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Demand for skills to increase

JOHANNESBURG - The demand for skills and the transferability of skills across industries is only going to increase, according to a survey released in Johannesburg on Tuesday.

"The war for talent is over, and talent has won," CEO of Landelahni Business Leaders Sandra Burmeister said at the release of the human resources company's 2008 mining survey.

"The shortage of skills -- particularly of engineers -- in the mining industry calls for a more innovative approach when recruiting at all levels in the organisation.

"We must encourage the return of retired mining professionals to run key projects or act as coaches and mentors to those coming up the ranks. This should be part of a formal company-wide coaching and mentoring programme."

Internal skills had to be identified and assessed to determine competency levels and potential for ongoing training and development, she added.

"Such investment in skills development is more than a scorecard measure. It is an economic imperative."

The survey showed that black representation in the mining industry at top management level more than doubled from 12.5 percent in 2001 to 30.6 percent in 2006, ahead of the all industry average of 22.2 percent.

The single biggest shift occurred at non-executive director level -- from 0.05 percent to 37 percent.

The survey also showed that mining industry had made significant strides in gender equity, with the number of women in top management increasing from 0.01 percent to 9.3 percent between 2001 and 2006, women in senior management increasing from 0.03 percent to 10.1 percent, and those in middle management and professional positions increasing from 5.4 percent to 18.3 percent.

However, across all levels, mining lagged behind the all industry average, the survey found.

-Sapa

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