



DaimlerChrysler South Africa:
Founding Member



LIVE and let LIVE



The Head of the SAFRI Chairman's Office, Josef Gorgels, addresses the SAFRI workshop in East London.

E. Cape businesses urged to adopt excellence model

EASTERN CAPE companies were urged to adopt the South African Excellence Foundation Model to help them become world-class – and attract greater global business interest – at a Southern African Initiative of German Business (SAFRI) Excellence Forum at DCSA-East London.

DCSA's suppliers and small businesses were invited to hear how the excellence model has helped businesses from as far as Zimbabwe and Swaziland to improve themselves and become sharper competitors.

Opening the forum, the Chairman of DCSA's Management Board, Christoph Köpke, said DCSA had found that the excellence model was an effective instrument to improve the business, adding that it was not only for large corporations.

"This model allows a company that can't afford consultants to assess itself on what to do, and how to do it better," he said.

"It's one thing to have a good idea, but that's only 20% of the job. The other 80% is to put the good idea back on the ground."

He admitted he had been sceptical when the company's then Total Quality Manager, Karl-Heinz Schlaiss, had approached him in 1994 to attend a European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) conference in Berlin.

He went together with Karl-Heinz and his special advisor, Reg Mason – and it had proved a turning point in how he saw quality and business excellence.

"We tend to think that quality is something that the Quality Depart-

ment does. I realised that it has got something to do with me – that it starts with me."

He returned to South Africa determined to introduce the model, and found that every single initiative that had been launched by the company in 1995 could slot into the model.

"In our first assessment, we scored only 230 points out of the possible 1000 points. Now we're just squeezing 500 points. We have learnt that excellence in business is not just about quality."

The Head of the SAFRI Chairman's Office, Josef Gorgels, said SAFRI was a virtual organisation of German businesses who were interested in developing Southern African into a viable global economic region.

He pointed out that the 14 countries that made up the SADC region had a combined population of some 200 million people, "and it will be an interesting market for German business in due course if it could be developed."

The Chairman of DaimlerChrysler, Jürgen Schrempf, having spent 12 years in South Africa, was considered to be the ideal person to chair SAFRI.

"SAFRI has identified the need to promote a culture of entrepreneurial excellence," he said, explain-

ing why the Excellence Model had been adopted by SAFRI and promoted throughout the region, particularly to small and medium size enterprises.

As an incentive to motivate businesses in the region to apply the model of self-assessment, SAFRI had launched the Jürgen Schrempf Award for Excellence.

"We try to promote Southern Africa to the German business community for more investment, but at the moment Africa has a very low business reputation.

"South Africa is in an extraordinary situation. You are the economic engine for Africa, and all South African businesses have a very important role in the future of the continent."

The forum was given a presentation by the Manager for Excellence at DCSA's Parts Division in Pine-town, Di Tarr, on how the division had applied the model – and won the South African Excellence Award for 2002.

Finalists and winners of the Jürgen Schrempf Award for Excellence – Mamoth Financial Services in Lesotho, BreatheTex Corporation in Port Elizabeth and Premier Gaskets in Zimbabwe – also gave presentations on their experiences with the model.