

Do more than just tick a B-BBEE box - make training a top business priority



Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) is a prerequisite for doing business in South Africa, and training forms a significant portion of the B-BBEE scorecard. However, training is also critical to help address the skills shortage in the country that is only growing as we move into the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). Businesses need to make training a priority, working not only with B-BBEE consultants but also with Skills Development Facilitators (SDFs) and importantly, outsourced training partners. This ensures organisations can tick all of the boxes while also developing skills they need to create a competitive edge and maintain focus on their core business.

Pieces of the puzzle

Many businesses make use of a B-BBEE consultant to assist with identifying requirements for the B-BBEE scorecard. This includes training on priority skills. An SDF can then engage with the business to identify skills shortages and requirements, and thereafter create a skills program. The SDF will endeavour to marry required skills with B-BBEE priority skills in order to create the best blend to achieve both business and B-BBEE benefits.

However, neither of these providers actually deliver the training required. In addition, there is such a broad range of skills that may be required, either from a business or compliance perspective, that it is impossible to deliver everything in-house. No single organisation can be an expert in their core business as well as every facet of skills training they need. This is why it is advisable to obtain the services of expert, accredited third-party training partners, that will tailor training programs to meet skills

development and B-BBEE goals.

Skills development benefits everyone

Training makes up 20% of the B-BBEE scorecard, and as such is a significant part of compliance. In addition, even if all other elements score high enough to raise a company's B-BBEE level to, for example, Level 2, if their training does not obtain at least eight out of the 20 available points, they will automatically drop to Level 3. This can affect many elements of business including tenders and contracts. It is necessary to spend a certain amount of turnover on training and improve the skills of a specific percentage of staff, in order to achieve this.

However, training should be about more than just a compliance exercise. Certain sectors, such as mining, need to engage in community development programs, and working with SDFs and training providers can help to upskill these communities. This in turn provides both skills development and workplace experience, helping to address some of the underlying socio-economic inequalities we face.

In addition, training staff in the right areas improves not only their skills, but their productivity levels as well. There are many forms this training can take. The most common is learnerships, which provide a full 12-month qualification with both theory and practical experience. Not only do learnerships match companies with the skills they need, it also provides opportunities for learners without previous formal qualifications to obtain one and further their career prospects. In addition, there are skills programs, part qualifications, apprenticeships and short courses like first aid and health and safety, which can be matched to the needs of the business.

The right partner is key

While many organisations have some training in-house, it is simply not possible to maintain the resources capable of delivering training on every single element required for B-BBEE, compliance or business improvement.

Partnering with accredited training providers through B-BBEE consultants and SDFs can ensure that the right skills are transferred, at the appropriate level, adding business value. In addition, organisations will be able to focus on their core business, while having peace of mind that training is up to date and that B-BBEE compliance and skills development are taken care of.

Skills should always be a top priority for every company. Even if budgets are tight, there are always creative ways to make sure training is cost effective, if you engage with the right partner.

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