

# The Golden Rule of Automation

People go about their daily lives never seeing technologies growing to eventually displace them, even when it's right in front of their noses.

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I just witnessed such an example this week while picking up a prescription refill. Living two counties away from where I do my weekly shopping, I leave off refills on Wednesday to be picked up the next Wednesday giving the pharmacy a whole week to fill a new bottle with pills. In this one case, I went two weeks not wanting to grocery shop the day before Thanksgiving, so I was just a little perturbed when I went to pick up the order and found nothing. Not only that, but they didn't even know anything about the refill or what it was suppose to be. I no longer had the empty bottle, therefore didn't have the refill prescription. Two weeks to do a simple job, which they had been doing continually for years . . . and they flubbed it!



First, a little background of my pharmacy experience, before going on to the main theme of this article. Like other elderly people, my doctor has prescribed several preventive maintenance drugs, and since the HEB that I do my weekly grocery shopping has a pharmacy, I started there. Apparently it isn't a very pleasant shop to work in, the people behind the counter having a continual scowl, always changing out with new people, but what the hell . . . as long as they got the job done right, who cares? Then after a few years I go to pick up a prescription and they've lost the bottle, had no idea what I needed, telling me in essence, 'spend you own time to straighten up our goof-up!' And I did by moving my business a mile down the road to a CVS pharmacy.

The people behind the counter were the same dowdy people I found at HEB, people constantly changing, seeming a new face every week. It was about a month or so when I get a phone call from CVS saying one of my prescriptions needed to be renewed and told me to call my doctor and have it done. Instead, I moved my business back up the road to Target's pharmacy who I then did business with for several years. The pharmacist and his assistant where good conscience people who quickly knew me and I them. They took care of business without any troubles or goof-ups. A couple of years ago, CVS bought out Target's pharmacy system, and after my previous experience with CVS, I was a little fearful, but with the same people behind the counter, it was business as usual.

Then a couple of months ago, the people who were running such a tight ship were transferred to

another Target-CVS which was having a lot of problems, and so new people were brought in. I was back to seeing different people each week I went in. Then after Thanksgiving, I went to pickup that prescription only to find they didn't have it and had no idea what drug it was. Back to square one! But this time technology had come to my rescue with a new Amazon company called PillPack, who claimed to use modern technology automation to package my medications in small envelopes with the correct dosage. So . . . I signed up!

This is what happens so often. Anytime there's a problem with workers, management goes looking for machines to do the job. Doesn't matter if it's the employee's fault, the employers fault, societies, the governments, everyone's fault or no one's fault. The solution is to find technology to get around whatever the problem is, and more often than not, a machine can be found to solve it. Unbelievable as it might sound, people are just diddly-bopping around without a care in the world, oblivious that they are constantly in competition with machines for their jobs . . . having a casual gay abandonment about their jobs that defies description. No one seems to realize what is happening. Oblivious to the Golden Rule of Automation, despite it having been around since the seventies or so.

### **Golden Rule of Automation**

**If you want something done right . . . get rid of the human!**

Unbeknownst to most, the Golden Rule has governed the job market for the last several decades, shaping the destiny of both young and old. Nevertheless, that rule continues to cut great swaths through the ranks of American jobs, usually leaving behind people with less opportunity for re-employment with the pay and compensation equal to what they had been getting. A slide down the slippery slope towards those 'tent city' folks we see so many pictures of on the news. And once lost, people stand in bewilderment, puzzling over why the world no longer wants or needs them.

Needless to say, this isn't a good time for people to exercise or accept non-performance in their jobs, no matter for what the reason. This is what I find so infuriating about people (workers) standing behind the counter, like the ones at CVS-Target, who seemingly care nothing about their jobs being lost to machines because of their negligence. All those machines are like sharks silently circling around, and when someone dribbles a few drops of blood in the water, those sharks instantly smell it and silently zoom in to attack a job field, leaving no 'survivors'. Right now, we have a benign environment of jobs and economy that is being squandered away instead of facing the problem when there might still be things that can be done, starting with employees being more conscious of the Golden Rule and striving to avoid those 'drops of blood' being dripped in the waters of their career fields. The net result is people never see technologies developing which can take their jobs, that can shuffle them out to the sidelines to work at lesser jobs for less pay . . . if they are luck.

**And if you don't think automation is a big concern, just watch the school teachers and truck drivers . . . because they're the next ones out!**