

# The Future of Skills

Driving skills development in a fast changing world

Trusted partner for your Digital Journey

**Atos**

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**Damien Shevlin**

Head of Human Resources, Northern Europe, Atos

Damien and his team work with the business to set the people agenda, shaping the people strategy to drive the business to achieve its goals. His role is to anticipate people trends, to ensure Atos attracts and retains the best diverse talent, continues to improve people engagement, improves productivity and supports the delivery of an excellent service its customers.

Damien leads in a number of key programs such as the We are Atos Employee Experience Program, the Antz Mentoring Program, Mental Health Awareness Program.

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# The future of skills starts now!

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**As the world races towards greater digitisation, accelerated since the global pandemic hit, new and disruptive forms of engaging with technology are becoming commonplace in many parts of our lives - including in our work and careers. Digital skills are now essential in every sector, and the ability for organisations to foster continued learning in the workplace will prove crucial in future-proofing career paths - and ensuring business health and longevity.**

The health crisis has accelerated the move toward a digital world of work. Working remotely and serving customers in new and digital ways will significantly transform our work; but this transformation will also require new skills.

The critical skills requirements have shifted and will continue to do so. This is not a new transformation as, even before the crisis, disrupting technologies such as artificial intelligence and new ways of working were already impacting the way we work and the way we will continue to work.

As part of our Digital Society thought leadership programme, we have taken you on a journey looking at the changing skills landscape over

recent years including factors of changing demographics, technological advances, social mobility and much more.

Inevitably we also explored the impact of the global pandemic on skills. We then moved on to explore diversity and the importance of building diversity into your skills acquisition plans, before finally moving on to hear from various organisations, including Atos, on how they are building the skills for tomorrow.

We have shared many different perspectives in the form of blogs, articles, videos as well as live panel discussions with key experts from various organisations.

## For me there is a big question left that we need to address, and that is - what next?

With so much change and advancement, in particular since the start of a global pandemic, what could be next for the skills landscape? To help address this point, we have 5 experts who have kindly contributed to this publication and have shared their own viewpoint. There are some common themes that emerge, but each expert has their own different perspective from which they address this topic.

We all have a role to play in terms of planning for skills and helping our people to continuously develop themselves so they can be Future Fit for the challenges that are ahead.

In our ever-changing world, many factors impact the skills that businesses require for both today and tomorrow.

Leading experts join us in this conversation to present various insights on how the skills landscape is fast evolving, what factors are affecting it and what this means in a post COVID-era and in our ever-growing digital society.

If you are keen to see some of our other work on The Future of Skills, check out our Digital Society resources on [atos.net](https://atos.net) and do not hesitate to get in touch with us directly at [digitalsociety@atos.net](mailto:digitalsociety@atos.net).

# A future digital society starts today



**Nimmi Patel**

Policy Manager for Skills, Talent and Diversity, techUK

Nimmi is committed to embedding diversity in the UK tech pipeline from classroom to boardroom working with partners such as the Tech Talent Charter and the WISE campaign. Nimmi also leads techUK's immigration work, collaborating with techUK members and stakeholders to create an environment that attracts the best and the brightest to the UK. Prior to joining the team, she worked for the UK Labour Party and New Zealand Labour Party.

*"I'm particularly interested in how the tech industry, has highlighted the different skills that will become even more important as we face the Fourth Industrial Revolution."*

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The world we are living in is changing rapidly, and although digital has the power to revolutionise our lives and work, many people risk being left behind as we progress forward. The digital skills agenda and digital exclusion problem is one we have continued to chip away at, but the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted how much more progress is needed to support digital capacities for everyone.

It is crucial that we continue to offer people opportunities to retrain and learn new skills. As more sectors adopt digital technologies and tools, the digital economy will simply become the economy. Lifelong learning initiatives will be pivotal as the Fourth Industrial Revolution charges ahead, with the UK Government estimating 7.4% of jobs in England could be automated or partly automated in the coming years.

