

Air Liquide

Mthunzi Motswiri - Chief Accountant

Give a brief introduction of yourself and your business.

I am the Chief Accountant at Air Liquide, a gas manufacturing organisation specialising in the production of industrial gas and gas used for medical purposes. My primary duty is ensuring the accuracy of results when reporting to the group.

Describe the status of the business, before The FD Centre became involved i.e. what were the key issues / projects that needed to be addressed?

I joined the company in October 2019, one month after John Kizito came on board as an AP Manager. At the time, Air Liquide had introduced a new ERP system and was experiencing a number of teething problems, especially in areas such as non-payment of suppliers and reconciliations. In some instances, we had paid suppliers twice. We called on The FD Centre to supply an AP Manager who could resolve these issues.

How did your initial meeting with our Regional Director go? Do you feel that he gained a reasonable understanding of the issues and requirements you had?

The system improved almost immediately after John came on board, with most of our issues eliminated entirely. His skill at managing teams also proved useful, because we were experiencing several challenges related to work flow – some employees were being allocated too much work while others were underutilised. John addressed these problems, too.

What value do you feel The FD Centre / Principal have delivered to you and your organisation during the time we have been working with you?

John initially had a three-month contract; however, Air Liquide extended this by one month because we realised there were still many obstacles that required his input; plus, we had seen so many improvements thanks to his expertise. Shortly after this, one of our Financial Managers requested maternity leave. We decided that John was the perfect person to fill the position, as he already knew the company well, and so we extended his contract for another eight months. We then asked him to stay on for yet another month.

How is the relationship you have with The FD Centre Principal you are working with/have worked with? Do you feel the incumbent is “culturally aligned” to your organisation’s ethos and values? Explain your observations?

In his role as Financial Manager, John reported directly to me. He came into the organisation at a time when the company was facing some concerns, specifically around our costs related to the previous year. John undertook an analysis of the situation, and this helped the team significantly.

John worked very closely alongside team members, and built good relationships rooted in trust. This had a significant impact on our business confidence.

The results of his involvement are also visible in the greater participation he encouraged among the people who reported to him.

He fitted in with our company culture and understood the business and our people.

What enduring impact has The FD Centre Principal made in your business?

John built a strong control environment which has helped us manage the issues with suppliers that we were experiencing at the time he joined us. His cost analysis ensured that we have a better understanding of costs.

How has the Principal supported and developed your Finance Team during this engagement? Describe the benefits to yourself and your Team?

John has created a template for handling month end, roles and responsibilities. This is an immense help to the organisation because we have always been concerned that accountants don’t have a proper understanding of the business as a whole. The template addresses this issue.

In closing, did The FD Centre meet / exceed your expectations? And would you recommend The FD Centre and our Finance Director service offering to other Clients?

I would definitely recommend The FD Centre, based on our experience with John.