

all about people

Totsie Memela-Khambule recently joined the Post Office as the Managing Director of Postbank and looks forward to making a difference in the lives of ordinary people, both within the organisation and among the people PostBank serves.

"It is critical that leaders look at strategy but it is more critical that they look at their people who enable the implementation of the strategy," she shares. "As leaders we are having to manage and lead people from a broad spectrum in terms of age, race and nationality. We need to be comfortable in our own skins so that we can understand where our people are coming from."

This diverse range of people results in a wide range of needs and expectations with which the leader is required to work and interact. Younger people coming into organisations are comfort-

able with the technological age they have grown up in and are happy to be contacted by email whereas they may struggle with the bosberaad concept.

"A leader needs to be flexible," notes Memela-Khambule. "We can't lead everyone the same because they are all different. The key is being able to draw passion from our people regardless of who they are and where they come from."

Memela-Khambule believes that an organisation can achieve the greatest level of success by having the right people in the right positions so they can operate at their best, and providing an environment in which those people can grow. "Growing your people means allowing them to make mistakes as long as they understand that they cannot make the same mistake twice," she asserts. "It's about being able to say, 'You've messed up and there are consequences,' but at the same time caring for them as people and having empathy with what they might be going through."

Creating space for growth and establishing a learning organisation allows for innovation that can be critical in bringing competitive advantage to the company. "A leader must indicate where the organisation is going and allow their people to focus on the how and what," shares Memela-Khambule, "But you also need a force to drive innovation because people generally do what you pay them for - you need programmes to encourage people to consider doing things differently, even in small ways."

Genuineness and integrity are critical for Memela-Khambule. She notes that in reprimanding and in appraising people it is critical that the leader is completely genuine. "Leadership is a privilege and a key value that should drive you is integrity - without that you have nothing else. It is soul-satisfying - you feel good about yourself and you make your organisation attractive because you attract great people. At society level you instil confidence in the organisation ensuring that you can make a difference in society as a whole."

For Memela-Khambule that difference can be giving a person the ability to send funds home to their families in a safe way or educating the newly banked in how to operate without cash using the recently launched visa card that is part of the Mzansi initiative. "We can do things differently," she concludes. "Banking is not just for the few but is there to make all our lives easier - to enable us to take care of our families by saving and creating a future for ourselves and our children."

Totsie Memela-Khambule, Managing Director: Postbank