As more and more organisations are encouraged to adopt, deploy and use digital technologies, including data analytics and Artificial Intelligence tools, it is important that we ensure that people are equipped with the skills they need to thrive in the future. Everyone should have the skills and confidence to make the most of the opportunities digital technology can bring.

Despite this, awareness continues to be a key factor in preventing people from upskilling or

reskilling themselves. We should not believe this a uniquely British problem. If we look to our neighbours in Europe, data shows that 37% of people in the labour force there – farmers, bank employees, and factory workers alike – also lack sufficient digital skills, despite the increasing need for such skills in all jobs. They too lack skilled ICT specialists to fill the growing number of job vacancies in all sectors of the economy. This points to an international competition for the right skills to turbo-charge the economy.

Polling published by techUK, reveals that during the first lockdown; over half of Great Britain's online adults aged 16-75 are interested in gaining digital skills with 82% agreeing that 'digital skills will become more important in the next 12 months' paving the way for a reskilling revolution. This was significantly higher amongst those aged 16-24 (73%) and 25-34 (75%) – the two age groups that have been hardest hit by

the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, with unemployment in the younger age group predicted to reach the one million mark by the end of this year.

Right now, people are more motivated to engage with digital skills and view technology more favourably – it is vital that we build provisions around upskilling and reskilling as to not lose this momentum!

Business leaders should:

- Assess technology investments and the extent of their impact on the workforce
- Define the digital skills you need and when you need them

- Enable leaders to communicate effectively and manage change within a diverse culture
- Align learning to organisational strategy

techUK members are making significant investments in lifelong learning strategies and helping people to navigate a pathway through the changing nature of jobs, the types of tasks people do at work, and new opportunities that the future economy will bring. Having played an integral role in supporting businesses and the public throughout the pandemic, when it was most needed, it's clear that digital skills are now more valued than ever. Let's be prepared.



**7.4% of jobs**

in England could be automated or partly automated in the coming years.



**Over half**

of Great Britain's online adults aged 16-25 are interested in gaining digital skills.



**82% agree**

that digital skills will become more important in the next 12 months.

# Lifelong learning and the future skills challenge

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**As the fourth industrial revolution gathers momentum and technology advances at an overwhelming rate, even for the most tech savvy amongst us, the one common certainty is that we will all have to adapt and find a way to navigate this new increasingly digital world.**

Whether in AI, 5G, Quantum Computing or any other area, technological advancements are not only incentives for change but are also changing the underlying fabric of society and even human behaviour; ranging from consumer patterns, our notions of "ownership" and the sharing economies, through to our social interactions, belief systems and attitudes towards things like the productisation of our lives through data.

It's incredibly challenging for industries, governments and individuals to understand what this means in the long term. There are both optimistic and pessimistic projections in relation to what the future could mean for the world of work, but the one consistent in every scenario is that we need to change our approach to how we skill, reskill and reskill again. We need to take advantage of these incredible future opportunities to ensure no one is left behind. It isn't enough to wait for future generations to bring the skills, attitudes and aptitudes with them - there needs to be a more holistic reskilling approach across the workforce and industry to keep pace with and gain competitive advantage from this tech revolution.

So where to start? The COVID-19 pandemic has forced organisations to revisit their people and talent acquisition activities, to reassess their approach to "Buy, Build, Borrow" dynamics and not just to re-evaluate how work is completed, but also where work is completed and by whom. The unpredictability of the pandemic has put business agility at the forefront of the talent agenda, both from a resource deployment aspect with flexibility of gig event workers, temps and contractors being a benefit to organisations, but also from a skills perspective by thinking more agilely about the core skills and capability of employees to make sure change can be embraced without losing your company's core culture.

