



# **Strategic Approach to Skills Development and Staff Retention**

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## **Background**

### **Shortages in RSA**

- Electrical Energy and Skilled Human Effort

### **Singapore Leadership**

- Concerned about the next generation if they have what it takes to lead the country into a brighter future



## Background

- **With reference to critical staff in electricity undertakings:**
  - 25% are more than 50 years old
  - 30% are between 41 and 50 years old
  - 35% are between 31 and 40 years old
  - 10% are less than 30 years old



## 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 )



## Introduction

- An engineer departed for London because he desired a professional environment
- How do we create and sustain a professional working environment that inspires staff and produces the desired results?



# Introduction

- Professionalism in the World of Sports





## **Strategic Solutions**

1. An organisational structure resourced to effectively apply skills development
2. Contracted Mentors
3. Developing A Skills Base



# 1. Organisational Structure

- Flexibility not at the expense of order

## **Important aspects:**

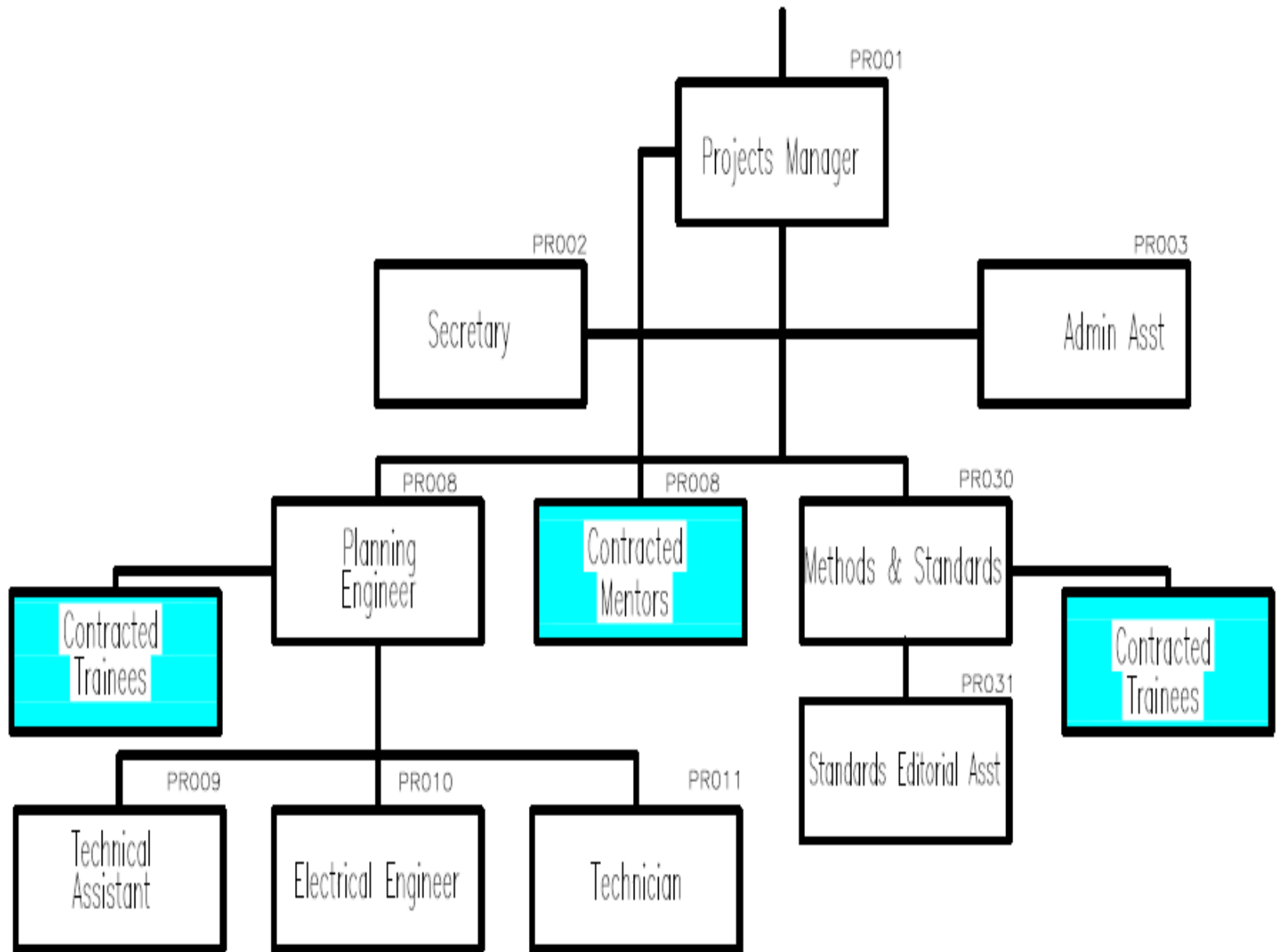
- Long/Medium Term Planning of Electrical Networks
- Methods and Standards
- Renewable Energy
- Demand Side Management
- Equipment Maintenance
- Skills Development and Staff Retention





