KORN FERRY

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT IN 2035: UTOPIA... OR DYSTOPIA?

Thought Leadership

A group of executives donning oculus headsets hold an urgent meeting in the metaverse. A critical recruiting search relies on a blockchain to squeeze a year-long effort into a few weeks. And an eager CEO, hoping to study the strength of her team, tracks the results of biometric sensors that her employees are wearing.

Korn Ferry has been out in front of trends in organizational consulting since its beginning. As we crest into a new era of technological innovation, a few of our "futurists" have been thinking about what to expect in the magical world of 2035.We are pleased to present a three-part miniseries which imagines what the future of human capital might look like. Please step into 2035 with us and join our heroine Katy who sits at the helm of a fast-growing financial technology company...

Background

Katy, a rising CEO in the financial technology services in California, has been tapped by a leading private equity firm to take a promising firm from early stage to IPO. The innovative technology was developed by an experienced set of former bank executives who now comprise the leadership team. They are outstanding subject matter experts but are limited in leadership and in scaling startup businesses. The private equity firm is principally concerned that the existing leadership team, nor the culture are tuned to rapid expansion in a highly competitive market. Katy will need to address both concerns immediately while further developing the technology and rapidly expanding the sales and distribution infrastructure. As all professionals in 2035 know, companies scale at lightspeed, and agility is key! Fortunately, Katy may just be able to achieve her goals using some possible futuristic playbooks from the metaverse, blockchain, and neuroscience!

Talent development: that's so meta

A few months into her tenure, Katy was relaxing in her personalized meditation pod at corporate HQ and relishing the last month of successful advancement. She was focusing on a recent conversation with her operating partner who insisted upon doubling top-line growth over the next quarter. Katy knew the demand was there and that the growth rate was achievable, but the sales and marketing team was not anywhere near ready or able to deliver that goal. She needed a miracle solution, and fast.

Upon joining, Katy inherited a small sales and distribution team that was product and industry savvy and seemed talented, albeit with a lower sales conversion rate than she would like. She did not have enough time or resources to get a global sales meeting together to charge up the team and refine the strategy, but that kind of catalyst was clearly essential. Katy would have to turn to modern technology and outside expertise to get the sales effort supercharged and producing in a matter of days.

Katy knew from her previous roles as Head of Marketing that evolving a salesforce effort could take many months if not years. Fortunately, Katy was able to turn to the Korn Ferry Global Simulation Center which specializes in individual and group sales acceleration. Using cutting-edge virtual simulations, the Simulation Center allowed professionals to practice real world business scenarios in a highly realistic virtual setting. The most attractive feature of the Simulation Center was its ability to get the global team together instantly in the metaverse, all sharing a virtual room and experience together. Katy felt the technology would allow for an instant sales meeting, all while getting the necessary strategic and development support from Korn Ferry.

The Simulation Center jumped into action and accompanied the sales team on a few live sales presentations held in the metaverse. Given the leaps in virtual reality, it has become the norm to run an entire sales process virtually and so the sales team was very comfortable in this setting. The Simulation Center team used that experience to recreate several real-world client scenarios with lifelike "client" characters and observed the sales and marketing team also in a controlled lab setting. Armed with the opportunity to review these performances, the KF Sales Effectiveness team restructured the entire sales approach, focusing on proven psychodynamic group sales practices. Using the millions of Success Profiles of

highly successful sales individuals compiled by KF, the Simulation Center was able to project how a topflight sales team would approach the same sales scenario. Each individual salesperson worked with a KF executive coach to adopt practices, in effect emulating these "ideal" avatars to improve their own style. Korn Ferry was also able to help the entire team develop and evolve their go-to-market strategy through strategic facilitation.

After only three full days in the Simulation Center, the global sales team emerged with a new strategy, dramatically improved group and individual sales techniques, and a strategic roadmap aligned to the aggressive sales goal Katy laid out. The sales team immediately began experiencing incredible results, winning every new piece of business that came their way. Even better, the KF consulting team continued to accompany the sales teams on live client pitches in the metaverse and provided group and individual "quick hit" coaching sessions immediately afterward. The overhaul of the sales team's approach yielded more than double top-line growth well before the quarter closed!

Three months later, Katy was back in her personalized meditation pod relishing the sales growth yet knowing her private equity partner would be expecting the same growth results again. Katy had much more work to do.

Your entire professional life in the blockchain: are you ready?

Six months had gone by since Katy stepped into her CEO seat. She was delighted with the development of her team through use of Korn Ferry's professional development program and ecstatic with the success of the sales team's evolution. However, planning with her private equity sponsor in the group strategy pod in the metaverse, Katy was becoming very aware of the need to expand revenue sources. Her fast-growing small company is starting to look like a scaled business and having a sustainable revenue model was going to be essential to her investors to stay committed.

Katy was ready to start expanding the product and service line-up to create a more diverse business. Her leadership team was not short on great ideas for new products and services, the company lacked significant advanced technology development talent and experience among her broader staff. To super-charge success with their envisioned new products, this development experience and capability were necessary. Specifically, the new product development was going to require a specialized quantum computing methodology found in a very small part of the quantum programming community. Katy was panicking. She had hired hundreds, if not thousands of developers in her career and knew that a normal process would take many months or perhaps even longer given the precise and rare skillset she needed. She guessed that the search would be especially challenging given the talent that existed in small, hard-to-find pockets all over the world. Finding a search partner to identify these individuals, sell them on the opportunity, and get them hired in a matter of weeks to begin development would be virtually impossible and Katy needed to show real progress quickly.

