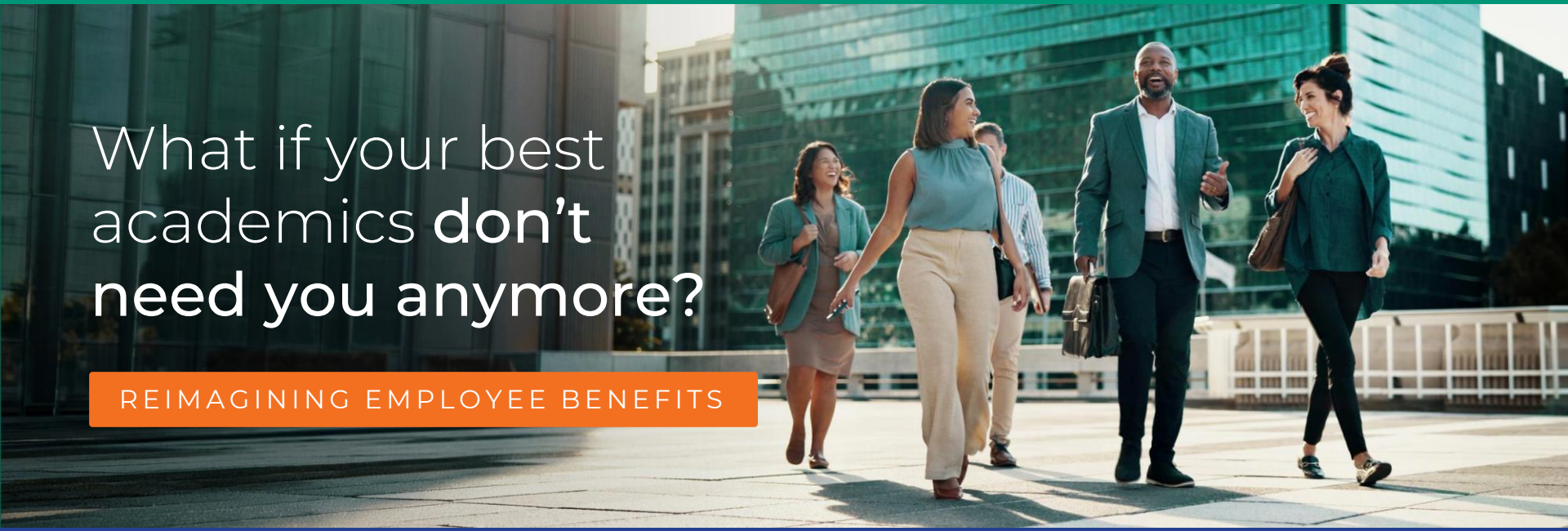
Remchannel

OLDMUTUAL
CORPORATE CONSULTANTS



What if your best academics **don't need you anymore?**

REIMAGINING EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

DATE:
09 October 2026

PRESENTED BY
Thiru Govender, Old Mutual Corporate Consultants

The Ryan Ahmed moment



DISRUPTION

A university academic.
A platform-scale audience.
Both at the same time.

"The Mo Salah of online education."

1,000,000

learners reached across **160 countries** Udemy, Coursera and YouTube

McMaster University
Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering
Active faculty appointment



