

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT GOES FURTHER THAN TRAINERS AND HR

By Mark Orpen, CEO of The Institute of People Development

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By virtue of the fact that learning and development (L&D) functions in the Education, Training and Development (ETD) sector, many believe that its role purely relates to training facilitators and human resource departments. Yet this limiting and narrow view of both L&D and ETD lead to the misconception that the skills taught cannot be utilised in other parts of the business, such as equipping top management with enhanced problem solving skills, or employing L&D professionals in management teams.

When viewed from this angle, L&D and ETD relates to any business that has a management structure in place, and can offer invaluable skills which will drive optimum performance. Due to the fact that ETD facilitates skills development, it can be utilised by management to develop methods for the strategic steering of their teams.

The ETD process looks much like the tactical problem solving one. ETD begins with a needs analysis, identifying the skills required to fill a company's strategic needs. In management, the first step to solving a problem is analysing the information at hand to determine the root of the problem. An ETD practitioner would then use this information to design a solution in order to ensure the proper filling of all skills gaps, while determining where upskilling can be achieved. Similarly, a manager would creation an action plan to resolve the problem the manager, team or business is facing.

Once this process has been completed, the ETD practitioner would implement the designed solution, either through formal or informal interventions, measure the return on investment (ROI) achieved and report back about the skills development cycle. This is akin to the process that a manager would follow in implementing the solution designed and then determining whether the implementation was a success.

Human Resource Development training was recently held at the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The feedback indicated that the skills transferred reached much further than the HR department. According to the SADC newsletter; "Human resource development can be linked to the goals and strategies of an organisation, while identifying the major external and internal factors that influence employee behaviour, define motivation and describe the main approaches to understanding motivation at work."

How is ETD, and how are ETD practitioners, suited to top management in all organisations? The ETD role is strategic, teaches problem solving and develops the ability to manage people, deal with other peoples' needs and perform total project management in many contexts. These skills are an undeniable asset to any person in any management position.

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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

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