PRESS RELEASE

PLASTICS SA TO SPEARHEAD GROUNDBREAKING KAIZEN™ PROJECT IN SOUTH AFRICA

"Small Changes Now, Can Have Future Big Impacts"

Johannesburg, *9 October 2023*. In a significant step toward enhancing the productivity and quality standards in South Africa's plastics industry, Plastics SA is thrilled to announce its pivotal role in managing the Quality and Productivity Improvement (KAIZEN™) Project. This milestone project is a result of a collaboration between the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (DTIC). Plastics SA, the umbrella body representing the local plastics industry, is a proud member of the National Quality and Productivity Network (NQPN), and has been tasked with the responsibility of leading the charge in implementing KAIZEN™ principles within the South African plastics sector.

The KAIZEN™ initiative was officially launched during a momentous signing ceremony held on 14 September 2023, in South Africa. Anton Hanekom, Executive Director of Plastics SA, represented the organisation at this auspicious event and expressed his enthusiasm for the introduction of this invaluable business philosophy to the local plastics industry.

"The collaboration between JICA, DTIC, and Plastics SA represents the first-ever KAIZEN™ Train-the-Trainer Project in South Africa, with the primary goal of instilling KAIZEN™ principles within the industry and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. We are honoured that our commitment to this initiative is exemplified through our Academy for Learning and Development, which will be involved in the JICA Project. Kirtida Bhana, Head of Plastics SA's Academy, played a pivotal role in discussions leading to the partnership between DTIC and JICA. Her leadership culminated in the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that formally inducted Plastics SA into the National Quality and Productivity Network for the KAIZEN™ Project in South Africa," Hanekom said.

What is KAIZEN™?

KAIZEN is a renowned Japanese business philosophy that centres on the gradual enhancement of productivity and the optimisation of work environments. Its fundamental principles are as follows:

1. **Continuous Improvement**: KAIZEN™ encourages ongoing efforts to improve processes and systems, irrespective of the employee's role or position within the organisation.
2. **Small Changes, Big Impact**: By focusing on small, incremental changes in processes, such as quality control, just-in-time delivery, standardization of work, efficient equipment utilization, and waste reduction, KAIZEN™ paves the way for substantial long-term improvements.
3. **Employee Involvement**: KAIZEN™ promotes the active involvement of all employees in identifying and implementing improvements, fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for continuous enhancement.
4. **Global Recognition**: Today, KAIZEN™ enjoys global recognition as a vital component of the long-term competitive strategies of successful organizations.

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Benefitting local companies

As part of this groundbreaking endeavour, companies operating in the automotive component sector of the plastics industry, as well as those considering entry into this sector, were invited to participate in hosting candidates for the KAIZEN™ programme. These candidates will undertake practical projects within the host companies' plants, guided by a dedicated KAIZEN™ expert. The programme spans six weeks and includes weekly consultations to facilitate learning and implementation.

One of the standout achievements of this collaboration is the selection of Koos Phalane, a Technical Trainer at Plastics SA's Academy in Gauteng, as part of the inaugural group of trainees for the Train-the-Trainer Programme in KAIZEN implementation. Phalane embarked on his training journey in July 2023 and regards this opportunity as a once-in-a-lifetime experience. His training will culminate in him becoming a fully certified KAIZEN™ Expert, a significant milestone that Plastics SA aims to replicate with more Academy Trainers in subsequent cohorts.

Direct impact on the local plastics industry

Expressing his optimism about the KAIZEN™ project and it's ability to transform the local plastics industry, Hanekom said he is confident that the results will be improved productivity, enhanced product quality, and a reduction in waste.

"The KAIZEN™ methodology is recognized worldwide as an essential pillar of many successful organisations' long-term competitive strategies and we are very excited about the prospect of this philosophy being introduced to the operations in the South African Plastics Industry. It underscores the belief that small changes now, can have future big impacts. Workers are encouraged to keep adding value to the organisation. Not only does this boosts morale, but it also gives everyone ownership of continuous improvement efforts. As Plastics SA takes on the vital role of implementing KAIZEN™ principles within the plastics industry, we believe it marks a remarkable step forward that will undoubtedly strengthen our competitive position on the global stage. We are fully committed to ensuring its success," he concluded.

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Note to the Editor:
Plastics SA is the umbrella body representing all facets of the South African plastics industry. The company is committed to promoting sustainability, innovation, and best practices within the industry, ensuring its continued growth and success.