



Frank Rizzo joined KPMG in 1990 and performed many different client-focused and management roles. He led KPMG's IT Advisory practice in South Africa from 2007 till 2012 and was also a member of the global IT Advisory team in the same period. Frank also led the IT Advisory Risk Consulting practice for Europe, the Middle East and Africa from 2011 to 2013. Currently Frank is the Technology sector leader for KPMG in Africa, leading the firm's Data and Analytics initiatives across Africa.



Visual acuity is a measure of the spatial resolution of the visual processing system. Normal visual acuity is commonly referred to as 20/20 vision, the metric equivalent of which is 6/6 vision. At 20 feet or 6 metres, a human eye with nominal performance is able to separate lines that are one arcminute apart (equivalent to lines that are spaced 1.75 mm apart)¹.

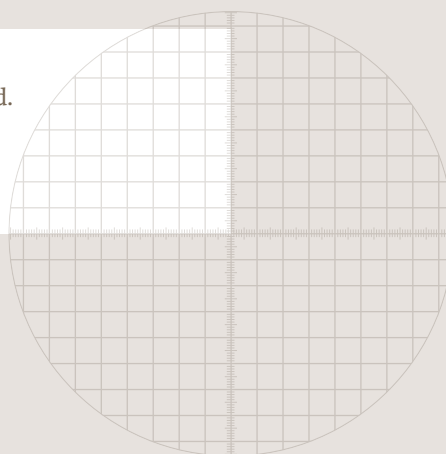
20/20 Vision

Interview: Frank Rizzo

So why the optical reference to kick off an article on the evolution of KPMG's IT Advisory practice?

Well, let me start with a quick introduction: I joined KPMG in Johannesburg in 1990. I started off in the Audit practice, but quickly found a home in the firm that aligned with my true passion, which is Information Technology. In 1992, I transferred to a small, growing department called "Computer Audit Department" – we were very creative with our naming conventions in the 90's...

Over the years, I have been privileged to be part of a dynamic and fast-growing practice that has now evolved into our global IT Advisory practice. I have also had the opportunity to work across the African continent; and while the pace of technology adoption has been slow in the past, this is accelerating rapidly. In a fast-changing environment, one must always be aware of the internal and external changes and the pace of change. It is too easy to get focused on delivering great work, only to look up and realize that the world has moved on.



One needs to always look over the horizon to try and predict the unknown and prepare for different scenarios

This brings me neatly to the topic of this article: Vision. In the technology world, you need to look in the rear-view mirror to learn lessons from where you have already been. But the most important aspect to keep an eye on is the road ahead. In fact, one needs to always look over the horizon to try and predict the unknown and prepare for different scenarios.

So what will the world look like in 2020?

One needs to consider the current trends and extrapolate these to see how the world will look. Unfortunately, this is not enough. You also need to look beyond your industry and your current environment to understand where the next challenge will be coming from. Countries across Africa are experiencing a "boom" in internet connectivity. This is creating a great opportunity for African countries to "leapfrog" the rest of the world and quickly implement innovative technology. In fact, there was a great article that suggested that the next internet billionaire will be from Africa².

In 2013, the technology world is shaped by six customer-driven trends. A lot has been written on these trends, and KPMG is working hard to assist our clients navigate through these trends. It is interesting to me that these are "customer driven" trends. Looking to 2020, I believe we will see even more "consumerization" of technology, as customers become more and more technologically savvy and continue demanding technology-enabled delivery of goods and services from businesses.

The six customer-driven trends are:

- Big Data
- Social Media
- Mobile
- Advanced automation
- Cloud
- Cyber security

If these are the current trends, what can we expect in 2020?

Well, the first point is that all of the above trends are interrelated. The lines will continue to blur between these trends, and business technology will need to be increasingly agile to cope with the changes and demands on their infrastructure.

While these trends are interrelated, they also conflict, to some extent. As we automate processes more, the human touch gets replaced. This is great for efficiency, but what about customer intimacy? Enter the world of social and mobile.

But as we engage with our customers on these platforms, what does it mean for risk and security?

This is the balancing act that needs to be achieved by business and technology.

So let's take it to the next level: what about wearable computing?

This is really embracing the mobile trend and adding personalization. And while I am personalizing my experience in interacting with business, I increasingly expect the business to treat me as their only customer.

What happens with privacy and security and trust?

Again, there is a balance that needs to be achieved.

With advanced automation and big data comes the "Internet of Things." Machine-to-machine interaction will be mainstream by 2020. This ushers in a new discipline covering "robot ethics." I am a big fan of Isaac Asimov – by 2020, a lot of current science fiction will be science fact.

How will our clients set out the "rules" for their machines? How will we balance automation and the personal touch?

As Moore's law continues to apply and we develop faster and

smaller machines, new solutions will be found for current problems. Of course, we will also create new problems and challenges that need to be addressed.

So what skill sets will be required to address these new problems and challenges?

The body of technology professionals will need to be even more diverse in 2020. The singularity³ is still some way off, so countries will still need to develop and nurture the organic hardware and software that joins the technology industry: i.e., people! As we move towards 2020, I see people from many more disciplines working in technology-related areas.

There has never been a more exciting time to be involved in the IT sphere. Digitalization is changing many things. For businesses to grow, they will need to dedicate even more time to innovation. My challenge to people that enter the IT profession is to look through an "innovation lens" at any work that you are doing at the moment. Ask yourself, "How could we improve this? Considering my business problem, what new solutions could we be developing?" Keep innovation front of mind and share ideas with your colleagues and peers on a global scale. The variety of skills and experience in the IT industry gives us a unique "laboratory" to test new ideas and develop new solutions. Let's use our collective vision to shape our future!

Notes

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_acuity
2. <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2011-11/04/get-rich-move-to-africa>
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological_singularity