

How to influence the customer of the future

 By [Jill Young Schutte](#)

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No one can accurately predict the future, but present-day research and information can direct us on how to make informed decisions for days ahead.



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My experience with the youth of South Africa and years of youth empowerment has led me to a finding that I believe can be profitable to business owners everywhere.

I believe that business owners can ensure future customer loyalty and investment by supporting programs that equip the youth today. Harnessing young talent, creating experts and forming supportive structures for the youth, is the best way to create greater participation in the economy.

What specific action should business owners take?

Because so many young people have been systematically disadvantaged and damaged by the past there is the need for youth organisations and initiatives that focus on structural and systemic change in young people's position in society. The support of youth development cannot be overemphasized.

We need to partake in efforts equipping the youth with skills - the kind of skills that enables them to actively take part in the formal economy. Cultivate your customer today, reap the financial benefit tomorrow.

Involvement in youth skills development is the golden thread between the business owner and the customer of the future. The customer of the future needs to have a solid foundation in the following spheres to contribute to future economic wealth:

Life skills, in terms of access to information, decision making, communication, problem solving, alternative dispute resolution and others.

- Employment/income-generating opportunities. (Creating the “do something” rather than “wait for something.”)
- Education, in terms of opportunities to continue their education and to restore the deficits of past education, as well as to gain exposure to life experiences in a positive and supportive environment.
- Respect, in terms of being listened to and having a safe space to discuss concerns.
- A sense of self, identity and value.

The good news is that businesses are in fact already focussing on skills development programs for youth through learnerships and CSI approach to skills development directly, but the fact remains that the life skills and soft skills pieces are missing from such initiatives.

The critical mass of our youth need to be equipped to get into the formal economy one way or the other, quickly, effectively and through mass reach of mobile.

ABOUT JILL YOUNG SCHUTTE

Jill Young Schutte is the founder of EvenMe! a free Online Portal and App aimed at Inspiring and motivating the youth.
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