Whilst the hope is that the pandemic will have a relatively short-term economic impact, the demand for tech skills and talent globally will become fiercer than ever as economies rebound, and organisations accelerate their digital transformation strategies to stay relevant and drive growth. The so-called hard skills needed in the short to medium term are hard to predict, some analysts estimate that by 2030, tech



## Iain Simmons

Global Client Director, Alexander Mann Solutions

Iain has worked in Talent Acquisition for 25 years across a broad range of industry sectors and geographies. In his 15 years with Alexander Mann Solutions, Iain has worked closely with some of the world's leading brands to define, implement and operate innovative, cost-effective, often global talent acquisition strategies that create sustainable and evolving value for customers. In his current role, Iain leads AMS strategy for the development of its relationships, capability and customer portfolio in the incredibly fast-moving world of digital and tech recruitment, the sector where he started his career working for a specialist technology recruitment agency. A Law graduate who "fell" into recruitment all those years ago and has never looked back.

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advancements will mean that as many as two thirds of all jobs will be soft-skill rather than hard-skill intensive, businesses are now realising that shifting the balance in their assessment strategies to evaluating traits like resilience, problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration and empathy. The traits that underpin agility and innovative thinking are what businesses are striving for. Yes, hard skills matter in the here and now, but the balance will change.

In the UK whilst we might, in certain industries, see more lasting impacts from the pandemic or Brexit, the Tech sector is still forecast to adapt and recover quickly making it important for businesses to broaden their thinking around available talent pools. There are huge opportunities for organisations who genuinely embrace a more diverse talent pool, creating a culture of inclusivity and opportunity for all that flows throughout the organisation's DNA. The positive impact the pandemic has had on organisational flexibility and dexterity, such as increased remote working

and investment in team collaboration tech, should also be a springboard for removing some of the perceived barriers to recruiting from more diverse talent pools to a much greater extent than before.

For an individual, it's going to become increasingly important to take a "lifelong learning" approach to work, to proactively seek learning opportunities whether through stretch projects in current roles, taking advantage of available Learning & Development opportunities at work or through the plethora of quality materials available online. Individuals should look for mentors, sponsors, people who can help identify the skills needed to develop .

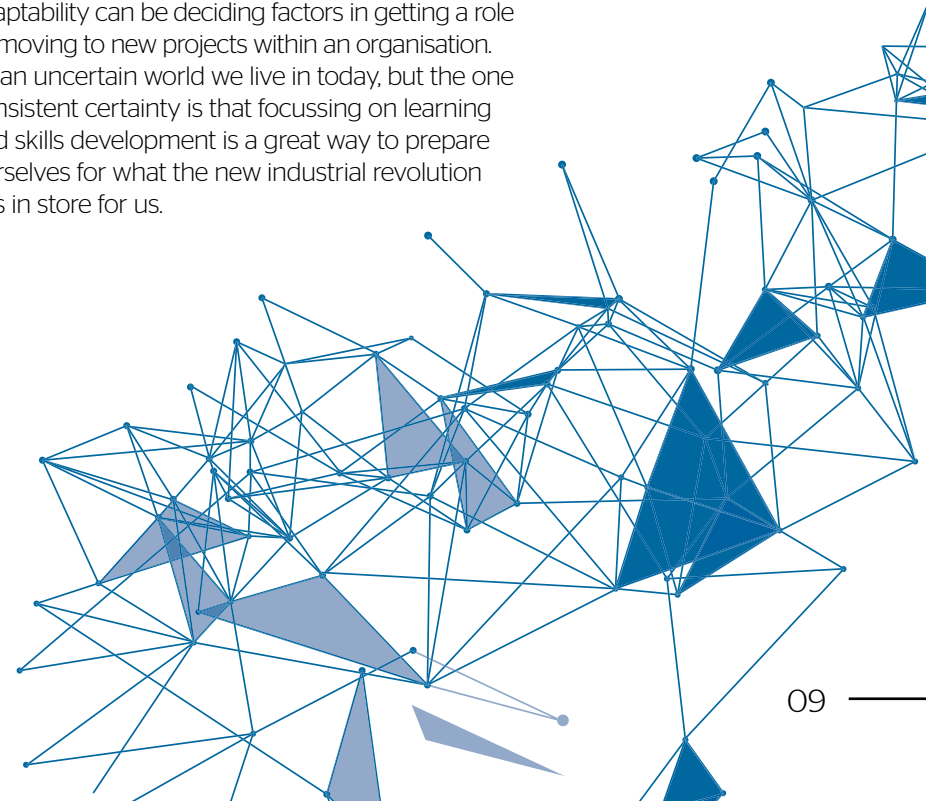
Governments are having to rethink and significantly improve accessible education available through every stage in life to provide quality opportunities to retrain workforces impacted by tech and automation. As a "non-permanent" worker, investment of time and energy in reskilling, learning and networking is

