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Transformation more than chasing numbers – SAE4D

Businesses hoping to meet the more stringent requirements of the revised BBBEE Act which takes effect in April by embarking on frantic recruitment campaigns are likely to have to repeat the exercise every year.

That was the overriding message that emerged at the Q1 breakfast workshop held by the South African Employers for Disability (SAE4D) which focused on the recruitment of people with disabilities. Hosted by Alexander Forbes in Sandton, the workshop was attended by almost 100 delegates from employers in the private and public sectors.

SAE4D is a non-profit employer organisation that was set up to promote the recruitment, retention and development of people with disabilities in the workplace. It enables organisations to share experiences, develop best practices, and develop ways of effectively confronting and tackling prejudices that act as barriers to the integration of people with disabilities in the workplace.

SAE4D chairman, Dr Jerry Gule, pointed out that any organisation that employs more than 50 people has to employ people with disabilities in terms of the Employment Equity Act. The new BBBEE Codes of Good Conduct requires that black people with disabilities constitute at least two percent of a business's workforce.

“These measures are designed to drive transformation in the private sector. However, true transformation is not a numbers game. Transformation is about living the country's constitution; it's about human rights.”

Julia Wood, Organisational Development Manager at Progression, a company focusing on transformation solutions and that specialises in the field of disability, told delegates that planned and focused preparatory work and staff sensitisation prior to the recruitment of people with disabilities is required for the successful integration of people with disabilities into the workplace.

“Merely recruiting people with disabilities is not enough. Businesses have to transform by developing and implementing strategies that are sustainable. Once

you have achieved transformation, compliance will follow. Otherwise you will find yourself chasing numbers year after year,” she said.

The chief director: Diversity Management in the Public Service and Administration Department, and a Commissioner at the Employment Equity Commission, Barbara Watson, said disability was an integral component of diversity. She encouraged delegates to move away from chasing quotas and rather to employ more people with disability because “it is the right thing to do”.

She noted that diversity and related issues had featured prominently at the recent World Economic Forum in Davos – a clear indication that the subject is moving out of the HR department into the boardrooms of the worlds largest corporations.

“Businesses need to mainstream the issues of diversity in their policies. Diversity management should be as much a corporate goal as profit and returns.

“Transformation is not a cheap or easy process, but it is extremely rewarding,” Ms Watson concluded.

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About SAE4D

South African Employers for Disability (SAE4D) is a body constituted by employers who are committed to addressing issues confronting the integration of people with disabilities in the workplace. The organisation was set up to share experience, develop best practices, confront and tackle prejudices that act as barriers to the integration of people with disabilities in the workplace, and form a common understanding of the challenges and solutions required to fully develop the potential of people with disabilities to contribute meaningfully to society and business.

SAE4D members are South African companies who are signatories to the Constitution of the SAE4D, its principles and values.

Current SAE4D members include: ABB; Absa; Anglo American; Barloworld; Bowman Gilfillan; Edcon; Ernst & Young; Eskom; GlenrandMIB; KPMG; Lorimar; Nedbank; PPC; SAB and Total.

For more information, please view the [SAE4D video](#), visit the [SAE4D Facebook page](#); or go to the SAE4D website at www.sae4d.co.za

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