Absa exceeds cloud-computing skills target

Absa Group is accelerating cloud adoption. Already one of the largest cloud adopters in Africa, the group will exceed its goal of equipping 1,500 staff members across Africa with cloud-computing skills this year through its cloud incubator initiative.

Source: ©melpomen 123rf

Companies that store their data in the cloud have access to powerful 'cloud-computing' capabilities. It means they can analyse, interpret, process and manage data faster and at a larger scale.

A report titled 'Cloud in Africa 2020' generated by World Wide Worx said 97% of respondents in a survey had either increased their spend on cloud or that their spend had remained the same in the past year.

The right skills

Absa launched the cloud incubator programme in March to support its digital transformation journey. A total of 1,496 participants successfully completed the training by the end of October 2021 and a further 280 are anticipated to complete the programme by the end of the year.

The initiative was undertaken jointly with Amazon Web Services (AWS), whose global Skills Guild programme was designed to help large enterprise organisations accelerate their cloud adoption journey and build cloud fluency for employees.

Absa employees from several countries, including South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, Mauritius and others, participated in the programme.

"At Absa, our goal is to ensure that employees are equipped with the right skills and, through the cloud incubator programme, we were able to bridge the skills gap in cloud technologies.

"Empowering our employees with cloud skills will unlock further potential for innovation and solutions that ultimately improve the way in which we serve our customers," says Ebrahim Samodien, chief information officer: Group Services at Absa.

Creating solutions

The key outcome from the cloud incubator programme was for participants to be able to identify cloud opportunities and to create more efficient, scalable services and solutions.

The employees can now use their understanding and knowledge to drive the broadscale digital transformation in the bank.

The cloud incubator programme offered the employees a range of learning opportunities, including workshops that focused on the impact of cloud technology on the business, training sessions that looked at how cloud reduces operational costs as well as how cloud enhances business processes.

"Since the establishment of the cloud incubator initiative, I feel like Absa is really taking the cloud revolution seriously.

"Prior to the Cloud Incubator initiative, I used to feel like cloud computing was just a talking point," says Phumlani Mbabela, a Lead Product Engineer at Absa who participated in the programme.

"The initiative has also helped me to improve my cloud proficiency and technical skills," said Mbabela.

Participants in the cloud incubator initiative were able to experiment with cloud technologies outside of their roles while improving their skills.

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