Attracting and Retaining Professionals

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High levels of global oil and gas industry activity must address workforce issues to ensure a successful future for this strategic commodity. Attraction and retention of young talent are fundamental to sustainability of the petrochemical industry. There is a need for organizations to manage these processes closely.

Maximizing petrochemicals exploration and development requires young professionals to be able to address technical challenges, increase efficiency and attract new investment. Most companies within the industry currently provide learnerships, bursaries and internships. On the other hand lack of experience, as well as cost-cutting programmes are limiting the recruitment opportunities for young professionals. Development planning, performance reviews, approachable managers, flexible work conditions and effective mentoring are central to harnessing the younger generations’ potential and to nurture their growth.

The topic of recruiting and retaining women continues to receive insufficient attention. Petrochemical companies no longer operate only in a world of manual physical labour. Technical skills and intellect prove to be just as critical. The International Labour Organization considers gender equality as a key element in its vision of Decent Work for All Women and Men institutional change to bring about equity and growth. The ILO’s mandate on gender equality is to promote equality between all women and men in the workplace.

As experienced technical professionals in the industry approach retirement age, strategies should be implemented to retain them in flexible work arrangements. The plan should be to invite back retirees as expert resources to assist in mentoring and coaching of young professionals. Skills transfer and knowledge from this experienced generation to young professionals requires organizational commitment, strong development, mentoring and coaching programs. In addition to attraction and retention strategies organizations may implement poaching in order to address unplanned staff movements like resignations and death.

Effective workforce development is a critical component of the petrochemical industry, and must be managed as the essential building block for future success. Attracting and placing the right person in the right position at the right time is crucial. Both experienced and new entrants need Induction and orientation in company culture and relevant business processes.
Attracting and retaining professionals
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1. Introduction

Given the high levels of activity global oil and gas companies must address workforce issues to ensure a successful future for this strategic industry.

Attraction and retention of young talent is fundamental to sustainability of the petrochemical industry.

There is a need for organizations to manage this process intensively. The challenge in South African is even greater.
2. The South African story

### MID-YEAR POPULATION ESTIMATES 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>40,206,275</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4,565,825</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>4,539,790</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian/Asian</td>
<td>1,274,867</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,586,757</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
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3. South African Employment Figures

- Current Unemployment rate – 25.7%
- 2000-2008 – 26.38%
- Provincial contribution to National GDP
4. Matters of concern

- Skills shortage and development: Develop industry programmes to tackle skills gap and nurture talent

- Lack of work experience: Industry professionals emigrate – leading to replacements by inexperienced employees

- Skills development: Promote cross skills – to harness peoples talents

- Recruitment and Retention: Recruitment process has impact on perception of an organization

- Employee Engagement and Talent Management: Corporate Talent programmes
Recruitment of Women

- SA government to spend R215 billion on education and skills development

- 30 000 more engineers to be integrated to the economy by 2014

- Co-ordinated under Engineering Council of South Africa’s (ECSA) ‘Engenius’ Initiative
5. Bridging the skills gap

- Flexible work arrangements for senior professionals
- Expert resources to mentor and coach young professionals
  - Skills transfer requires organizational commitment
  - Implementation of poaching
Bridging the skills gap

A shortage of skilled engineers and geoscientists is threatening to hamper efforts by Oil and Gas companies that aim to recruit qualified graduates in this field. One of the biggest problems is finding the right people with the right skills.

In South Africa in an attempt to ensure that more learners are successful in completing the tough requirements of engineering degrees, the John Orr Technical High School was turned into an Academy for Engineering and Technology.

Gauteng MEC for Education Barbara Creecy announced that a joint project has been initiated with Sci-Bono Discovery Centre, John Orr Technical High School and Sasol to transform the school into an Academy for Engineering and Technology.
## Bridging the gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Implementations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attraction of Women into the Industry</td>
<td>Engineering Council of SA Engenius Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in education and Skills Development</td>
<td>National Skills Development Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work scheduling</td>
<td>SA companies are developing and implementing flexible work policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retraining and nurturing talent</td>
<td>Implementation of well structured training and development programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define High Performance</td>
<td>Rewarding talent accordingly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Conclusion

• Effective workforce development critical

• Needs to be managed as an essential building block

• Attracting and placing the right person in the right position at the right time is crucial

• Engagement of high potential leaders - introduce more traditional incentives

• Acquisition, engagement, development, leadership, retention - strong link to learning functions
Acknowledgements

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I also wish to acknowledge all my colleagues and friends at our Technical Services department in Rosebank for creating an ‘enabling’ environment for me to put my thoughts across.
7. References

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2. International Business Times, 13 June 2011


4. The Nation, 11 July 2011

5. Engineering News, 13 May 2011
Nozibele Xotyeni was born at Mdantsane in East London, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Upon finishing her high school education, she completed a B.Tech in Public Management in 1998 at the Cape Technicon. Her first job was working as an Office Assistant for the South African national oil company, Soekor, currently known as Petro SA. In 2001, she was promoted to Geotechnical Assistant for the Exploration Department at the Petroleum Agency SA. Her responsibilities included technical data loading, with a focus on geophysical and log data, as well as seafloor and basement mapping.

In 2006, Nozibele pursued her B.Sc. Geology degree at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town. Her main fields of academic interest were Structural Geology and Sequence Stratigraphy. Upon graduating in November 2009, she continued her employment with the Petroleum Agency SA. In March 2010, Nozibele was recruited as a Trainee Geoscientist at Sasol Petroleum International based in Johannesburg, South Africa. She is currently working within the Technical Services Department, with focus on providing Technical Data Support.

As a mother to three sons, her passion has been to encourage and advise high school students on the importance of Maths, Science and Technology fields of study. Over the years, she has also become involved in career education and mentoring.