

My name is Lee Dyer. I've been teaching human resource management at Cornell University for 45 years. I've seen a lot of change in that time, but none more profound or more important than the changes that lie ahead. Over the next few years major transformations will be taking place in the nature of work. And it will be up to each of us to decide how these will unfold and to make sure that they work out the way we want them to be.

As this figure shows, HR professionals will be right square in the middle of things. Ultimately it is the human resource strategies that organizations enact which play a major role in determining how many jobs are created, as well as the quality of these jobs. But of course, HR professionals don't operate in a vacuum.

The number of forces, global competition, the emerging technological developments, societal pressures, and labor market conditions influence firms' business strategies, and in turn, their human resource strategies. And there are a number of key players in the process as well. These include labor organizations of various types, public policy makers who make and enforce the rules of the game, and educators who are responsible for helping folks develop the skills they need to succeed.

The challenge for HR professionals is to understand the environmental forces at work and to work with the key players to develop desired results. And of course, this means doing all they can to be sure that their organizations have enough high quality people to do the work that needs doing.

But it also means striving to ensure that everyone who wants to work is able to get a job. And not just any job. But one that provides both a decent standard of living and a sense of personal fulfillment and accomplishment.

This is where our course comes in. You will learn how the important external forces-- globalization, technology, and so forth-- have changed over time and are expected to change in the years ahead. You also will learn what can be expected of key players in the process-- labor organizations, public policy makers, and so forth-- in the coming years, and how you can work with them to forge mutually acceptable agreements on key issues.

In short, if you are or are aspiring to be an HR professional or a manager, completion of this course will help position you to influence the nature of the changes that will be taking place in the years ahead, both in the US and around the world.