



2026

THE PEOPLE

FACTOR MAGAZINE

JULY | 2026





SABPP™

SA BOARD FOR
PEOPLE PRACTICES

Setting HR standards



ANNUAL PEOPLE FACTOR CONFERENCE

**PEOPLE STRATEGY FOR COMPLEX AI-LED REALITIES:
FROM HYPE TO CO-CREATING IMPACT**

An invitation to

CPOS, HR EXECUTIVES, CHROS & SENIOR PROFESSIONALS



3 - 4

September 2026



ICC

Durban International
Convention Centre



11

CPD Points



	FEE INCL GALA	GALA ONLY
MEMBER	R6 999.00	R1 350.00
NON-MEMBER	R7 999.99	R1 500.00

**Excluding VAT





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SABPP AWARDS 2026

CALL FOR NOMINATION



VENUE

Durban International Convention
Centre



DATE

3-4 September 2026



TIME

19:00 PM



DRESS CODE

Black Tie





CATEGORY A

EXCELLENCE IN PEOPLE PRACTICES & GOVERNANCE

The following awards are not open for nominations. However, the committee will identify and finalise the nominees and winners using the data available.

1. *SADC Region.*
2. *National (South Africa).*
3. *Overall best performing organisation 2026.*
4. *Lead HR Auditor of Note.*
5. *HR Auditor of Note.*



CATEGORY B

INNOVATING PEOPLE PRACTICES & GOVERNANCE

The following awards are open for nominations.

1. *Leading Universities Innovating PPG Standards Alignment.*
2. *Leading Product Or Service Innovation Aligned To PPG Standards.*

The following award is not open for nominations.

3. *Leading Organisation Endorsing PPG Standards.*



CATEGORY C

INNOVATING CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

The following awards are open for nominations.

- 1. Practitioner Championing Learning & Development Innovation.*
- 2. Organisation Championing Learning & Development Innovation.*
- 3. Innovative Programme Supporting Youth Empowerment & Development.*



CATEGORY D

LEADING PROVIDER

The following awards are not open for nominations. However, the committee will identify and finalise the nominees and winners using the data available.

- 1. Leading Continuous Professional Development Provider.*
- 2. Leading Skills Development Provider.*



CATEGORY E

FUTURE MAKERS

The following awards are not open for nominations. However, the committee will identify and finalise the nominees and winners using the data available.

1. *Leading Student Chapter.*
2. *Leading Lecturer Championing Student Chapter.*



CATEGORY F

CHAMPIONING PROFESSIONALISM

The following awards are not open for nominations. However, the committee will identify and finalise the nominees and winners using data available.

1. *Outstanding Organisation Championing Professional Membership - PRIVATE SECTOR.*
2. *Outstanding Organisation Championing Professional Membership - PUBLIC SECTOR.*

The following award is open for nomination.

3. *SABPP Ambassador.*



CATEGORY G

LEADERSHIP OF NOTE

The following awards are not open for nominations. However, the committee will identify and finalise the nominees and winners using data available.

- 1. Outstanding Leader within SABPP Accredited University.*
- 2. Outstanding Leader within SABPP Audited Organisation.*
- 3. Outstanding Leader within the Public Sector.*
- 4. Outstanding Leader within the Private Sector.*



CATEGORY H

CEO RECOGNITION AWARD

Aimed at recognising and appreciating talent and excellence in People Practices. The SABPP CEO will listen to your advice and honour any professional doing marvelous work from their corner.

THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL BE USED TO ADJUDICATE THE AWARDS

- Clear intent and actions to drive professionalism.*
- Successful examples in creating awareness, capacity building and innovation.*
- Clear results achieved in terms of number of people influenced, number of workshops or other forms of impact measurement.*

Please complete the nomination form and send back to lawrence@sabpp.co.za or events@sabpp.co.za via e-mail.

Please ensure that this reaches him, by close of business day on the 20 of JULY 2026.



