

## **Abstract**

South African technology businesses are seeing an increasing number of young professionals from diverse backgrounds joining their ranks. Managing diversity in the workplace is perceived to be poorly handled in the South African business arena and may be responsible for the large turnover of employed professionals observed. There is a high rate at which young professionals are changing jobs, leaving the country and/ or becoming unproductive or complacent within relatively short periods of time. This situation is of serious concern due to the severe shortage of skills in the country, especially in the technology sector. On the one hand it creates a major upset or disruption for companies that invest significant resources in the training and development of these individuals. On the other hand, it leads to a vast knowledge gap within the industry since the time horizon of incumbents in specific positions or in companies is seldom long enough to fully develop specialist knowledge within the various technical niches.

Chaos and complexity theories are applied in the study to understand this problem better in the context of interactions between constituent parts of a dynamic system within itself and with the environment, and, specifically, to determine the degree to which the problem is influenced by leadership interactions. In the process a framework for designing leadership architecture was developed with the aim of helping business leaders better manage the problem.

A mixed method approach was used to conduct the research, in which a survey with over ninety respondents and focus group of selected individuals were used to obtain quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The data were then analysed to provide useful insight. The results showed that leadership, particularly the relationship between professionals and their direct managers, has a significant influence on the decision to stay or leave a company and/ or to change professions.