

## Short courses can improve career prospects

Short course qualifications that are recent, relevant and specific can be far better indicators of person's current skills than a qualification achieved years ago. Needing from 8 to 120 hours of commitment, they enable someone to kick-start his or her career.



© georgejmcittle – 123RF.com

“In our tough economic climate, employers – from small startups to major corporations – want to be sure that people are equipped to carry out the roles they need performed. Short courses continue to gain popularity with career-minded individuals seeking to boost their prospects, as well as with those who want study but are not able to do so full time,” says Peter Kriel, GM of The Independent Institute of Education (IIE).

“Many short courses are offered online but there remains an ongoing interest in those that are presented face-to-face in groups, as it is hard to match the interaction, collaboration and networking achieved in this way.”

The IIE’s key providers of short courses, Vega School and The Business School at Varsity College, confirmed that most students enrolled with the aim to ensure their skills were up-to-date and immediately applicable in the workplace, as it improved their career prospects.

“There is a direct correlation between the demand for short courses and the corporate world demand on staff to take up a new role or responsibility quickly. This is where short courses come into their own, as the give ambitious people what they need when they need it and in an immediately implementable way.”

### Popular short courses

- **Business management** - Short courses in business management remain very popular with those individuals who are progressing up the ladder at work and feel the need for a sound and quick exposure to key functional areas of responsibility for managers. Many may go on to do more formal education c

already have a foundation that they are consolidating, but we see a strong correlation between workplace opportunities and enrolment in this short course.

- **Marketing management** - In a tough economic environment, many existing managers and others recognise the potential that an ability to analyse and solve marketing challenges gives to achieving strategic advantage for business and for themselves. Small business owners understand the need to market effectively, but do not always know how. Finally, those with a sales background find that a foundation in marketing is an effective way to broaden their value to employers and enhance their earnings.
- **Project management** - Given the complexity of virtually all environments, project management methodology continues to gain traction as a core competency for those who want to help move a company forward effectively and efficiently. There is broad recognition these days that project management is a skillset that can be taught and, if applied well, can result in success in difficult situations. “As a result, we are not surprised that this course, which gives core skills to those who are required to plan and complete projects in time and on budget continues to be one of the most popular.”
- **Supply chain & logistics management** - Similarly, more and more managers understand that logistics and supply chains can make or break a growing business and thus the demand for training in this core function continues to grow.
- **Brand management in a digital world** - several short courses that embrace technology for improved effectiveness are experiencing a surge in enrolments. These include short courses in Digital Brand Strategy, Desktop Publishing and Design, Web Design, Copywriting for Brands, Gamification in Brand Building and Strategic Brand Leadership. Companies that do not embrace these opportunities find their growth stalled and more and more people in small, medium and large businesses want the skills to manage their own brands in a digital world.

“Short courses are now very much focused on career progression and new skills and few people have the personal resources or can get funded by their employers for ‘vanity courses’, focused on personal growth. This is not only because of the state of the economy but also because of the rapidly changing demands of the world of work.

“Employers reward staff and seek new candidates who can demonstrate that they have achieved a solid grounding in a specific niche field and that they are able to perform specific duties from the word go. Short courses are therefore an option for those people who need to upskill or wide-skill within a limited time, whose time for studies is limited, or who need to demonstrate that they can meet a business need right away,” concludes Kriel.

For more information, go to [www.iie.ac.za](http://www.iie.ac.za).