

Ngomane acquiring skills to take her business to the next level

“There are always opportunities for one to start or grow in business and one just has to look for them.” These are the words of 37 year old Witbank entrepreneur, Sphiwe Ngomane. Sphiwe is the owner of Fihli Business Projects, a company that supplies and delivers industrial spares and refurbishes valves, pumps etc. for Eskom and a few mines in her hometown.

According to Ngomane, one such opportunity for her came in the form of the Eskom Contractor Academy, an eight month programme offered to the organisation’s contractors and suppliers wishing to receive training in project and financial management, entrepreneurship, legislation as well as technical skills.

Ngomane had always wanted to be her own boss and she was fortunate enough to win a contract as an Eskom supplier in 2004, a year after starting her business. She has now created employment for four people and is looking to grow even bigger. After getting anonymously nominated by one of her clients for the academy and receiving the application forms, she didn’t hesitate to enrol. “I saw this as a great opportunity to help me take my business to the next level,” enthuses Ngomane.

“I’m looking forward to learning essential skills such as health and safety in the workplace, how to be compliant with all relevant legislation as well as keeping proper records. Most importantly I’m excited about the networking opportunity and picking up great lessons on how to keep my business sustainable and relevant to my clients,” says Ngomane.

The programme, which is running from June 2015 to February 2016 in Johannesburg, will see a group of Eskom’s suppliers and contractors from around the country gaining some invaluable business-related skills as they look to grow their small and medium enterprises.

The Contractor Academy combines both practical and theoretical course work to equip and empower contractors with the necessary skills to successfully negotiate lucrative contracts in order to build sustainable businesses. The entrepreneurs emerge from the course equipped with the financial, legislative, management, leadership, safety, health and technical skills to grow their business.

Haylene Liberty-Nel, CEO of the Eskom Development Foundation, says, “The academy is an integral part of the Foundation’s mandate to enhance the quality of life of the communities in which we operate. By equipping small and emerging business people with the necessary skills required to build sustainable businesses, we believe solutions to some of the country’s socio-economic problems will begin to materialise.”