



OCTOBER 2020

Clamping down on SA's economic problems

Covid-19: How are your business tactics doing?

Productivity now key for SA

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“Message and overview by Prof Jan van Romburgh,
acing director of the NWU Business School.”

Please click on the play button.

During the course of 2020, the NWU Business School has embarked on a brand new initiative where academics, political and business leaders, researchers and postgraduate students had the opportunity to join a virtual, online table and identified the most important economic issues in South Africa.

The NWU Business School “Think Tank” recently held its fifth successful session – to much interest from various business and political stakeholders. From a humble beginning, the Think Tank grew to a platform where it already saw more than 400 individuals participating in these sessions.

According to Prof Jan van Romburgh, acting director of the NWU Business School, the Think Tank experienced personal views and suggestions from high profile individuals who took part in guest addresses and open discussions. This included the likes of:

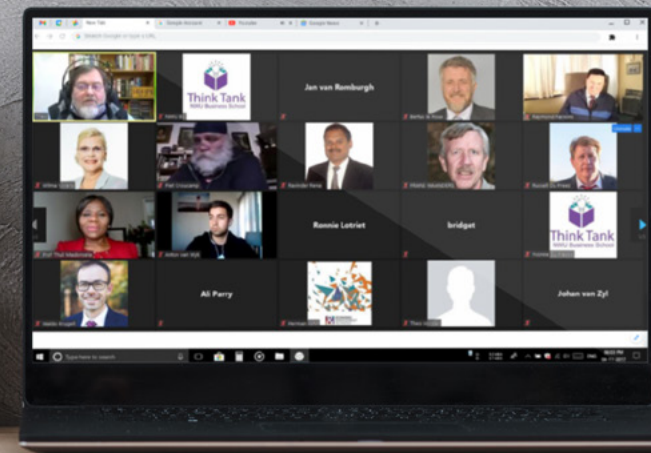
- Prof Thuli (former Public Protector)
- Prof Job Mokgoro
- Prof Job Mokgoro (Premier of the Northwest Province),
- Dr Azar Jamine (Economist)
- Mr Theo Vorster (Investment manager),
- Mr Dawie Roodt (Economist),
- Mr Francois Strydom (CEO of Senwes),
- Mr Wandile Sihlobo (Agbiz Head Economist)
- Mr Popo Molefe (Former Premier of NW Province)
- Adv Dali Mpofu (lawyer and politician)
- Ms Pauli van Wyk (Investigative journalist)
- Prof Wiseman Nkuhlu (Chancellor of the University of Pretoria)
- Prof Raymond Parsons (Economist)
- Mr Ryk van Niekerk (Managing editor - Moneyweb)

In future, the NWU Business School will embark on more such Think Tank initiatives. “We have an obligation towards stimulating the South African economy with our wide range of expertise and by creating possible solutions. This initiative will also take the profile and reputation of the NWU Business School to the next level,” Prof van Romburgh says.

Clamping down on SA's economic problems



Think Tank
NWU Business School



New exciting **engagement initiative** with our **alumni**



Some 95 alumni of the NWU Business School attended the virtual get-together.
Mr Alistair Mokoena, director of Google South Africa, was the guest speaker.

The NWU Business School recently embarked on a new initiative where alumni were invited to a first ever virtual get-together.

Some 95 alumni attended the event where we hosted Mr Alistair Mokoena, the current director of Google South Africa. He shared valuable knowledge about lifelong learning and one's quest

to become more. During his address on the topic of "academic journey vs industrial success", he spoke about his life journey, his achievements and the importance of proper education to take you to places where you have not even dreamt of.

According to Prof Jan van Romburgh, acting director of the NWU Business

School, the feedback from attending alumni were very positive. "Many alumni congratulated us with this initiative. We can be our alumni's partners in life-long learning and we look forward to engage with them again soon."

Keep a close eye on our Facebook page for more exciting events and course offerings.

As we continue to celebrate our alumni, we present to you, Heinrich Strydom – the current CEO of the Hollywoodbets Dolphins Cricket franchise and KZN Cricket Union, based in Durban.

Heinrich is a qualified chartered accountant CA(SA). His educational background includes five degrees of which an MBA completed at the North-West University Business School in 2018. He also obtained his Master's degree in South African and International Tax from the North-West University in 2007.

He has 12 years of leadership experience as chief executive officer, general manager and financial manager for various cricket affiliates and franchises, with the highlights being appointed as the youngest chief executive officer of a cricket franchise in 2017 at the Dolphins at the age of 34, and prior to that, as the youngest chief executive officer of an affiliate in the history of South African Cricket at the age of 29 at North West Cricket. The list does not stop there, as he was also the youngest general manager of a South African cricket franchise at the Lions.

He is a focused, dedicated and hardworking person who believes in a culture of lifelong learning, as part of a relentless pursuit of excellence. Some of his strengths include sound leadership, determination and excellent problem-solving skills, while he is also an ambitious and result-oriented team player.

As a CEO/general manager, he has been part of teams that have won 11 trophies in various formats at the highest level of South African cricket and produced more than 20 players who have represented the Proteas in both the male and female national teams. These incredible on-field achievements have been the result of sound business principles incorporated beyond the boundary.

An illustration of the good work that has been conducted under his watch, is the fact that the various affiliates under his management have won 18 incentive awards as part of the CSA Operational model that was implemented six years ago.

"I strongly recommend doing an MBA at the NWU Business School as I believe it helped to develop me into a more holistic leader with improved management skills. The content, presenters and support systems are world-class and I will be forever grateful for the value that it has added to my life," Strydom says.

His secret to success? "Live full out. Be brilliant at your work. Look after your health. Take positive risks to grow into your greatness. Love like there is no tomorrow. Respect all people. And enjoy every moment," he concludes.

Extraordinary Alumni - Heinrich Strydom



Professor Kiveshni Naidoo, chairperson of the Academic Exco, the academic director of the Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA) and a member of HONORIS united universities with partners in Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritius.

She holds a PhD from the North-West University and a professorship from the Novosibirsk State University of Economics and Management (NSEUM) in Russia. Her areas of specialisation are human resource management, leadership and stress management. Both her master's and PhD degrees focused on the topic of stress management.

Professor Naidoo had real humble beginnings and started her academic career in the further education and training (FET) sector and later moved into higher education and training (HET) for the past 15 years. During her tenure, she has been an academic, researcher, mentor, leader and conducted study tours with MBA students

focusing on the BRIC countries.

In her role within academic leadership at MANCOSA, she aimed at bringing about changes in curriculum, innovations, teaching and learning for impact and providing leadership to both the academic and research teams. Of particular interest was the focus on the impact of artificial intelligence and the dawn of the fourth industrial revolution in higher education.

Professor Naidoo is extremely passionate about research and has published several scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals in the UK, Canada, USA and Russia. Her scholarly interests also focus on women in management and leadership, education and training, strategy and stress management. Several of her papers have also been presented at overseas conferences over the past few years. She also serves as a supervisor and external examiner for several universities within South Africa. Prof Naidoo also serves on the colloquium panel for PhD students

across universities.

Her passion is the empowerment of women," The quote that inspires her:

"The empowered woman is powerful beyond measure and beautiful beyond description."

Steve Maraboli.

And yes, this can be achieved through education.



Great Alumni - Professor Kiveshni Naidoo



Academic journal publications



Two researchers affiliated with the NWU Business School have recently published articles in academic journals.

Prof Anet Smit completed her PhD in Financial Accounting on the financing of franchises. Previously she was a lecturer in Financial Accounting, but has since become interested in the field of Management Accounting. For the past number of years she has been lecturing Management Accounting within the MBA programme and in a variety of executive education programs. She has published articles in the field of sustainability, disclosure, Environmental Management Accounting (EMA) and integrated reporting.

Her most recent article, published in the Journal of Humanities, is titled:

“Analysing the contributory role of the accounting profession to save our planet”.

As an extraordinary professor of the NWU Business School, Benon C. Basheka is a Professor of the Public Administration and Management and the current Vice Chancellor of Uganda Technology and Management University in Uganda. He also founded Radix Management Consulting in 2006; a management consultancy firm headquartered in Kampala, Uganda where he serves as the CEO and Managing Director.

His article titled: “COVID 19: Supply Chain Practices, Challenges and Lessons Learnt: Ugandan Perspective” was recently published.

Creating hope, one module at a time



Patch Adams, an American physician and social activist, once said: “We can never get a recreation of community and heal our society without giving our citizens a sense of belonging.” Now, perhaps more than ever, South Africa is in dire need of this.

