

## Successes of DSA-UJ training, employment collaboration

A 14-year-long collaboration between the Direct Selling Association of South Africa (DSA SA) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ) has seen more than 14,000 students earn a combined R8.8 million through direct selling. In addition, part-bursaries, totalling R600,000, have been awarded.



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The programme prepares marketing and retail students for the modern workplace and provides them with both valuable practical skills and job opportunities. It ensures that students gain practical personal selling and sales management experience by exposing them to direct selling. It teaches them the basics of business and how to sell, equipping them with skills they can use immediately to earn an income and demonstrate that they have acquired practical sales experience whilst at the University.

The programme is a compulsory element of their marketing and retail course work.

“The initiative has a positive impact on students, by imparting sales, finance and business management skills as well as giving them increased confidence,” says Dr Marius Wait, Head of UJ’s Department of Marketing Management.

“Marketing carries with it somewhat of a glamorous connotation and many students and prospective employees lack an in-

depth understanding of what lies ahead in the real world. This programme enables students to be exposed to the direct selling industry and gain practical work experience.”

This collaborative project has proven so successful that some UJ students are now choosing to continue with their direct selling endeavours after graduating. The project has also been well received by industry, with many companies approaching UJ directly to employ their experienced third-year students. This competitive advantage is evident by the number of final third-year students finding employment.

“We are proud of the success of our collaboration with the DSA. Together we are creating well-rounded, competent marketing and retail students who are going out boldly and strengthening the South African economy,” said Wait.

From health and beauty options to financial products – the direct selling industry contributes R8 billion a year to the economy and has created income opportunities for approximately 1.4 million people, either part or fulltime, making it a significant contributor to the job market.

By collaborating with a tertiary education institution, like UJ, the DSA – the leading ambassador for the local direct selling industry – is further boosting its contribution to the country by upskilling graduates, generating employment and providing new sources of income.

“Few people realise the contribution that the direct selling industry brings to our economy, its ability to empower South Africans with valuable sales and business skills, as well as interpersonal skills, confidence and the ability to build their own small and medium sized businesses,” says Ernest du Toit, chairman of the Direct Selling Association.

“We are proud of our collaborative efforts at UJ and remain committed to the programme. We foresee that this sustainable initiative will continue to create skills, experience and outstanding results, well into the future, and provide real and credible job opportunities for graduates.”

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