

Fedusa takes on learnerships

The Department of Labour has committed itself to high targets in relation to the creation of learnerships. Fedusa as an employer has decided to enter into a number of learnership arrangements as part of its commitment to the Skills Development Act. Fedusa recounts how things are not so simple as they might seem...

A lot has been said about the need to improve skills amongst the unemployed so as to better equip them to find jobs as the pool of opportunities that exist for the unskilled worker shrinks further. Even more has been said about the role employers can play in offering opportunities to those in need of skills development. One of the key aspects of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) is the development and management of learnerships in various industries to bring need and opportunity together in an effort to meet the skills needs of our country. Seta's are committed to attaining the learnership targets set out in the current NSDS and have repeatedly stated that, in spite of being behind schedule, they intend meeting these targets.

Fedusa and its affiliates, in an effort to 'walk the talk' decided in 2003 that they too would look at taking on learners as from 2004 and have first hand knowledge of what so often looks clear cut and simple on paper but is far more onerous in reality.

Investigations into ways of implementing learnerships began late last year when it became apparent that

several learnerships were available within the Services Seta that were of particular relevance to the trade union movement.

As trade unions fall under the ETDP-Seta, extensive discussions followed and it was agreed that Fedusa and its affiliates would be able to access the 140 learnerships that had been identified within the Services Seta through a lead employer that was registered with the Services Seta. Simple enough. However, taking the process forward turned out to be slow and it proved to be difficult to get the required systems in place to go ahead with the appointment of learners. Initial indications were that the learnerships would be up and running by the end of January 2004. However, the complexity of the Seta processes and the pace at which systems and paperwork have been processed has meant that to date, interviews have as yet not been

conducted to fill the learnerships.

While nobody is denying that a good foundation is needed to work from, there must be a simplification of the processes. As a committed member of the NSA and organised labour, Fedusa will work its way through the teething problems and do whatever it takes to get the learnerships within the federation and its affiliates up and running.



However, as any consumer will tell you, no matter how good the marketing, if the first bite of the pie does not make you want more, all the good intentions in the world will amount to nothing. It would be fair to presume that any corporation with no knowledge of the learnership process, and only a fairly keen interest in 'doing their bit' for the

NSDS, would have labelled the mountains of paperwork and processes as unneeded baggage and walked away by now. With unemployment at its current levels in our country, we can ill afford that.