During 2013, Dr Johan Jordaan, a senior lecturer and newly appointed programme leader for the MBA qualification at the North-West University (NWU) Business School, accidentally stumbled onto service learning as a teaching methodology. Since then, his group assignments for the MBA Operations Management class have entailed that students have to identify a community organisation and apply what they learn in class to help that particular organisation. This has brought him to adopt a mixture of constructivism and connectivism as epistemology, as demonstrated in the situational learning theory.

“I strongly believe that the soft skills that an MBA graduate needs to succeed are not only taught in class, but are also acquired in group work, where students actively engage with the subject content.

The Brain Power Troopers first-year MBA study group chose a welfare organisation, the SAVF Carletonville, as their group project and decided to build a small hydroponics plant to help the

organisation on its way to becoming self-sufficient with respect to their food needs. The SAVF runs various welfare projects, including a soup kitchen, a transit centre for children, and poverty relief schemes.

The students did not let the Covid-19 lockdown stop them, and started working as soon as they could get authorisation to do so. They completed the project two months after the end of the semester, which shows that this was not just done for marks, but for a greater purpose, as well.

The handover function was recently held, where students showcased how they had used every single topic that had been taught in the module during the project. The gratitude of the organisation was moving, and Dr Jordaan became painfully aware that their needs could easily be addressed if other MBA modules also engage in these kinds of initiatives.

“The benefits to our MBA students were not only that they could experience operations management in action, but mostly the ways in which the project touched the study group members – not just their attitude towards community involvement, but also how their soft skills (problem-solving, decision-making, communication, leadership, teamwork and cultural awareness) developed during the project.”

“To me, these kinds of projects are the ideal combination of teaching and learning, research and community engagement, and developing graduate attributes to keep our MBA relevant within the African context,” Dr Jordaan concludes.



COVID-19: How is your business tactics doing?

by Prof Ronnie Lotriet, MBA Lecturer-Strategic Management

To be successful in any competitive industry, one needs to do things differently. The worldwide COVID-19 outbreak had a devastating effect on businesses, big and small. With the end not nearly in sight, businesses are trying their level best to take their operations back to the new normal level, and more. Now is the time for businesses to focus on the absolute essential aspects and to cut out all the clutter – restructuring if you may.

The purpose of good strategy is to limit surprises so that durable long-term results can be achieved. What is your “emergency” strategy in this regard – i.e. how do you turn around your business activities to the proverbial “next level”? Is it a case of a strategy of unconventional policies and procedures?

Take commodity trading as an example – the much depreciated exchange rate creates havoc for the agri-businesses, while producers would like to sell as much against the higher price levels. What will happen with the contracts in this regard, is an open question. Back-office and other support staff are working from home, but the extra communication channels cause non-timely responses on enquiries, the “Internet of Things” is not always as fast and misunderstandings are challenging work relationships, physical borders have been closed, which implies a more self-sufficient South African economy. Read: import substitution by becoming productive and efficient manufacturers again.

Volatility also has a knock-on effect on the variation of business margins that put pressure on organisations’ cashflows. Even with much lower rates of interest and more grant payments, demand remains sluggish as people are uncertain and anxious to spend their money right now. And this has a ripple effect on value chains all over the show – downstream and upstream. If one has a diversified business portfolio, how do you

minimise the knock-on effect on the other entities in the supply chain?

With sound strategy comes good tactics, and good tactics create surprises to the competitive incumbents in the industry. Tactics trade in the unexpected! Suddenly, e-contracts are developed much faster than initially planned. In the legal services industry, an attorney developed a virtual app that assists in legal consultations. Indeed, necessity is the mother of all inventions! Never has the challenge been to be more innovative, than right now. COVID-19 forces most industry players to adapt procedures and systems to comply with all the associated rules and government regulations. Typical of the exogenous shocks on the business landscape – one can only react to it.

Once again – is your business a leader or a follower in this COVID environment, a self-starter or a kick-starter? Think about basic business issues that are of significant concern – how do you react to shorter trading hours, to the restriction of the number of feet at any time through your premises, how do you focus on sell-on, to certain shortages because of supply side constraints such as a ban on the importation of chemicals, to possible trends of staff being either less productive or not productive at all, escalating operational costs directly linked to the COVID regulation (the spending on masks, permits, sanitiser, thermometers and the lot!) and in the meanwhile ESKOM's provision of electricity is getting unstable (again)!

