

## Volvo Group invests in driver learnership programme

Volvo Group Southern Africa invested R1.9m in the advanced development and training of 20 unemployed commercial vehicle drivers.



Marcus Hörberg, vice-president of Volvo Group Southern Africa (left) and Gert Swanepoel, MD of UD Trucks Southern Africa (right) with the learners and trainers of the newly-established Volvo Group Driver Learnership programme

In 2017, AB Volvo Group decided to donate funds on behalf of its employees to various markets around the world to assist in resolving the different challenges faced in local markets and to drive prosperity in these communities.

Sixteen projects were selected by a committee of employee representatives from AB Volvo Board, members of the executive board and Martin Lundstedt, president and CEO of the Volvo Group.

The newly-established Volvo Group Driver Learnership programme in South Africa is the direct result of this initiative. Locally, this programme is supported by Volvo Group brands Volvo Trucks and UD Trucks, with product-specific training provided by the brands' highly-skilled driver trainers.

"We are very proud to be able to make a tangible contribution to the development of local transport industry. With an acute need for qualified and skilled drivers, we believe this programme will start to address this industry-wide problem in a very

practical yet impactful way,” said Marcus Hörberg, vice-president of Volvo Group Southern Africa.

“Transport is key to economic growth in this region, and if we are able to upskill and empower commercial vehicle drivers, it will help drive development, prosperity and growth.”

The first intake of drivers started their learnership in July 2018, and after they have completed the 12-month learnership in June 2019, will graduate with a National Certificate in Professional Driving from the Commercial Transport Academy (CTA) in Bredell.

The qualification, which is approved by the Transport Education Training Authority is based on both theoretical and practical modules.

“Learnerships are not new, however, it is in the alignment of new knowledge learnt and its application in the workplace that differentiates this programme,” said Nicci Scott, founder of CTA.

“We purposefully select unit standards that speak to stakeholder management, be it the customer, the employer or the driver’s role in acting responsibly, with safety as the key focus. Additionally, we ensure that via our strategic partnership with Trucklogix, our learners spend a minimum of 400 hours driving over four seasons and across nine provinces.”

Hörberg said that the aim of the programme is to enhance the capacity of professional drivers, and to ultimately enable them to contribute to their future employers’ fleet productivity, safety, profitability and efficiency.

Hörberg added that the driver learnership programme is a long-term programme for the company. “Once the first group has graduated, we will be looking to specifically enrol and develop more women drivers – a demographic group we believe has great potential to positively impact the industry, and society at large, as truck and bus operators,” said Hörberg.

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