

Why should your Employee become a member of the ICFF? A Corporate Perspective.

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In my previous article I had highlighted the importance of this industry within the context of international trade, as well as the fact that South Africa is only ranked as the 60th most competitive nation in the world. This indicates that there is much more to be done in respect of learning and development and providing the economy with the correct set of skills and capacity required to facilitate international trade and growth, this is applicable to all sectors of the economy.

The establishment of the ICFF was a concept that came about in 2011. The industry recognised that it had to take responsibility and ownership of its industry standards for competency and proficiency, as the industry did not have anything structured in place to ensure that our employees were globally competitive. Also bearing in mind that many of our employees in this industry have limited or no formal qualifications.

Qualifications were developed over the years through the current skills development bureaucracy, and which has since failed to maintain the standards required by the business reality. The current skills development system leaves a lot to be desired, and hence in

2021 the industry employer associations finally established the ICFF through the recognised processes of SAQA (South African Qualification's Authority).

Aside from the above bureaucracy corporates have had to deal with, the learning & development of our employees does not always take priority. Most training implemented is for compliance purposes only and training budgets are approved to reach certain targets. However, if corporates took a more strategic approach to learning and development you will find more return on your investment, especially from a BBBEE perspective. It must be recognised that employees have various learning needs and styles which can be addressed in a more

focused manner. The question always arises as to what training your employees need to be proficient in what they do?

At the ICFF we have a competency framework which allows for competency assessments of your employees on their proficiencies in the field of customs and freight forwarding. The competency assessment will indicate any shortcomings in proficiency of an employee, and in so doing will assist the corporates to develop more focused training plans for employees on addressing competency. Employees will be able to attend structured training programs with industry training providers, receive recognised industry qualifications and become a professionally designated member of the ICFF.

Corporates have a responsibility to themselves and the broader industry to ensure that their employees are professionally designated or assist them towards meeting the industry standards.

Corporates should be making a professional designation a prerequisite for employment within their HR strategy; in so doing they can be assured of the calibre and proficiency of a person in their employ. It must be noted that the ICFF are currently in discussions with Employer Associations and SARS to include professional designations as part of the AEO accreditation criteria within the field of customs. The ICFF also assists members in maintaining their continuous professional development through CPD training to maintain member designations. There is a code of conduct and ethics that all members assign to, and which must be honoured to keep their respective professional designation.

The ICFF is also currently working closely with industry subject matter experts and our training providers through our various committees which focus on research, standards and compliance, as well as discipline. We are currently registering our recognised training providers based on our set of standards, and we have entered into MOU's with universities and strategic partners. The ICFF is there to look after the interests of the industry, and we are committed to working with you and all relevant employer associations and partners.

In conclusion, the ICFF is your partner in professionalisation. We are currently developing L&D strategies for the industry towards professionalisation and an effective and efficient supply chain.



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