



AUDIT • ADVISORY • TAX

Q&A Booklet **B-WOMEN IN TECH**

You #DaredtoAsk and
we answered!

www.bdo.co.za



Q&A WITH OUR SPEAKERS AND B-WOMEN IN TECH



Kirti Harcharan
Senior Manager In The Data
Science Division At BDO

BDO Financial Services

How do you approach men that always second guess you, that just because you are a women they believe that you can't do as good of a job as another guy?

► Kirti Harcharan

This is still an unfortunate reality in the workplace, particularly in technology. Be confident in who you are and the skills and knowledge you possess. Communication is key – voice your opinion and state your case as to why you are the best fit for that job...and then make sure you deliver! The positive is that this narrative is changing, and we are seeing more women in leadership positions.

Have you ever been so discouraged you wanted to quit and how did you overcome it?

► Kirti Harcharan

I haven't, however there are days that are tougher than others. In those times, I always reflect on why I am in this position, how much I have learnt (and continue to) and the value I bring to my team. Every job has its challenges, I find that surrounding myself with trusted people at work makes this manageable. I strongly suggested finding a mentor that you can chat to and get advice, particularly for those times where you feel discouraged. Sometimes all we need is for someone to listen.

How can we ensure that the technology we build will help alleviate/solve social issues?

► Kirti Harcharan

When building technology, we need to take into consideration all aspects, not just commercial. So, when we build technology, it is key that we consider the social issues and the impact thereon.

The benefits should always outweigh the costs (both monetary and non-monetary) of the technology we build. Involve the necessary stakeholders who experience the social issue at hand and understand the issue from their perspective. Show them and explain the solution that has been developed and get their feedback (i.e., conduct extensive market testing). Provision adequate support to ensure adoption and service delivery and prevent operational failure of the tech, resulting in further pitfalls to stakeholders due to their newly developed reliance on the technology (i.e., provide maintenance, support and coaching to ensure the tech actually operates the way it was intended and addresses the targeted issue).

Q&A WITH OUR SPEAKERS AND B-WOMEN IN TECH



Nitasha Pillay
BCom Honours Information
Systems and Technology Student

Tech Society UKZN

How did you kind of lay a foundation/necessary that would allow you to transition easily to the work place ?

► *Nitasha Pillay*

Every place of work or job role has a different set of requirements. From the perspective of students wanting to enter the workplace, the best foundation for students to prepare for the world of work is to #DaretoAsk people that are in fields of your interest and learn from their experiences in how they got to where they are now. If you are a student wanting to find employment, my biggest advice would be entering a grad program or joining internships to get a feel of the workplace.

Grad programs really do offer a lot of training in your transition to the workplace. I feel important skills for students to also learn is emotional intelligence and team dynamics.

I joined societies in my university and got involved in projects that dealt with student empowerment, whilst doing that I learnt a lot about teamwork and myself as a person.

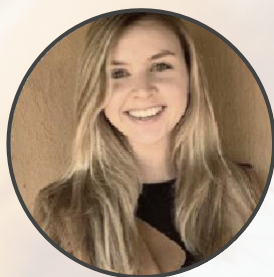
Do you advise to study bcom honors in Information systems and why?

► *Nitasha Pillay*

Honours is your steppingstone into research within your field of interest. It prepares students for research based postgraduate study. I feel at honours level you get to take a deeper look at Information Systems as compared to an undergraduate level which is the foundation.

I would recommend doing honours because you become more knowledgeable about the field. IS honours also provides opportunities for high-level theoretical engagements and intellectual independence in the field of IS. Furthermore, it prepares students to develop professional skills to implement, maintain, operate, and manage an organization's information technology (IT) systems. This programme is concerned with the systems and technologies used in and by companies. You should never limit your knowledge, challenge yourself and learn new things.

Q&A WITH OUR SPEAKERS AND B-WOMEN IN TECH



Cailin Perre
MSc Data Science
Candidate & Data
Engineer

Entelect

I love data science as well but I am doing a degree (Bcom: informatics) how did you get into data science from an unrelated degree? did you have to take extra modules?

► *Cailin Perre*

My Industrial Engineering degree did require that I take certain algebra/calculus and statistics courses, as well as some coding and operations research courses. I personally, did not have to take any additional modules to be able to register for my Masters in Data Science at UCT, but it was a requirement for me to have taken a certain level of mathematics, statistics, and coding modules in my undergraduate studies. I advise that if you are interested in pursuing a Masters in Data Science that you start looking at the prerequisite modules required for application.

If you are uncertain as to whether or not your subjects are sufficient to apply, reach out to the relevant course convenor (usually on the university website under the specific degree page) to discuss the matter further. I do know that Universities are more willing to accept you (and enable you to take these pre-requisite modules whilst undertaking the MSc subjects) if you have attained high grades for your undergraduate studies. If your grades are not the highest, do not fret – ASK the relevant course convenor for next steps.

How do you get a hold of Vac work?

► *Cailin Perre*

Vacation work will not simply fall in your lap, it is up to you to look for opportunities and reach out to companies that you are interested in gaining some experience from. My first point of call was to research companies in my industry that I was potentially interested in working for one day, or would offer a learning experience that would stretch me. I would look for details of a receptionist/an individual working at the company and reach out with a phone call/email detailing that I was a student very interested in their company and wondering about a possibility to perform a few weeks job shadowing/vacation work at their organization to gain some practical insight and experience within their domain. I would attach my CV as well as academic transcript for additional context. Sometimes organizations will not respond, that is okay – simply contact another one. It is also important to bear in mind that vacation work is not an internship, and therefore, you will not be paid for your time. This often makes companies more willing to assist you as having you around will not be costing them anything but some time.

