

A RESOURCE FOR BUSINESSES



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2026

From 2025 to the Year Ahead

December Edition:
Innovation, Leadership, and the Future of Business



Business Link
Media Group

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Dear Business Link Readers,

As we embrace the winter season, our latest edition of Business Link brings you a curated collection of articles that illuminate the vibrant landscape of Niagara Falls and beyond. This month's theme captures the essence of our city—its winter charm, strong community connections, and the opportunities that lie ahead.

In “Winter at Niagara Falls: A Different Kind of Magic,” we explore the serene beauty of the falls in colder months, while “Niagara Falls: A City Powered by Water, Connected by Community, and Driven by Possibility” highlights the collaborative spirit that fuels our region.

We also feature a key community milestone with “ENABLE Canada Tour Kicks Off Nationally in Niagara”, showcasing the region’s leadership in advancing accessibility and inclusion. Additionally, “Why Purpose, DEI, and Next-Gen Talent Will Redefine Marketing in 2026” examines how shifting priorities are reshaping business and marketing strategies.

Workforce developments take center stage in “Canada Eases Work Permit Rules for FIFA 2026 Personnel,” offering clarity on changes that support international talent flow. For business leaders, “Top 7 Reasons Customer Service Slides” provides insights for elevating service excellence, and “The Five Business Growth Signals That Could Shape 2026” outlines emerging opportunities for the year ahead.

As we bid farewell to 2025, we reflect on the progress of the past year and look toward 2026 with optimism. Our features on “Automation Surge: Amazon’s Ambitious Push to Replace Hundreds of Thousands of Jobs With Robots” and “Digital Twinning 2026: How Smart Companies Will Mirror Reality and Leap Ahead” explore the technologies transforming today’s workforce and shaping tomorrow’s industries.

We hope you find these articles as inspiring as we do. Thank you for being part of our community, and we look forward to continuing this journey with you into the new year.

Yours in Business
Marilyn Tian, M.B.A
President & Co-Publisher
Business Link Media Group



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WINTER AT NIAGARA FALLS: A DIFFERENT KIND OF MAGIC

NEWS DAY

When most travelers picture Niagara Falls, they imagine roaring water, summer crowds, and busy boat tours. Yet winter reveals an entirely different side of the falls — quieter, more mysterious, and almost dreamlike. Despite the cold, many attractions remain open, and the landscape transforms as frost coats the trees, ice forms along the gorge, and snow softens the scenery. For visitors willing to brave lower temperatures, the payoff is a striking, atmospheric version of Niagara Falls that feels both peaceful and dramatic.

The city embraces the season with events and activities designed for colder weather. The annual Winter Festival of Lights, Canada's largest light festival, brings colour and brightness to the frozen surroundings, making evening strolls or drives especially memorable as illuminated displays reflect off ice and snow. Many lookout points remain accessible, offering impressive views of ice-rimmed cliffs and the relentless flow of the falls. Winter-friendly attractions like the enclosed and heated Niagara SkyWheel operate year-round, giving panoramic views without the harsh wind, and visitors can easily warm up afterward at nearby restaurants, indoor entertainment venues, or relaxing spas.

For those planning a visit, winter is an opportunity to experience the falls at a slower, more reflective pace. Without heavy crowds, the combination of rushing water, drifting mist, and glittering ice creates a unique visual and sensory experience. To make the most of the season, consider:

- Visiting scenic lookout points for dramatic contrasts of water and ice.
- Choosing year-round attractions with indoor or heated viewing options.
- Pairing outdoor exploration with cozy indoor dining or entertainment.

Winter at Niagara Falls offers moments that feel almost suspended in time. The unfrozen water against frozen surroundings, the sculpted ice formations, and the glow of winter lights all highlight the falls in a way that summer simply cannot. It serves as a reminder that Niagara Falls is not just a warm-weather destination, but a year-round natural wonder, equally captivating even in the coldest months.

Read more here: <https://www.newsday.com/travel/niagara-falls-winter-viumoap6>



Niagara Falls: A City Powered by Water, Connected by Community, and Driven by Possibility

NIAGARA FALLS

Niagara Falls has long been recognized around the world for its natural wonder, yet its newly articulated brand story reminds us that the city is far more than a global landmark. The brand, developed by the City of Niagara Falls, positions the community as a place where the force of nature meets human ambition, where innovation grows alongside tradition, and where opportunity flows as continuously as the water that defines it.

At the heart of the brand is the belief that Niagara Falls is not just a destination to visit, but a distinct place to live, work, and build a future. While millions come each year to witness the power of the Falls, residents experience that awe as part of their daily lives — a backdrop to a community that values quality of life as strongly as it values economic growth. The brand story emphasizes that the city offers more than scenic views; it offers a lifestyle shaped by natural beauty, accessible amenities, and a strong sense of belonging.

