

IT HELPS TO HAVE THE PAPERS

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There are many managers in the market with lots of experience who can probably teach the MBAs and PHDs in the world a couple of things about how to manage a business. Then there are the highly qualified professional people, brilliant engineers, lawyers and chemists, who had to learn how to manage their businesses or practices through trial and error. But those mistakes were made and the lessons were learnt and now they know how to run their businesses effectively, yet in the market they are still seen as professional technicians and not as true business managers.

Many of these people have run successful businesses for many years and know how to manage a business, there are however others who are simply trying to keep their businesses afloat, with no quality of life, always fighting fires and never being able to take a holiday. These are some of the symptoms of businesses that are kept together by lead entrepreneurs, professional people who know how to do the job and bring in the money, but with no formal management qualifications.

Managing a business is complex and it requires knowledge in many different spheres. A chemical engineer will know how to produce the product the business is offering. S/he will know how to procure the correct raw materials and which customers to sell to, but what about the human resources management, the technology of the business, the financial management, marketing and communications, supply chain and logistics or customer relationship management?

The more proficient the professional is with regards to the product or service offering, the faster the business will grow and the quicker the typical management related problems will be encountered. In a recent study through North West University which investigated the effects of various factors on business success, it was found that leadership, operational excellence and marketing is what creates business success. While a good product and service offering will bring about growth, it will not create profitability or sustainability. To the contrary, such growth could create instability with problems such as high staff turnover, low client retention, high rate of customer complaints, quality problems and many more resulting.

When a company is small with just a few employees, the lead entrepreneur can manage everything and keep control, but as soon as the business grows past about fifteen employees, processes and policies are required to ensure standardisation of delivery. Knowledge of cost accounting is required to calculate financial forecasts and to make the best business decisions. The business owner or manager is kept busy with eighteen hour work days to try and manage everything. There is no chance of taking time out to do a management course or get the right qualifications to convince the now growing business' board to maintain his/her position as managing director or CEO.

The answer is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), where business managers can take out just three to five days, prove what knowledge and skills they already have and undergo a gap analysis to determine what they still need to learn. In that way no time is wasted sitting in compulsory classes learning about things they have been implementing for years. Where gaps are discovered, a targeted programme can be taken, delivered through simulation.

Simulated learning is much more fun than theoretical learning and prepares the learners for the real world in a practical and time efficient manner. Often it is said that theory and practice don't meet; but with simulated learning, real life scenarios are acted out and the business manager can practice in a safe environment, where the rewind button can be pushed and mistakes can be corrected.

Simulation is defined as the reproduction of a situation and can be used in all fields of learning, but it is particularly effective in business, where it is easy to sketch scenarios and act these out to understand the consequences of decisions. It is about recreating a real situation and experimenting, discovering the best outcome of various scenarios in order to implement working solutions in the real world. To apply knowledge gained through simulation is the ultimate objective of the top-up training that could also lead to a formal qualification if needed. Simulation thus provides real experience in a safe environment. It also magnifies the effect of certain decisions, preparing the business manager for the real situation. It is an immersive learning experience, filling the gaps in the knowledge base of a manager.

Once all the gaps in the manager's knowledge base have been filled and the manager has found and produced proof of prior learning, a SAQA accredited management qualification can be issued. Managers therefore gain a formal qualification with a maximum of only five days out of the office, provided they have real business experience or former academic learning.

This manner of learning takes less time (the average RPL process from start to finish taking three months), so managers are not out of the business for weeks on end. Networking takes place during the course and a lot of fun is had by all. Working in teams provides new team-forming abilities and managers can go back to the office as stronger leaders, more knowledgeable and more experienced, with a formal qualification to boot.

The objective of any training is to equip a manager to run their business successfully in an automated manner, maintaining quality of life for the management team and being able to replicate and grow the business while still maintaining quality standards. In order to achieve this, quality and knowledgeable managers are required.

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Boilerplate:

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