

This company replaced 90% of its workforce with machines. Here's what happened



As technology improves, the range of tasks that can be taken over by automated systems will continue to expand, leaving the future of human labor in a state of flux.

The rise of the robot workforce

It's hard to argue against automation when statistics are clearly illustrating its potential. The latest evidence comes out of a Chinese factory in Dongguan City. The factory recently replaced 90 percent of its human workforce with machines, and it led to a staggering 250 percent increase in productivity and a significant 80 percent drop in defects.

Changying Precision Technology Company's factory used to need 650 human workers to produce mobile phones. Now, the factory is run by 60 robot arms that work around the clock across 10 production lines. Only 60 people are still employed by the company — three are assigned to check and monitor the production line, and the others are tasked with monitoring computer control systems. Any remaining work not handled by humans is left in the capable hands of machines.

According to Luo Weiqiang, general manager of the factory, the number of people employed could drop to just 20, and given the level of efficiency achieved by automation, it won't be long before other factories follow in their footsteps.

Employee displacement

This efficiency comes at a price, though: our jobs. In fact, according to a joint study conducted by Oxford University and the Oxford Martin School, “[...] 47 percent of jobs in the US are ‘at risk’ of being automated in the next 20 years.”

And these won't just be factory jobs, either. At the rate that robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) are advancing, machines will soon be able to take over tasks in a variety of industries and do them just as well as, if not better than, humans. This early into our inevitably automated future, we already have robot lawyers capable of defending parking ticket violations, an AI that can deliver a medical diagnosis as well as a human doctor, robot “journalists,” and even AI therapists that can outperform their human counterparts in terms of drawing out necessary personal information from patients.

The uncertainty surrounding the future of human employment in the age of automation is already apparent, and machines are poised to keep getting better and better at what they do. Fortunately, governments and private organizations are putting some serious thought into this subject and have come up with some potential solutions to address widespread employee displacement.

Among those is universal basic income (UBI), a system in which all citizens of a country receive an unconditional amount of money on top of income they generate through other means. Pilot studies in countries like India, Canada, and Finland have already begun, and thus far, they've delivered promising results. It's too early to say if UBI could address widespread job loss due to automation head on, but it could ultimately prove to be an empowering economic move as we make the transition.

Fonte: World Economic Forum

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/after-replacing-90-of-employees-with-robots-this-companys-productivity-soared?utm_content=bufferdacea&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer