

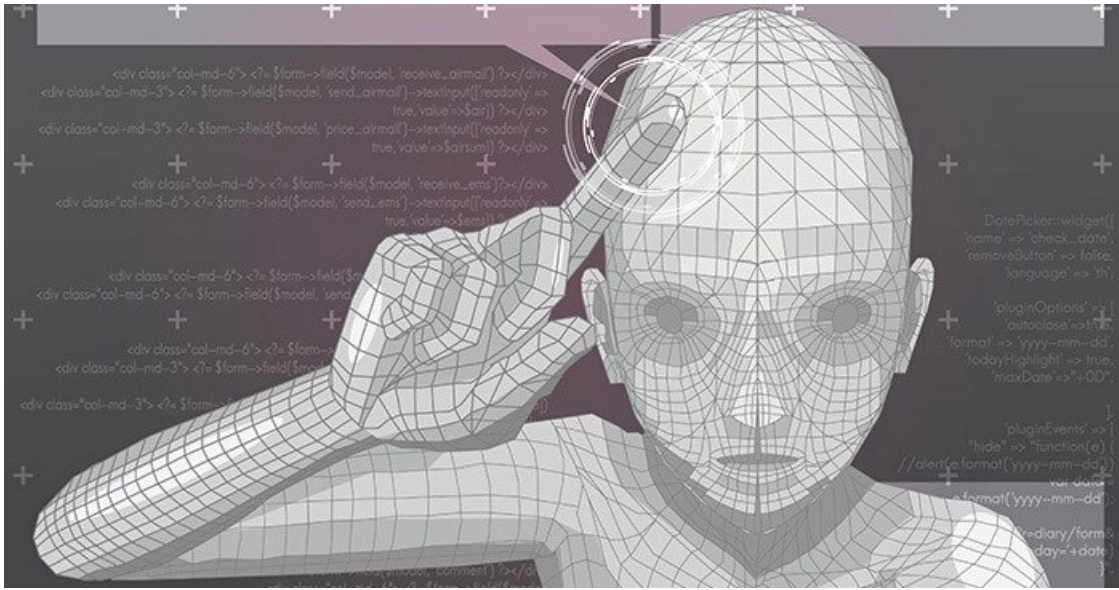
The next Elon Musk is still in primary school...

By [Gavin Cotterill](#)

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It's a fact - jobs as we know them are changing and many 'tried and true' career paths will cease to exist as we enter the digital age. How do we prepare our children for jobs that don't yet exist; using technology that hasn't yet been invented; for problems that don't exist yet?

The digital age is reshaping industries across the globe. How can we plan a future workforce when we don't yet know what jobs they'll perform? How can we develop talent when we don't know what our businesses will need in a few months from now; not to mention years?



While many parents have traditionally urged their children to pursue the 'safety' of career paths such as 'accountant', 'secretary' and 'teacher', a clear move away from a number of traditional skills and trades will be needed as the [Fourth Industrial Revolution](#) demands new roles, new skills and will fundamentally alter the way we live, [work](#) and relate to one another.

In tomorrow's economy, your job title won't be enough to keep you employed. The (successful) children of tomorrow won't be those who can recite the periodic table, but rather the [problem-solvers](#); those with the ability to offer an alternative viewpoint to the 'logical' solution, and those who are curious enough to challenge yesterday's solutions. Tomorrow's success will belong to the innovators.

Is Elon Musk an anomaly, or is it possible to instil in today's generation the ingredients of success for a future that is as yet unwritten? The next Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg are in primary school right now, they just don't know what their empires will be. If today's generation are to be among the winners in the race for success, they (and their parents) will need to heed some key, counter-intuitive principles:

Being clever simply won't be good enough

Today's generation of digital natives won't only be required to understand data and technology; they'll be required to collaborate and apply it in new and exciting ways. Understanding data and technological principles is one thing; designing machines that can self-learn and robots is quite another.

The employees of tomorrow won't perform the same job over and over again; they'll be expected to think and apply their knowledge. They will need to be taught how to be the interpreters and the translators between the digital world and the real world. Parents and teachers alike would do well to ensure today's children aren't only taught the theory behind how things work, but given the mandate to utilise this theory to evolve and test their own assumptions.

You won't ever 'reach your peak'

Success tomorrow will depend on an insatiable desire to learn about new technologies and to apply them. The children who understand this will go on to be the early adopters of technology, and will push the boundaries of applying it to their advantage. In tomorrow's economy, there won't be room for those who think 'they've arrived' and stalwarts will become 'stale warts' if they don't push themselves and their skills to evolve.

The 'good guys' will always win

In the past, climbing the corporate ladder didn't necessarily take character; and quite often involved a degree of ruthless drive. But the truth is, we're entering a future that will require collaborative behaviours to work in a data-driven world. Social networks have demonstrated the power of connecting people with open and free forms of communication. The online world and social media means reputations can be built (or destroyed) in seconds. Coupled to this, our concept of community has evolved to include online relationships that allow us to collaborate and share across physical and geographical boundaries. Tomorrow's leaders will understand the power of good relationships, online and otherwise, as well as the power of leveraging these connections.

Preparing our children for jobs that don't yet exist; using technology that hasn't yet been invented isn't as impossible as it sounds. What we must ensure is that we continue to update the principles we teach and embrace the attitudinal requirements of these new roles. This 'toolkit' will stand them in good stead to stand on the shoulders of the Elon Musk's of old.

(Aurecon has launched a futuristic blog called [Just Imagine](#), it provides a glimpse into the future for curious readers, exploring ideas that are probable, possible and for the imagination. This post originally appeared on Aurecon's Just Imagine blog. Get access to the latest blog posts as soon as they are published by [subscribing](#) to the blog.)