

## **Approved article: Engineering News feature on Training**

### **Training Academy Takes on 40 N6 Candidates on Air-Conditioning Learnership**

**Johannesburg – 07 July 2015** - According to [Stats SA](#) report released on 29 June 2015, Jimenez et al (2012) is quoted as saying: *“Because many young people are poorly educated when they leave school, they enter the world of work without the knowledge, skills, or behaviours necessary to adapt to changes in the economy and their lives. Moreover, within countries, learning levels are highly unequal, which points to a need not only for relevant and high-quality education at all levels, but also for basic education for hard-to-reach or disadvantaged groups. Research indicates that learning inequality more depends on the design and effectiveness of education policies than on income.”*

In light to the statement above, Bidvest Facilities Management decided to help address and alleviate the skills shortage at its Training Academy. “Critical skills shortage is a global phenomenon. We have noted that in South Africa the average age of an artisan is between 45 and 55 years. This is a major concern, as we need a younger workforce to ensure that skills do not become extinct. We decided to expand our training services to include previously disadvantaged individuals based in the surrounding communities of our facility in Olifantsfontein,” says Henk Benade, Senior Human Capital Manager at Bidvest Facilities Management (previously known as TFMC).

Bidvest Facilities Management, South Africa’s leading integrated facilities management company, established the Training Academy in 2011 to train its own employees in the electrical, air conditioning, fire and access, infrastructure and power generation disciplines. The purpose of the academy was to upskill employees and keep abreast of new technologies by providing training according to each individual’s needs.

“In 2013 – 2014, we opened our doors to the broader market, as a way of giving back to the communities. Not only was this move aimed to develop communities, but to also help address challenges of unemployment among the youth, lack of skilled individuals, and the economy of the country as a whole. We currently have 40 learnerships running at our academy, which is accredited by MERSETA,” adds Benade.

The 40 students undergoing this learnership were selected from the Kempton Park College, following an assessment that the Bidvest Facilities Management team carried out. All of them are currently on NQF Level 2, and will receive certification once they have completed their learnerships. “This year’s candidates are all N6 holders, which means they have the theoretical background on the practical training they receive at the academy. These individuals are compensated monthly, which lessens their financial burden. We have invested in this initiative to ensure that South Africa gets upskilled, and we are striving to enrol an additional candidates in 2016,” comments Benade.

Current candidates learn skills that vary from fire & access, security systems, aircon systems, brazing of pipes, welding, electrical, basic hand tool and life skills, to equip them with not only theoretical knowledge, but hands on experience when they enter the workplace. “In the power generation class, they learn about generators, how they work, how to make a basic diagnosis or maintenance and they also get basic PLC training. We are proud to have sponsors who support our initiatives to keep the SA economy alive. Each

class is equipped with the necessary tools that allow our candidates to do the actual work backed up with theoretical lessons,” he adds.

In addition to this initiative, Bidvest Facilities Management not only upskills its employees and their customers’ staff, but recently opened the Training Academy to the industry at large. Benade says that these training facilities directly impact on the quality of service by shaping the future of technical skills in the general Facilities Management environment.

With a capacity to train 1500 student per year, the Training Academy has an on-site restaurant and accommodation for 250 students for multiple-day training courses.

For more information, visit [www.bidvestfm.com](http://www.bidvestfm.com)

### **About Bidvest Facilities Management**

Bidvest Facilities Management is one of the largest Facilities Management solutions companies in southern Africa. The company currently provides various customised Facilities Management services for approximately 50 000 sites across 23 million square metres of space throughout South Africa.

Founded in 2000, Bidvest Facilities Management is majority black-controlled (Level 2 B-BBEE) and has the following accreditation: ISO 9001 Quality Management; OHSAS 18001 Health & Safety Management and ISO 14001 Environment Management.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015, Bidvest Facilities Management rebranded from Total Facilities Management Company (TFMC) to its current name as part of a growth strategy in line with the Bidvest Group. The company, which is well known for its end-to-end total facilities management services, is seen as a key driver of growth in Bidvest’s Services Division. With this rebranding, Bidvest Facilities Management is refocusing and expanding its offering by unbundling its integrated facilities management package to provide additional, individual, customised solutions to a wider business market.

### **Issued on behalf of Bidvest Facilities Management (previously TFMC)**

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