

# RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

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YourSPACE

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## BUSINESSES SHOULD FOCUS ON SOFT SKILLS

Business intelligence alone won't grow your brand in the crazy corporate world of today – it's so crazy, in fact, that there's even a new four-letter word floating around: **VUCA** (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous).



Businesses across the globe, and across sectors, are using this term to describe their current market conditions, but what does this mean for the modern executive?

In many respects, it means that execs and business leaders need to be the opposite – steady, certain, clear and unambiguous. This requires a high level of emotional intelligence (EQ) – especially when it comes to working with teams.

Alison du Toit is a coach and facilitator at Symphonia Leadership Development (<http://www.symphonia.net/symphonia/>) and has worked with a wide range of corporate clients. She says that the biggest challenge executives present to her is 'around their ability to balance the relational requirements of their role with their functional expertise'. She goes on to say: "They usually have exceptional technical and functional abilities and skills, but they lack the leadership and relational skills to really connect with people."

### LEARNING TO LEAD

Clients will ask Du Toit questions like: **How do I lead people better?** How can I help them manage the stress of change?

How can I be more resilient in this chaotic, VUCA world? That's where an executive coach can really add value, coaching business leaders to develop these soft skills. "Executives need to reframe their role in their own mind and as a coach we would help work on this," she explains. "We'd move away from the limiting assumptions that the 'people stuff' is soft, fluffy nonsense that HR should handle, and help executives to understand the power of engagement and partnering with people to optimise their value and contribution."

*To find out more about what an executive coach can do for your business, read [Call in the coaches in Issue 1 2017](https://www.oldmutual.co.za/docs/default-source/corporate/MindSpace/final-mindspace---singles.pdf?sfvrsn=0) (<https://www.oldmutual.co.za/docs/default-source/corporate/MindSpace/final-mindspace---singles.pdf?sfvrsn=0>).*

## OLD MUTUAL'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Ellenise Pedro, Head of HR at Old Mutual Corporate, says coaching has proven to be the most successful management intervention to drive a high-performance culture.

### COACHING ISN'T ABOUT FIXING PROBLEMS

Coaching is not a corrective tool for poor performance, nor is it a remedial tool. As the coaching culture has advanced in corporate South Africa, more companies are using coaching as a developmental tool. An organisation with a high-performance culture will use coaching proactively to develop and support high-potential individuals and grow its leaders from good to great.

### THE PEOPLE AT THE TOP NEED TO BUY IN (A COACHING CULTURE MUST BE LEADER LED)

Coaching can accelerate growth and change, therefore a strong coaching culture within a business will increase performance and results. But a strong coaching culture requires top level support as well as internal capacity. We believe that individual change is at the heart of everything achieved at a team and an organisational level. We therefore incorporate personal mastery as the starting point of our core leadership competency framework.

### LEADERS LEARN ON THE JOB

We have a very **comprehensive leadership development programme based on the 70-20-10 principle** – 70% of all development takes place on the job; 20% via coaching and mentoring, and only 10% dedicated to traditional classroom training.

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### WHAT MATTERS TO EMPLOYEES?

Truly great companies recognise that employee well-being is as important as career growth and remuneration.

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