fundamental, taking advantage of government supported schemes or more commercial training and certification programmes is key. The platformisation and commoditisation of gig-working means that whilst there's opportunity for the tech to bring work to individuals, being networked and proactive will typically get more desirable work. The importance of soft-skills, should not be discounted. Tech contracting, in particular, is a changing world and the ability to show learning agility, creative thinking and adaptability can be deciding factors in getting a role or moving to new projects within an organisation. It's an uncertain world we live in today, but the one consistent certainty is that focussing on learning and skills development is a great way to prepare ourselves for what the new industrial revolution has in store for us.

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As Julia Gillard, the former Prime Minister of Australia once put it:

**“Our future growth relies on competitiveness and innovation, skills and productivity.. and these in turn rely on the education of our people.”**



# The new skills needed in our digital society

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## John Hall

Head of Strategy & Portfolio, Atos  
Editor in Chief for the Atos Scientific Community

John is a chartered Engineer with more than 30 years cross-industry IT and General Management experience in the Energy, Industry and Public Sectors. Having fulfilled a variety of roles including IT management, Programme & Account management and Operations management, John is now responsible for the strategy and governance underpinning the Atos UK&I portfolio of products and services. A member of the Atos Scientific Community, John is involved in all aspects of Innovation and thought leadership with regard to using business technology to address the current and future challenges faced by organisations. He has a particular focus on developing the strategy and go-to-market approach for digital transformation and disruptive technologies, with a particular focus on Hybrid cloud, Industrial Data Platforms, blockchain and the Gig economy.

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## “The most important skill to acquire now is learning how to learn” John Naisbitt

There can be no doubt that the digital revolution has transformed significant areas of the skills landscape. There are jobs today that did not exist ten years ago and trying to anticipate where the world will be in another 10 years is challenging to say the least. Even following “tech radars” or “hype cycles” is no guaranteed guide since more hype topics fail to make it to full deployment than succeed.

At a more micro level, digital skills are also evolving, with new programming languages and automation features that are rendering previously manually intensive roles somewhat obsolete. User interfaces and programming environments are now so intuitive and comprehensive, that with only a few basic skills results can be achieved that were previously only possible with “highly skilled” resources.

And not only do we have to deal with evolutionary changes, we also need to deal with sometimes unanticipated revolutionary changes. Just consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As well as the tragic loss of lives, we are seeing the rapid emergence of new ways of living and working and the potential demise of whole areas of business value, with public and private sector enterprises having to react at a faster pace than

they previously thought possible. Increased awareness of the need for environmental and economic sustainability is also leading to significant changes in the way we use technology: from driving a transition to mass electrification, to enabling circular economy business models.

The net conclusion is that one of the most important and enduring skills is being able to adapt. To constantly be learning and moving with the current situation. For some this will mean continually honing their capabilities, for others it will mean a complete reinvention of their skill set. Younger generations are likely to have more jobs in their working career than their predecessors – in part because the digital divide of technology awareness is no longer the barrier that it was. In many respects a core level of digital capability is the expected norm, skill differentiators are now shifting towards softer skills – creativity, problem solving, communication, empathy and ethics. These are the things that we can generally do better than machines (up until now, at least).

