

How creativity can help students create flexible careers

What do employers really want when they ask you questions about your ability to think laterally? In today's competitive marketplace, the need to continuously innovate is integral and lateral thinkers are more valued than ever before. With creativity and innovative thinking both fitting in the lateral thinking cap, it's important to note how many fields now require this kind of expertise from young professionals in order to arrive at ideas that promote development to feed the continuous cycle of business growth.

By [Samantha van Zyl](#) 8 Dec 2016



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Your future depends on them

According to the Afrillennial research report by Student Village, South African youth's career aspirations, needs, attitudes and knowledge of new technologies will continue to define the culture of our workplace. They will shape our work environment, ethics and practices for years to come.

More increasingly, as tech disruption becomes a threat to certain professions and new career opportunities arise, a need for creativity has grown in importance when looking for new employees. Adaptability and fast learning are only some of the benefits of being able to think laterally, and as a potential hire, these traits are becoming more of a commodity as the pace of change increases in the workplace.

Creative students stand out with their unconventional way of thinking and are equipped early on to become problem solvers in the future world of work. Promoting creativity not only prepares students for adaptability change, but a flexible career. Imagine having an employee in IT that also specialises in digital marketing and animation. Sounds like a problem solver of the future? The reality today is that few people in creative roles stick to a single role or industry and find themselves developing a variety of disciplines, a career path many companies could benefit from in terms of retention. Moving from one department to the next has, for this reason, also become more commonplace and acceptable than in the past.

Secure your pipeline of talent

Supporting a culture that celebrates ideas and respects uniqueness, from university level to the ranks of business, will open up possibilities for South Africa to develop solutions for future challenges and also keep up with global developments. SA's youth have an inherent hunger to know more about other countries, not just for the sake of escaping their reality, but bringing expertise and insights home and developing SA.

In this case, lateral thinkers wouldn't function in an isolated field and could find themselves being helpful across various industries. Ultimately, encouraging the creative career development of the youth will ensure that a new generation of talented and dynamic thinkers are incorporated into South African businesses on broader industry scale, and contribute valuably towards our country's economic development.

Hanging in the balance

If you've previously thought of lateral thinking as a creativity reserve for artsy, free spirited youth who have yet to find out what businesses look for in the real world, think again. Businesses have lived on the resourcefulness of these creative people for centuries. Lateral thinking is not the first idea that makes you go, "Am I crazy or can this idea actually work?" It's the action that comes after that big idea that leads to the birth of great concepts, technological innovation and evolution that will continue to shape our future. Lateral thinkers started the business, they will take the business forward and they will be the business's future.

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