EVENT DETAILS

FEES

Member: R6 299.00 excl VAT (Plus Gala Dinner) Early Bird Special

Non-Member: R7 199.00 excl VAT (Plus Gala Dinner) Early Bird Special

Member: R6 999.00 excl VAT (Plus Gala Dinner)

Non-Member: R7 999.00 excl VAT (Plus Gala Dinner)

Member: R1 350.00 excl VAT (Gala Dinner only)

Non-Member: R1 500.00 excl VAT (Plus Gala Dinner only)

Please click [here](#) to complete the Awards nomination Form

THE PEOPLE FACTOR MAGAZINE

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RETHINKING EARLY CAREERS IN FINANCE TO RETAIN TALENT

For more information, contact Tshepisho Makofane on 011-783 5027 or Tshepisho@tamela.co.za

The finance industry can be an unforgiving environment for young professionals entering the workforce. From the outset, many are confronted by intense pressure, an 'always on' culture, fierce competition and the accelerating pace of technological change reshaping the sector.

At the same time, they are expected to bridge widening skills gaps while sometimes navigating unclear career pathways in highly demanding workplaces. For many, the combination of relentless performance expectations and limited visibility into future growth opportunities creates a sense of uncertainty about whether the industry can offer them sustainable long-term careers.



The consequences are increasingly evident in rising attrition rates among young finance talent. Many leave the sector within their first few years, with burnout, stress and a lack of meaningful development or recognition as reasons for moving on.

For leaders, these are warning signs that should not be ignored. Nurturing the next generation of finance professionals demands intentional investment in supportive workplace cultures, clear progression pathways, mentorship and environments where young talent can see a future for themselves.

Leadership enables, not micromanages

To ensure young professionals thrive, C-suite leaders must shift from traditional management to serving as coaches, creating purpose-driven, flexible and inclusive environments.

Key to empowering young professionals is entrusting them with decision-making roles, investing in their continuous learning and fostering a culture where they feel safe to innovate and take risks. Generation Z (1997-2012), especially, appreciates being afforded opportunities to make personal decisions and work independently in the workplace.

Consideration should be given to including them in key meetings where their ideas can be heard and by allowing them to lead projects, we encourage ownership and accountability. The sense of autonomy they are afforded is highly affirming and allows building AI-ready finance talent

Continuous learning also requires sustained investment in training and development initiatives, particularly as they navigate rapid technological change. This involves shifting from traditional stewardship to strategic mentorship that fosters AI fluency.

As AI becomes embedded in core business operations, leaders must move beyond purely technical training to cultivate human-centric capabilities such as critical interpretation, ethical decision-making and strategic judgement.

s for accelerated learning.



Promoting the 'human factor'

As the digital universe expands and businesses increasingly adopt hybrid work models, young professionals can benefit from cultivating genuine human relationships rather than relying too heavily on email, WhatsApp or virtual meetings.

Not only does human interaction drive productivity and innovation, but it also plays a vital role in supporting employee mental wellbeing, fostering a collaborative culture and strengthening trust across teams.

At the same time, organisations must recognise the evolving expectations of Generation Z, a workforce that values flexibility, purpose-driven work and seamless technological integration. As true “digital natives”, they are reshaping how businesses think about engagement, connectivity and the future of work.

Offering flexible work arrangements and prioritising work-life integration over rigid office hours goes a long way to enhancing the work experience for young professionals.

Mentorship never goes out of fashion

Mentorship is vital as it can accelerate career growth, bridge the gap between digital skills and traditional financial expertise, and offer personalised guidance and support structures necessary to navigate high-stress environments.

New entrants often struggle with limited guidance from supervisors and a lack of support in their early careers. Pairing them with senior leaders ensures guidance is provided and a sense of belonging fostered



Part of the mentorship process can be an exploration of future growth opportunities – something that will address the lack of prospects young people often report. This means outlining potential career paths within a company and the greater industry and what steps they need to take to achieve their growth ambitions.

Poor mental health a business risk

A ‘Confessions of the finance function’ white paper found that about 39% of younger employees reported taking time off due to stress, with 82% noting that working in finance negatively impacts their mental health, sleep and relationships.^[1]

For leaders, it is important to treat employee mental health as a core business risk, shifting from awareness campaigns to proactive, data-driven prevention and personalised support. Addressing high-stress finance environments requires leadership to remove the stigma around mental health and integrate well-being into the company’s culture.

