

Intelligent robotics and Quality of Life at work: compete, control or collaborate?



Key facts and figures

50% of all paid activities are estimated to be automatable by existing technology.

A closer look at tasks within roles reveals huge variation in the proportion that could be automated:

< 10% in the case of a psychiatrist,

> 90% in the case of a fruit or vegetable grader,

~ 50% in the case of a nursing assistant.

Although **1 billion** jobs could be automated with current technology, it has not yet happened; organisations can envision and plan for desirable scenarios.

Intelligent robotics could benefit occupational health by assisting workers in dangerous, physically demanding activities: in the US, work-related musculoskeletal disorders account for over

600,000 and **34%** injuries and illnesses of all lost workdays reported annually.

What is the issue?

In the next decade, we expect to see significant workforce developments with continued progress in the fields of data, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, machine learning and intelligent robotics. New types of jobs will be created, some will be lost, many will change. From the perspective of workers' quality of life, what is the key to the successful integration of intelligent robotics in the workplace?

What research did the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life do in relation to intelligent robotics and quality of life at work?

In May 2017 the Institute held a round-table 'Dialogue' of experts in Singapore to understand better:

- what is the essence of our historical relationship with the tools we use?
- how is it changing with the advent of intelligent robotics?
- are these changes different from those we've seen with past technological change?
- what future scenarios can we envisage?
- how desirable are they in terms of workforce quality of life?
- how might we reach the more desirable scenarios?

What did we learn?

There are many trade-offs to navigate between e.g. a focus on cost-minimisation framed in terms of human-robot competition for jobs and resources, loss of human control or decision-making autonomy and, in the alternative, a focus on value-adding human-robot collaboration framed in terms of worker quality of life. Looking at the detail of tasks and activities rather than jobs and roles, applying a quality of life lens, we can develop valuable human-robot collaboration. From reduced exposure to dangerous, risky or uncomfortable environments, to more time for human workers to spend interacting with other people, there are many potential benefits of intelligent robotics in the workplace.

Realising the benefits depends on our ability to prepare, engage and value human workers.

Find out more by reading the full report *Intelligent robotics and Quality of Life at work: compete, control or collaborate?* [here](#)

About the Institute

As an in-house 'think-tank', the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life is inspired by Sodexo's deeply held conviction that improving Quality of Life leads to the progress of individuals and contributes to the performance of organisations. Its role is to gather and develop insight to help Sodexo understand better what are the levers of Quality of Life.

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