

A group of six diverse people are sitting on the floor, engaged in a collaborative activity. They are surrounded by various icons and drawings that represent different trends and concepts. The central focus is a large, stylized banner that reads "TRENDS". Surrounding this banner are several icons: a camera, a lightbulb, a book, a person's head, a chessboard, a clock, a musical note, a star, a hat, a person's head, a camera, a lightbulb, a book, a person's head, a chessboard, a clock, a musical note, a star, a hat, a person's head. The people are using markers and drawing tools to create these icons. The overall atmosphere is one of creative collaboration and discussion.

Globally, for the first time, nearly half of respondent companies (45%) either are in the middle of restructuring (39%) or are planning to restructure (6%). In South Africa, 41% are busy restructuring, while the same number do not have any plans to do so in the next 18 months.

Human capital leader for Deloitte South Africa, Werner Nieuwoudt, concurs that organisational design is an important focus for organisations to become more agile and customer-focused, but he is concerned that few know how to achieve this goal. “Most South African respondents feel that they are weakest at creating cross-functional teams and only 15% believe that the company they work for is ready to effectively redesign itself.”

Culture

Notably, 82% of executives globally believe culture is a potential competitive advantage, while only 69% of South African leaders feel the same way - 90% of South Africans rate culture as very important or important but only 47% is ready to deal with this issue.

“Culture, ‘the way things work around here’ and engagement, ‘how people feel about the way things work around here’, are rated as more important than leadership in South Africa, as they form the glue that holds organisations together. If the culture is not well developed in an organisation, then the network of teams cannot operate well together.

“The concept of creating unified organisational cultures in South African organisations becomes even more complex when we consider that South Africa has a diverse population and 11 official languages. These may result in cultural and employee engagement differences across provinces, which would ultimately also impact on organisational design.”

Leadership

Leadership is the second most important issue facing organisations worldwide and the fourth most important issue for South African survey respondents. The report shows that leadership models are changing, with companies dismantling the classic management pyramid.

The South African responses regarding leadership indicate that only 13% of organisations are making substantial investments in female leaders and 28% in top corporate leaders. In addition, 29% of respondents say they have no employee engagement programmes for millennials where only 31% globally do not have such programmes in place.

Learning

Nieuwoudt says the world of learning is another rapidly changing area for organisations. “While employees are keen to learn, grow and increase their income, the way in which they learn is changing, as is the amount of time they spend on learning. Traditional training is the least desirable way they want to learn. Employees are now looking for learning materials on demand, which they can consult when they need the information.” Only 8% of South African companies are excellent at the use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), where globally the 13% of companies are excellent at this.

Nearly one-quarter (22%) of South African respondents see learning as the primary driver of employee development. The majority (87%) rate learning as very important or important, while 59% report that they are not ready for it.

Design thinking

Importantly, a new trend in 2016 – design thinking – is shifting HR's focus from programmes and processes to designing solutions that drive employee satisfaction, productivity and enjoyment. Companies are now putting employees in charge of their own learning experience.

“As HR departments work to upgrade their skills, they should incorporate key design thinking concepts such as digital, mobile app, user experience design and behavioural economics. Our research indicates that companies that deliver the highest levels of value from HR are three times more likely to be using design thinking in their programmes,” concludes Nieuwoudt.

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