But in 2035, the impossible was possible. Katy once again turned to Korn Ferry to identify the most likely recruiting talent pools, it was determined that the most cost-effective and relevant talent spanned fifteen geographies. With almost no HR/Recruiting in-house team, Katy asked Korn Ferry for a cost-effective approach to finding the best and brightest quantum programming talent around the world. Fortunately, Korn Ferry was able to employ its proprietary matching technology to cull through over two billion profiles on a universal career blockchain system. In 2035, various distributed ledger technologies had developed to track the

global workforce, almost fifty percent of which was now mobile. The distributed ledger technology enabled Korn Ferry to quickly identify the most relevant talent after screening for specific credentials, experience, and certifications. The decentralized ledger system ensured that matching candidates in fact possessed the requisite quantum programming skills and provided some sense of interest using an artificially intelligent algorithm.

Armed with a list of twenty-five qualified and interested candidates spread across the globe, Korn Ferry's Talent Acquisition team was able to rapidly contact each, interview and assess them in the metaverse, and present a promising shortlist to Katy. Katy was able to meet all five quickly and hired three shortly thereafter with one in Singapore, one in Lagos, and one in Minneapolis. All three were onboarded virtually and plugged into the company's team and resources. Katy was amazed at the rapid progress this highly specialized team achieved, providing the foundation for the new product in a matter of weeks, and allowing her product team to refine and launch. Given the fast go-to-market abilities the sales team developed through the Korn Ferry Simulation Center, the team was out selling the new product immediately with incredible success and the new hires were already onto their next project!

Katy was blown away with her newfound ability to identify talent with precision and speed. She sat back in her personalized meditation center and dreamed of what next project to chase!

Biometrics: the new team facilitator

It had been a year since Katy joined the financial technology company as CEO. Her private equity investor could not have been more pleased with her performance. After all, she had launched four new products and doubled sales each quarter for the past two quarters. She had delivered tremendous value and was beginning to see some scale to the business and pivoted towards developing her leadership team. The past year almost entirely focused on growth and delivery and Katy simply had not had any time to think about putting in place a capable and sustainable leadership team. Her job was to create value, and the private equity firm was clear that without a strong leadership team in place, monetizing the company in an IPO would be suboptimal.

Katy started to pull all the data she had on her leadership team. Even though she did not have a full human capital team or a performance review process, she had luckily decided to implement the Korn Ferry Biometrics package into the company in the first month. In the year 2035, neuroscience had advanced rapidly to a point where brain activity could be measured and accurately predictive of some critical human thinking patterns. Korn Ferry had figured out how to use biometrics to better understand these thinking patterns and intervene to enhance business decision-making.

The biometric package required all employees to wear a series of very small physiological biometric sensors measuring thousands of data points, including neurological activity and patterns. Reviewing the data, she was pleased to conclude that her team was solid but was dismayed that decision-making behavior was often very flawed. Knowing that the seasoned executives on her team would respond well to hard data, Katy shared this insight with her executive team who eventually agreed decision-making was holding the firm and the team back.

To identify ways to rapidly improve, Katy once again brought in Korn Ferry to help. A team of organizational psychologists, executive coaches, and neuroscientists from Korn Ferry got to work immediately pouring through the terabytes of physiological data. Using their extensive experience with this kind of big data as well as employing a machine learning processor, the team compared what they found with data from other similar-sized high-performing teams. The key insight from this analysis was not that the team was collectively poor at bad decision-making, but that often one individual would interject with bad decision-making outcome behavior and through the whole team off track. This showed up very clearly and significantly in the accumulated big data which analyzed each individual's neurological delta wave activity.

Though the executive team had to take some time to digest this finding, they agreed to let Korn Ferry help. Korn Ferry's team was allowed to monitor all major team meetings and use a custom algorithm to spot unusually high levels of delta activity in participating individuals. The high levels of delta activity correlated with bad decision-making behavior, and so Korn Ferry was positioned remotely to stop meetings early so that decisions could be made at a later time. The triggering team member received a thirty-minute neurofeedback session neuroscientist and executive coach to bring the activity back into alignment.

The team graciously submitted to this level of intervention for one week and observed much better outcomes to their meetings. Katy and her team decided to keep the monitors in place and leveraged the training from Korn Ferry to monitor the biometric data during team meetings to ensure neurological signs of poor decision-making were not clouding any one team member's contributions. After this data-driven intervention, it was clear to Katy that her team was well on its way to becoming a world-class decision-making group!

Katy was particularly pleased with this outcome. She sat back in her personalized meditation pod, relaxing after enjoying a 2028 vintage Merlot wine edible, turned off her biometric monitors, and dreamed of the trillion-dollar IPO to come!

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About Korn Ferry

Korn Ferry is a global organizational consulting firm. We work with our clients to design optimal organization structures, roles, and responsibilities. We help them hire the right people and advise them on how to reward and motivate their workforce while developing professionals as they navigate and advance their careers.