The narrative also highlights Niagara Falls' strategic advantage as a border city. Its proximity to the United States and its connection to major Canadian urban centres make it a gateway for commerce, tourism, and international collaboration. This location fuels a business environment where entrepreneurs find room to grow and where industries benefit from both local support and global reach. According to the city's story, Niagara Falls is a place where innovation is encouraged, where new ideas are welcomed, and where long-term investment is both possible and practical.

The refreshed identity unveiled by the city introduces a modern visual system anchored in fluid shapes and clean lines. The logo, built around the letters "N" and "F," echoes the movement of falling water without relying on literal imagery. Its palette features blues and aquas that reflect energy, depth, and clarity, while a subtle maple leaf motif reinforces the city's Canadian character. This visual approach captures the balance between nature's timeless rhythm and the city's forward momentum.

Importantly, the brand is more than a design update. It serves as a guiding framework for how Niagara Falls communicates its values — across departments, to residents, and to the wider world. It articulates a shared vision: Niagara Falls is a city shaped by its landscape but defined by its people. It is welcoming, progressive, and resilient, committed to preserving its natural heritage while embracing sustainable development and future-focused growth.

In its renewed brand story, Niagara Falls positions itself not only as a global icon but as a modern, dynamic community. It is a place where natural wonder inspires human possibility, where opportunity is accessible, and where the future is shaped by collaboration, creativity, and connection.

DECEMBER 16 - JANUARY 15

EVENTS

Christmas On Ice – Holiday Show at Fallsview Casino

Dec 16-17, 2025
Fallsview Casino, Niagara Falls

Event: <https://www.niagarafallstourism.com/events/>

Santa Meet & Greet

Dec 19-20, 2025
Skyline Tower arcade / Clifton Hill area, Niagara Falls

Event: www.cliftonhill.com/event/santa-skyline-tower

New Year's Eve at Niagara Falls

December 31, 2025
Queen Victoria Park, Niagara Falls

Event: <https://www.niagaraparks.com/events/event/niagara-falls-new-years-eve/>

New Year's Day Brunch 2026

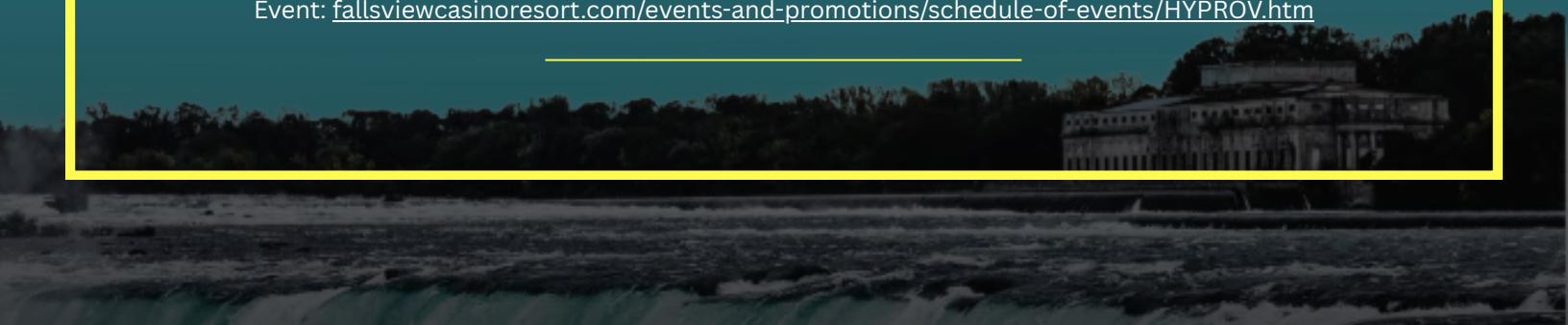
January 1, 2026
Queenston Heights Restaurant, Niagara-on-the-Lake / Niagara Parks

Tickets: <https://www.niagaraparks.com/events/event/new-years-brunch-2026?occurrence=14108>

HYPROV: Improv Under Hypnosis

Jan 2 - 3, 2026
OLG Stage, Fallsview Casino Resort, Niagara Falls

Event: fallsviewcasinoresort.com/events-and-promotions/schedule-of-events/HYPROV.htm



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A NEW PATH FOR MINING IN NORTHERN ONTARIO: WHY INDIGENOUS CONSENT MUST COME FIRST

THE CONVERSATION

As demand surges worldwide for critical minerals like nickel, lithium, and cobalt – essential for batteries, electric vehicles and clean-energy technologies – northern Ontario is seeing renewed interest from mining companies. But experts warn: the opportunity must be matched by responsibility. For mining to be sustainable, fair, and ethical, development must begin with the consent and meaningful participation of Indigenous communities.

