

## Team 1: Meaningful midlife reskilling

**It's 2025.** The labour market has seen some major changes in the past couple of years, with some professions more or less disappearing altogether and formerly non-existing ones emerging. Careers are more fragmented and skills become outdated faster than ever before. If there ever was one, there is no longer the expectation that your university major or first job says very much about where you will find yourself some 40 years later.

To many, this is not news. Years of talk of things like automation even before it was actually widely implemented, has infused a sense of acceptance. 80%, when asked, say they *want* to re-educate themselves at some point in their career, and switch their line of work entirely. Amongst many, there is both an acceptance that a single job is not for life and a willingness to try something new. The amount of "midlife students" is forecasted to triple within the next few years.

The options for re-educating oneself, however, are not always compatible with this desire, and the public education system has not reinvented itself at the same pace as the labour market. It's mostly optimised for 19-year olds fresh out of high school with an unused CSN (student aid) quota, providing significant threshold to many mid-lifers evaluating their options.

### **Human in focus:**

Person with an academic foundation and thirty years of work-experience, looking to make a significant change and settle into a new career path. However, they aren't sure whether they could afford to study full-time, the grade-system has changed three times since they last applied for anything, and they worry about making the kind of change where they have to start over as a 50-year-old intern.

### **Brief :**

What demands does this particular starting point place on how we educate people, and how might we help this group pivot in their careers?

## Team 2: Skill sets of the future

**It's 2025.** Robotic process automation is no longer just talk, but actually flipping industries on their heads. University majors that were once considered safe bets for stable jobs are gradually being phased out of the education system altogether.

With this comes the debate of how we humans can differentiate in order to be uniquely useful, as more basic and repetitive skills are being replaced by artificial intelligence.

Industry leaders sit at roundtables and release statements stressing the importance of soft skills and emotional intelligence, as hard skills are increasingly outsourced to robots. They want to hire human workers for jobs that are harder to automate, those that require critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration, where one is benefited by having entrepreneurial instincts, adaptability, curiosity, negotiation skills and imagination.

There is a stark contrast, however, between these skills and the traditional methods of distributing and evaluating knowledge. Even if there have been slight nudges over the past few years in that direction, formal institutions are still struggling to catch up.

### **Human in focus:**

Person about to educate or re-educate themselves, trying to determine where they should turn and what they should focus on, in order to be competitive in an increasingly automated workplace.

### **Brief:**

In a future of soft skills, what skills are crucial, and how do we acquire them? What forums; networks, schools, or communities can promote and enhance these skills and increase the likelihood that humans find meaningful jobs as many tasks and activities are outsourced to robots?

## Team 3: End of life work opportunities

**It's 2025.** The government has just announced that due to the population's increased life expectancy they're raising the retirement age to 70, effective immediately for everyone.

Within the next few years, 95% of those retiring are forecast to be finishing their careers in a very different place than they began: it might just be in a different role or industry, but it's not unusual that it's a role or industry that didn't even exist when they started out. Few are spared at least one significant pivot throughout their careers.

And so now, a large group of previously soon-to-be-retirees suddenly need to make sure they're relevant on the labour market for a longer period than they initially expected. Many of these people are in industries that are going through major overhauls, ones they had banked on avoiding by retiring. Instead, in order to remain employable for the duration, they will most likely have to make some changes such as switching jobs or upskilling.

### **Human in focus:**

Person who at 60 was planning to retire within 5 years, a span that has now doubled. They were already holding on to a disappearing role, something that now seems unlikely to last until retirement. They're not entirely motivated by the idea of completely reskilling, however, for "only" 10 more years (less if you subtract the time the reskilling might take).

### **Brief:**

How do we make sure that meaningful and motivating career options are available to those who need to make major changes in the last stretch of their work life?

## Team 4: Coaching the coacher

**It's 2025.** Whole industries are being swept up in robotic process automation, and entire segments of jobs are ceasing to exist. Facilitators of job transitioning are struggling to keep up as large groups of people with similar skill sets need to be transitioned into completely new lines of work at the same time.

The existing support systems are under pressure. Both in terms of sheer numbers, as well as due to the complexity of helping people make a 180° shift into jobs that perhaps didn't even exist a few years ago, and that are often novelties to the advisors themselves.

