

NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY NETWORK (NQPN)



What is NQPN?

NQPN (National Quality and Productivity Network) is a network for maximising the impact of Kaizen training delivery.

Current members :

- The Automotive Industry Development Centre Eastern Cape (AIDC-EC)
- The Automotive Industry Development Centre Gauteng (AIDC-GP)
- Automotive Industry Transformation Fund (AITF)
- Automotive Supply Chain Competitiveness Initiative (ASCCI)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Plastics SA
- Productivity SA
- Production Technologies Association of South Africa (PtSA)
- The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (**the dtic**)

Feedback from participating company

Sinethemba Sakuba
Chief Executive Officer
Electrical Electronics Quality
Solutions (Pty) LTD



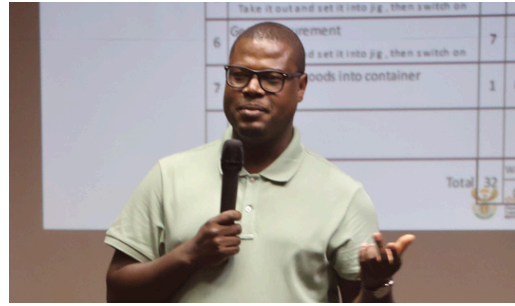
"When we first introduced Kaizen, I was **skeptical**, but the effects have been truly **remarkable** and **encouraging**. Having an NQPN Kaizen consultant come to our site and provide practical guidance on how to streamline operations, identify waste in daily operations, collect data, analyze and implement solutions has added immeasurable value. Since then, we have expanded the scope of Kaizen from the factory floor to the office, and everyone in all departments is constantly looking for ways to improve their operations. I am convinced that this mindset will give us an edge in our competitive industry and will be the **key to raising South Africa's competitiveness** to a global level. I highly recommend the adoption of Kaizen to MSMEs looking to improve their operational efficiency. The biggest lesson I have learned is that **"You don't know what you don't know."**

• Quality and productivity improvement (QPI, Kaizen) activities targeting small and medium-sized enterprises

For South Africa, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are a key driver of economic growth and a source of employment. MSMEs are estimated to account for about 34% of South Africa's GDP and employ around 60% of the labor force (Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) Annual Report 2023-2024, p.27). MSMEs typically face changes such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, regulatory burdens, inflation, and rising fuel and electricity costs. For MSMEs to survive, they need to adapt to the current market environment while also developing a corporate culture that is ready to change and grow in response to new changes in the market. This is where quality and productivity improvement (QPI, Kaizen) comes in. Quality and productivity improvement (Kaizen) activities can improve the quality, cost, and delivery (QCD) of the production process, helping to strengthen a company's competitiveness. Furthermore, by increasing the number of employees who are familiar with Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) approach in Kaizen, an organization can become more resilient to change and achieve sustainable growth.

For reference, the In-company training (ICT) for Basic Kaizen Training in 2023 and for TOT for Basic Kaizen Training in 2024 both recorded high productivity improvements for companies, at **62%** and **39.3%**, respectively.

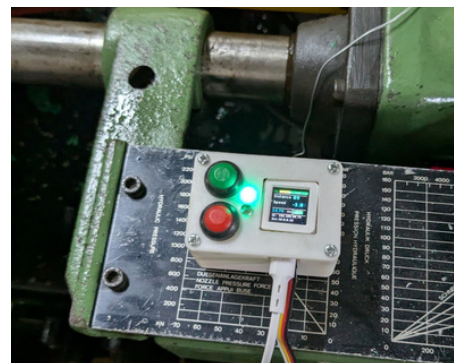
● CRT of TOT for Basic Kaizen Training 2025



