

The psychological advantage in today's workplaces

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The increasing deployment of smart technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and algorithms across every area of human endeavour is changing work in unprecedented ways. As fast as roles become extinct, new ones emerge. Skills-sets are constantly remodelled. The 21st Century worker doesn't just have to be digitally-adept, they must have more types of intelligences and literacies, as well as different knowledge and skills compared to their predecessors. Rapid tech-driven evolution in workplaces intensifies the urgency for South Africa's tertiary education institutions to adapt and ensure they are developing future workers who are fit and capable of succeeding and thriving in the 4iR context.



The academic dean of one of the country's top private institutions, Dr Jaclyn Lotter of [Sacap \(the South African College of Applied Psychology\)](#) says, "There are several leading workplace trends that have shaped the modern design of Sacap's education programmes offered by our Faculties of Management & Leadership, and Applied Psychology. Today's organisations have significant, unmet demands for emotionally intelligent employees with key skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving communication, and collaboration. They also face the challenges of building agile, diverse, and inclusive organisational cultures. Social forces such as the younger generation's focus on purposeful work, mental health, well-being, work-life balance, and family are shaping today's workplaces in very different ways. These developments are driving an increased awareness of the advantage of bringing a psychological lens into the workplace beyond the traditional role of the Industrial Psychologist. It includes having key managers and leaders in the organisation who are self-aware and have a deep understanding of others because Psychology as a major subject was embedded in their business degree education programme."

The psychological lens in the workplace

Sacap's Bachelor of Applied Social Science Degree is considered their gold standard of social science qualifications. The qualification boasts a core subject major in psychology, and students can then select second major subject in counselling or human resource management or business management.

Bringing a psychological lens to the workplace enables business professionals to better understand and address the unique needs of employees, customers and all other stakeholders. It empowers them to responsibly manage people at the individual, team and systemic levels while crafting a work environment that is conducive to productivity, performance, and well-being.

Agility and diversity in organisational culture

Agility and diversity have become foundational to success in organisations of the 4iR era. It falls on team leaders and managers to foster agility so that employees can adapt to rapid changes and seize opportunities. Diversity and inclusion are essential to harnessing the full spectrum of human potential, enhancing competitiveness, and attracting and retaining in-demand talent.

Business professionals with a strong grounding in psychology are capable of guiding and enhancing an optimal organisational culture. They have particular strengths in key areas such as:

Promoting inclusivity – Knowledge of psychology can help managers identify and productively address unconscious biases and design initiatives that foster greater understanding leading to diversity and inclusion.

Facilitating change - Agility in organisations is dependent on employees' willingness to change and adapt quickly. Psychology provides insights into human resistance to change and ways to overcome it. Business professionals who understand the psychological aspects of change management are better prepared to guide their teams through business transformations smoothly.

Fostering resilience - In the face of constant disruption, resilience is a critical attribute at both the individual and organisational levels. Psychologically informed managers can help employees build resilience by offering support, teaching coping strategies, and promoting mental well-being.

When you understand people, you understand the world

"Success starts with understanding people," concludes Dr Lotter. "A Sacap undergraduate qualification with Psychology as one of your subject majors sets you up for achievement in further studies or opens up a variety of career pathways. Whether you see your future in entrepreneurship, in blue-chip corporate boardrooms, or in caring careers such as therapy, counselling and coaching, the fact that you get people is what will take you far in life. If you can figure out people, you can figure out solutions. For school leavers who are unsure of where to start when it comes to tertiary studies, [Sacap's Bachelor of Applied Social Science Degree](#) programmes are ideal pathways to learn about yourself and others, gain research and analytical skills, enhance your communication and collaboration skills, learn sought-after conflict resolution skills, develop self-compassion and compassion for others while getting an expert grounding in human behaviour which you can apply to a myriad of career options."

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