### **Human in focus:**

Facilitator/job coach with the task of helping people re-skill/find new job opportunities. They're faced with a large workload and an overbalance of a certain skill sets in the people they meet, and are struggling to understand the opportunities out there themselves since the labour market has changed so much.

### **Brief:**

What skills and structures are required to keep functions and facilitators themselves up to date, in order to be able to aptly transition large groups of people into brand-new jobs?

## Team 5: Avoiding the traps of gig jobs

**It's 2025.** Gigging is supposedly all the rage amongst white collar workers, who gush about the freedom! and the flexibility! It is boasted of in the public sphere as the way of working of the future, with on-demand workers available to optimize companies' staffing with minimum financial waste-time. In another five years it's expected that as much as 80% of the global workforce will consist of temporary workers, if the trend continues.

The jobs that gave gigging a bad name a few years ago due to companies facilitating poor working conditions and lacking job security for taxi drivers, warehouse workers, and delivery people have now to a great extent been replaced by automated solutions. And so many have already forgotten the controversies that initially came with the gig economy.

With more and more people excited about gigging, however, competition to get a gig is increasing and compensation per gig is being watered down. Suddenly the reality of not finding enough gigs to pay the bills, gigs being cancelled last minute, and not being able to afford missing out for a sick day or vacation is making itself known even to the workers who once just viewed it as a sweet deal.

### **Human in focus:**

Person who willingly left stable employment 4 years ago, and initially really enjoyed the freedom that came with it. As more and more people gig, however, competition and decreasing pay has led it to feel more like a trap, and returning to employment is difficult, as companies are now hiring more restrictively.

### **Brief:**

Is it possible to combine mobility and flexibility with job security? What structures, tools, or functions could tip the scales towards the opportunities and benefits of the gig economy, rather than the risks?

## Team 6: The wake-up call

**It's 2025.** Being a responsible, sustainable company is a competitive selling-point more than ever before. It determines who wants to be your customer as well as your employee. Finally, it's becoming an awakening all the way to the bottom-line, in ways CEOs and boards can't ignore.

As the tone in society changes, large corporations that have been obsessing for years over automation, efficiency, and growth, are beginning to experience the downsides of their crusades. Many employees question whether they really want to continue to be part of the endless growth and profit mentality of large corporations, even if their skill sets and their roles aren't first in line to be lost in the shifts of disappearing and emerging roles.

For many, it becomes a nudge to question what they want out of their work life, assess the nature of their working situation, and long to explore new paths of putting their talents to good use.

### **Human in focus:**

Creative and entrepreneurial person who wants to make a change in how they use their talents. Person doesn't want to just jump head-first into a new employment, and they don't *have* to re-educate in order to be employable, but they would like to take a moment to question and identify what comes next: perhaps it's time to start something of their own, or collaborate with others in a similar situation?

### **Brief:**

What is a set-up for people in-between jobs that could help them identify a next step in their careers, one that is less about "just" getting a new job or education, and more about finding a meaningful and value-driven context, new ideas, and/or collaborators?

## Team 7: Future-proofing talent acquisition

**It's 2025.** Working in recruitment is harder than ever. These days, the top-of-their-class graduates you usually hire only want to gig, and shy away from long-term employment. As people become more global and mobile, the applicants consists of more and more people with schools and former employers on their CVs that you don't recognize, increasing your research workload. The hard skills you used to evaluate on have been replaced by soft skills, and cultural differences in a more global workforce also brings another dimension into the picture when interpreting and assessing these.

The nation-specific systems for evaluating knowledge and experience that have been relied on in the past are more or less void, and the usual recruitment tactics aren't really helpful. Even the channels you usually go through to advertise open positions are less effective, as those new to the market may not search for jobs in the same forums you're used to.

Employers worry about a labour deficit in the near-future. The dynamic for how companies find talent has been turned on its head, and there's an increasing concern whether they'll be able to catch enough talent for the most sought-after roles to keep business alive in a few years.

### **Human in focus:**

The HR specialist working with talent acquisition, who's trying to counter the anticipated labour deficit within the company's usual markets by finding new pools to recruit from and new strategies for getting workers into the company. Struggles to find enough talent, finds it harder to evaluate applications, and processes take longer.

### **Brief:**

As companies fear a labour deficit, how can they change how and from where they recruit in order to reach new groups of people to staff difficult-to-fill roles?

