

A professional portrait of Adjiedj Bakas, a middle-aged man with a shaved head, wearing a dark grey suit, a white shirt, and a colorful patterned tie. He is standing with his arms crossed, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light grey.

Trends 2015 according to trendwatcher Adjiedj Bakas

# 'The entrepreneur who nods off, loses'

"If you can choose between two ways, take the hard way, because the easy way is often very busy." In his book 'Trends 2015' Dutch trendwatcher Adjiedj Bakas does not beat about the bush. 2015 will certainly not be an easy year and the competition will often be fierce. "The entrepreneur who nods off, loses", says Bakas.

In their markets, entrepreneurs are challenged by new players. Bakas mentions the rise of outsiders and the young ‘techies’, the fact that profit systems change and that entrepreneurs must be alert. “Nowadays versatility is key for enterprises”, Bakas stresses. But he also warns against letting the concern for the employees slip. “Companies want to have more work done by fewer people, and you have to perform better than your colleague. Each employee must excel, or will be replaced by a flexworker. Employees experience a higher work pressure and they feel they have less influence in organizing their own tasks. Of the 4.6 million sick days registered by the Dutch labour institute ArboNed in the first half of 2014, ten per cent was stress-related. That is eight times the 2009 number.”

### The Big Sobering

But according to Bakas, the more than one million entrepreneurs without personnel (EWP) must also keep on excelling in 2015. “You must have positive recommendations from present and former clients, you must reward existing clients with a permanent cuddling offensive, be promiscuous and network wherever you can.” The number of EWPs is rising and, left in the lurch by politicians and multinationals, they more and more unite in institutions to insure their livelihood. “What is more, online platforms make it possible for people to easily value their services, car, house themselves”, Bakas reasons. “Ordinary citizens put up solar panels on their roofs or buy energy jointly with the neighbors.” According to Bakas this is also a consequence of the Big Sobering. “The middle class is getting poorer, families have too many debts and it is time for an other type of life. That is why the market for ‘hope and comfort’ will grow in 2015: the Dutch join forces and help each other. Sharing and bartering is also part of this picture. Peer to peer capitalism is on the rise. By excluding intermediate trade and middlemen, citizens obtain more power, transaction costs are lowered and a more inclusive economy is created: anyone can participate.” The force of this new form of economy has obliterated the monopolies of existing industries in just a few years’ time. “The taxi and hotel sectors, for instance, have lost their power base to platforms like Uber and AirBnB”, Bakas explains. That is why nowadays entrepreneurs must react flexibly to innovations and opportunities, but also have the resilience to be able to counter unexpected problems. “The successful companies of the future focus on quick learning instead of maintaining the status quo,” he explains. “If companies want to remain strategically flexible, they should implement more flexible work processes and IT solutions. Versatility happens to be one of the major survival strategies for companies.”

### Biography Adjiedj Bakas

Trendwatcher Adjiedj Bakas (1963) wrote several best sellers on the future, including the 2014 ‘Plenty’, ‘Megatrends Water’, ‘Energie en Grondstoffen’ and ‘Megatrends Werk’, about jobs that disappear and jobs that will be. Before that, he published, among other books, ‘The Future of Food’, ‘The State of Tomorrow’ and ‘Het Einde van de Privacy’. In the past years, over 700,000 copies of his books were sold.

### Serial entrepreneur

The life cycle of companies is getting shorter as the technology develops exponentially and business models quicker become obsolete. The serial entrepreneur is on the rise: the entrepreneur who starts up a company, brings it to fruition and then sells it, only to start up a new company (in the Netherlands, John de Mol is an example of this trend). Spending your entire career as an entrepreneur with only one company and one company name, is becoming more the exception than the rule. But the serial employee is also an increasing phenomenon. 35-year olds now have had on average seven different jobs, and this trend will continue in 2015.

But the consumer also switches more and more easily. “Customers show less and less brand loyalty. Nowadays, they switch brands, even banks or insurance companies, for the simplest of reasons. The most important reason for this is the rise of social media and the internet. They cause consumers to be better informed and assertive. These days, consumers are more sensitive to customer service. If a brand abandons its customers as soon as a product does not meet the standards, customers will drop the brand en masse.”

### Connected

In short, according to Bakas this year will be about ‘we’. Because of the rise of the barter and share economy, but also as a result of the rise of the peer to peer capitalism. “Companies will be looking for a closer relationship with their clients”, Bakas says. “More than ever before, the Dutch want to be connected instead of thinking themselves virtually connected. Being becomes more important than appearing.” ■

[www.bakas.nl](http://www.bakas.nl)