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Training and Mentoring of SMMEs on Standards and Certification Processes

Business Botswana

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0 Introduction

The Training and Mentoring Project for SMMEs on Standards and Certification Processes was practically completed as of Friday 11th November 2016. The Consultancy Project proceeded with a focus on compliance with the new ISO 9001:2015 standard (the Consultant took a discretionary professional decision to opt for this standard on behalf of the beneficiaries versus the older ISO 9001:2008 version which had been specified in the tender but which is soon coming to an end of its validity).

0.1 Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Business Botswana, the Centre for Development of the Enterprise and PSDP for giving us this opportunity to take part in this very important Project. Special thanks also go to the participating organizations for their cooperation and having made this intervention a success.

0.2 Benefits of standardization

The benefits for standardization and certification processes are not limited to these beneficiary companies but go beyond to other stakeholders namely,

- i) government and regulatory authorities as has already been explained above through improved tax revenues,
- ii) employees having secure employment,
- iii) suppliers of raw materials to the beneficiary organizations having guaranteed markets for their products and
- iv) The community having opportunities for employment and safety of environment from pollution.

The intervention will make an indelible mark in the diversification of the economy of Botswana through enabling the assisted companies to compete locally and globally. Their global footprint will help in creation of employment in the country because they can access otherwise closed markets by being able to meet international standards requirements for the countries in which they desire to do business. Botswana products will thus enjoy an expanded market the result being increased foreign exchange earnings for the country.

1 Key results of the object

For a project launched to turn-around an initial false start in late 2015 the outcomes are very pleasing with a success rate of 75% of the eight companies assisted. Six companies successfully completed the planned arrangements and of these four have had their applications for

certification by BOBS accepted by the latter. Three of these four will even be undergoing external audits in November and December 2016.

The successful companies have predominantly come from the same groups that were reported in our last report to you.

This has really been a value-adding project to industry and we look forward to other interventions of a similar nature.

The Groups are summarized as below.

1.1 Group A Companies

Weblogic, Lithoflex, SDM Switchboards and ICT Dynamix have received letters of acknowledgement of their application for certification by BOBS. I draw your attention to the fact that receipt of an acknowledgement letter by the Certification Body, in this case BOBS is a very significant indicator of the advanced stage and hence maturity of the development of the Quality Management System (QMS). The Certification Body, upon receipt of the application, thoroughly reviews the contents of the Quality Manual and related Documented Information and issues the letter of acknowledgement of application if and only if the full requirements for the ISO 9001:2015 standard are met in principle in the documentation. This is called Stage 1 Audit or Document Desk-study Audit by the Certification Body. What would then follow is the agreement on suitable dates for BOBS to carry out Stage 2 Audit or On-site Audit. At the of writing this report ICT Dynamix and Weblogic are already set for Stage 2 Audit on 15 November 2016 and 9 December 2016 respectively.

1.2 Group B Companies

Creations of Africa and Gabs Bedding have not lodged their application for certification due to delays they have experienced in their individual organizations. However, their Documented Information was deemed by us to be completed and ready to apply and be accepted by BOBS. There are no further actions required from the Consultancy to prepare them for this next step. However, it is to be noted that delaying of lodging the application process threatens to erode the progress that had been attained.

1.3 Group C Companies

Cally Clothing and Sunbeam Lodge have not positively responded to the call for them to change their approach and focus on the project. Lack of management commitment or focus is deemed to be the reason for poor progress. As such, there is nothing else the Consultancy can do beyond the advice given.

1.4 Summary status for each company

No.	Company	Brief Comments	Status of QMS
1	Lithoflex	Trained on Standards and Internal Auditing, Quality Manual and forms developed Internal Audited, Management Review conducted, and Mentored on maintaining QMS through implementation of corrective actions. Project incomplete.	Application approved by BOBS
2	Sunbeam	Trained on Standards and Internal Auditing, Quality Manual and forms developed Internal Audited, Management Review conducted, and Mentored on maintaining QMS through implementation of corrective actions. Project Completed successfully.	Stalled
3	ICT Dynamix	Trained on Standards and Internal Auditing, Quality Manual and forms developed Internal Audited, Management Review conducted, and Mentored on maintaining QMS through implementation of corrective actions. Project Completed successfully.	Application approved by BOBS
4	SDM	Trained on Standards and Internal Auditing, Quality Manual and forms developed Internal Audited, Management Review conducted, and Mentored on maintaining QMS through implementation of corrective actions. Project Completed successfully.	Application approved by BOBS
5	Weblogic	Trained on Standards and Internal Auditing, Quality Manual and forms developed Internal Audited, Management Review conducted, and Mentored on maintaining QMS through implementation of corrective actions. Project Completed successfully.	Application approved by BOBS
6	Gabs Bedding	Trained on Standards and Internal Auditing, Quality Manual and forms developed Internal Audited, Management Review conducted, and Mentored on maintaining QMS through implementation of corrective actions. Project Completed successfully.	Still to apply to BOBS
7	Creations of Africa	Trained on Standards and Internal Auditing, Quality Manual and forms developed Internal Audited, Management Review conducted, and Mentored on maintaining QMS through implementation of corrective actions. Project Completed successfully.	Still to apply to BOBS
8	Cally Clothing	Trained on Standards and Internal Auditing, Quality Manual and forms developed Internal Audited, Management Review conducted, and Mentored on maintaining QMS through implementation of corrective actions. Project incomplete.	Stalled

2. Challenges

The following were issues that presented challenges to the successful implementation of the project:

- Initial slow take up of the programmes by the clients.
- Late completion of tasks assigned to the clients
- Multiple concurrent assistance programmes taken up by the clients meaning that there was serious competition for limited time and human resources.
- Beneficiaries hardly took personal initiatives to work beyond assigned tasks.

3. Recommendations

From the experience gained with the intervention, we put forward the following recommendations:

- i) a strict screening process to admit beneficiaries into assistance programmes will in future greatly enhance the chances of their success. Some clients were totally not prepared to commit time to do planned activities.
- ii) Beneficiaries could be put in different categories depending on their maturity, organizational human resources and ability to execute assignments. The slow learners would not be pitted against the 'fast-laners'. As such different time-scales can be accorded to different categories of companies looking at their capacity to cope with the demands of the programmes. In the end we would not have absolute failures in the programmes.
- iii) Tied to point ii) above, Douglas Management Services would like to propose a simplified menu of activities to follow for the different categories of beneficiaries. This is by way of a step-wise approach to standards compliance. Recognition would be given to beneficiaries who meet criteria set for each step or stage reached before they enter into the next higher stage and ultimately attaining full compliance to standards such as ISO 9001. The fast-laners noted in bullet ii) above would be able to take the programme in one lap and attain compliance at once while the slow-laners would be assisted to systematically fulfill the criteria of each stage and eventually cumulatively achieve the desired full compliance status.

4. Enclosures

- 1. Internal Audits undertaken,
- 2. Management Review undertaken,
- 3. The Quality Manual (Policy, Objectives, Procedures and Forms),
- 4. Progress Evaluation Record for each company at the time of winding up the final reviews in preparation for application for certification.

End of Report