



**LIVE
YOUR
PASSION**



NAMIBIA TRAINING AUTHORITY
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INTRODUCTION

Deciding what to become in life is perhaps one of the most important decision we ever take, and navigating this decision through the endless possibilities available today, is equally challenging. It was the Chinese philosopher, Confucius who said: “Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a single day in your life”. This quote teaches us that we are all at our best, when we let passion lead the way. Simply put: Passion is the engine that drives excellence. It is what motivates us to continue pursuing our dreams when times get tough, when we get tired, or when others tell us we can’t possibly succeed. It forewarns us to recognize the kind of work that makes us feel fulfilled, because ultimately, if we aren’t fulfilled by the work we do, it may not emotionally sustainable in the long term.

We live in a society that places a high value on professional jobs. Often, parents and teachers push children to pursue popular careers in areas such as law, medicine and engineering, which will maintain or increase this status, instead of supporting and guiding them as they discover their talent and passion. Not all learners are academically inclined, though. On the contrary, what many enjoy doing most and often excel in, is working with their hands. Such learners are well suited to take up career options in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) domain. However, stereotypes and stigma continue to unfairly isolate technical and vocational career options. Children continue to be influenced that such careers are low-status, low-paying and dirty jobs, which generally offer little prospects for career advancement and growth. This unfair bias often results in learners who don’t excel in academic areas, or who have little interest in them, meeting with disappointment or disapproval. Our children are differently talented. Some excel academically, whereas others are more technically inclined.

The key message we convey under the NTA’s ‘Live Your Passion’ advocacy programme, is to say that if a young person has an affinity for woodwork, or food preparation, or any other trade for that matter; to keep him or her from developing the skills to pursue this calling, is destructive. Not only is it destructive for the individual, it is destructive to our country. Many of the skills needed to compete in the global market fall within the technical and vocational remit. And the absence of such skills is costing us economically, as a country.

This booklet contains the true and inspiring stories of ordinary Namibian men and women who overcame obstacles and defied the odds in establishing themselves as true ambassadors for technical and vocational career options. Not only do their individual success and achievement challenge this unfair bias, it also challenges school principals, teachers, parents, community and business leaders and learners to think differently about technical and vocational career options. Perception is feelings-based, not logical, making it very difficult and challenging to overcome. As such, we still have a long way to go in changing the negative perception of technical and vocational career options. It starts with all of us taking a true interest in identifying and nurturing the unique talents of our children from an early age and supporting them to pursue these talents. Your partnership will support us in getting more technically-inclined young Namibians passionate about working with their hands and not their heads, and to start living their passion, too.

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It's an exciting space, but one I believe my unique journey - from artisan, to instructor, to education manager - has prepared me for.

Dr. Raimo Naanda

Welder

FROM ARTISAN TO PHD - DISPELLING THE MYTH OF TECHNICAL TRAINING AS AN ACADEMIC CUL-DE-SAC

Technical and vocational career qualifications are often considered a dead-end street, offering limited prospects for career advancement and growth. Meet Dr. Raimo Naanda, Deputy Executive Director in the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, whose story dispels this myth. Not many know that this holder of a doctorate degree in Vocational Education and Training Policy from the University of Stellenbosch, started out as just a welder.

EARLY RESPONSIBILITY

Born and raised in Windhoek, Raimo Naanda grew up an active young boy, who loved sports, reading and enjoying the outdoors. An alumnus of Katutura's Mandume Lower Primary and Namutoni Senior Primary schools, he completed his secondary education at the Martin Luther High School at Okombahe, in Erongo.

Life was not easy. As the oldest of ten siblings, responsibility was thrust on his shoulders from a very young age, and he often had to pack shelves at supermarkets over weekends and holidays in order to supplement the family's income. "The odd jobs allowed me to cater for much of my own needs, while assisting my parents in raising my siblings. Thinking back on those formative years, I believe that in as much as the responsibilities came early, it inculcated in me the desire and drive to educate and empower myself to one day support my own family and my parents who sacrificed so much", he narrates.

CHILDHOOD DREAMS

Although his father - a qualified tailor himself - harboured ambitions for his first-born to enter the priesthood, Raimo dreamed of becoming an architect. "I was fascinated by the drawings and sketches in the windows of an architecture firm in the building where my father worked. I could look for hours at the high-rise building sketches; trying to make sense of how sketches would eventually transform into finished buildings", he shares.

The education realities of pre-independent Namibia, however, shattered this dream. In Grade 11, Raimo had to opt for a more social science subject orientation; and when he matriculated, his applications for bursaries to pursue university studies were all turned down. The future looked bleak.

APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY

While pondering on his options, a telegram came which required him to report for a welder apprenticeship interview. “Luckily I applied for some apprenticeship opportunities in my final school year. Without hesitation, I proceeded to Otjiwarongo where I was interviewed, and not long thereafter, a follow-up telegram came which read that Consolidated Diamond Mines accepted me as a Fitter and Turner apprentice. My parents, although they knew that my dream of qualifying as an architect went up in smoke, were over the moon that I managed to get an opportunity to further my studies”, he explains.

However, only three months into his apprenticeship at Oranjemund, Raimo requested the mine management for his apprenticeship to be changed that of a welder/boilermaker. “It’s not that I disliked Fitting and Turning. I just took a liking to welding and developed this fascination with fabricating and fusing metal parts together”, he shares.

Experiencing the change the apprenticeship brought to his own life, his time at CDM opened the young Raimo’s eyes to the self-empowering potential of technical and vocational training in improving the lives of individuals for the better. Recognising the passion he had developed in mentoring some of his peers and for imparting his technical knowledge to others, he completed his apprenticeship and worked as a Boilermaker at CDM’s 2 Plant until September 1987, when he returned to the capital, for a short stint at the Windhoek Machinen Fabrik.

TRAINING OTHERS

While working at the WMF, a friend told Raimo about a new vocational training centre to be opened by the Otto Benecke Foundation and that they were looking for qualified artisans to be employed as instructors. “Without hesitation, I submitted an application and subsequently landed a job as an Instructor in the Metal Workshop at the Vocational Training Centre Namibia, which was later renamed Windhoek Vocational Training Centre”.

Despite only having a N4 Certificate, Raimo’s passion and diligence soon landed him a promotion to Head of Training of the centre, overseeing the implementation of the training curriculum in line with quality and industry standards. Driven by the desire to strengthen the centre’s programmes, while at the same time appreciating that he still had a lot to learn about vocational education and training and the effective management thereof, Raimo returned to his books. “I enrolled at the then Polytechnic of Namibia

for my N5-N6 certificates, and subsequently, the National Technical Diploma. It was a tough journey, but I pulled through because I had the support of my family”, he reminisces.

The Head of Training position was a management position and without any management qualification, Raimo enrolled at the Technikon Southern Africa (TSA) for the National Higher Education Diploma in School Management, a qualification he completed after two years of study. The decision to further his studies proved wise. Soon opportunity knocked again when the vacancy of institution principal arose. Raimo’s application was successful and he became the principal of the Windhoek Vocational Training Centre.



LIFELONG LEARNER

Despite the demands of managing an institution of this nature, which left little time for further studies, Raimo’s thirst for learning could not be quenched. Having completed his National Higher Education Diploma at the Technikon Southern Africa (TSA), he first enrolled and completed his B-Tech degree, and then his Masters degree, specialising in Educational Management, at the same institution.

“Our education and training system was undergoing intensive reforms at the time and I grasped the opportunity to use my dissertation to explore policy options for the technical and vocational training sector. I received the Rector’s Medal for an outstanding research paper”, Raimo shares. “The award did little but to motivate me more. I realised that I had much more to offer and challenged myself to enroll towards a PhD qualification with the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. I received my doctorate in 2010”, he adds.

Despite his groundbreaking academic accomplishments and impressive CV - which includes a stint at the Roads Contractor Company as its Corporate Services Manager; and Telecom Namibia, where he served for thirteen years as Senior Manager: Training and Development - Dr. Raimo Naanda remains a humble artisan at heart. The establishment of the Namibia Training Authority was one of the recommendations of his Master's degree dissertation. Today, he also serves on the Namibia Training Authority's Board of Directors.

ARTISAN AMBASSADOR

Having devoted the greatest part of his career to the Windhoek VTC, Dr. Naanda - when his busy schedule allows - makes the effort to call on his colleagues at this leading training institution, especially during the national assessment rounds. "A big part of my life was in service of this institution and its trainees. It was here where I could play a part in training young men and women, many of whom are today, successful entrepreneurs and employers. It is institutions such as WVTC and the important work they do that give me hope that Namibia can achieve more and become an industrialised nation", Dr. Naanda emphasises.

Visits to the WVTC not only offer an opportunity to polish his trade and take up the welding rods again, but engage with trainees and to offer them encouragement. "The negative societal perceptions around technical and vocational career paths are deeply entrenched. The sad part is that so many talented young people are discouraged from taking up such options and end up in jobs that they are not suited for. Whenever, wherever I can, I do my part in sharing my experience and to give hope to technically-inclined youth that their dreams are indeed worth pursuing. I am proof that technical and vocational jobs are worthwhile and rewarding", Dr. Naanda shares.

SERVANT LEADER

Under the 'servant leadership' doctrine, a servant leader is defined as someone who enriches the lives of others, builds better institutions and ultimately creates a more just and caring world. Dr. Raimo Naanda is such a leader. Someone, who despite his academic accomplishments, remains a humble welder at heart. And although he has traded in his overalls and protective gear, he continues his dream for the vocational and technical training sector.

In his current capacity as Deputy Executive Director in the Higher Education Ministry, he is well positioned to continue his immense contribution. Supporting the Executive Director who is the Ministry's Accounting Officer, he adds value to the sector's sustainable growth and management. "It's an exciting space, but one I believe my unique journey - from artisan, to instructor, to education manager - has prepared me for. But, I still learn and keep up to date with contemporary issues in the sector by reading various journals and media updates", he stresses.

Away from the demands of work, Dr. Naanda appreciates the company of his close-knit family. An avid reader, he grabs the opportunity to unwind by immersing himself in the day's newspapers, or a good book, or two. "I've been blessed with a very good and strong support system. I am still fortunate that my parents are still alive, and whenever I need advice, they are always available. I have a very close-knit extended family and we use this blessing to support each other in so many ways. My siblings and children inspire me and I trust that they also draw inspiration from my journey and example", he concludes.



Dr. Raimo Naanda, accomplished, but humble; proficient, but unassuming. With his eyes on the stars, but his feet firmly on the ground, his story teaches us that great leaders are not necessarily the ones who do great things, but those who know the way, go the way and show the way. His contribution speaks for itself. He is living his passion!

I do my part in sharing my experience to give hope to technically-inclined youth that their dreams are indeed worth pursuing. I am proof that technical and vocational jobs are worthwhile and rewarding

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What does it take to become a **WELDER**?

A welder is a tradesperson who specialises in fabricating and fusing metals together. The term welder refers to the operator, whereas the machine is referred to as the welding power supply. Welders work on metal components of a various of building or construction industries. The main types of welding are Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) as one of the easiest and most common types of welding, Metal Inert Gas Welding and Tungsten Inert Gas Welding. Boilermakers are specialist welders with expertise in welding pressurised vessels, industrial boilers and power plant heat exchangers.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in mathematics, mechanical drawing, and general vocational technical training are considered useful. Welders typically have to have good dexterity and attention to detail, as well as technical knowledge about the materials being joined and best practices in the field. They use many tools and need hand-eye coordination to avoid injury or damaging materials. Welders frequently use basic math skills to calculate area, precisely cut material, and determine the amount of material needed to complete the job. They use heavy tools and materials and as such need to possess physical endurance; frequently standing, climbing, or bending for many hours. Welders need to think on their feet as they often have to modify material and make adjustments on-site to complete projects.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions and covers an intensive focus on safety and precautionary measures, as welding, without the proper precautions appropriate for the process, can be a dangerous and unhealthy practice. Many

welders typically learn the trade on the job and through apprenticeships, doing simpler tasks under the guidance of experienced welders who oversee how they learn the proper use of tools and equipment. Many welders need a driver's license or reliable transportation, since their work is done on jobsites.



Working Conditions

Most welders work full time, which may include working evenings and weekends. Adhering to safety and ventilation considerations, including prescribed safety gear is of utmost importance, because many common welding procedures involve an open electric arc or flame and the risk of burns and smoke inhalation is significant. Bending, stooping, and heavy lifting are common.

