

Employee training ticks BEE scorecard

Customised employee training is rapidly becoming the way to grow your skills base and notch up vital BEE points. It remains one of the highest return investments and with the new BEE codes which come into effect later this year, it makes good business sense.



The new BEE scorecard has shifted significantly and one of the key changes is a reduction of scores from seven to five. *Employment Equity and Management Control* have been consolidated, and *Preferential Procurement and Enterprise Development* have merged to form *Enterprise and Supplier Development*.

Less a reduction and more a rearrangement of scores

"The new code which is effective from October this year is less a reduction and more a rearrangement of scores," says Academy of York principal, Richard Leeming. One of the most important changes is that there are now three priority pillars: Ownership; Skills Development; and Enterprise and Supplier Development. Skills development has become hugely important with a hefty weighting of 20 points."

In order to gain the 20 skills development points, companies have to provide targeted training which can include bursaries, learnerships, apprenticeships and internships. Training compliance targets are based on the economically active population, but can include the unemployed. Companies can now earn five bonus points if 100% of the learners are absorbed into employment within the organisation or in the industry. This means that organisations will have to choose quality learners and training carefully rather than just focusing on the numbers.

Should the skills development threshold of 40% (eight of the available 20 points) not be achieved, the overall score will be discounted, thus penalising the company. Companies not meeting the threshold will drop one level on their BEE scorecard.

A holistic, tailored solution

"Such incentives will see more and more CEO's and business leaders in South Africa investing in their employees and at Academy of York we have developed a holistic solution to assist transformation managers to gain the maximum amount of skills development points effectively and efficiently," says Leeming.

"We have honed our offering into five steps beginning with an initial strategic session to understand what's needed, proceeding to setting objectives, then on to a comprehensive skills gap analysis before providing the solution to management, and finally initialising training."

There are many advantages to customised training: content can be tailored to suit your organisation's unique needs and to reach specific goals; it helps to build teamwork through group brainstorming and shared learning experiences; it is very convenient as you get to choose optimal dates, times and locations for the training to take place; and it can save time and money with staff spending fewer hours away from work and not racking up travel, food and lodging expenses.

Blended and flipped learning

"Over a million people in South Africa are currently studying via distance learning and it is a method of learning that keeps growing in numbers as it offers so many benefits. At Academy of York, we offer a tailored solution to corporates that can include blended learning, which combines distance education with contact sessions, or flipped learning where students study a specific module prior to a contact or classroom session. Both methods add great value to any learning programme and the latter technique has been found to yield far more student participation with facilitators as they have already read the information in the module, thus enabling them to ask relevant and pertinent questions," he says.

The benefits of upskilling your employees are well-documented and range from increased performance, productivity and motivation to enhancing company profits while saving money and time. Training also improves a company's competitive edge, enhances customer satisfaction and retains staff. "Encouraging employees to learn while they work encourages creativity and a culture of learning and development. Doing this through customised training and while maximising your BEE scorecard benefits all within the company," concludes Leeming.

Customised training methods are based on the belief that one size does not fit all and at a time when corporates are encouraged through their BEE scorecard to reduce skills shortages in the country, it looks like the way to go.

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