

The Future of the American Workplace

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In the article, “The Future of the American Workplace,” featured in *Philly Biz*, Attorneys Lori Armstrong Halber and Rick Grimaldi discuss how changes in employee diversity, legislation and technology will continue to impact the ways in which modern companies operate.

Fifty years ago, the workforce was comprised of mostly white men who took a job with one company, got a watch after 25 years, and finally retired at age 65 with a pension. Nine-to-five was the norm, the three martini lunch was a regular event and there was no technology to speak of. The workplace of today bears little resemblance to that time. The one constant has been change as each succeeding generation put its own imprint on how, where and when they do their work and what that work and workplace look like.

One of the most obvious changes in the way we work can be seen in technology and its impact. Twenty-five years ago, “snail” was still the primary form of mail. Twenty years ago, mobile phones were the size of bricks—the iPhone isn’t even 10 years old yet.

The face of the American worker is no longer “the man in the gray flannel suit.” According to a study by McKinsey & Company, women’s overall share of the labor force has increased from 37 percent of all jobs to 47 percent over the past 40 years—and, significantly, that increase has accounted for about a quarter of current GDP. Today, people of color and women represent about 14 percent and 18 percent, respectively, of corporate boards among the senior management of Fortune 500 companies, but diversity in the American workforce remains a work in progress.

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