The new competitive map

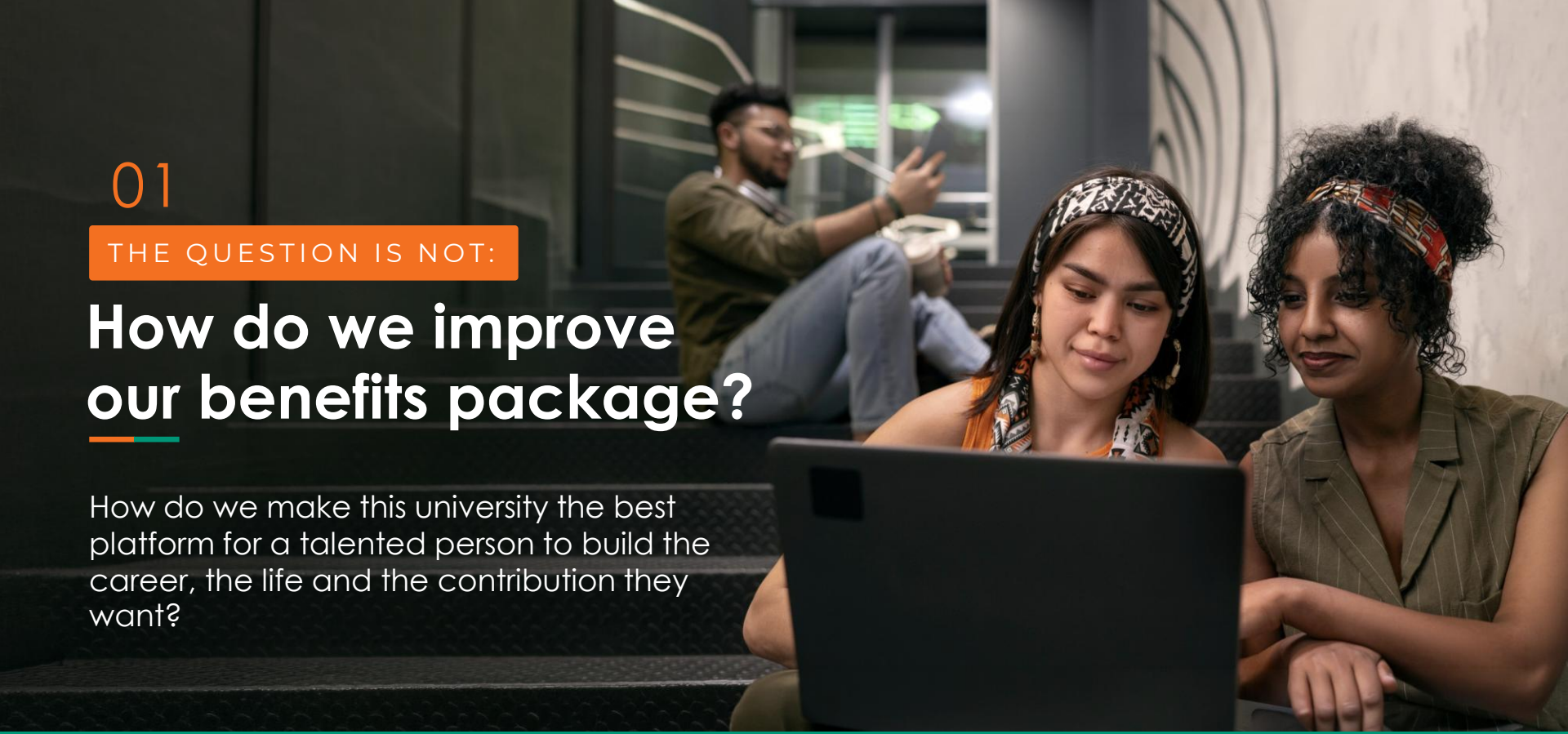
DISRUPTION

You are not competing only with other universities.

01	**TRADITIONAL**	UCT · Wits · UP · Stellenbosch · global universities recruiting remotely / regional African institutions
02	**PLATFORMS**	Udemy · Coursera · edX · YouTube · LinkedIn Learning · MasterClass / Khan Academy A talented academic can reach 500,000 learners through Udemy with no institutional support, no governance overhead, and income tied directly to their reputation
03	**PERSONAL BRAND**	Substack · podcasts · independent research newsletters Kate Manne, a Cornell philosophy professor, is the highest-earning professional philosopher on Substack.
04	**COMMERCIAL**	Consulting · AI companies · think tanks · boards · entrepreneurship

26% **of employers see a shift toward consulting, short-term contracts and multiple income sources**

Source: Old Mutual, New World of Work – C-Suite Employers, 15 July 2025, Q6.5.



01

THE QUESTION IS NOT:

How do we improve our benefits package?

How do we make this university the best platform for a talented person to build the career, the life and the contribution they want?

The talent crisis is documented

DIAGNOSE

This is not a future scenario. It is already in the data.

21%

Labour turnover in South Africa, April 2026

31% of terminations are resignations

Source: Remchannel, Salary & Wage Movement Survey, April 2026.

76% / 74%

Leave for better opportunities / leave for higher pay

The top two reasons talent moves

Source: Remchannel, Salary & Wage Movement Survey, April 2026.