But having said this, there are always alternatives or opportunities. Start by prioritising expenses and have a firm hand on any money wasting. Marketing strategy changes by becoming more digital (online social platforms), e-trade, running a “specials” campaign to enhance turnover, “Zoom”-type meetings becoming more productive than the traditional ones, system developments are making very sure that you know what your customer really needs.

Being consumer-friendly and much more consumer focused than ever before is certainly a good tactic. Businesses need to acknowledge whether they are first in the mind of the market that they serve? Therefore, what is your “mind share”? And, if you are not very sure whether you have a strategic advantage in a competitive industry, tactical brilliance is required – you really need to revisit and polish your tactics! This obviously needs to be appropriate to the context and requires sound judgement. And in the current scenario, those businesses most compatible to change will grow to the next level.

It is awesome to see so many entrepreneurs coming to the fore after seeing gaps in this “new” market and almost daily we hear and see new product and service developments. This begs the question: Is your organisation and its intellectual capital a leader or a laggard when it comes to truly “thinking out of the box” or even as Lego remarked many years ago when they had to change their strategy – even thinking ‘alongside the box’?

It was John von Neumann who once said that “play not to lose, instead of playing to win” – meaning to choose the option where you will have the minimum chance of losing the maximum. But to be able to achieve this, you need to know what the real strategic (competitive) advantage of your business is – is it your location, your service levels, your pricing approach, your sales force, your management acumen, etc.? This is sometimes harder to identify and not that obvious. This feature over time can lead to the annihilation of incumbents when all else is equal.

The main goal right now is to ensure that the economy, its industries and individual businesses keep functioning at the highest possible level. We need to keep in mind that the market narrative is basically how people behave – from both the supply and the demand side. Both current and future levels of economic activities are vitally important to all of us. It requires a massive injection of liquidity as soon as possible into the economic levers of South Africa – similar to what America has done when the terrorist attack happened to the twin-towers after 9/11.

However, the strategic tactics of business are simply put ones that depend totally on execution... This requires an accountable leadership with a human side to it!

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Assisting government with supply chain issues

The African Institute for Supply Chain Research (AISCR) is a leading Pan African research institute that conducts innovative research on supply chain management to support continental-wide sustainable development and inclusive growth. With the North-West University Business School being a tertiary member of AISCR since 2019, the result leads to mutual benefits in terms of research opportunities, funding, gaining of expertise and identification of projects – all with the aim of improving and standardising supply chain practices through research.

We are proud of the NWU Business School's Prof Jan Meyer, who was tasked in 2019, and more recently in 2020, to being the facilitator of the programme on government practices in 2020. This recent summit focused on the topic of Supply chain management in times of Covid-19: Challenges and lessons learnt.

In attendance and as speakers at this event were the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable Solomon Lechesa Tsenoli and four of the provincial Pan African Congress chairs, including the chairman of the Association of Public Accounts Committees

(APAC), the honourable JJ Skosana. During the summit, much focus was placed on the National Government's position on supply chain matters, but also specifically alluding to the personal protection equipment fiasco.

International speakers included guests from Kenya, Uganda and Ghana. These speakers all shared their countries' perspectives on the need for an improved, flexible and dynamic supply chain and appropriate management thereof.





Joining hands with business leaders to drive our economy

The North-West University's Business School recently amplified its initiative to share expertise even more, by reaching out to the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce in the North West Province (NAFCOC). This followed after discussions between the NWU and NAFCOC concluded that it was necessary to utilise the NWU's expertise to develop and conduct suitable capacity building programmes for NAFCOC members.

The NWU will play a vital role in addressing capacity challenges associated with small and micro-enterprises and the reliability of SME data in the North West Province. Among other things, this will be done by offering NAFCOC members a subsidised enrolment into a range of valuable, business-oriented short courses.

According to the Business School's acting director, Prof Jan van Romburgh, the signing of the cooperation agreement is another step in the right direction to empower and stimulate the South African economy. "We are proud to collaborate with NAFCOC in order to shape executive minds in Africa."

The NWU's deputy vice chancellor, Prof Robert Balfour, also thanked NAFCOC for reaching

out to the NWU Business School and said such joint ventures are of imperatively importance for the province. "Now, more than ever, we need these kind of collaborations in order to relieve the economic damages caused by Covid-19. We value your commitment and look forward to joining hands with you," Prof Balfour said.

The cooperation between the two parties also provides opportunities to identify research projects in order to increase community exposure for the benefit of both NAFCOC and the NWU.

