

Accredited training moving the industry forward

The sustainability of a piping system is often dependent on the jointing system and method used, and applying the necessary skills. An accredited installer is a product of certified training; it is, therefore, important to understand the various facets of training. **By Pranesh Maniraj***

TRAINING IS exceptionally critical when it comes to jointing solutions as this is essential to the longevity of a piping system. Failure to use an accredited training provider can result in an end product that is below the required standards and inferior in quality. In some instances, a failed jointing systems can be fatal to a pipeline.

The aspect of training is a complex facet of a business that requires significant

research and investment to ensure the skills transferred are comprehensive and applicable to the specific sector. While the market remains saturated with a number of training facilities, it is important to look at a few key considerations when selecting a training provider. Some key considerations include:

- Is the training accredited and with whom?
- Is the training offered nationally?

- Is the training offered at a facility or at a project site?
- What certification do the students receive?

Looking specifically at butt-welding training, this is a fairly common jointing method used and has proven to be sustainable when done correctly. Currently, in South Africa, butt-welding is offered as a jointing method for a number of piping solutions; it is,



Butt welding is a common jointing method used in piping systems

however, only done through qualified and accredited installers.

In South Africa, Plastics | SA, previously known as The Plastic Federation of South Africa, is the only accredited butt-welding training provider. As an industry body, Plastics | SA conforms to rigorous standards to ensure the training offered is all inclusive and in alignment with the necessary industry requirements.

Butt-welding training

Being the only accredited training facility, Plastics | SA offers a comprehensive butt-welding training programme that is aimed at ensuring aspiring welders leave the course with significant knowledge and expertise to successfully use this jointing method on piping solutions.

Butt-welding training is conducted over a three-day period during which time trainees receive comprehensive training on the components of butt-welding. Following the successful completion of this training course, each qualified welder receives a welder's code that is used on any completed project. The use of this welders code is imperative for accountability should there be an issue arising as a result of the welding.

The importance of specialised training skills in a variety of components in the plastic pipe industry is an urgent measure that is often neglected due to a lack of understanding of training, and some important considerations that are associated with it. As an industry and as professionals, we are often too entrenched in what we are currently doing and often neglect the importance of upskilling the necessary skills in the various areas of a technical solution.

Misconceptions

One of the greatest misconceptions that exist is organisations disregarding

the importance of training by continuing to use outdated methodologies from senior management. With the ongoing evolution of technology, the practices and procedures from the early days are not necessarily applicable in the present resulting in a compromised end product.

Training is ongoing

On the flip side, a number of organisations participate in training, they do not however recognise the importance of constantly updating the training to ensure it is current with the latest industry



Pranesh Maniraj, MD, Astore Africa, acknowledges that accredited training is critical to the advancement of the industry

standards as well as machinery innovations. Best practice highlights the importance of updating training skills on an annual basis.

Some considerations

While the outcome of training is somewhat dependent on the ability of trainees to grasp the concepts being taught, it is also imperative to identify some key factors that will ascertain the

credibility of training. In most cases, the best place to obtain training is through merSETA-accredited organisations that are able to give trainees

As professionals, we are often too entrenched in what we are currently doing and neglect the importance of upskilling

a nationally recognised certification. Training should never be taken on a "spray and pray" approach; employers should allocate training assistance following careful evaluation of the needs of a specific employee. In a number of cases related to training for artisans including welding, the greatest challenge faced is the high rate of illiteracy, thus making it important to ensure training has a theoretical and practical component, and can be tailored to suit the specific audience. The length of training will also play a role in determining the validity thereof. The length of training will vary based on the topic and could vary from one day to one year.

Training should be seen as a necessity in companies to ensure the technical solutions provided are successful and sustainable. The ramifications of offering a solution that is not in alignment with the correct industry standards can not only compromise a system but has the potential to be fatal.

Industry veterans and senior management need to understand and acknowledge that engaging in accredited training should form a compulsory part of every company's strategic plan. **35**

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