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Telecoms 'short of skilled staff'

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MORE skilled people are needed to strengthen growth in the telecoms industry, says the research firm Landelahni Business Leaders.

"There is an inadequate trickle of suitably qualified candidates entering the sector," said CEO Sandra Burmeister.

"As a result, industry players rely to a high degree on in-company training so as to develop the required skills."

On employment equity, Burmeister said a survey showed that the telecoms industry employed a significantly high number of black people at executive and senior management level compared to the average across all industries.

It showed that black people made up 44percent of top management, compared to the all-industry average of 24.2percent.

In senior management, 37.3percent of executives were black, compared to the 32.4percent all-industry average.

"When it comes to the mid-management or professional level, telecoms has a profile similar to other industries, while the sector lags in regard to skilled technical staff," said Burmeister.

With regard to gender equity, Burmeister said "there are significantly fewer women in technical and engineering positions across all disciplines and industries, not just in telecommunications, largely because of the small number of technically qualified staff available".

She said the private telecoms sector was doing better than government telecoms with regard to gender equity at all levels, particularly at skilled technical levels, with women making up 42.5percent of staff in comparison to the public sector's 24percent.

"Gender equity rather than employment equity is clearly the area that requires focus. More work is also required at the professional and skilled levels to create a pipeline for sustainable business growth in the future."

South Africa's telecoms sector is estimated to be worth R99billion and is growing at a rate of 14 percent a year. — Sapa

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