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BUCKING **THE TREND**





## New face for Aspasa enviro audits

"The fate of our environment is mainly in the hands of our corporate leaders and the consultants advising them." These are the words of Lizette van der Walt, new independent environmental auditor for Aspasa.

The energetic environmental lawyer took over from long-serving auditor, Alan Cluett, in January this year. She says her predecessor did sterling work in raising and maintaining awareness of the need for good environmental management. After several months on the job, she only has praise for Aspasa members, whom she says have displayed an above-average commitment and interest in environmental affairs.

This makes her job as the association's auditor easier as she continues to assist members to meet environmental legal exposure risks and to manage environmental impacts in accordance with the best practices as underlined by the association.

Van der Walt sees her appointment as a personal challenge and wants to use the opportunity to promote better environmental management. "Too often companies have the best intentions of upholding sound environmental managements, but due to incorrect prioritisation of environmental issues or misplaced advice from consultants they make fundamental mistakes. I would, therefore, like to use my time at Aspasa to share my experience with the members to ensure that their efforts yield the intended results while enabling them to build relationships of trust with regulators." ●



*Lizette van der Walt, new independent environmental auditor for Aspasa.*

## New Mining Charter Audit for Aspasa members

Following the publication of the Mining Charter's Implementation Guidelines and Amendments in December 2018, Aspasa has extended its service to members with a new Mining Charter Audit.

After a seven-month engagement process with stakeholders, South Africa's new Mining Charter was developed to boost sustainable growth, enforce procurement of local goods and to further support broad-based, meaningful Black Economic Empowerment of the local mining and minerals industry.

Independent mining law consultant Sibongile Kunene cautions that it's

important for all South African mines to work strictly within the confines of the charter.

"While the charter's main function is to secure one's licence to operate, it now has a stronger focus on socio-economic development. Then, increasingly local communities are becoming aware of their rights and holding mining companies to account. Overall, the new charter's message is clear; if a mine strays from implementing and maintaining its duty to society, it runs the risk of having its operations suspended or its licence withdrawn," says Kunene. ●



*Independent mining law consultant, Sibongile Kunene will provide auditing assistance to Aspasa members.*

## Aspasa introduces Blasting Audit

To assist members with compliance to the mining charter, technical and quality requirements, Aspasa is further extending its strategic service to members with the introduction of a new Blasting Audit.

According to director Nico Pienaar, Aspasa has decided to offer Blasting Audits to members due to the numerous legal challenges faced by the sector since the Mine Health and Safety Act's (MHSA) new explosives regulations came into effect on 14 December 2018. There have been various demands made by affected communities and Department of Mineral

Resources (DMR) officials.

"While some of the demands are not provided for in legislation and others are simply impractical, they are having an impact on the running of mining operations. A Blasting Audit that's in line with all new requirements of the MHSA is a positive step toward in clarifying the legal parameters of mining operations, and particularly when it comes to the use of explosives," says Pienaar.

To develop the audit, Aspasa has tasked an explosives solutions company that manages explosives related legal challenges, blasting engineering



*Explosives experts William Mlanje (left) and Corrie Rautenbach will be conducting blasting audits on behalf of Aspasa.*

improvement initiatives and independent investigations to undertake audits of members' sites. ●

# KEEPING THE MORALE HIGH

**We have gone through the elections and the commissions are still hearing horror stories. Meanwhile, there are some new leaders placed in strategic positions in government and we hope they bring a new, positive influence.**



Nico Pienaar, director of Aspasa.

**D**espite the so-called new dawn in South Africa, it is still very apparent that negativity prevails in people's minds, and our industry is no exception. So, what do leaders in the industry have to do to turn the tide of negativity? In his recent speech, which actually drove me to write this piece, SARS commissioner Edward Kieswetter said among the assets in the business, systems and computers can be fixed, but the morale and trust of the people is the most difficult to repair.

Leaders in companies need to understand that people and relationships are more important than tasks. Tasks do matter, but for leaders to be successful, they need to motivate and inspire people around them. It is petrifying to see what a single negative individual can do in a company. When there is a person who always knows better, bullying others and talking bad about others, the whole team is affected and then when such a bad apple leaves, the team either stays negative or gets a new injection and then performs above average.

### **Are leaders born not made?**

The old saying, "leaders are born not made" may hold true in some instances, but in my view, there are many leadership styles, and some

are learnt/studied practices. Something we always need to remember is to stay humble, even if you are the best. Humble people are often admired.

Your leadership style has a great bearing on how subordinates behave in a workplace. On the safety side we have heard all the slogans such as Zero Harm, Hard Targets and Target Zero, among others. A slogan does not make people act in different ways, but the actions managers and leaders display have a massive impact. If you don't wear your safety belt while driving, how can you expect your children, your co-workers and those who look up to you to act differently?

The problem when dealing with individuals is that they all have their own born-in beliefs. When talking to people who smoke, they will argue that smoking is not bad, or they will admit it, but also admit they just don't have the drive to quit the bad habit. Going back in those people's lives, one could identify the cracks that have been around for many years. A good leader needs to understand this.

### **Negativity drivers**

So, what are some of the issues that make people, a company or even a country negative?

- A poor economy – when one hears there is low growth while you are battling to keep your head above the water
- Issues such as high unemployment, poverty and the inequality in society. Some individuals want to help others, but there is also just so much one person can do
- When one hears about unethical leaderships and subsequent denial from the very same leaders who have done wrong. For the ethical individual, that is a key negativity driver and often the question they ask is "so why is nothing being done about it?"
- Issues such as the volatile labour market and lack of trust between stakeholders

### **What can be done?**

So, at the end of the day, what can leaders do to deal with some of the issues?

- We can talk to each other – some call it a culture of engagement
- Adapt to the environment – understand your people's fears and try to be positive
- Always focus on solutions and set goals for yourself and your colleagues. Never throw in the towel! ●