



▶The next generation contractor.....3



▶Megatrends to be aware of.....4

syncwize

coffee corner quarterly

Staying in touch with our freelance professionals

“Action expresses priorities”

~ Mahatma Gandhi

do your priorities need a review?

Another year is rapidly drawing to a close, and with it, the opportunity to fulfil promises we may have made ourselves in an exuberant post-New Year, holiday-time haze of eagerness. But it's been another tough year for most and the realisation is slowly dawning that things are probably never going to be as easy as they were before.

Looking toward the slippery downhill slope of the final 3 months of the year, I for one am forced to acknowledge that not only have I invested a sadly cursory effort in the things I prioritised a few months ago, but the likelihood of achieving those goals within the time frame I've set myself is about the same as grasping and holding a handful of bubbles.

Time just rockets by and busy-ness has become a form of cancer... Somehow, each time I tick an item off my 'to do' list, new items magically appear. Sometimes I feel like I'm barely treading water, and there is no sense of progress. And this seems to be almost everyone's experience. All the time.

We could take this moment of reflection to beat ourselves up or to take stock and

acknowledge instead what we have actually achieved, be grateful for the value these achievements will have added to our lives, and then to reassess. In my case, paging back through my ticklists and notes revealed how much I actually have



accomplished. It was liberating to realise that problems that felt like the end of the world 6 months ago are now just distant memories. I also saw that small things I did with an end state in mind actually have brought me that much closer to my goals, despite the frustration I felt at the time for not being able to focus properly on them.

That simple exercise gave me a new perspective, and I've begun seeing my daily

tasks as opportunities to remember to chill out when crisis strikes, and to be more strategic about where I direct my emotional energy.

So perhaps now is a good time to for all of us to recalibrate a little, pat ourselves on the back for what we've actually accomplished (write it down, too!), and do a quick review of where we'll be directing our time and personal energy for the rest of the year based on what really matters. And keep those lists or journal entries! Like photographs, they may help to put things into context which may have seemed overwhelming at the time.

Over-committing ourselves has the risk of leading to chronic stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion and even depression. Or worse. Nobody wants that for themselves.

A little food for thought from Israelmore Ayivor, author of 'Daily Drive 365': "A very slow movement on the right way is better than overwhelming speed on the wrong path!"

We're looking for an additional 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 making others' days better, and who is obsessive about providing the best possible service, underpinned by integrity. Someone 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 syncwize, please put us in touch. Enquiries can be addressed with Helen on helen@syncwize.co.za or 083 390 8137.



Welcome to the professionals who joined syncwize in the past quarter. We are privileged to represent you and can assure you that, with our awesome team, you are certainly in good company!

- **Janice Massalin**, change manager
- **Marc Marais**, developer
- **Angel Govan**, project administrator

And welcome back to **Teresa Neumeyer**, who completed a short contract with our sister company, Knowledge:Worx for a few months, but has returned to the fold.



We also wish to congratulate **Pieter Pretorius** and **Zelda Muller** respectively, on the recent births of their young 'uns! We hope you are awed every day by your previous little bundles, and never to forget to appreciate what a gift they are. Even when the terrible teens arrive!



The inexorable passage of time recently made its annual mark on a number of our professionals, with a heavy emphasis on the spring babies. We hope that, if anything, you'll see laugh lines and wisdom looking back at you in the mirror, and appreciate yourself even more for the amazing things you've achieved. And we wish you abundance, love and happiness for the coming year.

July Janus Groenewald, Sophy Makhubela, Santa Uys, Ian van Wyk

August Suzette Broekman, Richard Kagaba, Mondli Magwaza

September Nasreen Cassim, Cornel Fourie, Rob Hawken, Lindiwe Khwaza, Julie McCool, Andre Myburgh, Carin Oelofse, Pieter Pretorius, Andre Venter

DILBERT



BY SCOTT ADAMS



the next generation contractor

With the implementation in January of changes to the labour law, a level of uncertainty was introduced to the market which still persists. Although nothing changed for independent contractors—highly paid professionals performing freelance assignments—this uncertainty was the natural consequence of far-reaching changes in accountability for the well-being of those earning below the earnings threshold, which stands at less than R20K per month.

