

Redefining work and spaces

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Technology has made things previously thought impossible now possible, but whilst technology advances have demonstrated sustained gains in productivity, technology growth has not been proportional to the growth in industries and the jobs lost. While the bounty has increased, its spread has decreased.

This was a point made at the Vision-Marketing Mega Trends SA conference, held in Bryanston recently, that examined the trends that will influence our world over the next five years.

Belinda Carrerira, marketing head of interactive marketing, Standard Bank says spread is about economic inequality and technology is creating huge inequality in work. “If you are not a techie, what do you do for work? If your company is not number one - even if you are number two – you will close your doors. There is a 'winner takes all' mentality with capital shifting into concentrated places, for example Facebook.”



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Technology is not being used to correct the disparities, she says. “Innovation allows for new jobs, but there is no guarantee that these will be jobs that are economically viable for people to survive on.”

Therefore, she says we need a new concept of what work is and a new understanding of how we value work. “The implication for marketers is that they need to be aware that the skills they have might not be relevant in the future. Already programmatic networks can decide on advertising and content.”

The other implication is around value. “Marketers look for Return on Investment (ROI), but how do we measure value in this new world? We battle with social media because it does not give ROI, but perhaps we need to look at it differently and ask how we can create value in this process.”

Despite technology disruption of work, we are working longer. While the developed world’s workforce is aging one, there is an increase in all age groups participating in work as well as an increase in female participation. An aging workforce is just one of a number of trends that are changing the world, says Talia Feigen Baum, strategy director, Urban Econ.

However, for her the biggest trend in global growth is urbanisation, with 54% of the world already residing in an urban setting. While this drops to 40% in Africa, she says there has been a 90% increase in urbanised settlement on the continent since 1950, which is a massive catch-up that the continent is undertaking.

With this, innovation is playing a key role in developing connected cities with smart buildings and precincts, and smart governance and education. “Cities will be smarter, with networked building, walkability and security-focused as well as greener and sustainable. The smart city will be a mechanism to overcome many of the hurdles we are currently facing.”

Already new points of convergence are surfacing in health, safety, leisure, education, and these are also relevant to smart cities as they bring huge business opportunities with this.

Across the globe the middle class is growing, with emerging economies slowing challenging developed economies in the production of high-tech and high-end consumer goods. “Beyond the BRICS, the next set of economic powerhouses will be the ones that are highly industrialised and rapidly moving into services such as renewable energies. This includes countries such as Nigeria, Peru, The Philippines, Vietnam, and Bangladesh.”

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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