

Human Resources Management



The ICT industry is the hardest hit by the current talent crisis and skills shortage both at home and abroad. With rapidly changing technologies, shortages of talent are one of the greatest concerns.

Telecom Namibia relies heavily on top talent to drive innovation and suffers from this global problem. The biggest challenge is finding, hiring and retaining qualified employees, as the traditional business advantages of scale, physical assets, and financial capital are eroding as the global playing field is leveled by new technologies and networks.

As we transition to a Next Generation Network (NGN) environment, Telecom Namibia's ability to recruit, develop, and retain the right human capital is more critical than ever before. Having the right talent can help the company delight customers, differentiate itself and achieve profitability and growth.

Our staff

The number of permanent employees was 1,093 as at 30 September 2009, that is 4.5% less than the previous year. The majority (87%) left as a result of voluntary separation. The resignation rate is around 3.8% and concentrated at the technical and professional levels.

Employment equity

In compliance with the Affirmative Act, Act 29 of 1998, notable progress was made towards meeting the company's 3-year employment equity targets. Our Affirmative Action Committee meets quarterly to take stock of progress made on equity

targets and conduct consultation sessions with employees. The committee also carries out progress evaluation on all under-studies on a bi-annual basis in line with Telecom Namibia's governance framework for the understudy development programme. A review session was done in June 2009 with each understudy.

Remuneration

Telecom Namibia strives to keep its remuneration packages at a sufficiently competitive level to maintain our status as a preferred employer of choice in both the general and ICT market. Internal climate surveys show improved perceptions around remuneration issues.

NAPOTEL Pension Fund

The NAPOTEL Pension Fund is an in-house defined contribution pension fund, managed by a Board of Trustees. Membership to the Fund is compulsory for all Telecom Namibia fulltime employees. The Fund is financially sound.

A capital protection scheme is available to employees aged 50 years and older allowing them to exercise their option in terms of whether they want to have their money invested in a cash or market portfolio. The employees in this age category are sensitised and, through our retirement counselling programme, to exercise their preferred investment option. More than 80% of the prospective retirees attended the sessions during the year.

NAPOTEL Medical Aid Fund

The NAPOTEL Medical Aid Fund is an in-house pension fund,

managed by a Board of Trustees. The Fund is financially sound.

Performance management

The performance management system remains sound, but the application thereof remains a challenge, especially in aligning organisational and individual performance. To this end, the business is continuously enhancing the link between individual and team performance to company performance. A set of common performance measures which are reflected on all employee performance contracts with differentiated weightings for every level was introduced.

Skills training

The rapid technological changes, network security threat, new application development, and growing IP deployment have continued to keep the training and development in the priority catalogue. The following training programmes were conducted:

ICT training – for several network and field technicians focussed on IP telephony and IP-related offerings including LAN technologies, router installation and maintenance programmes as well as the installation and maintenance of MPLS, Metronet, ADSL, WiMAX, CDMA, A+, N+ IN etc.

Product knowledge training - focusing on IP was successfully carried out for the sales staff.

TE multi-skilling scheme - The multi-skilling of field technicians was identified as a must do to enable the company to implement the noble idea of doing more work with less resources. This initiative is on track.

Telecom Namibia has invested N\$8,4 million to provide skills training to a total of 1,093 employees in various disciplines during the year [2008: N\$16 million].

E-learning

The company has started to offer all Microsoft-based training programmes via e-learning. In addition, we are exploring the possibility of developing more e-learning based training programmes, e.g. product knowledge training.

Technicians up-skilling programme

Special courses were conducted for the technical workforce to upgrade their formal qualifications with the Polytechnic of Namibia. Thirty employees were enrolled for the SO programme providing them with a solid foundation to continue with the National Diploma in Electronic Engineering.

Graduate development scheme (Skills pipelining scheme)

Our Graduate Development Scheme is dedicated to addressing skills shortage in the ICT, electronic and telecommunication areas by growing and developing young talent. So far all graduate trainees were offered jobs permanently by the company.

Succession planning

Succession planning remains one of the key imperatives in managing the future human resources requirements. During the year, employees were encouraged to take part in assessments for both Career Path Analysis (CPA) and Personnel Index which profiles the level of alignment of the employee behavioural inclination and job profile requirements. The exercise will form the basis to draw up the company's Human Capital Balance Sheet.

Career path/Ladder scheme

The business objective of the career path scheme is to improve productivity through the multi-skilling of employees and through a reward mechanism that aims to encourage the acquisition of multiple skills. Multi-skilling would make it easy to deploy such competencies across the growing plethora of new technologies that typify a Next Generation Network (NGN) organisation.

Retention programme

The retention programme has been successful with all 178 targeted employees retained. In addition, a total of 201 employees qualified for long service recognition during the year in the various categories. This reflects the fact that Telecom Namibia is still regarded as an employer of choice.

Employee engagement

The overall internal climate rating improved to 69.2% compared to 68% last year. Positive gains were made in traditionally weak areas such as remuneration, training and development as well as in-house communication.

During the year, there was an improvement in the customer satisfaction rate across the various customer segments, which is indirectly the result of the positive engagement of our employees. However, the rating is still below the target of 75%.

Code of ethics and conduct

In an effort to ensure that all employees live our values and behave in tandem with our code of ethics, a booklet was compiled, printed and distributed to serve as a reference pocket guide for all employees.

Employee relations

While differences on specific issues and approaches persist, the trust relationship between the Union and the company significantly improved during the year. Tolerance and respect for diverse views are exercised even on issues where there are distinct differences. The following are some of the initiatives implemented to nurture a healthier employee relations climate:

- Initiated quarterly information sharing sessions between EXCO and Union leaders - to give insight into, and ensure ownership of business strategies, plans and targets. This forum is embedded and successful.
- Initiated monthly divisional meetings between management and their local shop stewards, the purpose of which is to address issues at the workforce.
- Negotiations and consultation sessions with Union on outstanding HR policies.

- Involvement of shop stewards on various statutory and functional committees such as the Affirmative Action Committee and the Optimal Employment Level Committee that deals with voluntary separations issues.

Discipline and grievance management

The building of Industrial Relations skill capacity continues to be an area of focus within Telecom Namibia. The skills development was to enable managers to address IR issues within the legal parameters set out in the Labour Act. Several managerial and supervisory employees completed training on IR Training for Chairpersons & Initiators as well as on Arbitration and Negotiation Skills.

Wages negotiations

The company and the union successfully concluded the salaries and benefits negotiations for the new financial year. Telecom Namibia continues to engage with the bargaining unit in order to find equitable solutions.