Do you think that we can solve or alleviate some of the social issues people face for example illiteracy? If so, how can we start cultivating such interests?

► *Cailin Perre*

Socio-economic and systemic issues such as illiteracy are incredibly complex, multi-faceted problems. They are incredibly difficult to solve due to the number of factors that contribute to the problem. With this being said, I believe that modern technology (with good, and large quantities, of data) could help policy makers and social bodies better understand the problems and their possible root causes. With the advancements in Machine Learning and Prescriptive methods such as Simulation, possible scenario planning could additionally be used to simulate/test the effect of intervention strategies on improving/alleviating the socio-economic problem. Cultivating interest for such problems is tricky since most of these projects are for social-development and do not make companies more money by investing in them. I believe that one way to start cultivating interest in these areas is at university. Societies such as Engineers Without Borders help create a credible platform for organisations to invest their money for projects that aim to address some of these issues. If you are interested in using data science/technology for good, start looking for such societies/groups/international bodies and get involved.

Q&A WITH OUR SPEAKERS AND B-WOMEN IN TECH



**BDO Women In
Technology**

BDO Financial Services

What is your advice for someone who is interested in tech but not sure exactly what career path to follow?

► *BDO women in Tech*

Doing research is the best way to find out about the different career paths in tech. You can start by googling different career paths in tech and reading the job descriptions and requirements/qualifications. It is also good to hear directly from people in those fields, so don't feel shy to reach out to people on LinkedIn and ask them if they have the time to tell you a little bit about what they do, what they enjoy about it and if there are any aspects that they do not like. Another good starting point is to search for tech degrees offered by universities and then start structuring your searches around what career paths you can pursue with that degree.

What does a junior analyst do ?

► *BDO women in Tech*

A junior analyst at BDO does IT audit work where we interact with clients to assess their policies, and procedures and make sure that their system(s) are in line with those policies and procedures as well as best practices. Based on our findings, we put together documentation (working papers) which goes back to the client with recommendations.

I want to become an IT Auditor, which degree should I do (Undergrad and postGrad) ?

► *BDO women in Tech*

To become an IT Auditor you can pursue a degree in Information Systems with a second major in Accounting, Internal Audit or Computer Science for a more technical outlook. After achieving the require years of experience, you can go on to obtain your professional designation by writing CISA. However, you are not limited to these degrees you can become an IT Auditor with any Bachelor of Commerce Degree, you just need the will and drive to learn about the field! OR if you want to be a CA(SA) IT Auditor, you would need to pursue the Accounting Sciences degree, followed by the relevant boards.

What does a Jnr. Data Scientist/Data Scientist do?

► *BDO women in tech*

Data scientists are analytical data experts who have the technical skills to solve complex problems and have the curiosity to explore what problems need to be solved. They are part mathematician, part computer scientist and part trend-spotter. As a junior data scientist at BDO, most of our work is surrounded around data cleaning, recalculation of financial concepts, building automation and predictive models.

WOMEN IN TECH WORD CLOUD

BEING A WOMAN IN TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY...

Enthusiastic, Bold, Relationship Builder, Humility, Fierce, Diverse, Making An Impact, Breaking The Stereotype, Ambitious, Resilient, Daring, Creative, Brave, Persistent, Amazing, Determined, Tenacious, Awesome, Powerful, Assertive, Insightful, Passionate, Resilience, Compassionate

#DareToAsk



INVITATION

Empowering Women And Girls Through Tech

B-WOMEN IN TECH INITIATIVE

Stand Your Ground

The B-Women In Tech team invites you to an event, hosted online on the **30th of June at 15:00**. In this session, we will tackle the topic of how women should stand their ground in the working world with inspiration from the following speakers:

Monique Anthony – Associate Director @BDO South Africa

Lauren Berrington – Chief Audit Executive @Bidvest & Chairperson of the IT Forum

[Click here to join the meeting](#)



FOR A CLEAR PERSPECTIVE,
PLEASE CONTACT US:

**BDO WOMEN IN FINANCIAL
SERVICES TECHNOLOGY**

B-Womenintech@bdo.co.za



/BDOSouthAfrica



/bdoafrica



/bdo_sa



/bdosouthafrica



/company/bdo-south-africa

www.bdo.co.za

Copyright © 2022. BDO South Africa Services (Pty) Ltd, a South African company, is an affiliated company of BDO South Africa Inc., a South African company, which in turn is a member of BDO International Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, and forms part of the international BDO network of independent member firms. BDO is the brand name for the BDO network and for each of the BDO Member Firms.

This publication has been carefully prepared, but it has been written in general terms and should be seen as broad guidance only. The publication cannot be relied upon to cover specific situations and you should not act, or refrain from acting, upon the information contained therein without obtaining specific professional advice. Please contact BDO to discuss these matters in the context of your particular circumstances. BDO, its partners, employees and agents do not accept or assume any liability or duty of care for any loss arising from any action taken or not taken by anyone in reliance on the information in this publication or for any decision based on it.

The information contained in these documents is confidential, privileged and only for the information of the intended recipient and may not be used, published or redistributed without the prior written consent of BDO South Africa Services (Pty) Ltd. The opinions expressed are in good faith and while every care has been taken in preparing these documents, BDO South Africa Services (Pty) Ltd makes no representations and gives no warranties of whatever nature in respect of these documents, including but not limited to the accuracy or completeness of any information, facts and/or opinions contained therein. BDO South Africa Services (Pty) Ltd, its subsidiaries, the directors, employees and agents cannot be held liable for the use of and reliance of the opinions, estimates, forecasts and findings in these documents.

BDO