Job Prospects

The starting pay for apprentices is less than what fully trained welders and seasoned boilermakers make. As apprentices gain experience, they receive more pay. Welders with the highest skill levels and a willingness to relocate have the greatest advantage for solid employment. Many welders work as independent contractors, with some often subcontracting work from bigger construction companies. The mining and fisheries sectors are other major employers of welders.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Welder. If you are detail-oriented, physically fit and strong and possess strong problem solving skills, you are a good candidate.

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Why bother to do something, if you cannot do it well. I live by this credo, and I expect my team members to do so, as well.

Gerhardus Engelbrecht

Sound Technician

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY TO MAKE WAVES IN THE CUTTHROAT SOUND AND STAGING INDUSTRY

The different sounds at events such as concerts need to be clear and crisp. Consequently, the technical skill of sound technicians are absolutely essential for providing the audience with a satisfying multi-sensory experience. Meet 35-year old Gerhardus Engelbrecht, a sound technician, employed by one of Namibia's leading sound and staging service providers, db Audio. Born with a cleft palate, which affects his speech, Gerhardus has overcome this adversity and is today considered one of the best sound engineers in the country.

CHALLENGING CHILDHOOD

A cleft palate is when the roof of the mouth contains an opening into the nose. Often, this condition results in feeding, speech and hearing problems and frequent ear infections. Born with this condition at Arandis in Erongo, life did not start out well for Gerhardus, or Gerrie, as he is affectionately known.

He had difficulty breathing and feeding was a challenge. But, his loving mother embraced her first born's condition and Gerrie grew up a normal, but naughty and hyperactive little toddler, in a loving family environment. Following surgical procedures at age four to repair the cleft; by age nine, he still struggled to speak. "I knew I sounded different than other kids my age, but it never really bothered me. My family's love and support certainly helped me to make peace with my condition; and cope with the occasional teasing and insensitive observations", he shares.

Gerrie's mother refused recommendations for him to attend a special needs school in South Africa, and instead, approached a local speech therapist to help Gerrie, while enrolled at M.H. Greeff Primary, in Khomasdal. The therapy had the desired results and his speech improved dramatically, boosting Gerrie's self-confidence to levels where at age ten, he boldly announced that he wanted to join the church band and that he wanted to play the keyboards.

EARLY CAREER CHOICE

Gerrie finished school at Ella du Plessis High School, in Khomasdal. After a self-imposed sabbatical year, he told his mother that he was going to enroll at the College of the Arts to study sound engineering - a decision motivated by his experience as keyboardist in the church band, where according to him, "little attention was paid to how instruments were set up, acoustics and overall sound quality". "Our band's sound was all over - loud and distorted. I remember saying to to myself that there must be a better way of doing this. I've always been very curious as a child taking my toy cars apart just to see how they worked. I guess it was pretty much the same with sound set-ups and systems.

I knew I just had to find a way to study and learn more about the science of sound, and how everything works”, he narrates.

Any doubts he might have had about his career decision evaporated at a chance encounter Gerrie had at a World Music Day celebration, with renowned and pioneering local sound technician and dB Audio owner, David Benade. “I couldn’t keep my eyes of him behind the console, working his crew and testing the sound quality and acoustics. I moved to stand closer to his station, when he handed me a microphone to hold for a while. That’s how I met David. And that’s how I got hooked on sound”, Gerrie shares.

TRAINING JOURNEY

The encounter with David Benade had a strong impact on Gerrie, and motivated him to put his full effort into completing his training. And as fate would have it, upon graduating, he came across a vacancy advertisement by DB Audio for a junior sound technician, to which he responded. His experience in the church band, as well as his enthusiasm and positive demeanour, counted in his favour at the job interview. “I remember being somewhat bothered about how they were going to respond to my condition. But, I went to the interview with a mindset of giving it my best shot, praying that they would see beyond my speech impairment, and instead recognise my talent and passion”, he recalls.

Work experience is everything in the sound and staging industry and Gerrie grabbed the opportunity to serve as an apprentice under the tutelage of seasoned sound engineers and industry professionals such as Benade and Manuel Jacobs, with both hands, gradually working his way up into more senior positions.

TOUGH APPRENTICESHIP

Working at dB Audio has provided Gerrie with the space to learn the finer tricks of the trade, checking

and preparing sound equipment, minimising unwanted sounds on set, evaluating location acoustics and positioning equipment in the right places. “My training course only laid the foundations for my career progression. The real training happened here at dB Audio. To become the best, you have to learn from the best. I’ve indeed been fortunate to learn my trade from such tough taskmasters, especially with regards to live events”, Gerrie confirms. Although considered by his employers as one of the most proficient live event sound technicians in the country today, Gerrie keeps humble as he moves from one project to the next. “You never get bored in this line of work, because every project is different. What is important to me is when after you connect everything – microphones, cables, amplifiers and speakers – switch on your console, play your favourite song and it works; that is what I love most. When everything works from a smaller system to a big outdoor setup, when you connect everything and it works 100%, that is the fun factor about my job”, he shares.

METICULOUS PLANNER

Planning for and executing live events can be physically strenuous, requiring high levels of concentration and heaps of mental toughness. Physical fitness and dexterity are equally important and despite his relatively tiny stature, Gerrie leads by example. “Packing, offloading and setting up on site is heavy work and the process repeats itself when the event is wrapped up. It’s taxing – both physically and mentally – but I’m always up for it. Don’t be fooled by my stature – dynamite comes in small packages”, he jokes.

Gerrie’s work ethic and energy continue to earn him the respect of colleagues and industry peers, who hold him in high esteem as a diligent and driven team leader. “It’s simple, really ! Why bother to do something, if you cannot do it well. I live by this credo, and I expect my team members to do so, as well. And it all starts with your planning. If you plan well, your chances of a successful event are just so much better”, he observes. “There are no shortcuts to quality. At the end of the day, it is quality service that will determine whether a client would want to continue doing business with us, or not”, he adds.

LIFELONG LEARNER

Gerrie’s faith, passion for what he does and commitment to excellence, stand him in good stead as he continues to make waves in the sound and staging industry. His employers have rewarded his loyal and dedicated service and contribution with shareholding in the company. His mindset of continuous learning makes him to grow in his chosen career path. “The owners have embraced a culture of continuous learning at dB Audio. We appreciate that to remain a leader in our industry, we need to invest in the training of our people and ensure their exposure to the latest developments. The training has a holistic focus and we assign an important premium



to health and safety standards and teamwork. I've attended several courses over the years, both locally and outside of Namibia', he notes.

FAMILY MAN

Away from the demands of work, Gerrie appreciates the company of his close-knit family. His wife, Giovanna and two-year old daughter, Keziah keep him grounded as he continues to reach for the stars. "They are what is most important to me. I mean, what more could a man ask for? A loving wife, a beautiful daughter, a supporting family and his dream job. I'm happy", he concludes.



Gerhardus Engelbrecht - passionate, driven and humble. Through hard work, self-belief, dedication, and the loving support of his family, he has transformed his disability into ability. His story teaches us that with persistence, it's possible to defy the odds. He is living his dream. He is living his passion!

When everything works from a smaller theatre system to a big outdoor concert setup; when you connect everything and it works 100%, that is the fun factor about my job

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What does it take to become a **SOUND TECHNICIAN**?

The different sounds used in TV shows and films and in events such as concerts staged in halls and stadiums need to be clear, crisp and emphatic. Consequently, the practical and technical skills of sound and staging technicians are absolutely essential for providing the audience with a satisfying multi-sensory experience. Generally, technicians who work on the sound production side of things are responsible for checking and preparing all the sound equipment for shoots, carrying out additional practical tasks to minimise unwanted sounds on set, evaluating the acoustics of a particular studio or location, and positioning recording equipment in the right place. Technicians on the staging side, in turn, interpret stage layout specifications and blueprints, install and rig lighting and sound equipment and scenery for theatrical, musical, and other entertainment events in arenas, stadiums, theaters, studios, and other amusement places.

Skills & Knowledge

Understandably, technicians need a certain amount of technical ability and a detailed knowledge of the science of sound. Consequently, courses in areas such as sound technology, sound engineering, electrical engineering or media production, will be particularly valuable. Spatial and mathematical skills are also important in interpreting stage layout specifications and blueprints to set up the props, scenery, lighting, and sound equipment required for a specific event.



Training

Training is mostly done 'on-the-job' under the supervision of senior technicians. The next best thing to have is a portfolio of work that demonstrates your talent. Work experience is everything. It can be a great way to get your foot in the door and a fantastic opportunity for building up a network of industry contacts.



Working Conditions

Sound and staging technicians work in a variety of different areas, from TV advertisements and panel shows to feature films and sporting and concert events that are covered on live TV. If you become a sound and stage technician, it's likely that you'll find yourself working long, irregular and unsociable hours. The nature of film, television and event production means that your expertise could be required at any time of the day. You may even be required to work at the weekend from time to time.

You will also usually find yourself working in a variety of different places, i.e. in studios and on-set in remote locations. Physical fitness and dexterity are very important for technicians as they often climb ladders or scaffolding, crawling and balancing on beams,

inserting ends of cables or ropes through grids, and attaching cables to scenery, equipment, support pipes, and counterbalance weights.

From starting out as a trainee or assistant sound and stage technician, you will gradually progress up the ranks into senior positions. Eventually, technicians tend to specialise in one particular area. For instance, you might become a sound supervisor during the production process, or you might become a sound and music editor during post-production. Many sound technicians eventually go freelance, working on a variety of different projects with a range of different film, television and staging companies. However, freelance work understandably lacks the job security of a full-time salaried position.

Job Prospects

From starting out as a trainee or assistant sound and stage technician, you will gradually progress up the ranks into senior positions. Eventually, technicians tend to specialise in one particular area. For instance, you might become a sound supervisor during the production process, or you might become a sound and music editor during post-production. Many sound technicians eventually go freelance, working on a variety of different projects with a range of different film, television and staging companies. However, freelance work understandably lacks the job security of a full-time salaried position.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Sound and Staging Technician. If you are detail-oriented, physically fit and strong and possess strong problem solving skills, you are a good candidate.

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It just snowballed and I was kept very busy after hours and over weekends. Soon, I was making more from these part-time jobs, than from my day job.

Antonia Shinana

Nail Technician

LIVING HER DREAM IN ESTABLISHING A TRULY NAMIBIAN BEAUTY BRAND

A nail technician is a beauty specialist responsible for the grooming and appearance of a client's finger- and toenails - providing manicures, pedicures, nail shaping, cuticle grooming, synthetic nail treatments and applying nail polish. Meet Antonia Shinana, whose skill as a Nail Technician has seen her making waves in the local beauty industry. What started out as a part-time and self-taught hobby to supplement her income has now turned into a successful fulltime business venture for this go-getter, as one of the best all-round beauticians in the country. This is her story.

CHILDHOOD MODEL

Born at Oshikuku in Omusati, Antonia Shinana, or Toni, as she is affectionately known, grew up in the capital, only to later move to Tsumeb in Oshikoto; where she completed high school.

Toni grew up loving modeling and fashion. “I guess it comes from playing with my dolls, but it's just always been part of me, since childhood: this fascination with makeup, beauty and fashion and playing model, imagining myself on catwalks wearing the latest designer clothes”, she reminisces.

Although Toni's friends found her career aspirations entertaining, her teachers did not. Much to their chagrin and ire, this talented and gifted young girl only had one wish: to become a Beauty Therapist. “Most teachers were consistent in their response. That I would be wasting my time and energy to pursue something that in their view was not worth the effort. I guess because they thought the industry was too small back then, that my career prospects would be limited, and that I would end up with a qualification of no value”, she adds.

CAREER CHOICE

Succumbing to the pressure, Toni enrolled for a degree course in Psychology at the University of Namibia. Although still modeling part-time, she soon started second-guessing her career choice and eventually ended up changing her degree course for one in Environmental Health Studies. “Before I could complete this course, the self-doubt kicked in again. It's difficult to describe, but it was like a feeling of not being one with my choice of career, which kept on creeping up on me”, Toni explains. After much introspection, Toni opted out and instead enrolled for a diploma course in Project Management in Cape Town. The change of scenery did her a world of good, and the Afropolitan feel of the South Africa Mother City's fashion scene, helped her to feel right

at home. "Cape Town also helped in reshaping my appreciation of the beauty industry to a whole new level. I observed the latest trends and was introduced to new products and saw the potential of taking these experiences home with me", she recalls.

