

During the tech revolution, people want work environments to be more human

By [Jason Stewart](#)

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Previously a pure administrative function, human resources today is a revitalised and revolutionised specialisation, focused on employing a holistic approach to unleash true human capital.



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Culture – positive and empowering norms, behaviours and values – is the new imperative and, coupled with investing in upskilling and growth has become the cornerstone of a company's success. Don't believe me? Studies prove that engaged staff are responsible for three times more profit.

2020 is going to be a busy and challenging year for the human resources professional (HRP) as the struggling economy causes businesses to slow, retrench or close. Coupled to this will be the emotional stress employees will experience as they feel more and more uncertain about their lives and careers.

- **High performers need psychological safety**

Psychological safety is the best indicator of high performance, which means that staff need to feel safe, secure and confident within the business for them to perform to their potential. This means that the role of the HRP and the company's leadership is to ensure that, no matter the challenges a company faces, the team feels safe and is clear on their role into the future.

- **Future-proofing employees**

The biggest challenge will be to help staff evolve with the requirements of an evolving world. Technology in the form of artificial intelligence, automation and robotics will replace, change and reform the way we work, eliminating some skill set needs but also creating new. It is vital the HRP keep a view on the future and help staff grow into these future needs, ensuring both the company and its team are future-proofed.

A 2019 study by Deloitte showed that 87% of South African respondents believed that their organisation did not have the right leaders in place to face disruption. 89% believed they didn't have the right talent pool, despite the majority of respondents anticipating their industry would be disrupted in the near future.

Skillsets to focus on are not only the traditional hard skills but those softer ones – collaboration, empathy, critical thinking and creativity. These four are often neglected but are key to the success of tomorrow's organisations and teams. And, here's the one space where artificial intelligence will struggle to outperform humans! As an extra bonus, unlocking these soft skills also always leads to amplifying the impact of hard skills.

- **Importance of self-motivation**

As important will be to ensure employees are self-motivated and self-led to not only be able to add value to an organisation but to cope with the growing complexity and challenges that 2020 is sure to bring. This can only be done through deep learning and awareness, and requires a complete shift in how we coach employees. Without self-motivation, they will be left behind and face the scary prospect of becoming irrelevant in the market place.

- **Physical well-being**

Well-being in the workplace is becoming a standard requirement given our more balanced and holistic view on how we treat and look after our team. And it goes further than promoting or subsidising healthy habits such as diet and exercise to healthier mental well-being and managing of stress. We now know how our environment affects us and HR has a role to play in designing a space that promotes high performance using light, nature, oxygen and such.

ABOUT JASON STEWART

Jason Stewart is the co-founder and MD of HaveYouHeard (www.haveyouheard.co.za), a communications agency immersed in culture to influence it. With 11 years' trading experience and offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town and London, HaveYouHeard uncovers unique insights to create innovative ideas that influence the audience by bringing the brands it partners with to the centre of culture.

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