

Press Release from Atlas Copco South Africa

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Atlas Copco and Filpro keep the wheels turning for township mechanics

On 21 February 2019 township automotive service centre owners and motor mechanics from around the country celebrated their success during the annual Filpro enterprise development programme awards function in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal.

Atlas Copco is a socially conscious company that is passionate about community upliftment and development. Through a long-standing partnership with Filpro, Atlas Copco's B-BBEE company, Tirisano Trust, has continued to support this highly successful township mechanics initiative.

Born out of a vision that was backed by an innovative project coordination team, automotive component manufacturers, G.U.D. Holdings and NGK Spark Plugs, launched Filpro in 2011. The objective is to equip motor mechanics from townships with the necessary skills to further enhance their capabilities. The programme has steadily grown to encompass over 1000 registered beneficiaries across five Provinces - Gauteng, Free State, KwaZulu Natal, Western and Northern Cape. This ingenious initiative which Atlas Copco has been actively supporting over the last five years has to date already empowered approximately 150 mechanics. "Atlas Copco's involvement in the development of informal automotive service centers in previously disadvantaged areas stems from one of our core competencies - innovation and solution," states Wendy Buffa-Pace, Corporate Human Resources Manager at Atlas Copco Holdings.

Atlas Copco's industrial power tools and assembly solutions specialist, Industrial Technique, joined the Filpro team to pay a visit to some of the township service centres to gain a better understanding of how they operate, the challenges they face as well as to determine their requirements. Informal businesses range from generalist mechanics to tyre repairs and panel beaters. "Therefore the selection of tools and workshop equipment is conducted in close co-operation with Filpro to elevate product suitability," explains General Manager of Industrial Technique, Brandon Oelofse.

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Since joining the initiative, Industrial Technique has donated a wide range of tools including sockets, torque and impact wrenches, drills, sanders jacks, engine lifts and their recent involvement once again saw the generous sponsorship of a selection of pneumatic tools. “Priding ourselves with our innovative ideas, this project presents the perfect platform to showcase the Atlas Copco brand in a light that was never seen before.”

Oelofse confirms that Industrial Technique is planning follow-up visits together with Filpro to ensure the correct use of the tools as well as to provide additional advice and training. “Assisting with the tools training part of the project was not only an occasion for us to give back, but it also enables us to create sustainable networks and as well as to learn from the recipients.”

Atlas Copco’s Compressor Technique business area has also been a strong supporter of this initiative having donated over 45 Automan compressors over the past few years. The 2018 programme was certainly no exception having gained an AC 31 E200M Automan piston compressor.

Gauteng participants are also given a wide range of soft skills trainings including, Basic Business Management, Finance and Bookkeeping, Sales and Marketing, Business Planning and Profiling and Business Excellence. These courses arm the small business owners with fundamental knowledge to formally operate their businesses.

“Filpro is extremely grateful to Atlas Copco and Tirisano Trust for their solid on-ongoing support which greatly assists us in our mission to gear motor mechanics with the skills they need to further develop their competencies,” says Mboneni Magada, General Manager at Filpro (Pty) Ltd. “We are proud to assist these entrepreneurs in taking their businesses’ to greater heights.”

The Filpro initiative has prospered and grown into the powerful programme that it is today thanks to the contributions of other partner organisations such as the Automobile Association, the Department of Labour, SARS, banking institutions and local municipalities.

Through the Filpro enterprise programme many small service centre businesses have emerged and expanded and are making valuable contributions to the betterment of their communities as well as to the country’s economy. Two success stories are 100% black-owned businesses, SAAB Motors in Soweto, Johannesburg and 2020TT Auto Refinishers in Randfontein on Johannesburg’s West Rand.

SAAB Motors was established in 2005 by co-owners Bethuel Nematondoni and Baldwin Malange. Since joining the Filpro programme in 2012, the business has flourished from its humble beginnings operating in the Bara taxi rank to formal premises employing six people. In addition to pneumatic and non-pneumatic tools, the company has also received training in SHEQ, Consumer Protection Act (CPA), customer care and first aid through EMS at Jabulani Fire Station.

Directors Nematondoni and Malange elaborate on the benefits that the business management training his company received. “I would like to thank Filpro for opening our eyes in terms of business as previously we were operating without knowing the business principles. Now we understand the importance of filing, recording every amount that is coming to the business and the importance of housekeeping.”

Since participating in the Filpro programme for the past six years, 2020TT Auto Refinishers, founded in 1993 by Nathan (Themba) Chacha, has received various soft skills and other training as well as pneumatic and non-pneumatic tools from Filpro. Chacha is a self-taught motor mechanic whose passion, hard work, dedication, and perseverance, combined with the interventions he received from Filpro, is reflected through the success of his workshop boasting a five-strong staff complement.

“Atlas Copco endeavours to promote sustainable productivity through the Filpro enterprise development programme and we are proud to be part of an initiative that gives recognition to and support the potential of small businesses to assist them in expanding their horizons,” concludes Buffa-Pace.

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Captions:

1. FLTR- Evan Slack- General Manager (Manufacturing) at GUD, Mboneni Magada- Managing Director of Filpro, Johan Streuderst- Tirisano Trust Representative, David Skuni- a mechanic from the Kwa Nobuhle township Uitenhage, Queenie Pink- MMC from the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, Lebo Matai- Tirisano Trust Representative & Frans van Niekerk- Vice President and Managing Director of Atlas Copco.
2. Filpro enterprise development programme awards function celebrates township automotive service centre owners & motor mechanics success
3. Atlas Copco Industrial Technique has sponsored a selection of pneumatic tools to Filpro programme

Atlas Copco Group Great ideas accelerate innovation. At Atlas Copco we have been turning industrial ideas into business-critical benefits since 1873. By listening to our customers and knowing their needs, we deliver value and innovate with the future in mind.

Atlas Copco is based in Stockholm, Sweden with customers in more than 180 countries and about 37 000 employees. Revenues of BSEK 95/9 BEUR in 2018. For more information: www.atlascopcogroup.com

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