

# The New World of Work

From the Cube to the Cloud

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Tim Houlne & Terri Maxwell

# The New World of Work: From the Cube to the Cloud

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## Table of Contents

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Section 1: *Where Did the Work Go?***

- Chapter 1      It's in Plain Sight and It's Up to You to Find It.
- Chapter 2      Who Moved My Cube?
- Chapter 3      Three Workforce Trends
- Chapter 4      The Empowered Customer

#### **Section 2: *Work: Fractionalized***

- Chapter 5      Motivating Tomorrow's Workforce
- Chapter 6      Creating a Productive Tech Enabled Workforce
- Chapter 7      The Customer Service Revolution

#### **Section 3: *Careers: Virtualized***

- Chapter 8      Tomorrow's Careers
- Chapter 9      Capitalizing on Virtual Careers
- Chapter 10     No Buildings. No Fear.

#### **Section 4: *Talent: Globalized***

- Chapter 11     New Business Models
- Chapter 12     Competing for Virtual Talent
- Chapter 13     Education Must Change

#### **Section 5: *Now What***

- Chapter 14     Close the Talent Gap
- Chapter 15     Rethink Career Strategies
- Chapter 16     Business and Purpose: Find Your Why

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

## INTRODUCTION

History is replete with examples of economic transformations that, in retrospect, seemed perfectly logical. However, the human beings most directly affected by those changes did not *experience* them rationally. Instead, they experienced those economic course corrections as disconcerting and often terrifying. On the other hand, the people and companies who embraced these transformations often maximized new opportunities, revolutionized industries and created generations of wealth, ***all because they could see the benefits of the change, rather than the change itself.***

As the authors of this book, our objective is to help professionals, corporations and business owners negotiate this New World of Work. We are business leaders who have worked in both small businesses and large enterprises and over the last decade, shared a range of market insights with each other about the monumental shift in the way the world works. Although our early grasp of workforce changes were on-target, it was only in the last year or so that we realized we had recognized a revolutionary market-shift- as it was just gathering steam, and before almost anyone understood its impact.

***Tim Houline*** has been the CEO of Working Solutions, a premier virtual agent and technology solutions provider, as well as serving on the Board of Directors for Vision Bank of Texas.

*Tim has authored multiple articles and white papers covering a wide-range of subjects including Top Traits of High Caliber Agents, Platform as a Service, and Contact Center Security – Moving to the Cloud. He is a highly sought-after speaker for industry conferences, business summits, and schools. He is committed to helping others embrace new concepts and ideas that improve the lives of working professionals while ensuring excellent bottom-line results. His collaboration on this book is the latest example of that commitment.*

***Terri Maxwell*** provides game-changing insights that transform businesses, people, and industries. She is an impactful, passionate leader known for simplifying formulas for success and igniting potential.

*In a career that spans more than 20 years, Terri has put her talents to work for large and small companies, and is a well-known consultant to small businesses and entrepreneurs seeking to accelerate growth. She has built numerous successful companies, and created an impressive and well-known business incubator, Succeed on Purpose Inc. in Irving, Texas.*

*She is the author of Succeed on Purpose: Everything Happens for a Reason, a book teaching how to use life's challenges to uncover purpose. In addition, she has been featured in The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, the Dallas Morning News, and Dallas Business Journal.*

Ironically, we both created companies leveraging next generation work without realizing the magnitude of what was occurring. Once we put our observations together, it became clear that this story had to be told. We remember the day vividly as the realization sunk in that this shift would revolutionize everything the world knew about work. The next decision was clear: We had to inform businesses and professionals how to navigate the New World of Work.

Ready or not, the New World of Work is here, and while it may be scary for some, this new world is also exhilarating. It offers those who choose to embrace it, the opportunity to grow with **no boundaries**. In creating this map to the new world of work, we have:

- Provided a historical context to this new work perspective
- Clarified, in detail, the trends taking place
- Demonstrated how to take advantage of these trends
- Introduced some people who have already embraced tenets of the New World of Work

A very well known example of someone with tremendous foresight, who took early action in this new world, was the visionary Pierre Omidyar, founder of eBay. He was the real precursor to the New World of Work. You can imagine how shocked he must have been when, in 1995, a bidder paid \$14.83 for a broken laser pointer in 1995 on his new online auction site named after his consulting company, Echo Bay Technology Group. When he personally contacted the winning bidder to reiterate that he was, in fact, buying a broken

laser pointer, the first customer of eBay told the founder that he collected broken laser pointers and was very happy to have found another for his collection. This was the ultimate, new-world expression of the old saying, “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.” And Omidyar was smart enough to realize that he could use technology to match people with their treasures—no matter how obscure or far away.

