

FOREWORD

Never has it been more essential for leaders and executives to understand the radical shifts that are reshaping work in America today. Only by coming together—inside every single rural and urban community—can we meet this moment to deliver the skills and opportunities we need to step into the future we deserve.

Like me, Rick Grimaldi has studied the world of work throughout his entire career. As former deputy general counsel to Governor Tom Ridge (who later went on to become the first US secretary of Homeland Security) and chief counsel for the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, he learned how to lead effectively on labor issues, manage disruption in the workplace, and adapt to change.

During his 30 years as a labor lawyer, Rick has managed human relations for a multinational corporation and consulted with dozens and dozens of small, medium, and large companies around the country on how to build a better workforce. His diverse leadership experiences have conferred unusual perspective on the most effective ways to grow profitability, solve workplace challenges, and be an employer of choice . . . even as the pace of change quickens.

As the first African American woman elected to the US House of Representatives from Delaware, I'm particularly aware of how far this country has come in creating a more inclusive culture . . . and how far we still have to go. The business case is compelling.

Now, more than ever, big change requires bold ideas . . . and you'll find them in these pages. As I write this foreword, our country is facing unprecedented challenges that seem poised to shift the paradigm of our future.

A health crisis that is amplifying existing income and racial disparities, long-held institutional inequities that have given rise to racial and social unrest, and an environmental crisis that will shape not only the job market for future generations but also the very planet they will inherit. How well we respond and react to these changes will dictate our success as a nation for decades to come.

From manufacturing to transportation, technology is rapidly remaking entire industries through automation and artificial intelligence. As someone who's always championed college affordability and practical training, I believe it's never been more important to recalibrate American education to available jobs that offer a living wage. Read on to find out how creative educational institutions are doing just that.

Ultimately, as Rick points out, it will be companies that can flex in the face of change that will win the war for talent and be rewarded by the market. Perhaps no event in American history has made this clearer than our recent pandemic.

Will your organization be disrupted? Or will it become a disruptor that thrives for impact and prosperity? Now is the time to be proactive. Fortunately, this is just the guide you need to master change.

—Lisa Blunt Rochester
Cochair, Future of Work Caucus