The Stakes: Resources, Opportunity – and Risk

Northern Ontario sits on rich deposits of minerals that could power the global shift to clean energy. Governments and investors view this region as a strategic asset. New laws and policies in the province – such as recent efforts to accelerate mine approvals – reflect that urgency.

Yet northern Ontario carries a legacy of extraction that often left environmental damage, social disruption, and broken promises in its wake. Many mining-affected areas became “sacrifice zones,” where land degradation, pollution, and community marginalization were disproportionately borne by Indigenous peoples – while profits flowed elsewhere.

Rushing headlong into new mining without structural change risks repeating those injustices. That’s why a different approach is being proposed – one in which Indigenous consent, partnership, and long-term equity are built into every stage of development.

Consent and Inclusion as Cornerstones

At the heart of this new approach is the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). Indigenous communities must have the power to accept or reject mining projects based on full access to information and meaningful participation.

Consent should not end at the start of a project. It must extend to any “brownfield” developments – expansions, modifications, or re-openings of existing mines – including on lands previously considered exempt from consultation.



Moreover, true inclusion means more than permission: it means shared ownership, shared governance and shared benefits. This could take the form of equity stakes, royalties, or co-investment partnerships.

Companies and governments also must commit to strong environmental stewardship, social investment, and community infrastructure – water, housing, health, and social supports – to ensure that development improves living conditions rather than creating new problems.

A Vision for Responsible, Rights-Based Mining

For northern Ontario, mining does not have to mean conflict. If done right, resource development can offer economic opportunity, jobs, and revenue – while respecting Indigenous rights, protecting the land, and empowering communities.

Under a rights-based framework, mining becomes a shared endeavor – not a risk imposed on communities, but a collaborative project built on trust, respect, and long-term thinking.

As demand for minerals continues to grow globally, northern Ontario's path forward must not sacrifice justice and sustainability for short-term profits. If governments, companies, and communities commit to consent, equity, and transparency, the region could become a model of how mining and Indigenous rights can coexist – to the benefit of all.

Read more here:

<https://theconversation.com/the-path-to-responsible-mining-in-northern-ontario-starts-with-indigenous-consent-267935>



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A collage of three smaller images showing diverse construction workers: a woman in scrubs, a man using a power tool, and a woman in a high-visibility vest.

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ONTARIO'S HEALTH-CARE AUDIT: WARNING SIGNS AHEAD

CBC

Ontario is preparing to release a comprehensive health-care audit report that could expose deepening problems in how the province delivers public health services. The upcoming report from the Auditor General's office will include multiple audits on health care, with a special focus on access to primary care — a critical area as the government aims to ensure every resident has a primary-care provider by 2029.

What's Under Review

The OAGO is expected to publish five audits, three of which focus directly on health care. Among the issues under scrutiny are: whether Ontarians are getting timely access to primary care; the capacity and performance of hospitals and long-term care homes; and how prepared the system is for growing demand.

These audits come at a moment of rising concern over funding, staffing, and long-term sustainability — as external reviews highlight a possible mismatch between budget allocations and actual health-care needs. A separate analysis by the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) finds that the 2025 budget's health-sector spending plan is unlikely to keep pace with projected demand. Specifically, FAO estimates suggest that to maintain current service levels, annual health spending would have to grow by roughly 4.0%, while the province plans for only about 0.7% annual growth over 2025–2028.



What the Shortfall Could Mean

The spending gap carries serious implications. FAO projects a decrease in staffed hospital beds: from 35,540 funded beds in 2024–25 to around 33,083 by 2027–28 — dropping the ratio from 220 beds per 100,000 people to 203. Meanwhile, projections for nursing and support-staff funding also show a decline. Provincially funded nurses may drop by 7,263 over the same period; funding for personal support workers (PSWs) is also forecast to fall.

At the same time, demand for care is expected to grow due to population aging, chronic disease, and increased health-care needs. The disconnect between rising demand and shrinking resources raises concerns about wait times, access to care, and overall quality of service for patients, especially in vulnerable populations.

Systemic Challenges: Understaffing, Long-Term Care, and Access

This is not the first time the Auditor General has flagged concerns. Earlier reports revealed chronic problems across the health sector — including understaffing in long-term care homes and emergency departments, frequent reliance on agency staff, and unmet targets for direct care hours for residents.

