

syncwize

coffee corner quarterly

Staying in touch with our freelance professionals



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"Everything starts somewhere, though many physicists disagree. But people have always been dimly aware of the problem with the start of things. They wonder how the snowplough driver gets to work, or how the makers of dictionaries look up the spelling of words."
~ Terry Pratchett, Hogfather

don't quit... do it

Another year has kicked off and, while the 'New Year' clichés always abound, there is nevertheless truth in the fact that this does always represent another opportunity to start afresh. Anything from a simple attitude adjustment to setting out to achieve an important goal. We pray that this year will bring positive and rewarding things to each of you.

As I write, I keep having to move my laptop... our new puppy thinks jumping on the keyboard is great fun, and a wonderful—and amazingly effective—way to elicit a response! For me, however, this 'annoyance' represents one small yet wonderful thing that has entered my life this year, and I'm eager to find other stuff to look forward to, even though the year ahead is likely to be another toughie.

We all know how important it is to look forward to something, to stay motivated and positive, but with the pressures of modern life it's too easy to get sucked in to just 'getting through' each day. We talk about our dreams with others yet more often than not we continue with the same behaviours that have kept us from making those changes that can bring us happiness. For most of us the realities of our lives and obligations keep us firmly entrenched in our ruts. In fact, research shows the odds of a

person actually making meaningful change in his or her life are usually as low as 1 in 10.

But even if bringing about big change is too much of a stretch, that doesn't need to stop us finding and focusing on the things around us that bring us pleasure, fulfilment, joy. I recently viewed an inspirational TEDx talk by a 17 year-old boy with Progeria, a genetic disorder that causes rapid ageing in children. He emphasised that he didn't want people to feel sympathy for him, because he was deeply happy and fulfilled in his life. His simple, yet so mature, recipe? Three things.

He said, "I'm okay with what I ultimately can't do", "I surround myself with people I want to be with", and "Keep moving forward". He always made sure he had something to look forward to—nothing was too insignificant.

But another comment regarding the last took my attention: "All of these things keep me focused... This mentality includes staying in a forward thinking state of mind. I try hard not to waste energy feeling badly for myself, because when I do I get stuck in a paradox, where there's no room for happiness or any other emotion."



So. If you're not already on this path, then this year, this month, this Monday, tomorrow morning, or the next minute, is the time to start moving toward something exciting. Start with a thought, then make that thought come alive. Colour it vividly. Bring all your senses into imagining that outcome. And then take the opportunities that come your way. They will. You just need to be alert for them.

We do of course hope that you are already doing what you love to do, but even so, there's always more! Then, in the meantime, remember to take pleasure in the daily things—large and small—that offer regular opportunities to appreciate what you already have. There really is so much to be grateful for, after all.



The following professionals celebrated the passage of another year recently. We wish each of you the very best for the coming year; may it be filled with rich experience, love and joy, and a load of good memories to put in your memory boxes!

- January** Andries Bester, Ayanda Gantsu,
Mike Moore, Wess Olivier, Dick Putter,
Lizelle Roos, Steve van Niekerk
- February** Rita de Canha, Henk de Graaf,
Sharon Greenway, Ian Pye, Zintle Xakawe
- March** Nicole Pillay, John Vesotzky

It is our pleasure to welcome the following professionals to our team, who joined us this past Quarter. We wish you the best in your new roles and look forward to working with you!

- **Edward Quinn**, programme manager
- **Anso Goncalves**, business analyst
- **Sudha Krishnamoorthy**, product analyst
- **Wess Olivier**, UI Designer
- **Bobby van der Merwe** and **Cecile van Aswegen**, digital content writers



Richard Branson: letter to 50-year old me

Dear Sir Richard (just kidding! You'll always be just Richard to those around you),

I'm writing to you from 15 years in the future. You're now 65-years-old, and while you've lived a happy and healthy life with no regrets, I have some advice for you.

Welcome to the 21st century. I don't want to give away too much—or worry you—the world as you know it is about to change. It's a great time to be alive; however the human race is set to face so many challenges. You've never gone into business to make money, but instead always wanted to make a positive difference in people's lives. It's time to step things up, and do more. Over the next decade and a half you'll realise just how much business can and should be a force for good.

Hone in on your passion points—animal conservation, human rights, conflict resolution, climate action, drug policy reform—and get thinking about ways in which you can make an impact in these spaces. You've met so many wonderful leaders and change-makers throughout your 40 years in business; reach out to them and galvanize them.

It's up to all of us to create the world we want to live in, and we can if governments, businesses and individuals work together.

If you need more incentive to act, think about your children. Holly and Sam are growing up in a very different world than you did. There's no need to be concerned about them; they are the most amazing adults, and you and Joan are so proud of them. But if you lead by example, you'll encourage them to find their passions too. Passionate people are happy people. The future needs passionate, happy and confident your leaders, willing to challenge the status quo and stand up for their convictions. Spend as much time with them as you can. The teenage years can be awkward, but if you're present in their lives and stand by them, you'll come through these years with two of the best allies and friends anyone could wish for.

Virgin has always been a 'family' business. You started things with your friends, who became your family. In years to come Holly and Sam will become great assets to the Virgin brand as well. Involve them now.

