

Datacentrix celebrates tangible results from learnership and graduate internship programmes

“If you keep knocking, someone will eventually open a door.” So says Nazmi Losper, a Datacentrix learnership programme graduate, who explains that being part of this programme has not just prepared him for a career in IT, but empowered him to create a better life and future for his family.

Samukelisiwe Dube, Head of Human Resources (HR) at Datacentrix, says this type of feedback aligns to the goals and objectives as to why the company launched the initiative a decade ago.

“Since 2008, Datacentrix has welcomed hundreds of learners and graduate interns into the programmes with the aim of combining theoretical knowledge with on-the-job skills training,” she explains. “This year saw 75 learnerships granted to people living with disabilities, in addition to the 85 general learnerships and graduate internships.

“The programmes have evolved significantly over the years,” says Dube. “The original programme was conceptualised and launched in 2008 with an intake of 10 learners. The initial intentions involved offering learnership opportunities only. Today the programmes offer carefully-crafted graduate and internship opportunities and aim to address the lack of employment opportunities by providing training, skills development and practical experience.”

According to Dube, the programmes target mainly school leavers and learners without any additional post-matric qualification, and, to a lesser extent, learners that have undergone basic ICT training.

“We offer successful candidates a year of practical and theoretical training in a bid to provide previously disadvantaged students with a solid IT and business-related qualification, as well as work experience. At the end of each programme, Datacentrix employs many of the learners and graduate interns. In fact, in 2016 and 2017 respectively, we managed to absorb around 80 percent of the intake.”

Placement types include:

- Learnership Programmes that are open to matriculants and combine a vocational education and training platform with theory and practice, culminating in a qualification that is registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).



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- Graduate Internship Programmes that are aimed at students who have completed a formal post-matric qualification (for instance ICT or business-related skills such as HR, business administration and finance.) and combines specialised training in project management with other technical training, such as system support, Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE), project management, and OpenText (for the enterprise information management business), amongst others.

“We aim to amplify skills that are critically needed within the marketplace, while offering tangible workplace experience in ICT, security and other technical areas,” she clarifies. “This way, we’re not only improving the quality of life for our learners, but we’re also addressing the ICT skills shortage within the industry and in South Africa.”

More than 650 students, including Losper, have made their way through the programmes since its inception.

“I thought it would be similar to school with textbooks, exams and certification, but it's so much more than that,” continues Losper, a 2014 learner who underwent a full internship at Datacentrix and is now a full-time employee of the company.



Datacentrix learners and interns 2018

“We were also taught how to conduct ourselves in the workplace, how to communicate effectively and professionally and even how to manage our time more efficiently – these are skills I would not own if it was not for this programme.”

Shannon Williams enrolled in the Technical Support Learnership programme in 2015, joining the Systems Support Programme a year later, followed by the Student2Business MCSE Cloud Platform & Infrastructure Programme a year after that. She completed all three qualifications successfully and is currently permanently employed at Datacentrix as a support engineer.

“I was based at different companies during my time on the programme and putting what I'd learned into practice was my favourite part,” she says. “Every day was an experience with different challenges and lessons. I was guided by coaches and mentors throughout and so, found learning to be motivating rather than daunting.”

Students do not have to be focused on IT to qualify, adds Dube. “We welcomed Nnditsheni Nthatheni to the programme under the End User Computing Learnership in 2013, and she subsequently moved to Systems Support in 2014 and then Business Administration in 2015. Today, Nnditsheni is permanently employed as an HR admin assistant and recently received internal recognition in the form of a Datacentrix Lighthouse Award for her Top Performance.”

Another 'value centre' related success story is that of Theodore Nkosi, who joined the internship programme in the finance department, gaining invaluable experience that ultimately saw him appointed as a creditors clerk. He also received a Lighthouse Award for his performance and commitment to living the company values.

“The internship programme saw me shadowing and gaining on-the-job training from people with the very skills that I aspire towards – accountants, creditors and debtors,” he says. “After some training, I was given control over an account of my own, which was a big deal for an inexperienced individual, but the lessons I learned helped me pull through. The manager in creditors noticed potential in me and helped me zone my focus. Today, she's my current boss.”

“Datacentrix welcomes the advancement of the programmes, which over time is shaped by organisational requirements as well as sector skills requirements and other market drivers,” Dube concludes.



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