Critics argue that unless structural reforms are implemented, the growing demand for services will continue to outpace capacity — leaving patients facing long delays or inadequate care. Labour-market pressures and workforce shortages only add to the strain.

What Comes Next — A Call for Action

As Ontario braces for the release of this new audit cycle, the coming report could serve as a wake-up call for policymakers, health administrators, and the public. If the findings mirror the gaps projected by independent financial reviews, authorities may need to reconsider current funding plans, staffing strategies, and long-term care capacity.

Reform likely will require a multi-pronged approach: increased investment in staffing and infrastructure, better workforce planning, stronger oversight of long-term care homes, and a renewed commitment to primary-care access. Without these interventions, the health-care system could face deeper declines in performance and equity.

In short: Ontario's health-care system may be at a crossroads — and the Auditor General's report could be the mirror showing where things stand today and what needs urgent change for tomorrow.

Read more here:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-auditor-general-health-care-report-9.6999715>

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ENABLE Canada Tour Kicks Off Nationally in Niagara

Enable Talent officially launched the ENABLE Canada Tour in Niagara Falls, marking the beginning of a nationwide initiative dedicated to strengthening disability inclusion in education, employment, and the future of work. Hosted at the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub, the kickoff brought together community leaders, accessibility champions, policymakers, technologists, and lived-experience experts for an inspiring start to a movement aimed at reshaping opportunities across Canada.

The event opened with remarks from **Maham Khalid**, who provided context on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and emphasized why Niagara was chosen as the tour's starting point. Daniel Bordenave, CEO of the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub, highlighted the region's growing innovation ecosystem and the importance of developing inclusive pathways for all individuals. **Hon. Mayor Jim Diodati** reinforced Niagara Falls' commitment to accessibility, noting how essential it is to keep advancing conversations around inclusion in both policy and practice.

A meaningful lived-experience perspective was shared by **Lindsey Mazza**, whose reflections on dignity, representation, and the importance of meaningful participation grounded the discussion in the realities faced by Canadians with disabilities. **Keerthana Mahadevan** followed with an accessible and engaging session on Web Accessibility and AODA, offering practical insights into meeting evolving accessibility standards.

Learn More at:

<https://www.enablecanada.ca/>

Two panel discussions expanded the dialogue, beginning with Building a Barrier-Free Future, moderated by **Lindsey Mazza** and featuring **Marilyn Tian and Sahil Gogna**, who explored inclusive hiring, workplace barriers, and the role organizational culture plays in advancing accessibility. The second session, Niagara Leading Inclusion: AODA, Accessible Tech, and the Future of Work, moderated by **Keerthana Mahadevan** of Segmentide and featuring Councillor Lori Lococo and **Jamie Oresar**, examined municipal leadership, emerging technologies, and the need to strengthen workforce readiness across the region.

Enable Talent also shared the broader vision behind the national tour, supported by the dedicated team of **Amandipp Singh, Jeby James, Sahil Gogna, and Jibin George**, whose ongoing efforts drive the mission forward. The event drew support from leaders including **Hon. MP Tony Baldinelli**, further underscoring Niagara's collaborative ecosystem and commitment to inclusion.

As the ENABLE Canada Tour prepares to visit Peterborough, Hamilton, Sudbury, and York Region, the Niagara kickoff stands as a powerful example of community-driven leadership working toward a barrier-free future for Canadians with disabilities.



THE NEW POWER EQUATION

Why Purpose, DEI, and Next-Gen Talent Will Redefine Marketing in 2026

CAMPAIGN CANADA

The marketing industry is undergoing a seismic shift—one driven not by trends or technology alone, but by people. According to the latest *State of the Nation* insights, the future of effective marketing lies at the intersection of DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion), next-generation talent, and truly purpose-led strategies. Together, they are rewriting what it means to create meaningful work in a rapidly changing world.

For years, DEI sat on the sidelines—often treated as an add-on, a box to tick, or a theme reserved for special campaigns. But today, the demand for authentic representation has made it a non-negotiable foundation. Consumers are more diverse than ever, and they expect to see that diversity accurately reflected in the brands they follow. It's no longer acceptable for companies to speak about inclusion without demonstrating it through action, accountability, and the people behind their ideas.

At the same time, the next wave of marketing talent is transforming the internal culture of agencies and brands. Young professionals entering the industry are prioritizing workplaces that align with their personal values. They seek leaders who understand equity, companies that invest in diverse voices, and employers willing to break traditional hiring patterns in favour of skills-based recruitment. This shift isn't just good for culture—it directly enhances creative output. When teams are built from different backgrounds and lived experiences, the work becomes more nuanced, more human, and more impactful.

