

The trainer's dilemma

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POACHING IS A GOOD SHORT-TERM SOLUTION TO SKILLS SHORTAGES, BUT BAD IN THE LONG TERM. CAN SOUTH AFRICA BREAK OUT OF THE HEAD-HUNTING AND JOB-HOPPING SPIRAL?

Everyone complains about the skills shortage, but no one does anything about it. But is that true? *Brainstorm* gathered as many skills and training experts as it could find and asked them some pointed questions: How bad is the skills crisis? Is it as bad overseas? How can government help? How do we stop poaching and start looking at the bigger picture?

Present to share their insights were: Stephen Bracher, business delivery manager at IQ Business Group; Haseena Parak, managing director of Staff IT; Teryl Schroenn, managing director of Accsys; Gary McHugh, director of Brighthouse; Lucas Mothupi, director of Satreno; David Ives, developer & platform strategy lead at Microsoft South Africa; Johan van Jaarsveld, managing director of EOH Outsourcing; Steve Randles, managing director of Khanyisa Real Systems; Sean Petersen, national resource manager of M-IT Mthombo; and Peter Clark, CEO of iSolve Business Solutions.

Brainstorm: How bad is the skills shortage in the rest of the world?

Peter Clark, iSolve: Last year, we attended the worldwide Microsoft partner conference and could see that it's a global problem. Australia, for instance, is about 50 percent short of the IT skills it needs. The governments of Britain, the US and Australia are putting down lots of cash to try to solve the problem. In India, there are 400 000 graduates per year, of which none leave the country. India needs them there.

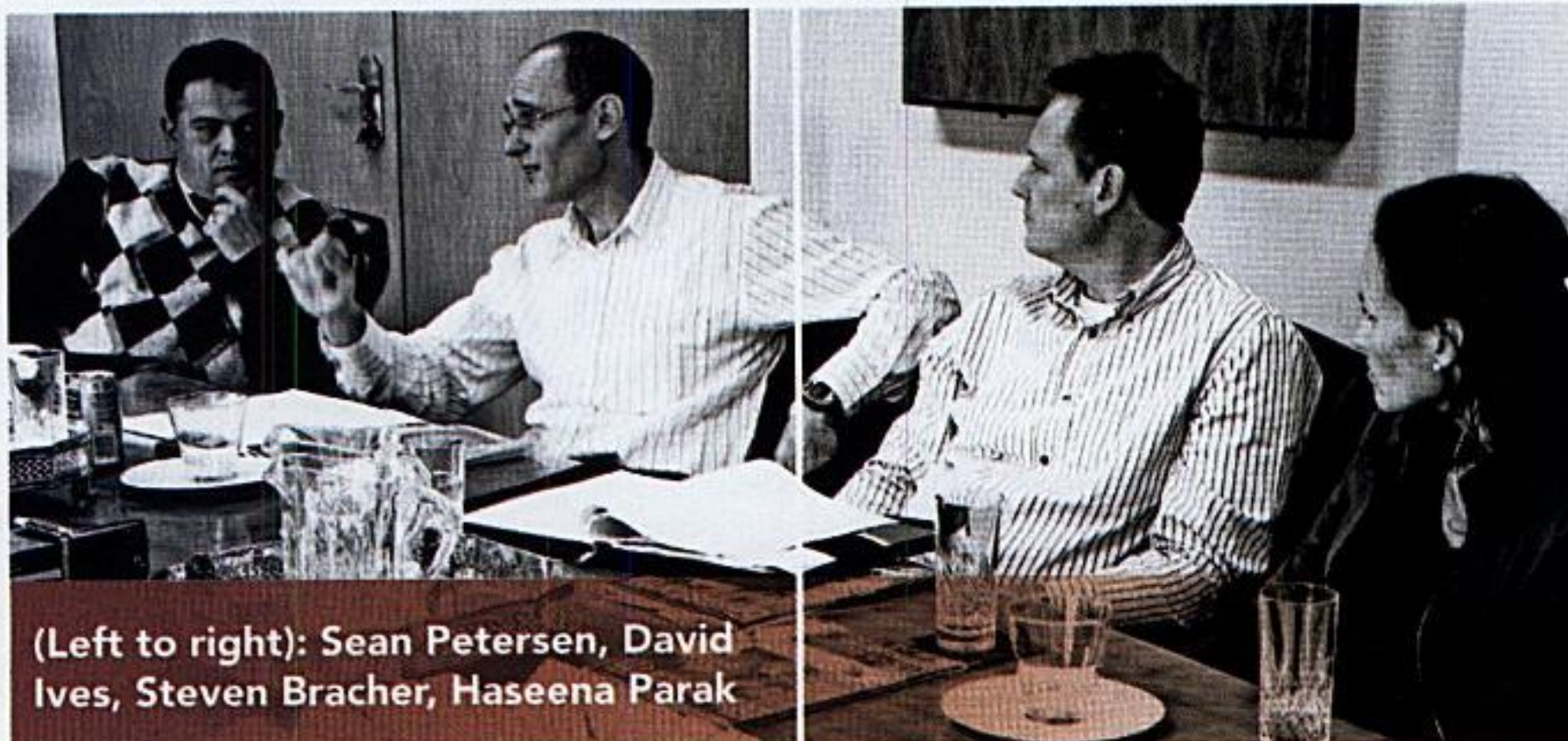
Lucas Mothupi, Satreno: Last year, we opened an office in the US and can't get the positions filled there.

Gary McHugh, Brighthouse: The estimates from SAP are that the industry is about 30 000 consultants short worldwide. That's work that has been allocated and budgeted for – it's just waiting to be done. Our problem is that South Africa is not the most glamorous destination in the

world and staff from offshore countries like India are saying they can go to Asia or the US. We're competing with the rest of the world for skills.

Johan van Jaarsveld, EOH Outsourcing: I think what's key is the difference between normal skills and experienced skills. You still get young guys coming through the ranks, but very experienced people tend to move a lot and relocate more easily. We've picked up that there's the biggest skills exodus from South Africa happening right now and it's purely because the guys can move. Companies and other governments are attracting our people.

Steve Randles, Khanyisa Real Systems: There's also a shortage of management and management structures around the world. And a certain number of more senior IT people are moving into management, so the gap is widening from the top and the bottom. ▶



(Left to right): Sean Petersen, David Ives, Steven Bracher, Haseena Parak