

The moonwalk economy and making the circle bigger

By  Keke Mahlelebe

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I've always regarded the moment Michael Jackson smoothly moonwalked in front of 47 million people in 1983 as a perfect demonstration of this beautiful global sharing culture wave we are all experiencing.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Front foot flat.
Back foot tiptoe.
Front foot slide.
Front foot tiptoe.
Back foot slide.

Repeat.

Why? Because as soon as he did it. Anyone around the world could do it.

Open source

That's a world ignited by digital acceleration and inspired by radical creativity.

Where viral challenges and trends turn into how-to tutorials. Like Lil Uzi Vert's latest 'Just Wanna Rock' dance craze or Drake and 21 Savage's 'Rich Flex' meme anthem.

That's open source. That's The Moonwalk Economy.

R.I.P. to the days of protecting so-called IP unnecessarily, it's about kicking open the doors and sharing ideas and tools willingly.

Like the moonwalk is to dancing, the kickflip is to skateboarding.

Especially when we live in a time where the second something gets documented it can become instantly replicated or iterated on.

Think every entertainment app ever. But more specifically the rise of Twitch streaming, and the duetting and stitching era on TikTok.

Or in the mid 90s when skateboarders first got a hold of videocassette recorders and filmed themselves on fisheye lenses in abandoned empty pools and on the streets of LA. From then onwards it exploded. Becoming a global movement and aesthetic that is still held today by brands like Palace Skateboards and public figures like Tony Hawk.

The late-great Virgil Abloh, fashion designer and cultural multi-hyphenate, has this lovely adage about when a kid does a skate trick nobody has ever seen before, the second they put it on YouTube, ten other kids around the world can learn to do the exact same thing.

Positive impact

Just like the moonwalk bringing joy to living rooms, dance floors, and social platforms globally, or skaters using the Internet to teach each other how to pop shove-it and mall grab, I believe this widespread sharing of knowledge will create a disproportionately positive impact on the world.

In South Africa, a country with one of the world's widest skills and wisdom gaps, the open-source economy is therefore a painful necessity. Skills like the dying art of EQ, being furiously curious about the world around you, or putting in the work. Pretty much what Malcom Gladwell shared in the novel, *Outliers*, about the 10,000-hour rule, where The Beatles performed live for 4 years straight in the 60s and only then were they considered good enough to become world famous.



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But what gives me hope is our incredible resilience and ability to take deliberate action as citizens to make a real difference in society.

At M&C, we often speak about the idea of conscious creativity: The act of solving problems as a force for good in the world.

Our latest project being a new magazine, called *Intuition*, that wants to inspire the youth to go out and fetch their futures.

Spreading the love

I think it was both Albert Einstein and Steve Jobs who spoke about the extraordinary value of intuition. Like a currency of

sorts. What's even more valuable though, is if you make it easily shareable and transferable. In culture, people often talk about gatekeeping and this publication is the complete opposite of that.

Our only intention here is to spread the love.

However, Thabo Bogopa aka JR said it best in his 2000s Summer Smash Hit. We want to "Make The Circle Bigger" and invite people in to an electric, open-source world of wisdom. Filled with ideas and thoughts from South African industry experts and leaders on how to live a successful life, have a maverick approach to money, or discover the art of starting an art collection, and the commandments of creativity, amongst other things.

What excites me most about *Intuition* is that it is as much a physical publication as it is digital. Meaning young people all over South Africa and the world will be able to access every piece of content and lesson shared in the magazine for free. We've just released our first issue and our ambition is for all university and college students, as well as every Matric learner in the country to have access to *Intuition*.

The only other motley crew who know how powerful this can be better than The Moonwalker and skateboarders, are celebrity chefs. There is a reason that people like Nobu Matsuhisa, Jamie Oliver, and Yotam Ottolenghi willingly share their recipes with the world, often for free. Not because a recipe will make you Jamie Oliver, but rather because it will make you a better chef.

Thinking outside of the box

I certainly believe that a true mark of your craft is from the minute you decide to share it with someone else. A campaign we cooked up for Standard Bank that dropped a few months ago is a perfect example of this sonew-agert of thinking at work. Introducing #BeUNBXD: A series of new economy businesses-in-a-box for the new age entrepreneurs who think outside of them.

Youth unemployment in South Africa is at an all-time high which means young people are entering a job market where there simply are no jobs. But at the same time, the new economy has given rise to new kinds of alternative career paths. Where people are literally turning what was once thought to be hobbies into fully-fledged empires. The data pointed us towards this, and we developed a platform for young people to create employment for themselves and become new age entrepreneurs.

We identified 10 different interests from drop shipping, to urban farming, and created 100 unique business starter packs in-a-box. Giving young people the tools, they needed to get started. While the boxes were physical and limited to 100 IRL... All the information, skills and tools within the boxes were made available for free URL, on the Standard Bank web experience for anyone to access.

Allowing young people to put their futures in their own hands and start making money as entrepreneurs in the new economy, and in turn, actively tackling the severe youth unemployment rate in South Africa head-on.

In The Moonwalk Economy, the possibilities are endless, to use creativity as a force for good to change people's lives.

And if we remember anything from the *Intuition* magazine, #BeUNBXD, and what cultural icons like Michael Jackson, Tony Hawk, and Yotam Ottolenghi have done for years, and continue to teach us is that:

Whatever it is that you decide to do or make, make it open-source.

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