



WHAT TO BE PREPARED FOR IN 2018

Top voices from LinkedIn weigh in on what we should expect in the year ahead. **BY CHIP CUTTER**

BIG BRANDS WILL LAUNCH secret hotels. Breakthrough gene-editing techniques will move from labs to reality. And your job—yes, you’ll still have one—will start to shift. If nothing else, 2018 should be fascinating, according to these top voices on LinkedIn. Here’s what they say we should expect in the year ahead.

POST-WEINSTEIN, AN ERA OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The flood of harassment claims following the Harvey Weinstein scandal will change how society treats those who are wronged. “There will be a tide shift,” says Kat Cole, COO and president, North America, of FOCUS Brands, whose chains include Cinnabon, McAlister’s Deli and others. Women will no longer shrug off inappropriate behavior; they’ll speak up and amplify each other, says Sallie Krawcheck, CEO of Ellevest, an investing platform for women.

YOU’LL FINALLY TAKE A DIGITAL DETOX

Get ready to hide your phone and immerse yourself in a few tech-free hours (or days). “We’re at an inflection point,” says Arianna Huffington, CEO of Thrive Glob-

al, adding that tech’s addictive grip on our lives will move from the fringes to the center of conversation. Bosses will start banning devices from meetings, predicts former GE vice chair Beth Comstock. She calls distraction-free time the “new ultimate luxury.”



Huffington

THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY GETS STALE

Eight years after the Great Recession, the U.S. economy is still growing, making this recovery unusually long-lasting. This year, expect “to get a lot closer to an economic tipping point, the nature and implication of which will depend on politics,” says Mohamed El-Erian, chief economic adviser at Allianz. The biggest threats: geopolitical shocks and policy mistakes by central bankers.

GENE-EDITING TECHNIQUES COME OUT OF THE LAB

Gene editing—clipping and tweaking DNA using a technology known as CRISPR—will only become more advanced in 2018, says author Walter Isaacson. “It has huge beneficial consequences when it comes to fighting disease,” he says, while also raising new questions. “Do we want to have the ability to make our children taller?”



FORGET SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS. THINK “CHAMPIONS.”

The appeal of social media stars paid to hawk a product is waning. What companies want now: authenticity. It’s becoming easier to find everyday people already raving about a product on Instagram; those posts can be turned into campaigns. “An influencer is someone who gets paid; a champion is someone who really, really likes a brand,” says David Sable, global CEO of creative agency Y & R.

THE GIG ECONOMY GETS VOLATILE

As companies such as Uber move to-

ward much-awaited IPOs, they’ll be under pressure to make profits. For drivers, grocery deliverers and others who depend on these platforms, that likely will mean lower pay, says former Google HR chief Laszlo Bock, now CEO of startup Humu. “The gig economy is going to get increasingly brutal. Companies are going to need to make a profit, and that’s got to come from somewhere.”

GOODBYE POP-UPS, HELLO SECRET HOTELS

Big brands, desperate to reach consumers, have spent years launching pop-up shops and temporary exhibits. Now, look for companies to seek new ways to convene communities—experiences “powered by” brands—centered on shared states of mind: “secret hotels, secret meetings, secret gatherings—less about celebrity or privilege and more about psychographics,” says Beth Comstock, former vice chair of GE.

THE MUST-HAVE CORPORATE PERK: JOB RETRAINING

On college campuses, something unusual is happening: “Quite a few” students are asking corporate recruiters whether companies will help them get new skills as jobs shift, says James Manyika, chairman of the McKinsey Global Institute. Corporations such as Walmart and AT&T have already launched retraining programs, with more expected. As roles morph, professionals should spend the year in constant learning mode, says entrepreneur and *Shark Tank* star Day-



John

mond John. Too many people think new skills will “magically come to their cubicle,” John says. “It’s not going to happen.”

Chip Cutter is managing editor at LinkedIn. See more predictions for the year to come by searching for #BigIdeas2018 at linkedin.com.



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