Layered onto this is the rise of purpose-led marketing, which has evolved from a buzzword into a business imperative. The most successful brands today are the ones grounded in real values—those that integrate social impact into their identity, not just their advertising. Purpose-driven messaging resonates because it restores trust at a time when audiences are increasingly skeptical. But purpose without inclusion rings hollow, which is why DEI and authenticity must be built into the strategy from the start.

As these forces collide, a new power equation is emerging. Brands that invest in diverse creators, nurture the next generation of talent, and stand firmly for something meaningful will stand out in 2026 and beyond. Those who cling to performative gestures or outdated practices risk falling behind.

The future of marketing belongs to those who understand that inclusion fuels creativity, talent fuels innovation, and purpose fuels long-term loyalty. In this new era, doing the right thing isn't just ethical—it's strategic.

Read more here:

<https://www.campaigncanada.ca/article/1941494/state-nation-part-three-dei-next-gen-talent-future-purpose-led-marketing>

CANADA EASES WORK PERMIT RULES FOR FIFA 2026 PERSONNEL

NEW LAND CHASE

As Canada prepares to host matches for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 76th FIFA Congress, the federal government has introduced a new immigration policy to simplify the entry of international workers supporting these events. Under this measure, certain foreign nationals invited by FIFA or its affiliates will be permitted to work in Canada without a traditional work permit between December 1, 2025, and July 31, 2026.

The policy acknowledges the scale of the World Cup, which depends on specialized staff, technical crews, media teams, contractors, and logistical support from around the globe. By easing work-permit rules, Canada aims to prevent administrative delays and ensure smoother operations leading up to and during the events.

To qualify, individuals must have an official invitation from FIFA or an approved affiliate confirming their role. Their work must be directly tied to a FIFA-organized event in Canada, and they must appear on a designated FIFA microsite listing authorized personnel. Those needing a temporary resident visa must still apply before travelling.

The policy temporarily waives two regulations: the prohibition on working without authorization and the requirement to hold a valid work permit. All other admissibility rules remain in place, including security checks, health screenings, and visa or eTA requirements based on nationality.

Overall, the measure reflects Canada's strategy for managing large-scale international events by creating a faster, event-specific process while maintaining essential oversight. Organizations planning to send staff to Canada should ensure invitees have proper FIFA documentation and complete necessary travel requirements early. With these steps, eligible workers can participate without the usual processing timelines associated with work permits.

Read more here: <https://newlandchase.com/canada-introduces-special-work-permit-exemptions-for-fifa-2026-congress-world-cup/>





When AI Changes Work What Happens to Government Revenues?

FORBES

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into business operations is already transforming the nature of work — and with it, the traditional foundations of employment taxation and public revenues. According to Deloitte's recent analysis, this transformation poses major challenges for governments that depend heavily on payroll- and employment-based tax systems to finance social programs and public services.

The baseline: employment taxes and where they come from

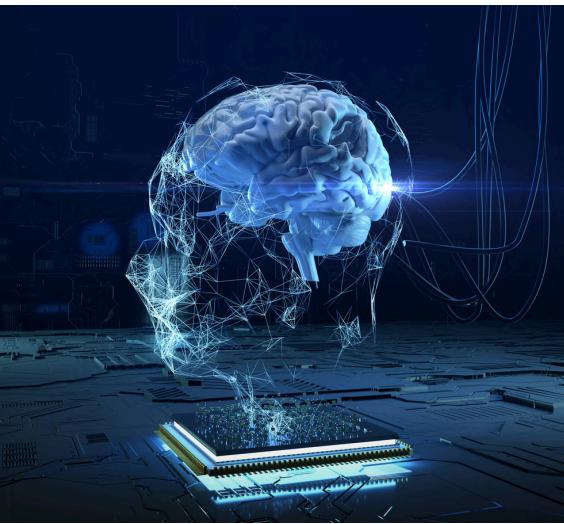
In many developed countries, employment taxes — including payroll taxes or social-security contributions — account for a large share of total government revenue. Deloitte notes that in some OECD economies, these taxes represent roughly a quarter (or more) of total tax revenue. Governments use these revenues not only to fund pensions, healthcare, and social security, but frequently earmark contributions to specific social-benefit programs.

Thus, the existing social contract between workers, employers and states is based on a relatively stable employment model: people work, they pay in, society draws benefits out.

The disruption: AI and the changing nature of work

As AI becomes more capable, the traditional employer-employee relationship is under threat — at least in sectors where AI can substitute for or augment human labor. Deloitte's authors argue that as work shifts, fewer people may be formally employed or paid through traditional payroll; jobs may become more gig- or contract-based, intermittent, or even shift value creation away from labor to capital (algorithms, data, automation platforms).

