

Re-imagining the future of entrepreneurship

"So few people have a vision for the future beyond what they don't want to happen. Very few are saying what could come next." Bronwyn Williams, futurist, trends translator and future finance specialist for Flux Trends had this to say at PSG's Think Big webinar discussion.



Bronwyn Williams

"You need to be able to paint a better picture of what comes after the chaos. It's difficult, but you will have a captive audience. People are so hungry for any vision, any sort of plan."

Williams added that very few individuals are planning past the next election cycle, and that there is so much blank space, ready for new ideas.

“ What 2020 has done is reveal how few plans we had lying around for a crisis like Covid-19. We need more ideas to create powerful change for the future. ”

The South African advantage

"I think South Africans are experts at change and comfortable with chaos. We've adopted a survival mentality that gives us an advantage in some ways, but there is a fine line between having a resilient mindset and becoming facetious or stuck in survival mode. If we become stuck in the present we become very 'shoegazing', as I like to say; we don't often raise our heads and look to the horizon. We are so busy surviving; how do we plan ahead?" But those businesses and entrepreneurs who can, will have the competitive advantage.

Williams felt that technology is something we can't ignore as part of the solution. Arguably, the Covid-19 crisis hit the globe at a time when tech was mostly already prepared. "But while tech is something, we're very hopeful about, many of us are also somewhat fearful of progress. Tech is just about doing more with less. We can't view it as the problem – it's the tool we need to harness to go forward," Williams said.

All businesses are in the business of solving problems

Problem solvers create opportunity. The more problems we have, the more opportunities.

"If you can get some perspective past the short-term noise, the long-term macro trends are still in place with the same old problems to solve," Williams added.

When everyone else is panicking, if you can look ahead, the opportunity is wide open. Entrepreneurs should be encouraged to have a vision towards creating new things. Successful entrepreneurs have relentless optimism and we need even more of that to make the world better.

"I definitely see energy, food and education as the areas to focus on," said Williams. "Education is horribly wrong. We are creating generations of job takers, not job makers. Let's instead create self-sufficiency. A mind shift is needed, and we need to fix education to get it right."

"Solving energy and food security are real opportunities to have a financial impact and one that changes lives too."

Williams added that if you are creating jobs in South Africa, you are creating social justice. "If your business follows the letter of the law and doesn't exploit anyone in the process, you are creating net good for society. We need more jobmakers like this to add value to our society. The future is there for the taking."

Bigger picture thinking

It's important to realise that in the midst of accelerated change and compounding crises, there is a lot of chaos and noise in the system, particularly in the short-term, so forecasts can get thrown out. But you shouldn't let short-term views dictate your long-term anyway.

Seeing the bigger picture is essential and the value of good objective financial advice throughout the journey, cannot be underestimated. "So much information is thrown at us that it is difficult to make decisions. It can be made much easier with a trusted adviser by your side," added Henriette Senekal, chief executive for PSG Insure Short-term Administration, who hosted the discussion.

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