What 2023 Taught Us: The Rules Are Always Changing

This year’s top trending articles explore how we can keep pace with a world in flux.

2023 has been a relentless year. Devastating wars and disasters caused widespread destruction and humanitarian crises. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals remained sluggish. Recession fears loomed. Mass layoffs in the tech industry and the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank floored us all. The great leap forward of artificial intelligence (AI) ignited ethical and safety concerns. And companies pushed harder than ever to get workers back to the office.

Amid the chaos, INSEAD professors provided some clarity. Their research and thought leadership offer insights and strategies to not only navigate an ever-changing landscape but also plot a better path forward for business and society.
AI is forcing us to up our game

The benefits and risks of large language models like ChatGPT dominated discussions this year, particularly with regard to their potential impact on business education, as well as issues around trust, safety and governance. Highlights from our AI: Disruption and Adaptation series in 2023 include:

1. **ChatGPT and AI Disruption: Is Consulting Next in Line?**  
   *Philip M. Parker, INSEAD*

   Given the increasing uptake of generative AI, consultants need to up their game to match algorithms’ ability to provide affordable strategic due diligence.

2. **How Will ChatGPT Shape Business, Society and Employment?**  
   *Phanish Puranam and Theodoros Evgeniou, INSEAD; and Morten Olsen, University of Copenhagen*

   Will next-generation AI systems such as ChatGPT deliver the productivity boost modern economies need – and are we ready for it?

3. **How AI Can Improve Human Performance**  
   *Henning Piezunka, INSEAD and The Wharton School, and Fabian Gaessler, Pompeu Fabra University*
AI training enhances strategic skills, especially in lower-skilled individuals. But it isn’t a perfect substitute for human training partners.

The workplace is evolving, and so must the way we work

Hybrid work has become a permanent fixture, yet many companies struggle to really understand employees’ needs. This year, INSEAD faculty shared research and insights on how we can enhance the work experience for everyone:

1. **Beyond Salary and Benefits: Why Career Conversations Matter**
   *Winnie Jiang*, INSEAD; *Claire Harbour*, Culture Pearl; and *Antoine Tirard*, NexTalent

   Meaningful discussions between managers and employees are necessary to build stronger individuals and organisations.

2. **Too Many Meetings, Too Little Time (to Work)**
   *Guillaume Roels*, INSEAD

   What if there was a better way to schedule meetings for team coordination?

3. **The Pitfalls of Giving Feedback Across Genders**
   *Erin Meyer*, INSEAD

   To best navigate gender divides, pay attention to perceived power imbalances.
Organisations must go back to the drawing board

Companies need to carefully (re)consider their decision-making processes, structures and strategies to remain competitive. INSEAD professors underscored the importance of agility and adaptability in today’s fast-changing business environment:

1. Only Fools Rush In: Pitfalls of Hasty Problem-Solving
   **Asher Lawson, INSEAD**

   Managers and organisational decision makers need to target their efforts to improve decision-making, starting with taking their time when approaching a problem.

2. Three Key Global Strategy Challenges Companies Face
   **Felipe Monteiro, INSEAD**

   How multinationals can adapt and redesign their global strategies in response to mounting pressures.

3. Solving the Problem of Remote Work
   **Mark Mortensen, INSEAD**

   A framework to help leaders approach the topic of remote work more holistically and effectively.
Leaders need to level up

As the well-worn proverb proclaims, "A fish rots from the head." But how can we nip toxic tendencies in the bud? INSEAD faculty outlined the need for self-awareness, continuous learning and a healthy dash of humour:

1. How Storytelling Makes You a Better Leader
   Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries, INSEAD

   Purposeful storytelling isn’t show business, it’s good business.

2. Stop Going It Alone
   Michael Jarrett, INSEAD

   Negotiating radical organisational change needs to be a collective effort.

3. How Women Leaders Benefit From Using Humour
   Ella Miron-Spektor, INSEAD

   Being funny helps leaders gain influence, and women benefit more than men from using humour in public speaking.
We are all responsible for fixing our world

2023 is set to be the hottest year on record, and both natural and human-made disasters are on the rise. As INSEAD professors argue, proactive business action remains critical to solve the world’s biggest problems:

1. ESG Is Not Impact
   **Jasjit Singh**, INSEAD

   ESG efforts are essential for reducing harm, but it is not the same as striving for a net-positive impact.

2. A Nondisruptive Approach to the Environment
   **W. Chan Kim, Renée Mauborgne** and **Mi Ji**, INSEAD

   By leveraging nondisruptive creation, companies can help the transition to a greener economy without sacrificing their financial interests.

3. Circularity in Practice: Case of a Zero-Waste Island
   **Atalay Atasu**, INSEAD, and **Imran Gill**, Polygreen

   Implementing sustainable solutions has everything to do with influencing behaviour, as showcased by the Just Go Zero project on the Greek island of Tilos.

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https://knowledge.insead.edu/career/what-2023-taught-us-rules-are-always-changing
About the author(s)

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