Edgar Koloi, president of NAFCOC, said in their pursuit of a renewed vision, they want to partner with stakeholders to embark on programmes that will help small business to gradually become meaningful participants in the mainstream economy. "Our strategic programmes focus on the revival of small to medium-scale enterprises in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, green energy and technology innovation. I would like to thank the NWU Business School for its enthusiasm and we look forward to this collaboration," Koloi said.

A ceremonial signing of the agreement took place in Potchefstroom, where after role players from both parties enjoyed a social lunch to discuss future plans and engagement.

Productivity now key for SA

The North-West University Business School's Professor Raymond Parsons has recently been invited by Productivity SA to give his expert economic opinion during a productivity and competitiveness seminar with the aim of assisting South Africa to move out its current economic doldrums.

During his address, Prof Parsons said when we look at the big economic picture, we need to understand that the battle for productivity growth is never won – it is an ongoing challenge – and must now be faced in SA more than ever before. “We should also recall that nothing is permanent about economic gains – they can be won or lost within a few years. In a nutshell, if I had to sum up in one word the gap between SA's undoubted growth potential, on the one hand, and its poor economic performance on the other, it would be “productivity”. We therefore just need at the outset to remind ourselves, as the Chairman has also emphasised, that productivity gains in their various facets are crucial to the achievement of socio-economic goals such as:

- improving standards of living
- generating higher economic growth
- creating gainful employment

- ensuring internal and external competition
- curbing inflation

These are, of course, the ideal outcomes,” he said.

Prof Parsons' basic message was, indeed, that productivity is now even more important than it was before Covid-19. “A large part of SA's current economic problems has arisen because the country has in recent years drifted too far away from fundamental concepts like productivity. It needs to find its way back. Only by better promoting higher productivity will the true economic potential of SA be realised and the necessary job-rich growth achieved. There is still the potential to make a difference.

We now nonetheless have a number of new policy opportunities in the near future where we can vigorously inject productivity concerns back into decision-making processes in both the public and private sectors. Policy-makers may be more amenable to these inputs. Interestingly, the National Treasury's 2019 Growth Plan resonates with much of what we want here today, i.e.:

- inclusive growth
- economic transformation

- competitiveness

Prof Parsons concluded with a quotation from the iconic management guru, Peter Drucker, who said: “Growth that adds volume without improving productivity is fat. Growth that diminishes productivity is cancer.”

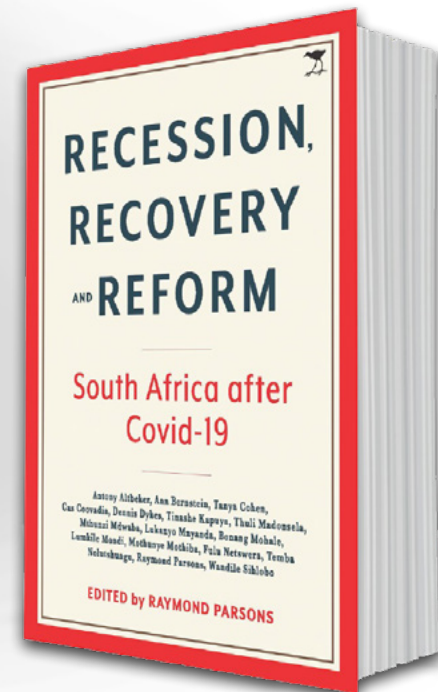
“If we broadly follow that mantra at a practical level, we can give the SA economy the flexibility and adaptability it needs to successfully manage the changes it requires to create a better life for all in the years ahead,” Prof Parsons said.



Yet another title for Prof Parsons!

Prof Raymond Parsons from the North-West University Business School recently launched yet another book. *Recession, Recovery and Reform: South Africa after Covid-19* is a must-read for those who are concerned about South Africa's well-being in these deeply uncertain times, and who are willing to believe that a better future is still within our grasp if we make the right choices.

[Click on the image to the left for more details.](#)



We deliver well-rounded students!

As part of the recent virtual MBA Study School, the NWU Business School has invited a guest lecturer to talk to students about the importance of one's appearance and being well presented when attempting to enter the labour market.

Prof Ronnie Lotriet, of the NWU Business School, had a discussion with Sandra Taljaard from Style Challenge International, where she shared a few tips. According to Prof Lotriet, this is yet another initiative where the MBA programme offers more than just theoretical knowledge. This, in an effort to present well-rounded students to the market.