SA HEIs

"Significant challenges in attracting and retaining quality younger-generation academics."

Source: Marozva et al. (2024), SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 22, a2301.

DHET RESPONSE: NEW GENERATION OF ACADEMICS PROGRAMME (nGAP)

Recruits new academics into permanent university posts, with six years of structured development and induction to strengthen the academic staffing pipeline.

Source: DHET, Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework, nGAP programme overview.

Four people. Four calculations.

WITNESS

People first. Data next.



JOHAN, 25	**THEMBA**, 42	**AYESHA**, 52	**NALEDI**, 64
Is academia worth the financial sacrifice?	**How long can this salary absorb family pressure?**	**Is it too late to fund a decent retirement?**	**Can my next chapter happen here?**

The proposition either helps them reach the right answer or stays silent while they reach the wrong one.

Illustrative personas. Research context: Old Mutual Flexibility and Choice: Employees (15 July 2025)
Old Mutual New World of Work: C-Suite Employers (15 July 2025) Personas are not research participants.

What employees say they want

DIAGNOSE

Choice is not a generational preference. It is a human preference.



68% benefit choice rated 9 or 10 out of 10

82% benefits influence whether people stay

73% rank a non-salary factor first

47% name skill development as the top non-traditional benefit

Baby Boomers 62% · **Gen X** 68% · **Millennials** 69% · **Gen Z** 70%

Source: Old Mutual Thought Leadership Flexibility and Choice: Employees Panel and Focus Groups July 2025.
Old Mutual Employee Benefits Survey April 2026.

Five shifts that change everything

DESIGN

01
Personalise
FROM
Package
TO
Life-needs wallet

02
Invest
FROM
Protect & pay
TO
Grow & develop

03
Flex
FROM
Full-time or leave
TO
Portfolio employment

04
Protect
FROM
Literacy
TO
Resilience

05
Transition
FROM
Retirement cliff
TO
Third career

The Benefits Wallet

SHIFT 1: PERSONALISE

A fixed protection floor for everyone with a defined menu of choices above it. Employees direct the same wallet value to different benefits within a governed structure.

The same benefit budget tailored to individual needs

Retirement
92% of employees value fund provision

Health / gap cover
22% expressed an unmet need for healthcare cover

Housing
35% valued housing assistance

Education
31% valued education or bursary support for children

Additional leave
88% ranked leave among top 3 benefits (study, wellness, parental)

Career fund
47% selected skills development as top non-traditional benefit

Emergency savings
31% valued access to emergency funds

Connectivity
29% valued connectivity and data

Childcare
Support for employees with children

PROTECTION FLOOR

Retirement minimum - 15% default (at higher retirement ages) · Core risk cover (life, disability) · Minimum health protection (medical aid or insurance) · Statutory leave

Research informing this proposed design: Old Mutual Flexibility and Choice: Employees Panel and Focus Groups July 2025. Remchannel Employee Benefits Guide 2025. Old Mutual Employee Benefits Survey April 2024.

The Career Capital Account

SHIFT 2: INVEST

You are already spending it. Start showing it.

CASH + PROTECTION

Base package	R 980,000
Performance bonus	R 72,000
Medical aid	R 42,000
Retirement	R 98,000
Risk benefits	R 18,000
TOTAL	**R1,210,000**

CAREER CAPITAL

AI capability programme	R 12,000
International conference	R 28,000
Research grant support	R 45,000
Industry secondment	R 60,000
Thought leadership support	R 15,000
TOTAL	**R160,000**

TOTAL REWARD STATEMENT **R1,370,000**

The social-media-savvy professor

SHIFT 2: INVEST



CURRENT OFFER

Full employment with restrictive outside-work rules, or leave and build independently.

A POTENTIAL BRAND AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY FRAMEWORK

Academic Brand Policy

Define permitted speaking, podcasts, newsletters and courses. Set IP rules and approvals for competing work or conflicts of interest.

Thought Leadership Fund

Use the Career Capital Account to support recording equipment, editing and social media production.

Course revenue sharing

Agree the academic's share for courses built using university time or research.

Platform literacy

Help academics build audiences and distribute ideas while retaining institutional affiliation.

