

PHL urged to ensure AI push in jobs strategy does not displace workers

By John Victor D. Ordoñez
Reporter

THE government's employment masterplan must harness artificial intelligence (AI) to create more job opportunities without displacing them, labor unions said.

"Our vision is that the Trabaho Para sa Bayan Inter-Agency Council will establish the necessary framework to ensure the responsible deployment of AI technology, benefiting both employees and businesses alike," Jose G. Matula, president of the Federation of Free Workers, said in a Viber message.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on Wednesday signed into law a bill authorizing the creation of a national employment roadmap and an inter-agency body to draft a national strategy for job generation.

Mr. Matula noted that the council must put forward upskilling programs that allow workers to use automation to their advantage, instead of having robots replace physical labor.

The recently signed law aims to boost the competitiveness of the workforce through upskilling and reskilling programs.

The inter-agency council, which will be headed by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Trade and Labor secretaries, will be tasked to assist local government units in implementing job recovery programs.

NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said the law will "facilitate stronger coordination and partnership among relevant agencies and stakeholders for the efficient implementation of employment programs."

In a July report, the Asian Development Bank said 20% of Philippine workers face a "high risk of losing their jobs" due to automation.



Josua T. Mata, secretary-general of the Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO), said the measure will fail to meet its goal of job creation if it does not ensure workers are afforded full-time employment.

"It could fail to live up to its promise of providing the jobs that we need as it missed a very important point: the need to realize the constitutional mandate for full employment," he said in a Viber message.

Mr. Mata reiterated the labor sector's position that the government must boost public-sector employment programs and offer wage subsidies to micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises.

SENTRO has urged the government to take the lead in employment generation after the Labor department presented its labor and employment plan for the next five years.

The unemployment rate rose to 4.8% in July from 4.5% a month earlier. Job quality worsened as the underemployment rate, which measures employed workers looking for more work or longer hours, rose to a 20-month high of 15.9% from 12% in June.

"Contrary to the government's orthodox position that it should merely be enablers of jobs generation, we believe that government should directly generate jobs through a robust public employment program," Mr. Mata said.

OPINION

Nonverbal keys to a successful job interview

I'm a factory supervisor with 15 years of experience with no clear expectations of getting a promotion in a family-owned business. I report directly to the operations manager who is the son of the owner. It's about time to move to another organization. With my wealth of experience, I'm confident that I can answer almost any question pertaining to the job of a production manager in another factory.
— September Morn.

Having self-confidence is only half of the equation. Even if you answer all the killer questions in a job interview, you need to be conscious of the other requirements in order to nail down the job. Most people understand that oral and written communication are major components in securing a job.

Per my experience and the experience of other job applicants who consulted me, communication skills are often not enough. You may not believe this, but what you may be communicating to other people, including to a prospective employer, can unmake you even if you possess strong credentials.

I'm referring to nonverbal behavior. If you have a rough personality buoyed by your self-confidence, the same coarse behavior can bring you down.

For example, the tone of your voice can make or unmake your chances of career advancement. This may not be apparent in your current job as your boss and colleagues may have been accustomed to your style. But what if you're applying for a job? Chances are, because of your self-confidence, your answers to every interview question can bring you down when you appear overly smart, making the job interviewer feel stupid in the process.

NONVERBAL ELEMENTS

Aside from giving intelligent answers in a job interview, what are other considerations that employers are seeking? Punctuality counts, as does self-control, particularly over nerves; even how they deal with the security guards, receptionists and secretaries.

All these contribute to the overall impression, which a prospective employer may find very important. Here are other non-verbal impressions that could help your cause:

One, a winning personality. Appearance is everything. It's the first non-verbal message that you'll give off even before saying "good morning" or "good afternoon."

A lot depends on the culture of a prospective employer. You must do your homework by visiting the office if you have friends there. If you don't, check the company website to learn about their culture. Whatever information you can dig up should give you clues on what to wear during the interview.

You can't go wrong by dressing professionally. There's no such thing as being overdressed even if the interview is done online.

Two, sit properly and relax. Lean slightly towards the interviewer to communicate your interest. But don't overdo it because leaning too close could suggest being hard of hearing. Establish eye contact with the interviewer. This suggests to the interviewer that you are honest and trustworthy.

Project warmth in your facial expression. This helps you convey a positive image. Practice your facial expressions with a spouse, family member or close friend. Your tone of voice can also betray you even without you knowing it.

Three, project class and competence. Aside from sitting, the way you stand, walk and offer a handshake will tell them more about yourself. I know how difficult it is to correct posture when you're used to slouching or walking with head down looking at the floor. But you can always try, for the sake of a job interview.

The appearance of having class and competence conveys much about yourself. This should be easy for someone with 15 years' experience. One caveat though: you'll appear more likeable if you act naturally.

In conclusion, pay close attention to the interviewer's actions and questions. You'd be surprised to learn the importance of reducing your apprehension and projecting eagerness to have an intelligent exchange of information. It's something to remember while you are making a critical decision on possibly leaving your current employer.

