

The Rise of the Superworker: Delivering On The Promise Of AI



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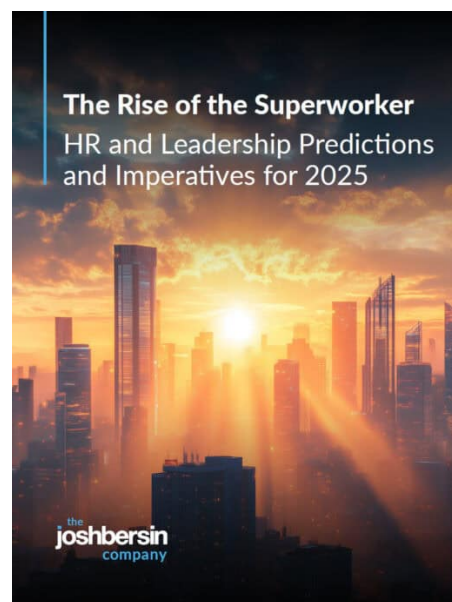
January 14, 2025

We're excited to launch our groundbreaking research "The Rise of the Superworker," a deep dive into the impact of AI on the future of work. As our hallmark research for the year, it defines the roadmap for leadership, technology, and HR. (Register for the launch webinar on January 28.)

The Workforce and Workplace Environment

We are entering a year of political change, economic disruption, and changing labor markets. As I discussed recently (The Tumultuous Year Ahead), the world is experiencing talent shortages in front-line and blue collar work (US unemployment remains at 4.1%) while white-collar employment is softening. CEOs are investing in AI in a quest for productivity and workers are asking to be retrained. And many core values (diversity and inclusion, pay equity, remote work) remain challenging.

Companies believe that AI will transform their business, so investment in technology is exploding. Yet as history tells us, this "trillion dollar AI-based re-engineering" effort is about people, not technology. As the research points out, the AI revolution, as exciting as it feels, is all about redesigning the way we get things done. And that lands in the laps of HR: how we redesign, reskill, and redeploy people in a world of highly intelligent systems.



Understanding The Superworker and The Superworker Company

Let's start with the basics. Companies are filled with business processes, tools, and job models designed around traditional people-centric work. Every job function, from sales to marketing to manufacturing, has been designed around the old-fashioned job families of the past.

In other words, we've run our companies as "people machines." We design a set of jobs and job families, then hire, train, and promote people to grow. This model creates a sprawling company filled with skills challenges, people wanting promotion, and fragility as the business goes through change.

The digital revolution, which defines the last 27 years of transformation, did speed things up. It automated many processes and opened up the ideas of self-service, e-commerce, and direct consumer transactions. But it didn't fundamentally change how companies are organized: rather it accelerated the processes we had.

Suddenly, with AI everything is different. As the most intelligent and data hungry technology ever, AI stands to integrate and redefine every business process and "superpower" every employee. And this shift, toward copilots, agents, digital twins, and intelligent platforms, forces us to rethink how we're organized, what we do, and what we define as a "job."

We are building a company of *Superworkers*.

What exactly is a "*Superworker*?"

A *Superworker* is an individual who uses AI to dramatically enhance their productivity, performance, and creativity. As routine work gets automated, AI has the potential to *empower everyone*, eliminating some roles while empowering many others.

A "*Superworker company*" is an organization that embraces this transformation, building a culture of adaptability where people reinvent themselves. Our new Dynamic Organization research shows that such change-ready companies *outperform their peers by six-times*.

Just as Superman Clark Kent learned to channel his powers, we must learn to harness AI for individual and team performance. This means not just automating existing tasks, but rethinking how work gets done, empowering people to do more, and creating opportunities for growth.

The Historical Perspective: From Automation to Autonomy

We've seen waves of automation before, but this time it's different.

In the past we used machines to automate the work of craftsmen and tradespeople. A

welder, farmer, or shoemaker had his or her expertise built into a machine so their craft could scale at low cost. The expert didn't go away, rather he or she helped design the machine.

AI does the same for white collar work. Writers, analysts, marketers, and sales people are now superpowered, leveraging their skills to drive scale. AI will not replace these special individuals: it empowers them to scale and expand their impact.

But in the case of AI we go further: it doesn't just automate tasks; it becomes a co-worker itself: listening, learning, reasoning, and acting. So new and better jobs are created, designing, training, and managing the AI.

And the shift to Superworker happens everywhere: from the retail clerk to the nursing supervisor to the senior executive.

The New Corporate Imperative: Redesign Work and Jobs

This transformation won't happen without effort.

Today, as AI systems still mature, our challenge is not *implementing AI*, but *redesigning jobs, and business processes around AI*. And that's why success with AI is a people problem, not a technology one. And if you don't get this right, your AI transformation will lag.

