

You don't need a degree to have a career in tech

By [Bontle Ramatsetse](#)

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Drone pilot, UX designer, cloud infrastructure engineer, AI specialist ... all of these are job titles that have come into existence in the last decade. It's astounding to think that the World Cup 2010 in South Africa happened before these jobs became some of the most in-demand roles in the world.



Bontle Ramatsetse, Village Tech MD

What is interesting to note is that many of the world's most in-demand jobs don't require university degrees. The world of work is rapidly evolving and so is the expectation of how young people acquire the skills for new jobs.

With LinkedIn reporting the job the most overall demand in the world is software engineer, we're clearly seeing how the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) is shifting the focus to technology. South Africa too is pinning its hopes of economic expansion on the prospects of a digital future that transforms industries and uplifts our youth. Facing the challenge of a youth unemployment rate of over 70%, the nation must change its message of traditional career expectations and embrace technology with its alternative options.

As a key example, President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed the 4IR commission to address the technological skills gap that could reduce youth unemployment and secure the country's economy. The pilot phase of a skills development program launched by the commission is training 1000 unemployed youth with ICT skills because the opportunities for growth and development are incredible within this sector.

Practical skills development

When exploring career pathways, what some may not know is that entry and growth in ICT isn't dependent on high school academic competency. Young school leavers can start gaining ICT skills with little or basic knowledge of computer systems because this is an industry that seeks out practical knowledge instead of grades. This is one sector that is willing to develop any determined young person, choosing practical skills development over theory and exams.

Growth and career advancement in the ICT sector, from entry level to senior roles, is largely determined by technical skills and experience acquired than the institution you graduated from. Job promotions are usually achieved by continuously expanding one's technical knowledge and experience, which is why the industry emphasises and supports continuous

learning through specialised competency certifications to keep up with evolving technology. Best of all, one's career trajectory isn't limited by location or years of loyal service. South Africa's technology specialists are in demand all around the world with lucrative salaries on offer. A growing trend is specialists working remotely in SA while employed by international companies.



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Degree - not a requirement

Finances are often the barrier to further education and training. Many parents and learners are unaware that a university degree is not a definitive entry requirement into the ICT industry, there are many opportunities & avenues of entry to gain in demand ICT skills & knowledge which can be a relief for families and learners who are constrained financially from accessing further education & training opportunities. Skills Development Service Providers like Village Tech offer courses that can serve as the building block or a bridge to a prosperous and exciting career within ICT. With just an accredited certification as a foundation, young people can still find meaningful employment and entry into the sector. Technology is ever evolving which presents many more opportunities for career growth and further learning opportunities with additional courses or specialised IT training certifications while earning an income.

All industries are seeing the impact of greater dependence on technology. So, in the very near future, understanding and being able to work with technology could trump holding a university degree. ICT courses are far more affordable, require less time investment and impart skills for immediate employability – an asset for any young person.

Opening doors

For many system administrators, software developers or cyber security specialists, the journey into their role began with a course or two. Now, these individuals can find themselves working in various industries, from mining to pharmaceuticals, and are using their acumen to ensure better online banking experiences, creating education apps for children, or maintaining the networks large corporations.

What young people, parents and educators must know is technology training opens doors. Ultimately, all young people seeking a career in virtually any field benefit from some technology skills in their career development. We're building a new world and it's important to change our post-high school education expectations for the better.

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