

# The Innovation Hub CoachLab™ Graduation

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Guest speaker  
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Good afternoon. I speak today on behalf of the partners involved in this programme, specifically Cisco, EPI-USE Systems and MTN.

## So, WHY are we here today?

One of the most important reasons MTN joined this partnership was the prospect that the CoachLab™ program would provide the environment for these high-caliber students to develop innovation and entrepreneurship at an early stage of their careers – which we as partners believe are critical for the development of highly motivated and capable future leaders.

While the academic institutions rightfully must expect students to develop and hone their cognitive abilities and innovative thinking capacity INDEPENDENTLY, it is unthinkable in today's working environment not to be able to operate as part of a TEAM.

Hence, we value that CoachLab™ graduates were required NOT just be innovators and entrepreneurs in isolation, but that they had to apply knowledge and solve problems innovatively in a team context. In addition, we value the premium that the programme places on leadership traits, integrity, honesty and respect.

Another important imperative for us is of course the fact that the programme provides us with the opportunity to contribute to the 'Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition' or 'JIPSA' - launched by Government in March 2006.

As part of our commitment to JIPSA, MTN is increasing the opportunities it offers to graduates to develop those skills that bridge the divide between the world of work and the world of academics, specifically focusing on our critical skills, and areas of work where we anticipate to be experiencing a shortage of skills in future.

Once again, CoachLab™ initiative plays a crucial role in assisting MTN to achieve this objective. **So this is why we are here!**

## The value for us?

1. The Innovation Hub - CoachLab™ Leadership Programme enables MTN to recruit top post-graduates from various Faculties like Engineering and Information Technology.
2. We get the opportunity to expand the students' knowledge and skills through the MTN infrastructure and the other partners provide as required by the projects.
3. The process of mentorship and supervision to the students has enriched each partner in the sense that our mentors have been able to hone their knowledge-sharing skills.
4. The interaction between ourselves as partners, the students and the tertiary institutions (UNISA, University of Pretoria and the Tshwane University of Technology) in the CoachLab™ context is really unique and we are intent on gaining much more value from this unique partnership in future.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, we as partners from industry we intend adding much more value to the programme by offering the post graduates opportunities to join our internal development courses – especially those in the behavioural field – to ensure they not only develop high-level technical skill in the knowledge industries, but also the so-called 'soft skills' that are necessary to progress professionally in that context.

***And finally, to the students (please stand up)***

This Leadership program is for you! So what is leadership really about? It is about coping with change effectively. Part of the reason is the world is now become more competitive and more volatile. Faster technological change, greater international competition, the deregulation of markets, globalisation, the emergence of knowledge based organisations, are all factors that have contributed to this shift. You will need to learn how to understand this landscape, & charter yourself this on a daily basis.

The net result is that doing what you did last month, or doing it 5% better, is no longer good enough. Self-improvement and maximising your full potential is the name of the game. Increasing change always demands increased leadership traits to succeed.

Ok, I don't mean to scare you already in the start of your journey, but rather equip you with knowledge about the lands that we have traveled already so that you learn from them.

Finally, your skills development & growth is a given, but there is another important ingredient that you need to keep in mind, and that is your mindset. Your mindset will shape your future! You must have self-belief, build trusting relationships and have the courage in your journey into the future! Without this you will not achieve your full potential.

All the best to you and thank you all for being so patient with what I had to say today.