See the video by clicking on the image to the right.





Photos: Researchers and academics from the NWU Business School were once again involved in Thinking Fusion Africa's recent Leadership Academy for the Agriculture sector, held in Potchefstroom.

areas of strategy and culture, development and research. Their models and frameworks embrace science, while challenging conventional thinking.

Their flagship programme, called "Leading" develops the leadership capacity of senior leaders individually and as a team. It has a strong strategic focus and a pace that suits the profile of the senior leaders. The content is science-based and customised to address the complexity within which senior leaders need to lead during times of turbulence. The impact across the organisation during the programme is significant and noticeable because senior leaders immediately engage and use their teams as learning 'laboratories'.

Their clients represent a variety of industries and sectors, which include agriculture and agri-industrial, construction, finance and banking, government and SEOs, healthcare, higher education, manufacturing, media, mining, oil, professional and consulting services, technology and telecommunication and transport and logistics.

Should you be interested in the wide range of courses that Thinking Fusion Africa offers, make sure to get in contact with them. Visit www.thinkingfusion.com or phone 011 955 1003 for more information.

Empowering others with extended skills training

Over the past seven years, academics from the North-West University's Business School have been closely involved with Thinking Fusion AFRICA, a company that specialises in the offering of various short courses. The NWU Business School's role, among other things, is to certify the quality

of the academic quality presented in these courses.

Thinking Fusion designs and delivers packaged as well as customised programmes and processes using their recognised intellectual property in the

Short Learning Programme in Small Business Consultancy

The NWU Business School together with the Small Business Advisory Bureau, offer a SMALL BUSINESS CONSULTANCY SHORT COURSE on an e-learning format to equip potential Small Business Consultants.

Potential Small Business Consultants will acquire a foundation in:

- * management skills,
- * marketing skills,
- * human resource skills,
- * financial skills,
- * financial statements analysis and interpretation,
- * determining selling price of a business

and much more in the small business industry.

The course can be completed at own pace, but should be conferred within 6 months, at a subsidised cost of R6000. Candidates will receive mentoring by experienced consultants in the execution of a management consultation. Visit this link for the enquiry form: <https://zfrmz.com/gwAqDstcTCG7itm0VQdw>





Why an MBA, you ask?

Almost nine out of 10 MBA graduates (88%) agree that they have gained substantially more skills to help them do business better as a result of completing the MBA. A further 81% agree that the skills they learned during their MBA have helped them be more mentally resilient, according to new research from the Association of MBAs (AMBA) and the Business Graduate Association (BGA).

The study, polling 752 current MBA students and 2 110 MBA graduates as part of AMBA and BGA's International MBA Survey, also found that almost two thirds of MBA graduates have found themselves in their dream role within just six months of completing an MBA programme from an AMBA-accredited business school.

Almost three quarters (74%) believe they have been able to develop all the business-related skills they wanted as a result of completing the qualification.

Key findings

- The largest proportions of MBA graduates find the role they want within six months of completing an MBA. Significantly, almost two thirds of all participants said they were either in the job they wanted before starting their MBA, while studying, or within six months of completing the qualification.
- The most popular reasons for completing an MBA are, 'to acquire more skills and

knowledge about the business world' (cited by 70% of graduate survey respondents); 'to expand my area of expertise' (67%); and 'to get a broader understanding of how business should be managed' (50%).

- 71% of graduates were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the impact their MBA has had on their careers to date.
- 68% of MBA graduates see themselves as being more confident on completion of their MBA; and 62% perceived themselves to be better at solving problems. A further 58% thought they were better prepared to operate in highly competitive environments; and 56% believe themselves to be better at dealing with people in a professional capacity.
- Recent graduates are more concerned with ethical business, compared to the MBAs of the 1990s and pre-1990s. Among those who graduated less than a year before completing the survey, 21% said they had completed an MBA to learn about developing a sustainable business, and 13% said they had completed the MBA to learn how to develop an ethically sound business. The equivalent figures among those who graduated 21 or more years ago are 7% and 6%, respectively.

With a deterministic fixed mind set, one tends to think that only a privileged few are born to this world to become leaders and the rest were destined to be followers. Nothing can be further from the truth – leaders are made, they develop and grow to become leaders eventually.

We idolize great leaders of our time and measure or rate them with a yardstick of power and influence. So it all seems on the surface that leadership is an external quality or trait. Lolly Daskal, a well-known leadership guru and founder of “Lead from within”, states that inspirational leadership is actually an internal quality and that everyone of us has the inherent potential to become a leader.

