

Training junior and middle management in the banking sector



The South African banking sector embarked on a unique new programme specifically designed to equip recently appointed junior and middle managers with leadership skills to manage, within the changing context of the broader banking and micro finance environment.

Spearheading the project is the Banking Sector Education and Training Authority (BANKSETA), in collaboration with the Institute of Bankers (IOB). The first phase has already been completed, with the second about to start in February next year, followed by two more phases. A total of about 500 learners will be accommodated over the six to seven months training programme. Already 41 candidates have successfully completed the first phase of the Junior and Middle Management Programme (JAMM) programme this year in Gauteng, 20 in the Western Cape and 15 in KwaZulu-Natal.

BANKSETA's chief executive officer Max Makhubalo says, with the introduction of JAMM, the BANKSETA now has skills development offerings at all levels of the skills pyramid. A major objective of this programme is to increase the talent pool by building a management and leadership pipeline for the sector of suitably skilled leaders within the broader banking and micro finance fraternity who, in the medium to long term, will become eligible to move into more senior roles.

The initial rollout of the programme will take place in Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and the Free State, to be extended to other provinces in accordance with the provincial profile of the BANKSETA and determined by demand for the programme.

While the BANKSETA facilitates the programme and maintains an overseeing role, the IOB will deliver the formal programme content.

The IOB is the sector's professional body, serving as its centre of excellence and bringing with it a sound delivery model, as well

as a vast network of subject matter experts, to ensure that the curriculum meets the current requirements of the industry. A third partner, Pure Innovation (Pty) Ltd, will assist in the selection of learners. Makhubalo says that Pure Innovation offers a wealth of experience in the recruitment, selection and profiling of junior and middle management employees.

"Comprised mainly of people of colour and [women], these employees constitute a broad band of the skills pyramid," adds Makhubalo. These employees do not possess theoretical management knowledge and some of the product knowledge necessary to enable them to progress to the next level.

"We have partnered with the IOB to address these skills gaps. We are very excited about the project and believe it will become one of our flagships."

Makhubalo says the BANKSETA has looked at the skills levels of people outside the sector, those entering the sector, and all skills levels up to executive management level. Through the Education Resource Centre, the organisation is looking at improving the pipeline even prior to the matriculation level. By investing in the improvement of the quality of matriculants and thereby enabling them to compete, they are also increasing the skills pool from which the banking sector recruits. The approach is multi-faceted in that it builds in theory and application (also referred to as work-based action learning) through the varied use of simulated activities and blended learning techniques.

The programme will focus on an integrated approach to learning that combines both technical and behavioural competencies, with a focus on building relationship management skills.

The formal curriculum is interspersed with networking events to allow all participants an opportunity to engage with their peers to share information on industry best practice. The purpose of this programme is not to provide job-specific technical skills, but rather to provide opportunities for aspirant leaders to develop a