KadaKareer Whitepaper

Careers in the Digital Economy

Background and Context

KadaKareer is a low-bandwidth, community-based career development platform that aims to provide resources and coaching for underserved students in the Philippines, most of home reside outside of NCR. The organization's theory of change involves breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty that plagues the Philippines on both a macro-level and a micro-level through its end-to-end career support.

At the macro-level, KadaKareer hopes to build a more fulfilled, empowered and productive workforce while also ensuring job satisfaction, performance and wealth multiplication on the micro-level. As a result, it was critical for the organization to carefully select industries that it truly believed would push both of these parts of the theory of change forward. KadaKareer's industries of focus would need to both contribute to nation-building and prepare the Philippine economy for future growth whilst also providing stable, empowering and fulfilling careers for individuals that can help them lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

Thus, in Q1 of 2021, the KadaKareer team began researching which key industries it believed would push its theory of change forward. After some initial research, the team identified three industries that seemed to fit its proposition: freelancing, BPO and education. However, upon conducting further research and discussion, it became clear that a common thread across these industries was their huge dependence on a rising tide of technological and digital infrastructure and change. So, instead of focusing on a particular industry, the team decided to instead focus on a key function crucial to the Philippines' upcoming growth: the digital economy.

Digital Economy

The Digital Economy consists of careers that leverage the rise in technological and internet infrastructure to deliver work and facilitate new services or functions. In fact, these careers are *enabled* uniquely through the digital revolution that is taking hold of the Philippines. Examples of such careers are vast and include roles such as digital marketers, media specialists, and even online tutors!

There are several factors and characteristics that make a focus on the digital economy attractive for KadaKareer, especially given the Philippines' current state:

1. **Philippine mobile and internet penetration are on the rise.** The Philippines is reportedly the 2nd most engaged mobile internet nation in the world, with Filipinos spending an average of 4 hours and 58 minutes using their phone data (Google and Bain, 2019). Philippine internet penetration was at 67% in January 2020, but is predicted to grow to 85-90% by 2030 (Hootsuite 2020).

2. **Certain sectors that have seen growth in recent years rely on a booming digital economy.** For example, the Business Process Outsourcing industry contributed 7.3% to Philippine GDP growth in 2019 (Outsource Accelerator, 2019) and has risen to become a multibillion dollar business, a large chunk of which is now rerouting to the Knowledge Process Outsourcing sector, which rely heavily on digitally-enabled careers like game design or web design. Additionally, the Philippines has become the 6th largest Freelancing country in the world (Payoneer, 2019), where individual contractors and small businesses have built their careers online through digital marketing and virtual assistantships.

3. **Job growth is shifting towards digital or technological careers.** Linkedin Jobs Report claims that 7/10 high growth jobs in the PH in the coming years will be related to technology (Linkedin, 2020).

4. **The pandemic has pushed workers to become more comfortable and reliant on remote work.** Due to COVID-19, several subsectors of the Philippine economy were forced to be creative with the ways in which they conducted their work, forcing classes, business dealings and even financial transactions to move online.

Benefits of a Digital Focus

Besides the clear evidence that the Philippines is currently undergoing a digital revolution, there are a few other organizational reasons as to why focusing on the Digital Economy is beneficial for KadaKareer and its community:

1. **Tech-enabled jobs don't have a huge barrier to entry, especially given the rising access to infrastructure.** For instance, for certain individuals entering the freelancing industry, access to a smartphone and reliable internet connection are enough to begin taking on minor projects and building a career.

2. **The digital space places greater emphasis on skill rather than pedigree.** Digitally-enabled careers are dependent on a demonstrated track record of successful outputs and projects. Therefore, even individuals who did not major in technology-focused subjects can enter the space and build their portfolios and reputations as long as they can deliver. The online space prioritizes a positive feedback loop of skill demonstration and validation to build a successful career.

3. **There is greater flexibility and inclusivity in the digital space.** Lots of jobs that fall under this realm do not have to fit the standard 9-5 structure or require that individuals attend a formal place of work. As such, individuals with different needs can still participate in the digital economy and be successful (i.e. full-time parents, the differently abled, etc.).
4. **Careers in the digital space are a good match for the upcoming generation of millennial and Gen Z workers.** These individuals grew up around technology and are incredibly digitally savvy. Thus, these workers are not only primed to embrace the trend towards digitally-enabled careers, but are also equipped with the fundamental comfort and skill sets that are needed to begin building a career in the space.
5. **Focusing on digital or technology-based functions allows KadaKareer to have impact across multiple sectors.** As already demonstrated, digitally focused skills and roles are available and essential across multiple sectors and many more are on the brink of transformation (i.e. during the pandemic, a majority of the education sector had to shift their services online, and teachers were forced to adapt to technologically-enabled functions). Thus, KadaKareer will have a bigger impact across a variety of industries instead of growing slowly by sector vertical.
6. **Focusing on digital or technological functions can promote coaching on strategies or skills that can transcend roles.** Someone who specializes in digital marketing in the consumer goods industry, for instance, does not need to only coach individuals within that space. In fact, a coach with digital marketing skills in any role and at any organization can still lend insights into what digital marketing roles are like overall.

Digital Careers in This Space

Some careers that fit into the Digital Economy are:
- Digital Marketing
- Photography or Video Editing
- Graphic Designer
- Online Tutor
- Research Analyst
- Mobile App Developer
- Project Manager
- Data Scientist
- Transcriber
- Virtual Assistant
- Content Creator
- Data Encoder / Data Tagger
- IT Technician
- Network Manager

- Software Developer
- UX / UI Designer
- Online Business Owner
- Education Technology Specialist