## Team 8: Loyalty in a fluid labour market

**It's 2025.** Gig workers are sweeping the nation and fewer than ever want to be employed full-time. To some companies, an on-demand workforce has helped them optimize their business, but others struggle with the lack of predictability. In particular, smaller companies find it a financial challenge having to outsource so much competence and being unable to plan very far ahead.

It used to be that job security and opportunity for moving within an organisation were things that attracted people to and kept them at a company for a long time. Now, with freedom being a premiered benefit and flexible contracts all the rage, other aspects drive employees and job takers. Things like company values, shorter hours, individual education plans, and health benefits are amongst the things that make up competitive perk packages used to attract elusive talent.

Still, what builds loyalty and keeps people onboard over time is under constant evolvment, and a new gap seems to have opened between what job takers want out of their work and what (especially smaller) businesses need in order to have a viable business plan for their futures.

### **Human in focus:**

Job takers who value freedom and flexible "employment" options, but are also mindful of their long-term career development and the kinds of jobs/assignments/gigs they take on. They're not primarily driven by a need for variation, and so working for new people or organisations is not a means in itself. They want their autonomy, but also to accomplish meaningful results over time.

### **Brief:**

What service, platform, function, or organisation could bridge the gap between job providers and job takers, creating a sense of loyalty and commitment between the two, even outside traditional employment agreements?



## Team 9: Beyond retirement

**It's 2025.** These days, retirement is less 'chilling with the grandchildren' and more 'I discovered my entrepreneurial instincts'. More than half of retirees say they want to leave formal employment, but continue working in other ways, at their own pace, with their own things: monetizing hobbies, gig-jobs etc. There's an abundance of digital tools to facilitate different ways of doing this, making it easy to set up and sell goods and services, finding surfaces for communication and marketing themselves.

While it sounds pleasant enough, experts worry what will happen if this fluidity truly becomes established practice. The impact on the labour market and the tax systems is still minimal but the concern is that this group, who work more for fulfillment than monetary compensation, might affect the labour market and dilute what others in the middle of their careers could charge for the same products or services – and, in turn, lower what others would earn and pay in taxes.

Still, with an aging population, it's only likely to become more commonplace that energetic retirees want to continue being part of meaningful contexts and put their skills and experience to good use, rather than just step aside for what they might consider an outdated view on one's working life.

### **Human in focus:**

Energetic retiree with lots of ideas, inspiration, and experience that they want to put to good use even after leaving formal employment. They want to be useful and continue to be intellectually and socially stimulated even after leaving a regular workplace with colleagues and clear tasks.

### **Brief:**

How can retirees' ambition to continue partaking in society and the labour market be supported in a way that also benefits the younger generation and society's ambition of a progressive and sustainable working culture for all?

## Team 10: Human-centered recruitment in a decentralized market

**It's 2025.** Climate change has become impossible to deny. The world is teetering on the edge, but experts deem that it is still possible to slow global warming down and cap it at the 1.5°C target. Since a year back, almost all developed nations have implemented flight restrictions for both business and personal travel.

Naturally this impacts how companies organize, expand, and work, even if distributed teams and flexible office-options have been fairly commonplace for quite a while. Opening offices in new markets, undertaking international projects and collaborations, or networking with new contacts and closing deals abroad are all aspects of modern business that are being reworked and reinvented.

Recruitment, in turn, has become many companies' achilles heel. Labour migration has over the past few years become a dependency for sustaining business, as an ageing population and shift in the skills companies seek to recruit has forced them to look outside their own country's borders to find enough employees. With travel restrictions, however, the process of evaluating candidates has become more difficult. And getting it right is more crucial than ever, since relocating new hires and their families within the realm of this travel ban comes with major commitments. Probationary contracts have been scrapped and a condition for labour relocation is a minimum stay of one year.

### **Human in focus:**

The HR specialist working with talent acquisition in this new climate, trying to find talent that needs to be a viable long-term fit, over a distance and without meeting in person. Person is in charge of making sure that the investment is worthwhile for the company. They're also faced with establishing a global network of leads and channels for attracting applicants to begin with, without an in-person physical presence.

### **Brief:**

How can modern technology be leveraged into a tool that global companies can use to find, network with, and evaluate talent in this glocal world, in a way that makes up for what is lost with the lack of physical presence?