

PLASTICS|SA'S TRAINING DIVISION HOSTS INFORMATION SHARING BREAKFASTS

News of new learning programmes, qualifications and digital certificates welcomed



Johannesburg, 9 April 2018. Plastics|SA's Training Division recently hosted a series of well-attended information sharing breakfasts at its regional offices in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Durban with the aim of providing details of exciting new learning programmes that it will soon be offering.

Welcoming guests at all four events, Plastics|SA's Training Executive, Kirtida Bhana, stressed the importance of offering relevant, up-to-date learning programmes that address the changing needs in the plastics industry. "Plastics are an important part of the country's manufacturing sector. It is therefore critical to ensure that we have the correct skills in place to sustain our growth over the next few years to come," she said.

According to Kirtida, these annual get-togethers offer their current and potentially new customers the ideal opportunity to become familiar with the Training Divisions offering, culture and values, whilst the training teams are on hand to answer any questions they may have regarding accessing funding, course content or tailoring courses to their specific needs.

Improving local content input and output

During the past financial year, Plastics|SA successfully trained more than 3 000 learners. Whilst the most popular learning programmes are those centred around the actual manufacturing processes (with quality and safety programmes being part of these), the Training Division also launched a National Certificate in Production Technology (NQF2) and Generic Management (NQF5) last year. Another important step forward is being able to run scheduled Pipe and Profile extrusion programmes at each of their regional offices, using their newly acquired extruders. Apart from theoretical grounding, students are now also equipped with much-needed practical experience in extrusion, blow moulding, injection moulding and the various plastics fabrication welding techniques.

"We were also in the fortunate position to be able to send some of our trainers overseas to be up-skilled and trained in the latest techniques. They brought this expertise back to South Africa and developed local course materials in line with international best practices," Kirtida confirmed.

Exciting new training offerings introduced in 2018

Statistics for the past 3 years suggest that training spend has increased steadily year on year owing to the fact that companies are realising the value that trained staff undoubtedly add to their businesses. In order to keep up with this demand and to expand its service offering, Plastics|SA is now offering various new Learning Programmes that were developed specifically with the local training needs in mind. These include:

- **Scheduled pipe and profile extrusion programme.**
 - After acquiring new pipe and profile extruders in all three factories nationally, these specific extruder programmes have now become part of our Scheduled programmes.
- **Production Technology NQF L2.**
 - Since the technology of production goes hand in hand with the actual process technology, this offering is absolutely critical in addressing production related skills gaps.

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- **A national certificate in Generic Management NQF L5**
 - This is an exciting new offering that is in the pipeline for the new financial year starting in July 2018. Learners that have Supervisory Management NQF L4 are looking for progression. The Generic Management NQF L5 is the next step for these progressive learners.
- **Various online training options for soft skills**
 - These are going to be available for all levels of the workforce including office-based staff and not just factory staff.

Other news of forthcoming programmes include the new Bachelor of Engineering Technology in Materials Engineering in Polymers that will be offered at TUT as from 2019, as well as a new 3-year Setter Trade Qualification (the first ever plastics related trade) launching later this year and will be offered by Plastics|SA.

Digital certification

Keeping up with modern trends, Plastics|SA will be issuing learners with digital certificates instead of hard-copy certificates as from the 1st of April 2018. One of the biggest benefits of going digital, is that it negates the need for printing of hard-copy certificates which have to be either be collected, posted or courier-delivered to a client's premises. It also allows clients to always have access to learners' certificates via the virtual 'vault' created for each client.

"Once learners have been found competent in a learning programme, Plastics|SA creates an original, digital certificate for each learner which is uploaded into an online "vault" - a user-friendly cloud platform from where these certificates can be viewed, e-mailed, printed or downloaded for easy reference," Kirtida explained.

Other guest speakers

Guests who attended the breakfast sessions welcomed news of these exciting developments before being treated to a variety of different guest speakers who offered insights on topics relevant to each region. In Cape Town, Raldo Kruger of Green Cape spoke about the city's current drought plans, the business opportunities that exist for plastic companies and what local companies should do to survive the current crisis. The Johannesburg session saw Matthews Moatli of Productivity SA and Matshidiso Phala of merSETA explain details about the grants that are available through merSETA and how companies should go about applying for this funding for training of their staff members. Thandolwethu Strydom from East Coast Radio entertained the KZN guests and spoke about the importance of everyone in society and how different skills are deeply valuable to the plastics industry, no matter what rung of the corporate or societal ladder these are played out from.

Each session ended with an exciting lucky draw during which guests won a variety of different plastic products and including training vouchers.

Conclusion

"We wish to thank everybody who took time out of their busy schedules to attend our information sessions and for the very positive feedback we have been receiving. Scenario analysts around the world agree that there will continue to be growing pressure and demands on the manufacturing industry in order to keep up with the demands of the population. We believe we are enabling manufacturers to be in the position where they can continue to reinvent themselves and remain competitive because they have a skilled work force that is able to perform well and do the job at hand. We truly believe that a knowledgeable employee is an asset to any company. For this reason, training should be seen as the ultimate motivational tool that every company needs to invest in," Kirtida concluded.

Captions to photographs:

1. Isaya Ntuli of Plastics|SA, Matshidiso Phala of Merseta and Andiswa Mbuque of Sibile HR Consulting who won the training voucher during the Johannesburg presentation.
2. Isaya Ntuli of Plastics|SA, Matshidiso Phala of Merseta, Moatli Matthews of Productivity SA and Kirtida Bhana of Plastics|SA
3. A group pic of some of the guests who attended the Port Elizabeth information session
4. MerSETA CLO presenter Siyabulela Sibotoboto with Isabelle Brettenny of Plastics|SA Western Cape
5. Thandolwethu Strydom was the guest speaker at the KZN breakfast, seen here with Dikotsi Moloji of Inkulu Plastics
6. Kirtida Bhana, Plastics|SA's Training Executive with Nosipho Hlangeni of Mpack Plastics photographed at the KZN session

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