

# Next group of workers thinking self-employment

**HOT SECTORS** | Flexibility is No. 1 as many workers will have more than one career

BY DAVE HALL

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Recognizing the disappearance of a one-job career, workers will need to be flexible, capable of instantly adapting to new processes and able to absorb stunning amounts of new information and knowledge, a Canadian innovation expert said.

Jim Carroll, who writes books about trends, innovation and change, said “the next generation of workers will be far different than any which has gone before. They will be far more entrepreneurial because many already think self-employment is more secure than a corporate job.

“They’ve already seen their mothers and fathers downsized and right-sized,” said Carroll. “Understandably they want no part of it.”

And while one segment of the workforce will be expected to be far more specialized to deal with this explosion of new information, others will be expected to be flexible enough to shift between careers and jobs. There will also be those who help people deal with the complexities of every-day life and their workplace.

One of the hot new jobs created by the fact that medical knowledge is doubling every eight years is the hospitalist — someone who not only helps patients navigate their way through the medical system but also treats so-called orphan patients who arrive at hospitals with no family physician to treat them.

While the term didn’t exist before 1996, there are now more than 10,000 hospitalists in the U.S.

Other new jobs created by changing demographics in the workplace, according to employment consultant John Challenger, are manager of diversity, offshore outsourcing coordinator, corporate historian, retirement consultants, a new breed of automotive-repair technician, eco-relations manager and coordinator of workforce development and continuing education.

With one exception, all help employees and their employers deal with changing demographics, global competition, a



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greater emphasis on green manufacturing plants and a growing pool of retirees who take with them large parts of a company’s institutional memory.

In a report written for the World Future Society, Challenger said “over the last 50 years, we have seen radical changes in where we work, how we work and when we work. These changes are most readily evident in the job titles that have dramatically evolved over the years.”

Richard Samson, director of the Era-Nova Institute, said “people used to have a job, now they’re frequently going to have two or more jobs at once.

“They used to work for someone else but will increasingly work for themselves and instead of serving as functionaries in the achievement of purposes set by others, they will increasingly set purposes for themselves,” said Samson in an essay published by the World Future Society.

According to an Australian government study, 65 per cent of the children who are in pre-school today will work in jobs or careers that have yet to be defined.

All of which will require professional associations and educational institutions to continually upgrade their training, teaching and skill-development processes to better enable their members and graduates to acquire the necessary ever-changing skills.

Carroll said his 13-year-old son is currently trying to choose between taking international business and technology or science and engineering because “both he and I recognize that an arts degree will not prepare him for the specialized nature of future work.”

Carroll said “science or business is where you want to be because you need a core set of knowledge to get you started.”

However, Carroll also acknowledged that flexibility is key because even in the auto industry, which is highly specialized, the days of automatically producing 600,000 or more vehicles of a certain model have disappeared.

“Consumers don’t want their automobile to be five years behind their living room so auto companies which can re-tool and re-engineer quickly to bring new, more technologically-advanced models on line will be the ones who grow. “And they will need people who can adapt and be flexible enough to follow them.”

It’s now estimated that one in four workers will be considered a knowledge worker in the future — an increase from one in seven 35 years ago.

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