

Employment trends for followers and friends (and connections)

 By [Francois van Dyk](#), issued by [Omico](#)

18 Nov 2013

"Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." Confucius (551-479 BC)

Dave Duarte, a marketing and digital business educator and sought-after speaker, based in Cape Town, South Africa, has a very interesting view on trends. He feels it is critical to differentiate between what he terms "trifles", a fleeting idea with little staying power, "trends" with more staying power and the ability to influence commerce and culture, and "truths", which is a fundamental reality of the human existence.

Though Confucius' famous advice about choosing a job you love is thousands of years old, this is a fundamental truth which is becoming more prevalent in modern society - and not just from an employee perspective.

The World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects, issued in June 2013, showed a global economy starting to stabilise after the economic tribulations of the previous few years. As expected the traditionally developed markets, remained the worst affected with minimal growth prospects - economic conditions for the Eurozone are bleak at a modest predicted growth of only 1.2% for the year. Sub-Saharan Africa is however reasonably robust with a 5.2% growth predicted for the 2013-2015 period.

But a serious dichotomy is haunting the global economy with millions of unemployed people but also millions of positions which can't be filled due to a lack of suitable skills. Hence a few prevalent truths and trends have become apparent when observing the global employment landscape:

1. Seeking greener pastures

With the traditionally developed economies facing a continued stagnation in employment it is interesting to note that BRIC and other developing countries indicate that they are experiencing a major skills shortage in many fields, particularly information technology, engineering, research & development and even sales and client services. Whereas Africa in particular has suffered a major brain drain with skilled people migrating to Europe and the US a new trend is emerging to fill the gap left by these people.

A great example of how this is affecting the globe can be seen with the migration of Europeans to other markets. Faced with little or no prospects in their home country or even continent, thousands of native Portuguese (recent estimates of up to 20,000) have been returning to Mozambique where they are setting up new businesses or utilising skills which were in short supply in the former colony. Many others are moving to Brazil and even Angola where they are starting new lives and becoming an integral part of a growing economy.

It maybe even surprising to note that In the 2000s, some 3.5 million people emigrated from the UK looking for better economic conditions in other countries. Germany alone lost 160,000 skilled workers in one year.

2. Social media - more than just social

Africa has long been branded the mobile continent and obviously with mobile comes the rise of social media and some particular African innovations - think Mpesa. Looking at statistics published earlier this year there were more than 50 million Facebook users on the continent - surprising perhaps is that Egypt had more than double the users than any other country,

incl. Nigeria and South Africa. Social media in Africa however predominantly remains an area where people socialise with their friends.

LinkedIn, the global social media network for professionals in the workplace, has yet to make major inroads on the continent with only around 7.5 million registered users, 620,000 based in Kenya. This is tiny compared to the more than 225 million Linked users across the globe. A mobile application for the site was launched in 2008 and according to CEO Jeff Weiner mobile views have roughly been increasing 400% year over year.

LinkedIn is changing how people are searching for jobs and how employers are recruiting staff as well and it is only a matter of time before Africa will start utilising these new technologies to its fullest potential. Not only can employers do some major research on prospective employees and their skillsets, but a whole new arena opens up for "passive" recruitment. Upwards of 80% of global LinkedIn members rather use the site to network with other professionals rather than to actively seek new employment. However it allows employers to identify relevant and skilled candidates to engage for new career possibilities, even though these workers may not be looking for new jobs.

Tatenda Chiweshe, CEO of Media Trace, a company specialising in providing strategic data on the outdoor media advertising landscape across Africa, says that LinkedIn has proven invaluable to him - not only for recruitment purposes but also to engage possible clients and other relevant parties. He now even focuses his marketing campaigns on this platform rather than target traditional media with media releases.

3. Great brands attract great people (and keep them)

Companies are also realising they need to build great brands to attract great talent and to retain their stellar staff. An obvious example of this is Google who topped Fortune's list of 100 Best Companies to Work for in 2013 - for the second year in a row. Employees are well catered for with family-friendly environments, fitness facilities, health benefits and more, and they do realise they are getting a great deal from their employer. This naturally makes it easier for the brand to attract top employees as well.

This then is a combination of great external branding through marketing and public relations activities and a major focus on internal branding and training - selling your brand to your employees.

Following Confucius's philosophy has become a mantra for Oresti Patricios, CEO of Ornico. Though Patricios refers to this as "putting a round peg in a round hole" he notes that some of his employees who were considered mediocre in positions they were originally employed for, really blossomed once they were moved to other positions more suitable to their individual characters. Once these people found their comfortable niche in the business their performance skyrocketed.

Patricios could further also correlate the improving quality of job applicants to his company's increasing media profile through aggressive public relations and marketing activities. "What is of critical importance for the employer/employee relationship to blossom though is a shared value system and a cultural fit with the company - not just the necessary skills," says Patricios.

The reality is that there are huge opportunities for employment and the successful candidates will be those that have done far more than just qualifying from a tertiary institution. They need to have an absolute passion and enthusiasm for their chosen area of work, do a lot of groundwork like internships, even if it is free, and arm themselves with as much knowledge around their subject as possible. With the internet being freely available across most of the world there is really no excuse for ignorance.

ABOUT FRANCOIS VAN DYK

Francois van Dyk, heads up Operations at Ornico, the Brand Intelligence research company. He is part of the management team that has seen Ornico expand across Africa, currently with data resources in 14 countries and employing more than 100 media enthusiasts. He studied and lectured public relations before entering the world of media research. Contact details: Twitter @sballie

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