Finally, purpose is often overlooked when onboarding young professionals. Leaders should clearly communicate how employees’ work connects to a broader mission and contributes to meaningful impact.

The author would like to hear from you, please click [here](#) to share your feedback with us...

“
SABPP
FACTS
”

Did you Know

We are proud to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between GIBS and SABPP, marking the beginning of a strategic alliance partnership.

This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to advancing education, professional excellence and workforce development. Through this partnership, we will work together to create opportunities for skills development, knowledge sharing and the growth of future HR professionals.

We look forward to the positive impact this alliance will have on our students, members and the broader community.



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After the Door Opens: What Organisations Owe Young People in the Workplace

By Gcina Mthembu Chairperson of the HR Citizen Committee Author of Work, Life & Becoming, a weekly LinkedIn newsletter



The true measure of an organisation's commitment to young people is not only that it opens the door, but what it does after they walk through it.

Youth Month often brings necessary attention to youth unemployment, access to opportunity, skills development and the future of work. These conversations matter. In a country where many young people continue to face barriers to employment, every opportunity created is significant. Internships, learnerships, graduate programmes and entry-level roles remain important pathways into the world of work.

But perhaps Youth Month should also invite organisations to ask a more uncomfortable question: once young people enter our workplaces, what kind of experience do they encounter?

Access Is Only the Beginning

For many young professionals, their first workplace experience becomes more than a line on a CV. It becomes an introduction to organisational culture, leadership behaviour, professional confidence, workplace standards and the unwritten rules of how work gets done. It teaches them what it means to contribute, how to ask questions, how mistakes are treated, how feedback is given, whether effort is noticed, whether they are trusted, and whether there is room for them to grow.

When handled well, this experience can be formative. It can shape confidence, capability and career direction. But when handled poorly, it can leave young people confused, underutilised and unsure of their own competence.

When Opportunity Does Not Become Development

From an HR lens, there are moments that stay with you. One of them is hearing young people reflect at the end of internship or learner contracts and quietly name what the organisation may not have noticed. Some speak about gratitude for the opportunity, but also about long periods where they were not given meaningful work. Others speak about being present in the workplace, but not truly included in the work. Some were available, eager and willing to learn, yet were given tasks that did not stretch them, expose them or help them build confidence in their chosen field.

There is a particular kind of disappointment in a young person who was invited into an organisation but not intentionally developed by it. They may have had access to the workplace, but not access to learning. They may have had a desk, a laptop and an email address, but not enough guidance, structure or responsibility to understand how their role connects to the bigger picture.

This is where organisations must be careful not to confuse placement with development.


The Risk of Poorly Structured Youth Opportunities

It is one thing to bring young people into the organisation. It is another to receive them with intention. A youth opportunity that is poorly structured can unintentionally communicate that young people are additional hands rather than emerging professionals. It can reduce a developmental experience to administrative relief. It can make young people feel like observers in spaces where they were meant to participate.

Meaningful youth inclusion requires more than goodwill. It requires design. Before an intern, learner or graduate enters the business, organisations should be able to answer a few practical questions:

- What is the purpose of this opportunity?
- What meaningful work will this young person be exposed to?
- Who will supervise, guide and support them?
- What skills should they develop?
- How will their growth be reviewed?

Without this kind of thought, youth participation can become symbolic rather than developmental.



Standards, Support and Meaningful Work

Young people are not entering the workplace fully formed. They are entering to learn, contribute and be shaped. This does not mean lowering standards. In fact, young people need standards. They need to understand what good work looks like and be introduced to professionalism, accountability, quality and workplace discipline.

But standards without guidance can feel like judgement. Expectations without support can feel like abandonment. The organisation's responsibility is to hold both: to stretch young people while supporting them, to correct them while coaching them, and to give them real work with enough context to do it well.

