

# SA's Flexible Staffing Companies

## Flexicurity is the new approach to staffing and mobility

Charmaine van Eeden



**A** new approach to flexible staffing, usually referred to as flexicurity, is a way to achieve common employment objectives: helping the unemployed build the experience and skills they need to become employed, while supporting the flexibility and mobility needs of companies.

Independent global research shows that flexicurity as a policy approach is gaining importance in combining labour market flexibility with employment security, and the need to respect the rights and working conditions of employees.

Two leading players in the staffing industry - Charmaine van Eeden, managing director of Landelahni Workforce Management and Shaun McCormack, CEO of the Capital Out-

sourcing Group - are strong advocates of this approach.

Says Van Eeden, "Flexible staffing agencies are the intermediaries that can play a vital role in striking the right balance, especially in the South African context, where many companies face a critical shortage of skills. The agencies offer access to sources of skills such as retired people and women returning to the workplace. They also provide a stepping stone for the large number of unemployed graduates to find a foothold in the formal employment sector."

Research by the International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies shows that, in the European Union, more than 40 percent of temporary workers were unemployed prior to getting work

with an agency. Within one year from their assignment, 43 percent of agency workers obtained permanent employment.

Similar trends are evident in South Africa.

Van Eerden elaborates, "Job starters and first-time entrants gain experience and build useful skills through their assignments. The long-time unemployed, mothers returning to the workforce, elderly people and the disabled are able to demonstrate their worth and skills to prospective employers."

McCormack is adamant that to survive in the present environment there is a need for flexible capacity and that the TES industry plays a key role in providing this. It also provides temporary employ-

ees with rapid access to a variety of industries with different demand cycles.

The Capital Outsourcing Group is a subsidiary of Adcorp Ltd and deploys about 19 000 industrial and technical staff daily.

He says, "Let's face it, recent power outages and wild fluctuations in the exchange rate remind us of uncertain times that we live in. We are facing uncertainty in consumer demand whilst at the same time are experiencing the need to fast track massive infrastructure projects in a market where there is a shortage of skills."

Against the backdrop of a massive skills shortage, the company trained more than 6000 temps last year and is employing numerous strategies

to ensure skills retention.

He adds "Fortunately for us, Adcorp is at the leading edge of developing retention strategies which entails performance recognition and has developed numerous productivity enhancement tools.

"Our clients are concerned that skills development and retention strategies alone will not meet the skills requirement of the massive projects the country is undertaking. The peak demand will have to be satisfied by utilizing foreign skills on a temporary basis."

Capital has a track record in supplying foreign skills locally and internationally having brought in large volumes of foreign skills from countries such as the Philippines, Thailand and India. It offers a complete turn-key solution.

## Codes up stakes for services industry

Already the BEE codes have added a new dimension to the TES industry and all players - clients and suppliers alike - should anticipate an increased focus on all

## So you thought last year was impressive?

The past 12 months saw Quest scooping a wealth of accolades including the Gauteng HR Service Provider of the Year and BPeSA's (National HR Service Provider of the Year) As a category winner,

And Kay Vittee, managing director, predicts that 2008 will be even better. "The rapidly increasing demand for human capital throughout all sectors of industry has shifted the employment scales

ment and want to lead the way in utilising it to the benefit of effective recruitment."

Vittee says the company is enormously proud of the active role it plays in securing meaning-

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