



BYLAE BY DIE BURGER

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**DIE BURGER**

# Making human capital work

*"The winds of change truly opened doors for me. Having lost an entire farming operation after a very stormy night, I had to make a decision as to where my road was to lead," says Ute Gass, managing director of Ute Gass Human Resources. She told her story to Marlene van Houwelingen.*

**T**HIS was four years ago, in February 1997.

However, firmly believing that she is the master of her own destiny and armed with a marketing management and human resources management diploma, she started her own company, Ute Gass Human Resources.

"I was fortunate to embark on a training course for recruitment consultants, presented by Margie Baker Training, within the first week of operating. Margie had worked in the industry for many years and is known to be an industry expert. In essence she became a mentor to me and propelled me into professionalism, without having to go the route of trial-and-error."

Her passion for developing people to their fullest potential and matching candidates' expectations with clients' strategic business objectives, coupled with a dedication to service excellence, is her recipe for success, says Ute.

"Clients, specifically SMME's, started using me more and more to provide human resource solutions. I started consulting on recruitment best practices, employment equity, induction programmes, performance management, industrial relations and later skills development. I have always been someone who needs to put back what I have gained. I am totally committed to increasing the professionalism of the recruitment industry."

Ute serves as the Western Cape chairperson and national vice-president of the Association of Personnel Services Industry (APSO), is chairperson of the IPSC and member of the Labour Recruitment Chamber in Services SETA. She is also a registered skills development facilitator and assessor.

Ute Gass HR rapidly expanded

and now consists of five recruitment consultants and two support staff. Each consultant specialises in their own area of expertise. "We thus have technical, legal and medical, financial and office support and executive search divisions."

The Temps-on-Call division was launched two years ago and is growing at a phenomenal pace.

Each consultant has undergone training and completed the Institute for Personnel Services Consultants exam. They also undergo continuous professional development to keep abreast of industry trends.

According to Ute, consultants are thus "highly trained" in interviewing techniques and human resource practices, enjoy the dynamics of recruiting and as they are constantly growing and developing their own skills, they create a positive image for our company.

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Choosing the right person to send for the interviews can make all the difference in the way our company is perceived. It is so important to send people who have knowledge of the specific job requirements."

Honesty is always the best policy when it comes to describing the culture and jobs, she says. "Our recruiters are candid about the realities of working at the company and candidates can make informed decisions. Being realistic yet positive about the challenges and rewards of working at our client's organisation helps to build a memorable, lasting reputation among candidates and clients alike."

Another aspect which, according to Ute, has to be taken into consideration is employment equity: "This is becoming more than a buzzword for Ute Gass HR.

We embraced the act because we realise that ultimately, the most successful companies have figured out that it makes best economic sense to draw talent and potential from all segments of the population.

"Inclusive recruitment and promotion practices bring into the organization segments of the workforce that may well provide a competitive advantage in the increasingly global economy.

"For these companies pursuing diversity and equal employment opportunity is just as integral a business concept as increasing market share or maximizing profits.

"To ensure that we access the widest possible pool of talent we utilise networks, specifically the Linx Group, APSO members, the media and internet advertising," she says. Although high-tech recruitment tools may be popular, she still supports the importance of the "high touch" approach. "Personal attention conveys the message that every candidate matters to us.

"When the Skills Development Act and Skills Development levies act of April 2000 kicked in, I was appalled by the apathy that companies displayed towards the act. Here was a brilliant mechanism to ensure that skills gaps could be addressed by means of training and learnerships.

"Companies saw the levy as nothing else but another tax. Upon investigation I realised that companies lacked knowledge and resources to implement the act."

The next step for Ute Gass HR?

"Skills2u.com was born. Here we offer services related to skills development facilitation and training and development co-ordination. This includes recognition of prior learning and assessments.

"After all is said and done, people are the true wealth of our country. I am privileged to be working with and contributing to our biggest asset - human capital!"

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