FIRST JOB

After completing her Project Management qualification, Toni returned to Namibia, landing her first job at mobile telecommunications giant, MTC. She soon joined advertising agency, Leo Burnett, and her friendly and customer-oriented demeanour made her excel in her role as an account executive, liaising with the agency's corporate clients. "The Leo Burnett colleagues were my type of people - creative, artistic and full of energy and ideas. Because, I had to interact with a wide array of corporate clients, looking good and acting professional were key requirements under my job description. Not that I had a problem with it", she shares laughingly.

First jobs seldom pay well and struggling to cope with expenses, Toni, in an effort to supplement her income, started to market her makeup and nail services to friends and family. "It all happened so fast. My clients were very happy with my services and helped in spreading the word. It just snowballed and I was kept very busy after hours and over weekends. Soon, I was making more from these part-time jobs, than from my actual salary", she recalls.

THE RISK TAKER

Considering the success of her part-time venture, Toni soon started to weigh up her options. Thoughts of tendering her resignation and focus full-time on make-up and nails kept on creeping up on her. However, in as much as she was tempted to jump ship, Toni also knew that she still had a lot to learn about the trade. "I decided to first get professional training. I knew how to do nails at the time, but didn't know much about the latest technology and methods, including acrylic and the synergy gel applications. I started my search and ended up with a renowned training institution in South Africa. I emailed them an application for part-time training, was accepted and the ball got rolling", she shares.

As for further training in makeup services, as a key component of her service offering, Toni reached out to Nigeria, known for its vibrant and pulsating beauty scene. "I knew that some of the world's best make-up artists hail from Nigeria. I went online and looked for some of my favourite make-up artists and mailed them. I was so fortunate when Nigerian makeup artist and stylist, Bibyonce responded and agreed that I came to Lagos to train with her. I would never forget my two-week Nigerian excursion", Toni notes. Always the risk-taker, Antonia resigned her job at the advertising agency and took a leap of faith to work for herself.

EARLY ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY

Although the new career choice brought more inner peace, Antonia appreciated that she had to work very hard if she wanted to make a mark in the lucrative beauty sector, where competition is tough. Her Nigerian escapade and Bibyonce's mentoring gave her the confidence to take the first baby steps to what today is her own business, 'The Nail Bar'.

"Although I was doing well, my business model was one that was very much based on making house calls, moving on from one appointment to the other. The money was good, but the traveling and diary management became taxing. I wanted more, and the international nail bar concept starting making more sense to me - a nail salon which pairs high quality products with knowledgeable technicians rendering quality services including nail services, spa pedicures and gel manicures", Toni says.



Toni soon opted for a station in a local salon. Attempts to secure funding from local financial institutions to roll out her business concept did not yield results. "Getting responses from potential funders that your idea is not viable and that my collateral was not sufficient proved very discouraging. But, looking back, I'm happy today that I was able to keep my eyes on the prize", she recalls.



and feet treatments, it has become a distinctive spot for your next manicure and pedicure. “It’s a dream come true. This is my baby. Competition is tough and the local industry is growing at a fast pace. But, I’m confident that this is only going to get bigger and better”, she shares.

Asked how she coped with the demands of managing a thriving business, Toni highlights the importance of business management training in her venture’s success. “Getting professional training helped me. When you do something you’ve learned on your own; you don’t really have the confidence that you could otherwise have acquired from professional training. It really boosted my confidence because there were times when I wasn’t sure what to do. In this cutthroat industry, you need to be confident in what you do”, Toni explains.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Successful nail technicians are able to build up loyal support through rendering personalised service. Weekends are especially busy considering that most social events take place then. Toni takes it all in her stride. She appreciates that solid customer service skills are essential, and the satisfaction of her clients is her number one priority.

“We want our clients rejuvenated in all ways possible. It is a place where they come and offload. Some are strangers and have never met you, but you’ll be surprised at the stories they share. The biggest part of my job is listening to them and help lift their burdened hearts. Its more than just doing nails”, she explains. “My business philosophy is simple, really. A happy client is one that will call again. I cannot afford to slip up in terms of quality service. I need to be prepared. And I need to always do my best”, she adds.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Toni also appreciates the importance of marketing, in growing her clientele. Her experience as an advertising agency account executive and the contacts she has built up over the years, have allowed her to take her brand, ‘Toni Did It’ to her target market.

“I’m quite tech-savvy and make use of digital platforms and social media to attract corporate clients, as my main target market. You need to appeal to them in a manner that speaks corporate, order and excellence”, she explains. “Everything matters, from the type and quality of the picture to the language and time I post the advertisement. For example, I don’t post the advert in the mornings when they’re busy and occupied. I do so in late afternoon when they are laid back and relaxed. I do most of my advertising digitally”, Toni explains. “Digital and social media have helped me a lot. It’s no longer expensive to advertise, and its very

targeted and focused, considering that at least 90% of my target audience is on social media. So you know it’s going to reach everyone, especially when coupled with a sponsored advertisement that pops up on the timelines of people that don’t even follow you. It’s not like back in the days when you had to geographically position your advert for it to be seen. Now it can be viewed and seen at the same time by someone here in Windhoek, or up north in Ongwediva”, she adds.

FRANCHISING DREAMS

Away from the demands of her busy business schedule and full appointment book, Antonia spends quality time with friends and family. She is very close to her youngest brother, Panduleni, who likes her cooking, and whom she often teases about having to feed him and change his diapers, when he was a baby. The future looks bright for Antonia and the ‘Toni Did It’ brand. Given her zest and fortitude, the journey continues for this driven young woman so determined to take her business venture to greater heights. “For starters, I need to finish up my place of business in terms of layout and upgrades, before venturing into my next goal of franchising it to the rest of the country. I believe it is becoming a good local brand. And although I don’t want to take on more than I can handle, I am still getting more employees on board. I believe in my business”, she notes.

“Furthermore, I want to get into the training space and introduce other young girls to the potential of the beauty industry. I had to go outside of the country to access good, quality training, and still, there are not enough credible institutions where young Namibians who want to enter this thriving sector, can enroll. It’s been quite a journey, especially in terms of overcoming the financing challenges, but the journey continues. I’m not stopping. Not anytime, soon”, she concludes.

Antonia Shinana – a passionate, tenacious and unpretentious entrepreneur. Her focus and single-mindedness teach us that tenacity is not about avoiding being overwhelmed, but being indomitable in the face of those overwhelming odds. Her story teaches to stay true to our passion and dreams. She is living her dream. She is living her passion!

My business philosophy is simple, really. A happy client is one that will call again. I cannot afford to slip up in terms of quality service. I need to be prepared and always do my best



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What does it take to become a **NAIL TECHNICIAN**?

A nail technician is a beauty specialist who is responsible for the grooming and appearance of a client's fingernails and toenails. He or she provides manicures, pedicures, nail shaping, cuticle grooming, callus removal, synthetic nail treatments, and application of nail polish for their clients. A nail technician trims, shapes, files and polishes nails, as well as applies tips or wraps to nails. They massage hands and feet, apply lotions and airbrush nail art. Some nail technicians sell products used during nail services directly to clients, earning commission on each sale. Evening and weekend hours are common for nail technicians, who usually work in salons or spas.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in arts and drawing are considered useful. Nail technicians need good visual acuity for detailed work. Nail technician professions require physical stamina since they must sit, stand and spend hours hunched over working on clients' hands and feet. Solid customer service and sales skills are essential, as the satisfaction of the client is the number one priority of nail technicians.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. However, many makeup artists typically learn the trade on the job and through apprenticeships in salons and beauty parlours. Industry experience, whether paid or unpaid, is crucial to honing skills, building a reputation and ultimately developing a solid client base. Nail technicians study basic cosmetology skills, health and safety procedures, manicure and pedicure skills and skin treatments, as well as general business skills. They participate

in continuing education opportunities to learn new developments in nail treatments and applications, like acrylic, gel or fiberglass nails, sculpting, airbrushing and nail art.

Working Conditions

Nail technicians generally work as an employee or an independent contractor renting space from the spa or salon owner. Self-employed nail technicians handle salon management, hiring, inventory, marketing and bookkeeping. The starting pay for apprentices and novices is less than what fully trained nail technicians make. As apprentices gain experience, they receive more pay. Many nail technicians opt to freelance and are able to build up loyal support through rendering personalised service. Weekends are especially busy considering that most social events take place then.

Job Prospects

Some skills necessary to work as a Nail Technician will allow you to work in another profession as well. In addition to styling, coloring and cutting hair, cosmetologists also offer makeup application services. Skincare Specialists specialize in the care and treatment of the skin and often prepare the skin prior to the application of makeup. Most makeup artists freelance. Compensation varies, but those with established clientele tend to earn more. The best job opportunities can be found in the urban centres.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Nail Technician. If you are creative, personable, detail-oriented and knowledgeable of cosmetology and beauty trends, you are a good candidate.

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Knowing that I was gifted and had determination in spades kept me going, and I told myself that come what may, I'm going to rise above my circumstances and make something of my life.

Tuhafeni Erastus

Eletronic Technician

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN THE EXCITING TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR

Electronics Technicians help design, develop, install, and repair electrical and electronic equipment. They are experts in the function and mechanics of complicated equipment, often using software and meters to diagnose malfunctions and complete repairs. Meet expert Electronics Technician, Tuhafeni Erastus, whose skill and determination to succeed in the area of transmitter electronics makes him a big asset to his employer, local telecommunications giant, MTC. This is his story.

CHALLENGING CHILDHOOD

People who grow up in poverty often have a tougher road ahead, than those who are well off from the get-go. But there's no reason why that road can't lead to success.

Born at Omestokonime village in Oshikoto , Tuhafeni Erastus' childhood proved challenging. His unemployed single mother had to relocate to Otjiwarongo in Otjozondjupa and kapana sales was the sole source of income to raise Tuhafeni and his three siblings. After he completed Grade 7 at the Orwetoveni Primary School, it was decided that Tuhafeni returns to the north and stay with his aunt.

"Although I was saddened by the fact that I was going to be separated from my mother and siblings, I actually looked forward relocating from an urban area to the village, because somehow, I thought, things were going to get better. Was I in for a surprise? Village life toughens you up. There was no electricity; we had to collect firewood and study by candlelight. But we made the best of our situation", he reminisces.

TENACIOUS LEARNER

A wily and clever youngster, Tuhafeni gave it his all at the Onamahoka Combined School, where he completed Grade 10; and the Mwadikange Kaulinge Secondary, where he completed Grade 12. "I was the best in my class during my time at Onamahoka and I took this reputation to Mwadikange Kaulinge, where again I was the best learner in Grade 11 and 12. It wasn't easy, but looking back on my journey, I cannot but to thank the Almighty for carrying me through", he shares. Considering his academic achievements, Tuhafeni started harbouring dreams of becoming a lawyer. "To study law was the dream. And although I appreciated that my family would not necessarily

have the means to support me in further studies, I somehow refused to give up on this dream. Knowing that I was gifted and had determination in spades kept me going and I told myself that come what may, I'm going to rise above my circumstances and make something of my life", he explains. "I knew by then that I was destined for greater things and that performing well in school was my ticket", he adds.

TOUGH CITY LIFE

Circumstances once again impacted on Tuhafeni's dreams when he made the journey to the capital, to pursue a tertiary education. Although the University of Namibia accepted his application to study law, his boyhood dream soon evaporated. "I stayed with a cousin in Okuryangava and considering that I could not afford taxis and would have to walk to classes, the distance to the UNAM campus, compared to that of the then Polytechnic of Namibia, pushed me to rather enroll for a course in Engineering, at the latter", he recalls.

The distance to campus soon took its toll on Tuhafeni. Often too tired and hungry to study, and once again having to deal with no electricity at home, he often had to resort to sleeping over in the hostel rooms of friends. The death of his mother compounded matters and the knowledge that he now was responsible for his three siblings weighed heavy on his mind. "I thought life was going to be good in the city. It was even worse. The very same issue of using candles to study and at times even using my phone flashlight", he notes.

Things improved slightly when Tuhafeni moved to stay with another cousin in Havana, who supported him with food and taxi money. However, just as things were starting to improve, job demands soon required his cousin to relocate to Oshikango in Ohangwena. Tuhafeni was close to giving up on his dream, when a church friend intervened and he ended up staying with a family in a flat in Windhoek North. "They were my guardian angels, my saving grace. From that point onwards, my results improved and my performance was on par. Now, I had electricity. I could take hot baths. I had regular meals", he explains.

