

Interview with Rohit Talwar for EXAME Magazine, Brazil - 10/06/11

What are the occupations of the future for a country like Brazil, an emerging economy with many natural resources?

As a rapidly modernizing country Brazil will see advances at every level. At the most 'essential to life' level farming will need to expand to cater for the demands of a growing and increasingly wealthy population. Brazil will also develop rapidly in sectors such as health, housing and education – leading to massive growth of jobs in healthcare, construction and teaching at all levels from kindergarden to university.

Brazil will also develop in sectors such as professional services, scientific industries, leisure and finance – leading to growth of jobs in fields like law, accountancy, design, research, hotels, restaurants and banking. Brazil's natural resources will also see growth of jobs in sectors involved in the management, extraction, harvesting and processing of natural resources.

In your opinion, what are the most radical changes in the job market in the coming years?

Society is ageing in many countries as people are living longer so we will see a boom in jobs involved in caring for the elderly and providing services to them. Education and health are a priority for developing nations and so we could easily see a doubling or trebling of the number of people involved in these sectors. Also there is a growing emphasis on science and technology led growth so we will see heavy investment in these sectors and a heavy increase in research, development and innovation roles.

What will be the impact of longevity and fertility reduction in the labour market?

People will need to work for longer to pay for longer retirement periods and to counter lower fertility. Some countries with very low birth rates will provide incentives for people to have more children. An older society could be more conservative and restrict innovation and also influence governments in how they allocate resources between the needs of the young and older segments of the population. We will also see more innovation in medical treatments, drugs and aids to help us carry on living active lives long into our 80s, 90s or 100s.

What should be the priority of the new generations when choosing a profession?

We may have 6 or 7 different careers in a working life that spans through to 80-90. Hence the key skills to acquire are learning how to learn, constant acquisition of new skills and knowledge, tolerance of uncertainty, problem solving and cultural adaptation. I would encourage new generations to look for opportunities that give them these skills early, that encourage them to challenge themselves, to work in international and multicultural environments and which constantly push the boundaries of their comfort zone. We will need to have both specialist expertise and the generalist abilities to inspire, to lead, to collaborate, to solve problems and to work with multiple partners in work swarms that come together for increasingly temporary projects and then break up again.

Will the professions evolve or some activities should disappear? Which?

In reality few professions disappear – some will become smaller and more specialised. Most professions will have to evolve to be more multi-disciplinary and to adopt the latest technologies. For example, in the law more and more of the routine work will be automated and lawyers will act more like consultants to their clients – serving them both face to face and virtually over the web and via video-conferencing, social media and mobile channels.

Rohit Talwar

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EXAME Magazine

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