

Employment trends in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

By [Adre du Plessis](#)

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As we enter the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, organisations across the globe are investing time and money in technology to go fully digital. The internet of things (IoT), everywhere computing, mobile applications and big data are all being explored and, indeed, embraced by organisations of all shapes and sizes. These changes are impacting not only the people currently employed by organisations along with their families and way of life, but even those entering the workplace, eager graduates and young children with dreams of the future.



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Along with these changes, we are seeing a new breed of employee emerge, one which organisations are going to need to adapt to, even as people - from children to graduates to employees - adapt to the changes that a digital world brings. In an age where the development of robotics poses a potential threat to the job market, people are more conscious of their value and the value that they want from their career. Organisations will need to adjust accordingly, changing the way they employ people and the way they position themselves as employers.

The new employee

Fast networks and user friendly apps have driven a generation that has grown used to immediate results and instant gratification, a generation who chooses what they want, switches if they aren't happy and encourages others to expect the best. For the generation entering the workspace, personal happiness and fulfilment, the freedom to be agile, and a purpose-driven life are more meaningful than enticing salaries in static positions.

We will probably be seeing a lot more flexibility demanded by employees, where they may choose to work for two or more organisations - either from completely different industries or potentially even competing in the same field – on different days of the week, while dedicating more time to a fulfilling cause or charity.

Culture will be a strategic priority

Organisations will need to adjust their mindset, moving away from 'nine-to-five' expectations and focusing more on creating a corporate culture of agility, mobility and collaboration. Everywhere computing means we will likely see a shift in the way

employees work and the way that organisations cater for and motivate their staff. Organisations will need to ensure culture forms a critical part of their digital transformation strategy to avoid alienating staff or implementing unwelcome technology.

Zero distance

Technology is being used effectively and creatively to bridge the gap between businesses and their customers, but what about businesses and their employees? Increased mobility, more time spent online instead of in meetings, a more flexible workforce and more jobs being taken over by artificial intelligence (AI) devices means that organisations will need to find creative ways to maintain morale and team spirit. More organisations will explore the potential for technology to connect their people in such a way as to avoid being invasive.

Grassroots investment

More and more organisations are starting to see the benefit of building an employable and skilled workforce within our borders, from a grassroots level. Young, malleable minds are the most fertile ground for planting seeds of knowledge and agility, making for the best source of future employees from which to reap.

Many organisations are investing in skills and learning centres aimed at bringing technology to areas where access is scarce, thus paving their way to success by ensuring lack of education is not hiding tomorrow's brightest innovators. In a rapidly changing world, our youth hold the key to unlocking the next generation technologies and trends.

ABOUT ADRE DU PLESSIS

Adre du Plessis is vice president of Strategy and Transformation at T-Systems. She is a qualified chartered accountant having completed her articles at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Du Plessis has had the privilege to work in various industries, functional disciplines and countries. Under her leadership, T-Systems received various international and local awards, including the Gender Mainstreaming Champion Award. Her role contributes to the bigger South Africa through the TSSA ICT Academy, Localisation Programme and Internship Programme.

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