

The need for skilled individuals in the tyre industry

By [Nobuzwe Mangcu](#)

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The South African job market is becoming ever more competitive with the emergence of new industries requiring us to keep moving, be proactive, and not be the inactive spare wheel that sits in the boot — waiting for something to happen.



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With unemployment being at an all-time high, it's time that we become more cognisant of certain industries that ordinarily we would not consider as possible career paths, or even potential entrepreneurial opportunities.

The tyre: one of the most revolutionary inventions

Our tyre industry is one such commerce. And even though some might think it's not the most exciting industry in the world, no one can deny that the wheel remains one of the most revolutionary inventions man has conjured.

Running parallel with the scarcity of jobs is a lack of skilled artisans needed to really elevate some of our more niche industries such as the tyre industry.

Tyre recycling

The tyre industry is much more than just producing tyres from rubber, and I believe this one-dimensional observation is quite unfavourable.

There is an entire world of tyre management specialities, for example, tyre recycling which encompasses using the rubber from recycled tyres to make other products.

This is where things get exciting - R700m worth of exciting to be more precise, according to the Recycling and Economic Development Initiative of South Africa (REDISA). Yes, that's no typo; this is the amount of money generated from a waste tyre management fee collected by REDISA. This money is what goes into developing our recycling industry.

So, what is so exciting about the tyre industry particularly within recycling?

Well, did you know that old tyres are among the largest and most problematic sources of waste? This is due to the difficult process of disposing of used tyres as well as the large volumes in which they are produced.

Need for research and development

The R&D into recycling methodologies still remains a largely uncharted territory. Therefore, there is an urgent need for research and scientific solutions on dealing with the environmental impact that is caused by used tyres.

So just as easily as you will find the astute and learned individuals draped in their white coats in the labs developing and enhancing the rubber which eventually becomes the tyres used on our cars; a lot more of these individuals are needed to find more environmentally friendly methods of disposing of those tyres.

More significantly, since tyres are non-biodegradable, here is a thought: perhaps one of those individuals could venture into developing a biodegradable tyre.

Now, of course, there are plenty of traditional career opportunities within the tyre industry: from sales to manufacturing and fitment, but the true value would be exploring those opportunities which have the potential of making a significant impact on the industry in its entirety as well as on the environment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nobuzwe Mangcu is the managing executive of SATMC. The SATMC is the representative of the four SA tyre manufacturers comprising of Bridgestone, Continental, Good Year and Sunittor Rubber. SATMC aims to become the voice of South African tyre manufacturers and an industry thought leader within the minds of all South Africans.

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