RETENTION LOGIC **Retain core contributions while academics build an external profile that strengthens institutional credibility.**

The Portfolio Academic

SHIFT 3: FLEX

Proposed 60/20/20 model: retain institutional contribution while enabling a portfolio career.



UNIVERSITY CORE

Teaching, research, supervision and administration.

Student-facing obligations remain non-negotiable.

RESEARCH & VENTURE

Research partnerships, grant-funded work and spin-outs.

Agree ownership by time allocation and funding source (IP framework).

EXTERNAL PRACTICE

Consulting, advisory roles, course creation and speaking.

Require disclosure and approval.

POLICY DECISIONS BEFORE A PILOT

IP ownership: agree rights and any university-ownership thresholds in writing.

Conflicts: annual disclosure and approval for work with direct competitors.

Teaching continuity: set minimum contact hours supervision and assessment duties.

Benefits: decide whether retirement and medical subsidies are pro rata or remain full.

Pilot discussion: nGAP graduates and early-career academics attracting industry interest.

Financial support for today and retirement

SHIFT 4: PROTECT

Two-Pot enables emergency access. How can employer benefits complement that support?



The employer's role: support informed choices and strengthen financial resilience.

39% say pay and benefits support financial wellbeing

86% Two-Pot withdrawals for needs, emergencies or debt

6% can retire comfortably

These figures inform benefit design. A withdrawal alone does not indicate poor financial management.

The Financial Support Needs Assessment

SHIFT 4: PROTECT

Voluntary and anonymous. Aggregate responses to improve benefits and access to support.

1. Options for a R10,000 emergency?
2. Access to emergency savings?
3. Debt manageable or increasing?
4. Healthcare costs you cannot cover?
5. Support needed with Two-Pot?
6. Clarity on retirement outlook?
7. Help needed with a will?
8. Extended-family commitments?
9. Confidence in dependant cover?
10. Access to confidential debt advice?

SUPPORT OPTIONS

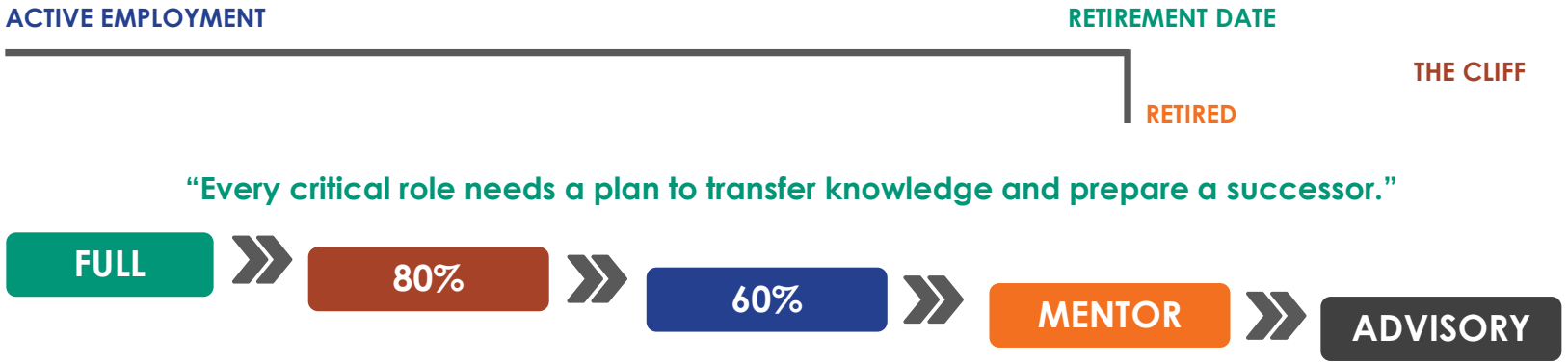
- Emergency savings options
- Confidential debt counselling
- Two-Pot and retirement advice
- Healthcare continuity planning
- Coaching for family commitments

Success means useful support and informed choices. Withdrawal rates alone are not the scorecard.

Retirement planning for critical roles

SHIFT 5: TRANSITION

A known retirement date gives us time to plan across academic professional technical and operational roles.



