

Denel Aviation South Africa

Mike Kgobe, CEO of Denel Aviation South Africa is taking the company to new heights

Having only been in the position of CEO for six months Mike Kgobe has made an impression and instilled a positive attitude among employees. He is respected and respects everyone around him, working his way up from Chief Operating Officer shows that he is committed, dedicated and is going to leave a worthy imprint at Denel Aviation South Africa. Being named CEO has been the proudest moment for him, but it has also humbled him in many ways.

Denel Aviation a division of the Denel Group is a maintenance, repair & overhaul (MRO) company with a depth of aeronautical engineering capability commensurate with an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and design authority responsibilities as Denel Aviation is the OEM and design authority of the Rooivalk and Oryx helicopters respectively. Denel Aviation is committed to the delivery of complete aviation solutions, with innovation, quality and value-adding services, through their worldwide partnerships.

The organisation's main focus is remains a strategic partner to the South African Air Force (SAAF) and seeks to entrench and expand this position and to leverage off it's capability base to support local and selected international rotary, and fixed wing aircraft markets in the provision of MRO and related services. Denel Aviation has been providing support services to the SAAF and the greater South African aviation industry for more than 45 years.

Denel Aviation's service offerings are centered around the provision of MRO services for a fleet of both fixed and rotary wing aircraft for the SAAF and other clients with the added services of design, development, integration,

manufacturing, and upgrade of aircraft, aircraft systems, and aircraft ground support and test equipment and some airport round equipment.

The Denel Group has a sterling reputation in the world as the largest manufacturer of defence equipment in Africa, and anyone that is at the helm of a business entity of the Denel Group has quite a challenging task because they have to make sure that this reputation is upheld.

When Kgobe is asked about this he says that the industry is highly regulated thus processes have been put in place so as to ensure adher-

When asked about his leadership style Kgobe laughs, but eventually says, "I believe in an intrusive environment where my executive team are basically my advisors and I would like them to, you know, take the initiative on issues and advise me on decision areas."

When speaking to a colleague about Kgobe, Colin Singarum says: He's very down-to-earth. His office is open at all times to anyone, from shop floor level right up to the top level. Kgobe has also armed all staff with what they call the Denel Aviation values card, which displays the Denel values. And has started the latest fad at

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ence to all standards and requirements of air safety. This together with his leadership and a good balance of sound business processes that uphold the principles of good corporate governance helps Denel Aviation uphold its reputation.

As the man in the cockpit of Denel Aviation, Kgobe has substantial influence over how the organisation functions, the motivation of the staff etc. Kgobe has been able to infuse the staff with a contagious 'can do' attitude that propels them towards giving the company the best.

He has made sure that he most importantly ropes in each and every individual into the plan that he has for the company. If described in three words one would say that he is a considerate, fair, down to earth and humble leader.

Denel - Show me your values. The idea behind this is to educate the staff with the values of the company so that they can be reminded of them and also in the long run know them off by heart, and work towards fulfilling these.

Kgobe is asked about the imprint that he hopes to leave once his time with the company has expired, and business development is something close to his heart.

He reveals that he would like to see the company expand in many ways, namely the clients that Denel Aviation is servicing presently, a shift away from the military to the commercial aviation sector. "I think for me, the challenge that I've set myself is one to grow the portfolio of the company. If you were to analyse our revenue streams, you're looking at about more than



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90% being dependant military business and I'd like to see that diversified, maybe to a 60-40 if I were to pull up the number, I would say, probably 60% military and 40% commercial aviation business. We either have or are developing the partnerships that will ensure this as sustainable growth cannot be done in isolation to these partnerships"

To partnership building he further adds, "I think, you know, one of the things that I would like to see through, is development of those relationships to a point where, it makes Denel Aviation relevant to the continent, I mean, we are part of the African continent at the end of the day. Denel Aviation needs to be relevant to the environment that it operates within."

Another project or programme that is close to Denel Aviation's heart is the Denel Centre for Learning and Development (DCLD), which is an aviation apprentice Training Centre, and part of the Denel Group. This centre also caters for young disadvantaged learners who have failed to complete grade 12 and are looking to better their results the second time around.

"The DCLD leverages some of the programmes that they have where learners are not doing that well in Mathematics and Science, primarily because they are not aware of the amazing careers available in the aviation sector. and we have identified that if you excite them with something, like air shows, site visits, science expos, etc, it sparks this whole interest on the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead once one has enhanced their Mathematics and Science," elaborates Kgobe. Learners would go through the programme and then get the opportunity to enter the Aviation sector.

With only a short while in the hot seat Mike, as he is known to many at Denel Aviation is still going to wow and surprise many. With a dedicated team behind him to help with all that he would like to accomplish for the company, a close eye should be kept on Denel Aviation as new developments are going to be coming from the this company. ▲

Tamara Toti



CEO Mike Kgobe has instilled a positive attitude among employees