Thus began a revolutionary business that has grown to be an industry unto itself, with a base of fifty-five million buyers in all parts of the world. A more interesting fact however, from the perspective of the New World of Work, is that eBay has more than 430,000 sellers who now consider eBay their primary source of income. If eBay employed all of these people, it would be the second largest retailer in the world, right behind the behemoth named Wal-Mart by founder Sam Walton.

How eBay and its incredibly diverse group of entrepreneurs make money from this fascinating virtual marketplace has been covered in detail in other books such as Adam Cohen’s *The Perfect Store*. However, eBay may be the perfect example of how virtual entrepreneurs and businesses can join forces to generate revenues and livelihoods from the New World of Work. Strap on your seat belt, and let’s explore this new frontier.

## Section 1: *Where did the Work Go?*

## Chapter 1: It's In Plain Sight and It's Up to You to Find It

There's a popular children's book called *Where's Waldo*, in which the lead character—with his signature red-and-white striped shirt and somewhat goofy expression—is obscured by various collections of people and things. He's hidden, but in plain sight (if you'll excuse the oxymoron) and it's the young reader's task to locate him in every illustration. By the end of the book, children become adept at locating the enigmatic Waldo in a glance.

We can only hope that this instructional parable reminds us of how sometimes the simplest truth can be obstructed by our need to make things complex. And so it is with the new world of work. If you want to know where the jobs are, here's a hint: They're in plain sight.

You might call this new, adult game *Where's the Work*. And the stakes couldn't be higher.

### ***The Case of the Disappearing Jobs—Or Not!***

In listening to politicians and pundits one might think jobs have disappeared completely. They haven't! They're simply hiding in plain sight where only those who can see the obvious are able find them.

For example, let's say a big company like IBM sets up operations in a new locale. In the past, the company would have staffed the new facility with a thousand new workers. That meant spending hundreds of thousands (maybe millions) of corporate dollars on office space, equipment and infrastructure, and parking lots. No more! Today the company builds a small facility, staffs it with 100 or so managers while the remaining positions are sent to the cloud to be filled by talent around the globe. Not because the labor is cheaper...but because the labor is more talented, and more eager to compete for this work. That's right; compete for the work.

Why would a company such as IBM consider the cloud for its talent needs? Because technology and next generation work now make it possible for companies to work effectively with skeleton crews onsite and large, competent resources spread across the globe.

And that brings us to an important point. You're right if you think much of the "new" work has gone overseas. Work has spread across the globe because companies can now

source talent easily, and the talent will compete for the work...not based on price, but on the quality of their work.

Ironically, this doesn't mean those same jobs aren't also available in the United States because they are. It's just that most Americans don't realize that this work is available, and we are not prepared to compete for work in this way. Furthermore, most US companies haven't grasped how to capitalize on this new talent war, and only a handful of companies are winning the new game. You see, just as workers are competing for work in the cloud, companies now have to compete for the best talent, by providing interesting projects at competitive pay.

Which is why we wrote this book. The New World of Work is both a roadmap for professionals seeking a career in this new world, as well as a compass for those responsible for developing new talent strategies for your company.

### ***The New Revolution***

We're in the midst of a new work revolution, and its implications are as far-reaching as those of the Industrial Revolution, which lasted from 1750 to 1850, yet impacted the way we worked for generations after. The Industrial Revolution—coupled with the impact of the Great Depression—pushed jobs from the farm to the factory. The move from farm-to-factory, and then to the corporation, resulted in a geographical concentration of workers in cities and suburbs rather than dispersed on family farms. New industries evolved, in part to match the way our society worked, lived and played. The WAY we worked after the Industrial Revolution, ultimately reshaped our entire society

There have been several mini-revolutions since, but nothing to match the scale of the Industrial Revolution. That is, until now.

