



Richard Florida

AUTHOR

Top talent now decides where to live before deciding where to work. Companies that built their workforce strategies around moving people to where work is are losing ground to firms that locate where talent already is. Leaders are confronting a new geographic calculus: which places attract the people they need, and which do not.

Richard Florida explains why companies now compete for top talent through location decisions as much as compensation, the central insight of his creative class theory and decades of urban research.

Richard Florida's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Richard Florida

- His “three Ts” framework (technology, talent, tolerance) remains the most cited model in talent geography, drawn on by city governments and corporate location strategists worldwide.
- He named and quantified the creative class, the 40-million-strong workforce whose location and lifestyle decisions now drive regional economic growth.
- Through the Creative Class Group, he has advised BMW, Audi, Microsoft, Facebook, and Starwood Hotels, alongside city and regional governments worldwide.
- He co-founded CityLab, now owned by Bloomberg, and contributes regularly to The Atlantic and the Financial Times.
- His 2017 book *The New Urban Crisis* examined how the same forces driving creative-economy growth also produce inequality and segregation, giving leaders a more honest account of the trade-offs in talent-led strategies.

Biography highlights

- University Professor at the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management and School of Cities, which he helped found
- Visiting Distinguished Professor at Vanderbilt University’s Owen Graduate School of Management
- Author of *The Rise of the Creative Class*, winner of the Washington Monthly Political Book Award and a Harvard Business Review Breakthrough Idea of 2004
- Co-founder of CityLab, now owned by Bloomberg
- Ranked #19 on the Thinkers50 list of the world’s most influential management thinkers in 2017
- Founder of the Creative Class Group, advising BMW, Audi, Microsoft, Facebook, and Starwood Hotels

AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Consultancy
- Speaking

RICHARD'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Digital Transformation
- Economic Trends & Global Markets
- Future of Work
- Innovation & Disruption
- Talent Retention Strategies
- Workforce Transformation

LANGUAGES: English

Biography

Talent used to follow jobs. Florida's research, beginning with his 2002 book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, demonstrated that the relationship had reversed. The most ambitious workers were now choosing cities first, gravitating to those that combined what he called the three Ts: technology, talent, and tolerance.

The Rise of the Creative Class won the Washington Monthly Political Book Award and was named a Harvard Business Review Breakthrough Idea of 2004. The book quantified a workforce of 40 million Americans whose decisions about where to live were beginning to drive regional economies. It became the foundation for how cities and large employers think about competing for human capital.

His 2017 book *The New Urban Crisis* confronted what creative-economy growth had produced. In cities like New York, San Francisco, and London, the same forces driving wealth creation were also increasing inequality, deepening segregation, and hollowing out the middle class. Florida calls this winner-take-all urbanism. The book gave civic and corporate leaders a sharper account of the trade-offs in talent-led growth.

Florida is University Professor at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management and School of Cities, which he helped found. He is also Visiting Distinguished Professor at Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management and a Distinguished Fellow at NYU's Schack Institute of Real Estate. Through the Creative Class Group he has advised BMW, Audi, Microsoft, Facebook, and Starwood Hotels on talent and location strategy.

Key speaking topics

- The creative class and the geography of talent
- Talent attraction and retention in the post-industrial economy
- Cities as engines of growth and inequality
- Real estate and corporate location strategy in the creative economy
- Innovation and the conditions that produce it
- The future of work in superstar cities

Ideal for

- Chief Human Resources Officers and heads of talent making decisions about where to recruit, locate, and build culture
- Real estate developers, REITs, and corporate location strategists
- City leaders, mayors, and economic development agencies competing for investment and talent
- Boards and CEOs of large employers reassessing geographic footprint after the shift to hybrid work

Audience outcomes

- Florida's creative class framework, including who it covers and where the category is now concentrated globally
- Detailed data on which cities and regions are gaining and losing talent right now
- A diagnosis of why creative-economy growth also generates inequality and segregation, and what cities are doing in response
- Specific implications for location and recruitment strategy in their own organisation

Richard Florida's 2026 talks & topics

On the Brain Drain: Competing for Talent

A direct examination of what attracts and holds the workers companies most depend on, drawing on Florida's research into creative-class motivations and migration patterns.