Illustrative pathway: any reduced hours or post-retirement role require agreement and policy approval.

KNOWLEDGE CONTINUITY

Identify scarce expertise key relationships and undocumented processes. Agree a handover and successor.

RETIREMENT READINESS

Offer individual financial advice healthcare continuity planning and support for the personal transition.

AGREED TRANSITION

Consider reduced hours or mentoring. Define duties benefits and time limits with space for successor progression.

A planned handover between colleagues

SHIFT 5: TRANSITION

An illustrative partnership for critical academic professional technical and operational roles.



EXPERIENCED ROLE HOLDER

Documents critical know-how and introduces key contacts. Mentors the successor and agrees any ongoing advisory role.

SUCCESSOR OR DEVELOPING COLLEAGUE

Builds capability through shadowing and shared work. Takes responsibility in agreed stages, with clear readiness milestones.

Agree handover dates, responsibilities and benefit terms. Recognise knowledge transfer in performance and reward.

Three shifts universities cannot ignore

DEPLOY

Prepare now. Do not wait for certainty.

PAY TRANSPARENCY

CONTEXT

Fair Pay Bill proposals cover salary range disclosure and prohibit salary-history questions.

THE GAP

85.7% conduct annual fair-pay analysis, but only 26.2% have a written fair-pay policy.

UNIVERSITY RESPONSE

Document pay bands by grade and discipline. Address legacy anomalies and explain differences. Benchmark against universities and industry.

AI + ACADEMIC WORK

CONTEXT

33% of C-suite respondents identify digital and AI proficiency as the leading future skill.

ACADEMIC VALUE

AI changes research and assessment. Critical judgement, ethical reasoning and mentoring remain central.

UNIVERSITY RESPONSE

Use Career Capital to fund AI skills.

Recognise AI-enabled teaching and research supervision in reward and career pathways.

MULTIGENERATIONAL DESIGN

CONTEXT

Five generations may share one institution. Needs differ by life stage and family responsibilities.

SOUTH AFRICAN LENS

Employees may support parents, siblings and wider family networks. Personalisation should recognise these commitments.

UNIVERSITY RESPONSE

Offer structured benefit choices. Ask about extended obligations and consider funeral cover. Provide culturally responsive coaching.

Five experiments

DEPLOY

Contained pilots. Measurable outcomes. One board cycle to begin.

01 Personalise

Run the 10-question diagnostic. Map utilisation and invisible value.

02 Invest

Audit Career Capital and show it on the next Total Reward Statement.

03 Flex

Identify up to 10 scarce roles and one willing faculty for a pilot.

04 Protect

Replace one generic workshop with a targeted resilience intervention.

05 Transition

Identify five retirement-critical roles and start Third Career conversations.

Pick the most pressing experiment. Pilot carefully. Measure honestly. Scale only what works.

The evaluation framework

DEPLOY

Connect reward design to outcomes already measured somewhere in the institution.



RETENTION

- Voluntary turnover by grade and department
- Resignation reasons
- Offer acceptance rate



WELLBEING

- Financial resilience score
- Mental-health support utilisation
- Leave uptake patterns



ENGAGEMENT

- Benefit satisfaction pulse
- Perceived Total Reward value
- Career-fund utilisation



PERFORMANCE

- Research output
- Teaching quality
- Postgraduate completion rates

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

Get In Touch





REMCHANNEL (PTY) LIMITED IS A MEMBER OF THE OLDMUTUAL GROUP

Quick reference: key evidence

Remchannel

APPENDIX

OLD MUTUAL RESEARCH

- 68% benefit choice at 9–10/10
- 39% wellbeing supported by pay/benefits
- 47% skill development priority
- 82% benefits influence stay
- 73% rank non-salary first
- 71% mental health will grow

REMCHANNEL + SECTOR RESEARCH

- 21% labour turnover
- 31% terminations are resignations
- 76% better opportunity; 74% pay
- 5.43% average increase; 3.2% CPI
- 85.7% fair-pay analysis
- 33% AI/digital is top future skill

Core sources: OMC Employee Benefits Study 2025 · Old Mutual New World of Work C-Suite 2025 · OM Employee Benefits Survey 2024 · Remchannel Guides and Surveys 2025–2026 · SAJHRM 2024