



OUR CULTURE SUPPORTS WOMEN TO SUCCEED



KGOMOTSO MABUZA | EMPLOYER



Name of Company:

Hesto
Harnesses



Sector:

Electrical, Wiring
Automotive
Distribution



**Number of
Employees:**

3 300



Position in Company:

Human Resource
Executive



Location:

KwaZulu-Natal,
kwaDukuza



**Percentage
of Female
Employees:**

75%



**Company
Size:**

Large Enterprise





AT HESTO WE TAKE PEOPLE WITH **POTENTIAL OR RAW ABILITY** AND DEVELOP THEM, WE PRIORITISE GETTING **FEMALES INTO LEADERSHIP** POSITIONS.



WE DELIBERATELY SELECT AND TARGET FEMALE EMPLOYEES

Since HESTO was established 33 years ago we have always had more female than male employees on the production line: our MD at the time strongly believed that women demonstrated better attention to detail, a stronger eye for quality as well as better hand and movement coordination skills than men.

These abilities were important as manufacturing harnesses is complex and involves the assembly of electrical cables or wires which transmit signals or electrical power, and it is easy to make mistakes if you are not detail orientated. Today at Hesto we pride ourselves in continuing to intentionally and deliberately recruit capable females, with a proven track record to ‘harness’ their talent, ensure their retention within the company, and support them to grow their potential and succeed in their careers. We now have a renewed focus on ensuring that we have more female representation at all levels of the organisation, which we primarily do through a holistic career management approach.

This approach was initiated in 2020 and is mostly focused on young women in engineering and production roles, with clear strategies for on-the-job training, job specific technical training and support for tertiary education. We also have graduate programmes, learnerships and apprenticeships where we target females with engineering or related qualifications and experience.

WE APPLY THE 70-20-10 PRINCIPLE TO OUR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Our training programmes are structured in a way that ensures a pool of trainees are given tools to thrive and grow for the betterment of the manufacturing industry. At Hesto we take people with potential or raw ability and

develop them. We apply the 70-20-10 principle to our education and training funding, where 70% is on the job training, 20% is soft skills training, and 10% is supporting tertiary education. We have found that once people go through our various development programmes, they are more likely to succeed.

We are also transforming our HR department to be at the forefront of an approach focusing on development, mentorship, and coaching. We also have an internal development and leadership learnership focused on women and provides them with leadership skills.

We are also currently working on ensuring all our trainees, especially those within the engineering field, are exposed to different production lines and different areas of the business, so that they can broaden their scope and learn about other roles and how the areas integrate into our value chain.

ALIGNING RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN WITH OUR ORGANISATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

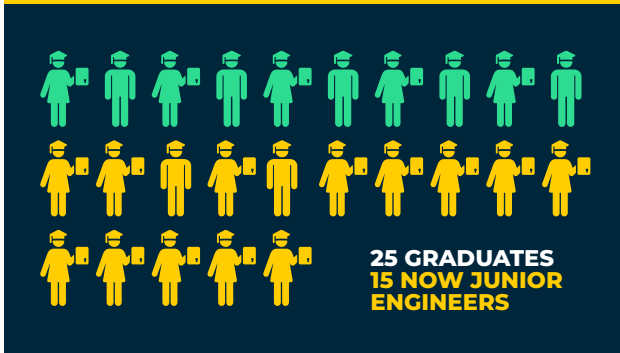
We adopted this approach to career management as part of a Group strategy championed by our parent company, Metair. Metair was motivated by the realisation that much of the leadership in its subsidiary companies were approaching retirement. This spurred the deliberate decision to evolve and focus on the development of internal talent, as well as attracting new talent, retaining current talent, and building a future leadership pipeline to take the business into its next phase of growth. A key component of this talent management strategy was transformation specifically related to achieving a gender balance.

YOUNG WOMEN ARE GROWING WITHIN THE COMPANY

Our intentional focus on supporting the career growth of women has had much success. In 2021 and as part of the efforts to attract new talent and retaining talent within the talent management strategy we had 25 graduate trainees, 15 of them are now junior engineers within the company and the majority of them are females.



NUMBER OF GRADUATE TRAINEES IN 2021



We prioritise getting females into leadership positions. In 2014, there was only one woman in an executive leadership role but since introducing the career management programme in 2020, we now have four women at executive leadership. We also have an increased number of female engineers in management or leadership roles. We believe that if you compare us to other companies, you will find more women in leadership roles at many levels, especially technical engineering roles.

Additionally, we have always had female team leaders in the assembly line at Hesto but for the first time in a while we now have now added a male team leader. This caused a bit of a shock internally and we jokingly call him Nduna (chief) but we of course support him and know he is very capable.

COMPANY CULTURE: A HOME FOR FEMALES TO THRIVE IN A MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY

We find that female employees remain in their engineering production roles at Hesto. Most of them stay because our culture supports women to succeed. Hesto is a home for females to prosper in a male-dominated industry and we have created a very conducive environment for females to thrive.

This dates back to our inception where the first group of engineers were female. They were able to excel in a male-dominated industry and since then our culture has grown organically, with the help of positive word-of-mouth recommendations, we continue to attract and retain more and more women which is how we are still female-dominated today.

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING FOR WOMEN TO USE THEIR VOICE

We also ensure that our women feel empowered by training them in conflict management and assertiveness. We have found that assertiveness training helps make our women more effective in this environment. We aim to empower females to voice their opinions and understand that they are equally skilled, talented, and deserving to be in their positions.

STAFF-WIDE EDUCATION ON GENDER IMBALANCE ISSUES

Another focus is our gender policies and education of our staff on gender issues. We have a strict code-of-conduct related to gender discrimination and use our internal communication channels to educate all our staff on such topics as victimization, sexual harassment and gender-based violence. We also have an anonymous tip-off line for gender related grievances.

We train our staff in diversity and inclusion and even had training with our male colleagues to help them to understand our deliberate focus on empowering females in a male-dominated industry.

FUNDING INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

Our career management programme, with its focus on increasing the participation of young women in engineering, is mainly supported by in-house funding.

We do get funding from MerSETA for skills programmes such as internships and apprenticeships and we target females within these programmes which contributes towards our transformation goals. Metair is also applying to MerSETA for sectoral funding for critical skills, and we hope that Metair's subsidiaries will develop 250 engineers over 3 years.

We have a good working relationship with the SETA and the process of applying for funding is not difficult. We receive funding every year and so there are no challenges in this regard. If we do have any queries, the SETA has client service officers who are very helpful.



HESTO IS A HOME FOR FEMALES TO PROSPER IN A MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY AND WE HAVE CREATED A VERY CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR FEMALES TO THRIVE.