If payroll employment declines as a share of economic activity, the repercussions for public revenue could be significant. A shrinking base for employment taxes translates directly into lower income for social security programs, pension systems and welfare structures.



What this means for tax policy and governments

Policymakers may soon confront difficult choices. Some of the potential directions discussed in analyses of AI's fiscal impact include:

- Revising the tax base: Rather than tax only labor income, governments might have to consider taxing capital, data use, AI-generated value or corporate profits more heavily to offset lost payroll tax revenue. Researchers have proposed concepts such as a “robot tax” or automation tax to capture economic value generated by machines rather than people.
- Adapting social-benefit funding models: Social benefits – traditionally funded via payroll taxes – may need rethinking. Systems that rely heavily on contributions linked to employment status might become unsustainable. Governments may need to design more flexible or universal welfare funding models.
- Encouraging new forms of work and reporting: As freelancing, gig work, remote global contracting and AI-augmented labor grow, tax regimes will need to evolve to capture income from nontraditional work arrangements.

What businesses should watch and what individuals should expect

For companies, the evolution may require rethinking workforce strategies, tax compliance, and how value is distributed (between labor and capital). For individuals, the changing tax-revenue model may affect their future access to social safety nets, retirement benefits or health coverage if those are tied to traditional employment.

In short, the rise of AI isn't just a matter of efficiency: it could force a redefinition of the social contract between labor, business and government. As AI reshapes who creates value – humans, machines, or a mix – governments will need to rethink how they collect taxes and fund public services. The coming years may demand bold structural reforms, or risk underfunded social systems in an AI-driven economy.

Read more here:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/deloitte/2025/11/11/how-ai-will-reshape-employment-taxes-and-public-revenues/>



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Top 7 Reasons Customer Service Slides

BY JEFF MOWATT, TRUSTED ADVISOR COSTUMER SERVICE

WWW.JEFFMOWATT.COM

When I'm asked speak at conferences on how managers can boost business, they often assume we're going to focus on gaining new customers. Ironically, that's the last thing we should focus on. Neglecting existing customers to chase new business is akin to gathering water in the proverbial leaky bucket. We can exhaust ourselves trying to collect more water when we'd be further ahead by simply fixing the holes. The more sustainable approach to growing business is ensuring existing customers are so thrilled that they'll not only return; but they'll also recommend you to new potential customers. The challenge is without attention, customer satisfaction often atrophies. To ensure that doesn't happen in your organization consider these top seven reasons why customer service slides.



1. Assuming customers notice good service

They don't. Customers are too busy and distracted by their mobile devices to notice when service is merely good. Employees need to provide service that's remarkable. Fortunately, that doesn't mean working harder. It just means choosing words more carefully. Compare, "Do you want us to deliver it?" Vs. "Would it be helpful if we delivered that for you to save you a trip?" The second phrase didn't take more work, yet the wording made the offer more noticeable.

2. Establishing Customer Service as a department

If you set-up a customer service department, it by default means other employees will assume that taking care of customers isn't their job. That means employees end-up redirecting customer concerns when they should be addressing problems themselves.

3. Measuring sales vs satisfaction

It's tempting for managers to evaluate the business by focusing on monthly or annual revenues. That's fine for measuring how the organization has been doing up till now. But the factor that determines how the business will do in future is not sales; it's customer satisfaction. Sales measures success today. Customer satisfaction predicts how you'll do tomorrow.

4. Rewarding longevity over service

It's fine to have 'service' awards for long term employees. However, length of service isn't nearly as important as quality of service. Customer service cultures that thrive are those where recognition is focused more on internal and external customer service, than on just showing up.

5. Training focuses on technical vs interpersonal skills

The term 'soft-skill' somehow implies that customer communication skills aren't nearly as substantive as technical skills. The irony is that customers take for granted that employees have basic technical skills. What customers do notice are the interpersonal and communication skills employees use to interact with them. Technical skills deliver the work. Soft skills create the customer relationship.

6. Lack of recovery skills

When customer service training consists of providing customers with information, transactions, and being polite, that skill set will take the employee as far as the nearest foul-up. If employees aren't trained on how to interact with customers when things go wrong, then they're not fully trained. Ironically, customers don't notice (or appreciate) your service when everything goes well. The time when they actually notice and judge you is when things go wrong. That's why of all the customer service skills you can provide, those that get you the fastest return on investment are recovery skills.

