

Why learnability is a critical skill set for women in the workplace

Learnability is now more important than any existing skill set. This principle is one of the most serious disruptors in the modern workplace, and is a trend that many businesses are either unaware of, or are simply ignoring. With gender equality remaining a challenge, the shift to the importance of learnability is set to become critical for addressing the gender gap according to ManpowerGroup South Africa's managing director, Lyndy van den Barselaar.



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“Skills and talent matter now more than ever, and learnability – the desire and ability to learn new skills to be employable for the long term – will be the equaliser for women in the workplace,” she says. “It is important that employers are aware that responsive and responsible leadership is the key to accelerating female workers.”

With automation, artificial intelligence and robotics becoming increasingly integrated into business models, there is great concern that these defining technologies will impact female workers more than males. “Now more than ever, organisations and leaders must ensure that they are alleviating digital impacts in a way that creates equal workforce opportunities for all women around the globe. This is called the skills revolution,” explains van den Barselaar.

Investing in learnability

In the midst of a Skills Revolution, when 40% of employers cannot find the skills they need and 65% of the jobs younger Millennials (18-24) will do don't even exist yet, acquiring new skills and experience has never been more important to remain employable. An organisation's success will be defined by the skill sets of its employees.

“A person's employability is no longer dependent on what they know, but on what they are likely to learn,” says van den Barselaar. Women need new skills, and they will need them more often, to remain employable for the unknown jobs of the future. This is why it is critical for leaders to begin investing in their employee's learnability.

Responsive and responsible leadership

In today's time of rapid change, leaders need to examine the structure of work and explore which roles can be fulfilled, by

whom or by what. Advancements in technology can bring great opportunities for new job creation and career progression for those willing to rise up to the challenge, has the ability to facilitate lifelong learnings and to provide a work / life balance.

“Now is the time to be responsive and responsible in terms of leadership. By ensuring that your organisation’s leadership development models can offer consistent upskilling and reskilling opportunities, corporate South Africa’s objective of the acceleration of working women into leadership positions will be realised that much faster,” concludes van den Barselaar.

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