

# PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

According to Gary Singh, business manager at SETA-accredited Occupational Health & Safety Training (OHST), the realisation of Zero Harm is almost impossible with a traditional, reactive approach to health and safety

**T**he traditional approach to employee health and safety is reactive; employers try to resolve issues after an incident occurs. Although we have come a long way since the Industrial Revolution, whether compliance and systems have been fully understood and implemented is still questionable.

Our constitution provides for safe and healthy workplaces, with strong compliance to legislation. We have evolved tremendously from a quality perspective.

Why then is health and safety "suffering"? The answer lies in statistics. Fatalities can be measured by statistical means, but never managed in that manner - we should never cause harm, injury or death to people for the sake of production. Companies need to understand that their people are their greatest asset and invest in them. One of the avenues is training and development.

#### WHAT MAKES GOOD TRAINING?

Training courses have to be approved

by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) - or be aligned to its unit standards. The most effective training courses are those that are customised to meet the needs of the organisation. All courses must have specific outcomes to be assessed.

People have to be the focal point of health and safety training ... *Abantu Kuqala* (translated as People First) is OHST's philosophy; we have a "common safety sense" approach to occupational health and safety.

#### ISN'T ADULT TRAINING MORE DIFFICULT?

For adult learning, group activities, classroom activities and practical exposure add huge value to training courses. Importantly, the facilitator will either make or break the learning experience. Facilitators must have ability, sound experience and competence in the field.

#### TRAINING AND EDUCATION IS ONGOING

Employers must constantly assess the outcomes and refresh learning at

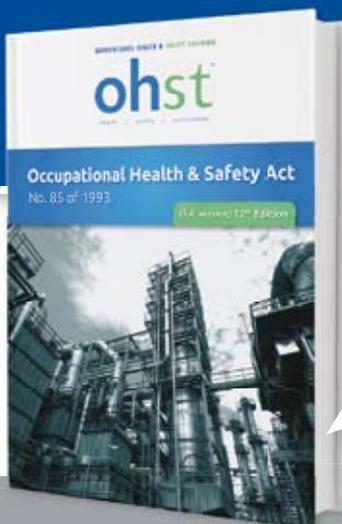
appropriate times, and ensure that the correct culture and coaching processes are upheld. It is frustrating for staff members to be motivated and empowered through courses which aren't supported ...

#### KEEPING STAFF INTERESTED IS DIFFICULT

Many employees work primarily to obtain a salary. The employer must provide work instructions for each task, but each task has associated hazards ... "Hunting these hazards" and exposing them is paramount, as they hold various risks; such as the company's moral obligations, compliance to legislation and financial implications.

OHST's courses are geared not only towards teaching, but at illustrating, to the learners, the downstream and upstream perspective of occupational health and safety.

This will help employers adopt a more proactive approach by understanding the workplace health and safety risks and do their best to ensure Zero Harm is achievable. **|SHEQ**



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