Meaningful work does not always have to be complex. Even simple tasks can develop a young person when they are properly explained and connected to a broader outcome. The issue is not always the size of the task. Sometimes, it is the absence of context. When work is random, repetitive, unclear or disconnected from learning, it can quickly become discouraging.

This is where managers play a critical role. The quality of a young person's workplace experience is often shaped by the quality of supervision they receive.

The Emotional Transition Into the Workplace

We must also recognise the emotional transition that comes with entering the workplace.

Many young people arrive carrying both excitement and pressure. Some are the first in their families to access certain professional spaces. Some are trying to prove that they belong. Some are navigating corporate language, workplace etiquette, financial responsibilities and personal expectations all at once.

The way organisations respond to them matters.

A young person who asks many questions is not necessarily unprepared. They may be trying to understand. A young person who appears quiet may not lack ideas. They may still be learning how to read the room. A young person who makes a mistake may not lack potential. They may simply need correction that teaches rather than correction that humiliates.

The workplace can either become a place where confidence is built, or a place where young people begin to doubt themselves before they have even had a fair opportunity to grow.



The Role of HR in Youth Enablement

This is why the role of HR is so important.

HR can play a pivotal role in helping organisations move beyond compliance-driven youth participation towards intentional enablement. It is not enough to count how many young people have been appointed, hosted or placed. We must also ask what they are learning, how they are being supported, whether their work is meaningful, and whether managers are equipped to guide them.

Youth programmes should not be treated as side projects. They should be integrated into workforce planning, talent development, organisational culture, manager enablement, skills development, succession thinking and transformation strategy.

The measure should not only be absorption, completion or headcount. It should also be growth, readiness and dignity.

A Mirror for Organisations

Youth Month should not only celebrate young people's potential. It should also hold up a mirror to the organisations receiving them. It should challenge us to ask whether we are opening doors into environments that develop people, or into systems that have not prepared for them.

Every young person who enters an organisation receives a message about work. They learn whether leadership listens, whether effort is noticed, whether mistakes are developmental, and whether there is truly room for them. Opening the door matters. But the work cannot end there.

Young people deserve more than proximity to work. They deserve structure, guidance, meaningful exposure, honest feedback and the opportunity to leave better prepared than when they arrived.

That is the deeper gesture: not only access, but enablement. Not only opportunity, but stewardship. Not only bringing young people in, but helping them become.

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THE NEW FACE OF FRAUD: WHY AI-POWERED EMPLOYEE SCREENING IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL FOR SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESSES

By: Jenny Reid, Founder, www.ifacts.co.za, 011 453 1587

Recently, a significant political call echoed through South Africa's corridors of power. The Democratic Alliance urged the appointment of a national Cyber Commissioner, specifically highlighting the urgent need to combat AI-driven banking scams. Almost in unison, the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) issued stark public warnings about a new breed of fraud: deepfake and impersonation schemes using AI-generated audio and video to target consumers.

This dual alert from political and regulatory bodies is not mere speculation; it is a siren call. For South African businesses, the message is clear: the threat landscape has fundamentally changed, and our defences must evolve just as rapidly. This evolution must start not at the firewall, but at the front door, with how we screen and trust our employees



The FSCA's warning cuts to the core of the new challenge: fraud is no longer simply a matter of stolen credentials or compromised systems. It is now about the sophisticated manufacturing of trust. Cybercriminals are leveraging tools once confined to science fiction to craft flawless deceptions.

Voice clones of a CEO authorising an urgent payment, realistic videos of a new "client representative" requesting policy changes, synthetic identities built from stolen data to apply for jobs or credit, and hijacked insurance claims backed by falsified digital evidence, are the weapons in a new, AI arsenal.

This presents a profound and immediate risk for businesses. The traditional perimeter of trust has dissolved. An employee's identity, a vendor's invoice, or a client's verbal instruction can no longer be taken at face value. The very channels we rely on for communication and verification have been weaponised. In this environment, a company's greatest vulnerability can often lie within its own structure, not through malicious intent from within, but through unwitting human compromise or sophisticated external impersonation targeting staff.

