

## Keep on training

Written by Jaco de Klerk  
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IRCA Global, as the name suggests, has offices worldwide – but it has more than a diverse footprint ... It offers a wide range of systems, products and services for risk management in the areas of safety, health, the environment and quality (SHEQ). JACO DE KLERK speaks to Wensley Misrole, executive of research and development, and Lynne Venter, executive: training and education.

IRCA Global, which began its local operations in 1993, went from humble beginnings (starting in a small flat in Hillbrow) to an international contender (with offices in Africa, the Middle East, China and Australia).

It has expanded its risk management solutions to cover several areas in the SHEQ-driven industries. These include assessing, advising and assisting various organisations to reduce operational risk exposure.

This is all made possible by the company's research, development, training and education divisions ...

What role do training, education, research and development play within IRCA Global? And how important are these to the company and your clients?

Misrole: They play a key role within the organisation. Our research enables us to stay abreast with the latest trends, both locally and abroad. It also helps us to keep tabs on any new developments, and the way in which the SHEQ industry is progressing ...

**What training and development courses do you offer?**

Venter: We provide a vast range of health and safety courses including short courses. The course categories include: SHEQ management, incident analysis, legal liability and skills programmes. We also offer risk assessments and auditor programmes.

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On the education side, we've got certificate courses, diplomas and a Bachelor of Commerce degree, which are customised for operational risk management. We provide these together with the Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management (a registered higher education and training institution).

How have the training and education, and the research and development departments developed as the company has grown?

Misrole: Since we started, we've grown the list of courses that we offer to the public exponentially. We currently have over 100 courses and we're constantly innovating and adding new ones to satisfy our clients' requests.

We've learned a lot from the field exposure we have had over the years, and we have ploughed back the knowledge we have gained into the training courses.

### **What trends are you most excited about?**

Misrole: There are quite a few, but the one that stands out the most is the safety leadership programme for supervisors. We've identified problems in this area in the industry. We have found that many supervisors do not have all the tools and knowledge to do what is expected of them.

We are, therefore, offering courses in safety leadership for supervisors, because they play a key role in any organisation. Often the shortcomings are in the area of middle management, resulting in organisations not being as successful as they could be.

On the formal education side – which includes certificates, diplomas and degrees – there are a lot of industry practitioners, with years of experience. This is difficult to convert into a full qualification. We've expanded our partnership with the Da Vinci Institute to offer formal qualifications that enable people with extensive experience to receive recognition of prior

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learning. Candidates can, therefore, be given credit for skills, knowledge and experience gained through working and learning – enabling them to continue to work towards formal qualifications.

### **What challenges does IRCA face and how is the company overcoming these?**

Misrole: On the formal education side one of the challenges is the cost. This prevents many people from actually pursuing a formal education.

### **How is this being dealt with?**

Misrole: In some cases companies are paying for their employees. In other cases, employees are paying for themselves by taking loans. They see education as an investment in their future. There are no bursaries at the moment, but it is something that we are looking into and working towards.

Venter: From Da Vinci's side, it assists by offering students a monthly payment option – so it isn't necessary for them to pay all their fees up front.

### **What does the future hold for IRCA Global?**

Misrole: With our current initiatives, and our ongoing research and development, we believe the future for IRCA is quite bright. We are broadening our scope of services that we can offer to clients, and, through that, we'll keep the company sustainable into the future.