

Training is critical towards sustainable development

"There is no substitute for training in business," says Charlotte Mokoena, Telkom's Group Executive for the company's Centre for Learning, "as an enabling tool and to aid adaptation to changing environments and to contribute towards sustainable development."

Mokoena highlighted the value of training for human resource development leaders at the American Society for Training and Development global conference and exhibition in Cape Town recently. Over 320 human resource development professionals from more than 10 countries attended the event, which highlighted the value of training for human resource development leaders and businesses alike.

"The only alternative for those not regarding it (training) as a business imperative is the gradual decline of human capital critical for long-term sustenance and growth of their businesses," Mokoena said. She maintains that in the fast-changing global and local environment in which businesses like Telkom operate, re-skilling and training of employees and investing in education, should be part of the business culture.

"Only when business leaders embrace training - can they successfully adapt to the changing business environment and further grow their revenues through exploiting new opportunities."

She implored business leaders not to treat training as a middle management operation responsibility, but as a vehicle to meet business needs.

Telkom is also investing heavily in South Africa's education in a drive to provide more highly skilled technical graduates into the economy. About R23 million was spent on its graduate development programme (full time bursary scheme) in the 2003/2004 financial year, making Telkom one of the biggest companies investing in training and education.

The absorption of graduates into Telkom is guided by the company's strategic human capital needs, with the demand now being in the commercial field, including marketing.

"For Telkom, investing in our future leaders and professionals through education and training is a strategic and business objective because we are alive to the fact that the company's future success will be determined by the calibre of the staff we employ and develop," Mokoena said.

"The role of business leaders to invest time and effort over and above financial resources is crucial in unlocking the human capital to satisfy and meet the customer expectations.