

The changing world of work

What is the new world of work?

The type of work people do and how they do it is constantly changing. Although this may feel a bit daunting for those of us who have been in the workforce for a long time, these changes can also be very exciting!

New opportunities are opening up and new directions are possible for each of us to consider.

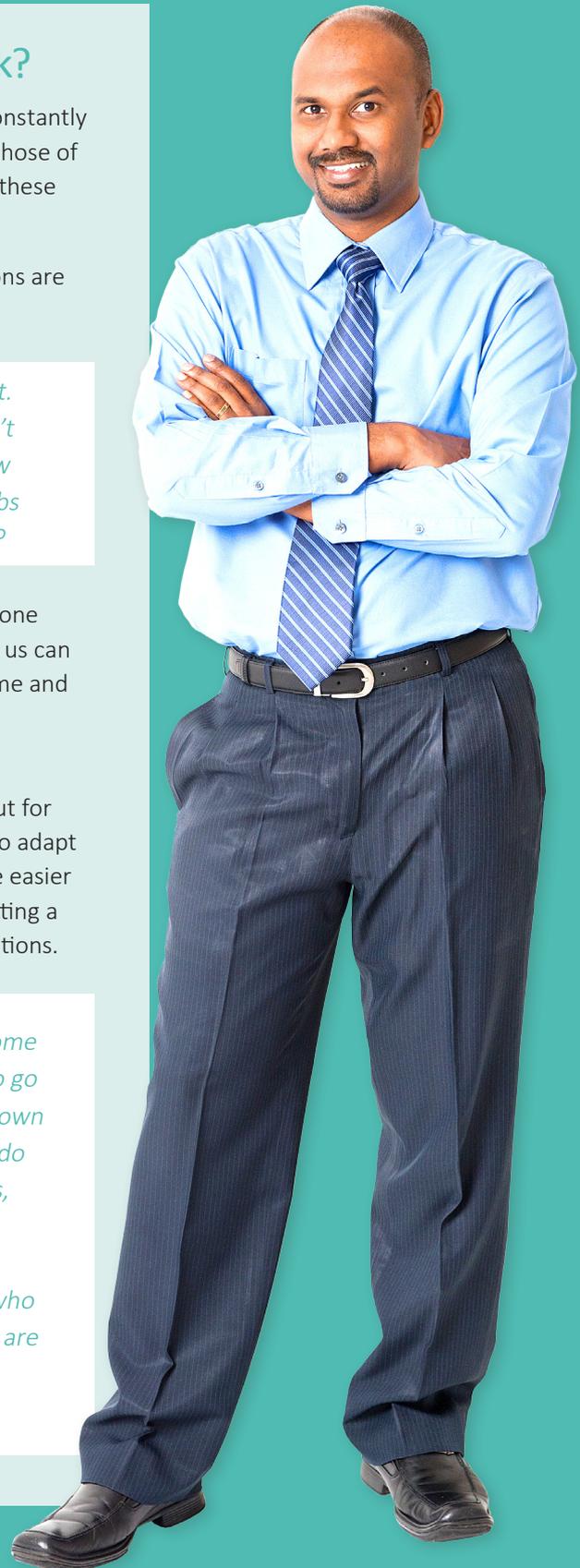


Before 2004, Facebook didn't exist. Twenty years before that, we didn't have the internet. Who knows how the world will change and what jobs will come to exist years from now?

In decades past, it was common for people to have one job (and even one employer) for life. Today, most of us can expect to have a range of different jobs in our lifetime and this may involve having several jobs at one time.

For many of us, this means more flexible working arrangements and increased variety in our lives – but for others it can mean more stress unless we are able to adapt to these changes. Your search for work will be made easier and more exciting if you do not just think about 'getting a job for life' but about exploring a variety of work options.

With the development of the internet and home computers, many people do not even have to go to an office anymore – they can go to work down the phone line via their computer! While we do not all have to have advanced computer skills, basic computer skills are now very important for most of us to have in the workplace. For example occupations such as Truck Drivers (who may have not needed these skills in the past) are now commonly required to have basic information technology capabilities.



Why do I need to responsibly manage my own career? What do all these changes mean?

In this changing world of work it is becoming increasingly important to be able to manage your own career, as it is highly likely you will be required to deal with job changes. There is a movement away from a career as a 'point to arrive at' to a range of roles you will have throughout the span of your lifetime.

Employability skills

We need to be able to adapt readily to these changes so that we remain competitive in the job market. This is sometimes referred to as having 'employability skills' – the skills needed to gain employment, retain employment, become a self-directed learner and progress in the world of work. These skills include:

- > communication;
- > problem solving;
- > technology;
- > teamwork; and
- > personal attributes like self-management, honesty, enthusiasm, adaptability and openness to new ideas.

Think about which of these employability skills and attributes you have and which ones you could develop. For more information and for examples of the kinds of employability skills employers are listing in Job Adverts go to **Quick tip 1 – Employability skills examples** (page 81).

Whilst employability skills are not new, the emphasis on employers requiring these attributes in their employees is increasing.

Some things to remember when job searching

- > The more skills you have, the more employable you are. Today, how you got these skills is not as important as whether you can put them to use in the workplace. Make sure you are aware of ALL your skills. Have the confidence in expressing how your skills are of value to potential employers.
- > The secret to remaining in the workforce is to be multi-skilled and to be able to transfer skills from one area of your life and work to another. We must continually learn new skills. Remember to update your training and be open to learning new things on the job! Any skills you acquire along the way may also be useful for future positions.
- > The way we seek work has changed. These days, only a small percentage of jobs are advertised in newspapers. Many jobs are advertised on the internet or exclusively through employment and recruitment agencies. Most people now require an email account when applying for jobs. What can be even more effective is 'word of mouth' and 'cold canvassing' – using the network of people we know and approaching employers directly.
- > To find work in this way, we have to be pro-active and make it happen. We must chase up contacts and leads and create opportunities for ourselves. Use the networks of people you have and expand those networks!
- > It takes a fair amount of self-confidence to approach an employer, but how will you know if they will give you a chance if you don't ask? They might not know how much they need you until you are able to convince them of it!

These are just a few of the ways the world of work is changing. The possibilities are endless and the opportunities are limitless! For many of us, it is just a matter of changing our way of thinking.