

Unilever tops employer list for the first time in SA

Unilever has been Certified as the Top Employer in South Africa for 2014 by the Top Employers Institute with Nestlé and EY following closely on its heels.

The Top Employers Institute certifies excellence in the conditions that employers create for their people to grow and develop. The Certification Programme is the result of months of rigorous research, and Grant Thornton independently audits the findings.



Accessing top talent

"Unilever is delighted at having earned this year's top HR accolade as the Top Employer in South Africa, a Certification that will continue to inspire us to attract, produce and retain the finest talent SA has to offer," says Antoinette Irvine, Vice President of Human Resources. "We place great energy in leadership development as well as ensuring that employees from our graduate programmes are fast-tracked into becoming capable managers within a short space of time, which is very attractive to individuals who have great ambitions and potential.

"If we want to continue to grow our business to double its size, we will need access to the top talent; being an employer of choice helps us attract this kind of talent from the external market", says Irvine.

In order to achieve the Top Employer Certification, organisations are researched and audited on Primary Benefits, Secondary Benefits and Working Conditions, Training and Development, Career Development and Culture Management. This year there was an overall increase in certified participants' scores in the five research dimensions (as above) indicative of the fact that HR in the country's Top Employers is a firm strategic business lever.

Additionally, many of the country's Top Employers offer benefits such as social media channels for employees to offer feedback (63%), financial study support (72%), leadership development programmes (89%) and share options (45%). A small but increasing number of companies are also offering crèche and childcare facilities.

Employer of choice

"There is a shortage of professional talent in the country, which means more and more, companies are focusing on the competitiveness of their Employer Value Propositions (EVP) in order to attract and retain good people," says Samantha Crous, Regional Director Top Employers Institute Africa and Benelux.

The Certification process has multiple benefits, believes Crous. "We provide credibility to the employer branding efforts of Top Employers, and we help employers of choice adapt to a rapidly changing HR environment. We also enable knowledge sharing and transparency, as well as facilitating harmonious HR practices in global companies."

"On a societal level, the work that we do helps create life-enriching experiences for employees, raise the standards of HR, and advance employee conditions worldwide."

Being recognised as an employer of choice is highly motivating, says Ajen Sita, CEO of EY Africa. "We are extremely excited to be recognised as third in the Top Employers South Africa 2014 Certification Programme. Every single day, our highest performing teams are committed to playing their part in building a better working world. This recognition motivates us to do even more."

Nestlé has similarly recognised the importance of the working environment in business success, says Millicent Molete,

Media Relations Manager. "Our employees are our most important asset and we believe that their holistic wellness is essential to running a healthy business. We also support and encourage employees to take ownership of their careers by regularly identifying new opportunities as well as their own training and development needs," she says.

Top Employer companies

The companies named in this year's Top 10 are (1) Unilever South Africa (Pty) Ltd, (2) Nestlé (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, (3) EY, (4) Old Mutual Life Assurance Company, (5) SAP South Africa (Pty) Ltd, (6) Accenture South Africa (Pty) Ltd, (7) MTN SA (Pty) Ltd, (8) Microsoft SA (Pty) Ltd, (9) Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs Inc., and (10) Peninsula Beverage Company.

Other companies to also receive the Top Employer South Africa Certification for 2014 include: Abbott Laboratories South Africa, AbbVie (Pty) Ltd, adidas SA (Pty) Ltd, African Rainbow Minerals Limited, AfriSam (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, Anglo American Platinum Limited, Avande South Africa, BASF Holdings South Africa (Pty) Ltd, Becton Dickinson (Pty) Ltd, British American Tobacco SA, Clicks Group Limited, Coca-Cola South Africa, Crossroads Distribution (Pty) Ltd, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Dimension Data, Evraz Highveld Steel & Vanadium Ltd, Foskor (Pty) Ltd, G4S South Africa, Growthpoint Properties Limited, Hilti South Africa, Industrial Development Corporation of SA Ltd (IDC), Imperial Group Ltd, JDG Trading, Joburg Market, Kimberly-Clark South Africa, Legal Aid South Africa, Liberty Group Ltd, Merchants SA (Pty) Ltd, Mutual & Federal Insurance Company, Neotel (Pty) Ltd, Novartis SA (Pty) Ltd, Orion Group, Procter & Gamble SA (Pty) Ltd, PwC, Godrej South Africa (Pty) Ltd & Kinky Group (Pty) Ltd, Samancor Chrome Ltd, Sanofi, SAS Institute (Pty) Ltd, Simba (Pty) Ltd, State Information Technology Agency (SITA), Tata Consultancy Services (SA) (Pty) Ltd, Telesure Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd, Telkom SA Ltd, The Effectiveness Company, The Unlimited, The Spar Group, Total South Africa (Pty) Ltd, Tsogo Sun Group, Vodacom Group Limited and Webber Wentzel.

Companies who received the official industry rankings are as follows:

- Automotive: Volkswagen Group South Africa
- Chemicals: Safripol (Pty) Ltd
- Financial Services: Old Mutual Life Assurance Company
- Healthcare: Netcare Limited
- Insurance: Old Mutual Life Assurance Company
- IT: SAP South Africa (Pty) Ltd
- Manufacturing: Unilever South Africa (Pty) Ltd
- Pharmaceuticals: Pfizer Laboratories (Pty) Ltd
- Professional Services: EY
- Public Sector: Airports Company South Africa
- Retail: Estée Lauder Companies South Africa
- Telecommunications: MTN SA (Pty) Ltd
- Banking: Barclays Africa Group Ltd (including Absa Bank Ltd and Absa Financial Services Operations)
- Construction: Group Five
- Electronics/Engineering: Siemens (Pty) Ltd
- Petrochemical: Sasol
- FMCG: Unilever South Africa (Pty) Ltd
- Mining: Exxaro Resources Ltd
- Legal: Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs Inc.