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TO: THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER
THE CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
C/o The Principal Officers Association (POA)

CHANGING THE COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT LANDSCAPE: MOTIVATION TO ATTEND POA TRAINING
AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN 2009

Purpose

Training is an expensive commodity and should therefore make business sense to Fund in order to support such expenses. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with more details on the tailored training that the POA will be offering to principal officers, trustees and retirement functionaries so that you are in a better position to motivate for the funding.

24-month development programme

Over the next 24 months the POA will invite and encourage you to attend information sessions and workshops in order to assist you with consolidating your complaint management efforts at fund level and refocusing your energies towards improving service delivery in a coordinated and effective way.

Outcomes

At the end of the period the participants should feel confident to successfully:

- Guide and drive dispute resolution activities
- Effectively chair various meeting proceedings
- Direct complaint handling at fund level
- Update themselves on the latest legislative change to the Pension Funds Act and other relevant changes to legislation that have an impact on the effective management of retirement funds.

Why complaint management and service delivery

As you may be aware there is a general focus on improving complaint management with a view to improve service delivery to beneficiaries. A customer orientated service means that funds should make sure that the promised level and quality of service is always of the highest standards. Funds should respond swiftly and sympathetically when standards of service fall below the promised standard. Using customer service as a yardstick, service delivery, especially in relation to complaints management, requires attention. Presently, most of the initiatives are generated by the Regulators. At Fund level, however, there is little evidence of a coordinated approach towards dealing with complaints.

More about the two-day course on conflict management and dispute resolution (Summer Tutorials)

The following paragraphs will provide you with an outline of the training that will be presented at our Summer Tutorials in February 2009 as well of the level and standard we have asked our service provider to meet. The POA is committed to provide principal officers and trustees with the best quality training and support at an affordable rate per person. This is also the first custom-made training on conflict management and dispute resolution offered within the retirement industry.

The training service provider

Resolve Encounter Consulting will conduct the training. The material would be developed and presented by Claire Hock who has some 23 years' experience in the labour relations arena, particularly in training and dispute resolution. Claire is a part-time Senior Commissioner at the CCMA since its inception and is an arbitrator with the Metal Industries Bargaining Council. She is also an accredited mediator with CEDR – the premier commercial mediation agency in the United Kingdom.

Claire would be assisted by Sharon Wakeford and Lungile Zondi in the presentation of the programme. Both Sharon and Lungile are practising mediators and arbitrators and work for the CCMA and a range of bargaining councils. They each have over ten years' experience in the labour relations field and are also frequent trainers on Resolve training programmes. *Curriculum Vitae* of Claire, Sharon and Lungile are available on request.

Course content

The material would use the participative methodologies described above and aim to expose participants to the principles of conflict management and dispute resolution and give them some practical experience of what it "looks" and "feels" like. Topics covered would include:

- distinguishing between "conflict" and "dispute"
- the conflict path
- different approaches to conflict management

- the consensus-based approach and the positional approach
- defining mediation
- steps in the mediation process
- mediation techniques such as: effective listening, distinguishing between interests and positions, probing for interests, reality testing, dealing with threats and anger
- facilitation and effective chairing
- types of disputes which arise in the retirement funding context
- role plays

Participants would gain insight into different approaches to conflict management and practical experience of some dispute resolution techniques. These include: effective listening, distinguishing between interests and positions, probing for interests, reality testing and dealing with threats and anger.

Project approach and methodology

Insight into these techniques would be built up through a series of exercises and would culminate in a mediation role play in which each participant would have the opportunity to practise these skills in a simulated conflict situation.

The methodology is highly interactive, and the training courses are facilitated by practitioners who are qualified to train. This ensures that the training intervention has *academic rigour* and *practical application*.

The course material is also customised to suit the requirements of the retirement industry, both in terms of the environment in which we operate and with regard to organisational specific requirements.

Developing institutional knowledge will ensure that the training materials are appropriate, and that accurate and realistic material for case studies and exercises is included to ensure that the programme is practical and relevant to participants and is pitched at the appropriate level. The training materials are developed in such a way that participants have a reference file post the training intervention.

Unit standards

There is a wide range of unit standards registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which address conflict management. Most of them are specific to particular industries (e.g. engineering) and none of them is particular to the retirement industry. However, unit standard 114272 ("Analyse complaints and reports relating to referred disputes and select appropriate resolution process"), may be appropriate. This unit standard is in the Human Resources subfield at level 5 and has 10 credits.

Alternatively, unit standard 123416 (“Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the individual’s basic rights and responsibilities under a retirement fund”) is more focused on the retirement industry although not specifically on conflict management. This unit standard is in the subfield of finance, economics and accounting, at level 1 and with one credit. Given that each credit requires ten notional learning hours to acquire, it would only be possible to meet the requirements of the first unit standard if participants were required to perform additional assessments and tasks outside of the 14 contact hours they will receive during the two-day training course.

Alignment challenge and solution

Given this challenge with regard to unit standard alignment, we opted as a first pilot, to present a non-credit bearing short course which works towards registered unit standards but does not necessarily fulfil all the requirements in terms of notional learning hours. A *certificate of attendance* will be issued to all participants. This could be used in their portfolios of evidence, should they at a later stage wish to be certified competent against the whole unit standard.

Further course development

If the demand exists, we will consider developing the course into a credit-bearing short course on the second unit standard with additional content on the course which deals with conflict management. The implications of this are that participants’ competence would be assessed against this unit standard and a certificate of competence could be issued to those who are successful.

Resolve Encounter Consulting has provisional accreditation with the Services SETA and we would need to apply to extend the scope of our service offerings to convert this unit standard.

Costs for two-day training course

The POA is a non-profit organisation and the costs for the Summer Tutorials are set to recover costs for the design and development of the material, payment of trainers (this is a specialist field) and production of the training files.

POA members	New POA members (Fee covers membership until 28/2/09)	Non-members	Service providers
R1 700	R2 100	R 2 500	R3 000

Important dates


The table below provides more information about the activities over the next 24 months. Invitations will be forwarded no less than 8 weeks prior to the event. Please register early as seats are limited.

Date	Event	Objective
21 Nov 2008	Year-end function to unpack the Adjudicator's complaint score card as a tool to assess the effectiveness of complaint handling at fund level.	To implement the Adjudicator's score card effectively-getting it right first time round.
9 & 10 Feb 2009	Training on conflict management and dispute resolution at fund level.	Participants would gain insight into different approaches to conflict management and practical experience of some dispute resolution techniques.
6 Oct 2009	Training on complaint management.	Improve frontline service delivery to fund members and other beneficiaries.
9 & 10 Feb 2010	Training on retirement fund legislation.	To improve the fund official's legal and fund management knowledge.

Request

I trust that the information provided is sufficient to evaluate the standard and level of training on offer. Please call us if you still haven't received an invitation to register for the November 2008 and February 2009 events. It will be helpful if you could register early. You are welcome to contact me should you have any questions. I am looking forward to a fruitful working relationship.

Yours sincerely



Anne-Marie D'Alton
CEO: Principal Officers' Association