



"...taking the lead in innovation since 1452..."

Da Vinci Institute News

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

JULY 2008

Mid Year Update

Dates to remember!!!

- 30 July** Deadline for Written Submissions for October Graduation.
- 13 August** Deadline for Oral Defense for October Graduation.
- 22 October** Late Spring Graduation

Dear Da Vinci Student

Six exciting months of 2008 have already passed and it gives us great pleasure to share with you some of the activities that took place at The Da Vinci Institute during this period.

In this issue we will give you feedback on:

- *The April Graduation*
- *The Alumni Launch*
- *Reports from some of our Eskom students*
- *Report from a Da Vinci employee that graduated in April and*
- *...as we are an Institution for Technology and Innovation we thought that you might enjoy an article on Innovation from one of our respected lecturers.*

We sincerely hope that you enjoy this issue.

The Da Vinci Institute Team:

Bennie Anderson, Bok Marais, Piet Swanepoel, Ronelle Larsen, Sharlene Vania, Theresa Lourens, Adrian Petersen, Christa Rudd, Simon Gathua, Pierre Kabeya, Jennifer Magnus, Brent Burgoyne, Bryan Banfield and Onicca Maculube.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE...a graduate?

Some time long ago, you succumbed to the challenge by your manager/colleague/friend/family "to take up and pursue the journey of life-long learning" and you enrolled with The Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management.

At the time no doubt, your thoughts were along the lines of:

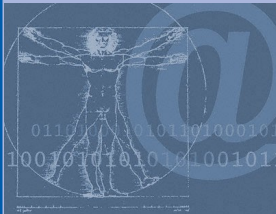
- This is a synch, I can do it lying down
- I will prove to them/my boss/myself that I can multiplex
- I've made it this far, what can be more difficult!
- This will be a breeze - no exams, only assignments, and oh yeah, a dissertation!

However, we are all human and are suddenly confronted by the enormity of the challenge of learning whilst at the same time, holding down a job and maintaining a family life – not a walk in the park by any standards but, you GET THERE!

To those 'humans/students' who through the relentless pursuit of the "Four Educational P's":

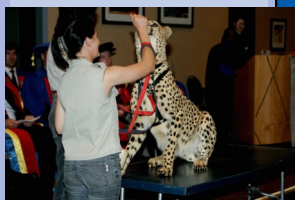
- Purpose**
- Passion**
- Perseverance, and**
- Professionalism**

CONGRATULATIONS!!



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Professor Roy Marcus congratulates Tim Brown on receiving his PhD

The Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management (Pty) Ltd

Registered with the Department of Education as a private higher education institution under the Higher Education Act, 1997.

To the graduates – we salute and congratulate you.

List of Graduates – <http://www.davinci.ac.za/Graduates08.pdf>



"It was indeed extremely refreshing to go through a learning journey that had its foundation firmly embedded in the real world of work "



Altech Students at the Apartheid Museum

The Da Vinci MOTI Business Analysis Certificate: A holistic learning Experience

By Xolani Fakude, Da Vinci's own Graduate

Firstly I want to admit that having done my undergraduate studies at an institution with roughly 45 000 students spread across 5 campuses with a staff compliment of almost 3 000 I reacted with a lot of scepticism to the opportunity of enrolling with The Da Vinci Institute. I was immediately engulfed by the fear of the unknown, the fear of venturing into "untested" territory given the fact that Da Vinci was, and still is, an infant in the higher education space and clearly my fellow classmates shared my sentiments as well considering their undergraduate academic backgrounds.

I must be honest at this stage and mention that not only was I proven wrong but the experience from the first day of contact made me believe without any fear of contradiction that the future of South African higher education lies in the "Da Vinci way" of doing things. It was indeed extremely refreshing to go through a learning journey that had its foundation firmly embedded in the real world of work. It was such an eye opening experience to complete my post module assignments with the starting point being a work based challenge and it gave me an opportunity to get to know my organization much better not to mention contributing towards the improvement of potential beneficial business processes. The higher education system in South Africa is such that it does not give the student an adequate opportunity to integrate their studies with the real



Xolani in a different role, as Master of Ceremonies at the graduation

world of work hence organizations are almost always forced to send new graduates to programmes in order to bring them up to speed with the "real" world. The Da Vinci Institute has a different approach that seeks to ensure that students get the whole experience and that their studies remain relevant. This literally means that according to the Da Vinci way you can be in class today and have a significant impact at work tomorrow!