Don't forget to objectively assess your current work performance. It may give you a hint of what's in store for you when you join another company, only to be told that you're not the right fit for them after months of employment.

Bring REY ELBO's leadership program called "Superior Subordinate Supervision" as an exclusive event for your supervisors and managers. For details, chat with him via Facebook, LinkedIn, X (Twitter) or e-mail elbonomics@gmail.com or via <https://reyelbo.com>



Ayala Land and Cathay Land break ground for 800-hectare Southmont



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Ayala Land and Cathay Land recently broke ground for Southmont, a new estate located in Silang, Cavite.

Southmont is an 800-hectare, mixed-used master planned development that will refresh South Luzon's natural landscape with the best in contemporary and sustainable urban living. Designed to provide an expanse of business and lifestyle opportunities within a remarkable atmosphere and terrain, it is set to cultivate communities while also bringing unique opportunities to investors looking to expand their portfolio in the South.

Currently, Southmont offers residential developments Hillside Ridge and Verdea from Alveo Land, and Lanewood Hills by Ayala Land Premier.

Held onsite last September 27, 2023, this groundbreaking milestone was led by Cong. Roy Loyola, 5th district representative of Cavite; Silang Mayor Kevin Anarna; Cathay Land President Jeffrey Ng; Ayala Corporation Chairman Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala; Ayala Land President and CEO Bobby Dy and Ayala Land incoming President and CEO Meann Dy.



Google offers free AI skills courses, new IT certificates

GOOGLE Philippines launched on Wednesday a program offering free generative artificial intelligence (AI) courses and information technology (IT) career certificates to up-skill the workforce for the digital economy.

The new AI courses include an introduction to the technology, large language models, and its responsible use, among other topics, Google Philippines said in a statement.

"Filipinos can now seize the opportunity to build and demonstrate their proficiency in in-demand AI skills to prospective employers," it said.

Additions to the Google Career Certificates program include business intelligence, advanced data analytics, and cybersecurity, it added.

"These certificates are professional credentials that help enable people from all backgrounds to earn job-ready skills in high-growth digital fields such as IT support, UX [user experience] design, e-commerce, and digital marketing."

"Upskilling is so important for realizing career aspirations and improving lives," Jeffrey Ian C. Dy, undersecretary for the Department of Information and Communications Technology, was quoted as saying in a statement.



"Through our technology, skilling programs, and partnerships, we will continue to help unleash the potential of the digital economy and empower the workforce of the future," according to Bernadette Nacario, Google Philippines country director.

The information technology and business process management industry has 1.7 million full-time employees, up 8.7% from a year earlier. — Miguel Hanz L. Antivola

Biden and Trump in Michigan: Views on unions, UAW auto strike

US President Joe Biden and 2024 Republican front-runner and former President Donald Trump both travel to Michigan this week to talk to local auto industry workers, as a United Auto Workers' (UAW) strike spreads around the country.

Mr. Biden, a Democrat, and Mr. Trump are expected to speak to different crowds and present messages that reflect their vastly divergent views on unions, organized labor and the future of the US auto industry.

Winning the UAW's support is part of a broader push by both presidential candidates to capture the small-but-influential union vote in the November 2024 election.

JOE BIDEN: SHARE THE PROFITS

Michigan trip: Mr. Biden is expected on a UAW picket line in Wayne County, where he will meet with UAW President Shawn Fain.

Michigan message: Mr. Biden is expected to side with striking workers and urge the companies to share

their record profits with workers. As President: Mr. Biden says support for unions is a cornerstone of his economic policies, and he has pushed investment in US manufacturing tied to union jobs and workers' rights.

Mr. Biden has backed collective bargaining and union wage increases since taking office, but blocked a railroad workers' strike in 2022, disappointing unions pushing for paid sick leave.

Notable quote: Auto companies "should go further to ensure record corporate profits mean record contracts for the UAW."

Mr. Fain said last week: "We invite and encourage everyone who supports our cause to join us on the picket line from our friends and families all the way up to the president of the United States."

DONALD TRUMP: ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVs) ARE NOT THE ANSWER

Michigan trip: Mr. Trump will speak at Drake Enterprises, a nonunion auto parts supplier in a Detroit sub-

urb, where he will address hundreds of workers.

Message in Michigan: Mr. Trump will criticize Mr. Biden's economic policies and incentives promoting EVs and say he would do a better job of protecting blue-collar workers if elected to a second term.

As president: Mr. Trump lowered taxes for US companies including the auto giants and appointed people to the National Labor Relations Board who unions say weakened protections for workers.

Previously as a real estate developer, Mr. Trump faced lawsuits in which contractors accused him of not fully paying for their work.

Notable union quote: "If the UAW 'leadership' doesn't ENDORSE me, and if I don't win the Election, the Autoworkers are 'toast,' with our great truckers to follow," Mr. Trump said on Truth Social.

Mr. Fain says: "Every fiber of our union is being poured into fighting the billionaire class and an economy that enriches people like Donald Trump at the expense of workers." — Reuters