

Mind the gap

By Lesanne Brooke - business development executive, Dialogue Communications Training, Cape Town.

Good graduates are in high demand. The potential to craft well-qualified young people into crucially-skilled top performers is a promising ideal. How do you ensure the spend produces the rewards?

As we reach the end of the year, most organisations have secured their prize potential from the graduate pool. Many do so knowing that the previous intake has not lived up to expectations - there will have been varying degrees of success and disappointment.

The gap between potential and experience

Highly qualified graduates usually lack at least some aspect of organisational or

Alternatively, in a well-intentioned attempt at training, graduates are frustrated with basic tasks and information perceived to have no relevance to their degree. Some are given e-learning projects without facilitated processes or feedback. Bewildered and unaware of what they don't know, crucial loopholes are often discovered at the coal-face when impact and pressure are high.

Expectations and needs mis-match

Lack of self-awareness and life experience, undeveloped communication skills, no understanding of professional behaviour, a sense of entitlement, generational

business-ready people as quickly as possible to balance the time and money invested.

Realising your graduates' full potential

A meaningful integration programme adds essential value for both the company and graduate and facilitates alignment of the different needs. Overlooking the gap between potential and reality (or hoping that it will just go away) fails both. After the excitement of recruitment and induction the honeymoon phase passes quickly. Graduates are either eventually absorbed into the workforce with varying degrees of success or they leave to seek greener pastures (often just as they're honed and work-ready).

The successful organisation relishes the functional challenge of the graduate gap because of the potential for crafting specific skills to fit their unique requirements. It requires dedicated, ongoing focus and a culture of awareness, development and support, but the rewards are well worth it.

Tips for success:

Design a programme to deal with the gap over a period of time. Ensure it has measurable outcomes that are integrated into your work-based reality and full staff buy-in.

Identify key people to support and mentor the graduates. They must be effective and willing and may need training. Plan an ongoing process to build core skills and ensure

support and opportunity to practice. Have regular, facilitated sessions where team-leaders and graduates share information, deal with issues and align expectations and practicalities.

Design a communication programme to stimulate engagement, understanding, responsibility and loyalty to the team. Value the development and practice of soft skills as highly as hard skills - in the end, these will make the difference between a success story and disappointment. **mmp**



Lesanne Brooke is the business development executive for Dialogue Communications Training in Cape Town. She has 20 years' experience facilitating groups and coaching individuals.

Dialogue's 10-month graduate programme adds business-critical value and is proven to develop core competencies, stimulate engagement, ensure fast-return and optimise effective performance.

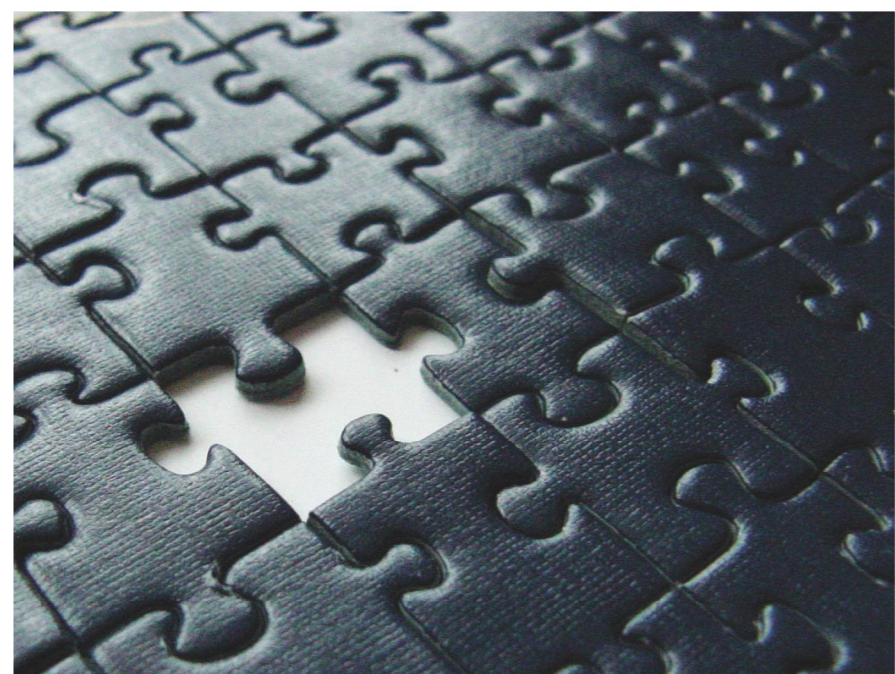
relational competence to match their skill set. They have the theory, but little practice of the nuanced implications of work situations, complex interpersonal dynamics, business protocol or workplace ethics. In addition, many have second language literacy issues and need support to balance educational gaps. For organisations to get full value, they must deal comprehensively with these issues.

Placed in situations that match their degrees but not their experience, graduates are often left to sink or swim. Pressured to perform without full awareness of fundamental work-day practicalities, costly and/or humiliating mistakes happen.

misunderstandings etc. - these issues need to be thoroughly addressed before bad habits, loss of confidence and the resulting mediocrity dull the potential for excellence.

Organisations are pressured to satisfy graduate expectations if the spend is to bear fruit. There is high turnover at this level, expressing 'Millennial Generation' attitudes and expectations. Graduates want their newly acquired education to earn them high incomes and fast-tracked careers, often without understanding the full practical implications.

On the other hand, organisations want functional talent that shows fast returns. They want thorough, integrated, work-applicable knowledge and



Environmental ease

REF: MMPR 80



Benefits to the industry: Legrand's energy-efficient cast resin transformers, which efficiently transfer electrical power between two different voltage systems, at the same frequency, are manufactured by a Legrand subsidiary, EdM, according to stringent quality and safety specifications.

Maintenance: This compact system has also been designed for easy installation and low maintenance requirements - no oil changes are necessary.

Sustainability: The absence of flammable insulation liquids, the use of self-extinguishing materials exempt of toxic gas emissions, reduced noise levels, and low electromagnetic emissions, ensure enhanced environmental protection in all sectors.

Back-up service: Legrand offers a technical advisory service on which transformer and busbar trunking system provides the best solution. **mmp**

Mining & Minerals Product Review

is now digital

Visit

www.miningandminerals.co.za
for all the latest editions.



The **Cool Vest** garments are multifunctional and can be used for environments where control of body core temperature is essential to work safely, comfortably and productively.

These garments protect and cool the body in an optimal way using no electrical appliances - only water.

EN ISO 6940:2004 (flame retardant)
CE marked (medical use)



FIRE-SAFE®

Website: www.charnaud.co.za
Tel: + 27 11 794 6040
Email: jhb@charnaud.co.za