

Would you hire an entreployee?

 By [Cole Rautenbach](#)

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In an employment landscape where the talent you need may be scarce, expensive, or otherwise occupied, how far will you go to find the right people to meet your organisational needs and objectives? How innovative are you?

Entreployee... It's a word that's been around for at least ten years (although there's still no Wikipedia entry for it) and various publications seem to have slightly divergent claims over its definition. The generally accepted term is applied to employees who - for any number of reasons - are also active entrepreneurs, which is even encouraged by their employers. It's the product of a continually evolving working landscape, especially in the Information Age where Generation C can't be prevented from making up new games to play in the digital sandpit.

But I want to modify this concept of the entreployee to the opposite of what it currently means: the entrepreneur who becomes part of the client's furniture.

The nature of this entre-ployee-ship...

I've spent the last almost-two-years building a very strong relationship with digital sales company, ClickMaven. My role has primarily been in production - sometimes in a conveyor belt-like fashion - during which I've learned discipline, surviving pyjama-based deadlines, and the art of negotiation. An inventory of skills no freelancer can do without. As a result of the growth from this process and the relationship, the freelancer-client lines have become somewhat blurred, especially since I've been provided with a desk and chair at ClickMaven's office, as well as a role in their long-term strategy.

I no longer feel like just a freelancer and yet I stubbornly refuse to be an employee. MD, Ferdie Bester, and I have managed to iron out the nature of this entre-ployee-ship, but the process has certainly called into question both traditional methods of growing business relationships as well as placing talent.

It may also assist the point I want to convey, to know that I'm not the only entrepreneur/contractor - pardon me: entreployee - with a desk space at ClickMaven. As the company has grown, its offerings matured, and the digital space in which it operates changed, so too has its skills requirement. And instead of just waiting for answers to their consistent calls for new talent to arrive at its front door, getting the right talent on board has been a process of nurturing business relationships and identifying where the risks and pay-offs in these unconventional placements intersect.

A flexible outlook

This entreployeeism has required a flexible outlook from both of us, but one of the bittersweet benefits for me has included

trading my hermit lifestyle and quiet home office for a creative and energetic atmosphere, for at least three days a week. In this open-plan and highly dynamic office environment, a congruous blend of expertise and personalities creates one of the most unique vibes I've ever experienced during daylight hours. The current ClickMaven team is the result of skills, synergy, and a distinct selection process - whether it's probationary interns, full-time employees, or us line-blurring entreployees, who are being strategically placed.

So it begs the following questions:

- Are South African companies shifting into a reliance on at least some independent workers - and if so, to what degree?
- Are you having employee placement issues that could be solved with the concept of the entreployee - and would you take that risk?

Lastly, a few benefits of using the entreployee model:

1. Establishing a relationship with freelancers or contractors essentially encompasses what would have been the traditional "job interview" process, which familiarises you with their work ethic and quality, as well as giving you the chance to suss out their personality and business acumen.
2. Ensure that equal risk is carried by both employer and entreployee. Nothing damages a business relationship more than one party feeling like they got the raw end of the deal. Establishing the nature of this relationship requires a huge amount of transparency and negotiation.
3. The entreployee retains a modicum of independence within the bounds of which, deliverables still need to be met and outputs accounted for. You get the same quality of work, but have the assurance of a longer term relationship.

ABOUT COLE RAUTENBACH

Having worked her way through various jobs and gained invaluable experience, Cole Rautenbach decided that she was better suited to being her own boss. Now she takes on numerous writing projects across industry lines. Where there are words, there you will find her. Her approach to her clients is to assist them to get more out of their own business development endeavours, and she enjoys seeing the results of those joint efforts. Follow @ColeRautenbach on Twitter.

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