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## Local manufacturer looks to bridge skills gap

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KLINGER TRAINING ACADEMY The trainees have access to a fully equipped workshop, and gain both practical and theoretical knowledge

**S**ealing products manufacturer Klinger Mzansi has opened its training academy, which offers a learnership programme, joint integrity

training as well as an introductory course on all of the company's products.

Klinger sales and marketing director **Phillip Herbst** notes that the academy opened on July 1, adding that Klinger started the academy to address the ever-widening skills gap, and to gain vital points on the black economic-empowerment scorecard.

He notes that the training facility, as well as the training programme was designed, funded, and developed by Klinger Mzansi and was set up and financed by the company.

In terms of the training available, Herbst explains that there are currently 15 trainees attempting to obtain a National Qualification Framework level 3 and 4 certificate, through Klinger Mzansi's learnership programme, which has been accredited by the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Skills, Education and Training Authority.

He explains that applicants for the learnership had to have passed mathematics and science in grade 12 and notes that trainees who complete the two-year course will be qualified pipe fitters, able to work on chemicals and petrochemicals plants.

Aside from "addressing the critical skills shortage, specific to the industry", Herbst mentions that this initiative also assists in addressing the county's high unemployment rate. "We will eventually be in a position to supply trained labour for our on-site work, with the surplus trainees able to obtain gainful employment in the open market."

Klinger fluid sealing division product manager **Ryan Hough** explains that the trainees have access to a fully equipped workshop, and gain both practical and theoretical knowledge.

"In the training room, we can recreate a problem that may occur on site, such as a misaligned flange joint, so that the trainees can have a practical demonstration of what can go wrong and why."

Hough adds that the two other courses are mainly aimed at Klinger customers. "The Joint Integrity Foundation Level 1 course – based on the requirement of international bolted joint technology standard ASME PCC 1/2013 – provides a basic understanding of the interrelationship of flanges, fasteners and the gasket, as well as how different applications and plant conditions affect the performance of the individual components."

Some of the topics covered in this course include bolted flange joint

standards, obligations in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, joint assembly and disassembly, flange joint alignment, bolt installation, and torque tightening, among others.

Hough explains that the three-day course is run by the training manager, with occasional assistance from product managers.

Meanwhile, the introductory course on Klinger Mzansi's product offering covers a basic knowledge of what the Klinger products are, and what applications they are best suited to. This course takes about six hours and, "is a value-added service that allows our clients to familiarise themselves with our products and their capabilities".

### **Furmseal Acquisition**


Herbst notes that Klinger acquired specialist leak sealing company Furmseal toward the end of last year. He notes that the company, which is now wholly owned by Klinger, is able to conduct in situ emergency leak sealing for any fluid conveyance component, including pipes, valves and pumps, without initiating a complete shutdown, thereby increasing productivity.

He explains that this can be done using the FurmaFast emergency repair kit, a resin-impregnated fibreglass tape that adheres to steel, fibreglass and concrete. The other emergency repair measure is to build a clamp or box around the leak in the pipe/equipment, and then inject a specialised compound into the clamp, which hardens and stops the leak.

These measures ensure that the plant is able to remain operational until a planned shutdown can occur.

Hough explains that Furmseal also specialises in leak detection, on-site tube sleeving for shell and tube heat exchangers, online trevite testing, as well as in situ machining.

He concludes that the acquisition further strengthens Klinger's value proposition, noting that the company is currently the only internationally

compliant South African seals and gasket manufacturer that offers their customers a “cradle to grave” service, and is able to support clients with technical capability, expertise and experience. 

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