

# From the Editor-in-Chief

In 2018 we chose to focus our 7th MUT Empowered Administrators' Conference on the theme of "Embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution". Setting the tone at the conference, I drew attention to the reality of people losing their jobs due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. I spoke about the shock an office administrator would feel on being told she or he is redundant. I asked what happens to someone with over 15 years' work experience whose responsibilities will now be performed by machines or absorbed by other employees. As a way of finding solutions, I looked at how best we as employees could start preparing to multi-task and work anywhere. I may have sounded like an alarmist at the time. Yet in less than two years, we have found ourselves in a predicament that once seemed fairly far away.



Mbali Mkhize

In retrospect, I wish we had taken this theme further and spoken about equipping ourselves to become more techno-savvy and more wired to perform our duties optimally, from anywhere. Today, I pen my thoughts in a world we never envisaged we would experience: LockdownSA. We are not alone in this; the entire world is in lockdown as a result of a brutal but invisible enemy.

I still watch the news, all channels from 400 to 406, and I am faced with the grief of the departed souls who I believe are resting in peace. I grieve even more for those still left behind, like you and I. Are we embracing a new way of working or are we waiting for the lockdown to vanish and go back to our old ways? Are we ready for the fast-changing world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution?

Unfortunately, there is no more turning back. The events of the past four weeks have shown us that digital transformation has to become a part of our culture – it is no longer a luxury. Look back at the very first industrial revolution and imagine how the ancestors felt about abandoning the Stone Age. Our transition is more brutal because it has come with such speed and a high human cost – yet there is also much to be gained if we embrace the transformation.

Having spent the entire period of Lockdown working as if things were normal, I can conclude that the fears we expressed in 2018 about embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution, now need to be addressed. Some of the things I have had to navigate on my own include managing and locating various data, and understanding the power of online collaborations. (Believe me, the documents that my colleagues and I shared in the Cloud helped us to do so much and to trust one another.)

Moving into this new culture of adapting to work in the digital space, I have learned that planning my week, days and hours is more important than ever before. There are many distractions in the house but a culture of prioritisation has prevailed. I have learned in the space of three weeks what would have taken far longer without the lockdown, and this has reminded me how truly adaptable we are as people. While the new world may look daunting, we need not fear – we will survive together, and we will even thrive if we have the right spirit and mind set.

I hope this issue of the *MUT Spirit* inspires you along your own transformation journey. We have a great human – and institutional – spirit to be proud of.