

BEST EMPLOYERS™ SOUTH AFRICA





Safcor Panalpina

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Safcor Panalpina is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Bidvest Group and a member of the global Panalpina network. It specialises in international supply chain management and consulting services, system integration, customs clearing, forwarding, logistics and financial services.

Outline

According to Safcor Panalpina managing director, Pete Williams, there have been substantial changes and improvements in the company over the past 10 years. The organisation is striving to be an employer of choice in the industry and believes it is some way down the road to achieving that goal.

On a practical level, the company opened its new facility near OR Tambo International Airport and has invested heavily in an improved, modernised IT platform.

Biggest Plus

The company has made incredible advances in terms of attracting, retaining and developing talent and creating the right culture in which these individuals can flourish. It has a strong strategic direction and places real emphasis on carrying out the company's values.

Biggest Challenge

Safcor Panalpina has made significant strides in building brand recognition. The challenge now is to leverage this recognition and that of the Bidvest brand to attract prospective employees to the company. It also needs to make the company's value proposition better understood so that it is a place where people want to work.





The Business

With nearly 100 years experience in the freight forwarding business (the company celebrates its centenary in 2010), Safcor Panalpina has a proven track record and is considered a leader in its field.

The company was acquired by the listed Bidvest Group in 1993 and Renfreight, another subsidiary of Bidvest, was absorbed into Safcor Panalpina in 2001, making the company the biggest player in the country, with an annual turnover in excess of R15 billion.

The business deals mainly with the movement of goods internationally – by road, rail, sea and air – however, some local forwarding is undertaken, provided there is an international link. It is active in many sectors including pharmaceuticals, chemicals, hi-tech products, oil and gas, telecoms, automotive and FMCG.

By nature, the supply chain industry is a highly administrative one that is bound by processes and legislation and the need for accuracy in every respect.

This is where Safcor Panalpina prides itself on being 'a global supply chain of seamless motion'.

International Stance

Safcor Panalpina is part of the global Panalpina World Transport Group network which has a presence across all six continents, thus providing it with the network required for the management of international supply chains.

The People

Safcor Panalpina has expanded dramatically from its humble beginnings when founded by Fred Cohen in 1910. It is now run by a management team headed up by Pete Williams, managing director.



Due to the nature of the business – which is highly administrative – individuals who give attention to detail but who are able to work effectively as a team will do well. The company is also focused on personal development through education and training, so those with a desire to acquire and improve their knowledge will flourish.

'Finding the right people is very important to the future success of the company,' says Sean McSweeney, human resources director. 'For this reason we incentivise employees to recruit like-minded individuals.' Recruitment is also done electronically.

The company has a comprehensive induction programme to promote sound employee relations and to ensure that employees are familiar with the organisation's policies and procedures, which are aimed at opening the channels of communication at all levels.

Company Culture and Style

Williams says that progress has been made in creating a more relaxed and open atmosphere in the company and this has been an important part of the company's transformation. There is a strong sense of living out the company's core values – which, it is evident, are taken extremely seriously.

Talent Management and Development

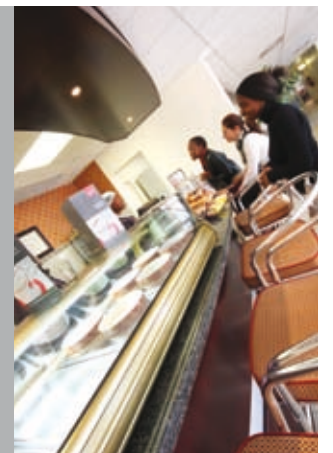
The freight forwarding business in South Africa has, in the past, been dominated by family run concerns, which have been passed down from one generation to the next. Moving into the modern era during which the industry has taken on the broader – and more sophisticated – identity of logistics and supply chain management, there is now a greater awareness and individuals who would not formerly have moved into the industry are now showing an interest in becoming a part of it.

'Our only real asset is our people. They are our past and, more importantly, they are our present and our future. As such we have to pay an enormous amount of time and attention in that area.'

– *Pete Williams, Managing Director*

'It's acceptable to have fun. That is what I see while walking around Safcor Panalpina. You see people who enjoy what they do and who look forward to coming to work everyday. Employees are given the opportunity to learn both the theoretical and practical aspects of the industry.'

