



roundtable skills development

► the drive to earn more money have created a situation where companies are not respecting the rights of other companies. We had someone who joined us on 12 May who sent the company he was working for his resignation on 15 May from our fax machine. We put him through a disciplinary hearing and let him go. If we adhere to the law of the jungle, it will bite us.

Brainstorm: What are some ways companies can retain staff?

Clark: We've found that if someone gets an offer and we counter-offer, we'll lose him within three months.

We had a database administrator who was getting paid about R25 000 a month. In a six-week period, he went to R55 000. He's messed up his career now because he's stuck

in a corner doing something he doesn't really want to do because no one will pay him that in the market. We place people in projects closer to home and give them more flexibility. Most of our senior guys have been here for ten years because they're happy.

Van Jaarsveld: Traffic locations have become very important. The second thing is lifestyle. Money is critical, but it's not the driving factor because the assumption is that they'll get paid well for their skills. The culture is important too: will the guys work together? Is it easygoing?

Bracher: I've had a lot of guys who've left and come back just because the environment is good and they get looked after. But I find that it's more in the zero to five years'



Gary McHugh, Brighthouse

experience that it's all about money. When they're a little older, it becomes about flexi-time, skipping the traffic, and being able to work from home every now and again.

McHugh: We've become flexible in remuneration as well. We don't necessarily pay them more, but we're more flexible in other things, like paying quarterly bonuses rather than annuals. Salary-wise, people get paid well, so it's about cash flow.

Cycle to the rescue

If economic indicators are anything to go by, both the US and large parts of Europe (including the UK) are in for a very rough time over the next five years. When that happens, will South Africa be in a position to offer overseas skills a stable environment with well-paid jobs? That would be first prize. But, the maturity of both our companies and employees towards the skills roundabout needs to improve. **B**