What made the learning journey extraordinary is the fact that the institute puts a lot of emphasis on the individual behind the student, this allows you to get to know and appreciate your unique characteristics much better and use these to your advantage during the learning journey. The result is that you come out of a programme fully confident of what you have learned and willing to test your knowledge in the "real" world.

Let me conclude by stating that I came out of the IDC Business Analysis certificate programme having grown as a "whole" person that can contribute significantly to the South African economy. It was definitely not just about the business analysis tools only but the whole experience and interaction with my peers and facilitators helped to shape my thinking and ignite the characteristics that will allow me to be a real "cheetah" of the corporate world!

Alumni Launch



Friday, the 9th of May was the official launch of the Da Vinci Alumni Association.

The event was held at the De Wildt Cheetah and Wild Dog sanctuary in the foothills of the Magaliesburg. It was a great networking opportunity for the alumni, and was both fun and insightful. Everyone gained a new perspective on the role that each species, including human beings, plays within the earth's ecosystem and learned a few tips on surviving the corporate jungle from some of the inhabitants of the natural jungle such as the cheetah's use of strategy and speed in hunting, to the wild dog's use of the power of numbers in hunting. This clearly showed that we're each born with certain unique traits that not only enable us to survive but also give us an added advantage when used and harnessed properly.

The launch marked the first step towards building an alumni association with a difference, addressing ongoing development needs of business leaders in a fast paced and highly competitive global world, with each individual as a building block.

To everyone who could not attend, there are more insightful networking opportunities still to come. And remember that just like everything else in life, the value you gain out of The Da Vinci Alumni Association depends entirely on you! So the challenge is to come forward and engage with us on how The Da Vinci Alumni Association

can work towards your growth and development as a business leader. All suggestions can be emailed to alumni@davinci.ac.za.

Da Vinci students on the move

We are proud to announce that one of our students, **Robert Clark (Chief Engineer, EED—Komati Power Station at ESKOM)**, was nominated for two ESKOM Achievers Awards, the one for System Sustainability and the other for Excellence.

Well done Rob!!!

NEW PROGRAMMES LAUNCHED IN THE FIRST PART OF 2008

The following workshops for 2008 up to May:

- Altech: Certificate, Diploma, MSc and Project Management (Short course)
- Bankseta Women's Development Programme Grp 2
- Leonardo V
- City Power Grp 3 & Grp 4
- Baneth
- Anglo Platinum
- ESKOM Project Management, Diploma, MSc & PhD

Comments from Da Vinci Students

Our country and the world are in trouble when availability and quality of education and skills is measured. Eskom, to my mind, one of the greatest institutions in South Africa (or in the world for that matter), is affording us the opportunity to qualify ourselves in a much needed area of expertise namely project management. In our organisation occupation is topical and in the country it is a very scarce commodity.



Altech Students at the Apartheid Museum



ESKOM Students at Gold Reef City

The course at Da Vinci is dedicated to the needs of Eskom and at the same time it incorporates universal principles of leadership and project management in the context of the business. Since becoming part of the inaugural student group, I have become even more motivated and enthusiastic about the prospects in our great company as well as the direction that my personal career is taking.

Although I am a senior audit manager and not a project manager per se, the skills that I am developing will assist me in auditing project management at a very high level as well as stand me in good stead should I, in the future, want to become a trainer in project management or even a project manager.

Drikus de Beer

*Senior Audit Manager
Eskom Corporate Audit Department*

Da Vinci has provided me with a new way of learning by ensuring that I am informed, motivated and involved. The institute does not only focus on teaching the students but they also include participation by discussing the REAL-LIFE challenges and I have learnt to understand my organisation better by using the Da Vinci way of thinking know where we need to improve to in order to be successful. Da Vinci keeps unleashing my innovation potential which I did not realise I had and I am still looking forward to advancing my knowledge through them.

Phindile Nkosi

*Project Co-ordinator (Pr Techni. Eng.)
Power Delivery Projects*

Since the inception of The Da Vinci Institute into Eskom as a pilot project, the following benefits were visible from my day to day management style:

1. Creating a respectable homely working environment at work;
2. Practical application of learning outcomes to my current work;
3. Gap identified that there is a requirement of a forum to get teams from different divisions to share experiences and ideas to build the organisation to a first world power utility;
4. Awareness of understanding the sensitivity of my social and environmental surroundings;
5. "System Way" of managing the divisions within an organisation with one common goal.