– *Romano Theunissen, Learner*





PETE WILLIAMS
Managing Director

Executive Committee

Pete Williams

– Managing Director

Aniel Soma

– Financial Director

Sean McSweeney

– Human Resources Director

Charles Speed-Andrew

– Product Development Director

Jane Tennant

– Information Technology Director

Maria du Preez

– Regional Director, Gauteng

John Cummins

– Regional Director, KwaZulu-Natal

Mervyn Cookson

– Regional Director, Western Cape

Bruce Thoresson

– Regional Director, Eastern Cape

‘With the industry as a whole opening up and growing, it is attracting a diversity of people with different kinds of personalities who are challenging the status quo,’ adds McSweeney.

He says they do not necessarily look for top students, but rather for individuals who have something special to offer. It is also important that the person be able to get on with other people and work together as a team.

The company runs its own learnership programme which operates along the lines of an apprenticeship. The programme involves a one year programme – half of the day is dedicated to theory, with candidates doing computer based tuition in learnership rooms located at several of the company’s sites. The rest of the day is spent doing on-the-job training.

‘The programme is supervised, but learners are responsible for their own work,’ explains McSweeney. ‘The candidates receive a learner allowance, which increases if they perform well, and the company recruits a minimum target of 60% of the candidates upon completion of the learnership. We will employ a whole intake if they all perform well during their learnership period.’

At present there are approximately 40 ‘graduates’ of the learnership working for the company.

According to McSweeney, personal growth is important to the company and a lot of emphasis is placed on education, development and training of staff through the Individual Development Plan (IDP). Each year staff are asked to identify training which would help them do their job better. They must motivate their choices to their managers and if convinced, the company will pay for the training irrespective of whether the individual passes or fails.

When it comes to aspirational education, for example, an MBA, the company will advance the individual the fees, and on completion of the qualification, the employee is expected to work back the advance, irrespective of the result.



‘We have become fairly good at finding and recruiting from the right pool, now it is about retaining the talent, but we believe that these kind of programmes help us do just that,’ says McSweeney.

Salaries, Rewards and Benefits

Safcor Panalpina offers competitive packages, which are reviewed regularly. Packages take into account inflation, individual performance and the results of benchmark surveys.

Benefits include medical aid, annual leave starting at 17 days and increasing with long service, maternity, paternity and family responsibility leave as well as study leave.

Additional key benefits of working for Safcor Panalpina are a pension scheme, provident fund, and where appropriate and agreed, study assistance, flexible working hours, car allowance, overtime pay, incentive based pay for senior managers, recognition awards, cellphone allowance, subsidised canteen services in some centres, laptop, and sabbatical/approved extended leave of absence.

McSweeney adds that the organisation is also constantly looking for innovative ways to recognise success and has rolled out a recognition and reward programme called the ‘Flaming Hot Service’ Award, which provides an easy to administer way of rewarding people who ‘go the extra mile’.

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)

The company has been awarded an A rating by EmpowerDEX and has been rated as a level 4 contributor. It has also been accredited by Eskom as a black empowered supplier.

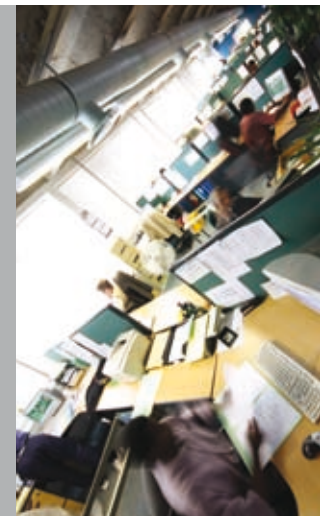
‘We adopted the policy of broad based transformation before it was even legalised and regard ourselves as one of the more transformed companies,’ says Williams. He hastens to add that the company has always

‘When I think of Safcor Panalpina I think of growth and improvement. I see where we have come from and can clearly see where we are going – it is exciting! I am proud to be part of this huge team and cannot think that I would like to work anywhere else.’

– *Delia Louw, Process Analyst (Operations)*

‘Being part of the Safcor Panalpina experience has ignited my passion for learning and this is rewarded by the support offered by the company in respect to self development. In a world where we often lack good leadership and a sound moral compass, I’m proud to be a part of a business community where values are lived from the top down!’

– *Jillian Schaffers, Client Services Manager*





been against tokenism or fronting as it is negative for the nation, the company and the individual. 'We take pride in giving real people real jobs,' he says. 'We believe in training and development rather than just shareholding.'

The company has three black directors while black leadership and management is currently standing at 25% with more than half of the workforce being black.

