Skills Development and Transfer Strategy

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ABSTRACT

South Africa as a developing country is faced with numerous challenges amongst them is the shortage of skills in the working environment. Skills shortage has been aggravated by the retirement of the ageing skilled workforce and emigration of most experienced professionals to first world countries. Some professionals once they acquire the experience they opt out for a consultative business. This leaves a gap or void in the industries which can results into poor performance and quality, lessening of business standards and loosing competition. This challenge need to be attended to, because it will lead to hiring of consultants in most jobs or having many young and less experienced professionals and new graduates filling these gaps.

The South African Young Nuclear Professionals Society (SAYNPS) has developed a strategic plan to serve as a guideline on how these challenges mentioned above can be addressed [1]. The proposed strategy will be aligned with skills development in the line of work and should get support from the nuclear Industry. Young professionals and recent graduates are the most affected people who lack skills and shall benefit from these programmes. In order for skill development and transfer to be accomplished there should be a Skill Development and Transfer Strategy and procedures to be followed.

1 INTRODUCTION

The South African nuclear industry has been growing since the initiation of the new HTR project, building of the smelter, the helium test facility and the fuel plant, etc. Furthermore the localization of the supply chains in the country will also put more demand on the skills development and transfer. SAYNPS has developed a strategic document to serve as a guideline on how this mentioned challenges can be addressed. The proposed strategy will be aligned with the national skills development strategy [2] and it should also get the support from the nuclear industry. Young professionals are and recent graduates are the most affected people who lack skills and shall benefit from the programmes contained in the said strategic document. In order for skills development and transfer to occur within the industry, there should be a skills development and transfer strategy.

2 SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFER STRATEGY

SAYNPS have developed a strategy that can be used to accomplish skill development and transfer. As part of the strategy a skill audit plan, skill development and transfer plan, interaction of stakeholders and development of competency standards should developed.
2.1 Skills audit plan

The skills audit plan is viewed as a valid reason for the need to develop and transfer skills from the available sources of expertise to the relevant human resources that should be established as follows:

2.1.1 Conduct an audit on Young Nuclear professionals to assess

- Level of qualification obtained
- Level of competence of the YNPs in their designated areas of work
- Training needs and future plans for the YNPs
- Training will also anticipate the growth of the industry

2.1.2 Conduct an audit on Nuclear Experts to assess

- Availability of expertise in various nuclear disciplines
- Competence to deliver skills to YNPs
- Eagerness to impart skills to YNPs
- Challenges envisaged during the process of skills transfer
- Expectations for their involvement in the process

The process to achieve the objectives of this audit plan will be through distribution of the questionnaires to YNPs and nuclear experts within various nuclear organisations in the country and ad hoc discussions with the relevant people.

2.2 Skills development and transfer plan

Based on the outcomes of the SAP, skills development and transfer program will then be developed and implemented in line of work of young professionals. The plan comprises the following programmes:

2.2.1 Job specific skills

These are specific skills that help an employee to accomplish the duties of the job and could be acquired through in-service training, workshops etc.

2.2.2 Self attained skills

These refer to the pro-activeness by the skills requiring professional in order to show activeness to acquire the necessary skills where follow-ups are made without being pushed by the mentor. YNPs should take initiatives to acquire other skills necessary to supplement the programmes.

2.2.3 Project and Mentorship development in the workplace

According to the national skills development act [3], employers are encouraged to:

- Use the workplace as an active learning environment
- Provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills
- Provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience

Hence, skill levy is paid to the department of labour [4]. Projects should be developed in the workplace and allocated to YNPs. These projects will entail the nature of activities YNPs...
have to complete and have a well defined structure with respect to scope and target dates. The following could serve as guidelines how such projects/programmes will be established.

- Set the standardised mentorship programmes in the nuclear industry.
- Identify skills requirement categories in terms of preferences and scarcity
- Identify mentors by means of volunteering, nominations, hiring etc.
- Identify clear cuts for YNPs progression during the process of mentorship.
- Each level will be associated with the criteria for measurable output for YNPs promotion

2.3 Interaction with nuclear stakeholders

SAYNPS will facilitate the discussions with the stakeholders, viz. government departments, nuclear companies in South Africa, institutions of higher learning, nuclear and radiation societies and South African Qualification authority (SAQA). These stakeholders should establish a national nuclear skills transfer committee that will:

- Identify all scarce skills needed by the nuclear industry
- Advice the government and the nuclear industry about the skills development programme that should be established
- Develop a national skills development strategy for the nuclear industry.
- Develop competency standards

2.4 Competence Standard Setting

Setting of national standards of competence for skills development and transfer programmes is of outmost importance. This shall give professionals who have acquired skills recognition in all nuclear related organizations globally. The setting of the competence standards for the YNPs will be conducted between SAYNPS executive committee and the National Nuclear skills transfer committee. Once mentored professional has attained the required level in accordance with a standard, a certificate shall be granted. The general opinion is that this should be recognised by all nuclear role players.

3 CONCLUSION

The involvement of young nuclear professionals in the decision-making, skills development programmes and research and development will help in developing and transferring skills. When old experts retire, young professionals will have enough experience and knowledge in the field.

4 REFERENCES

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4. National skills development levy 1999, depart of Labour, Republic of SA