

## Preparing for Generation Z in the Manufacturing Sector

Governmental bodies and manufacturing stakeholders need to invest in Generation Z industrialists who are ultimately set to lead the continent's manufacturing sector.

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Johannesburg, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019;** Many critical manufacturing topics warrant priority attention from the sector's stakeholders, yet it seems some significant and hard-pressing issues remain overlooked. In effect, these matters prove just as much of an influence on the industry and in turn, the economy of a country. The **Manufacturing Indaba** is a one-of-a-kind conference that delves into such subjects, providing its attendees with a wealth of information they would never have otherwise considered, leaving them informed and better equipped to confront the challenges the industry inevitably presents. One of these unheeded illuminations is the impact of the upcoming Generation Z on the continent's manufacturing industry and strategies on incorporating these individuals in a manner that benefits both existing manufacturing businesses and the emergent entrants.

Individuals 21 years old and younger, born between the mid-1990s and 2000s are categorised as Generation Z. This age bracket describes young, dynamic and tech-savvy people who are expected to introduce fresh energy and know-how into Africa's manufacturing sector. In South Africa alone, a third of the population is made up of Generation Z.

Africa is considered by many industry experts to be the world's next major manufacturing centre owing to an increased influx of foreign direct investment, the development and execution of business-friendly policies as well as its sophisticated infrastructure. However, Generation Z entrants are also considered to play a monumental role in creating positive economic transformation in the continent.

Generation Z stands out from their previous generation counterparts, having a creative and entrepreneurial mindset as well as demonstrating independence. They are expected to introduce new management styles, whilst incorporating innovative techniques in product design. African governments therefore face the challenge of embracing this significant shift, thereby developing policies that would open new doors of opportunity for Generation Z entrants.

Generation Z quickly identify opportunities and execute appropriate plans to capitalise on those opportunities. They are flexible and can quickly adapt to changes in their environment.

This trait is crucial in supporting African manufacturers to gain and maintain a competitive advantage in global markets, manage the impacts associated with recession and shift customer preferences along with new technological innovations. Similarly, team work has occupied a central position in leading manufacturing firms. Education systems of Generation Z employees have taught them to work collaboratively in teams. They simplify work by delegating tasks, building strong, reliable networks and bridging communication gaps.

Multiple factors have compelled African manufacturing employers to recruit Generation Z individuals. As baby boomers retire, consequently leaving behind vacant positions, there is a sense of urgency to recruit fresh talent. Furthermore, the use of modern technology to design innovative products has forced employers in Africa to include this tech-adept generation in their workforce.

African governments are striving to provide financial and technical support to fledgling entrepreneurs willing to participate in Africa's manufacturing arena. This will prove to be a massive step in empowering young African manufacturers who will subsequently go on to provide employment to thousands of people, ultimately adding value to African economies.

Policymakers believe that induction of Generation Z in the manufacturing sector's workforce will lead to a competitive environment in industries with increased focus on exploring new learning opportunities and providing appropriate training to employees. With this said, there is a necessity to develop new career progression programmes, along with reward and compensation policies to ensure that the young, passionate minds of this new age band are rewarded according to their modern skills set. Government, policymakers and authorities of African manufacturing sectors need to devise and implement such programmes so to provide the appropriate levels of mentorship and guidance that Generation Z employees expect and require. It is critical that the continent's manufacturing realm prepares for the impact of these Generation Z industrialists and are on point with their priorities as this group is ultimately set to lead the continent's manufacturing sector.

Generation Z is believed to be a critical "demographic dividend" for the continent, and if employed appropriately, they have the potential to spearhead the African manufacturing arena in the right direction. With the appropriate resources, African countries can empower their Generation Z entrants to lead the continent's manufacturing sector, thereby ensuring a thriving, globally competitive and dynamic industrial landscape.

Although seemingly insignificant, overlooked topics such as this deeply impact the manufacturing sector and will be covered in detail at the **Manufacturing Indaba**. Any industrialist aiming to gain a competitive advantage in this landscape on both a local and global level, is urged to attend this premier event to reap the invaluable insights on offer.

PRESS RELEASE ENDS.



## MORE ABOUT THE MANUFACTURING INDABA

### THE MANUFACTURING EVENT FOR AFRICANS, BY AFRICANS

The annual Manufacturing Indaba will be hosted at Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg from the 25 - 26 June 2019. The two-day event has shown impressive growth year on year and has proved its value in catalyzing business connections and helping manufacturers to innovate and grow their potential. The aim of the annual Manufacturing Indaba and its provincial roadshows is to bring together manufacturers, industry leaders, government officials, capital providers and professional experts to explore opportunities and grow their manufacturing operations. The event is designed specifically for private and public company representatives to hear from industry experts as they unpack challenges and find solutions for growth across the manufacturing sectors and explore regional trade into Africa.

The event will comprise a two-day conference and exhibition and is hosted in partnership with the South African Department of Trade & Industry (**the dti**), the Department of Science & Technology and the Manufacturing Circle, representing the private sector.

For more info on this event, or to register for the Indaba, visit [www.manufacturingindaba.co.za](http://www.manufacturingindaba.co.za)

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