

Datacentrix and HPE join forces in Alexandra to assist with small business and youth development initiative

Datacentrix has continued its ongoing efforts to enable economic development, by participating in a project that will specifically target small businesses and local youth.

Datacentrix has joined long-term partner Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) in supporting the new Greater Alexandra Chamber of Commerce (GALXCOC) Digital Hub and Township Incubator, launched in early March by the Minister of Small Business Development, Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams.

The township incubator is based at Motswedi Skills Centre in Alexandra and will foster the growth and development of small businesses and the economy. It is backed by the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), Ecosystem Development for Small Enterprise (EDSE) Programme and the Delegation of the European Union to South Africa (EU in SA).

“Broad economic growth and small business development are two areas that are highly dependent on an efficient, integrated and connected network of support platforms, such as these digital hubs and incubators,” explained Billy Mabena, General Manager: Public Sector Sales at Datacentrix, speaking at the recent launch of the Alexandra digital hub.

“This project, and the many others embarked upon by SEDA and the Department of Small Business Development aiming to provide small innovative digital start-ups with the required support, will have a significant impact in addressing our socio-economic challenges. More specifically, they will target youth



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unemployment by assisting young entrepreneurs to take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital era.”

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) presents a plethora of digital opportunities across all industries, said Mabena. “What is also accurate, especially for South Africa, is that for this programme to succeed, it requires private/public partnerships that will provide small innovative digital start-ups with the much-needed business infrastructure, enterprise supplier development linkages, access to funding, and investor linkages.

“Upon initial discussions with HPE regarding involvement in this project, it was clear that it resonated well with Datacentrix' vision of being a good corporate citizen. We have partnered with HPE for the past 25 years, and both companies share the same the vision in many respects relating to business drivers, social cohesion, particularly when it comes to human development, and philanthropic initiatives.

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“It was only natural, then, that Datacentrix raised its hand and offered to assist where it could by providing ICT network infrastructure installation services and expertise for the GALXCOC Digital Hub and Township Incubator.”

Over and above the infrastructure support provided to this facility, Datacentrix will also support the new hub with linkage opportunities through its supplier development and learnership programmes.

“Datacentrix' transformational projects are not a tick-box exercise. We are very clear and concise about what transformation means for us and the country in general, and about the initiatives that meaningfully contribute to our transformational objectives, in particular supporting our previously disadvantaged youth,” he added.

The main objective of the Datacentrix supplier development programme is to build sustainable EMEs (exempted micro enterprises) and QSEs (qualifying small enterprises) that will contribute to job creation and economic growth, by providing financial and non-financial support aligned with the National Development Plan (NDP) and broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) Codes of Good Practice.

“In our view, this aligns with the objectives of the GALXCOC Digital Hub and Incubator, and it is for this reason that we took up the challenge to partner on this project. It is encouraging to see that, despite the many



Michael Langeveld, Chief Technology Officer at Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Kholiwe Makhohliso, VP and Country Managing Director South Africa at Software AG, Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, Minister of Small Business Development and Billy Mabena, General Manager: Public Sector Sales at Datacentrix

challenges faced by South Africans, including crime and unemployment which have only been put under more pressure during the pandemic, we have also witnessed a rapid increase in digital adoption across all sectors of the economy and country - and even in our private lives.

“This is an opportunity for the communities to accelerate their digital programmes and contribute towards the revival of the economy through technology,” Mabena said. “We offer our sincere congratulations to SEDA, the Department of Small Business Development and all involved in this inspirational project, and look forward to seeing the fruits borne of this good work.”