# 1. Organisational Structure

- Incorporate Contracted Mentors and Trainees



## 2. Contracted Mentors





## 2. Contracted Mentors

- Building a culture of learning in order to develop personnel to their full potential
- A positive approach in relieving management and staff from the full burden of developing staff as per the skills development principles
- With the efforts of the Manager and Mentor, the company skill levels can increase at a faster rate



## 2. Contracted Mentors

### Successes:

- Only one staff member has resigned over the past three years within the technical sections of the Projects Division where high staff turnover has been experienced
- Five trainees who went through the processes of development outlined above were successful in interviews and have been appointed within the Directorate. As a result, five critical vacancies have been filled and staff has been retained
- There is a positive working environment that exists across different race groups and genders
- A national interest in duplicating principles across other sectors



## 2. Contracted Mentors

### Characteristics:

- A desire to develop staff
- A good understanding of the functions and systems
- Experienced enough to transfer skills to junior and senior members of staff
- Good teaching and public speaking abilities
- Versatility and flexibility
- A team person

## 2. **Contracted Mentors**

### **Characteristics:**

- Willingness to learn and embrace new ideas
- A strength and support to management
- A good leader and administrator
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good character
- Well respected
- Not threatened or intimidated by the progress of staff beyond their own skill levels

## 2. **Contracted Mentors**

### **Key Objectives:**

- Creating a learning culture
- Establishing a solid skills base
- Creating a positive working environment and camaraderie amongst staff
- Producing excellent teams
- Providing incentives for staff to achieve e.g. presenting awards for the best team
- Building a full staff complement
- Developing the expertise and technical depth required





## 2. Contracted Mentors

### Key Objectives:

- Developing future managers
- Networking with the wider body of engineers to remain in touch with the latest technical developments
- Being a support and strength to management in the roll out of the organisation's objectives
- Lecturing on the fundamentals of electricity and management
- On site practical demonstrations
- Career path mapping by creating mentoring relationships amongst all staff



### **3. Developing A Skills Base Definition:**

- Establishing and sustaining the expertise and experience that the organisation requires in fulfilling its objectives
- Making a meaningful contribution to the wider body of engineering



### **3. Developing A Skills Base**

#### **Key vehicles:**

- Foundational lectures
- Upskilling Training – addressing managerial and higher level technical issues
- Scheduled ECSA accredited training
- Mentor and Mentee relationships
- Design and Research Projects
- Engaging with other institutions
- Managing personnel well
- Assessing personnel with the aim of encouraging growth



### 3. **Developing A Skills Base**

#### **Key vehicles:**

- Monthly team building events



- Establishing accountability with the working teams



## Leadership

- “Leaders establish the vision for the future and set the strategy for getting there; they cause change. They motivate and inspire others to go in the right direction and they, along with everyone else, sacrifice to get there.” John Kotter
- The strategies we have do not happen unless there is effective leadership.
- Exposure to the wider body of engineering to learn and grow in step with current trends and better practices in which the industry is moving forward.(AMEU, CIGRE, ECSA,NRS working groups and Engineering Magazines)



# Leadership

## Key actions:

- Keeping the teams focussed on the objectives
- Ensuring that the right people with the right gifts and right talents are involved with the correct functions
- Maximising every team member's contribution



## Conclusion:

### 4) How should this problem be addressed?

- A collective and united effort from all industry stakeholders.
- A strong leadership approach applying strategic solutions in reversing the negative cycles. These solutions should include: developing a learning culture, employing mentors and recruiting trainees who can be developed for job opportunities within the organization and industry as a whole.



- Questions



## 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, Mvuleni Bukula, 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



## **Conclusion:**

- 1) **What are the main causes of current skills shortages in the SA energy industry?**
  - The lack of professional working environments.
  - Extensive times to resolve issues, staff shortages and uncompetitive salary packages.



## **Conclusion:**

### **2) How does this impact on the industry?**

- Equipment failure due to lack of maintenance
- Effective organizational systems breaking down
- Staff turnover
- Insufficient skills to deliver a quality service



## **Conclusion:**

### **3) How serious is this problem?**

- Statistics indicate that we have lost unacceptable numbers of skilled personnel, which now need to be replaced. I understood these realities better when I discovered that two key sections of high profile organizations together require at least 35 personnel and have only 10 at present. If I just consider this scenario and the statistics that are available then the problem is very serious.



## Background

June 30, 2009

Minister of Higher Education and Training-  
Blade Nzimande:

- “The report estimates that of the approximately 2.8 million of 18 to 24 year olds are neither in employment, nor education or training. This implies that over 40 percent of our youth are not productively engaged. This is a huge wastage of human potential and a squandered opportunity for social and economic development.”



# Leadership

## Key actions:

- Evenly distributing the workload so that morale stays high and burnout stays low
- Facilitating communication so that all teams remain in the information loop
- Nurturing healthy relationships



### **3. Developing A Skills Base**

#### **Key steps:**

- Appoint mentors
- Create a skills development culture
- Recruit trainees
- Expose personnel to a wide range of technical and managerial practices
- Delegate responsibilities to personnel
- Affirm personnel in their progress



## 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