

**November 2019**

## **Wintech: Vineyard worker skills survey**

A survey was conducted as a pilot project to investigate the application of a newly developed competence dictionary developed for Vineyard Workers in determining skills development needs. The dictionary is based on the Vinpro courses for Vineyard Workers and was developed by Skillogical as part of the Professionalisation of the Wine Industry. The initiative forms part of Wintech's Learning and Development Strategy. Findings from the pilot is aimed at informing future strategies to further develop the wine industry by building the capabilities of its people.

The pilot had three main objectives:

- Clarify and confirm the content of the competence dictionary that was developed for Vineyard Workers.
- Evaluate the Skillogical Survey methodology for further usage in the industry.
- Establish a baseline for the development of learning that would address the skills gaps identified in the survey.

### **Survey Methodology**

The survey was aimed at implementing and evaluating the applicability of Skillogical's methodology of conducting skills surveys that establishes individual skills gaps or training needs. The methodology is based on the premise that managers should be given the basic tools in the form of a survey instrument to discuss training and development needs with their co-workers. Team leaders from five identified farms were briefed on the rationale of the survey and given an overview of how to use the printed survey forms to conduct interviews with their co-workers. The important nuance of the interviews was not to establish competence, but rather to discuss and identify possible learning and coaching needs for each of the skill sets identified in the competence dictionary. The survey also identified people that are deemed able to coach and mentor others on specific skill sets in the workplace. Survey results were captured by Skillogical and the results are immediately available to the industry as Personal Development Plans for everyone that participated in the survey.

### **Competence Dictionary**

The survey tool content is derived from a competence dictionary that Skillogical developed in collaboration with client experts and research. The five farms' foremen/team leaders were consulted on the content of the dictionary to refine the content and specifically adapt the language to their context. Three sets of competencies were defined and used in the survey:

Basic Competencies: Competency sets that forms the foundation for the skills required for a specific work environment. These skill sets are usually acquired through schooling and other formal learning processes.

Interaction Competencies: Workplaces require people to interact with one another. The skills required to enhance this interaction are addressed in this section of the dictionary.

Workplace Specific Competencies: These are the detail competencies expected of employees to produce the required output of the specific work environment. The skills related to work output such as pruning, harvesting and soil preparation expected of vineyard workers were defined by referencing specific activities expected of workers.

### **Qualifications and Licences**

Though the survey is focused on identifying skills needs, the opportunity is also used to establish a baseline of the formal qualifications people have or would like to acquire and the licences they have to operate specific vehicles. The survey does not vouch for the validity of the claimed qualifications and licences, nor for their actual requirements. Workplaces could however use the results of the feedback as base for further confirmation of qualifications and even aspirations.

### **Baseline to Address Identified Skills Needs**

The software provides clients with the option to manage employees' learning and development on a cloud-based web solution. The utility provides managers with the ability to address identified skills gaps by linking people to training and development initiatives that were identified for the skill sets defined in the dictionary. The skills survey only has value if linked to training and development initiatives. Winetech then identifies and avail such interventions and training service providers.

### **Training**

Winetech's objective was to provide training for the skills identified in the survey. Winetech sponsored an opportunity for technical training offered by Vinpro to a group of five farmers on the Bottelary road who was part of the pilot study in contribution to the competence dictionary for the farm worker profile. Training commenced 8 - 12 July 2019 and was offered by experienced viticulture consultant Jeff Joubert.

A total of 25 workers per module for five days were sponsored with the option of the producer to add more candidates. Modules that were offered were pruning, vineyard establishment, fertilization, canopy management and vineyard pests and diseases.

As stated in the objectives of the pilot it was important to identify which workers need training and what type of training was needed, which made the selection of workers much easier and more valid. The pilot feedback was distributed to each farm in advance to inform the farm owner on the exact needs of the employee or worker.

A total of 57 workers attended the training. Training included learning material, theory classes, workbooks, presentations, practical demonstrations and lunch meals. These workers are the first to be uploaded on the SAWIPB website to track further development.

Winetech would like to thank Kaapzicht who offered their facility and vineyards for the practical activities, Vinpro for special arrangements and coordination and the Stellenbosch Wine Route for the selection of farms that participated.

For more information on innovative HR practices contact Kachné Ross via email at [kross@winetech.co.za](mailto:kross@winetech.co.za).



Photo: Jeff Joubert with the farm workers of Kaapzicht and Belleview who attended the Vinpro technical training courses