7. Lack of reinforcement

Without regular reminders and reinforcement, employees revert back to old habits of focusing more on transactions than on customers. That's why we advocate a three phase approach to building a customer focused culture. Phase One is conducting a customized customer service seminar – including recovery skills – which we film to serve as an orientation for new hires. In Phase Two we provide employees with monthly bulletins and by-weekly tips. And finally for Phase Three we teach managers how to stage their own regular CAST® (Customer Service Team) meetings so they can continue to train employees in-house and adapt to changing customer needs. That way you'll convert a one-time customer service training event into an on-going continuous improvement process.

Read more here:

<https://jeffmowatt.com/article/top-7-reasons-customer-service-slides/>

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The Five Business Growth Signals That Could Shape 2026

FORBES

As businesses look ahead to 2026, the landscape is shifting fast. The Forbes article outlines five major growth trends that leaders and entrepreneurs should watch closely.

1

Generative AI, Automation and Increased Visibility

Artificial intelligence is no longer a niche experiment—it's becoming a foundational tool. Advances in generative AI and automation are enabling companies to streamline operations, scale up productivity, and reduce manual workload. For many firms, this means reallocating resources from repetitive tasks to higher-value strategy, creativity, and growth.

2

Innovation Beyond AI

While AI remains a dominant force, the report emphasizes that innovation in 2026 won't be confined to AI alone. There are fresh opportunities across finance, infrastructure, business models, and market approaches. Companies that diversify their innovation strategies—blending tech with operational, financial, and human-centered improvements—are more likely to adapt and thrive.

3

Financing Opportunities and Financial Adaptation

Financial mechanisms and access to capital are increasingly important growth levers. The article notes that 2026 may bring significant opportunities in financing—whether through traditional capital, alternative models, or more agile financial structures. For businesses poised to invest or expand, new financing models could unlock growth potential.

This ties into broader macroeconomic dynamics: as markets shift and uncertainty rises, companies that stay financially agile—ready to seize opportunities, manage risk, and invest strategically—will have an edge.

4

Demand for Resilience, Adaptability and Human-Centered Skills

In a rapidly evolving environment, resilience matters more than ever. Many organizations are rethinking their structures to balance digital acceleration with human strengths: creativity, empathy, problem-solving and collaboration.

2026 is shaping up to reward businesses that invest not just in technology, but also in people—those that foster continuous learning, build adaptive cultures, and emphasize soft skills alongside digital fluency.

5

Blending Technology, Purpose and Strategic Agility

Finally, growth in 2026 will favor companies that integrate technology with a broader strategic vision—ones that align innovation with purpose, sustainability, and long-term value. The next wave of growth isn't only about fast returns; it's about building systems that are durable, flexible, and aligned with evolving customer expectations.

Read more here:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnhall/2025/12/01/5-growth-trends-to-pay-attention-to-in-2026/>



AMAZON'S AMBITIOUS PUSH TO REPLACE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF JOBS WITH ROBOTS

NY TIMES

Critics warn that the implications of such a large-scale automation push go beyond just cost savings. Some economists argue that once Amazon proves robots can handle this volume profitably, the model will spread across industries, potentially transforming the labor market. On the other hand, Amazon maintains that these documents represent only one internal team's perspective – not necessarily the entirety of the company's hiring strategy. A spokesperson noted the company is still recruiting and plans to hire around 250,000 seasonal workers for the upcoming holiday season.

Recent internal documents obtained by The New York Times reveal that Amazon is preparing a sweeping automation initiative – one that could replace more than 600,000 U.S. jobs with robots by 2033. According to the plan, Amazon's robotics division aims to automate roughly 75% of the company's operations across warehouses, logistics centers, and fulfillment facilities.

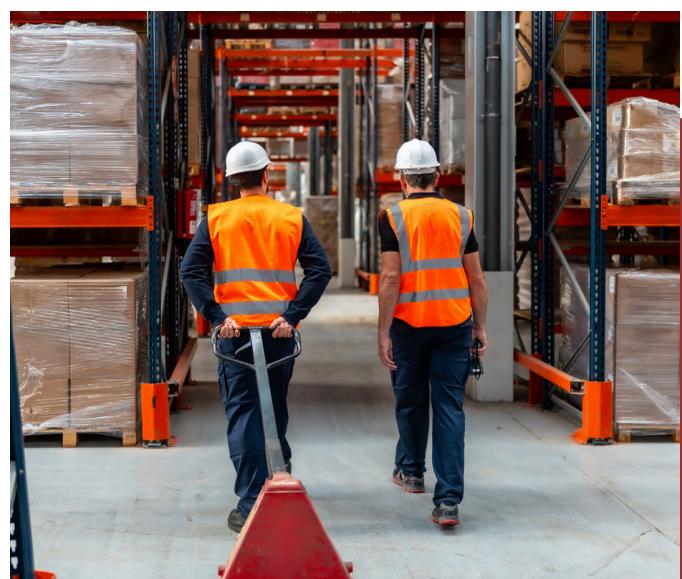
Under this strategy, by 2027 the company expects to avoid hiring some 160,000 workers it otherwise would need – even as it ramps up output. The projected savings are significant: internal estimates suggest roughly 30 cents saved per item handled, and a total cost reduction of more than US\$ 12.6 billion between 2025 and 2027.