So how should organisations respond? I believe that it is a time for businesses to think differently, to be brave and to truly recognise that their employees are their best assets. Employees need a sense of engagement and worth – a part

of an enterprises' purpose. This is particularly challenging during these current pandemic times when social distancing, isolation and remote working are the order of the day. But, businesses, schools, universities and even places of worship are having to embrace new ways of online working and teaching that are already being described as the "new normal".

The skills needed for leadership are quite different in such a world. Presenteeism should no longer be a thing, yet anecdotally remote workers are feeling under huge pressure to be seen to be "logged on" from early morning to late evening. Online interactions work best in bitesize chunks, yet we still see virtual meetings of multiple hours. Management styles need to change, there needs to be greater flexibility and trust at all levels. Employees need to be given the time, space and tools to learn and refine their skills. They should be given the freedom to shape their own learning curriculum to some extent, to determine themselves what is needed to be effective and efficient in their job - and this should include soft skills development. Organisational structures should encourage the cross-fertilisation of skills through dynamic teams that are not constrained by rigid role definitions and departmental silos.

Of course, as people learn and enhance

their breadth of skills, they also become more marketable. Businesses must address the challenge of how to hang on to their most valuable assets - and it's not just about money. The nature of an enterprise is becoming more important than ever in terms of social and environmental value. A clear and engaging enterprise purpose can be as much a market differentiator as the products and services produced.

Individual employees also need to take stock as they look at how their careers might develop - what skills should they be investing in? Going back to the quote from John Naisbitt's - learn to learn! Become a networker, someone who connects with and learns from others. Don't cling too tightly to deep technical skills, they will become obsolete and new skills will have to be learned (many times). Instead,

understand how to work with technology in terms of its applications and principles e.g. what are the potential ethical and bias problems of Artificial Intelligence, what makes a good digital user experience, or how could use cases in one industry be applied to advantage elsewhere? We need to encourage the mindset that technology is there to serve us and not the other way around.

## Focus on essential skills! Collaboration, communication, creativity

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**For success in the future of work, essential skills which are easily transferable will remain critical.**

In 2017, the World Economic Forum (WEF) published a blog in which it predicted: “35% of the skills that workers need – regardless of industry – will have changed by 2020.” One thing the WEF didn’t predict was the coronavirus pandemic turning our world upside down that very same year, but the point remains true; we are seeing a dramatic shift in the skills that employers value and workers need.

This is being driven by a range of macro factors. Ageing workforces in many Western economies. The unstoppable march of technology and automation. The growth of the knowledge economy. And, of course, the pandemic forcing change into economies around the world, shutting down some sectors entirely while causing demand to spike in others.

The half-life of professional skills (the time it takes for a skill to lose half its value) is falling. Estimates put it at just five years, meaning that people need to reskill themselves constantly if they are to remain relevant in an evolving workplace.

The shifting skills landscape is a critical issue for employers of all shapes and sizes, as well as for individuals. No organisation can be successful

without the skills it needs to produce its products and deliver its services. Even if more work is automated, human skills will be needed to oversee those robots.

In fact, we know that in a shifting world of work, it’s those uniquely human skills that are becoming the most important and the hardest to automate. Study after study from organisations such as the World Economic Forum, the OECD and Nesta shows these essential and eminently transferrable skills – communication, team working, creativity – are most highly prized by employers.

Sometimes these skills are referred to as ‘soft skills’, but there is a growing recognition that such a descriptor is underselling them. Leaders and HR professionals know that these skills are in fact some of the hardest ones to find, develop and display personally.

I held a dinner for senior HR directors last year to discuss skills, and one people director reflected that getting her leadership team to consistently display such skills was one of her biggest challenges.

Over the last couple of years, the CIPD has been working as part of a coalition of organisations



**Katie Jacobs**


Senior Stakeholder Lead, CIPD

Katie is a Senior Stakeholder Lead for CIPD – the UK’s Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development company.

