

Press release:

Dekra Industrial – Encouraging women in safety to ‘dream it and achieve it’

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Dekra Industrial, a leading provider of non-destructive testing (NDT), inspections, advanced NDT technologies, aims to be the global partner for a safe world with the support of a dedicated team of people striving to ensure long-term safety, quality, and environmental protection.

Testament to this ethos is Dekra Industrial RSA’s encouraging approach to gender equality and respect, which is also reflected in its like-minded client base within the South African industrial sector.

Dekra Industrial RSA’s culture - combined with a positive working environment, and encouraging support from clients – lays the foundations for female employees to execute their duties and responsibilities confidently and happily, while pursuing their passion for safety, according to experienced Dekra Industrial team members Corporate Health and Safety Manager, Carina Brink-Kleinhans, and Administration Clerk Rolene van Niekerk.

“Women at Dekra Industrial are respected, valued, and recognised for their contributions. This acknowledgement of women’s efforts, dedication and abilities not only differentiates Dekra Industrial as a progressive and gender-equal company - but encourages women to thrive in their roles at the company,” Brink enthuses.

“In turn, we are empowered and encouraged to motivate our female colleagues - and women in the industry in general - to strive for their goals and achieve the highest levels of performance,” she adds.

Brink-Kleinhans’s and van Niekerk’s contributions to the safety sector are testament to the changing mind set and attitudes in the industry – which has typically been very male-dominated – and exemplify the successes which women can achieve with perseverance.

While focused on the Dekra Industrial Vision 2025 goals - and in driving the reputation of the company as being synonymous with safety internally and externally - Brink-Kleinhans’s passion encompasses a warm enthusiasm for people and their safety.

“I enjoy advising people and changing their mind sets about safety,” Brink-Kleinhans says, mirroring Dekra Industrial’s ethos of the need for safety *‘on the road, at work and at home’*.

As such, Brink-Kleinhans proactively strives to ensure that the people, environment and equipment involved in daily operations at Dekra Industrial - and at client sites - are always safe.

Rolene van Niekerk, with a similar passion for people, enjoys building relationships and learning more about Dekra Industrial as a business every day. Since she joined the company as a freelancer in 2006, she has steadily progressed in her role as a safety administrator and more.

With various job-related qualifications under her belt – including a radiographic interpretation course from the Southern African Institute of Welding (SAIW) - van Niekerk continuously learns about new and different NDT techniques, testing methods and equipment during her daily interactions with her Dekra Industrial colleagues.

Drawing on her experiences with Dekra Industrial’s nationwide footprint of branches and with clients during site visits, Brink-Kleinhans underscores the distinct respect afforded to her and her female colleagues:

“This high regard and appreciation for women is demonstrated throughout Dekra Industrial internally and externally, throughout our broad client base,” Brink-Kleinhans says.

“Dekra Industrial and our clients share high standards and strive to be progressive regarding gender equality - counteracting preconceived and dismissive competency prejudices – and accepting women’s expertise and experience. This approach stacks up to an unbiased and supportive approach to women in safety,” she points out.

“Fortunately, this means we have not experienced negativity or discrimination due to our gender – and our input and recommendations are always respected and valued,” Brink-Kleinhans advises.

Nevertheless, both acknowledge the challenges women still encounter across broader industry – including gender bias and discrimination; the pressure of having to prove themselves more than their male counterparts; and the notion that women may be less likely to ask for a promotion or a raise.

“Employers’ negativity towards family responsibilities outside of work - as well as the so-called ‘motherhood penalty’ - which can lead to stalled careers – are also still concerns, and definitely warrant greater attention, investigation and change,” Brink comments.

“Yet, despite these challenges and as the broader industry landscape changes, there is nonetheless a growing platform for women to make a positive impact,” Brink-Kleinhans says.

She adds that while each gender makes its own contribution to diversity within industry, some distinctive traits women bring include close collaboration and cohesive teamwork, which result in the provision of consistent service excellence.

“Women prefer to do every job with fairness,” Brink-Kleinhans suggests. “Notably, women’s emotional intelligence, passion and helpful nature further help to create a healthy workplace relationship and well-rounded workforce.”

Echoing this observation, van Niekerk adds that women’s patience, paired with “super versatility, multi-tasking abilities and fearlessness” are invaluable in tackling challenges, assisting all team members, and serving clients.

Brink-Kleinhans agrees: “In sharing a clear and dedicated safety vision and passion, we each fulfil an essential part of the greater safety ‘jigsaw puzzle’ – all working and fitting together, through mutual support to deliver great service to our clients!”

To this point, both women believe that businesses in South Africa need to do more to foster and prioritise equal treatment, respect, and fair career opportunities within all sectors.

Believing that the HSE sector in particular is predicated upon teamwork and buy-in, Brink-Kleinhans emphasises the imperative of support from management and the workforce in order to sustain safety mind set changes and to achieve safety-related organisational goals.

“Women can be encouraged to pursue new opportunities through the definition of concrete and detailed goals. By creating a plan to achieve these goals and pairing it with the gathering and assignment of resources, progress evaluations and consistent, constructive feedback, staff can be motivated to achieve performance excellence,” she says.

Similarly, Van Niekerk urges women to remain focused and ‘stand their ground’ in executing their duties: “Keep your head high, your voice audible and be strong!”

While Brink-Kleinhans adds that women should be themselves, respect themselves and “define your success in your own terms, and do not base it on the opinion of others,” she advocates that women remain open to learning from others:

“There is always room for improvement and making the most of additional learning opportunities. Last, but not least, believe in yourself and dream your dreams – after all, if you can dream it, you can achieve it,” she concludes.

(1028 words)

Note to Editors:

About Dekra Industrial and Dekra Institute of Learning

With 96 years in the industry through its global parent company, Dekra Industrial SA has established a formidable reputation as a leader in inspection services, non-destructive testing (NDT), material testing, laboratory services, Advanced NDT, and asset integrity services, and offers industry training through Dekra Institute of Learning. The company also offers a one-stop NDT inspection and corrosion control with rope access service, further complemented by a drone inspection service.

With a global presence in more than 50 countries on five continents, Dekra Industrial RSA is committed to providing professional and innovative safety solutions across a multitude of industries, including power generation, oil and gas, construction, petrochemical, manufacturing, fabrication, pulp and paper, rail, mining, steel industry, renewable energy and foundries, within South Africa and pan-Africa.

Dekra Industrial RSA is RD 0034 compliant, a nuclear safety compliance standard and is one of the few NDT companies locally to hold the ISO 45001 certification. The company is also registered with the Corrosion Control Institute of South Africa (CISA) and the Institute of Work at Height (IWH).

Dekra Institute of Learning is QCTO-accredited and delivers an internet learning service across all industries, in both public and private sectors, with training pitched to all levels of competency, focusing on HSE, ISO and CPD-aligned courses. Classroom-based and distance learning are also available.

Dekra Industrial strives to be recognised as the 'heroes of safety'.

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