Tshepo Phiri

*Planning Manager
Ingula Pump Storage Scheme*

"I am currently finding it extremely valuable.

You are exposed to Project Management tools that take you outside of your current comfort zone and gives you a new view through old viewing glasses, on how to approach your current environment.

Eskom is building the plane while we fly and we do not always have time to think about best practices to address old problems. Da Vinci enables you, through assignments, to take the time to look at situations in your current work environment with new tools and come up with improved solutions.

I have applied the tools in my department and am finding it extremely useful. If I evaluate the value of taking the time to execute best practice project management, the MSc degree will only be a bonus in the end!"

Alicia Swart

*CED Risk Manager
Projects Support*

"Forget about waiting for opportunities; create your own while having that cutting edge".

Is Project Management teaching the right people, at the right time, and in the right ways? It's a question many people have views on, as the qualifications in Project Management have risen in popularity over the last decade in South Africa, especially with various major projects taking place, but one set of voices has perhaps been left on the periphery of the debate – employers. I've been with Eskom for more than 15 years and worked my way from being a Draftsman, Design Technician, Project Engineer, System and Data Analyst, up to today, as a Project Manager Integration, looking at Content and Document Management. Before I started with my Masters in Project Management at The Da Vinci Institute, I was still missing that one key ingredient, the "cutting edge thinking" ability in today's changing corporate business world.

So if you are an individual that is: resourceful, a creative team-player, seeking greater insight and confidence to hold positions in the corporate world with a strategic focus, but at the same time willing to go that extra mile, work long after hours to achieve your goal, this **intellectually challenging program in Project management** will do exactly that.

Leon Fourie

CED Projects Support



Audrey Verhaeghe, CEO of the Research Institute for Innovation and Sustainability (RIIS). Audrey is also a Da Vinci lecturer.

“Pelgrim roads are made by walking’. The innovator will have to take risks in conquering the unknown”

Learning from Service Innovation

By: Audrey Verhaegh (RIIS)

Fervent, passionate and inspirational, but also steady, soft spoken and humble – the truth is that innovators come in different shapes and sizes and from all walks of life. This special breed of people embodies different ethnic backgrounds, social standings, educational levels, genders, ages and even general looks.

The CPSI (Centre for Public Service Innovation) commissioned a survey of a number of social innovators that led award winning projects and have been honoured as Impumelelo Innovation Award Winners. This short article will unpack the generic lessons learnt from these inspiring innovators who, through their commitment and dedication, made a difference in the lives of ordinary people in South Africa. We surveyed innovators from Soweto to Cape Town and they represent the best in all of us.

The first observations made during the survey are represented in the following list and are seen as important innovator at-

tributes for successful innovation in services:

- A positive attitude,
- Action, drive and persistence,
- Understanding people and the environment in which they operate,
- Teamwork,
- Bravery and conviction,
- Using their skills,
- Mobilising skills they do not have but need,
- Passion,
- Being real,
- Using what they have and where they are to the best of their ability, and most of all,
- Having a vision for a better tomorrow.

One of the factors that stood out from the conversations with these innovators is that it is people that innovate, not systems or structures. Actually, systems and structures can often stand in the way of, or even bog down the innovation process. Successful innovators, however, always manage to overcome such constraints. These are some of the lessons learnt from innovators in ser-

vices:

Lesson 1: There is no Blueprint for Innovation

Henry Poincare said: “It is by intuition we discover and by logic that we prove.” If we could describe and demystify the topic completely, we can make it completely risk-free for the would-be innovator. There will always remain a piece of magic and a piece of risk in any new project/intervention or change introduced.

“Pelgrim roads are made by walking”. The innovator will have to take risks in conquering the unknown. The following advice is given to novice risk-takers:

- Start small.
- Take risks often.
- The most appropriate risk is when there is a good chance of success or failure. (Otherwise it is not really a risk)
- Prepare for your risks.

Innovations come from chaos or structure. Some innovations present themselves because of chaos and others were managed proactively by a person. There is no formula for

chaos and others were managed pro-actively by a person. There is no formula for the birth and development of an innovation but it always stems from something that moves one emotionally.