So then, what differentiates individuals to become leaders eventually? The answer lies in self-awareness – if you know exactly who you are, what you stand for and what you are willing to sacrifice for, you will most likely be comfortable to lead others. That internal compass brings a clear sense of direction, presents a leader’s calm in the storm, drives him to do the right thing and not the easy thing, causes him to stand on his own while others go with the flow. As Daskal states it – “Leaders are not born, they are made by the collective of their values, virtues, principles and character – leading from within”.

The North-West University Business School’s MBA students are already serving as growing leaders in their organisations or aspiring to fill those roles in the near future. As a leadership

coach I feel privileged to be part of some of their journeys towards these ideals. The leadership coaching engagements lends itself ideally for deliberate immersive thinking opportunities about self-awareness.

During such a facilitated discussion the individual is required to not only think about his values, virtues and principles but also to translate those into actions towards self-discovery. By defining related goals, devising plans to achieve those and then executing over the duration of the coaching engagement, supports an individual in this self-awareness journey. Erik Kruger, motivational speaker, author, coach and founder of “The Mental Performance Lab” states that leaders find themselves at times in a state of survival, just ticking over – mainly due to multiple distractions and complexity they are confronted with on a daily basis. He suggests that a leader can subconsciously become “Harmless” in facing challenges in this state of overwhelm.

So how do you regain the mental edge and become “Dangerous” again? Erik confirms that the answer mainly lies in “Knowing thyself” – to be acutely aware of your values, virtues, principles, character and how these impact your thinking. This enables a leader to immediately know what really matters in a specific scenario, accelerate and enhance his ability to decide on the right thing instead of the popular thing, to firmly stand his ground, to maintain an inner calm in the face of chaos, to inspire others to walk a journey with him!

Leadership and self-awareness

by John Skinner, MBA leadership coach



Tips for avoiding loneliness when working from home

by The Business Graduate Association

Loneliness should not be brushed off as a minor concern in the modern workplace. From joining an online community to lunchtime walks, these pieces of advice are aimed at preventing mental and physical health issues brought on by remote working.

This year, remote working has become the norm. While some have relished lounging in their back gardens with minimal distractions, parents have swatted children away from webcams and 20% of remote workers say they struggle with loneliness, according to a 2020 report from Buffer and AngelList.

As an introvert, I thought I would relish being home alone when I went freelance in 2018. After more than 10 years of working in teams, I was overjoyed to set up a business in my front room. I felt more balanced, relaxed and in control of my moods. However, after a year or so, I started to realise that I was not always flourishing in my solitude.

Being socially disconnected can have a serious impact on your mental and physical health, increase your risk of high blood pressure and inflammation, increase stress, and even make you more aggressive. This is why loneliness should not

be brushed off as a minor concern in the modern workplace. Here are my tips on how to avoid loneliness when working from home.

1. Be proactive

Do not wait until you feel loneliness descend before taking action. Schedule in social time with friends and family just as ruthlessly as you plan in work meetings and deadlines. Having these interactions as part of your self-care plan is essential, so make sure they are non-negotiable. Whenever you do catch up with friends, take time to acknowledge the positive impact it has on your mood in that very moment and use that as a reminder to prioritise it in the future.

2. Check in with your friends

I have a close-knit group of friends who, like me, are all freelancers. I know that they are all busy and stressed (also like me), so I make a conscious effort to check in on them every day. I am not one for Zoom calls unless they are completely necessary, so I prefer to send voice notes on WhatsApp to say hello. I find that ending a little audio gift to a mate saying 'good morning' and offering a pep talk is a nice way to start the day and feel connected to others.

3. Maximise your lunch hour

There may not be much scope for socialising when you are sitting at your desk, but you can banish the blues at lunch time. Instead of migrating to the sofa for a Netflix session, go for a walk with a friend. Walking and talking at the same time have proven to be an incredible mental health tool because the forward-facing momentum encourages honest conversation. Not to mention all that glorious vitamin D that can play a pivotal role in helping depression.

4. Join an online community

Working in an office means that you are surrounded by people who understand your industry. On the flipside, remote working can leave you feeling isolated and without anyone to bounce ideas off. Online communities can plug this gap and provide you with a space to talk about work, vent and network with like-minded individuals. You can join LinkedIn groups (take a look at these suggestions aimed at entrepreneurs, for example) or search for industry groups on Facebook.