### ***No Boundaries: Work Has Moved, Not Disappeared***

The Information Revolution, which occurred over the last twenty years and involved an almost unbelievable growth in work-enabling technology, has spawned an entirely new way of organizing work. As it relates to technology, Moore's Law correctly predicted the progression. This new method is responsible for innovative business models and career opportunities, all with one thing in common: **Today, there are no boundaries to work.**

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*Moore's Law continues to be undeniably accurate. As described in his 1965 paper on computer components, Gordon Moore predicted that the number of transistors on integrated circuits doubles every two years. Therefore, the speed and performance of computer chips would double every two years. The faster the processing power, the more applications you can run with greater capabilities, the ultimate combination for a virtual world.*

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Over the last two decades the world experienced several well-publicized workforce developments. First, it was outsourcing, which led to offshoring. Today there is a ubiquitous transformation of work platforms and talent-sourcing that is revolutionizing not just how and where work is performed, but the **way** business is being done.

The New World of Work is leveraging the Information Revolution and in the process, transforming how, and where we work. Today work is certainly moving from the cube to the cloud, but in the process it's creating an entirely new breed of worker.

### ***Three New-World Workforce Trends***

This transformation, and thus the New World of Work, has crystallized three key trends that form the basis of this book. We will fully explore these trends and how you can profit from them later, but briefly want to introduce them here:

**Work has been *fractionalized*** – Routine work has been broken down into small tasks, and as a result, most companies will be hiring less full-time workers as they outsource those routine tasks as contract projects.

**Careers have been *virtualized*** – With cloud technology and its capacity to allow companies to leverage intellectual property, work (both contract and role-based) is moving from the cube to the cloud. Professionals can work from anywhere, and at any time.

**Talent has been *globalized*** – As noted earlier, the fractionalization of work, and virtualization of careers has made talent truly exportable. Forget offshoring; Crowd-sourcing means that smart businesses can get talent anywhere, anytime.

In the New World of Work, there are literally no limits to what, how, and where work can be performed. While this is clearly an advantage for those businesses that can adapt, it is an even bigger opportunity for professionals who learn how to compete effectively for this work. And, in a world with no boundaries, learning to compete for this work is paramount.

Throughout the book, we'll show you how to use these trends to position your business or career to compete effectively in a boundary-less world of work.

### ***Work, Work Everywhere...***

In the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the hero of the poem is dying of thirst while surrounded by an endless ocean of water. The now-famous line, "Water, water everywhere, but nary a drop to drink," is all too appropriate for workers who struggle to take advantage of the new work that surrounds them.

According to the International Labor Organization, as of this printing in late 2012, two hundred million people are out of work globally, with an estimated forty million of those unemployed workers residing in advanced societies such as those in the United States, Japan and Europe. Yet at the same time, businesses in those nations lament that they are unable to find qualified workers!

A small percentage of this now-persistent unemployment can be explained by weak demand, but clearly there are bigger problems underpinning the stagnant labor market. Despite elevated unemployment levels, many jobs go unfilled in mature economies because employers can't find the right talent.

In 2011, when US unemployment was at 9%, an MGI survey of two thousand U.S. companies found that 30% of the available positions remained open for six months or more. The reason? Companies couldn't find the required talent. During the same period, 36% of European employers claimed to have difficulty filling roles, and as many as 8% of Japanese companies reported the same challenge.

While technology has enabled a New World of Work, the speed of business and technological change has outpaced the ability of many workers to adapt, resulting in a **mismatch** between work and the skill required to fulfill demand. So the jobs are there—in fact businesses are crying out to fill them—workers just need to gain the necessary

skills—and attitude—to make those jobs their own.

### ***We'll Be Your Guides***

For most, the New World of Work seemed to appear overnight. As two of those who saw it early, at first even we didn't grasp the magnitude of the shift or understand the drivers fueling it. On behalf of those ready to embrace this fresh perspective, the new world will usher in new opportunities and new ways of approaching business.

We know that such dramatic change can feel disconcerting. Once we realized that next generation work was bigger than the cloud technology that enabled it, even we were caught off guard. You see, technology certainly has changed work. But it is a new breed of worker that is changing the way business is done. This new breed of worker competes for work anywhere in the world. They are what we call a "Virtualpreneur™" – combining an entrepreneurial spirit with virtual work platforms that match talent to the companies who want to hire them, on a contract basis.

That's why we had to write this book. We felt compelled to explain this new world to the millions of professionals in search of work, all the while missing that the work is right in front of their very eyes. We also know that this new talent marketplace is changing the way businesses must compete for work, and in so doing, most companies are left without talent to fill open positions because the majority of qualified workers aren't within a 50 mile radius of their headquarters.