Katie was Towers Watson’s HR journalist of the year 2017 and 2014; highly commended 2016. Shortlisted for Editor of the Year, Trade & Professional, British Society of Magazine Editors 2018 awards.

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on the Essential Skills Taskforce. The aim of the taskforce: to agree a universal framework for essential skills: one which is clear, measurable and authoritative. This framework, which covers listening, speaking, problem solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership and teamwork, was launched in May 2020.

Essential skills are highly transferable skills. These skills support people as they move into the workforce for the first time, through progression or career changes and as they adapt and flex their skills to the new digital environment. While technical skills are of course important, a strong foundation of essential skills sets people up for success in building other more specialist skills.

While hundreds of schools are already using the Essential Skills Framework to prepare their young people to enter world of work, something the coronavirus pandemic will make even more challenging, it is critical that skills development doesn't stop when we leave the education system. We need to instil cultures of lifelong learning within our organisations, and those in work already need to take some responsibility for keeping themselves up-to-date. In a world of change, the ability to respond with learning agility will be critical to people remaining relevant and productive.

The months ahead will not be an easy ride but a focus on essential skills helps boost resilience, adaptability and employability. Businesses and individuals need to look ahead beyond the pandemic to the skills that will be needed to thrive in the 21st century workplace, whatever that looks like. A focus on essential skills will be central to recovery.



**35% of the skills**

- regardless of industry -  
have changed by 2020.



# The impact of a global pandemic on tech talent

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**Tom O'Reilly**  
Head of Group Strategy, QA

Tom is Head of Group Strategy at QA – the UK's leading tech learning provider.

Prior to QA, Tom spent most of his career at McKinsey and Company, working worldwide on large-scale strategy and corporate finance projects. He took a year out of consulting to work as a Senior Strategy Advisor at the UK Department for Education.

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**The majority of UK organisations were on some type of digital transformation journey before the pandemic hit. Whether leaders were evaluating business cases for change, or already reaping the initial rewards of a plan partially implemented, they were nonetheless on a journey to digital.**

The rapid change in the way we worked and consumed services during the first few months of the pandemic then added rocket fuel to just about every digital transformation programme. In their recent Digital Strategy Roadmap 2020 Global Study, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), said that over 80% of companies regard accelerating digital transformation as a strategic necessity.

Now with economists predicting a post-pandemic recession deeper than the financial crisis in 2018, and the depression of the 1930s, digital transformation is critical to survival. Businesses that failed to digitise before COVID-19, and businesses who are unable to secure the digital skills required to execute digital projects, will find it harder to survive.

## **The impact of COVID-19 on tech talent**

The ability to deliver digital projects and then harness the transformative powers is clearly

dependent on the skills of the people charged with their delivery. Having entered the pandemic with a pre-existing tech skills shortage, the increased pressure to deliver large-scale transformation will move the UK tech skills gap from shortage to drought.

More fundamentally, seeking to hire talent from an existing pool fails to solve the underlying problem of a shortage... It merely shuffles the same pack of cards. Pursuing traditional forms of recruitment will only exacerbate the digital skills gap and push up the average market rates. Instead, organisations must innovate to broaden talent pools, and to secure the tech talent required to keep pace with change.

The challenge is that we find ourselves in a world where every organisation is trying to hire the tech talent required to emerge stronger. In the Institution of Engineering and Technology's annual



skills survey, 60 per cent of respondents cite the recruitment of engineering and technical staff with the right skills as the biggest barrier to achieving business objectives over the next three years.

In amongst all this doom and gloom, it is refreshing to discover that the potential reward will make it worthwhile. A Microsoft study with Goldsmiths University of London has identified more than £48 billion of opportunity, if UK leaders enhance their organisation's digital competitiveness through sustainable growth practices.



