

Builders programme aims to develop, empower black businesses

In an effort to improve the lives of skilled tradespeople, Builders launched an Enterprise Development Programme in 2015.



The Enterprise Development Programme is an initiative founded by Builders and training partner Black Supplies. The programme is aimed at developing and empowering black businesses, particularly small to medium enterprises in the areas where Builders operates. With an initial intake of 30 tradespeople, Builders set out to provide them with the necessary training to enable them to make a success of their businesses.

Builders were looking for tradespeople with the motivation to achieve and based their selection on a range of criteria including skills-verification audits, capacity audits, and every person was interviewed to discuss their expectations and to identify their opportunities for growth.

Principles of empowerment, community upliftment

“At Builders, we are committed to the principles of empowerment and community upliftment which is why we introduced the Builders Enterprise Development Programme. This program gives Builders the opportunity to play a real role in the sustainability and growth of our country’s economy,” says Nkele Mukhari, Builders CSI/ED practitioner.

Business consultancy firm Leago Capital was tasked with taking the candidates through the administrative minefield of legal documentation such as taxes, BEE compliance, marketing, website development and business plans. Leago has also been there to assist with improving the candidate's customer service, quoting and financial management, three areas that were identified early on as potential weak points.

"A successful business is dependent on more than just talent. You must also have a good grasp and understanding of all the other elements that make a business sustainable," said Gaofengwe Malao, MD of Leago Capital.

Workshops and training

Seven months down the line the candidates have attended a number of business and marketing workshops, they have received technical training in the fields of electrical work, tiling and brick making, also receiving iPads to help them manage their affairs on the move. Of the 30 candidates, 23 have already registered their businesses.

"If it wasn't for Builder's training sessions I don't think my business would've grown the way it has, I am very thankful to Builders," said plumber Themba Mobanele (48) from Protea Glen near Soweto.

Builders have since partnered with Standard Bank and Tusk Construction Support Services, to establish the Builders / Standard Bank / Tusk Development Initiative to give small- and medium-sized construction firms a shot at making their businesses succeed.

This initiative provided qualifying black-owned South African companies with access to affordable credit and specific on-site expertise. The idea being that once these companies have successfully completed a series of projects, they would have the confidence and the financial track record to go on to bigger and better things, growing the economy, creating jobs and transferring and developing skills.

Qualified, experienced service providers

The pilot phase of the initiative targeted ten qualifying companies with a fund value of R20m. The rollout started in September 2015, targeting 40 companies with a fund value of R40m.

"So far the initiative has been enormously successful. The contracts have ranged in value from R650,000 to R40m and have involved the building of houses, boundary walls for state institutions and the refurbishment of schools," said Tony Riley, Massbuild divisional key account manager.

Through Builders and its partners, the participants are now able to take their business skills to the next level and provide South Africans with access to qualified and experienced service providers.

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