

5 skills brand managers need to survive the 4th industrial revolution

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There have been plenty of predictions surrounding the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and how it will impact various industries and the future of work. There's no question that the digital era has caused major disruption in many industries - from Airbnb's impact on the hospitality sector to the way Uber and Bolt changed the face of transport. According to the [World Economic Forum](#) (WEF), over one-third of skills (35%) that are considered important in today's workforce will have changed by 2020 - and brand management is no exception.



While professionals may feel exempt from having to worry about the changes that 4IR brings, the reality is that anyone hoping to not only keep their job but progress in their career will need to upskill to stay ahead of the curve. Shevon Lurie, MD at [Vega](#) (a brand of The Independent Institute of Education – [The IIE](#)) provides the top skills that brand managers of the future will need to survive and thrive in the future.

1. Creative strategic thinking

It used to be that 'strategic thinking' and 'creativity' were considered two separate skills on either end of the spectrum, with creativity being more of a priority in artistic fields like design and photography and less so among those responsible for 'steering the ship'. However, brand managers in the 4IR will need to understand the importance of tapping into their creativity to generate and execute ground-breaking strategies, ensuring the brands they manage remain relevant while always being a step ahead of its competitors.

2. Complex problem-solving skills

From finding ways to engage with a new generation of consumers who are worlds apart from their 'baby-boomer' predecessors to keeping up with the latest social media content trends, brand managers will need to think on their feet to stay afloat. Managing a brand in the digital age involves navigating an ever-evolving landscape of challenges which requires the ability to look at problems from different vantage points while taking a number of factors into

consideration. Complex-problem solving is one of the WEF's [top 10 skills for the fourth industrial revolution](#), not to mention a core focus of The IIE qualifications available to study at Vega. You'll need to have a good understanding of the world and how it works in order to find the innovative solutions for brands of the future.

3. Social awareness

To understand the world around them, brand managers will need to keep a finger on the pulse of their consumer market. According to a recent [study](#), 64% expect the brands they support to take a stand on social issues – Colin Kaepernick's [ad campaign](#) for Nike is a great example of this, where the brand stood in support of a social movement that many of the consumers in its target demographic felt strongly about. This involves having a good understanding of the moral, social and cultural circumstances and real-world contexts that impact society, which comes down to research, observation and dialogue in order to earn the respect and support of today's consumers.

4. Understanding digital platforms

Most people are aware of Facebook and the many other popular social media platforms that people spend their time on, but a brand manager's job is to unpack the potential of these channels for the benefit of their brand. While algorithms and software can be helpful when it comes to gaining important insights, they are simply tools at a brand's disposal and no match for the expertise of a human being. This is where brand managers come in – they will need to be able to take these insights, add this to their unique understanding of the power of digital platforms, and turn all of this into a meaningful outcome for a brand.

5. Passion

As the industry continues to shift and change shape, the one 'skill' that every brand manager needs to hold on to is their passion and drive to succeed. While it may seem obvious, it's easy to get lost in trying to survive the 4IR. A brand manager of the future will play an important role in ensuring that a brand adds value, makes meaningful contributions to the world and takes accountability for its every decision and action. Brands have the power to influence and affect change, and brand managers hoping to survive in the future will need to hold on to these ideals more fervently than ever.

The 4IR has already significantly changed the landscape of careers, work and the future. While somewhat uncertain, it will be bright for those who invest in themselves. To find out more about many industry-leading [IIE Brand Communication and Brand Management qualifications](#) available to study at Vega, visit www.vegaschool.com.

Visit the Vega Open Day on Saturday, 26 October 2019 to find out more about the modern career landscape and to chat to educators and industry professionals about a career in brand management.

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