

We need a gear shift to support our youth and their future marketplace opportunities

By [Dineo Molefe](#)

11 Jul 2019

With South Africa's unemployment rate reaching 27.6% in the first quarter of 2019, worryingly approaching a 15-year high, it is important for corporate South Africa to assist in creating a pool of skills that will not only address today's workforce requirements, but those of tomorrow.



T-Systems ICT Academy graduates

There needs to be a closer working relationship between government and private sector organisations. Although there is some government funding for private sector learning interventions, there still needs to be a better-defined and collaborative plan around skills transfer, job creation and job sustenance.

There also needs to be a mind shift in terms of how the youth is prepared for entering the marketplace and what their contribution to the economy can and should be.

Traditionally, young people are taught in school, then go to university – if they can afford it – and then need to start looking for a job. We do, however, need to start at school level to build and instil a sense of entrepreneurial drive into our young people. So, yes, go to college and study, but your end goal shouldn't necessarily be to pursue employment. Young people should know that they can and do have the option to open their own business.

A challenge for many university graduates is that companies require them to have some work experience in order for them to be employed. This is the challenge that private sector internship programmes aim to address. They take graduates who have no practical working experience and train, coach and mentor them in order that they might gain the necessary exposure and work experience.

Enhancing the current skills pool

Corporate South Africa's various skills initiatives are therefore important to enhance the current skills pool and prepare for the needs of tomorrow. We've seen how many of these initiatives also help business' by bringing in a young, innovative and vibrant talent pool. Young people come up with new and innovative ideas and ways of doing things. It is these fresh ideas that challenge the norm and lead to new ways of doing things. Our current world leaves very little room for lack of agility and slowness to adopt.



Dineo Mblefe, MD at T-Systems South Africa

It is therefore important that organisations keep their eye on the future and provide critical training and re-skilling to develop skills for roles that are required for a digital economy. The digital economy has introduced disruptive business models and new ways of transacting. The advent of artificial intelligence (AI), the internet of things (IoT) and other breakthroughs, is heralding an age of job roles that are yet to be created and defined. As the digital era takes full swing and new technologies emerge, we need to ensure that we are on par, if not one step ahead, with provision of skills.

In light of this, one of the things that we are trying to do with the T-Systems ICT Academy is to introduce a new course every year that feeds into industry 4.0 skills required, as well as whenever new technology comes out. Aside from just theoretical exposure, what we need to ensure is that learners get exposed to the practical components of new technologies. We need to ensure that these new technologies are available for them to play with and be open to learning, failing fast and re-learning.

It is predicted that in future, AI will become a positive net job motivator, creating more jobs than it will eliminate. This means that corporate South Africa will have to be on top of its game to ensure that the youth are equipped with the required skills to fill these new positions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dineo Mblefe, MD at T-Systems South Africa

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>