Chapter 8
Airbus Global Workforce Forecast (GWF)

Meet the Future Competence Challenge

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Abstract This chapter is a brief overview of the Global Workforce Forecast (GWF), a document made public by Airbus presenting the results of a large study launched by the group in 2018. The aim of the GWF is to provide every employee, every reader with relevant information and data to be prepared for the 2019–2029 competence challenge the company will face by 2030.

Keywords Human resources · Competencies · Industry 4.0 · Demography · Megatrends

8.1 Introduction

Understanding fast transitions (digitalisation, Industry 4.0, carbon neutral, COVID-19) and their transformations to come in different disciplines is key to be prepared for competence challenges. Our competence strategy resulting from successive iterations helps to anticipate declining activities, emerging jobs and competences.

The Global Workforce Forecast (GWF) document examines the main asset of the company, its human capital. It presents how to secure continuous positive growth and support Airbus’ transition towards a new worldwide Industry 4.0 and becoming a new technology company. This document is structured into five main chapters: megatrends, demography, competence strategy, resource development levers and practices and the evolution of resource development levers.
8.2 Involve Everyone in the Transformation of the Company

It then appears obvious that each individual would need to take part in this transition by taking one’s development into one’s own hands with the support of the organisations. One way to facilitate this was the creation of a document providing all elements allowing “my” capability to project “myself” in future of “my” company in terms of skills.

The ambition of the Global Workforce Forecast is to provide all employees with relevant data, information and analysis to better understand, anticipate and prepare the evolution of our company competencies. Employees worldwide are actors of this opportunity and are encouraged to engage their own relevant development actions such as learning, mobility and knowledge management.

The purpose of this study launched in 2018 is to give a robust and consistent frame of reference to every reader in order to:

- access relevant data, information and analysis in a synthetic format;
- get a better understanding on current and future workforce evolution;
- get a better understanding of the current and future HR levers supporting competence development from the organisation, team and employees;
- enable everyone to integrate these elements into their own decision-making process.

8.3 Deep and Fast Transformation: A Shared Concern

In 2019, Airbus decided to make this document public as all information provided could help institutions, universities, any talent worldwide and our supply chain employees and leaders to better understand our transitions and associated skills forecast. It was also considered as an opportunity to engage in exchanges with other stakeholders working on the subject, such as the World Economic Forum Future of Work, the EU Commission’s Pact for Skills and other committees.

Our world is facing an ever-increasing pace of global change and has been labelled as volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA). This world brings a high number of challenges and opportunities to our company: a competitive environment in a globalised and financially driven economy, a permanent increase in customer expectations, reputational challenges, the need for Airbus to deal with innovation mostly because of the COVID-19 crisis, the need to become carbon neutral, the digital transformation and the development of Industry 4.0, generational gaps and demographical changes considering that 50,000 employees will leave the company in the next 10 years and 80% of our staff will be generations Y, Z in 2027.

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1 Human Resource.
These fast-approaching transformations are conveying risks and challenges, but bring great opportunities if well anticipated and prepared with the full engagement of the whole organisation and all employees.

It is our company’s responsibility to put in place appropriate means and levers helping managers and employees to adapt our main asset, “human capital”, and make the most of it for a successful future with a positive growth mind-set.

Megatrends are transformative, global forces that shape the future world with their far-reaching influences on business, societies, economies, cultures and personal lives. Megatrends impact all regions of the world and all actors and organisations over a large time scale. We have selected six megatrends: economic globalisation, resource scarcity and climate change, global governance, demographics and social evolution, innovation and technologies, new consumption patterns.

8.4 The Airbus Competence Strategy: A Full Engagement with International Organisations

The Airbus competence strategy is a company approach which aims to support the business strategy implementation in a five year time frame and to accompany the five Airbus business drivers: boost our existing core business, be a digital aerospace champion, be a responsible company, be the global company of choice, shape the future of flight.

Consequently, the competence strategy objectives are to:

- assess external and internal evolutions and their impacts on jobs and competences;
- set up recommendations and actions to accompany these jobs and competence evolutions and reshaping;
- deploy all resource and develop actions to be taken by HR, academies, managers, employees to systematically serve our future needs;
- provide visibility to all employees on the competencies needed in the coming years for our business.

The Global Workforce Forecast helps also to understand the different HR tools and levers available to support skills development and knowledge sharing. A chapter is also dedicated to the improvement of those tools and levers. Leaders and employees should be more comfortable in engaging their collective and individual skills developments.

Analysis, realisation and communication of the Global Workforce Forecast open the door to different initiatives and communities worldwide:

- the World Economic Forum analysis and events for their “Future of Work”;
- the European Commission’s reflections on the subject and The Pact for Skills initiative on different ecosystems and particularly Aerospace and Defense;
- some national and regional working groups.
8.5 Conclusion

There is a clear ambition and willingness from many top leaders and specialists to find collective solutions in support of massive and scalable upskilling and reskilling challenges to respond to the impending fast transitions worldwide. The new technologies and the improved understanding of neuroscience open the door to very innovative approaches allowing new perspectives for easier responses to this challenge. Communication and open collaboration are key to engaging proper transitions with all stakeholders in education, industry (large and small companies), authorities, social partners and people.