We have observed varied responses to this, with the bulk of companies clearly distancing themselves from the risk of being viewed as employers, and in line with the spirit of justifiable temporary employment. In most cases in the IT industry this has meant a return to the early days of independent contracting, where contractors were treated as external service providers, contracted to provide a specific service for a set period and because the permanent staff complement did not provide either the skills or know-how to perform the work. Contractors did not consider themselves entitled to any of the benefits that would ac-

Be aware of the attributes that will—and always have—set you apart as an independent contractor. The IT industry is too small to fake it for long.

crue to permanent staff such as paid leave or free training. Should a contract be extended beyond a year, there was no expectation of an automatic increase in rates; any change in rate required a renegotiation of the contract. Rates were a factor of multiple influences including skill scarcity, contract duration, complexity and nature of the assignment and the contractor's competence, and were at best loosely linked to the salaries of permanent employees in similar roles. Importantly, however, rates were also a factor of the state of the economy.

The important point that those wishing to continue contracting should consider now, is that the economy has been in a depressed state for an extended period, and is continuing to worsen as a result of the slippage of South Africa's international ratings and our weakening currency. These latter considerations are likely to remain—and worsen—as long as the current mismanagement of the country continues. This has led to a downward pressure on rates by companies seeking the services of contractors, at a time when contractors need to drive their fees up, causing a noticeable slowdown in the contracting market which has only been compounded by the uncertainty resulting from the labour law changes.

The contracting market is undergoing a definite shake-up, and once it settles down more opportunities will arise.

What does this mean for you as a contractor?

Now, more than ever, it is crucial to remain aware of the characteristics that set successful contractors apart from opportunistic permanent staffers whose tenure as contractors is typically shortlived except in times of high prosperity or severe shortage:

- A reputation of consistent and above-average delivery, cutting-edge skills and solid experience;
- Always seeing assignments through to completion;
- Financial astuteness and a 'businessman' mindset;
- Marketing oneself at fees that are palatable to clients, given the current economic climate;
- Remaining professional at all times, building strong networks of satisfied clients rather than making demands on clients as a permanent employee might.

food for thought

The brain is an amazing organ, and is still one which is very far from being understood. Although traditionally thought of as some kind of supercomputer, the centre of our nervous system and perhaps the seat of our consciousness, this definition really doesn't do it justice.

You may not know that your brain, which weighs half as much as your skin and consists of about 75% water, contains 100 billion neurons and anywhere from 1000 to 10 000 synapses. With continued mental activity our brains continue to manufacture new neurons, and generates enough electricity to power a light globe. And every time you have a new thought or recall a memory you are creating a new connection in your brain.

Check out this interesting infographic about this amazing tool and how to nurture it. Perhaps less TV and more music—with a nice glass of wine— may be a pleasant way to work out your grey matter this evening!

THE POWER OF YOUR AMAZING BRAIN

The conscious mind controls our brain only 5% of the day, whereas the subconscious mind has a hold of our thoughts 95% of the time!

You have 70,000 thoughts per day

Boost your brain power with Meditation, it's proven to increase IQ, relieve stress, and promote higher learning levels.

Listen to Music
Studies have proven that listening to music strengthens the brain and literally changes the structure.

Thoughts Are Real
Your thoughts cause biological and physiological effect—Your body responds to mental input as if it were physically real.

Loss of fatty acids EPA and DHA are linked to depression, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's

66.66667% FAT
Your brain is two-thirds fat. Myelin, the protective sheath covering your neurons is 70% fat. Eating fatty fish, green leafy vegetables, olive oil, avocados, chia seeds, flax seeds, and nuts, replenish your neurons and brain cells.

conscious 5%
subconscious 95%



3 megatrends that will affect all of us

The future is hard to predict and a lot of “experts” regularly get it wrong. However, there are some facts so important and trends so inevitable that leaders would be ill-advised to ignore and not try to anticipate.