To grasp next generation work, it is imperative to understand what—not **who**—moved the cube into the cloud. We'll show you why it's inaccurate (and unproductive) to blame corporations for outsourcing jobs and ripping success from our hands. In the New World of Work, boundaries have vanished and work now moves fluidly around the globe, based on available and passionate talent. This is the effect of a new and ubiquitous trend—not the result of corporations simply trying to increase profit margins.

To truly understand the New World of Work, we must let go of the need to blame and instead grasp that something much bigger is going on. We can no longer blame corporations or the government for not protecting our jobs. It's time to take advantage of the resources surrounding us, set our fears and angst aside, and prepare for the future.

The fact that you've chosen to read this book is a very good indication that you are ready to get started. Companies who capitalize on these trends will have increased leverage through human capital. And professionals who create new career strategies geared to the new world will find their skills to be in high demand.

In the coming chapters, we will explore new business, career, and talent models driven by a cloud-based world and a workforce motivated by its *passion* for the work, rather than the *location* of the job. The real benefit of removing the boundaries to work is that it enables one's passion for work to take precedence. And companies that can capitalize on passion will take a lead role in the coming Talent Revolution created by the New World of Work.

If you're ready to exploit next generation work, and plot a new career strategy for yourself or a talent strategy for your business, then this movement is for you. Welcome to the new world of work.

## Chapter 2: Who Moved My Cube?

It may be terrifying for those caught in the vortex between the old and the new way of work. Most professionals earned the right degrees, responded to the demands of their professions, learned the intricacies of their industries and were rewarded under the old system. It feels like a massive betrayal that an entire system is falling away.

The truth is that the cube was moved in part by a new breed of professional. They are skilled and passionate global workers who want the freedom to choose the type of work, rather than choosing a job based on its proximity to their homes. Rather than being hindered by location, they are able to compete based on talent and passion. While most of us were sleeping, they unknowingly leveraged cloud and mobile technology and created the New World of Work. And it was their passion for work, rather than some indiscreet evil force, that caused work to seep across boundaries and find its way to this new breed of talent.

Let this chapter be a call to action for those most affected by the New World of Work. Professionals need to reinvent themselves in order to compete in the New World of Work. Conversely, companies need to wake up to the reality that competing for the best talent locally will soon be a thing of the past. The best person for a job no longer lives within a fifty-mile radius of your corporation.

### ***Where Have the Good Jobs Gone?***

According to Gallup Research, Americans believe that the country's most pressing problem is the lack of good jobs. In a recent Gallup study, people chose the lack of jobs as the country's biggest problem over healthcare, the economy, the environment, and even global terrorism. The thirty million Americans who are either out of work, or significantly underemployed in the worst recession since the Great Depression, are left bewildered, confused and in many cases lost.

But it's not just America reporting these problems. Every industrialized nation in the world is dealing with persistent, systemic unemployment and underemployment. This stagnant job market is chipping away at national resources, citizen satisfaction, and pure old-fashioned hope. And, it doesn't appear to be getting better.

The lack of good jobs is truly the most pressing issue in the industrialized world, but this challenge can easily be solved if companies and workers begin to think differently. ***The work still exists, but the jobs we once held, do not.***

### ***Forget the Cheese. Who Moved my Cube?***

After the 2000-2001 dot.com bubble burst, an entertaining book helped displaced workers find their way through the aftermath of the Internet bust and became a catchphrase standard in common culture. The book was *Who Moved My Cheese*, by Spencer Johnson.

Unfortunately for the workers involved, this time it's not just the cheese that moved, but also the restaurant, the farmers' market and the grocery store. Everything is different. For the most part, workers can recognize that something about the job marketplace appears to be different, but most professionals can't put their finger on what the problem is or where their darned cube went.

Here's why most workers can't see the opportunities of next generation work: They're looking for the jobs they lost, which in most cases, no longer exist.

### ***It's Time to Wake Up!***

What displaced workers don't realize is this: Not only is that old job not coming back, it has probably been broken into small pieces and sent into the cloud for completion. The truth is that the lost job isn't coming back, at least not in the form it left, because work has been **fractionalized, virtualized and globalized**.

Even traditionally safe careers, such as professional sales positions, have been obliterated in this job recession. According to *US News and World Reports*, 400,000 sales positions have been lost since 2008, but not because the work wasn't available. Many of those sales positions were fractionalized as companies moved sales positions to more efficient channels. These new channels included mobile sales tools and outsourced sales channels where contract labor is abundant.

