



# Corridor

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## TRANSFORMING WORKPLACES

**TODAY'S WORLD IS UNDERGOING** transformational, disruptive change, and the mindset of North Iowa leaders needs to be focused on the future.

"The places where we work, and the people who manage and lead us, can influence a shift in how we address the challenges we face," according to David and Carol Schwinn, educators and authors of "The Transformative Workplace."

In September, the Schwinns spoke with community leaders in Mason City about transforming the work culture here. They were joined by Rox Pals of 3Consulting, an organizational change consultant ([rp3consulting.com](http://rp3consulting.com)), and Dr. Chris Groscurth, future of work expert and founder of Leadership 4iR, a future of work think tank ([Leadership4iR.com](http://Leadership4iR.com)).

Their discussions relate to the Vision North Iowa initiative to create a strategy for regional economic growth and prosperity. North Iowa Corridor EDC, Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce and Mason City Chamber of Commerce sponsored the meetings because encouraging employers to improve workplace culture can lead to better retention of workers and community growth.

"This is a conversation we're just beginning to have in North Iowa, about what we see in terms of the future of work," said Pals. "These are not the kinds of changes we experienced 30 years ago. Everything right now is what we consider transformational change. We have to begin to change our world view to create that future. The very

nature of work is changing."

The workforce also is changing dramatically. "There is no time in our history where we've had as many generations, with different perspectives, working together before." Pals said today's workers demand meaning and purpose; the chance to use their talents; jobs that fits their lives; and organizations that share their values.

Groscurth said only one-third of today's employees are considered engaged in their work, meaning involved, enthusiastic, and committed. That percentage goes down to 22 percent for Millennials (born between 1980 and 1996), and by 2020 they will make up half of the workforce.

Technology is progressing at an exponential rate and transforming work. "The Fourth Industrial Revolution is upon us," Groscurth said. "It's the fourth major economic era in modern history." While the first three revolutions were marked by leaps in mechanical inventions, today's revolution is driven by "the convergence of the physical world, the digital world, and the biological world."

"How do I develop a future mindset?" he asked. "I want to give people hope about this. I don't want to live in a world where the Fourth Industrial Revolution is the last industrial revolution we talk about, the last of the great improvements we've made as a society."

His website offers a free tool to identify

your future focus mindset, to start the conversation within teams about how different personal approaches to the future can strengthen each other. "We can't afford not to understand how our mindsets are getting in the way of the future."

The Schwinns spent a sabbatical year traveling the world to find leaders who understand the importance of creating meaningful work. They sought answers to, "What do companies and communities need to do to attract workers and work places to create thriving communities where people want to live?" People they interviewed "challenge the assumption about what it means to lead," Carol Schwinn said. Their examples demonstrate that investments in helping employees find meaning in their lives resulted in organizational success.

"The transformative workplace, as part of its essential purpose, creates the context in which people can grow and develop to their highest potential, as fully aware and conscious participants in the evolution of life on our planet," she said. "A commitment to expanding the consciousness of people enlarges the purpose of the organization, leads to its prosperity, and ultimately to greater possibilities of more peace in the world."

Pals challenged North Iowans to take these examples back to their own workplaces. "I am counting on you to continue this conversation about what's possible, to create a workplace where people thrive."

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