

## How we need to respond in a changing world of work

South Africa | 06 June 2017 | Insight

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In the previous sections, we looked at the disruptors behind the disruption – mostly, at how technology has had an impact on every aspect of life, from how we live to how long we may live. Here, we move on to a discussion of what would be deemed an appropriate response to the shifts we’re seeing across the globe and here at home. What do we need to be doing to ensure the long-term success of our economy, our businesses and, most importantly, our people?

We start by looking at how shifts in the employer–employee relationship are placing new demands on the employer, and how the [modern organisation](#) will need to start managing human capital in a way that encourages employee engagement, participation and long-term commitment. Here, we suggest that the co-creation of individualised employee benefits would go a long way to achieving this, demonstrating the organisation’s understanding of and ability to add value to the unique needs of the employee.

We see how [workforce analytics](#) can be used as an effective tool for engaging and retaining human capital, and look at a case study from Mercer, a global leader in pension, benefit, investment and HR consulting. The study demonstrates the usefulness of data analytics in addressing questions of employee turnover in the modern organisation.

Workforce analytics also make a powerful contribution to how we set employment policies as we adapt to the changing world of work. With South Africa facing the challenges presented by two major demographic developments – a youth bulge and the prospect of greater longevity – the debate as to how long people should be allowed to work in a company can become particularly emotive. We show how workplace analytics can **take the issue of age off the table** when we start to think more broadly about what drives productivity. Choosing to invest in rather than ignore the older segment of the working population can result in significant pay-offs – and not at the expense of the younger workforce.

An emerging concept that organisations can embrace in order to better manage human capital is what our HR departments are calling ‘**employee well-being**’. Organisations that focus on employee well-being seek to reap the rewards associated with a healthy workforce: lower absenteeism, fewer workers’ compensation claims, reduced work-related disabilities, and greater workplace safety, productivity and performance – all of which contribute to a competitive and sustainable organisation.

There’s no one, ideal solution yet, but many of the pieces are already in place. It’s now a question of how to put them together to form a holistic programme that proactively ensures behavioural change and equips individuals to successfully deal with the physical, financial and emotional issues that affect their individual and family well-being. We ask some serious questions about how to create a sustainable well-being programme that will ensure commitment and ongoing engagement from all stakeholders without introducing possible conflicts of interest. We also look at the example of employee **health programmes** as an integrated benefit that, if well managed, can make a significant contribution to employee – and organisational – well-being. We address some of the complex issues of implementing these programmes and suggest useful metrics and measurements employers can consider to ensure everyone gets the most value from what is offered.

Another area requiring a complete rethink is that of **skills development**. Wherever they are in their careers or life stage, and whichever industry they work in, all employees will need to be properly equipped with the skills our new world, and new world of work, demands. The rapid rate of automation coupled with advances in technology will radically change more than just the way we work. Industry, policymakers, employers and trainers need to get together – now – and accelerate our skills development journey if we are to meet the challenges of an interconnected future and compete within a rapidly changing global labour market.

And it’s not just individual skills development that need to be fast-tracked: the future of **our entrepreneurs and SMMEs** is also at stake if we can’t provide an environment that will encourage transformation and growth in a way that’s competitive and sustainable. Our final chapter explores what can be done to help entrepreneurs develop the right skills and provide a safety net that not only encourages entrepreneurship – at any age – but also goes a long way to enabling the long-term success of our businesses of the future.

From these discussions, the need for a comprehensive life planning package is apparent. We will need to take a more creative approach to designing benefits that extend beyond the traditional offerings if we are to enable and empower our workforce for the future – something we go on to consider in the next two sections.

[MODERN ORGANISATION](#)

[WORKFORCE ANALYTICS](#)

[WELL-BEING](#)

[HEALTH PROGRAMMES](#)

[SKILLS DEVELOPMENT](#)

[ENTREPRENEURS](#)

[SMME'S](#)