

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT TRAINING; IS SOUTH AFRICA GETTING IT RIGHT?

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Various business schools, universities, and other educational institutions offer a wide variety of management courses; but are these training programmes adequately preparing managers for the professional market? Management training should encompass soft and technical skills, while building characteristics that encourage effective management and functional teams. How can this be achieved?

Many people in a management position cannot further advance in their careers without a formal management qualification, regardless of their everyday competence in their position. True management training sets itself apart from inferior courses when emphasis is placed on imparting real-world management skills and on-point, effective assessments. This can only be delivered if the learning institution employs top class facilitators, best practice material, innovative delivery methodologies and an experienced ability to analyse needs. However, before needs can be analysed, a clear understanding must be developed regarding who managers are, and what they need to know.

The rather stale argument of whether managers are leaders and leaders are managers always crops up at this point. A manager needs to be an effective leader, able to motivate the workforce to mobilise itself and reach the organisation's goals, while being able to delegate tasks effectively. In leading, managers determine direction, state a clear vision for employees to follow and help employees to understand the role they play in achieving goals that they all understand and believe in. Therefore, a manager must be able to communicate effectively and build sound relationships (soft skills). While various leadership styles exist, no single style is effective at all times and training should assist managers to know which approach would be most appropriate to utilise at which times.

While experts in their field are often promoted to management positions on the strength of their technical/product expertise, being a technical expert does not equate to being a good manager - even if managing a team full of technical experts. Effective management training must equip managers with the skills of management.

Learning institutions must realise that managers need to be trained holistically, in soft and technical skills, for the training to be effective. While certain inborn characteristics certainly lend themselves to being more naturally adept in management positions, great leaders and managers are not built on personal characteristics alone. No matter the manager's skills

level, there is always something new to learn, a style that can be adapted or a communication skill that can be improved on.

That being said, as important as these skills are, institutions should not strive to teach the basics only. They should aim to lay a firm foundation of soft skills, upon which real-world managerial and technical skills can stand to enable the manager to build an organisation that works together, moving forward together with a singular, purposeful goal in mind; success.

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Boilerplate:

Founded in 1999, Workplace Skills Solutions t/a The Institute of People Development (IPD) strives to equip, prepare and certify practitioners to serve South Africa's skills development strategy and facilitate the transformation of education and training. Over the years, IPD has become the preferred people development partner to most state owned and private enterprises in Southern Africa. For more information, please contact IPD at trainingenquiries@peopledev.co.za, on (011) 315 2913 or visit www.peopledevelopment.co.za