- NQPN is working hard to ensure that manufacturing MSMEs, the backbone of the South African economy, receive sustainable support for their production processes. As part of this, we are creating a mechanism for South Africans to transfer Quality and Productivity Improvement (QPI, Kaizen) skills to other South Africans. One of these initiatives is the implementation of Training of Trainers (TOT). In TOT, participants are divided into trainer and student roles.
- First, a retreat-style classroom training (CRT) is conducted. After that, trainer and student roles are paired to conduct in-company training (ICT) in four states of South Africa. TOT for Basic Kaizen Training was held at Garden Court Hotel O.R. Tambo, in Johannesburg, Gauteng, from January 27th to 31st, 2025. Approximately 50 participants from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape provinces participated in this training, staying overnight for five days and attending intensive lectures, doing exercises, group work and making presentations.
- The biggest highlight of this lecture is that the South Africans in the trainer role lecture on core skills and ways of thinking, such as the 5S (how to organize and tidy up the workplace), Mudatori (reduction of waste), and Quality Control (QC) of Quality and Productivity Improvement (QPI, Kaizen). This will help the Kaizen trainers to improve their understanding of QPI and Kaizen, as well as their ability to communicate in an easy-to-understand way to others. NQPN strives to maintain high quality in the capabilities of its Kaizen trainers and Kaizen consultants so that these highly skilled personnel can provide guidance to participating companies.

● Digital Kaizen Training, targeting MSMEs

- Recently, large companies have been introducing technologies such as IOT and AI, automating production processes and relying on robots. Although this is one factor in developing the economy, MSMEs have difficulty in terms of funds and internal infrastructure to implement such large-scale IT equipment and digitalization, and the gap in production processes between MSMEs and large companies is only widening. That's why NQPN's digital Kaizen training was introduced.
- NQPN provides Digital Kaizen training that involves data collection and analysis with low investment, do-it-yourself type. This method uses inexpensive sensors, creates a simple program, and attaches the sensors to specific locations in the production process. The sensors then collect and analyze various data such as defects, breakdowns, and increases or decreases in production volume, leading to preparation for actual quality and productivity improvement (QPI, Kaizen) activities. In other words, this Digital Kaizen Training does not promote the digitalization of the entire factory, but rather uses small sensors on specific production lines to collect data and prepare for actual Kaizen.
- NQPN has conducted over three sessions of classroom and in-company training from July 2024, and four companies and eight Kaizen consultants from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and Eastern Cape provinces have been capacitated. These Kaizen consultants are expected to spread Digital Kaizen to other companies, too. Three people also participated from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and future collaboration between NQPN and CSIR is expected to ensure continuation of digital Kaizen training in South Africa. In this way, NQPN provides capacity building while keeping in mind the challenges faced by MSMEs.



Classroom Training (CRT) of Basic Kaizen for Companies



- Before the In-Company Training (ICT) begins, NQPN also provides QPI and Kaizen classroom training to production management personnel of participating companies so that they can learn the basics of QPI and Kaizen and lead Kaizen activities at production sites together with Kaizen consultants. CRT for companies was held for two days each in four provinces: 3rd to 4th February (Gauteng), 5th to 6th February (Eastern Cape), 6th to 7th February (Western Cape), and 11th to 12th February (KwaZulu-Natal) 2025. This training was part of TOT for Basic Kaizen Training, and it also served as a practical opportunity for Student-roles (Kaizen consultant candidates), who had received lectures from Kaizen Trainer candidates, to lecture QPI, Kaizen techniques to companies.
- These trainings were attended by about 90 participants, including company production managers, Kaizen instructors, Trainer candidates, student-roles (Kaizen consultant candidates), in total of four provinces. After this CRT, a three-month in-company training (ICT) takes place. Under supervision of Kaizen Instructors, Kaizen Trainer candidates and student-role (Kaizen consultant candidates) will regularly visit the company's production site to identify issues together with production managers, analyze them, and try out problem-solving methods to improve quality and productivity.
- These classrooms also provide an opportunity for participating companies to meet with Kaizen consultants and Kaizen trainers, and this combination of classroom learning and in-company training contributes to the success of the training.



Certificate Handover Ceremony

During 3rd to 6th February 2025, certificate handover ceremony for graduates of Basic Kaizen Training 2024 were held in four provinces, with 20 Kaizen Consultants and 17 companies as awardees. We look forward to your continued contributions to the development of the organization through further challenges. Congratulations !



Let's all join forces towards AKAC2025!

The Joint coordination committee Meeting (JCC) for NQPN Members on 12 February 2025. and it was agreed that the African Kaizen Annual Conference (AKAC) 2025 will be held in Gauteng, South Africa in October 2025. It will be co-hosted by NQPN, JICA, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Pan-African Productivity Association (PAPA), etc. This will be the second time that AKAC is held in South Africa, following its first in Durban in 2018. It is expected that hosting AKAC in South Africa will further raise awareness of QPI and Kaizen activities, further spread the activities, and contribute to companies.

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To be continued !