A BURSARY

Tuhafeni's confidence grew and his academic performance improved. Appreciating that good results would make it easier to land a bursary, he continued to give it his all. "I just made sure that I did not miss any of my classes; that all my assignments were well-researched and handed in on time; and of course, study, study and study", he shares. The

bursary applications came back one by one. And after several disappointments, MTC called in Tuhafeni for a bursary interview. "I told myself that this was my first shot and that I had to make it my best shot. So I prepared well, taking along everything; from my grade 1 awards to the latests academic records", Tuhafeni reminisces.

Appealing to the interview panel to take his circumstances into account, Tuhafeni made it clear that he would have no other choice but to abandon his studies, should he not be able to secure financial support. "I was very calm and sincere in my interaction. And I think that my appeal of not wanting to end up on the streets, and instead wanting to make a contribution to the development of my country and its people, struck a chord with them. Tuhafeni was awarded a bursary, which also secured him placement in the student hostel. "I was over the moon. My prayers were answered", he recalls.



WORLD OF WORK

Tuhafeni worked harder than ever before. "The fear of failing a subject pushed me and kept me going. Failing wasn't an option as MTC could then withdraw their support. And that's exactly what I did. Excellent results, up until I graduated.", he says.

As a bursary holder, Tuhafeni also worked at MTC during holidays. His work ethic, positive attitude and eagerness to learn impressed his supervisors and upon graduation, the diligent Tuhafeni was offered a full-time job. "I'm truly a child of this company. I started at the bottom. This is where I earned my first paycheck and this is where I cut my teeth in the telecommunications network department. From transmissions, to radio, to optimisation. I've been exposed to all aspects of this work and have picked

up key skills and competencies that make me an asset to MTC”, he says. Today, MTC is reaping the rewards of its decision to invest in the future of a deserving student. The growing demand for jobs in the electronics engineering and service fields as the result of a recent proliferation of both consumer and industrial electronics products, especially in the key sector of telecommunications, allows Tuhafeni’s career to thrive. And he is cementing his reputation as a loyal, dedicated go-getter. “Every day brings new challenges.

Sometimes, the network goes off and you don’t really know what is wrong. I troubleshoot and identify the problem, pinpointing it on our big national network. Often, the problem requires that I leave my workstation and drive to the actual transmitter site with replacement parts and hardware, where I would then do installation and configuration”, Tuhafeni shares.



Despite his success and the challenges he had to overcome along the way, Tuhafeni continues to push himself in furthering his education. Currently enrolled for a Master’s degree in Electrical Engineering, specialising in Telecommunications at WITS University in South Africa, he appreciates that his story can inspire others to not give up on their dreams.

“The fast-growing telecommunications sector offers a wide array of opportunities. To venture into such career paths in this sector would be a wise decision. So, if someone wants to study telecommunications or venture into a career in telecommunications, I would say that’s the best way go for. Employment opportunities are abound and there is potential for you to become your own boss, and employ others”, he notes. “The telecommunications sector is evolving at a very fast pace. It is this evolution and the potential this sector holds that drive me in

pursuing further studies. You need to continuously develop yourself in this sector, or risk that your skill set will lose relevance. I’ll get my Masters degree, and thereafter, I want to enroll for doctoral studies. I want to venture into the telecommunications innovation and research space. I don’t see myself stopping anytime soon”, he adds.

CAREER AMBASSADOR

Away from the demands of work and studies, Tuhafeni keeps humble in his social interactions, spending quality time with his fiancée, Anna and loved ones. “I often share my journey with others, because I believe that many can relate to it. Yes, there are many young students out there facing similar challenges as we speak. No money for food. No taxi or bus money to campus. No money for textbooks. My message to them is to never give up on your dreams. What you put in, is what you get out. I live by this credo. Keep on working hard. Keep on believing. Keep on praying”, he shares.

“My journey has been tough. But, God has put people on my path that helped me to push through and overcome adversity. My success is their success, as well. Therefore, I can never allow my success to go to my head. Because, if I do, I might just lose my drive and them as friends. Anyway, it’s not the way I was brought up. I need to stay humble. As it is said in the Scriptures – the meek shall inherit the earth”, Tuhafeni concludes.

Tuhafeni Erastus – driven, focused and determined. A trailblazer who is embracing the potential of the thriving telecommunications sector. His story teaches us the true meaning of perseverance in the face of adversity. He is living his dream. He is living his passion!

You need to continuously develop yourself in this sector, or risk that your skill set will lose relevance. I’ll get my Masters degree, and thereafter, I want to enroll for doctoral studies ”



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What does it take to become an **ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN**?

Electronics Technicians help design, develop, test, manufacture, install, and repair electrical and electronic equipment such as communication equipment, medical monitoring devices, navigational equipment, and computers. They may be employed in product evaluation and testing, using measuring and diagnostic devices to adjust, test, and repair equipment. Electronics technicians may also work as sales workers or field representatives giving advice on the installation, operation, and maintenance of complex equipment and may write specifications and technical manuals.

Skills & Knowledge

Electronics Technicians are experts in the function and mechanics of complicated electrical equipment, often using software and meters to diagnose malfunctions and complete repairs. Considering the strong technical component to this field, high school courses in science, mathematics and computer science are considered useful. As technicians often deal with customers face-to-face, it is important that they possess adequate communication and customer service skills.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. Training curricula generally consists of courses in basic electricity and electronics, including integrated circuits, magnetism, capacitance, inductance, transformers, resonance and digital electronics. Nowadays, many institutions make use of electronics software simulation in conjunction with traditional training laboratories to provide greater opportunities for trainees. Training programmes primarily prepares

the graduate for employment and/or further on-the-job training as a service technician in the field of consumer, commercial, and industrial electronics.

Working Conditions

Technicians are not office-bound and often travel to their clients' location on a regular schedule to perform preventative maintenance, using specialised equipment, software and diagnostic tools. Typical job-related activities may involve assembly, installation, maintenance, testing, troubleshooting, repair and upgrading of associated electronic equipment and systems. Physical fitness is of utmost importance as technicians need to stand for extended periods of time. Often equipment is installed at high elevation and in dusty, dark and cramped spaces.

Job Prospects

Job opportunities for electronics technicians are increasing because many industries use electronic products and systems. The demand for jobs in the electronics engineering and service fields is the result of a recent proliferation of both consumer and industrial electronics products. Key sectors are telecommunications, audio/video, computers, robotics, energy conversion and efficiency and electrical equipment manufacturing. Due to the increasing complexity of electronic technology, most technicians specialise in a particular type of equipment.

You too can live your passion and qualify as an Electronics Technician. If you are self-motivated, inquisitive, willing to learn on your own and have a deep interest in electronics, you are a good candidate.

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Africa is one of the fastest growing beauty product markets. Penetrating this multi-billion dollar market is certainly not going to be an easy assignment. But, I'm determined to do so.

Hannah Nangula

Makeup Artist

FROM SELF-MADE MINI SKIRTS TO HER OWN BEAUTY PRODUCT LINE - TAKING THE NAMIBIAN MAKEUP SCENE BY STORM

Makeup artists select and apply make up in accordance with the principles of light, color and the human form to achieve the desired objective of the client. Meet Hannah Nangula, make-up artist to Namibian celebrities and NBC television presenters, who uses her skills and expertise to enrich the lives of others by teaching them how to apply their own makeup. She serves as a role model for others who wish to enter this lucrative and growing sector. This is her story.

YOUNG DESIGNER

Hailing from Walvis Bay in Erongo, where she completed her secondary school career at De Duine High School, Hannah Nangula recognised her own creativity from a very early age when she would cut up and stitch her own mini skirts from her grandmother's cutaway materials.

"I remember those days vividly, because of the excitement and anticipation they brought. I would always be thinking out new designs and as soon as I could land some cutaway materials, I would get straight to work. Luckily, my grandmother didn't mind", she recalls.

Hannah's early fascination with making clothes pushed her to enroll for a course in fashion design at the College of the Arts, in Katutura. "Although it meant I had to swap my beloved Walvis Bay for the capital city, and that I did not necessarily have the means to support my studies, I was determined to make work of my dream. I wanted to become a fashion designer and nothing and no one was going to stand in my way", she shares.

NEW FASCINATION

Given her artistic nature and the company of like-minded and creative young people surrounding her, Hannah felt right at home at the College of the Arts. It was here where she was introduced to the exciting world of makeup.

"It was truly an eye-opener. I realised that there was much more to makeup than mere lipstick and powders. Indeed, there is a surprisingly strong technical component to the makeup artist field, because you need to develop a solid understanding of lighting and the photographic process, as well. Somehow, I just got drawn into this world", she explains.

“Based on my results and the positive and encouraging lecturer feedback, I realised that I had a talent in this field. It did my self-confidence a world of good and I started to really excel in this area. My mind was made up soon. Makeup it was going to be. Considering how it all worked out, I guess one can say it was more a matter of my passion finding me, than me finding my passion”, Hannah adds.

GRITTY ENTREPRENEUR

After graduating as a qualified makeup artist, Hannah, confronted with the reality that she had to start standing on her own feet and that the odd jobs of doing makeup for friends and family would not generate enough income to sustain her lifestyle, started to scan the market for opportunities to ply her trade.

“I guess graduation is often a happy moment, but soon the euphoria is over, because you realise that without opportunity, your qualification does not mean much. The beauty industry was still very small then and it’s not as if you could just buy a newspaper and find a vacancy. It became difficult to make ends meet. And although I was tempted to do so, and indeed my family wanted me to, I simply couldn’t allow myself to go back to the warmth and safety of home, at Walvis Bay”, she says.

Hannah dug deep and the grit she demonstrated when she made her own mini skirts when she couldn’t afford to buy them, came to the fore again. She boldly approached the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation and offered her service as a makeup artist to their television anchors and presenters.



“The College of the Arts curriculum includes a strong entrepreneurship development component. We were taught how to market ourselves and land opportunities to grow our experience and portfolios. The nbc gave me an opportunity, and here I am, nine years later, still rendering makeup services to our national broadcaster. I was really a proud moment when I saw my name on the television credit scroll for the first time. Makeup done by Hannah Nangula”, she recalls.

FURTHER TRAINING

The beauty industry is evolving fast and practitioners need to stay on top of their game as far as new trends and techniques are concerned. Hannah, as a student of the trade, embraces this reality.

“I realised very early on that the skills I acquired during training were not on par with what was happening on the international scene. You know, clients come to you with pictures from beauty magazines or which they downloaded from the internet, and expect of you to achieve the same result. So, I used my savings and attended an intensive training course at an internationally acclaimed institution, in Manchester in the United Kingdom. I also attended a specialist course in Cape Town, South Africa, where I upskilled my eyebrow and microblading techniques, so I can align with international standards”, Hannah notes.

“It’s a matter of perspectives, I guess. don’t deem travelling overseas to learn new things, observe new trends and acquiring new skills, as an expense. On the contrary, I’m a businesswoman and I see further training as an investment in myself, my business, and my family. Upskilling myself is an expense, but it is a necessary expense”, she adds.

EMPOWERING OTHERS

Always one to look for new opportunities and appreciating the value the makeup sector has brought her, she has ventured into the world of training and is offering makeup classes and tutorials at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. “This side-venture has boosted my income and profile significantly. Staying in touch with students through social media platforms allow me to evaluate their progress, whereas I could also offer them advice in terms of the latest trends and techniques”, Hannah explains.

“Through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, I keep in touch with all my students. I rate pictures of their work and share feedback, while I also advise them on how to source specific product lines.

I'm always there for them. The relationship never ends", she adds. Neither is Hannah concerned that she is training young women who might end up as business competition one day. "I am a citizen of this country and I need to play my small part in creating opportunity for others. Unemployment is on the rise. I train others because I've experienced how this occupation has changed my life for the better. Empowering others is just my way of giving back", she explains.

Hannah is also a member of the Namibia Training Authority's technical working group supporting the development and registration of local qualifications in this exciting and growing sector. "My interaction with industry peers on this platform is pushing me towards a new dream. I want to open my own makeup school. A fully furnished and equipped facility where to share my skill", she adds.

FUTURE TYCOON

Hannah's engaging and bubbly personality adds to her reputation as the complete makeup service package and a preferred service provider for local celebrities. Just recently, she launched her own makeup and cosmetics product line.

