

Jobs of the future - what will they be and how do we prepare for them?

The fourth industrial revolution (4IR) is probably one of the most popular discussion points of the last few years. If you consider how 4IR or at least its imminent roll-out has disrupted education, business and industry sectors worldwide, we can safely assume that South Africa will also need to make provisions to do the same, but what will the future employment landscape look like?



“Massively different,” says Melissa van Aswegen, ETQA Manager at The Skills Development Corporation. “4IR technologies are transforming the way we live, work and govern ourselves and preparing for the future presents significant transformation opportunities,” she says.

In a symposium conducted at the University of Johannesburg last month, professor Edward Lorenz from the University of Cote d’Azur, says that tertiary institutions need to do more to bridge the skills gap in South Africa to prepare the future workforce. UJ themselves echoed this sentiment by ‘suggesting institutions broaden their scope of work-based training and government prioritise innovation’ with specific reference to technical and vocational training.

According to Trade-Schools.net - an online tool based in the USA that helps users locate colleges, universities and vocational schools that best meet their training needs, says the many future jobs will exist because of the scientific and technological efforts being made today. “Although this is great news from a global perspective, locally, both public and private sectors need to be doing significantly more now to connect potential students to skills development opportunities - especially in outer lying areas,” says van Aswegen.

Business incentives

“What’s helpful in South Africa, that many business owners do not know or fully understand, is that government is actively supporting this growth strategy by providing an opportunity for businesses to benefit through the skills development efforts they make within their organisation,” says Melissa. “Section 12H of the Income Tax Act that supports the Skills Development Act has been set up to improve the workforce’s access to education that can have a positive effect on productivity and quality of life, offers businesses an attractive rebate incentive to create an active learning environment, and can have a significant impact on a company’s B-BBEE score.”

In addition to these efforts The Skills Development Corporation is proactively introducing dynamic and interactive blended learning interfaces that deliver real-time feedback and qualification endorsement where students can learn in the classroom, as well as online. “Simply upskilling learners to be able to work in an e-learning environment is affording a large group of individuals training they may have been unable to pursue were it not for businesses undertaking skills development programmes,” observes van Aswegen.

“To prepare for the workforce of the future, we need to educate a new generation of forward-thinking individuals with forward thinking methods of learning,” she concludes.

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