Here are three of many future megatrends that will not necessarily determine what will happen, but will most likely have a big impact on everybody’s business in the coming years to decades.

Changing demography

This is one of the only indicators that cannot lie about the future: Tomorrow, we will all be older than we are today!

Some of the major changing tides of demography may have important political, economic, and potentially military consequences. For example: what are the implications of Russia having a life expectancy of 59 versus 61 for Bangladesh?

Statistics show that populations in Europe and Japan are having fewer children, while both places face distressing recent levels of youth unemployment. This makes for some potentially troublesome situations such as smaller less-experienced workforces who will have to financially support larger elderly populations. And right now Europe is witnessing a historic migration crisis. What effect will this eventually have on its long-term demography? Only time will tell.

For many mature economies like Japan and the US, the workforce will be older, healthcare costs will be higher, and it looks like we will see diminishing pension benefits. Overall competitiveness in these countries is being challenged.

Looking to another part of the world, a number of analysts are betting that China, the most populous country on the planet, will take up some demographic slack and be the growth engine of the future. I wouldn’t be so sure about that. While today’s generation may be relatively prosperous, the country’s one child policy is beginning to take its toll; smaller numbers of the next generation will have to support a

much more massive pool of aging citizens just like in the so-called developed countries. With the Middle Kingdom accounting for such a large proportion of the global population, mainland China will still fuel world economic growth, but the pace of growth will vary province by province more than ever.

Companies need to be creative and find new business models to take advantage of the shifting makeup of their operating countries’ populations.

There will be big growth in the world but it will be elsewhere in countries like India or in Africa, where there will also be some big opportunities. Over the next five years, some African economies (Ethiopia, Mozambique and Tanzania, just to name a few) are likely to grow as fast as, or faster, than some of the recent Asian champions.

This growth comes with challenges however. It could easily be squandered if problems like corruption, political instability, lack of infrastructure and poor education persist or get worse.

These predicted shifts in demography don’t only spell decline though. There will be a lot of room for new business opportunities in the healthcare and nutrition sectors for example. Infrastructure will need to be redone and rethought, creating a lot of openings for building and technology innovators.

Explosion in technology

If you think we have seen a stark increase in technology in our lives over the last few years with the omnipresence of smartphones and wearable health trackers, you haven’t seen anything yet.

One example of how fast we have been speeding up is that the number of mobile web users is growing eight times faster today than the number of people getting on desktops in the mid-1990s. And this change will only continue to move quicker!

In the coming era, everything will be connected: from buildings to roads to satellites to your refrigerator. The internet of everything is on its way. Advances in 3-D print-

ing will change the cost and efficiency of making a lot of products and even body parts or organs!

Someday, I wouldn’t be surprised if it were common for people to live to 120 years old due to how personalized medicine will become and how much of an impact neuroscience will have on our lives. Of course, if people live 120 years, this will only add to our socio-demographic challenges.

In addition, with the explosion of technology and the internet of things, digital disruption will continue to displace established industry incumbents at an alarming rate. Up to 40% of current businesses are vulnerable to digital disruption according to recent research by the IMD/Cisco Center for Digital Business Transformation.

Leadership challenges

You have probably noticed by now that we are living in an increasingly V.U.C.A. (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) world.

There is no end in sight and leaders are struggling to cope. Add to that the fact that all sectors are becoming more transparent, leaders are much more exposed today than they were 10 to 15 years ago. They are under pressure for quick results in a difficult environment with an unprecedented level of scrutiny for their every decision.

We need great leaders more than ever to overcome the challenges we face ahead. But it is getting harder and harder for leaders to navigate obstacles and to obtain the mandate and leeway they need to make their mark

Copied directly (!) from “Three Megatrends That Will Affect Everybody’s Business”, an article published on LinkedIn by Dominique Turpin, President at IMD



**It's the downhill run to year end...
Stay focused but take time to enjoy the energy of summer.
Live your life in full colour and be blessed !**



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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.