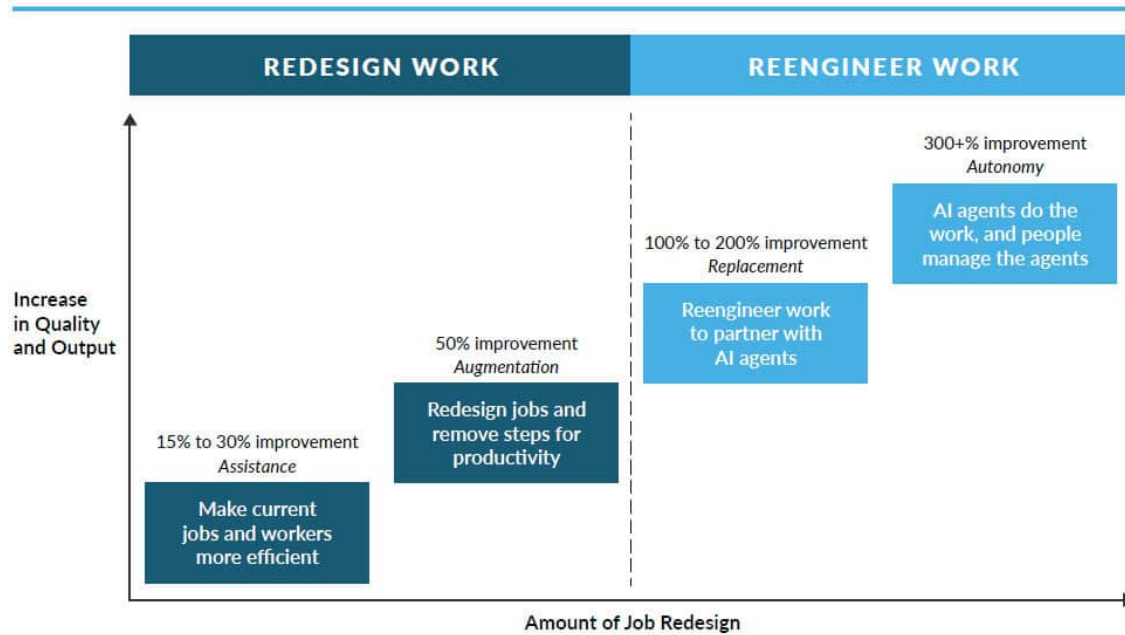
Academic studies show that 45% of change management programs fail, and 72% of the reason is "people resistance." So consider this:

For each dollar spent on machine learning technology, companies may need to spend nine dollars on intangible human capital," Erik Brynjolfsson wrote in 2022, citing research by him and others.

Consider the four stage model below, where we look at "current jobs" vs "re-engineered jobs" on the horizontal, and level of output on the vertical.

AI transformation begins with *assistance*, then moves to *augmentation*, then to work *replacement* and then to *autonomy*. The level of performance improvement goes up exponentially.

Figure 2: Evolving Job Redesign



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2025

This process of rethinking business processes takes time. When electricity was invented companies replaced horse-driven machines with motors. Decades later engineers realized we could redesign the entire manufacturing process by integrating the entire supply chain.

The same will happen again. We may start by automating emails and data access, but over time we build “digital twins” and configurable agents to manage entire projects and business processes.

One of our clients built an entire platform that can interview stakeholders, import documentation, build training programs, and publish training and certification programs by AI. Humans are still needed, but now they’re the “super-curators” and “craftsmen” perfecting the product. New programs that took 3-6 months can be generated in a few days.

This kind of redesign is now being used for claims analysis, sales enablement, RFP generation, and workplace design. (Our report 100 Use Cases For Galileo explains dozens of such solutions available now for HR.)





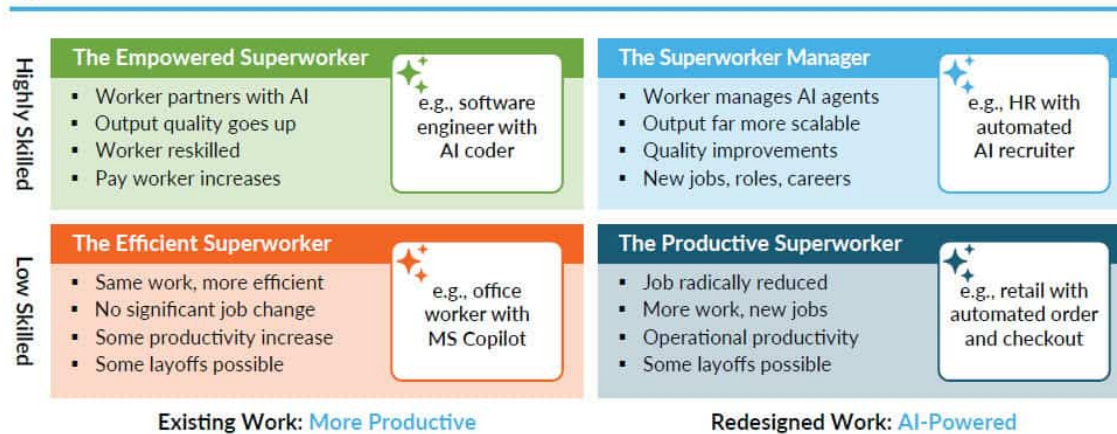
The Work Redesign Challenge

How do we get there? Business and HR teams work together, following these stages.