Consider the implications for human resources and risk management. A synthetic identity, painstakingly crafted with AI-generated supporting documents and a credible digital footprint, can easily slip through conventional background checks. Once inside, this "employee" could be a sleeper agent for industrial espionage or a conduit for financial fraud. More commonly, existing employees, from finance clerks to department heads, can be targeted by these same AI scams. A convincing voice-cloned call from "the MD" demanding an urgent, confidential wire transfer can bypass layers of protocol if the recipient is convinced of its authenticity.

This is where the paradigm must shift. Proactive, intelligent employee screening is no longer a once-off administrative task for recruitment; it is an ongoing component of corporate cybersecurity and fraud prevention.

Building a Human Firewall: The iFacts Approach

To combat AI-powered threats, businesses need intelligence-powered defences. This requires moving beyond static checks to dynamic, contextual verification processes:

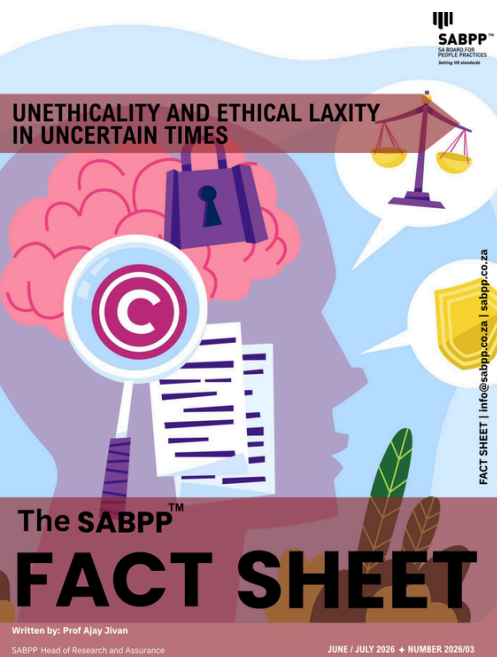
1. **Advanced Identity Verification:** Implementing biometric and liveness detection during onboarding can thwart synthetic identities. Continuous authentication measures can help ensure the person accessing sensitive systems remains the vetted employee.
2. **Ongoing Monitoring & Education:** Screening cannot end on day one. Regular checks against updated risk databases and watchlists are crucial. Equally vital is continuous employee education, making staff aware of deepfake and social engineering tactics, turning them into a vigilant "human firewall."
3. **Cultivating a Culture of Verification:** Companies must instil protocols that require secondary verification for unusual requests, especially those involving payments or data through a separate, established channel. "Trust but verify" must become the operational mantra.
4. **Leveraging Professional Screening Partners:** In an arms race with AI, most businesses lack the internal expertise. Partnering with a specialist provider like iFacts, which understands the local South African context and the global technological threat, provides access to the latest tools and methodologies to detect sophisticated fraud.

The call for a national Cyber Commissioner is a welcome step towards a coordinated national response. However, cybersecurity and fraud prevention have always been a shared responsibility between the state and the private sector. While authorities work to disrupt criminal networks, businesses have a duty to fortify their own domains.

The AI genie is out of the bottle, and criminals are exploiting its power. The warnings from the DA and the FSCA are our definitive wake-up call. In South Africa's fight against this new frontier of fraud, reinforcing our first line of defence, through intelligent, persistent, and AI-aware employee screening, is not just prudent risk management; it is essential. It is an absolute business imperative. Is your business's vetting process still living in a pre-AI world?

Contact iFacts today to learn how our tailored employee screening and ongoing monitoring solutions can help you build a resilient human firewall, protecting your assets, your reputation, and your people from the sophisticated scams of tomorrow, which are already here today.

The author would like to hear from you, please click [here](#) to share your feedback with us...



FACT SHEET JUNE/JULY 2026

Prof. Ajay Jivan
SABPP Head of Research and Assurance

This brings us to the question of unethically. In this Fact Sheet, we explore how people who would ordinarily not engage in unethical behaviour may nevertheless do so in difficult and uncertain situations, whether knowingly or unwittingly. It may be tempting to label such persons as 'bad apples' and to attribute unethical conduct to individual character or traits alone. However, the literature suggests a broader view that considers 'bad apples' (individual factors), 'bad barrels' (organisational factors), and 'bad cases' (situational factors) that may contribute to 'apples going bad'. This framing is drawn from the title of a meta-analysis by Kish-Gephart et al. (2010)¹.

