

# Leadership

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Steyn's righthand man



# Upskilling & Development Remodelled for Economic Growth

Nancy Aspeling, Founder and CEO of Naspeling, talks about a unique macroeconomic skills development and training concept



**T**his unique upskilling concept had initially been developed from a corporate need over a period of 9 years prior to the official founding of Naspeling in 2013.

Having spent 34 years in the corporate financial services industry in various roles and having witnessed the dramatic change in the South African political and economic landscape, Nancy Aspeling became aware of the impact of globalization, regulation and continual technological advancement on business and employees alike.

“Gradually a workforce started to exist in a riptide of change within a spectrum from the departing of educated, knowledgeable and experienced middle managers on one side, to the entrance of inexperienced graduates on the other, resulting in a significant and disempowering knowledge skills gap”, says Aspeling.

She explains that through tightening of regulations and controls, employees were increasingly becoming uninspired and disengaged while trying to survive amidst the accelerated pace of change and increased complexity within the business environment.

“Although new entrants into the workplace were well qualified in the theory of business, the vital business ingredients of experience, confidence, enthusiasm and commitment seemed to have been lost, resulting in my research and upskilling opportunity on how to reverse this debilitating trend”, says Aspeling.

Her research found that while the Internet age had completely transformed business, in general, conventional training and development methods had changed very little over many decades and simply no longer adequately prepared students for the changing demands of the contemporary workplace.

“Learnings were still pretty much based on a “one size fits all” outcome, while in contrast, individual differentiation and self-directed learning became key in our economy’s quest for entrepreneurial thinking and growth,” explains Aspeling. “I believed that fundamental training and development restructuring would be required if we wanted to first succeed in business, and then collectively as a nation.”



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT • APPLICATION • GROWTH

### Financial markets

Having been involved in the financial sector for so many years and based on her own studies in the field of economics and financial markets, she noticed a dire need for employees to be empowered through true understanding of macroeconomics in order to converse and negotiate from a credible knowledge base.

Aspeling explains that while many people in the workplace have studied economics at tertiary level, there was still a huge gap between the interpretation of theoretical studies and the practical understanding and application thereof. The latter competency was an urgent requirement as it became evident that in practice, the amount of economically active people who truly understood the challenges and consequence of an ever-changing economic environment around us were few and far between.

“Subsequently I started developing a visual based learning concept in macroeconomics that could be practically applied within the workplace and to the financial benefit of the company and its clients,” explains Aspeling. “As this was created informally within the organization, both the development process and continuous testing of outcomes through different audiences, took place outside of normal working hours.”

The eventual goal of those short presentations was to allow for people to immediately apply new learnings in the workplace through external as well as internal customer interaction. Furthermore, through the encouragement of reading business articles, the delegates would get a better understanding of their newly acquired influence on current decision making.

“In hindsight, addressing this initial challenge was a blessing in disguise,” says Aspeling. “The response to the learnings was most rewarding and the concept proved to be highly effective, whilst being the perfect time-efficient and cost effective match to the requirements of an accelerating technology driven business environment.”

### A fresh approach

Naspeling offers a comprehensive, unique macroeconomic skills development and training concept aimed at employees typically from customer interfacing levels right up to executive level. A fresh approach to training and development methods has been long overdue and this greatly differentiates Naspeling from conventional training methods.

Through the use of the latest available presentation technology, Naspeling’s course content is based on the very latest macroeconomic data and articles that could potentially affect our economy, business and society.

“The relevance of real time information and the interpretation of its possible consequence through knowledge and awareness ensures a captive audience through stimulation of the thought process,” explains Aspeling. “This is the kind of effective upskilling, combined with creative

and practical application that is desperately required by a country in dire need of entrepreneurship and job creation.”

Naspeling’s vision is to strive towards the transfer of knowledge and true understanding of macroeconomics at all business levels in order to promote sustainable growth and job creation. Its mission is to contribute towards bringing about positive change in people for the benefit of personal growth, communities, business and the economy as a whole.

“Primary objectives of Naspeling’s development intervention include empowering people through knowledge and understanding, broaden business and economic awareness and instilling the desire for self-education and personal growth for the benefit of a wider sphere of influence and effectiveness. The objective is to create higher skilled and confident staff and stimulate creative thought in potential entrepreneurial activity,” explains Aspeling.

### A vital skill

Naspeling was afforded the opportunity of collaboration with the Corporate Development Foundation (CDF) Incubator in providing potential future entrepreneurs with the necessary understanding of macroeconomics, a vital skill in strategic decision-making.

The goal of the CDF is to impact people’s lives by providing them a platform that would support a self-sufficient and sustainable life. This platform is created through an incubation model, which provides to aspiring entrepreneurs a step-by-step process for turning innovative ideas into successful enterprises.

“Skills development is invaluable and fundamentally key to economic growth and job creation. South Africa’s high unemployment figures and lack of relevant and practical skills are directly linked to the inequality within the education of its population,” says Aspeling. Without continued investment in meaningful skills development from both the public and private sectors, there can be no sustainable employment to support economic growth and South Africa’s ability to improve its global competitiveness.”

Aspeling firmly believes that Naspeling’s upskilling concepts could contribute towards the long-term perspective of the National Development Plan 2030. “A true understanding, awareness and interpretation of macroeconomics potentially has a multiplier effect on any business within any economic sector,” she says. “It starts with knowledge and awareness. Confidence soon follows and confident people start sharing new learnings through practical application in the workplace, while a higher skilled and confident workforce is the backbone of any organization’s competitive advantage. Subsequent business growth in turn opens up the opportunity for job creation.” ▲

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