For professionals looking for work, this notion is hard to accept. Maybe they don't want to admit it, or maybe job-transition groups are simply providing stale advice. Either way, it's just not working.

Global professionals who want to compete in the New World of Work must rethink their careers and begin the long road of rebranding and reinventing themselves. Like it or not, everything has changed.

The truth is, in the social/digital decade ahead of us (you know the one, where technology changes in an instant) jobs will change just as quickly. Professionals who want to capitalize on the New World of Work have to think differently. The online virtual-work market is estimated to be more than \$1 billion in 2012 alone, and it's predicted that a massive one-third of the global workforce could be hired online by 2020. Some reports argue that it could be as high as 50% of global workforce.

### ***Take This Job and Move It***

Let's explore a few roles that have changed in the last four years, to help you better understand the cloud-based world around us:

**Administrative Assistants:** Once a staple of corporate luxury, administrative assistant jobs have been declining for a decade. Today, those jobs are easily crowd-sourced to the tens of thousands of virtual assistants who now work from home. (Crowdsourcing is defined as a distributed problem-solving and production model. As *Time* noted in an article about the crowdsourcing phenomenon, "We're looking at an explosion of productivity and innovation, and it's just getting started, as millions of minds that would otherwise have drowned in obscurity get backhauled into the global intellectual economy."

According to Marketwatch.com, businesses trying to weather the economic downturn are turning in huge numbers to Business Process Outsourcing (BPO): meaning that they're looking online to hire thousands of people for support positions in their organizations. According to the Q2 2012 survey by Freelancer.com, hiring of virtual assistants increased by 18% to 3,770 jobs during the quarter, demand for MS Word processing skyrocketed 119% to 1,594 jobs, and data processing hiring was up 16% to 21,274 jobs, with hiring of people with skills in Excel up 13% to 22,947 jobs.

**Professionals:** Your job didn't go overseas this time. Instead, it went into the cloud and another professional working from home (but not always in his PJs, as was once perceived) is now taking those service calls. According to IBIS World, the number of temporary workers in the U.S. is on the upswing, and will continue to increase at least through 2017, reaching 3.5 million.

**Engineers and Programmers:** As technology has become more streamlined, so have the ways in which it's programmed, designed and engineered. Companies have moved this work into the cloud through such brands such as Amazon, Google, Genesys, Oracle, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft and a host of others, including EMC, Cisco and Red Hat. That translates to a range of cloud-related development jobs—often from remote locations—for engineers and programmers.

**Project Managers:** Do you know that there are more contract jobs available to you on Elance.com and oDesk.com than there are physical project management jobs available on recruiting job boards across the U.S.?

According to an online employment report on Elance.com, the company posted 197,000 jobs in the second quarter of 2012. Online Employment is a \$1B industry comprised of companies with online platforms for hiring contractors. It's in double-digit growth mode driven by global expansion and favorable workforce trends.

**Marketers:** Your industry has been obliterated because of the double whammy of the job recession coupled with new social and digital-marketing strategies unfolding each and every day. Your profession was listed as Number Two in the list of Top 10 Dying Careers in the June 2011 *Forbes* article "The Disappearing Middle Class". But, don't despair! You can now take your skills to the cloud and find a global network of companies who want to hire American marketers powerfully trained in famously effective American marketing strategies.

Let us be clear: This isn't an attempt to scare you. Instead, it is meant to inform professionals to understand that the work still exists: just in a different form.

And, it means that it's time to think differently. The old job system is disintegrating before our eyes, and it's being replaced by platforms that give professionals powerful new options for taking their passions and skills to market. Gone are the days where we have

to accept management styles like those mocked on *The Office*, and long commutes followed by even longer work hours. Today, we can create our own jobs. We can put together work streams of projects that we enjoy, rather than being forced to do tasks simply because they are considered part of the “other-duties-as-assigned” aspect of our job description.

Now professionals can freelance skills through Elance, Working Solutions or oDesk. For passionate graphic designers, there's LogoTournament.com and 99Designs.com both of whom are actively seeking designers, copywriters and marketing professionals to compete openly for projects and be paid based on the quality of work rather than the time spent doing it.

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*"In this new world, the worker is in control of the work they select, the hours they work and a work choices that are built around their lifestyle."* Rich Peterson, Chief Marketing Officer of Elance

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### ***Even the HR Department Can't Find the Cube***

Just look at any job-posting board and observe the manic trend played out. One week a company advertises for a marketing communications specialist. A week later that job is pulled down, and now the company wants a PR manager. Then, a few weeks later, that job disappears and the same job is titled social media specialist.