Key takeaways:

- Why pay alone no longer secures top talent, and what intrinsic factors (challenge, autonomy, peer environment) now carry more weight in the decision
 - The data on where creative workers are concentrating globally and which regions are losing them
 - Practical implications for recruitment, retention, and the design of work itself
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Real Estate for the Creative Economy

Why location has become one of the highest-leverage decisions a company makes, and what real estate developers and corporate occupiers need to read from creative-class geography.

Key takeaways:

- The leading indicators Florida uses to identify high-value real estate markets, including the bohemian and gay indices
 - How creative-class lifestyle and work patterns are reshaping demand for office, residential, and mixed-use space
 - The location factors that link real estate strategy to talent strategy directly
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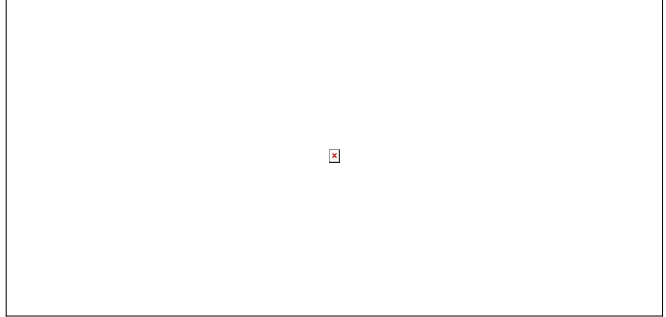
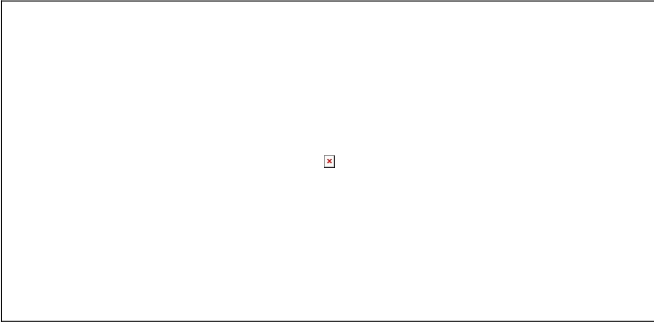
The Creative Corporation

Why some companies maintain a creative edge while peers stagnate, drawn from Florida's studies of firms ranging from Toyota to leading software and design houses.

Key takeaways:

- The role of design and innovation as a competitive discipline inside the firm
- How the most successful companies attract and organise high-performing creative talent
- The location decisions that compound or undermine the first two

Richard Florida's Videos



What Richard Florida's clients say

Richard's presentation at our Annual General Meeting was both powerful and inspirational. Community and business leaders left the meeting with renewed passion for building a strong knowledge-based economy in our city.

CEO, Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute

It was a spellbinding session and really rounded off the day provoking thought and exciting people about the possibility of change.

Deputy Director, Communications Centre for London

Your speech at Columbia College Chicago was insightful, thought provoking and wonderful! We have received rave reviews and a tremendous amount of positive feedback from our students and guests.

Director of Event Operations, Columbia College Chicago

...Florida is an authoritative and entertaining observer. He pulls together many of the things we see into an illuminating narrative of demography and urban and economic development.

John Gapper
The Financial Times

Richard Florida's 2026 speaking fees

Specific fees fall within the ranges shown. These are presented as a guide only and are subject to change without notice.

	EUR	GBP	USD
Home Country	€40000 to €90000	£35,001 - £75,000	\$50000 - \$100000
Asia Pacific	€40000 to €90000	£35,001 - £75,000	\$50000 - \$100000
Europe	€40000 to €90000	£35,001 - £75,000	\$50000 - \$100000
Middle East & Africa	€40000 to €90000	£35,001 - £75,000	\$50000 - \$100000
South America	€40000 to €90000	£35,001 - £75,000	\$50000 - \$100000
United Kingdom	€40000 to €90000	£35,001 - £75,000	\$50000 - \$100000
US East Coast	€40000 to €90000	£35,001 - £75,000	\$50000 - \$100000
US West Coast	€40000 to €90000	£35,001 - £75,000	\$50000 - \$100000
Virtual	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000