

Students and learners need to be agile to succeed in unprecedented times

By [Ralph Speirs](#)

14 May 2020

These are unprecedented times, and a great deal of agility is required for such times. The Covid-19 pandemic is happening to everyone, everywhere, which means all of us need to figure out a new way of living.



© Jan Mk – [123RF.com](#)

Various professionals, entrepreneurs and businesses have had to figure out quickly how to work efficiently from home. Learners and students are no different, schools and universities have had to use online communication tools to keep learning and development alive, and some parents have had to formulate routines which include home-schooling while working from home. Tools such as Zoom, MS Teams, WhatsApp and other online platforms have been at the forefront of keeping the economic and education wheel turning during these times.

This has been true for this year's JSE Investment Challenge participants as well. Never before, in the nearly five decades the challenge has existed, has it been presented with such an obstacle, or perhaps an opportunity disguised as an obstacle.

New set of obstacles

This year's participants are experiencing the challenge a little differently due to the restrictions implemented as a result of Covid-19 which include social distancing as part of the President's call to action for the nation to flatten the curve and reduce the spread of the virus. The opportunity in this is it allows all participants more time to better research their trading decisions.

The markets, as with everything else, are also going through unprecedented times which provides participants with the opportunity to learn which sectors are best to invest in during this time.

There is no doubt though, that these young people, largely made up of the Generation Z (Gen Z) age group (born between 1995 and 2010) are up for the task. They have shown a number of qualities, including their use of technology, which ranks higher than any other generation. Over the course of the challenge, participants have proven to be resilient, determined and creative, and this should only fuel such qualities in the group.

Everyone has had to use online communication at this time of social distancing, whether to communicate with loved ones, colleagues or peers. And herein lies a winning formula for participants who no longer have the leisure of face-to-face strategy sessions. Chatrooms, instant messaging platforms and phone calls will prove worthwhile devices for strategic and mentorship meetings.

Assistance

While participants navigate these tools, mentors and the JSE Investment Challenge Team are also available online and ready to assist where needed. Mentors are attending training webinars so that they can better support participants remotely during the lockdown. Add to this, live social media Q&A sessions kicked off on Facebook last month where participants shared best practices and experiences with those who tuned in. School participants can expect another session on 14 May at 2pm, while higher education participants have a session scheduled for 28 May at 2pm.

Teachers are also being trained to further assist participants to achieve their challenge goals. All stakeholders necessary for the success of the teams and participants have been considered and we continue to insure all are adequately equipped to help the challenge proceed with little to no disruption.

The challenge

The challenge, which draws school learners and university students with an interest in investment and stock markets, is in its 47th year. Over the decades the initiative has come to be a highly regarded programme that introduces the country's youth to investing and the stock exchange.

Last year the challenge attracted more than 23,000 school learners and university students.

The JSE Investment Challenge runs from March to September each year and impacts more than just the lives of the young people who participate. The learners and students who participate spread the message of investing throughout their communities.

The challenge takes the form of a simulator where each team of four learners or students from the same school or institution are given a virtual sum of R1 million. With this virtual amount the teams trade on the stock market and invest in actual JSE-listed shares over a six-month period.

Participation is open to school learners between grades 8 and 12 as well as students from higher learning institutions. The various teams compete with other teams from schools, and institutions, countrywide. There are prizes to be won monthly. There are also annual prizes for top performing teams, schools, teachers.

The teams that win in the JSE Investment Challenge receive prize money in the form of an ETF investment account for each team member while the top performing university team wins a trip to an international stock exchange. Registration has been extended and teams who have an interest in this year's challenge can add their names by entering on: <http://schools.jse.co.za>.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ralph Speirs, CSI Officer at the JSE

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>