What's the deal? Why does the same job have three different titles? And it's not just occurring in marketing; the phenomenon is occurring in IT, sales, finance, and operations. So what is going on?

Yesterday's jobs don't exist, and tomorrow's careers options are changing faster than a teenage girl changes clothes. As a result, most companies are caught between their old way of sourcing talent, and these next generation work models.

So both business leaders and working professionals are frantically looking for once-earthbound jobs. The fact that they can't see them doesn't mean they no longer exist; they have simply moved.

## ***Work has Moved Into the Cloud***

Here's how dramatically the job marketplace has changed: Currently, work opportunities are more readily available virtually than locally. And most of the new virtual work options are contract jobs with performance pay, rather than the archaic and bureaucratic work system that compensated employees with wages and benefits for time well spent, rather than work well done.

Since a large portion of the virtual work is being redistributed through contracts on virtual work platforms, those countries whose citizens access these platforms will win the jobs war, because that's where the work can be found. According to the *Financial Times*, as it turns out, workers from developing markets are capitalizing on virtual workforce trends. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ukraine and the Philippines are among the top providers of virtual workers, with millions of hours of brainpower exchanged every day on the Web. The result is what the publication refers to as "impact sourcing", which is increasingly becoming an important source of income in these countries.

And, as virtual collaboration tools and mobile technology improves, virtual work will become easier for a hyper-available workforce digitally connected from anywhere and at any time.

***So, if the United States—AND ITS WORKERS—wants to win the job war, we must rethink the concept of work. Jobs have moved from the cube to the cloud, and the countries whose professionals capitalize on this trend will win the talent war.***

## ***You Can Win This War***

For professionals who are left confused by the new talent market, the critical shift that must be made is to stop looking for jobs, and to think more about work. You should be asking yourself:

- What type of work am I most passionate about?
- How do I prefer to work?
- What type of company and culture appeals to me?
- In what roles can I be effective?

Professionals who want to compete in this New World of Work have a huge advantage if they can stop worrying about their job and build a new career strategy. This book is designed to give professionals a map to this new world, whether that professional is a hiring manager, a corporate executive trying to develop a competitive talent strategy, or a job seeker stuck between worlds. Without boundaries, workers are free to compete in new ways, and companies will compete for talent, and maximize their future (and profits) one worker at a time.

So, what does tomorrow's workforce look like? What will be changed? What will remain the same? What are the trends and how can we capitalize on them? We briefly introduced the three key trends in Chapter One, but let's take a closer look at them individually, learn what they mean for our economy and find out why we should care. Understanding how these new trends have removed work boundaries is critical to maximizing the New World of Work.

Let's explore these trends and begin to create a New World of Work Roadmap.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### **Tim Houlne**

Tim Houlne is a visionary whose longstanding, futuristic predictions about the virtual workforce is now a reality. He recognizes and understands trends, and uses that unique knowledge to transform industries across the business landscape. His understanding of the virtual workplace is unparalleled, and his drive to uncover new concepts is matched only by his passion for growing profitable businesses. Tim holds the position of CEO at Working Solutions, a premier virtual agent and technology solutions provider in Dallas, Texas.

Tim has authored multiple articles and white papers covering a wide-range of subjects including Top Traits of High Caliber Agents, Platform as a Service, and Contact Center Security – Moving to the Cloud. He is a highly sought-after speaker for industry conferences, business summits, and schools. His passion is helping others embrace new concepts and ideas that improve the lives of working professionals while ensuring excellent bottom-line results.

### **Terri Maxwell**

Terri Maxwell provides game-changing insights that transform businesses, people, and industries. She is an impactful, passionate leader known for simplifying formulas for success and igniting potential. In a career that spans more than 20 years, Terri has put her talents to work for large and small companies, and is a well-known consultant to small businesses and entrepreneurs seeking to accelerate growth.

Throughout her career, Terri has delivered sound solutions to large and small companies, producing unprecedented results and igniting growth. She has launched more than twenty start-up brands, built numerous successful companies, and created a well-known and highly respected business incubator, Succeed on Purpose, Inc. in Irving, Texas.

She is the author of *Succeed on Purpose: Everything Happens for a Reason*, a book teaching how to use life's challenges to uncover your purpose.