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Q & A

Barbara Lombard, corporate service executive at the National Empowerment Fund, talks to **Margaret Harris**

How does the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) attract talent?

We use recruitment agencies that understand the organisation's mandate and its requirements. We also recruit online; candidates can apply for vacancies via the NEF website; we also place adverts in newspapers and rely on referrals.

What are the qualities that you look for when recruiting?

We look for:

- Relevant qualifications;
- Good financial analysis skills;
- Technical knowledge;
- Relevant experience;
- The ability to assess entrepreneurial acumen in potential investees; and
- Good communication and negotiation skills

Are there special skills that NEF employees need to have?

We look for candidates who possess, among other skills, a passion for development and who want to grow SA to ensure that it is an inclusive economy.

Does the NEF consider the "softer skills" important?

Yes, this has become increasingly important over the past few years at the NEF. Our recruitment process includes an element of soft skills assessment that looks at



ADDING VALUE: NEF corporate service executive Barbara Lombard

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conflict management, interpersonal skills, analytical ability, the ability to work under pressure and within a team environment, and so on.

Is there room in your organisation for graduates who lack experience?

Definitely. This forms part of the NEF's mandate with regards to skills development. The NEF generally appoints trainees who are newly qualified and who are rotated within different departments so that they may gather as much experience as possible. We have also successfully appointed

several of these trainees as permanent employees.

How did you find yourself in human resources and what do you enjoy about it?

I was a member of the human capital and rewards committee at the NEF, and they had a vacancy for the corporate services executive, which I applied for. I have not looked back since. I enjoy working with a diverse portfolio within the corporate services division and the opportunity to be part of a team that adds value to empowering fellow black South Africans.