



MASSMART

GROUP UPDATE

Massmart develops its future black leaders

Providing advantages to SA's previously disadvantaged

When Norman Mainganya, 34, worked as a salesman at Makro Wonderboom, he thought the guys back in the receiving area had it easy. "I believed my job was harder because I had to bring in the sales. Once I saw how involved receiving was – scheduling deliveries and validating stock – I gained a new respect for the work they do."

Norman is a participant in Massmart's new Graduate Development Programme. He is learning the business from the ground up so that one day he may be one of its leaders.

Developing new talent

The Graduate Development Programme is helping expose 22 black South African graduates to as many areas of Massmart's activities as possible. By the end of his two-year training, Norman will have a thorough understanding of how the group operates its retail businesses, from procuring products from suppliers to selling them on to the stores' customers.

"Like many other South African companies, we face the challenge of a lack of equity at senior management level," explains Nivy Moodley, Massmart group training services executive. "In addition, our growth strategy over the last few years compounded the problem of this shortage of talent. Part of our objective is to position ourselves as a career retailer. We

encourage our employees to benefit from our culture of continuous learning, and want to see them move up the career ladder in the company."

How does the programme work?

The programme's aim is to develop internal and external university or technikon graduates for permanent roles of greater influence at Massmart. There were some 900 applicants, so the selection process had to be thorough, explains Moodley: "We didn't rely solely on interviews; we conducted cognitive assessments, looked at each candidate's skills and asked them all how they would resolve a variety of typical challenging scenarios. The retail business depends on delivery. You have to have good interpersonal skills, be a critical thinker, be able to plan ahead, meet customer expectation and motivate and inspire fellow colleagues.

There is also a strong entrepreneurial spirit where we need creativity, such as in merchandising. "After 14 months' training across many areas, candidates will determine where their interests lie and begin 10 months' intensive training in that area.

Adding value

While in the programme, graduates are asked to look critically at Massmart's internal processes.



"I feel like this programme was created with me in mind," says Norman Mainganya (right), as he learns about receiving at Builders Warehouse Fourways.

"We can offer suggestions and come up with ideas for improvement," says Mainganya. "My goal is to do my best and work towards a good position in the company. I am enjoying this because I get to understand how Massmart works as a whole and what happens from the time when stock is ordered to when the money from the tills is banked. This programme will help me achieve that goal." ■