

Heavy Chef launches Entrepreneur Education Survey

Heavy Chef launched The Annual Heavy Chef Entrepreneur Education Survey with over 4,000 entrepreneurs sharing insights to how entrepreneurs learn in South Africa.



The inaugural launch of the study was done in light of exponential demand for entrepreneurial skills and thinking.

“Not everyone is cut-out for starting and running a business, but every single person has the ability and should learn how to problem solve, think creatively, be resilient and adaptable – in other words, to think like an entrepreneur,” says Louis Janse van Rensburg, chairman of the Heavy Chef Foundation.

Janse van Rensburg emphasised that the findings from what is now the largest study of this kind ever conducted in South Africa gives a practical blueprint for organisations that want to build an entrepreneurial culture, and for those teaching entrepreneurs.

“By visiting entrepreneurs at their place of business, having conversations with them about how they learned growing up, how they educate themselves today and how they are preparing for the future, we now have a vivid picture of how entrepreneurs learn,” he added.

The Five Learning Habits Of Entrepreneurs

1. Learning alone

Sixty-nine percent of the entrepreneurs we spoke to said ‘Learning by myself’ contributed the most to their development. True to form, entrepreneurs are independent, self-directed learners. In a country with stark socio-economic disparities like South Africa however, learning is also a lonely pursuit out of necessity. In fact, informal entrepreneurs in rural areas indicated that they have between 0 and 2 other entrepreneurs that they have regular access to, to share experiences with and learn from. 1 in 3 identified logistical constraints, like transport and data, as a major barrier to learning.

- **Learning whenever they can**

Google search (73%) and Youtube (43%) are seen as the best sources of learning for entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs want to spend almost all their time working on their business, dealing with customers and making sales. They only learn when the moment calls for it. It’s why they use their mobile phones to access learning after-

hours, with 63% preferring short-video and 40% short-audio as the best content formats to learn from. For entrepreneurs, knowledge found quickly and cheaply is power.

- **Learning in small circles**

Seventy-six percent of entrepreneurs cited family and friends as the most valuable source of knowledge when they first began learning about starting a business. However in a country with a high number of first-generation entrepreneurs, it should be no surprise that almost half (44%) of entrepreneurs was 25 years old when they first started to learn about business. It is why entrepreneurs seek hyper-local conversations and learning, to fill that familial gap. Thirty-nine percent indicated they do not have a mentor but would desperately value one to connect with, preferably another entrepreneur from their community, or in close range, who understands their world.

- **Learning that is useful, immediately**

Money. Marketing. Sales. These are the knowledge and skill gaps that entrepreneurs want to fill. Seventy-six percent of entrepreneurs rate marketing and sales as the most important skill to develop for the future. Learning to learn, plan, make decisions and set goals are skill sets that entrepreneurs learned most since starting a business. For entrepreneurs, the priority is to find and use knowledge and skills that serve their short-term needs, and instantly add value to their business.

- **Learning through play and practice**

Almost 9 out of 10 entrepreneurs indicated that they learned mostly through trial and error while working on their business. This is by far the most valued and best-rated form of learning for entrepreneurs. It is why the second most popular type of long-form content for entrepreneurs is experiential in its delivery. Entrepreneurs want to see, touch and feel their learning and the effectiveness of it in real-time. For them, the type of education they prefer is organised by other entrepreneurs and practical in nature.

A summary report of The Annual Heavy Chef Entrepreneur Education Survey can be downloaded at www.heavychef.com/surveys.

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