

Employee flexibility drives changes in recruitment industry

 By [Lyndy van den Barselaar](#)

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The global Covid-19 pandemic has connected the world and changed how people see the world of work. Having driven the remote workforce, employees' demands have changed and the world of work needs to adapt accordingly as people are prioritising work-life balance.



Lyndy van den Barselaar

A global perspective

Business growth is dictated by the economy and unfortunately, no country across the globe was able to escape the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact. While some companies were forced to shut their doors, others needed to adapt to a new way of work. As such, business is expected to grow at 1% over the next year, which paints a bleak picture for many economies around the world.

On the back of this sobering forecast, some industries will continue to see significant growth such as the technology sector, which has experienced a high rate of adoption of new technologies over the past two years. This opens up great opportunities for businesses and individuals within this sector, which will continue to grow in 2022 as many more companies implement technologies to improve their business operations.

South Africa connects to the world

While South Africa's employment figures have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, the increased adoption of technology and the ability to work from anywhere has also opened up opportunities for South Africans to explore opportunities to work with global companies locally.

Many people are proactively seeking job opportunities to work for international companies while continuing to live in South Africa similar to what we experienced with the call centre industry in Cape Town. South Africa's high unemployment rates, skilled people and affordability due to the Rand exchange rate, means that many more people will be taking up employment

with international companies while working from the comfort of their South African homes.

Hybrid working and flexibility remain key

Many employees have experienced the benefits offered by working remotely and the flexibility to work as they choose. Globally we have seen the emergence of the great resignation where people are leaving jobs in search of companies that will give them the flexibility to work when they choose and even to take on less stressful roles.

If local companies force employees to move back to the office, we may face a similar situation in South Africa where employees will seek out flexibility over stress and salary.

Reassessing workers needs

Employees are becoming more selective of employers, reassessing their personal needs and what they want from a job. While salary is important to meeting commitments, employees are also looking for work-life balance now more than ever before. As such, when looking for employment opportunities, they are no longer putting salary at the top of the list and rather asking companies how they will prioritise work-life balance. In many instances, this will take the form of remote work.

However, remote work can lead to burnout as employees often believe that they need to be available 24/7. At the end of 2021, Portugal introduced new laws dubbed 'Right to Rest' which prevents bosses from texting or emailing employees after hours. This trend is likely to be adopted in other countries as the hybrid working models become the norm.

Next-gen working on the rise

As employees seek freedom and flexibility to work according to their terms, the rise in next-gen working will continue to grow in South Africa. Although South Africans have traditionally opted for full-time employment that offers additional benefits and the security of a monthly income, as the desire for flexibility increases, employees are moving away from working for organisations and are supplementing their income with short-term employment that provides the freedom to explore different roles and develop their skills to become more employable in the long-term.

Contract work and freelancing, which have been popular in regions such as the UK for some time, are now going to become popular options for many South Africans who can now reduce stress and gain work-life balance.

The rise in recruitment process outsourcing

While companies are adjusting to the new normal, the opportunity to hire staff as and when you need them is becoming an attractive alternative at this unpredictable time. As such we are seeing a rise in recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) which has traditionally been a popular option to our international markets.

Locally more companies will turn to RPO as they seek to employ people on a project basis according to a specific skill set

or business requirement. This approach gives potential employers access to a large database of skilled employees that are available for the duration of the project and gives people the flexibility to work when they want to.

ABOUT LYNDY VAN DEN BARSELAAR

Lyndy van den Barselaar is the MD of Manpower Group South Africa.

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