## 80% of companies

regard accelerating digital transformation as a strategic necessity.





### Cheryl Allen

Head of Culture & Transformation, Northern Europe, Atos

Cheryl is a HR future thinker, with lots of energy, passion and opinions on HR and the future of work. She is experienced across the full spectrum of HR & across a variety of industries including IT, government, utilities and healthcare. As a strategic thinker, she is able to influence senior stakeholders to drive change and positively impact business performance. Cheryl is currently leading the agenda of transformation, HR analytics & automation, diversity & inclusion and employee engagement in the Northern Europe region.

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## Nurturing diversity in talent

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**When we eventually emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and move towards a the 'new normal', we will need to develop, nurture and retain digital skills more than ever before. Diversity and inclusion have a crucial role to play in developing these capabilities, therefore it is critical that this remains at the forefront of business priorities.**

As key nurturers of digital skills, the tech industry must do its part in driving and fostering inclusive cultures to broaden their applicant pool, and inspire talent of all ages, genders and ethnicities to pursue a career in the industry. If they do not so do, quite simply their businesses will not prosper and flourish as much as they could.

For real progress to be made, it is no longer acceptable for businesses to merely pledge their commitment to tackling the issue; they need to take a multi-dimensional approach in ensuring that diversity of thoughts and different skill-sets are built into the very foundations of the organisation. An action plan or pledge is not enough; concrete actions and tangible progress must be demonstrated.

The business case for D&I is now better understood and appreciated. Diversity has shown to boost innovation, help remove unconscious bias and provide companies with wider market awareness as well as improving ultimately the bottom line.

The journey to creating a truly diverse and inclusive company culture begins at the recruitment stage. Organisations need to think differently about how they, not only attract and retain employees, but how they get access to wider tech talent pools. They need to be viewing recruitment through a different lens, considering factors like: which candidates possess the most transferrable skills? How will they appeal to different audiences? And how will they demonstrate inclusive leadership, especially in a time of crisis? The war for talent remains fierce and candidate's expectations are evolving; it is a requirement and a given that businesses will conduct themselves in a fair and ethical way and how candidates feel as part of the hiring experience is key - inclusion!

Fostering a diverse workplace isn't just about finding new talent; it's also about developing the talent already within your ranks. People in different roles and with different experiences can provide unique perspectives when it comes





to creative problem-solving. That diversity of thought exercised onto a new solution or a client challenge can prove to be invaluable in creating the next best thing.

Plugging existing gaps in a company by offering employees continued education and training opportunities, through a reskilling programme, can boost employee job satisfaction, help a company retain a competitive edge, and bring out the full potential of its existing workforce. Companies can transfer skilled employees into many non-obvious roles. For example: someone who has the basic understanding of cyber security as a discipline may also find their talents

can be transferred into working on SAP or AI and automation technologies. Coupled with the benefits of reducing the need to hire, reducing induction / settling in costs and avoiding restructuring costs, re-skilling has to be the focus for businesses both today and tomorrow.

As the foundation for a world leading digital transformation strategy, digital skills will be vital to helping the UK build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to generate a pipeline of talent with a range of digital capabilities that accelerate innovation, create pioneering technologies and support the recovery of the most impacted sectors. A strong

approach to diversity and inclusion across the technology sector will be integral to creating these skills, so we need a collective will for organisations to raise their game and start putting strategies into action.

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Fostering a diverse workplace isn't just about finding new talent; it's also about developing the talent already within your ranks.



# Providing digital skills which bring communities to life



**Jen Gillies Pemberton**  
ANTZ Founder & CEO

Business Digital skills strategy can bring communities together, driving social change for people in digital isolation. Over the years, ANTZ developed a proven model that drives business growth while changing people's lives forever. This is more than responsibility, it's a desire to shift culture and change lives in work and in communities.