Lesson 2: Think Big, Act Small

Innovators dream and they dream big. Furthermore, they follow their dreams with persistent, focused action. It could be helpful for the start-up innovator to start planning from a certain place in the future and then work backwards. At Da Vinci we call this Reverse Engineering the Future. The process, in short entails the following:

- State the desired future outcome,
- Tap into the values that will drive you personally,
- Identify the barriers that could stop you from reaching your goals,
- Develop action plans to overcome the set barriers,
- Answer and act upon the notion of: "What do I need to do now to start to achieve the future outcome"?

All the innovators we interviewed had sceptical people they had to deal

with at first. Some even had to win the trust of the communities they operated in. You often have to achieve some success before more people will start believing and supporting your vision.

While you are taking the small steps that you need to achieve your dream, ask yourself the following three questions regularly:

- What do we still need to do?
- What should we stop doing?
- What should we keep on doing?

You learn by doing. One innovator succinctly put it like this: "If you stand too far from an automatic sliding door it will not open for you"

Lesson 3: Swimming Upstream

Innovation, by definition entails doing something that is different from the present paradigm. Whether you want to file documents differently or deliver water and sanitation to a community in a different way, it entails disrupting the way a number of people work. They will not like it!

All the innovators interviewed experienced setbacks and felt like giving up at times. Some even

experienced ridicule and rejection for a while. They all persisted, succeeded and were awarded for their efforts. You will be too.

Lesson 4: Innovation requires Basic Management

All successful innovations were managed properly. The main areas of successful project management are:

- Understanding the critical need,
- Defining the objectives,
- Mapping out the scope of work,
- Agreeing on the deliverables and timescales and
- Monitoring and evaluating the project.

Proper planning and management increase the potential to successfully implement new innovations.

Lesson 5: See the Doughnut, not the Hole.

This lesson entails that you need a positive attitude in your survival kit as an innovator.

The following statement, by an innovator, captures this lesson: " Even if the breath of hope which blows on us from that new continent were

"If you stand too far from an automatic sliding door it will not open for you"

fainter than it is and harder to perceive, the trail must by all means be made. For there is no comparison between that which we may lose by not trying, and that by not succeeding." Sir Francis Bacon in settling in the New World.

Lesson 6: Understand your Environment

Service innovation is different from product innovation in that service innovation requires a significantly stronger focus on the human and environmental aspects of innovation.

Innovation is applied creativity that is contextually relevant.

Lesson 7: Innovation Is Not A One Person Show

One needs a network of other people to successfully complete an innovation project. Three types of networks emerged in the survey. One needs networks to help to fund innovation, networks to help implement the innovation and networks in the community in which the innovation takes place. All of these can be built through the innovator's dedication. All the innovators we surveyed were humble and gave huge credence to the team of people they mobilised to help them or who were moved by their vision and volunteered to help.

Lesson 8: Innovation is about Solving Real Problems

A survey of innovation in industry published in the economist in 1999,

shows that innovation has more to do with a pragmatic search for opportunity, than with romantic ideas about serendipity or lonely pioneers pursuing their vision against all odds.

Understand the problem that needs to be solved through innovation and do not get caught up with a product or an idea that has only one possible solution.

Lesson 9: Innovation has a Heart

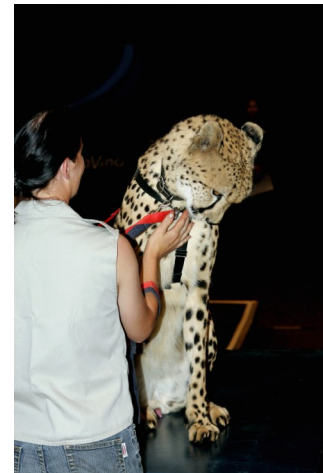
Successful innovations always come from the heart. One innovator puts it like this: "You have to be rooted in what you do and do what you really love."

In summary, celebrate the uniqueness of an innovation and learn from others who also have had to think big and act small. Swim upstream, be positive, manage creativity in a structured way, work through networks, but most of all, follow your heart. As one innovator remarked in the survey: "If you have a stirring about something that needs to be done and you are not following it up with action, you are committing a sin against humanity" and another innovator said: "If someone like me can do it anyone can do it"

This article was based on a CPSI publication: *Making Service Delivery Happen – Innovation at Work* by Audrey Verhaeghe and Mohammed Jeenah.



ESKOM Students at the Apartheid Museum



Byron The De Wildt cheetah at the graduation



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**CREATING
INNOVATION VALUE™**

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