

MasterStart Programme Boosts Leadership Skills

FOR ABSA LIFE INSURANCE LINE MANAGERS

Summary

In 2023, Absa Life Insurance, the life insurance division of one of Africa’s largest diversified financial services groups, identified leadership skill gaps among its line managers. To address this, they partnered with MasterStart to develop a contextualised learning solution for their department. The goal was to **enhance the leadership capabilities of their line managers**, making them more efficient and effective in their roles.

Michelle Brink, Senior Leadership and Learning Partner at Absa Pan African Life Insurance, who led the skills development for this department shared more about the experience. She elaborates on the **challenge the line managers faced, the solution MasterStart proposed** and **the impact** it had on the team after training.

Read about her experience and see learner feedback below:



The Challenge

At Absa Life Insurance, the biggest challenge we faced was leadership role modelling – leaders whose actions set the tone and positively influence their teams. Every year we do a colleague experience survey and year after year, the results showed a need to upskill our leaders.

Ultimately we had to ask:



“How do we improve our leadership role modelling?” and



“How can we develop leaders who motivate, encourage and successfully manage high-performing teams?”

The Solution

The learning and development team met with our colleagues to discuss how to better support them in this leadership journey, without just putting them on another programme that might not be beneficial. With this in mind, we then approached MasterStart who proposed a programme drawing course material from their **Human Resource Skills for People Managers** and **Power Skills for Team Building** courses. They created a contextualised line manager programme, specifically with Absa context, to target the skills gaps that were highlighted in our colleague survey.

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The Solution – Continued

Part of the programme included Absa Sponsor and Headliner talks that provided specific business and industry insights and coaching circles that allowed learners to grow and better understand their roles and objectives. A weekly community fireside chat was hosted to allow learners to discuss topics relevant to the subject matter covered during that week and the collaborative learning sessions where learners were immersed in live online, collaborative, learning experiences where they interacted with the Industry Experts, their peers and their Learning Success Coordinator.

The **programme was a valuable learning opportunity** for the line managers of Absa Life Insurance, who **gained new skills and insights on how to lead their teams effectively**. The programme covered essential leadership topics such as effective communication, motivation, performance management, coaching, and feedback.

With MasterStart contextualising the programme for the Absa Life Insurance group specifically, this **allowed the line managers to easily align their goals and actions with the company's vision and values**.

The Impact

The impact of the programme was evident in the **improved engagement, productivity, and retention of the line managers and their direct reports**. It enhanced the collaboration and trust among them, their peers, and senior management while simultaneously contributing to the achievement of their key performance indicators and the overall strategic objectives of Absa Life Insurance.

The experience of dealing with the MasterStart team was positive and professional. They were **responsive, flexible, and supportive throughout the programme** and provided timely and constructive feedback, as well as guidance and resources for the line managers. The online sessions and the group projects were **facilitated with expertise and enthusiasm** and they demonstrated a high level of commitment and quality in delivering the programme.

Learner Feedback



The line managers found the programme content and activities to be relevant, practical, engaging and applicable to their work. They also **enjoyed the interactive and participatory nature of the programme**, which allowed them to learn from each other and share their experiences and best practices.

The learners appreciated the support and feedback they received from the MasterStart team. They truly **valued the opportunity to network and build relationships with other line managers from different departments and regions** and enjoyed the atmosphere of the programme, which **fostered a sense of camaraderie and belonging**.

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