

5 key skills that learnerships can provide

While South Africa struggles with one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world, it is also faced with a shortage of skilled people to fill positions in many sectors. Businesses want workers who can hit the ground running, yet matriculants don't have the skills or the understanding of the work environment to make the required impact.



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So how do we solve this impasse? According to Sean Sharp, executive head of Sales at EduPower Skills Academy, learnerships are the only solution.

“Learnerships bridge the gap between school and work. They can provide the essential skills to help young people get onto the employment ladder and once there, build solid career trajectories,” Sharp explains. `

In a structured programme, a learnership is typically a 12-month qualification. Through work-based learning, learners sharpen the knowledge and skills needed for a specific job – all of which prepares them for the workplace. But what are the key skills developed by learnerships? Three learners from EduPower explain the five key skills they have acquired during their learnerships:

1. **Time management**

Time management in the working world is very different from managing your time at school. Buyiswa Mchunu says she joined EduPower with no work experience and had to learn how to manage her time. It's not only about being on time for work, effective time management is about allocating the right time to the right activity for maximum impact and productivity.

2. **Communication**

Unathi Fihlo says that the work experience component of the learnership at EduPower has allowed her to develop her communication skills. The Academy has a custom-fitted contact centre that can accommodate more than 400 people. What really sets it apart from other skills providers is that the learners work on real campaigns, talking to clients, and Unathi says she has not only learnt how to speak to different people but to express herself in a clear, more succinct manner too.

3. **Problem solving**

Another skill that learners quickly develop when working in the Academy's call centre is problem-solving. Samkelisiwe Ngubane says learning how to approach problems and solve them goes hand-in-hand with communication skills. There is nothing quite like a call centre to make you comfortable with decision-making. It gives you the confidence to identify problems as they arise and come up with effective solutions on the spot!

4. **Computer skills**

When Unathi started her learnership, she had never even powered up a computer before, let alone work on one. After only a couple of months though, she is comfortable with a desktop and proficient in several programmes. Digital skills are essential in today's work environment and with a computer at every workstation, EduPower ensures that each of its learners uses every opportunity to maximise their computer prowess.

5. **Learn to dream, again**

The most important skill that learnerships can teach is the ability to dream big. Samkelisiwe dreams of becoming a journalist because she loves news and also wants to help people who live with disabilities. Unathi's dream is to open her own creche so she can also create employment opportunities in her community. And Buyiswa wants to be financially free to provide for herself, her child and her mother.

Sharp says that EduPower not only teaches its learners the skills they need to prepare them for the world of work but also inspires each of its learners to dream, lighting a fire that will change their lives forever.

"Learnerships can play a pivotal role in providing opportunities for youngsters and developing the skills and attitudes that businesses need," Sharp explains.

More learnerships are, however, needed to tip the scales and get young South Africans working.

"Business can make a fundamental difference by investing in the growth and development of our youth. This will mean business gets the practical skills and theoretical knowledge they need whilst enabling our youth to become skilled, competent, and well-rounded contributors to South Africa's economy, workforce and communities."