



# THE CLIENT

Santam is a South African financial services group headquartered in Bellville in the Western Cape. The company also has interests in Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Santam is listed on the JSE and is South Africa's largest short-term insurer. The company is a subsidiary of SA financial services group Sanlam, which holds 62.3% of their shares.

## SUCCESS STORY

### THE CHALLENGES

#### BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ACADEMIC LEARNING AND REAL-WORLD RELEVANCE

In contemporary South Africa, the burgeoning issue of unemployment casts a long shadow over the nation's youth. The challenge isn't only about the numbers, but by implication they impact a generation that forms the backbone of the nation's future.

This issue is multifaceted, encompassing not just the absence of jobs, but the lack of relevant skills and experience to make young graduates competitive in the ever-evolving job market, where the demand for tangible skills and experience is growing. Graduates today need to be agile, adaptable, and ready to hit the ground running.

Given this context, Santam realised that it could enhance its existing Graduate Programme and better equip graduates to meet the challenges of the modern professional world. The time had come to overhaul the Graduate Programme and help young people bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world applicability.

### THE SOLUTION

#### ALL ABOARD FOR DELTA AIR LINES FLIGHT 2998

To address the pressing challenges of youth unemployment and the skills gap, an engaging and participative initiative was conceived: the "Delta Air Lines Flight 2998" programme. This innovative solution not only sought to equip young professionals with the tools they needed to thrive in the business world, but also aimed to foster holistic personal growth, ensuring a comprehensive approach to professional development.

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW AND GOALS

At its core, the programme aspired to serve as a bridge. It sought to link the world of theoretical knowledge with the real-world demands of the contemporary workplace.

The programme, in partnership LRMG, included a 7-month Graduate Development journey via the University of the Free State Business School, comprising online classes, online group coaching sessions, weekly assessments, quizzes and final presentations.

Also through LRMG, Santam's Graduate Programme included a rich learning journey to develop graduates in line with Santam's Core Competencies by enrolling in Wits DigitalCampus courses. LRMG further enhanced the learning experience by enabling access to compressed knowledge and book summaries from getAbstract.

Together, all these components meant that the programme was able to develop graduates with best-in-class content from LRMG's professional skills content catalogue, DigitalCampus' university accredited courses (UFS, Wits DigitalCampus), Santam's Learning Academy, and Santam's Business Portfolio Specialised Learning.

### VALUE DELIVERED

**40-45%** of participants received indications of job placement



The programme received **positive feedback** from graduates



Recent participant numbers have grown, reaching **20-25** graduates



### IMPACT

The programme succeeded in bridging the gap between academic qualifications and real-world business demands.

# THE MULTIFACETED APPROACH

**In-house theoretical knowledge:** In-house training sessions, delivered by industry experts, covered a broad spectrum of topics - from emerging market trends to effective communication strategies. By merging theoretical knowledge with practical insights, graduates were better equipped to understand the bigger picture and their role within it.

**Active experiential learning:** Once back in the corporate setting, graduates weren't simply left to their own devices. They were actively integrated into business units, allowing them to directly apply what they had learned. Whether it was managing a small project or collaborating with seasoned professionals, this phase of the programme emphasised the importance of resilience, adaptability, critical thinking and other key skills in the real-world workplace.

**Mentorship and Coaching:** Recognising the pivotal role of guidance in professional growth, the programme prioritised mentorship. Seasoned professionals from various business units were selected and rigorously trained to serve as mentors. Through regular interactions, they provided direction, feedback and encouragement.

This was not a one-way street though – the mentorship programme also ensured that mentors themselves underwent coaching sessions with experts, enhancing their capabilities and understanding of modern mentoring dynamics. The end goal was clear: to build a mutually beneficial relationship between employers and employees, fostering an environment of continuous learning and collaboration.

In essence, Santam's Delta Air Lines Flight 2998 programme was more than just a training initiative. It was a transformative journey, meticulously designed to mould young professionals into the leaders of tomorrow, equipped with both the skills and mindset to navigate the complexities of the modern workplace.



## FIRST STEPS TO THE SUMMIT OF SUCCESS

- **Programme success:** Santam's programme has entered its third year, indicating its sustained success and utility.
- **Absorption rate:** Before the end of the programme, about 40-45% of participants received indications of placement into positions. The ultimate goal was to finalise this absorption with their respective business units.
- **Feedback and perception:** The programme received positive feedback from graduates, highlighting their appreciation for the exposure and in-depth experience they received.
- **Programme expansion:** Though designed as a bespoke programme for Santam, numbers of participants have grown, reaching 20-25 graduates recently, evidence of the programme's growing reputation and success.
- **Flexibility for improvements:** With the framework in place, the Santam team recognised areas for potential enhancement, like aligning content with Santam's values.

Through a blend of immersive experiences, theoretical education, hands-on training, and valuable mentorship, the programme devised by Santam succeeded in bridging the gap between academic qualifications and real-world business demands.

### CLIENT FEEDBACK

*"We selected LRMG to be one of our partners in our quest to develop talent and invest in our people at Santam.*

*We designed a fun and immersive concept to 'pick up our Graduates and fly them to a new destination' – effectively landing them in the business. We have crew members, pilots, support staff – a team of people ready to support, guide and lead our new grads on their journey."*

**Botsepegi Motau, L&D Lead: Learnerships and Compliance at Santam**