While tight-lipped about the formulae for her foundation products, Hannah notes that all her products were developed with Namibian skin tones and local weather conditions in mind. "My range of quality foundation creams caters for most Namibian skin tones, including those with naturally oily faces and people that have blemishes or marks who find it difficult to source the exact foundation to suit their skin tone and condition. My quality foundation creams exude sophistication. Coupled with my special mink eyelash products, which comes in both natural and dramatic options, everyone can look their best", Hannah explains.

"I harbour big plans for my range. First, I want to cement the brand locally. Thereafter, I plan to roll it out into the lucrative African market. Africa is one of the fastest growing beauty product markets. Penetrating this multi-billion dollar market is certainly not going to be an easy assignment. But, I'm determined to do so", she adds.

FAMILY WOMAN

In between the constant juggling act of balancing her irregular and demanding working hours with spending time with her husband and son, Hannah appreciates her role as a wife and mother. "My time with them is sacrosanct. I prioritise cooking and preparing meals for them. Not that it is always

possible. Luckily, my husband understands my line of work and its demands. I appreciate that he has an equally demanding work, but he supports me throughout. He shares in my dreams. They are our dreams, after all", Hannah explains.



"I'm blessed and fortunate in so many ways. Family comes first, but should you ask me what my second most important blessing is, I would without hesitation tell you that it is that I have found my purpose in life. I love what I do", Hannah concludes

Hannah Nangula - passionate, innovative and trailblazing. A determined and driven entrepreneur who is taking the local makeup scene by storm. Her story teaches us that in meeting our true destiny in life, we first have to meet our purpose - that boundless, passionate energy that guides you down a path created just for you. She has found her purpose. She is living her passion!

I train others because I've experienced how this occupation has changed my life for the better. Empowering others is just my way of giving back ”



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What does it take to become a **MAKEUP ARTIST**?

Makeup Artists select and apply make up in accordance with the principles of light, color and the human form to achieve the desired objective and vision of their art director, costumer or client. Generally, they begin by cleansing their clients' skin. They then proceed to choose the ideal makeup style after evaluating their clients' hair color, eye color, and skin tone and type. Makeup artists must quickly analyze their clients' circumstances and implement plans accordingly. They apply the proper foundation, concealer and colors using various brushes, airbrushes and tools to shade, highlight or de-emphasize features. A makeup artist may be asked to produce special effects such as aging, illness or even wounds or deformities, and may use and design prosthetic devices such as noses or scars.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in arts and drawing are considered useful. There is a surprisingly strong technical component to this field. Makeup artists must have a solid understanding of lighting and the photographic process. Skills vary by specialty. However, all makeup artists must have a strong sense of fashion, an artistic nature and a willingness to work all hours. Good interpersonal skills are a must for working with clients and models. on-site to complete projects.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. However, many makeup artists typically learn the trade on the job and through apprenticeships in salons and

beauty parlours. Industry experience, whether paid or unpaid, is crucial to honing skills, building a reputation and ultimately developing a solid client base. Aspiring makeup artists typically volunteer their services to local media production houses, theater troupes and charity fashion shows to get a foot in the door.

Working Conditions

Makeup artists often combine the application of makeup with sales and work at department store cosmetic counters where they instruct clients in makeup application or demonstrate the newest products. Physical fitness is also important as makeup artists need to stand for extended periods of time. The starting pay for apprentices and novices is less than what fully trained makeup artists make. As apprentices gain experience, they receive more pay. Most makeup artists work full time. However, weekends are especially busy considering that most social events take place then.

Job Prospects

Some skills necessary to work as a Makeup Artist will allow you to work in another profession as well. In addition to styling, coloring and cutting hair, cosmetologists also offer makeup application services. Skincare Specialists specialize in the care and treatment of the skin and often prepare the skin prior to the application of makeup. Most makeup artists freelance. Compensation varies, but those with established clientele tend to earn more. The best job opportunities can be found in the urban centres. Offering training can also generate significant income.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Makeup Artist. If you are creative, personable, detail-oriented and physically fit, you are a good candidate.

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I believe I have a responsibility to continue blazing trails for our country's fashion industry, notwithstanding the success and recognition, which came quite early in my career.

McBright Kavari

Fashion Designer

TAKING TRADITIONAL ATTIRE TO INTERNATIONAL CATWALKS - BLAZING TRAILS FOR NAMIBIAN FASHION

Fashion designers study fashion trends and anticipate designs that will appeal to consumers. They oversee the final production of their designs before showcasing them in fashion or trade shows. Meet award-winning local Fashion Designer, McBright Kavari, whose captivating collections based on his trademark and elegant Otjiherero traditional dresses have earned him international fame. This is his story.

CHILD DESIGNER

Notwithstanding his current international acclaim, McBright Kavari comes from very humble beginnings. Growing up in the capital - where his mother raised him and five siblings - McBright's extraordinary talent manifested very early and once landed him in hot water, when he cut up his mother's expensive bedding to make clothes for a doll.

"I remember it so vividly. I was coming from school at Katutura's St. Barnabas Primary. My mom was angry at first, but I think after she looked at my attempt for a doll dress, her motherly instincts took over and she appreciated that somehow I just had to find a way to express myself", he reminisces.

Unlike boys his age, who looked forward to weekends to play soccer in the streets, McBright instead preferred to join his sisters on visits to the city centre. "I always wanted to tag along. And if I got lost, they knew where to find me. In front of the bridal shop called 'The Bride', which always would have these magnificent dress displays", he shares. "Looking back, I can say that it is in front of those shop windows where my dream started, and where I told myself that this is what I was going to do one day", he adds.

TEACHER SUPPORT

Always being surrounded by clothes and dresses at his mother's home-based ironing and dry-cleaning business helped in shaping McBright's aspirations. However, he ascribes much of his success to the early support he received from his teachers. "I started to sketch designs. And one day, instead of paying attention and taking down classnotes, I was sketching some dress designs in my scrapbook. I expected a thorough scolding when caught out by my teacher, but got a compliment, instead", he recalls. "In fact, my teachers called in my parents and encouraged them to support me in nurturing my talent.

Their validation really helped. They even arranged for me to attend workshops to hone my skills and talent. And when I did, they would assist with extra work to ensure I keep pace with my schoolwork", he adds. The positive feedback and encouragement from his teachers also helped in convincing McBright's uncles, who were not very comfortable with his interest. "As

a young Herero boy, they expected me to learn about cattle and farming and to play with toy cars or play street soccer. My teachers' encouragement and my later success have convinced them otherwise. They're very proud of me today, and they support me now", McBright adds.

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

McBright's stellar rise started when in Grade 6; he entered his first Herero dress design competition. Designing this voluminous Victorian-style dress and its matching horn-like 'otjikaiva' headscarf is not an easy assignment and McBright only managed to make it into the top 10 at his first attempt in 2006. However, he returned the next year and won the overall prize, which included a trip to Kenya. Further victories followed in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

"The Herero dress is special in our culture and steeped in so much tradition and heritage. For a Herero woman, it holds a lot of cultural pride. It captures her essence and reminds her about our customs and etiquette", he explains.

"I've been criticized for some of my modern interpretations of the dress and for pushing the boundaries. However, I prefer to interpret my designs as just a process of natural evolution. My designs still allow for the dress to retain its mystery and aura. No one can deny that my work has sparked a renewed interest amongst younger women. No one can deny that the Herero dress today enjoys international interest and acclaim. I went to Germany and a single buyer bought out my whole collection", he shares

INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM

Although his young age prevented him from taking up the travel opportunity to Kenya, McBright's confidence in his own talent grew. "The following year I travelled to Berlin, Germany and I took part in the Shanghai Fashion Week. Not only were these amazing experiences, they were eye openers and got me a lot of exposure. The Niger Fashion Week was another incredible platform, where I had the opportunity to meet and interact with contemporaries from the African continent", he shares. McBright has also designed dresses for the Miss Namibia beauty pageant and crown holders. His modern interpretations of the traditional Herero dress also won him acclaim at the 2016 Africa Fashion Reception, hosted by the African Union Commission at its headquarters in Addis Ababa.

"I won a gold medal and outperformed renowned designers such as Lisete Pote from Angola and the eccentric David Alford from Zimbabwe. The standing ovation was a special moment. It was when I really got to appreciate that I had a God-given talent to do this, as I was outperforming the other designers who all attended advanced and highly-acclaimed training courses", he shares.



INNATE TALENT

Good fashion designers have heaps of creativity and excellent visual acuity for detailed work. McBright possesses these skills in heaps. Taking the added pressure of co-steering his brand, 'McB's Classic Fashions' into his stride, it is in his studio where McBright is the happiest. Watching him plying his trade makes you appreciate the true talent of this young man, who has all but captured the fast growing and lucrative Herero dress niche market.

"I never attended a training college or participated in any formal training to do this. I was born to this. It's in my blood. It's like I look at the fabric and the design just comes to me as I sketch. It just happens. It's like magic. Then, not all designers are good at sewing. I'm a master behind the sewing machine. Self-taught", he explains.

"Often new clients get distressed when I practice my magic and just start cutting up the expensive fabric they bring in. And I do so, without even taking their measurements. This is another skill I possess: to just look at you and to know your dress size. But, all these new clients smile once I'm done and call them in to come fit on the final product. And they are sure to come back for more", he jokes.

TENACIOUS ENTREPRENEUR

McBright's creativity is not waning at all and his impressive portfolio continues to grow. "Although managing my brand and business can become cumbersome at times as I'm not really the administration type, business is good, overall. I'm not complaining. We're busy and orders come in from as far as the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States. The two seamstresses I employ are kept very busy. Our philosophy is simple - quality, originality and personalised service", he notes. "I continue to work hard on new collections, which I wish to take international to events such as the Paris Fashion Week. I believe I have a responsibility to continue

blazing trails for our country's fashion industry, notwithstanding the success and recognition, which came quite early in my career. I therefore need to continue what I'm doing and put our country on the map as a hub of creative fashion design talent, in its own right", he adds.



Asked about the future of the local fashion industry, McBright expressed his satisfaction with events such as the Windhoek Fashion Week, which he notes, create platforms to elevate the local industry to international standards. "We have the talent. More new designers are stepping up and it is up to those of us who are established household names to support them. I also wish for more male designers to enter this sector, which is somewhat still female-dominated", he explains. Talent is defined as a natural ability to be good at something, especially without being taught.

McBright Kavari is talented, but passionate and driven, as well. Having taken the local fashion design scene by storm, his passion for what he does and his drive to succeed are sure to elevate him to greater heights. His story teaches us that we all have talents; that our talents are God's gifts to us; and that what we do with our talents is our gift to the world. McBright has succeeded in making his talent, his purpose and his passion.

I was born to this. It's in my blood. It's like I look at the fabric and the design just comes to me as I sketch. It just happens. It's like magic



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What does it take to become a **FASHION DESIGNER**?

Fashion designers create original clothing, accessories, and footwear. They sketch designs, select fabrics and patterns, and give instructions on how to make the products they designed. They typically study fashion trends and anticipate designs that will appeal to consumers. Deciding on a theme for a collection, they use computer-aided design programmes to create designs and visit manufacturers or trade shows to get fabric samples. They select embellishments, colors, or style for each garment or accessory and often work with other designers or team members to create prototype designs. They oversee the final production of their designs before showcasing them in fashion or trade shows.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in arts and drawing are considered useful. Fashion design requires heaps of creativity and good visual acuity for detailed work. Every designer's primary objective is to design clothing that will sell and appeal to a target market. Strong communication and customer service skills are essential.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. Prospective designers must develop a portfolio, which showcases their best designs, so potential employers can judge their creativity. Designers typically gain their working experience by interning or working as assistant designers. They may start as sketching assistants under more experienced designers before advancing to independent designer, chief designer or creative director. Aspiring designers starting out in their careers spend a considerable amount of time marketing themselves and their products to attract

public attention. Established designers continue marketing themselves through advertisements in the print and online media.



Working Conditions

Fashion designers often work long, irregular hours and make a point to form strong, lasting connections with a variety of other fashion professionals, which include fabric manufacturers and trade show runners, who supply the fabric and embellishments designers need to see their designs come to life. Designers travel often, forming connections with creative directors for magazines and other publications so they can share their creations with a wider audience. Depending on the size and type of company, fashion designers may manage other professionals such as patternmakers, colorists, and sewers.

assistants under more experienced designers before advancing to independent designer, chief designer or creative director. Aspiring designers starting out in their careers spend a considerable amount of time marketing themselves and their products to attract public attention. Established designers continue marketing themselves through advertisements in the print and online media.

