Bedrock foundations essential for success

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Leadership

In the rollercoaster of uncertainty and change that seems to have become the norm in South Africa and the world, there are two positive descriptions that can be attributed to the South African mining industry, and more broadly to South Africa and Africa - "resilient" and "innovative".

The South African mining industry, like the mining sector in most countries with vast mineral resources, is a barometer for how well South Africa is doing because of its significant contribution to growth, development and transformation, and its impacts on related sectors such as construction and engineering. The industry has worked its way through some pretty tough cycles and is going through one at the moment. This is reflected in the general state of the South African economy.

While resilience of an organisation is often attributed to good leadership, this is only the starting point. The culture of resilience should be attributed to all stakeholders including government, business, trade unions, and non-governmental organisations. Most importantly, South Africa's resilience should be attributed to the most critical asset of a business, its employees. Recognition and acknowledgement of the contribution that employees make can go a long way towards ensuring that a business is sustainable.

South Africa is well regarded for providing innovative solutions to complex challenges. This is critical to ongoing sustainability and starts with the acknowledgement that the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence will continue to have a significant impact on decisions. The recent announcement by Rio Tinto that its first autonomous train transported iron ore approximately 280 km from its Tom Price Mine, is a good example of the role that innovation will play going forward. The delivery was remotely monitored by operators in Perth, approximately 1500 km away. This event gives a preview of the future.

To remain resilient and sustainable will also take an exceptional level of maturity from all role players and will require leadership teams to be inclusive, consultative, and flexible enough to identify and respond to changes. Decision-making is probably more of a science than an art and knowing when to take which decision, and who should be included in key decision-making will

be critical to effective and efficient decision-making in our fast-paced world.

In the face of ongoing political, policy and regulatory uncertainty, it is just as important to develop and maintain a moral compass, which ensures that honesty and integrity form the bedrock of everything that we do.

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