Teach them the ins and outs. You will be amazed at the fresh insight they can provide you with and the value their young minds can add to the business. Plus life is more fun when you work with your family and friends.

On the business front, you may feel like you've achieved just about all there is to achieve, but let me tell you, there are so many more great things to come. The US, Latin America, Asia, Australia, the ocean, and even space—the sky is no longer the limit and the future will be so bright, if you continue to look for opportunities where others see challenges. Just remember, whatever you do and wherever you go, make sure you place purpose at the heart of your words and actions.

Good luck.

Richard

Transcribed directly from Richard Branson's publication on www.virgin.com



industry outlook

With the tough economic climate we face at present, clear signals of 'tightening the belt' continue to be sent by most clients. As always, the quickest route to cost savings is to reduce HR spend, sometimes at the short term cost of reduced productivity. However, there will always be a need for flexible resourcing and once the budget cutting is achieved, we believe the IT independent contracting industry will have consolidated, returning to a space where top quality contractors will once again be in demand.

There is no question that SA companies across almost all industries are currently preoccupied with cost containment, even though this may have a negative effect on productivity for the short to medium term. The market for contractors is quiet, and where there is activity, there is strong downward pressure by clients on rates, to the extent that managers keen to utilise contractors need to be able to demonstrate to their superiors that the total cost of hiring

contractors is the same, or only marginally more, than employing permanent staff.

However, it should be obvious to anyone with basic mathematics education that the perceived benefit gained by employing permanent staff to meet fluctuating resource demands is not very elastic, meaning that this solution can not extend very far before it becomes impractical.

The law of swings and roundabouts dictates that, once the criticality of cost containment is satisfied, companies will need to shift their focus to moving forward again, which typically entails increased activity, particularly in the IT space.

The combination of the global economic climate and the negative actions of our current government does not bode well for any meaningful recovery in the near future, and we anticipate that the pressure to contain costs will continue to retain a higher

profile in companies' priorities than previously. However, these changes are likely to return the model of independent contracting to that of 10 to 20 years ago, where top class professionals with a strong track record and a 'consultant' mindset, will continue to be in demand. These individuals will be able to work on a freelance basis, not needing to be employed through large consulting firms, and will therefore be a more budget-friendly, yet highly effective option for companies requiring flexi-resourcing.

When the fog lifts, those contractors with the ability to outperform most permanent staff, who are adaptable to new environments and thrive on challenges, and who understand how to position themselves in terms of charge-out rates, will form the new body of independent contractors. We're excited, because this is what syncwize stands for.

let your brain figure it out

A growing body of research shows that our brains not only continually repair themselves, but can grow in new ways, with practice and positive stimuli such as healthy food, sufficient rest, and exercise. Not only that, but our brains—perhaps we know this as instinct—will unconsciously find a way forward when our conscious can't, provided we hold a clear vision in mind.

Patti Dobrowolski, who offers some useful concrete advice in setting and achieving goals, bases her method on the idea that our brain unconsciously translates a picture into an action plan. She provides insight into recent neurology research that throws a new light on the idea of seeing then believing, and advises us to trick our brains into making desired change in our lives.

The left side of the brain houses the critic, who wants to keep us 'safe'... and away from anything new, which is perceived as too risky. However, "your brain emits serotonin and oxytocin when you draw and dream," allowing us to feel happy, capable, creative. Patti advises us to trick our brains into first seeing, then believing in, a possible outcome, then knowing that our brains will unconsciously devise and execute a plan as long as our image of the desired outcome is very clear.

In this regard, Patti advises that the picture of our desired new reality should be as vivid and compelling as possible, filled with colour, emotion and feeling—to allow our brains to 'get inside' it.

How do we get from 'here' to 'there'? Your brain has recorded everything you've ever experienced, learnt or imagined, and is better qualified than our conscious thinking process to leverage this information. In asking it to put these pieces together for us we should remember that light falls on the retina in a 2 dimensional manner, but it's a 3D world. The brain copes with this by guessing, so it is well versed in filling in the blanks and can subconsciously guess the steps needed to get to 'there'.

Directing your mental—and emotional—energy to your desired outcomes is far less like daydreaming than positive visualisation, and is now believed to be a powerful tool in achieving new heights. So go ahead, dream and doodle!

We have regretfully said farewell to Julie Morton, who has decided to move on from her role as account manager in search of a role more in keeping with her personal strengths. We're therefore now seeking a new account manager to join our team: someone with a sound understanding of information technology and experience in recruitment, who can engage intelligently with our professionals, clients and prospective candidates. Who gets a kick out of bringing a smile to others' faces, is obsessive about providing the best possible service, and who believes in working with integrity. Someone self-driven and with an ability to juggle multiple priorities, who knows the bottom line is about doing the best you can in every moment. If you know a suitable candidate who is looking for a company like ours, please put us in touch. Enquiries can be addressed to Helen on helen@syncwize.co.za or 083 390 8137.



**Amazingly, summer is already almost over and the autumn chill is setting in. We hope your year has got off to a good start, and will just get better. Remember to live your life in full colour!
the syncwize team**



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This newsletter is intended for syncwize's contractor team, and is published quarterly as a means of conveying general information. We would love it if you'd like to contribute, place an advertisement, or have a specific request for inclusion. If so, please contact Pascalina or Helen.