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NEW S L E T T E R

NATIONAL QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY NETWORK (NQPN)



What is NQPN?

NQPN (National Quality and Productivity Network) is a network for maximising the impact of Kaizen training delivery.

Current members :

- The Automotive Industry Development Centre Eastern Cape (AIDC-EC)
- The Automotive Industry Development Centre Gauteng (AIDC-GP)
- Automotive Industry Transformation Fund (AITF)
- Automotive Supply Chain Competitiveness Initiative (ASCCI)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Plastics SA
- Productivity SA
- Production Technologies Association of South Africa (PtSA)
- The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic)

Feedback from participating company



Kenneth Nenzhelele
SHERQ Manager

Delberg Engineering Kaizen Program Experience"

Participating in the Kaizen program has been a transformative experience for the Delberg team. It has helped us take a fresh look at how we operate, revealing areas for improvement that were not previously on our radar. With the support of experienced facilitators, we've been able to implement practical tools that eliminate inefficiencies and improve overall workflow. One of the most noticeable changes has been on the factory floor, where our staff have embraced more structured routines and visual management techniques. As a result, our processes are more consistent, our workspace is better organized, and team communication has improved significantly. The introduction of 5S principles has especially helped creating a cleaner, safer, and more productive environment. Beyond the production area, we've applied the same mindset in our administrative and support functions. This cross-functional approach has encouraged everyone in the business to actively identify bottlenecks, reduce unnecessary steps, and focus on value-adding activities.

Adopting a culture of ongoing improvement, not just as a project, but as part of our everyday thinking, has positioned us to respond faster, work smarter, and stay competitive. I highly recommend the NQPN Kaizen program to any small or medium business looking to boost efficiency and build a more agile operation.

You are never too busy to change.

● Quality and productivity improvement (QPI, Kaizen) activities targeting small and medium-sized enterprises

For South Africa, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are a key driver of economic growth and a source of employment. MSMEs are estimated to account for about 34% of South Africa's GDP and employ around 60% of the labor force (Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) Annual Report 2023-2024, p.27). MSMEs typically face challenges such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, regulatory burdens, inflation, and rising fuel and electricity costs. For MSMEs to survive, they need to adapt to the current market environment while also developing a corporate culture that is ready to change and grow in response to new changes in the market. This is where quality and productivity improvement (QPI, Kaizen) comes in. Quality and productivity improvement (Kaizen) activities can improve the quality, cost, and delivery (QCD) of the production process, helping to strengthen a company's competitiveness. Furthermore, by increasing the number of employees who are familiar with Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) approach in Kaizen, an organization can become more resilient to change and achieve sustainable growth.

For reference, the In-company training (ICT) for Basic Kaizen Training in 2023 and for TOT for Basic Kaizen Training in 2024 both recorded high productivity improvements for companies, at **62%** and **39.3%**, respectively.

● CRT of Intermediate Kaizen Training (7-11 July 2025)



- "Intermediate Kaizen" Classroom Training (CRT) was held at Garden Court Hotel O.R Tambo International Airport for five days from July 7 to 11, 2025. This classroom training includes advanced level quality and productivity improvement (Kaizen) knowledge including Statistical Quality Control (SQC), Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), Production Planning (PP)/Toyota Production System (TPS). 18 intermediate Kaizen consultant candidates selected from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape provinces participated in the training, with three Japanese experts providing guidance to the participants as instructors.
- In addition, observers from AUDA-NEPAD, Productivity SA, Plastics SA, Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEISFA) and others participated in the lecture, with a total of about 40 people attending. After the CRT, in-company training (ICT) will begin. These intermediate Kaizen consultants who have been trained through CRT and ICT are expected to lead quality and productivity improvement (Kaizen) activities in South Africa.

● Final Presentation of Digital Kaizen Training (1 August 2025)

- The Final Presentation Session and Certificate Award Ceremony for the Digital Kaizen Training were held in Pretoria on August 1st. The Digital Kaizen Training was conducted by NQPN from July 2024 to August 2025, and eight Digital Kaizen consultants and four companies completed the training. Consultants and participating companies learned how to program sensors and controllers, how to use QR codes, and how to acquire, transmit, store, and analyze factory production data in a do-it-yourself (DIY) format.
- This has enabled them to analyze the status of their production processes and implement Kaizen activities independently and at low cost. Digital Kaizen training has attracted a lot of attention, and it is expected that this training will continue to expand and develop in the future.



● Japan Study Tour (24 May – 8 June 2025)



- From late May to early June 2025, a group of 13 participants—including Kaizen consultants and members engaged in promotional activities—visited Japan for a two-week training program. This initiative was organized as part of a JICA-supported project to promote and disseminate Kaizen practices in South Africa. During the training, participants visited various institutions and companies across Japan to gain practical knowledge and insights into Kaizen's historical role in Japan's industrial development, the support systems from public and private sectors, improvement initiatives in SMEs, and the use of digital tools in modern Kaizen practices.
- In the final phase, participants worked in groups to develop action plans to strengthen and sustain Kaizen dissemination efforts in South Africa. Topics addressed included evaluation systems, policy alignment, training content localization, and capacity building. Participants expressed high satisfaction with the program, noting its strong practical value and relevance to their work. The insights gained are expected to play a key role in advancing Kaizen in South Africa.



Certificate Handover Ceremony

Certificate presentation ceremonies for the Training of Trainers for Basic Kaizen (January - May 2025) were held on August 6th, 12th, 13th and 14th in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape, respectively. 18 companies in four states completed the training, 19 Kaizen Consultants were trained, and 13 Kaizen Trainers were trained to supervise the consultants. To date, 20+ Kaizen trainers and 70+ Kaizen consultants have been trained, and they will lead efforts to improve quality and productivity in each state.



Let's all join forces towards AKAC2025!

Africa Kaizen Annual Conference (AKAC) 2025 will be held on Monday 27th, Tuesday 28th October, at the Birchwood Hotel & O.R.Tambo Conference Centre. AKAC 2025 will bring together policymakers, productivity experts, and business leaders to share knowledge, celebrate achievements, and promote sustainable industrialization across Africa. Further detail will be updated at the website of the African Union Development Agency New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD).

URL: <https://www.nepad.org/event/africa-kaizen-annual-conference-akac-2025>

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To be continued !