We're going big!

The NWU Business School is excited to share with you that brand-new billboards have been erected in Klerksdorp, Mahikeng, Kimberley, Bloemfontein and Vaal. These are MASSIVE billboards. The billboard in Bloemfontein is 12m high x 25m wide and is erected against the wall of the Loch Logan Waterfront. The billboards in Klerksdorp and Kimberley are 4m high x 16m wide across the N12 Highway.



Flying our flag internationally



Prof Ravinder Rena, a professor of Economics at the NWU Business School, is no unfamiliar name on the local and international arena. During the past years, he has been invited to be a keynote speaker and share his expert opinions to so many national and international conferences, that's it's actually strange that prof Rena hasn't lost count of them all. Not even the Covid-19 pandemic could bring a halt to his involvement in seminars and conferences, as these times paved the perfect opportunity for online, virtual involvement.

During the months of August to October, he flew the NWU Business School's flag very high with his participation in international conferences hosted from countries like Indonesia, Pakistan and India.

Some of the important conferences are listed below with their specific themes:

- Keynote speaker to speak on the "Building Institutions for Sustainable Development: Education, Economy, Research and Practice". An international virtual conference (via Zoom), jointly organized by the Yayasan Al Asyariah Mandar, Universitas Al Al Asyariah Mandar, Fakultas Agama Islam and Islamic Religious of Unasman and the Association of Islamic Economy Expert Region West Sulawesi, Polewali Mandar, Indonesia on 16 October 2020.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVKDxdRHwNI>

- Invited to be a judge and speaker to assess the literary works/poems of various students across the globe as part of the "Amity International Literature Festival 2020". It is an international literature festival, organized by the Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India during 15-17 October 2020.

<https://www.amity.edu/ailf/speaker.aspx>

- Invited to be a keynote speaker to speak on the Bharath Ratna and former President of India "Dr APJ Abdul Kalam: An Inspiration for Youth" on the eve of his 89th birthday and also World Student's Day Celebrations 2020.

<https://youtu.be/6WyBR7yntJQ>

- Invited to be a resource person and keynote speaker to speak on the "Global Business: Lessons from Pandemic", a global webinar,

organized by the Faculty of Management Studies, Sri Sri University Cuttack, Odisha on 12 October 2020.

- Invited to be a session chair of the 5th International Conference Business and Management Dynamics, on the theme of “Enhancing Africa’s Development and Competitiveness in the Digital Economy and Beyond”, organized by Cape Peninsula University of Technology and other Universities of Consortium.
- Invited to be a keynote speaker to speak on the “Higher Education Readiness towards Independent Learning Policies”. This was an international virtual conference, organized by the Indonesian Accounting Lecturers Association Aceh, Indonesia during 29-30 September 2020.

<https://youtu.be/7geYTVpedPc>

- Invited to be a keynote speaker to speak on the “Globalisation and Sustainable Development”, at the second international conference on Global Sustainable Development: Challenges and Solutions 2020, organized by Dadabhoy Institute of higher education, Karachi, Pakistan during 20-21 September 2020.
- Invited to be a keynote speaker for the international webinar “Atmanirbhar Bharat - Opportunities & Challenges” organised by the Government Vivekanand Post-Graduate College, Maihar, Satna District, Madhya Pradesh, India on 22 August 2020.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohD3fksPfvY&feature=youtu.be>

- Invited to be a guest speaker for the international webinar on “Opportunities & Challenges Post- Pandemic Economy and Human Life”, organised by the Shri Sai Baba Aadarash Mahavidyalaya, Post-Graduate College, Digma, Ambikapur, Sarguja District, (affiliated to Sant Gahira Guru University, Sarguja), Chhattisgarh, India and Indian Economic Association on 18 August 2020.
- Invited to be a guest speaker for the international virtual seminar on “Environmental Protection and Life Management in Present Scenario” organised by the Government Post-Graduate College, Bina (affiliated to Dr Harisingh Gour University, Sagar), Sagar District, Madhya Pradesh, India on 16 August 2020.

<https://youtu.be/cCZECukXqww>

- Invited to be a resource person and keynote speaker for the international webinar on “Impact of Covid-19 on Global Economy”, organized by the International Association for Academic and Corporate (IAAC), India. This was hosted on 12 August 2020.

<https://youtu.be/J6HGxdRY-Jo>