Amazon has reportedly begun rolling this out. In some of its newest fulfillment centers – such as the facility in Shreveport, Louisiana – robots already shoulder much of the work, allowing Amazon to operate with fewer human employees without slowing down operations. The plan is to replicate this model across dozens of warehouses by 2027.

Read more here:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/21/technology/inside-amazons-plans-to-replace-workers-with-robots.html>

Still, the shift signals a turning point for warehouse labor and corporate employment models in general. For many frontline workers, the rise of robots may bring uncertainty. For Amazon and other large-scale logistics companies, it could mark the beginning of a new operational paradigm – one where machines, not humans, carry much of the workload.

In the coming years, what was once considered “support labor” could increasingly be replaced by robotics, forcing a rethink of work, skills, and the value of human labor in industrial logistics.



DIGITAL TWINNING 2026

HOW SMART COMPANIES WILL MIRROR REALITY AND LEAP AHEAD

INFORMATION AGE

As we approach 2026, companies face growing pressures: tighter budgets, faster competition, and demand for smarter, more sustainable operations. Enter digital twinning — a powerful tool that's quietly becoming a business necessity. What started as a niche engineering concept is now emerging as a universal framework for smarter decision-making, efficiency and innovation.

What is Digital Twinning — and what's new

At its simplest, a Digital Twin is a live virtual replica of a physical asset, system or process — constantly updated via real-time data. That data can come from sensors, IoT devices, software inputs, or other data sources. The digital twin mirrors behavior and conditions of its real-world counterpart, enabling simulation, monitoring, and predictive analysis.

Historically, digital twins were popular in manufacturing and heavy industry — for monitoring machinery, forecasting maintenance needs, and improving workflows. But thanks to advances in AI, data analytics, IoT, and cloud computing, the technology is expanding rapidly. Today, it's becoming accessible and relevant for businesses across sectors, from logistics and supply chain management to services and operations.



Why 2026 may be the tipping point

The article argues that 2026 is a turning point: the infrastructure — sensors, connectivity, data pipelines, analytics — has matured enough that digital twinning is no longer a luxury but a strategic investment. Organizations embracing digital twins early will gain agility, foresight, and resilience in uncertain times.

Critical benefits include:

- Smarter decision-making & risk management – With a digital replica, companies can simulate “what-if” scenarios without risk, evaluate outcomes, forecast failures, and plan maintenance or upgrades more accurately.
- Faster innovation and product development – Instead of building multiple physical prototypes, businesses can prototype, test, and refine virtually. That saves time, cost, and materials – and speeds up time-to-market.
- Operational efficiency and sustainability – Real-time monitoring helps avoid waste, optimize resource use, and extend asset life. For companies aiming at sustainable operations, that’s a major benefit.
- Cross-department alignment – When different teams (engineering, operations, planning, finance) link their data and processes through a unified digital twin environment, silos break down – improving collaboration and coordination across the organization.

From niche tool to strategic imperative

Adopting digital twinning isn’t just for industrial giants. As digital infrastructure becomes more affordable and accessible, even mid-size or service-oriented businesses can benefit. A digital twin can represent a process, workflow, or service delivery chain – not just heavy machinery. This means companies across sectors – logistics, real estate, retail chains, even project-based firms – can leverage it to optimize operations, anticipate challenges, and stay agile.

The companies that embrace digital twins now will effectively “mirror” their operations in virtual space – gaining the ability to predict, adapt, and innovate faster. In an era where speed, reliability, adaptability and sustainability define success, digital twinning is no longer optional. It’s the next frontier.

Read more here:

www.information-age.com/why-every-business-needs-to-start-digital-twinning-in-2026-123516644/



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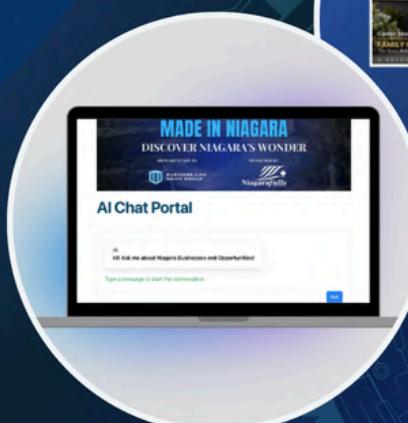
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