[Read more..](#)

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IT CAN BE UNLAWFUL TO FIRE ILLEGAL STRIKERS

By: Ivan Israelstam, Chief Executive of Labour Law Management Consulting.

Chapter 4 of the LRA read together with item 6 of Schedule 8 of the LRA effectively allows employers to dismiss employees who have embarked on an unprotected strike. . For example, where employees fail, prior to embarking on a strike to follow the LRA's pre-strike procedures, the employer may be entitled to dismiss the strikers. This is because, by their very nature and purpose, strikes cause damage to the enterprise concerned. And the pre-strike procedures are necessary to mitigate that damage and to try to avoid the need for a strike.



However, the law makes it clear that an unlawful strike does not automatically give the employer a right to fire the strikers. The appropriateness of the penalty depends on the circumstances in which the strike action took place. For example, if the employer provoked the strike this would act as a mitigating factor.

In the matter between the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union vs Northern Coal (Lex Info 30 April 2026 Labour Court case No JS491/23) twenty-one AMCU members embarked on an unprotected strike which, according to the employer, cost the company R2.1 million.

The employer fired all the employees for embarking on an unprotected strike, and AMCU referred a dispute for unfair dismissal that ended up at the Labour Court. The Court found that the strike had been unlawful because the employees had failed to follow the legislated pre-strike procedures. The strike had cost the employer 6 hours of lost production. The reason for the strike was the employer's negligence in failing to include the employees' overtime pay on their pay slips. The amount of the overtime pay erroneously omitted equated to 30% of the employees' pay. The employees had heavy financial obligations and the loss of 30% of their pay was very significant. The strike was short and peaceful and occurred only due to the error in the employees' pay.

The Court therefore found that, while discipline for the strike had been merited, the penalty of dismissal was too harsh under the circumstances. The Court therefore ordered the employer to reinstate all 21 employees with 36 months' backpay.

The average monthly pay of the reinstated employees was approximately R9000. This, multiplied by 36 months, would have come to approximately R 6.8 million.

This court decision provides 6.8 million reasons for employers to ensure that they understand the law of strike dismissals.

The innovative video series WALKING THE LABOUR LAW TIGHTROPE assists employers to provide their managers with very inexpensive training that allows the managers to achieve crucial labour relations knowhow at times suitable to their very busy schedules. Its 48 chapters, averaging 10 minutes in length each, can easily be watched at junctures when the manager has time. This greatly informative yet very engaging and practical video series provides crucial and user-friendly learning using a stimulating, animated case study that runs throughout the 48-chapter series. Each chapter contains clear and important advice needed by workplace management on the basics of labour law over a very wide range of topics.



A further advantage is that the manager can, for a full year, easily go back to any of the 48 videos for purposes of refresher training or to access information on how to deal with a current workplace issue. This solves the problem of managers forgetting what they have learned.

This video series helps management to walk the shaky labour law tightrope and to run the workplace productively without falling into the labour law abyss.

To access our groundbreaking video series: WALKING THE NEW LABOUR LAW TIGHTROPE please go to www.labourlawvideos.co.za or contact Ivan on ivan@labourlawadvice.co.za

The author would like to hear from you, please click [here](#) to share your feedback with us...



Provincial Highlight

As part of the SABPP strategy to enhance value, visibility, and member engagement across South Africa, we are delighted to announce the launch of two new regional committees in the Western Cape.

Are You Ready for the Worcester and George Regional Committees Launch?

Join us as we continue our growth journey and mark another significant milestone in the advancement of the HR profession. Together we will shape the future of human resource management in South Africa.

With **18 vibrant regions already established**, the launch of the **George and Worcester Regional Committees** will bring our total number of regions to **20**, demonstrating the unprecedented growth of SABPP and its growing impact on the HR profession.

