

iLearn contributes to empowering SA's disabled workforce

Around 2.9-million South Africans are living with disabilities, yet only 1% have jobs. This is according to data by Statistics SA, and as the country observes Deaf Awareness Month, Richard Rayne, CEO of iLearn - a South African learning solutions company which offers a range of learnerships, short courses and digital learning solutions says, “an urgent intervention is necessary” to boost employment levels among the country's disabled.



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“These figures are alarming. We need to do a lot more to strengthen our disabled workforce and aid career development and business growth. But it’s a collective effort. A good place to start is with skills development through learnership programmes. This ensures that an individual will be up-skilled in an area of significance and in turn make a positive contribution to that industry and society as a whole,” Rayne says.

To demonstrate iLearn’s commitment to growing the amount of employed disabled South Africans, the organisation has partnered with Altech Netstar. For the next 12 months, learners with hearing loss will be trained to monitor the video feeds that are an integral element of the fleet management systems of one of the country’s largest bus operators.

Bus operations safety and security

The team of learners with hearing loss will be trained through a Business Administration NQF Level three Learnership programme on the best way to monitor drivers and staff using on-board cameras and report on daily activities, particularly those that relate to the safety and security of drivers, as well as the 350,000 commuters transported every day.

“When someone has a sensory impairment, it means his/her other senses become heightened and astute and compensate for this loss. People who are hard of hearing often have impeccable visual ability and we felt they would be a perfect fit for this role. We are thrilled about this collaboration and the contribution we are about to make to the disabled workforce in our country,” says Rhona Wolmarans, executive: human resources at Altech Netstar.

A learnership is a vocational and educational learning programme that links structured learning and work experience to obtain a registered qualification. It combines theory and workplace practice into a qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Learnership benefits for the learner:

A fixed-term employment contract and generous allowance for the duration of the programme.

An opportunity to enter the job market and appeal to current and future employers.

A nationally recognised qualification.

Janelle Ramsami, a hard of hearing learner on the programme, says she’s excited to experience these benefits first-hand, and in doing so, improve her overall circumstances.

“For me, this learnership has brought with it independence through education. And education is the most important part of anyone’s future. With this qualification, I want to send a message to everyone that you can do anything with the right mind-set and no one should make you feel inferior,” Ramsami says.

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