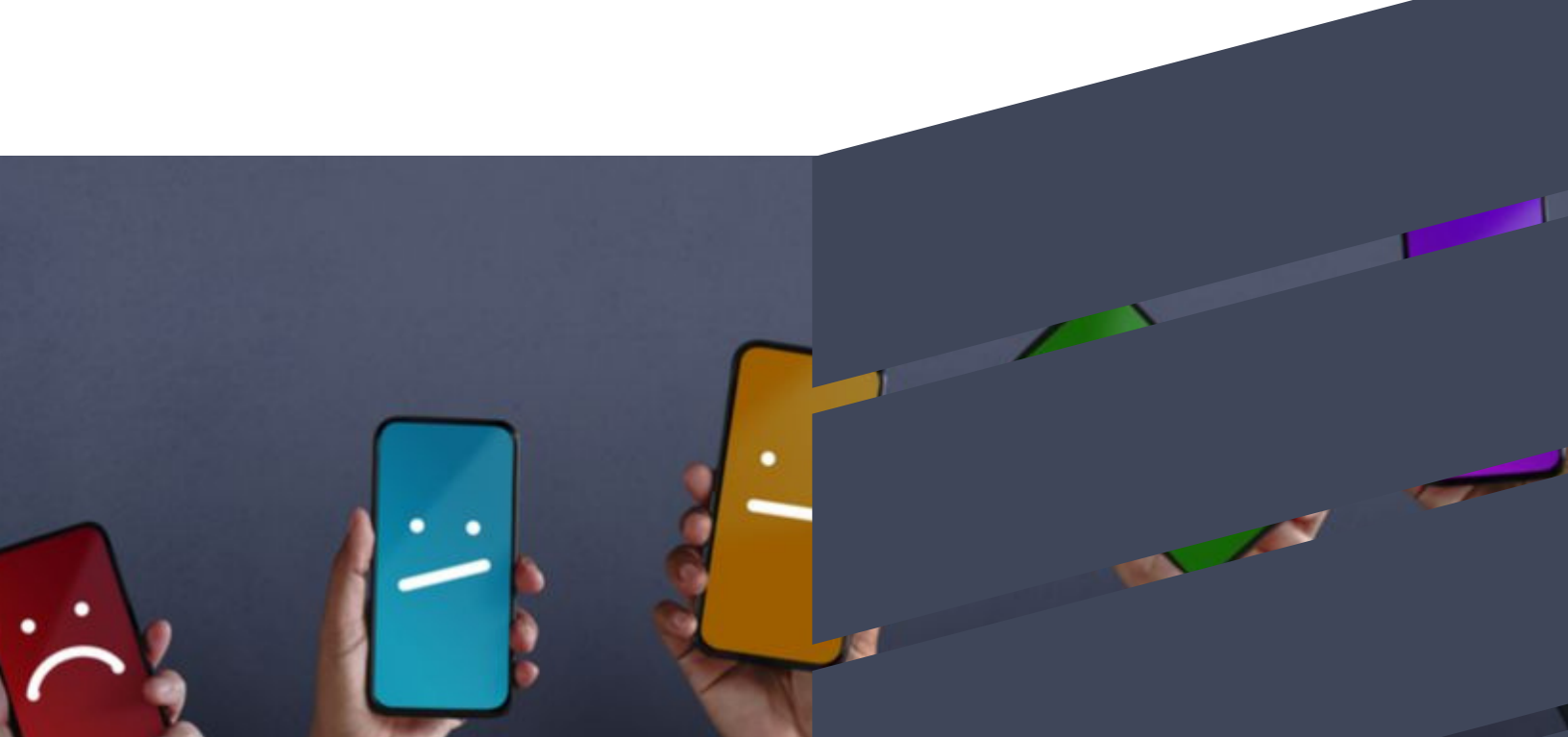
Today, “smart” increasingly means powered by artificial intelligence (AI)- generally machine learning algorithms - and capable of helping us in increasingly innovative ways. Smart cars use facial recognition algorithms to detect whether we are paying attention to the road and alert us if we're getting tired. Smartphones use AI algorithms to do everything from maintain call quality to help us take better pictures, and of course, they are packed with apps that use AI to help us do just about anything. Even smart toilets are on their way - capable of helping to diagnose gastrointestinal issues by using computer vision to analyze stool samples! Whatever your industry or job function, you're likely to find there's an AI-powered solution designed to make your life easier.

## RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Earlier in 2019 the fast food giant McDonald's, bought an AI company for \$300 million to help tailor its touchscreen menu offerings to customers. This well know chain had already embraced advanced technologies to boost sales and digital innovations that have been rapidly approaching. Some restaurants have AI flipping the burgers.

## BANKING & FINANCE

Artificial Intelligence is the future of banking as it brings the power of advanced data analytics to combat fraudulent transactions and improve compliance. Over 40% of millennials have never used a brick and mortar bank. They are all digital all the time. You don't need a loan officer or a teller, AI does it all for you.



# #9 BUY BEFORE YOU TRY

Product experiences have become an essential part of the buying process. If you've used Netflix, you've witnessed this first-hand—you didn't need to reach out to a sales rep or book a demo before you were able to watch and eventually buy the service. The entire onboarding and upgrade experience was handled by the product.

No need for human intervention. Now, that's not to say that product-led companies don't need sales reps. But your product needs to do the heavy lifting when it comes to getting new users up to speed. To put your SaaS business in the best position to win, you need to pick a go-to-market strategy that will place your business on high ground. These tidal waves aren't stopping anytime soon. They're here to stay. Consumers (like us) demand it. Your SaaS business might be able to weather one of these tidal waves, but do you really want to take a chance on surviving all three?





## #10 Digitization, Datafication and Virtualization

During 2020 and 2021, many of us experienced the virtualization of our offices and workplaces, as remote working arrangements were swiftly put in place. This was just a crisis-driven surge of a much longer-term trend. In 2022, we will become increasingly familiar with the concept of a “metaverse” – persistent digital worlds that exist in parallel with the physical world we live in. Inside these metaverses – such as the one proposed recently by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg – we will carry out many of the functions we’re used to doing in the real world, including working, playing, and socializing.

As the rate of digitization increases, these metaverses will model and simulate the real world with growing accuracy, allowing us to have more immersive, convincing, and ultimately valuable experiences within the digital realm. While many of us have experienced somewhat immersive virtual realities through headsets, a range of new devices coming to the market will soon greatly improve the experience offering tactile feedback and even smells. Ericsson, which provided VR headsets to employees working from home during the pandemic, and is developing what it calls an “internet of senses,” has predicted that by 2030 virtual experiences will be available that will be indistinguishable from reality.

That might be looking a little further ahead than we are interested in for this article. But, along with a new Matrix movie, 2022 will undoubtedly take us a step closer to entering the matrix for ourselves.