

Do your homework before contracting training suppliers

 By Jackie Carroll

11 Aug 2015

Underlining the dire state of further education and training in South Africa is a story on the Mail & Guardian website, 'Limpopo youth lose out after R28m skills project grinds to halt'. This is only one of many training contracts that have failed dismally because training companies are awarded contracts without having the ability to deliver on the requirements. Although it is an excellent concept that would have resulted in job creation, ultimately it is a waste of taxpayers' money.

The problem now faced by the managers of this project is trying to restart it: Are the learners still available to attend? Can they afford to attend further classes? The learners were demotivated because of the failures - how do you get them to come back?

After working in the adult education and training industry for nearly 20 years now, I have noticed a trend: Training institutions apply for tenders that they have little or no skills or materials to deliver on the requirements. The attitude seems to be 'we will develop it when we get it'. Many companies being awarded these tenders are only getting the work based on 'connections' rather than capability.

Training institutions need to evaluate carefully their ability to deliver the training before applying for a tender. We must never forget, it is not about the money that can be made, it is about the lives that can be changed through the training. The question is, are we going to make a positive change or not?

The institution issuing the tender also needs to take responsibility. You cannot award a tender unless due diligence has been completed for each candidate. In the case of the Limpopo tender, the SETA clearly failed in its duty.

In my experience, there are a few training providers in the industry who give us all a bad name. They work the system, knowing that too often that no due diligence is done. They are able to capitalise on these 'opportunities'. They promise the world, at an impossibly low price, take the first payment tranche and 'disappear'. In our line of business, there are unfortunately just too many of these unprofessional Adult Education companies to start quoting names. Yet, repeatedly, contracts are awarded to these charlatans.

Criteria needed

In order to award contracts to the right service providers who can deliver what is required, institutions need to put the following qualifying criteria in place as part of the tender process:

- Insist of proof of accreditation - it must be current and with the relevant ETQA body.

- Insist of proof of previous work that has been completed.
- Call the references provided and confirm that the work was conducted and to a satisfactory level
- Request samples of the training material. It is important to know that this already exists and is not a 'work in progress'.
- Ask for the CVs of the personnel who would work on the project. Make sure that these people actually work for the institution and that they have the relevant qualifications to conduct the training.

Until we are able to improve the training being offered to learners and take control of the rampant corruption within the tender process, we will have to continue to import the skills that we need - at a premium price. This price comes at a premium cost to our economy; our personal development and the right to a decent life for all our people.

It is only through education that the country will see a significant amount of social change and a decrease of poverty. A literate workforce is an empowered and more valuable society with fires in their hearts and food on their tables.

ABOUT JACKIE CARROLL

Jackie Carroll is the CEO and co-founder of Media Works, South Africa's leading provider of adult education and training for over 21 years.

- ▀ Tech should be an enabler for education, not a barrier - 25 Jun 2021
- ▀ The many wrongs of the right to education - 20 Mar 2019
- ▀ Unhappy with your matric results? Here's what you can do - 8 Jan 2019
- ▀ Why we need to take a lifelong approach to learning - 14 Sep 2018
- ▀ It's not a matter of why we should empower women at work - it's how - 14 Aug 2018

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>