

Career trends in 2014 - what to look out for

By  Juliette Attwell

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As 2013 draws to a close, there seems to be a general sigh of relief as a year filled with emotional ups and downs comes to a close. It is the time of year that the majority of people will spend time with those who mean the most to them and their jobs and careers will take a back seat. It's often a time for reflection and a time when many realise they may not be happy where they are in their careers and will look to the New Year for fruitful change and new adventures. In other instances the year is closed off with a resounding bang as career highs and successes are celebrated and ready to be tackled again in the coming year with excitement and vigour.



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So what are some of the trends we predict in 2014?

1. **Increase in freelancing and outsourcing:** Employers are trying to find ways of decreasing their financial risk with new employees and therefore would rather pay a freelancer or outsourced company to fulfil roles that were previously done in-house. This means that good companies to look at for opportunities are consulting houses and outsourced services companies in IT, engineering, finance and media.
2. **The gender pay gap is starting to close:** Recent studies have shown that the pay gap between genders is smallest in the Gen-Y population. This means that as the workforce matures, the subsequent generations will experience less and less of a discrepancy. 2014 is a step closer to this thinking and women will expect the same pay as their male counterparts and if not, may not accept various job offers. If you are an employer, the key is therefore to base offers of employment on skills and experience rather than on current salary, otherwise competition may get the better of you.
3. **Baby boomers retiring - a change in demographics in the workplace:** Baby boomers are expected to start retiring from next year which will have a major impact on the workplace (see Forbes Magazine 2013). In fact, it is

expected that 18% of baby boomers will retire in the next five years. One of the biggest problems that companies will therefore have is succession planning. Training the younger generations to fill big shoes will take time and money, and this could also mean an increase in new policies, ideas, innovations and a general change in companies' landscapes. This also means, however, that new positions will be opening up in leadership roles as well as junior roles where succession planning has led to a gap in the workforce.

4. **Social media:** Social media continues to dominate as a form of recruiting and referencing. Make sure your online image is squeaky clean, and be careful of what you say about your company and colleagues online (or anywhere for that matter).
5. **New job titles:** With new technologies being produced daily, many job titles that will be used in 2014 haven't even been thought of! Did anyone know what a data storyteller, a content archivist or a gesture writer were last year? Companies are becoming more focused on getting the right people on the bus and then using those particular skills to steer the bus forward (ie. creating job titles for them). Different roles have been condensed into one person's responsibility and many more people are multitasking various roles that they are excellent at, as opposed to having one set role to focus on day in and day out. This means more learning opportunities in different areas of the business, as well as the ability to increase your own skill set in a company as opposed to in a specific role. It is important to look out for these forward-thinking companies that offer learning opportunities.
6. **More flexi-time and virtual workspaces:** As before, we are seeing an increase in companies putting together more flexible work hour policies. Traffic, speed of data transfer and many more single parents in the workplace have led to companies being able to increase productivity by allowing their employees to work from home, or at least allowing more flexibility. As baby boomers start retiring and company cultures run by Gen X and Gen Y increases, this trend will become progressively more popular. This means that work and family life are becoming increasingly meshed together and your work space isn't confined to the office only. This may lead to more productivity and loyal employees that appreciate the flexibility. Those who are mature enough to handle this scenario are the employees that companies want to keep in the long run.

In essence, there are exciting times ahead and the job market in South Africa looks promising for the new year. Opportunities abound everywhere for those that are willing to step out of their comfort zone and experience a new challenge. 2014 promises to be a year filled with new prospects for those that are willing to see them and tackle them head on.

We wish all our BizCareers readers a wonderful and restful holiday season and a very successful, rewarding and fulfilling 2014.

Remember to always love what you do!

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