Event Dates

- 📍 **George Regional Launch – 27 July 2026**
- 📍 **Worcester Regional Launch – 28 July 2026**

We extend this special invitation to you, our valued stakeholder, to attend either of these important regional launch events.

This is a unique opportunity to:

- Engage with fellow HR professionals in your region.
- Expand your professional network.
- Contribute to the advancement of the HR profession.
- Support the professionalisation of both the public and private sectors.
- Play a role in strengthening and growing the professional body.

Be part of history as we continue building a stronger, more influential HR profession for South Africa.
Your Voice. Your Vision. Your Regional AGM.

Let's unite to advance the HR profession with purpose, excellence, and impact.

We look forward to welcoming you to Worcester or George.
South African Board for People Practices (SABPP)



2026 Regional AGM's Notice
Road Show

George | Western Cape

SA Board for People Practices is coming to your region to host an **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** on the **27 July at 12:00PM**. During the AGM, new leadership will be elected and a new committee will be launched to look after your region for the next 3 years. This is an opportunity for you as a Professional to serve and help shape the future of HR in your region.

Join the CEO and his team together with the current regional committee members and help take the body to the next level.

Free 

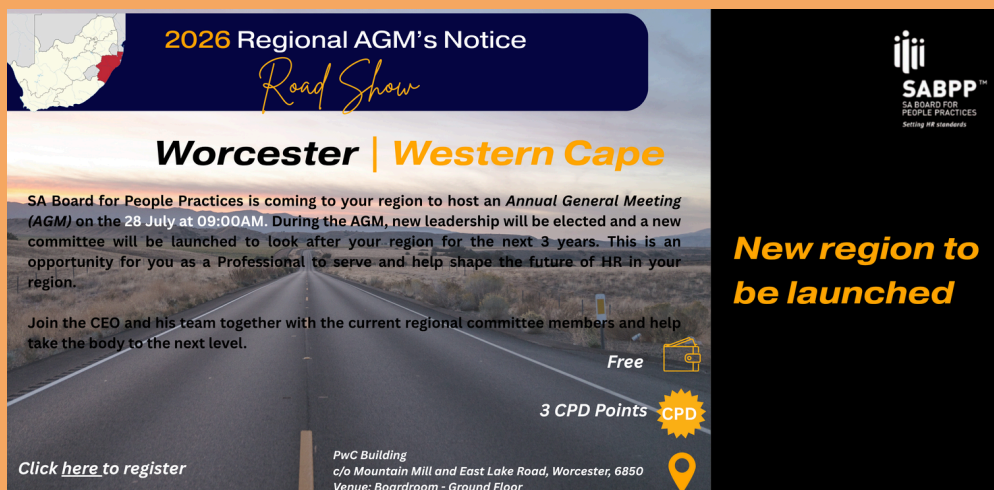
3 CPD Points 

Breede-Olifants Catchment Management Agency (BOCMA), York Building, 101 York Street Third Floor, George, 6530 

[Click here to register](#)

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Setting HR standards

New region to be launched





2026 Regional AGM's Notice
Road Show


Worcester | Western Cape

SA Board for People Practices is coming to your region to host an **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** on the **28 July at 09:00AM**. During the AGM, new leadership will be elected and a new committee will be launched to look after your region for the next 3 years. This is an opportunity for you as a Professional to serve and help shape the future of HR in your region.

Join the CEO and his team together with the current regional committee members and help take the body to the next level.

Free 

3 CPD Points 

PwC Building c/o Mountain Mill and East Lake Road, Worcester, 6850 Venue: Boardroom - Ground Floor 

[Click here to register](#)

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Setting HR standards

New region to be launched

CHM

COWAN- HARPER- MADIKIZELA

Experience. Skills. Solutions.

In today's highly regulated business environment, employee screening is no longer just a best practice - in some instances it is a legal obligation.

For organisations that qualify as 'accountable institutions' under the Financial Intelligence Centre Act 38 of 2001 ("FICA"), robust employee screening is essential to mitigate the risks associated with money laundering, terrorist financing and fraud.