Job Prospects

Fashion designers work for design firms, boutiques, manufacturing companies, wholesalers, department stores, chain retailers, retail shops and boutiques. Some are also self-employed. In smaller companies the fashion designer will likely wear many different hats, acting as designer, patternmaker, and even colorist. Solo designers, if just starting out, will wear all hats until he or she establishes a name in the industry. Some self-employed fashion designers may earn many times the salary of the highest paid salaried designers.



You too can live your passion and qualify as a Fashion Designer. If you are creative, personable, detail-oriented and knowledgeable of fashion trends, you are a good candidate.

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Listening is a very important skill to possess in this sector. It's about guiding your clients to what they need, whilst at the same time striking a balance with what they want.

Annette Conradie

Interior Decorator

EXPERT IN BREATHING LIFE INTO DULL AND DREARY INTERIOR SPACES

Interior Decorators bring life to inside spaces through upgrading aesthetical and practical features. By assisting clients to decorate homes, offices and businesses they create the most functional and beautiful decor in a space as possible. Introducing leading local Interior Decorator, Annette Conradie, whose creative ability to transform lackluster interiors into striking and captivating spaces has made her a sought-after service provider. This is her story.

CREATIVE TALENT

Born and raised at Graskop, a small town in South Africa's Mpumalanga province, Annette Conradie's creative nature manifested at a very early age. Her grandmother was keen on crochet- and needlework and with toddler Annette always fiddling around, it came as no surprise to the family when she too demonstrated a desire to make her own clothes.

"From about six years old, I started knitting and crochet work under my grandmother's watchful eye. No doubt, I inherited my talent and passion for needlework from her. She taught me needlework and at age eight, I made my first piece of clothing", Annette recalls.

Whilst at school, Annette also excelled in music and her talent as a pianist encouraged her to apply for a Bachelor's in Music degree at the University of Pretoria. "Music was my thing and I harboured big dreams of becoming a concert pianist. However, I continued to make curtains on the side for an outlet at Nelspruit in Mpumalanga. Not only did it help in keeping the pianist fingers nimble, but also to generate an income to support my studies and related expenses", she shares.

EMPLOYMENT WOES

It was also at university where Annette met her future husband, Pieter, whom she later followed to Windhoek where he landed a job at a local commercial bank. "I fell in love and married a man from another country and followed him back to our new home", she notes.

Struggling to secure employment as a music teacher in Windhoek, Annette again turned to her childhood passion of needlework, to keep busy and earn an income. "I started making curtains and later landed employment at the Kock and Schmidt Company, where I worked for many years in the curtains department", Annette shares.

“Looking back, my curtain days were where I really cut my teeth in this industry. The frequent interactions with clients brought along the experience and ability to read them and their needs. Listening is a very important skill to possess in this sector. At the end of the day, you need to listen and have the ability to make changes to ideas and rooms to accommodate your client’s wishes throughout the decoration process. It’s about guiding your clients to what they need, whilst at the same time striking a balance with what they want”, she explains.

OWN BUSINESS DREAM

Annette saw a gap in the market for a fully-fledged curtain shop and approached a local bank for funding to get her venture off the ground. “My husband helped in putting a loan application together, which the bank approved. I got a loan of just 90,000 dollars and I went solo with the Quiltmaster franchise. This, more or less coincided with the completion of the Maerua Mall, which offered plenty of floor space for rent. ‘Touch of Style’ was born and I haven’t looked back since”, Annette reminisces.

Asked about the name of her business, Annette explains that the name encapsulates the customer-oriented vision of the venture to establish itself as a preferred service provider to discerning clientele. “The name says it all. There is a touch of style in everything we do. And that touch should stand out when people see it. Not only is it about creativity and skill, but service and quality, as well. That is our trademark”, she adds.

BUSY WORK

Skilled interior decorators have one thing in common – a thorough appreciation and sense of composition, layout, and color design. “These fundamental elements strongly influence interior decoration. We work with different mediums and our varied product offering of curtains, window blinds, wallpaper, upholstery, bedlinen, décor items and carpets make us a one-stop shop”, Annette explains.

“Don’t be fooled by the tranquility of our showroom. Behind the scenes, I manage a very busy workshop where we manufacture custom-made curtains and other products. There are also installation and sales teams I oversee. I need to interact with clients and suppliers as well. It’s just a continuous flow of job cards, quotations, orders and site visits. So, all in all, a very busy and demanding environment and you need to stay on the ball. And that ball is quality in all we do”, Annette highlights. Another key component of Annette’s work is the training of her employees, some of who have been with her company, since its

inception. “Investing in my team is very important. Without them, ‘Touch of Style’ will not be where it is today. I need to plough back and growing their skill sets so they too can go out there and make a difference to the lives of others”, she emphasises.



BUSINESS GROWTH

With a growing clientele, including bigger corporate clients in the hospitality and services sectors, ‘Touch of Style’ continues to cement its reputation. Starting out with three employees, the company now employs 17 permanent workers and was appointed as the decorator of choice for both the old and new presidential residences, including the staff and guest houses. It has also landed deals for the soft decorations at the five-star Hilton Hotel and various other luxurious hotels and lodges across Namibia, as well as large corporate offices.

“Although demanding, such bigger projects boost our growth and profile significantly. But, that doesn’t mean that the individual client is treated differently. At the end of the day, it is all about personalised customer service and quality”, Annette stresses. “Personalised service is very important in this line of work. If a client is looking for new curtains, I visit them at home, because the moment I walk in, I get an idea of what their style is”, she adds.

Today, ‘Touch of Style’ is located in a big showroom, designed by Annette, in partnership with a local architect. “The showroom was one of my dreams when I started the business. I first acquired the erf. You need to start somewhere. But, I was able to make it happen. Today, coupled with our reputation of inspiring creativity, it is our showroom and what it offers that sets us apart from our competitors”, she notes.

STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM

Notwithstanding her business successes, Annette stays grounded and humble, appreciating the support she received from her staff and family, in growing her business and brand.

“No doubt, none of this would’ve been possible without my team, both here at work, and at home. I have a strong and loyal team here at work. They too, love what they do. I just lead them, but they are the ones that make it all happen. They are no other family”, she acknowledges. “Equally, the support of my husband and mother allowed me to deal with the early pressures of getting a one-man business off the ground. I took its toll initially, but they’re my pillars of strength. I make a good team with my husband, Pieter. I’m more of the creative type, but his financial acumen continues to add significant value to our growth as a business”, she adds.

With her business well established and sustainable, Annette now has more time to pursue her other childhood passion, music. A partnership she struck up with the talented singer, Rene van Wyk, whom she now leads on the piano, is starting to pay dividends, and the duo recently released an album. “Music will always be a passion. Playing the piano calms me. It feeds my soul. It reinvigorates me”, Annette explains.

Asked about the prospects for future local interior decorators, Annette is very optimistic. “Interior decoration is all about giving soul to spaces and make them more livable and pleasant. Although the market is tough and competitive, I believe that young

talent can make it with the right mix of creativity, innovation, a customer-centered approach and a drive to succeed”, she concludes.

Annette Conradie, resourceful, driven and industrious. Although a successful businesswoman, she remains an artist at heart. Her story teaches us the true meaning of creativity as not only artistic ability and talent; but also the ability to take risks, ignore doubt and face fears. Her story teaches us that success is no accident: that its price is dedication, hard work and an unremitting devotion to those things you want to see happen. She is living her passion.

Personalised service is very important in this line of work. You need to understand your client’s own creativity. If a client is looking for new curtains, I visit them at home, because the moment I walk in, I get an idea of what their style is



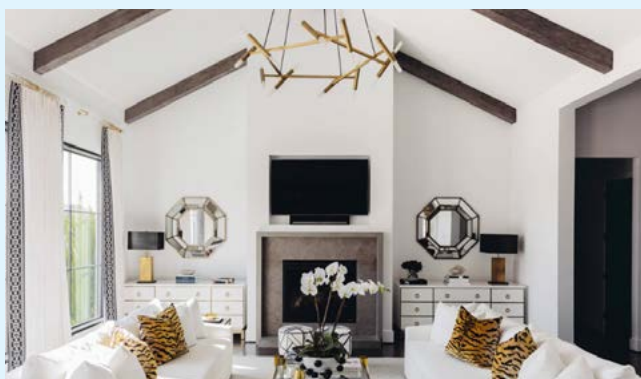
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What does it take to become an **INTERIOR DECORATOR**?

Interior decorators are concerned with the appearance and functionality of indoor spaces. They use furniture, paint schemes, carpeting and decorations to transform the interior of a building. When starting a new design job, they meet with the client to determine style, budget and needs. The decorator then plans the space, often using a computer-assisted design program, and determines color palette, furniture options and interior layout. This role shares some similarities with, but also differs significantly from, the role of an interior designer. The primary difference is that interior decorators don't make architectural changes, and instead work to improve the existing room.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in arts and drawing and computer science are considered useful for prospective interior decorators, who need a good sense of visual awareness; and a high level of attention to detail. Interior decorators are well-versed in the principles of design, and know how to balance color, flow, and unity to ensure that all decorative elements work cohesively. This role also requires a high level of creativity, as decorators need to come up with creative ways to reinvent spaces. They need excellent communication and client service skills and the ability to make changes to ideas and rooms to accommodate the client's wishes throughout the decoration process.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. Many interior decorators complete an apprenticeship with a design firm, independent interior decorator

or furniture store. Industry experience, whether paid or unpaid, is crucial to honing skills and building a reputation. Interior decorators who work on a freelance or consulting basis should have some education and experience with principles like composition, layout, and color design, since these elements strongly influence interior decoration.

Working Conditions

Managing budgets, schedules and deadlines is equally important, as interior decorators must maintain a steady workflow and meet client expectations to stay profitable. In many cases, interior decorators also oversee and direct the activities of subcontractors. They may hire painters, floor refinishers, or carpenters to work in a client's space. They ensure these subcontractors complete their work according to schedule and without causing excessive inconvenience to the client. Interior decorators may also pay these subcontractors directly and bill the amount to the client. They travel often.

Job Prospects

Many interior decorators freelance, as salaried positions are scarce. Compensation varies, but those with established clientele, especially bigger corporate clients in the hospitality and services sectors, tend to earn more. Interior decorators must keep their projects within the client's budget while also maintaining profitability for their own business.

You too can live your passion and qualify as an Interior Decorator. If you are creatively minded, and interested in working on creating or improving the aesthetics of indoor spaces, a career as an interior decorator might just be the right career for you.

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Seeing people in my community suffer because of a lack of access to medical services convinced me. I knew early on that I wanted to play a part in ensuring that people who need medical attention are attended to.

Isabella Gustavo

Pharmacist Assistant

SERVING WITH DILIGENCE AND PRIDE IN A COMPETITIVE INDUSTRY

Working under the direction and supervision of licensed pharmacists, a Pharmacist order, prepare and dispense medicines. Introducing seasoned Pharmacist Assistant, Isabella Gustavo, whose caring, but methodical nature makes her a favourite amongst customers at one of the capital's landmark pharmacies, Langerhans Pharmacy. This is her story.

CHILDHOOD

Isabella Gustavo is the second eldest daughter of Angolan refugees who grew up at Rundu in the Kavango-East region. Bella, as she is affectionately known, grew up in a close-knit family and excelled in Mathematics and Science at primary school level. "I come from a family of science minds. Some family members in Angola are medical doctors and my dad's brother is also a renowned scientist. So, I guess it's in the genes", she shares.

Her teachers at Grootfontein High School soon recognised Bella's aptitude and encouraged her to pursue career options in the science field, which included the option of one day qualifying as a medical doctor. Not that the young Rundu girl needed their encouragement. "Seeing people in my community suffer because of a lack of access to medical services convinced me to get involved in the medical industry. I knew early on that I wanted to play a part in ensuring that people who need medical attention are attended to", she explains.

TERTIARY STUDIES

It came as no surprise to her parents and close friends when after matriculating; Isabella applied for a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Namibia. "I had good grades and was accepted. So, I made the journey to the capital and enrolled", she notes.

It was not to be, however, as financial constraints pushed her into abandoning her studies in 1996. "I had no choice to abandon my dream; not because of academic performance, but because of not being able to afford tuition and other student-related expenses. I couldn't secure a bursary or loan. My dreams were shattered. It wasn't easy", she reminisces.

