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## The new skills that your future employer will be looking for

**By Dr Veronique Genniker, Director: Marang Education Trust in partnership with, Pearson South Africa**

The working world is changing faster than ever before, as companies adapt to a rapidly evolving market. An increasing number of essential tasks are being automated, businesses are going digital at an incredible pace, and the competition to stay ahead of the market has never been tougher. This is also forcing more businesses to rethink the kind of skills that they need in their organisations.

Dr Veronique Genniker, Trust Director at global education group Pearson South Africa, says that graduates should make sure that they have the relevant, work-readiness skills that will make potential employers take notice. "In addition to all the hard skills that you have learned during your studies, you should also cultivate the soft skills that employers value and need, in this rapidly changing world of work. It is imperative to have a growth mindset underpinned with a culture that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion to enable you to engage daily with complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management and emotional intelligence which are now highly sought after by employers. Having these skills shows potential employers that you are aware of the rapidly changing nature of work in the 21st century and capable of adding value to their organisations from day one."

Dr Genniker says that one of the best ways to start developing these skills before entering the working world is by taking part in initiatives that can build one's practical work experience and how to navigate your emotional growth. "In whatever industry that you choose to build your career, internships and practical work-readiness programmes can help to set you apart from other job-seekers. It is also important to look for initiatives by companies and other stakeholders that focus on developing future work skills. Businesses and educational institutions often work with schools and universities to get students involved in programmes that develop future-ready skills. Apply for many programmes that help students develop high-level critical thinking, future scenario building and innovation."

Lastly, she adds that students should never stop looking for opportunities to reskill. "The world is changing rapidly and – more than ever before – skilled professionals have to adapt if they want to remain relevant. This means that lifelong learning and skills development is going to be the norm for individuals who want to build sustainable careers. Embrace this growth mindset, diversity, equity and inclusive culture, learn as much as you can throughout your career and add to your skillset every day of your working life – do this and you'll go far, and most importantly even enjoy your job," Genniker concludes.

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