

# Breaking the mould on traditional CA job options

With the spotlight on the ethics and integrity of the major players in the auditing sector, landing an opportunity to do your training as a chartered accountant (CA) at a Big Four firms may no longer be all its cracked up to be.



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In fact, the job market for young CAs has changed in the last decade and the top jobs of the future look set to be quite different from what they've been in the past.



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As the world becomes more technology-driven is the 'traditional' approach still best-positioned to provide you with the skills you'll need for the future? So, what can new CAs do to future-proof their careers? The most important first step is to choose the right firm to complete your training – and consider whether a non-traditional option might be a good fit for you.

According to the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (Saica), there are currently 9,500 CA trainees. The vast majority – 8,885 – are completing their training at traditional auditing firms, compared to 615 who have opted for a non-traditional approach. For graduates looking to differentiate themselves from the majority, this might be a sensible option to consider.

## Three questions to help you find the right firm

### 1. Is innovation expected?

An innovation mindset is not for everyone, but for those who enjoy finding new solutions for new challenges, a traditional accounting approach may be stifling.

### 2. Do you want to find a niche?

The predictable, rote aspects of accounting will be the first to be affected by artificial intelligence, and these are often

the tasks delegated to clerks at big firms. Being exposed to a wider range of work in your first years of work will enable you to find a niche sooner than you might have done if you'd been stuck doing one type of work.

### **3. Who will you learn from?**

A key question to ask yourself is 'who will I learn from?' What does the management structure look like, and will you be able to access senior executives to gain insights or bounce ideas off? Doing your training at a smaller, non-traditional firm will provide greater access to people at all levels of seniority, whereas the 'Big 4' tend to have firmly established hierarchies.

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