- **Improve efficiency at current job:** Use AI to make existing work more efficient: same job as before, new tools to make it easier. Examples include an office worker using MS Copilot.
- **Automate tasks to increase scale:** An engineer uses AI to write code. A marketer builds videos and campaigns automatically. An HR manager rapidly builds job descriptions or analyzes performance.
- **Integrate processes to improve productivity:** Agents now handle multiple connected steps. A retail clerk automatically checks out customers; a nurse uses a machine to monitor dozens of patients and make diagnostics; an HR manager builds learning programs in minutes.
- **Leverage autonomy for more:** The AI manages multi-step processes (customer service, candidate communications, recruiting, campaign design) and the people “manage” the digital employee.

This creates four types of Superworker:

Figure 3: The Four Dimensions of AI Automation



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2025

An Example: The HR Business Partner

Consider the role of HR Business Partner (HRBP), a complex job that's constantly changing.

An HR business partner (HRBP) equipped with AI like Galileo™ can automatically analyze turnover, productivity, individual performance, and leadership potential. The AI HR Agent can help compare job candidates against multiple requirements. Analysis, coaching, and hiring speed goes up, and the HRBP is now a Superworker.

Then the transformation continues. What if we give the AI to managers. Do we need the HRBP at all? (IBM has made this step.)

Yes, now the HRBP manages the AI. Just as Wayze may drive you automatically, someone behind the scenes is monitoring your trip to help you when things go wrong. This "Superworker" job is the upgraded role of the HRBP.

AI As A Job Creation Technology

Many new jobs will be created. Who maintains the knowledge base that feeds the AI? Who ensures data privacy and security? Who handles the ethical issues that arise? Who monitors the AI to make sure it's trained well? And once these multi-step digital employees exist, who will manage them?

These are new Superworker jobs.

Five Imperatives for 2025

How do we make this transition a success?

Here are five key imperatives detailed in our study:

1. **Redesign Work, Jobs, and Organizational Models:** Focus on the customer, how success is measured, then apply AI. This is what we call “productivity-based job design”. Deconstruct work into activities, evaluate AI solutions, and determine the human role alongside AI, using the models above.
2. **Create a Dynamic Talent Model:** The traditional “prehire to retire” model is becoming obsolete. We need a more dynamic approach where people move across roles and projects. Prioritize internal mobility and foster a culture of growth. Focus on “doing more with what we have” by upgrading the productivity of our existing workforce. Focus on building “talent density”.
3. **Rethink Pay, Rewards, and Performance:** Move from traditional pay models to “systemic rewards,” based on role, skills, and output. New roles may warrant higher pay, not lower. (Lightcast sees a \$45,000 premium for workers with AI skills.)
4. **Refine Leadership and Culture:** Focus on human-centered leadership: this is a time of change. Ensure leaders understand AI, foster innovation, and focus on productivity, not headcount. Start co-design projects in every functional areas. Get line employees involved in transformation efforts.
5. **Accelerate the Shift to Systemic HR®:** HR must operate in a consulting role. Integrate HR silos, develop a change-enablement team. Experiment with AI tools in HR and train the HR team about AI.

Let me give you an example.

One of our large clients, a healthcare company, created a “transformation enablement” team in HR that does co-design workshops throughout the business, helping with process redesign, role design, job changes and pay and rewards changes. They built a set of tools and methodologies which are well established. HR professionals rotate into this team for education. Every HR function should set up “AI transformation teams” like this.

| AI isn't here to replace us; it's here to empower us.

How To Get The Research and Learn

The Rise of the Superworker predictions report is available to all users of Galileo™, The Josh Bersin Academy, or Corporate Members. (A Galileo Pro membership is only \$39 per month, and JBA membership is \$49 per month.)

If you want to learn more and follow our ongoing case studies, briefs, and AI tools,

download the Rise of the Superworker Overview today. You will be registered for regular updates. And please register for our launch webinar on January 28 where I will detail this entire story.

The Superworker era has arrived, join us in the journey!

Additional Information

Digital Twins, Digital Employees, And Agents Everywhere

AI in HR: Certificate Program in The Josh Bersin Academy

Galileo™ Professional, The Essential AI Assistant for Everything HR