

Professionalising the Sector of Corrosion is a task which Corrisa is set on tackling.

By Dr Ivor Blumenthal

CEO : ArkKonsult – Consultant to Corrisa

Should the Corrosion Sector be regarded as a viable and valid group of industries operating in South Africa? If not, then is the anti-Corrosion focus simply a component of every other conceivable Industry which is susceptible to the inevitable reality and ravages of Corrosion?

Corrisa believes that Corrosion is not only an Industry, but a Sector of dedicated, independent and critical Industries, which need to step out of the shadows, raise their hands and insist on being recognised as a collective Profession, upon which others rely and are absolutely dependent for their success.

Beginning with the Industry of **Asset Owners**, there can be no doubt that State Owned Enterprises, and private sector property and asset owners need to focus a percentage of their activities and employee's on the task of anti-corrosion practices. The individuals employed to deal with such issues can be regarded as Internal Corrosion Consulting Practitioners, who are required to procure, apply and project manage the services, products and equipment required to combat the scourges of corrosion which left unattended can destroy those assets. It is the Asset Owners who first and foremost need to be conscious that they are procuring services from Professionals who are both Competent in matters of Corrosion, and Accountable for their ethical and acceptable behavior at all times. It is these Assets Owners who need to be insistent that such Professional Practitioners are quality controlled, that their performance is standardised and importantly measurable.

Corrisa is very concerned that at the moment, there are very few professional standards available to distinguish the Professional Practitioners from those who act independently and are simply not accountable for their advice, interventions or judgement. There appears to be a history of no barriers to entry in-terms of Professional Recognition, Lifelong Learning or any meaningful Accountability for people who work as Corrosion Professionals in the marketplace.

Perhaps the most focused Industry which applies to Corrosion, is that of the **Corrosion Consulting Industry**, which would include Engineers registered with ECSA, who have specialised in Corrosion Practices, but are not, beyond their accountability to ECSA, accountable in any concrete manner for the nature and content of their specialisation in corrosion. ECSA do not have an Engineering Stream identified as "Corrosion" and their members who work in this arena do so in an unregulated and non-accountable fashion. In-addition, there is an entire spectrum of practitioners who operate within the banner of Consulting Practices, who are not ECSA Registered Engineers, and therefore remain on the fringes of being responsible and accountable for anything that they do, except possibly to their clients. But the question is to-whom their clients have recourse should either the Competency, or the Ethical Behavior of the Consultant ever be called into question?

The Industry of **Quality Assurance**, relates not only to products and equipment, but importantly to the nature and the quality of all work done, from detection and diagnosis, through to the quality assurance of interventions applied by contractors, and the issuing of

finalised “Certificates of Completion”. The question in this regards needs to be asked: Which organisation is finally accountable for the quality assurance of these “Certificates of Completion”? Additionally who, which level of recognised and registered Professional Practitioner is responsible for issuing and signing off those “Certificates of Completion” and therefore can be held accountable for their quality?

Other Industries identified as part of the Corrosion Sector equation are those of **Science, Technology & Academia, Product and Equipment Manufacturing, Importers and Suppliers and Distributors**, and very importantly **Corrosion Contracting**.

In-short Corrisa has a plan. It is one which is both bold and necessary. It's a timeous plan which involves recognising its responsibility at the head of the Corrosion Sector in South Africa. It is one which is dependent on the participation, cooperation and contribution from companies in all of the affected Industries, and from individuals who see the benefit in the professionalisation of what they do as advantageous to the sector of Corrosion as a whole.

In the year ahead, Corrisa will have established a “**Professional Body for Corrosion**”, which will develop a series of **Professional Designations** applicable to the full range of Professional Practitioners working at various levels and in the variety of Industries constituting the Corrosion Sector in South Africa. Alongside awarding these Professional Designations to deserving recipients, Corrisa will work hard in establishing a calendar of **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)** for every one of those Designations so that the public at large can have peace-of-mind that irrespective of how long a person has been in the sector, their competence, knowledge and their behavior is up-to-date, and reflects best International practice.

With regard to Companies, Corrisa will have, within the next year established a meaningful and impactful **Grading System** for corporate members, which amongst other criteria will attest to the fact that recipient companies are **Excellent Companies** when it comes to the training, development, professional recognition and commitment to lifelong learning of all affected staff members.

Corrisa appeals to both individuals and companies within the Sector of Corrosion, to be watchful for Information Sessions and invitations to attend and participate in a range of activities designed to further our objectives as set out above. We will attempt to establish forums nationally, beginning in Gauteng, KZN, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape to ensure that we attempt to reach companies and individuals working in the sector of Corrosion, wherever you are.

Whether you work in the Private or the Public Sector, we want the public to be aware that we encourage them to only deal in the future, with individuals who are Professionally Designated by the Professional Body for Corrosion, and companies which are Graded as Excellent, by Corrisa, the Trade Association for the Corrosion Sector. In that way the Individual and Companies are properly accountable, and the public properly protected and assured that the services they receive are ones underlined by our two principles, namely **COMPETENCY** and **ETHICAL ACCOUNTABILITY**.