

# Let learnerships steer you into tomorrow

BY UTE GASS

**T**he Skills Development Act and Skills Development Levies Act have brought about mechanisms for companies to engage in processes that help them become true global competitors.

One of these is learnerships, which are hugely advantageous.

Apart from reaping generous financial rewards, learnerships allow companies to attract and retain the best staff (as they become an employer of choice), operate globally bench-marked training and human development practices, and contribute to achieving the national skills development strategy targets.

But here's a fair warning: if learnerships aren't correctly implemented, they can turn into monsters and set people up to fail.

The key is a careful planning and building capacity from within the organisation.

A learnership is primarily a workplace-learning programme, which is supported by structured institutional learning. It results in a qualification registered with Saqa. Though it may sound quite similar to an apprenticeship, it isn't really. Apprenticeships are job-oriented, lead to only a qualification and are restricted to certain types of work. Learnerships, on the other hand, occur in multiple work contexts, are job-oriented and can lead to levy grants and refunds.

It all starts with submitting a Workplace Skills Plan (WSP).

Sector Education Training Authorities (Setas) determine the sector skills needs by analysing the Workplace WSP.

Companies should be sure to actively engage with Setas to achieve accurate, demand-led, registered qualifications. Help it to help you!

Building professional capacity involves training Recognition of Prior Learning advisors, education

and training development practitioners, assessors, moderators, mentors and programme coordinators.

Start developing these functions from within and watch the system unfold.

Line managers and supervisors are ideal candidates for the Facilitate Evidence Collection NQF 4 unit standard. This unit standard will be useful to people who assist candidates to prepare and present evidence of prior experience for assessment.

They, in turn, teach their subordinates the same process. The process could be used for assessors and moderators or is probably best outsourced if companies lack adequate resources.

Your company should now know where its human asset is pegged on the National



**Ute Gass ...** learnerships are a vital tool in staff retention.

Qualification Framework.

Based on your strategic business objectives (business plan), your WSP and Employment Equity plan, you can pinpoint your exact means of acquiring the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for achieving business objectives.

A sensitisation programme targeted at all employees ensures that the organisation prepares itself during its metamorphosis into a learning organisation.

Delivery of the learnership is divided into on-the-job training and structured theoretical knowledge.

Quality Assurance must be ongoing and systems and procedures must be in place for record-keeping, policy and procedures, assessments and certification.

Companies actively driving learnerships will become the captains of tomorrow! It all depends on how you approach learnerships. To the caterpillar it is the end of the world, to the Master it is a butterfly!

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