Atos partnered with ANTZ to deliver mentoring to prison leavers and those hard to reach in the community. The programme's social value impact through its collaboration of employees, clients and suppliers, unified by a shared goal to change people's lives by providing skills and support towards employability. The programme has delivered over £1.4 million in societal savings since 2015.

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**There has never been a more important time for businesses to understand what 'social value' actually means and looks like. When engaged properly it delivers sustainable, tangible change to a community and is genuinely impactful! However, this is not new for Atos who is already impacting people's lives in work and out.**

Firstly, the COVID-19 global pandemic has not only taken a huge toll on life, but it has highlighted once again how it is the poorest communities that are hit the hardest.

A report by independent charity The Health Foundation<sup>1</sup> found that of the 10 local areas in the UK with the highest death rates from COVID-19, half of them are from the poorest 30% of local authorities. These communities 'face a double whammy of health and financial hardship'.

Add to this, the latest research from Drs Hannah Holmes and Gemma Burgess of Cambridge University<sup>2</sup>, has found 'the coronavirus lockdown risks turning the problem of digital exclusion into a catastrophe of lost education and opportunity for the UK's poorest and most vulnerable'.


It is therefore **imperative for a digital skills strategy to understand the specific social issues that exist**. Digital gaps have always been there but due to COVID-19 they have been amplified and are

now taking a huge toll on people's mental health while increasing digital exclusion.

Secondly, all businesses need to understand that delivering 'social change' is now crucial to business growth, particularly when working with the public sector. This will include supply chains across all sectors. Atos has already started this process through the award-winning Atos Antz Mentor Programme.

For example, from the 1st January, a new UK Government Procurement Policy Note (PPN), requires key environmental, social and governance (ESG) related themes to be evaluated expressly in all UK central government procurement through the use of a 'social value model'. This PPN applying to England, builds on the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

The 'social value model' is divided into five broad themes, each containing one or more policy outcome to be achieved that must be evaluated



expressly through specific ESG objectives. It is therefore imperative that a digital skills strategy is linked to one or more of these key goals:

- COVID-19 recovery - Help local communities to manage and recover from the impact of COVID-19
- Tackling economic inequality - Create new businesses, new jobs and new skills
- Fighting climate change - Effective stewardship of the environment
- Equal opportunity - Reduce the disability employment gap and tackle workforce inequality
- Wellbeing - Improve health and wellbeing and improve community integration

In other words, if companies want to continue winning work with the public sector in the UK, they need to align and increase social value within key areas of their commercial strategy or be left behind.

### “Digital Isolation”

If digital isolation and local community skills are not considered, we are not addressing a key component within our business strategy for commercial and social growth.

Atos can build stronger cross sector relationships, grow the business and give back to the community by providing digital skills progression and opportunity leading to new paths out of poverty.

Delivering social value within the communities in which a business operates should be as normal a part of the business strategy as health and safety and HR.

Digital approach is critical, more now than ever!!  
Social outcomes are more than skills and jobs. ANTZ can help deliver a different pool of talent who currently have no reach to Atos, as well as jobs, community and a network of people and organisations that can work together to change lives. ANTZ can help align social and business strategy locally, creating future pathways to a forgotten talent that is currently hidden.

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# About Atos

Atos is a global leader in digital transformation with 110,000 employees and annual revenue of € 12 billion. European number one in cybersecurity, cloud and high performance computing, the group provides tailored end-to-end solutions for all industries in 73 countries. A pioneer in decarbonization services and products, Atos is committed to a secure and decarbonized digital for its clients. Atos operates under the brands Atos and Atos|Syntel. Atos is a SE (Societas Europaea), listed on the CAC40 Paris stock index.

The purpose of Atos is to help design the future of the information space. Its expertise and services support the development of knowledge, education and research in a multicultural approach and contribute to the development of scientific and technological excellence. Across the world, the group enables its customers and employees, and members of societies at large to live, work and develop sustainably, in a safe and secure information space.

Find out more about us

**atos.net**

**atos.net/career**

Let's start a discussion together



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