Bella's science background played a part in her landing a job at a private medical practice, until she learned of an apprenticeship opportunity at Langerhans Pharmacy, to undergo in-service training as a pharmacist assistant. "It was a true case of grasping the opportunity. I did my utmost to impress at the interview", Bella notes.

APPRENTICESHIP

Although initially placed on a week's probation, Isabella's diligence, friendliness and attention to detail convinced Langerhans' managers to offer her a fulltime apprenticeship.

Working under the tutelage of seasoned pharmacists, Bella took to her new environment like a fish to water. "Apprenticeship is all about a commitment to succeed and a willingness to learn. The work is multifaceted, and on top of the technical and clerical parts, covers various other important aspects including a customer-service orientation, sound planning and organisational skills and being able to work in a team setup. These are all important skills to possess", Bella shares.

Isabella also excels on the customer-service front. Coupled with her multilingual ability and excellent communication skills, her customer-first approach has made her a favourite amongst the pharmacy's loyal clientele. "The apprenticeship at Langerhans offered me a way back into this sector. I've been here for fifteen years now and what keeps me going is the fact that I'm able to play my part in assisting others in caring for their health. I'm learning every day. And yes, it is nice when some of our regular customers walk in and ask for me. Some don't want to deal with my colleagues. They just want Bella. I'm their favourite", she jokes.



EMPLOYER ASSET

Pharmacies attach significant importance to quality, hygiene and safety; and expect employees to adhere and subscribe to such requirements. Isabella's attention to detail, methodical approach and professional demeanour make her an asset to her employer. Sound judgment and decision-making add to her reputation as a diligent and industrious employee who requires minimum supervision.



"Retail pharmacies can get very busy at times and our work is all about precision. As pharmacist assistants, our most important job is to lessen the pressure on our pharmacists and ease their workload. We need to be agile and flexible – mix a cream here, or stock a shelf there; or offer advice in terms of affordable off-the-shelf medication here, and place an order there. You're always on your feet. Never a dull moment", Bella explains.

"I cannot dispense all types of medicines; some are only dispensed by the pharmacist. Dispensing is not just about taking medicine off the shelf and giving it. Medicines can be dangerous. So, labeling and ensuring that medication instructions are clear and accurate are important. Furthermore, it is also about being pro-active to potential contra-indications. So, when a patient comes in, we need to know a bit about them, before giving them their medicine. We also ask questions such as what they are allergic to", Bella explains.

PEOPLE SKILLS

Not only are good pharmacist assistants multi-skilled, methodical and responsible, they also possess excellent people skills. Bella ticks all the boxes. “In as much as my approach is always very customer-centred, I appreciate that medication is highly legislated - and for good reason. As such, those of us who work in this sector need to have a thorough understanding of all requirements. It’s all about responsibility and often you need to be very firm with clients who might want to take shortcuts”, she explains.

“Although some of our clients consider me a favourite, make no mistake, I’ll be the first one to call them to order, should I sense that they are trying to take shortcuts. Trust and honesty from the client is very important. Just the other day, I had a customer who was not honest about the headache medication he took before, and after a cycling event. He kept on taking more of the same medication and ended up in the emergency room”, Bella shares.

“Communication is very important in my line of work. Sometimes you need to talk to people about things that they are very uncomfortable with. You need to be firm, yet tactful; steady, yet considerate. Often your interaction involves sharing confidential information and the client needs to be comfortable that she can trust you with that information. And you can never betray that trust”, she adds.

FAMILY LIFE

When away from the demands of work, Isabella finds sanctuary in the company of her 18-year old son and

her sister, Eunice, with whom she has formed a close bond, since childhood. They don’t only appreciate her friendship and support, but trust her advice and guidance on the responsible application and use of medication and a healthy lifestyle.

“My family is my refuge. Yes, my job can be taxing at times. Then, they are the ones I reach out to when feeling a bit down and out. My father instilled in all his children the value of family and the importance of strong family ties. I’m now like their own ‘family doctor’, as they will first call me to double check if their doctor-prescribed medication is indeed safe to use”, Bella shares.

Asked about the prospects for future local pharmacist assistants, Isabella is very enthusiastic. “With the right skill set, anyone can succeed. Although still a relatively small market, more and more opportunities are coming up with new retail pharmacies opening their doors and more hospitals and public health facilities being constructed across the country. These facilities need pharmacies, pharmacists and pharmacist assistants. So, if this is what you want to do, then by all means, give it a go. It’s a fun job”, Bella concludes.

Isabella Gustavo - A principled, diligent and industrious servant leader. Her selfless commitment to her calling allows her to enrich the lives of everyone she comes in contact with. Her story teaches us that in serving others, the seeds you plant are of more value than the harvests you reap. She is living her dream. She is living her passion!

It’s all about responsibility and often you need to be very firm with clients who might want to take shortcuts ”



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What does it take to become a **PHARMACIST ASSISTANT**?

Duties will vary depending on whether the Pharmacist Assistant works in a retail or hospital pharmacy. They work alongside licensed pharmacists and pharmacist technicians to help prepare and process prescriptions to inpatients, healthcare providers, outpatients and customers. Assistants' duties are typically clerical and organisational in nature and might include answering phones, filling out and filing paperwork, running cash registers and stocking shelves. They also receive and input prescription orders into system, liaise with healthcare providers to ensure prescription information accuracy, monitor and maintain inventory of medicines and pharmaceutical supplies, and place orders for required inventory.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in mathematics and science are considered useful. Attention to detail, accuracy, excellent verbal and written communication skills, strong customer-service orientation, planning and organisational skills, sound judgment and decision-making, confidentiality and being able to work in a team setup, are important skills to possess.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions to acquire industry-regulated certification. Training curricula covers aspects such as sterile product preparation, drug and medicine regulations and medical and pharmaceutical terminology. Training also

focuses on administrative and clerical procedures and systems, inventory management and relevant computer applications. Amassing industry experience is of utmost importance in building resumes, as employers prefer well-experienced workers.

Working Conditions

Pharmacist Assistants employed by dispensing pharmacists usually work shifts, whereas those employed by medical laboratories and medical aid funds tend to keep to normal business hours. Employers attach significant importance to quality, hygiene and safety and it is important for assistants to adhere to such requirements.

Job Prospects

Pharmacist assistants typically work in medical clinics, hospitals, offices of healthcare professionals, nursing homes, optical retail stores, pharmacies, medical laboratories. Other related industry occupations include Dental Assistant, Medical Assistant or Optical Dispenser.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Pharmacist Assistant. If you possess strong organisational skills and are methodical and service-oriented, you are a good candidate.

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It is very much about developing a sound customer-service orientation. We were trained that good housekeepers are trustworthy, caring and attentive; our work is about creating comfort for our guests.

Priskilla Panguleni
Housekeeper

SERVING OTHERS IS NOBLE AND HONOURABLE

Although commercial housekeeper jobs are varied for different places of work, it generally involves maintaining assigned areas in a clean and sanitary condition. Despite the physically demanding work, housekeepers need to maintain a positive attitude towards residents, guests and visitors. Meet Priskilla Panguleni, employed as a housekeeper by the Gondwana Group at one of its landmark hotels in Swakopmund, in Erongo . This is her story.

CONSCIENTIOUS CHILD

Hailing from Omashekediva village outside Ongwediva in the Oshana region, Priskilla Panguleni lost her mother at a very early age. Raised by her aunt, and supported by her older brother, Priskilla grew up a responsible and conscientious child at the mining town of Tsumeb in Oshikoto, always willing to assist with the daily cleaning and housekeeping chores.

“My elders were stern and from a very young age, we were taught that cleanliness is next to godliness; that cleanliness keeps the body, mind and soul clean and peaceful. I enjoyed cleaning the house. It was never a task to dread. It was fun,” Priskilla reminisces.

“Anyway, I always appreciated the encouragement by my aunt and other family members that I was a good and hardworking girl that one day would be able to manage her own household”, she adds.

EARLY AMBITION

Harbouring ambitions to become a radio presenter, Priskilla's Grade 12 results were not good enough to apply for media courses. And since her extended family, who supported her throughout her school career could not afford her enrolling for further studies - Priskilla started job hunting.

Upon the request of her uncle, she relocated to Swakopmund, where she soon landed her first job at a popular pizza restaurant. “Waitressing at Gabrielle's Pizzeria was an eye-opener and introduced me to the importance of fast and efficient customer service. Waiting on tables is physically taxing and rude customers often spoil your day. But, the tips are good when your service is good”, Priskilla shares.

“I also made good friendships whilst at Gabrielle's Pizzeria. When my uncle had to relocate to the North, I was on my own and my colleagues and some of the restaurant's regular patrons became my family here at the coast”, she adds.

NEW OPPORTUNITY

Priskilla's friendly demeanour and diligence got her noticed and patrons encouraged her to apply for vacancies at the Gondwana Collection's new and flagship establishment, the Delight Hotel. "It all happened so fast. Soon after handing in my CV - which didn't contain much other than my Grade 12 results and a few testimonials - I was called in for an interview and landed the job", she notes.

Having no formal housekeeping work experience, Priskilla took to the in-service training at the Delight Hotel like a fish to water. "I fitted right in. After all, I started training for this from a very young age. My mom and my aunt taught me well," she jokes.

"Gondwana's in-service training is not only about proficiency in the tasks we need to perform, it is also very much about developing a sound customer-service orientation. We were trained that good housekeepers are trustworthy, caring and attentive; and to appreciate that our work is about creating comfort for our guests," Priskilla explains.

DEMANDING WORK

Hotel housekeeping encompasses a wide range of skills. Vacuuming rugs and carpets, collecting trash, emptying wastebaskets, polishing furniture, changing sheets and making beds are what makes up Priskilla's daily routine. Her positive attitude, diligence with which she takes on and completes tasks, and customer-first approach have made her a favourite amongst colleagues and clientele, alike.

"I agree, it sounds monotonous and routine, but it is about finding the fun in your work. We say when changing the bed linen, we are now shaking out the old dreams from the mattress. When we disinfect the bathrooms, we sing goodbye to the germs. We karate chop the pillows back into shape", Priskilla shares. "As housekeepers, we are a special breed. We don't mind being on our knees cleaning a carpet stain, or lifting a heavy mattress to fit new bedsheets. On the contrary, we embrace the satisfaction that a freshly made bed, a stack of bleached towels and a clean room bring. Yes, it is physically demanding, but I don't need to go to the gym. My job keeps me fit," Priskilla adds.

EMPLOYER ASSET

Today, Priskilla's attention to detail and methodical approach as a housekeeper make her an asset to her employer. Sound judgment and decision-making add to her reputation as a diligent and industrious employee who requires minimum supervision.

"We are trained to clean from the back to the front. This strategy allows us to move through the room without tracking dirt and germs back into the areas we've already cleaned. And while we are trained to be invisible to clients, make no mistake, we are not invisible to our supervisors. They inspect our work and appreciate a well-cleaned room. They appreciate thoroughness, meticulousness and professionalism", Priskilla highlights.

"The Delight Hotel is a newcomer establishment in a very competitive space. Customer satisfaction and exemplary guest comfort are what can set us apart from our competition, and as housekeepers, we play a very important role in building the brand. Everything needs to be top notch: from breakfast to linen, from room service to transport. Poor service in just one aspect can determine whether a customer call on us again, or not. We are all guardians of the Delight Hotel image and reputation", she emphasises.



CAREER PROSPECTS

Although she excels in her work as a housekeeper, Priskilla has big dreams to grow in the hospitality and tourism sector. The fact that her current employer assigns a high premium to staff development and creates opportunities for employees to grow in other aspects of the hospitality and tourism industry, bodes well for Priskilla's future plans.

"Our supervisors expose us to all aspects of the hotel's operations. It's our Gondwana culture. They want us to grow. So, if you want to venture into maintenance, they arrange for in-service training with the maintenance colleagues. If you want to become a chef, they arrange with the restaurant and kitchens. If Gondwana recognises your potential and desire to

grow, they will support you ", she notes. "The hospitality sector offers endless possibilities and my future is secure. I'm well trained and well trained housekeepers are in high demand. However, I wish to improve my grades through distance education, whereafter I want to venture into the reception and hotel administration aspect of the industry. Other colleagues started out as waitresses and with Gondwana's support, they are now working in reception and in other areas", Priskilla shares.

