

Volkswagen SA opens training academy in Gauteng

Volkswagen Group South Africa opened a new R60-million training academy at its Centurion site in Gauteng late last month. The 4 000m² facility has been custom-designed to provide training courses that aim to improve the performance of VWSA's dealers.

"As we grow globally and locally, it has become necessary to transform and reposition our brand to achieve our goal - maximum value for our customers, dealers and suppliers. With this transformation and the alignment of our operational structure came a need to re-align our focus on training and development within the dealer network. Consequently, the Board of Volkswagen Group South Africa and Volkswagen AG approved the building of a new training academy, as well as an annual spend of R18 million on dealer training," said sales and marketing director, Mike Glendinning.

Increasing technical complexity of vehicles

VWSA's product offensive and the increasing technical complexity of its vehicles, particularly in the field of electronics, demands a high level of knowledge and expertise of the service employees. Professional diagnosis and high level of repair quality are decisive factors for achieving its strategic objectives and customer satisfaction.

"In order to deliver top performance in these areas, high quality training courses are required which serve to continuously improve the performance of our dealers. Our training comprises of an integrated qualification concept in which technical, non-technical and IT training modules are combined. This qualification concept forms the foundation of the holistic employee qualification programme," said Glendinning.

Training academy, hub for technical, non-technical, IT training

The new training academy is the hub for technical, non-technical and IT training for the brands. It comprises of eight fully equipped technical training modules with capacity for practical, theory and systems related training, three non-technical training rooms and a dedicated IT training room. The facility has the capacity to host 180 delegates on any given day.

On the technical side, training on technology evolution in the fields of convenience electronics (i.e. sensors), driver assistance systems, software (such as diagnostics) and control electronics (fibre optic technology, for example) will be key. The aim is to strengthen dealer electronic diagnostic and repair competence through specific focus on diagnostic and master technician training.

"Non-technical training within the training academy is responsible for training the entire dealer staff, excluding workshop staff - from the dealer principal and managers to sales and service staff - covering business process, behaviour, systems as well as product launch training. This is all aligned to German standards and is based on international curriculum. The

academy also provides HR consulting and assessment services," concluded Glendinning.

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