

### **War for talent rages on in banking sector**

Demand and supply, or the lack thereof, of skills remains an issue for the banking sector. Lindiwe Miyambu, African Bank's Group Executive: Human Capital, says there is a mismatch between the skills demanded by the sector and the skills supplied by various training institutions. "There is a need for the development of a pipeline of graduates that meet the skills needs of the banking sector. In addition to filling the current skills gaps in IT, accountants, actuaries and a range of analysts are lacking within the sector as well as managers at various levels who seem to lack the requisite skills needed to perform effectively, especially at the level of senior management ," she says.

Miyambu cites the Ernest and Young (EY) Global Banking Outlook 2015 report which indicates that global megatrends, stakeholder pressures and subdued economic growth will drive both evolution and revolution for banks over the next decade. These trends include, amongst others, the changing workforce (changing working patterns and employee expectations); adopting advanced technology (including digital business – smartphone penetration etc.); surviving a new era of competition; delivering profitable growth; and introducing new products that are more aligned to emerging customer needs.

"Most of the scarce skills relate to IT. This is logical due to the changing technology and new product development of banks in an effort to move away from archaic legacy systems and the development of technologically-driven new products. Mobile banking and cashless transactions are what people want. They no longer want to wait in queues at banks so customer centric innovation is what's driving the industry."

"Banks are adopting rigorous innovation practices, driven by technology as a means to attain a competitive edge. Technology has become the cornerstone of banking operations and it is therefore not surprising that future skills requirements include Information Communication Technology (ICT) occupations especially developers, programmers, network engineers and designers," says Miyambu.

She adds that as much as a tech savvy workforce is important, this should not be at the exclusion however of an experienced workforce with the right qualifications. "Customer centricity is a major change driver in the industry. We need professionals who can understand customers holistically." Common fields of study offering a supply stream for the banking sector are Bachelor of Commerce; Bachelor of Science: Actuarial/Financial Mathematics; Bachelor of Business Administration; Bachelor of Science: Engineering/Applied Mathematics/Computer Science; Bachelor/Master of Law: Corporate Law; Bachelor of Accountancy. "There are in some cases intakes from Bachelor of Arts:

Psychology and Bachelor of Social Science: Human Resources. The bulk of the supply however falls within the areas of Business and Management.”

So how is the sector dealing with the skills shortages? Miyambu says BANKSETA, in its sector role, is engaging in a range of partnerships with both industry and higher education institutions to deliver on its mandate. In an effort to support the development of the sector, inter-SETA partnerships, partnerships with other public higher education institutions, partnerships in Africa and overseas are underway. “However there remains a need for more substantial programmes that will improve qualifications, support career-pathing, enable greater flexibility and mobility, and increase productivity.”

She points out that one of the greatest challenges facing the banking sector and a great cause for concern remains the poor performance in Mathematics, which is key for employment in the banking sector. Data from the Basic Education Department indicates that there has been a decline in enrolments for the subject since 2010. “This means there is an increased war for talent as the supply of the right skills is very limited.”

On a more positive note, however, she believes that the sector is performing well when it comes to transformation and equal opportunities. The sector employs 61% women with black females comprising 30% of the working population. “At a glance it seems that the sector is transforming by employing a rather youthful workforce and generally more females than males.”

For those considering a career in banking Miyambu advises a holistic look at what is really required. While one should choose a qualification that meets the needs of the sector it is also important to be resilient, to be agile in approach, and constantly learn and adapt. “For those already in the industry renewing skills on an ongoing basis is key and always being cognisant that the skills required now might not be the ones needed in three or five or ten years’ time,” concludes Miyambu.

ENDS

---

COMPILED ON BEHALF OF AFRICAN BANK BY CATHY FINDLEY PR.

MEDIA QUERIES CONTACT JACQUI RORKE ON 0114636372 OR JACQUI@FINDLEYPR.CO.ZA