Furthermore, the company is committed to supporting and developing BBBEE companies wherever possible and is involved with various empowerment initiatives of which three such projects are Mpisi Transport, Dlonlobala and JIATA.

Mpisi is an owner-driver scheme and the company assists Mpisi by guaranteeing minimum volume of cargo on a monthly basis as well as providing operational support.

Dlonlobala is the company's own initiative to show its commitment to BBBEE and to create an opportunity for its employees who have an entrepreneurial thrust. Dlonlobala is a messenger service to Safcor Panalpina Gauteng and was started by Anthony Mdluli, an employee of the company.

JIATA is a 100% black owned company, which provides airport and hotel transfers for Safcor Panalpina employees travelling from the company's regional offices.

Responsible Citizenship

The high value placed on education and training within the company itself is extended to its Corporate Social Investment Initiatives (CSI) where it has chosen to support and assist black learners to complete their studies.



These learners are from schools and universities in areas where Safcor Panalpina staff come from. The company supports eight schools around the country providing them with computer and other equipment. These schools also act as feeder schools for the company's Learnership Programme. Safcor Panalpina staff are involved in donating blood and supporting the CANSA Shavathon. As a member of the Bidvest Group, Safcor Panalpina reports on corporate citizenship as guided by the G3 sustainability reporting guidelines of the Corporate Global Reporting Initiative. Relevant measures of sustainability are therefore included in the company's performance management system and are reported and monitored on a continuous basis.

In terms of environmental issues, McSweeney comments that the top leadership of Safcor Panalpina have pledged their commitment to a greener and more sustainable planet. 'To achieve a greener supply chain demands an understanding of the impact we have on the environment,' he says. 'We have started to measure our consumption of resources, including how much water, power, paper and fuel we use, and we have made some progress towards reducing the consumption of these resources.'





The Future

According to Williams the year ahead will see the bedding down of the company's new and improved IT systems as well as the continuation of the company's strategic journey. He adds that there will also be a focus on having the right people in the right positions in the company. ■

Facts & Figures

Total number of staff employed:
1 095

Annual turnover in rands: in
excess of R15 billion

Industry sector: **Supply Chain Management**

Black employees: **66,10%**

Black executive (senior)
management: **10,67%**

Women employees: **45,11%**

Women executive (senior)
management: **24%**

Previously disadvantaged
individuals in management:
21,67%

Absenteeism/sick leave taken in

past financial year: **1,5%/1,3%**

New SMME established/
supported: **8%**

Workplace accidents in the last
year: **0,73%**

Employee Assistance

Programme: **An HIV/Aids**

Employees Support

Programme was launched

in February 2007 and offers

telephonic and face-to-

face counselling, testing,

induction training for new

staff, assistance and support

with registration onto the

government antiretroviral

programme. Every second
year Safcor Panalpina has a
wellness day on-site, offering
employees the opportunity
to complete a health risk
assessment and to learn
about healthy lifestyle choices
such as being physically
active, managing stress and
healthy eating. Employees
also receive an individualised
lifestyle report covering their
lifestyle habits and health
risks as well as guidelines on
the areas that need attention.

WHAT MAKES AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE?

Fifty years ago, there would have been just one answer to that question: a good salary. But as the workplace becomes more demanding, employees are viewing remuneration as just one part of an overall package. They want their jobs to match their lifestyles and, whether it means providing an on-site crèche or flexible working hours, savvy employees are becoming increasingly considerate of their staff's needs.

But that's just the beginning. The days of the faceless drone are over and employees want to feel that their input not only makes a difference, but is valued too. Challenges are welcome, so long as organisations equip employees with the skills to meet them head-on, and culture counts more than you think.

The Best Employers South Africa is a showcase of the South African companies that have managed to create an environment where employees are not only inspired to give of their best, but are happy to do so. They are the companies that realise that even the best business strategies are nothing until they are implemented by the best people and their attention to all aspects of the employee experience - from recruitment to retention, from development to incentives - is rewarded by a sound bottom line. Drawing on the resources of a top research and writing team, the Corporate Research Foundation presents a must-read for any organisation eager to find out what constitutes best HR practice today and for anyone who wants to find out which companies are getting it right.

Corporate Research Foundation is an independent, internationally operating organisation. Established in 1991 in the Netherlands and in 1997 in South Africa, it is a combined initiative of business journalists, researchers and international publishers, which today operates in nine countries. Its goal is to impart information about all aspects of business enterprise worldwide. This book has been created by the Foundation to inform a wider audience about corporate culture, effective human resources management and strategies of successful enterprises.



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