



Skills Development and Staff Retention

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Background

- The Chinese proverb, “Grow a tree for ten years; grow men for a hundred” is true in that nurturing and educating human talent is the key to prosperity.
- A Culture of Learning



Introduction

Skills Development and Staff Retention

- What effect does it have on performance?
- What priority should it have?
- Is it an expense or an investment?



FAR East's Philosophy on Skills Development

- The right to be trained, and trained free,
- A standard mandate given to every public and private organisation.
- A total desire of each individual to absorb all the training possible, without abusing the privilege,
- A totally cost-effective exercise in human capital, repaying its investment many times.



- This has transformed the Far East into an exceptional area of phenomenal growth, low inflation with some of the highest productivity internationally.
- "A Learning Company is an organisation that facilitates the learning of all its members and continually transforms itself." (M. Pedler, J. Burgoyne and Tom Boydell, 1991)



Statistics on Skill Shortages and Staff Turnover

- Value is added to organizations primarily through people and information and not, as was thought in the past, through the four M's: money, man, machinery and materials.



Skills Lost to South Africa

- The Immigration and Emigration statistics below indicate the net loss of economically active Professionals, Engineers, Technicians, Architects and related occupations to South Africa.

(The figures within the brackets indicate immigration minus emigration data.)

- 2001 = -6638 (953 -7591)
- 2002 = -6280 (1054 -7334)
- 2003 = -9529 (1011 -10540)



- **Staff Turnover and its Financial Impact** Research in the UK indicates that staff turnover by 2012 would have cost businesses at least £6,2 billion.
- This negative impact can primarily be attributed to skill shortages and as a result the demotivation of existing staff.



Why Do People Leave Their Employer?

- Employers answer "Money", whereas employees rate other factors more highly such as:
 - Career Development
 - Unresolved problems
 - Working Hours
 - Staff shortages



How can these obstacles be overcome, resulting in an upgraded economy:

- Creating a non-threatening culture of learning,
- An organisational structure resourced to effectively apply skills development,
- A collective effort by industry stakeholders



Mechanisms that Develop Staff

1. Structure

- Sufficient Trainer Capacity
- Training Policies and Skills Development Objectives
- Training as per the requirements of the Engineering Council of South Africa
- A Large Resource-Pool of Trainees
- Administration



- 2. Lectures and Practical Training on Engineering Fundamentals**
- 3. Lectures and Practical Training on General Engineering Practices**
- 4. Ongoing Professional Training**
- 5. Assessments**
- 6. Human Resource Management**



7. **Research and Special Projects**
8. **Team Building**





9. **Mentoring and Mentoring Contracts**

- “A mentor is a kind of a guide who, having been far enough to know something of what's down the path, comes back to walk with you and thus leads without leaving you to follow.” (Boyd H.A. 1989)
- Managers can now partner with Mentors in establishing staff competency and, as a result, Managers have a reduced training load.



The benefits of mentoring are:

- increased productivity and improved work ethics
- transferred skills and the development of future leaders
- accurate selection of talent and placement
- opportunities for plateaued managers to grow and be challenged
- reduced staff turnover



The role of the mentor:

- **advocate** or opportunity provider
- **interpreter** – helps understand the broader purpose of the organisation
- **learning consultant** – audits and advises learning goals
- **coach** – transfers skills or competences with the aim of improving performance
- **counsellor** – talk through issues and allow for problem-solving
- **guide**
- **ally** – friend
- **catalyst** – inspires.



Conclusion

- What effect does skills development have on performance? What priority should it have? Is it an expense or an investment? How?
- South Africa makes up 6% of the population of Africa and is the most significant contributor to the economy of Africa. Dynamite comes in small packages!

Credits

Ex Executive Director of the Electricity and Energy Directorate: George Ferreira, in being innovative by implementing Mentoring Contracts and the continued support given by the Acting Executive Director, Richard Harris, together with their staff.

Director: Projects, Peter Neilson, for the support and confidence shown.

Mentor: Mike Roote, for the significant contributions made in skills development and the relevant training structures implemented within the Projects Sub-Directorate.

Planning Engineers: Tyronne Ferndale, Kevin Beme and Denis Johns for the contributions and support given in the day-to-day functions of mentoring and training.

Support and Contributions made by:

Projects Engineer, Paul Gerber

Electrification Engineer, Elwyn Williams

GIS Manager, Tiger Pather, Pictures by Keith Piers

Administration: Hanlie Junius and Pauline Veitch

Director: Technical, Stephen Adams

Training Manager, Johan Scheepers



- Questions