

It's about time !

SETAs need to start investing in meaningful, useful solutions implementable across providers to prevent duplication of efforts and materials development. Far too much time and effort is spent by private providers duplicating programme design systems and tools development at an enormous cost to the economy. The SETAs may need to come up with a unified initiative to pull together constituent providers and share knowledge, processes, systems and tools.

“Essentially we need to train productive learners at a fraction of the current cost if we are to survive in a modern economy. Our competition is not each other, as training providers or SETAs, it may rather be the 90 million Chinese who are taking trade away from South Africans through better productivity and pricing strategies,” states Mark Orpen, CEO of Institute of People Development (IPD). “South Africa needs all the competent people it can get – there is no longer time left for petty rivalry.

“What may well be needed is for SETAs to provide funding budgets to research and develop programmes, materials and common shared tools as generic solutions for industry, private and public training providers.

“Take for instance customer service – it is absurd investing in developing the very same thing for there are common elements in all industries on what constitutes good customer service. One example of cost effective materials development support could be seen where SETAs fund the generic components across providers who then only customise application workbooks to better facilitate the learning. In this example:

The first step would be managed by the SETAs who produce generic textbooks, information sources or materials. This has large scale, cost-effective benefits that government can thus bring to the party. The second step is to develop handbooks that contain policies, procedures, case studies and tools. The third step is producing portfolio (workbook) guides also generic in style.

“Training providers should then conduct research and develop case studies and through continually recycling best practice work, to achieve their competitive edge,” continues Orpen.

“Scenario planning, between providers and SETAs, could give South Africa a competitive training edge that could stand her in good stead for the next ten years and save millions in wasted spending. Perhaps we need to re-visit the seventh SAQA “commandment “,”Thou shall see the world as a set of inter-related systems and recognise that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation,” concludes Orpen.

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