

New ways of working

In our latest mini survey via LinkedIn, Facebook and email, we asked USB and USB-ED alumni how their way of working has changed since their studies. For most of our respondents, it is not about applying new tools and techniques. It is about their ability to see the bigger picture, spot opportunities, be a better leader and instil trust.

SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

This is how MBA alumnus Robert Marshall, director at Alacrity Technologies, explained the effect of his studies on his work: “It’s about the angle of thinking and the way one contextualises the workplace. I understand the business landscape in a more integrated manner.”

Current MBA student Elyssa Spreeth, who works as engineering manager at Sasol Technology, says her studies help her to “approach problem-solving more holistically”.

MBA alumnus Bettina Schneider, supply chain analyst at Accenture in Germany, says systems thinking helps her to “link recommendations and possible impacts on various departments and stakeholders without losing track of the bigger picture”.

MBA alumnus Pasan Kunene, a market specialist at Sanlam, says his major take-out is the importance of sticking to strategy. “This exercise made me realise that as soon as you take your eye off the ball you start to lose clients and efficiency.”

TURNING CHANGES INTO CHANCES

MBA alumnus Frans Badenhorst, director at RecycloTech Industries, said he did his MBA during the time of mainframe computers and before the launch of IBM’s personal computer. “Having lived through this revolution, it was easy to recognise other revolutions and capitalise on them. The 1994 election was an obvious revolution, but privatisation and unbundling also created new opportunities. Now we are in the green revolution and whole new industries are being created with alternative energy, recycling and mass transport. There is no turning

Do people really work differently after their studies? Amanda Matthee asked around.



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back and opportunities await those who are ready. An MBA is the best way to be ready.”

ACQUIRING EMPLOYABLE SKILLS

Medsalem Nandjebo, who studied Project Management at USB-ED, works as monitoring and evaluation officer for the Namibia

Global Fund Programme. He says his new skills help to improve the team’s performance and to employ the strategies they need to bring about positive change. “I can successfully implement my programme activities and this makes work easy for others.”

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL GROWTH

According to Bettina Schneider it is now much easier to interact with clients, senior counterparts (“who are mostly much older than I am”) and team members. She attributes this growth to “my personal development on the leadership course”.

Deon Dickson, who recently did USB-ED’s Management Development Programme, works as systems manager at Woolworths. He says his studies changed his approach to managing people and interacting with senior leadership. He says it took a conscious effort to apply his new knowledge but the results are positive. Team efficiency, trust and support are just a few of the manifested outputs. “I’ve seen my team become more responsive and I’m glad to see the team mimicking some of my newly applied behaviour.” 