

Solidarity saves jobs at Gijima

Trade union Solidarity announced that after "intense consultations" with black-empowered information technology company Gijima, it had succeeded in suspending forced retrenchments of its members - illustrating it was "possible to rise above difficult financial times and ultimately ensure that employees do not suffer from them".

Gijima said in May that it planned to retrench some of its more than 3 000 employees in a bid to save costs and improve efficiency, citing "dramatic changes" in the industry.

According to Solidarity, Gijima had already retrenched about 200 employees since December last year and the company planned to retrench another 200 by the middle of August - 14 of whom belonged to Solidarity. Gijima would not disclose the number of employees facing the axe at the time "due to the consultative HR (human resources) processes" the needed to be followed.

Chief executive Jonas Bogoshi said the strategy was part of Gijima's Vision 2025, launched last year, and the first phase of the implementation of the new business structure had resulted in "some role duplication and staff under-utilisation", which was now being corrected.

Solidarity spokesperson Moira-Marie Kloppers said: "It has been a really successful process for us", with the union succeeding in negotiating voluntary severance packages for seven of the 14 members affected, while another six members were either placed in other positions or retained their posts, although there was still uncertainty regarding one member's future at the company.

Zylma Olivier, Group HR manager at Gijima, confirmed the figures and said that while the company was "in the final phases of the process of consultations" regarding the retrenchments announced earlier in the year, there were no further retrenchments planned.

Kloppers said the union expected that "no Solidarity members will be forcibly retrenched". Gijima's successful implementation of measures such as redeployment and reasonable voluntary severance packages "proved that economic setbacks do not necessarily have to lead to the retrenchment of employees," she said.

Effective communication with employees regarding retrenchments was essential, Kloppers said, adding that the recent suicide of a Cell C employee was the unfortunate result of a lack of communication.

Source: Sapa

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