



SUCCESS IS NOT A ONE-ACT BUSINESS

There's a tangible sense of order, harmony and team spirit at Barak Products (Pty) Ltd in Pretoria North.



It's not by chance that this manufacturer of ceiling- and building-related products is a success story. It's because Muller is a strong believer that *"success is not a one-act business"*.

With SEESA's guidance Muller embarked on a BEE strategy aimed at empowering all Barak Employees. The outcome was the launch of ARE Investments in March 2007. Barak employees were offered shares in ARE Investments, which owns 25% of Barak, now a Level Four Contributor.

Barak employees pay for their shares with wage deductions over a four-year period and directly benefit from the dividend payouts each year.

"This has greatly contributed to the team spirit at Barak because it engenders loyalty and commitment," says Muller who has shown that when employees are part of the decision making in their company and directly benefit from the profits, they offer so much more of themselves.

The Managing Director of ARE Investments is Barak's Sales Clerk, Roy Chauke, who was appointed by his fellow employees. He also sits on Barak's board.

Chauke joined Barak in 1996 and has worked his way up from the factory floor to his current position. He put himself through a computer literacy course and office management course at Unisa to advance himself in the company, and has since completed several SEESA Skills courses.

Barak employees have all benefited from the wide selection of accredited Skills courses that SEESA recommends or offers, ranging from an Introduction to Management to Customer Care to Disciplinary Procedures and Hearings.

"Mr Muller and the board invests a lot in all of us at Barak," comments Chauke. "This has brought self-esteem to all the staff. They feel important to the company and are willing to do their utmost best for it."

SEESA additionally assists Barak with the SETA claim forms for the refund on skills development. "My personal opinion is that even if we didn't get anything back, the skills courses are money well spent because they greatly

benefit our employees and the company," says Muller who signed up with SEESA five years ago, first as a Labour client and subsequently as a Skills and BEE client.

"We immediately recognised the benefits of having SEESA manage our Labour side because our employees respect SEESA as a higher, professional legal authority. This way there is no prejudice," he explains.

"It also takes the pressure off management as we found we were spending all our time trying to keep up to date with the changes in the complex Labour law system instead of concentrating on growing our business."

Muller is unreservedly positive about the future of Barak, and feels the same way about the future of South Africa. "We are in the housing industry and housing is one of the greatest needs in our country. In a small way we are contributing to the country's growth because there is not a single house that doesn't feature some of our products.

"For me, it is very gratifying to know that long after we have gone, a piece of our handiwork will remain. It has taught me that there is enduring significance in all the things we do."



QUOTE

Johan Muller

"SEESA has given us tremendous ongoing guidance and support for all our BEE, Labour and Skills needs. SEESA's team responds promptly and professionally to all requests. The retainer I pay to SEESA each month is money very well spent."

"The success of this business relies on each and every member of the team and I believe that because of this everyone should profit from the success."

– Johan Muller, Managing Director, Barak Products (Pty) Ltd in Pretoria North.

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SEESA has an in-house team of 152 lawyers, 9 consulting-panel legal firms, 550 employees and 18 offices country-wide.

SEESA was established in South Africa 10 years ago and has a client base of 30 000 business owners. The group's success is attributed to product and service excellence combined with affordability.

SEESA's clients range from businesses with 1 employee to businesses with over 2 000 employees. SEESA assists a diverse range of businesses, including retail, security, manufacture, farming, service industry and professional practices.

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