Legal foundations for employee screening

FICA, particularly through Directive 8 and Public Compliance Communication 55 ("PCC 55"), requires accountable institutions to screen prospective and current employees for 'competence and integrity'. This may involve conducting checks on qualifications, employment history and criminal records. The level and frequency of checks should be aligned to the risk profile of each role.

Statutory duties under other legislation

Under the Immigration Act 13 of 2002, employers are obliged to verify that all employees, including foreign nationals, are legally permitted to work in South Africa. Section 38(2) requires a good faith effort to verify immigration status, while section 49(3) imposes criminal penalties on employers who knowingly employ undocumented workers.

Similarly, under the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008 ("NQF Act"), recent amendments introduced criminal sanctions for persons who misrepresent their qualifications. Once section 32A of the NQF Act comes into effect, it will become mandatory to verify employees' qualifications against the National Learners' Records Database.

Real world implications

The importance of thorough screening, especially for senior roles, was recently underscored in the high-profile case of Anushka Bogdanov, a former independent non-executive director at EOH Holdings. In July 2025 it was reported that the Johannesburg Stock Exchange had fined Bogdanov for misrepresenting her academic qualifications, specifically claiming a PhD in International Finance from the London Business School that she did not possess.

CVs Lie, Background Checks Don't: Questions Employers Must Ask

Data privacy considerations

The Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 ("POPIA") applies to the processing of employees' personal information and generally requires that consent be obtained. However, POPIA contains certain caveats that permit processing without consent when necessary for the conclusion or performance of a contract or compliance with a legal obligation, amongst others.

Practical implementation

In respect of prospective employees, screening forms an integral part of the recruitment process and should be provided for in recruitment and selection policies. Any adverse screening results must, however, be assessed in context, particularly considering whether the adverse finding materially impacts the employee's ability to perform their duties.

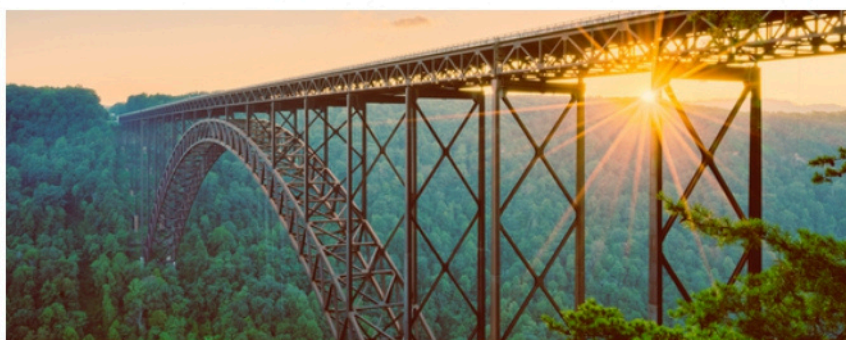
Importantly, employers must ensure that their policies and screening practices align with the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. As recently emphasised by the Labour Court in *O'Comor v LexisNexis (Pty) Ltd* (2024) 45 ILJ 1287 (LC), not all adverse findings justify dismissal - employers must demonstrate that the adverse screening results relate directly to the inherent requirements of the job in line with the Code of Good Practice on the integration of Employment Equity into Human Resource Policies and Practices.

With increased scrutiny on internal controls and ethical standards, employers must take a proactive and compliant approach to employee screening. For accountable institutions, screening is not simply a measure to mitigate risk - it is also about discharging a statutory duty. By implementing clear and legally compliant screening policies, employers can protect their operations, promote trust with stakeholders, and ensure that they remain on the right side of the law.

This issue can, however, be a minefield and if not handled correctly could expose employers to significant legal risk. As the Bogdanov case illustrates, failing to verify critical credentials, particularly for senior roles, can lead to lasting reputational damage and regulatory penalties.

Employers must always, as part of their efforts to mitigate any risks, ensure that they take appropriate, specialised advice before implementing any policies or procedures which may impact upon their workplaces.

Neil Coetzer, Head of Employment
Nicola Watson, Senior Associate



Where *Experience* and *Skills* meet
to create *Solutions*.

Trust us to get you there.

