

# Take Pride In Your "Bullshit Job" — It's The Future Of Capitalism

*Bullshit jobs reflect the impossibility to name tasks that are more and more intangible. - Raw Pixel*  
([https://unsplash.com/photos/Lh\\_bn9SgRSY](https://unsplash.com/photos/Lh_bn9SgRSY))

*Some see the invention of bogus-sounding professions as a sign that work has become less and less necessary. It may also just mean that capitalism is being transformed.*

Gaspard Koenig (<https://iq.worldcrunch.com/profile/26827/>)

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**PARIS** — Stuck at home and prescribed a diet for an early case of gout this year — a punishment familiar to those with a love for decadent meals — I found myself sober and

with enough free time to do all types of useless things, like exploring my LinkedIn account.

If it seemed natural not to personally know most of my 3,500 contacts, I was surprised to find that I didn't know the title of many of their professions either. Some job sectors that are obviously popular, but that I had never heard of, included: "Networking Enhancement," "innovative strategies," "holacracy (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holacracy>)," "global innovation insight," "transition transformation," "change management," "global strategy (<https://www.worldcrunch.com/tech-science/the-smart-global-strategy-driving-the-coming-cheap-iphone>)," "creativity and innovation..." And so on.

The confusing concept of "strategy," in particular, appeared often in job titles. But, the one that baffled me the most was that of "thought leadership." Doesn't it sound like like Yoda's professional profile?

The dose of exoticism was high in the job titles of my contacts: They are experts, counselors, senior advisors, business managers and even officers. Many directly appointed themselves as boss, CEO, founder, owner, managing partner — i.e. "self-employed" more often than not, as one profile honestly admits. Lost in the midst of intergalactic-sounding titles are a minority of traditional job titles that define themselves as modestly "traditional": architect, landscaper, banker, professor, accountant, airline pilot, doctor and director.

“ *Elite prefer enhancing useless functions to justify their own legitimacy.* ”

Beyond the megalomania inherent to social media, the proliferation of "global strategy CEO" indicates a changing economy and society. It is a sign of the times, as predicted by anthropologist and anti-globalization activist David Graeber — the arrival of "bullshit jobs." Such positions characterize the bureaucracy of global commerce (<https://www.worldcrunch.com/china-20-1/inside-the-global-expansion-of-chinese-industrial-parks>), with its human resources, public relations, in-house counsel, experts in influence and their myriad of consultants armed with PowerPoint presentations.

The global success of this expression, used by Graeber in an article for *Strike! Magazine* in 2013, then expanded into his essay *The Utopia of Rules*, is itself revealing. After

publication, Graeber set out to create a more empirical study and collected testimonies at the address [doihaveabsjoborwhat@gmail.com](mailto:doihaveabsjoborwhat@gmail.com) (<mailto:doihaveabsjoborwhat@gmail.com>). He classified bullshit jobs in five categories: flunky (trying to make one's superior within a hierarchy look good), goons (in which a company recruits because its competitors have done the same), Duck tapers (whose mission consists of solving a problem that doesn't exist), Box-tickers (signaling the business wants to seem fashionable), and task-masters (who are there to supervise those working fine on their own). Somebody should ask LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>) to include these classifications.

Graeber interprets bullshit jobs as an artifice deployed by capitalism (<https://www.worldcrunch.com/opinion-analysis/artificial-intelligence-will-kill-capitalism>) in an effort to survive in a universe where work has become less and less necessary: Rather than falling into idleness, the elite prefer enhancing useless functions to justify their own legitimacy. I would like to propose an alternative explanation: Bullshit jobs reflect the impossibility to name tasks that are more and more intangible, where intelligence takes priority over technical skills. In this way, bullshit jobs stand at the center of the meteoric progress of capitalism; they go beyond the specialization of work to better find the value of the entire human being.

Nothing terrifies me more than having to express "what I do for a living." My hesitations immediately cause suspicion (especially at customs). Depending on circumstances and the identity of my interlocutors, I alternate between writer, activist, professor and humorist. I may actually need to categorize myself by these new signals of eternity: to think of the jobs that we *are* rather than the jobs we have. Let us not be ashamed of our bullshit jobs. The next time someone asks me, I may just try: "thought leadership."

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