DOWN TIME

When away from her demanding shifts, Priskilla enjoys shopping and watching her favourite soaps; or some days, when the weather allows, just a lazy day at the beach. "Swakopmund is good for me. I've acclimatised from the hot and often humid weather of the North. Now, I get plenty vitamin sea", she jests. She also finds sanctuary in the company of close friends who appreciate her friendship and support, and in serving her church community. "Although I don't have relatives here at the coast, I make it a point to regularly visit my relatives up North. My growth at the Delight Hotel makes them proud and they continue to encourage me to grow and reach for the stars. But, I'm not lonely, at all. I have my Delight Hotel family and when not at work, my friends Desire and Mimi keep my company," Priskilla notes.

"Going forward, as I plan to enroll at the Namibian College for Open Learning to improve my Grade 12 results, I might not have too much time on my hands anymore. But, I know my friends and family will be there to support me", she adds.

HOSPITALITY CHAMPION

When asked how she deals with comments that question the passion she displays for her work - commonly perceived as a low-status and low-income option - Priskilla affirms that she always makes it a point to deal with such comments in a tactful and diplomatic manner.

"Yes, I do get asked how cleaning up other people's mess can be fun? But, I prefer not to look at it that way, because in my book, you get two types of people - those that enjoy being served, and those that enjoy serving. I explain that I'm part of the latter group. I enjoy serving others. Serving others is a noble calling. Even the president is a servant", Priskilla notes.

"But, I also tell them about my dreams to grow in the fast-growing hospitality industry, and that housekeeping is only one of many rungs on the ladder I need to climb. I tell them that housekeeping teaches me what true hospitality is all about. It is about creating comfort", she concludes.

Priskilla Panguleni - Humble, but ambitious. A principled and caring young woman, motivated and driven by her desire to create comfort for others. Her story teaches us that we all are to be generous; not just in the results of our work, but also in our work. Her generosity in serving others is her true passion. She is living her passion!

The hospitality sector offers endless possibilities and my future is secure. I'm well trained and well trained housekeepers are in high demand ”



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What does it take to become a **HOUSEKEEPER**?

Housekeeping is a very physically demanding job that includes many, varied tasks. They typically handle light cleaning needed for the upkeep of homes as well as commercial buildings, such as offices, hotels, and hospitals. Typically they'll replace bedding, clean rooms, halls and bathrooms, vacuum, sweep, mop, replace toiletries and make beds. They notify managers of necessary repairs, collect and dispose of trash, assist guests when necessary, keep linen rooms stocked and properly clean upholstered furniture. In the hospitality sector, they need to maintain a professional appearance and interact positively with guests.

Skills & Knowledge

While a high school education isn't required, it certainly doesn't hurt. You should be able to perform simple arithmetic and be able to follow instructions. Employers often look for bilingual team members so that could be a huge advantage. Hotels and cleaning companies will expect you to be efficient and hardworking with a good eye for detail. You'll have to work well without direct supervision, whether you're working solo or with a team of other housekeepers. Housekeeping requires physical endurance; frequently standing or bending for many hours. Good housekeepers are trustworthy, caring and attentive.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. Many employers train apprentices on-the-job on various aspects of the work including how to use equipment safely, housekeeping tools and techniques, special surface care and maintenance, laundry, stain removal, ironing and folding, flower arrangements, valet and pet care.

Working Conditions

Housekeepers clean up other people's messes for their entire shift, so you've got to really love the satisfaction that a freshly made bed and a stack of bleached towels brings to your life. Often, you will be on your hands and knees, and you'll need to be able to lift things on a regular basis, so staying physically fit will be important.

Job Prospects

Housekeeping vacancies are on the rise especially given the fast-growing tourism and hospitality sector. Good, experienced and well trained housekeepers are in extremely high demand with ultra-high-net-worth families and high end hotels. The possibilities could be endless and you could even find yourself travelling or growing in your role and managing a team or a full estate. The key to climbing the career ladder, or finding these exciting jobs in the first place, is decent training and education.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Housekeeper. If you are detail-oriented, physically fit and strong and possess strong problem solving skills, you are a good candidate.

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There was always just this thing about wanting to get my hands dirty with more technical work, that kept on creeping up on me.

Michael Matundu

Heavy Equipment Mechanic

IMPORTANT COG IN AN INTENSIVE MINING PRODUCTION WHEEL

Heavy Equipment Mechanics maintain the big mobile mechanical, hydraulic and pneumatic equipment often used in the construction and surface mining industries. They test mechanical products and equipment after repair or assembly, to ensure proper performance and compliance with manufacturer specifications. Meet Michael Matundu, a qualified Heavy Equipment Mechanic, employed by the Swakop Uranium Mining Company. This is his story.

INQUISITIVE CHILD

Born in Windhoek, Michael Matundu was raised by his single mother and uncle in a loving family environment. The young inquisitive boy asking all kinds of questions was something the family soon got used to. However, this prying nature also landed him in trouble when he dismantled the toy cars his mother bought him. “I was always taking my toys apart, curious to see what was inside; what made them work the way they do. I was really very inquisitive and I think that’s why I love being a mechanic so much,” Michael reminisces.

Through his mother’s encouragement and support, Michael excelled in Mathematics and Science at the Jan Jonker Primary School in Katutura. “She really nurtured my talents and made me believe that I could be anything I wanted to be. Her reassurance has brought me this far. I could never have done it without her. She is my rock,” he shares.

“Performing well in Maths and Science somehow made my teachers and others believe that I was going to follow a career in engineering or medicine one day. However, I was never really sure, because there was always just this thing about wanting to get my hands dirty with more technical work, that kept on creeping up on me,” he adds.

EARLY AMBITION

Upon finishing Grade 12 at Dobra’s St. Joseph’s High School in 2005, Michael enrolled for a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering degree course at the University of Namibia. And although he settled in well in the university environment, it was the nature of his first year studies that made Michael change his mind about his career path. “The first year was predominantly theory. I felt frustrated and started to second-guess whether mechanical engineering was really what I wanted to do. After some thorough introspection, I realised that it wasn’t really my thing and I called it quits”, he notes.

Although somewhat dumbfounded, Michael's family supported his decision to enroll at the Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology (NIMT) at Arandis in Erongo, instead. "Looking back, I now appreciate the day when I signed up for training in Diesel Mechanics as the day I decided to follow my passion. Being surrounded by like-minded young people, who loved working with their hands too, was what I was really yearning for, all along. I felt right at home," he shares.

"The training environment at NIMT was an eye-opener. You are taught and trained by seasoned trainers with years of industry experience. I appreciated their consistent emphasis on the practical side of things, whereas the spirit of positive competition amongst trainee peers also makes you want to work harder and learn more about your occupation", Michael explains.

BURSARY OPPORTUNITY

The exposure to the production-intensive mining environment where heavy equipment and sophisticated tools make up a key component of the production process, opened Michael's eyes to a whole new world.

"It somehow just validated my decision to leave UNAM. NIMT is in close proximity to several mines, with whom the institution maintains strong ties. Through these solid partnerships, NIMT trainees gain access to the mines for in-service training", Michael shares.

It was through the diligence and drive that he portrayed during one such an in-service attachment, that Michael landed a bursary from a mining subcontractor company, Rotary Mining. "This opportunity arose in my final year at NIMT and I was told afterwards that it was my hard work and dedication that got me noticed and made me land the bursary", he notes.

Working at Rotary Mining allowed Michael to gain more real workplace experience and hone his skills. "Those early years were challenging, but fun at the same time. Working alongside seasoned mechanics in a pressure cooker production-intensive environment can be taxing. It's not only about technical skill, but about growing in other areas, as well. Things such as patience, endurance, focus and being deadline-driven, without compromising on quality output and safety, are skills you can only polish on the job. However, I was quick to adapt and soon I was able to take on more complicated tasks, which I completed without supervision", Michael shares.

FURTHER TRAINING

Heavy Equipment Mechanics ensure the proper performance of equipment and machinery through compliance with manufacturer specifications. Michael has been fortunate in having worked at two such manufacturers, Komatsu and Caterpillar.

"My stints at these leading industrial equipment service providers have really aided my résumé. At Rotary Mining, I worked on these brands. Now I was working for the same brands that designed and manufactured these machines", he explains. "The training offered by Komatsu and Caterpillar is very intensive and focused. Often, we would go to South Africa for a month for intensive training on the hydraulic part of things; then another month for only the mechanical part; then only the electrical part - very intensive and focused training", he adds. His time as a field technician at Komatsu also allowed Michael the opportunity to traverse the country. "You are given a vehicle and tools and should be ready to travel to any part of Namibia where Komatsu machines have broken down. Field work is exciting and the best training ground to hone your skills", Michael highlights.

DREAM JOB

With eight years of solid industry experience behind his back, Michael landed what he describes as his 'dream job' at his current employer, Swakop Uranium. As Lead Technician in the mine's mechanical workshop, he works alongside the workshop foreman in overseeing a team of artisans. "Our workshop team is a multi-disciplinary one. We have boilermakers, welders, fitters, diesel mechanics and auto-electricians under one roof. When a machine comes in for repairs or service, the auto-electricians tackle the electrical part, whereas the boilermakers at the same time may work on repairing a metal component. It's busy work", Michael shares.

Excelling in an environment where efficient machinery reparations and overhauls against strict timelines are the order of the day, Michael appreciates the value his work brings to his employer's production targets. "Without their heavy equipment, mines cannot produce. Swakop Uranium



is a leading company with ambitious production targets and our work is therefore of utmost importance to ensure that machinery and equipment are maintained and serviced, and when broken down, can re-enter the mining process without impacting production targets. The work we do is therefore very important”, adds Michael.

“Here, we focus on all aspects of the work, including diagnosing and repairing malfunctions and the disassembly and reassembly of equipment and components. Time is of the essence and so is quality work. I can’t compromise on quality. I’m proud of my reputation and quality work ensures that my reputation remains intact”, he emphasises.

SAFETY FIRST

Michael and his team assign a high premium to the establishment of a safe work environment and the execution of tasks against high quality outputs and Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) specifications and standards. Michael’s wealth of experience and OEM knowledge, having worked on a wide range of Komatsu and Caterpillar machinery and equipment at his previous employer, make him an important cog in the safety and quality wheel. “We have 38 different types of machinery in this workshop, which includes track doublers, tyre doublers, excavators, fill bousers and loaders, which load the trucks”, he highlights.

Appreciating the importance of the mine’s wide array of specialised heavy equipment in allowing it to keep to production targets, Michael pays significant attention to proactive and preventative maintenance.

“At Swakop Uranium, we take pride in our safety record. We have an important role to play in this regard and as such, we strive to be as pro-active as we can. On a daily basis, I visit the mine’s open pit to inspect and assess machines and equipment. And where I detect potential risks, I call in machines for immediate workshop repairs”, Michael stresses. “Safety is also very much about team work. It is our corporate culture. We all have a responsibility to safety”, he adds.

BIG DREAMS

Although he performs well in his work, Michael still has big dreams for himself. One of his goals is keeping up with the rapidly changing technology in the mechanical industry. “Professionally, I would like to again enough expertise to one day run and own a fully functional workshop, in which I can employ other artisans. This is the dream”, he notes. “Diesel mechanics play an important role in keeping the physical and the economic engines of the world running. Most major industries, from mining to agriculture, from transport to manufacturing, rely on machinery that needs to run efficiently;

without somebody to fix and maintain equipment, these industries would literally grind to a standstill”, Michael shares.

Michael’s work also involves grooming apprentices and less-experienced artisans. Appreciating his own journey and how others empowered him to become the productive, skilled and experienced technician he is today, Michael does so with passion and diligence. “It’s all about attitude. I appreciate the role other seasoned artisans have played in my own growth. However, it is also about my own development and growth. Technological advancement is the order of the day and I need to stay abreast of changes. In as much as I am reasonably experienced, I still have a lot to learn from my supervisors who have been in this trade for much longer.”, he stresses.

AVID FISHERMAN

During his much needed off time, Michael spends most of his days fishing or relaxing with friends. On days when the weather permits it, Michael and his good friend, Sam Nyau cast their fishing rods looking for a strong bite. “Fishing is a gamble, some days you get land plenty and some days you go home empty-handed. But for us it’s more about the soothing effect the waves have on you after a long week. It’s about unwinding, being one with nature. And if you’re lucky enough, you get dinner sorted as well, “he jokes. Apart from working and angling, Michael finds encouragement in rebuilding and restoring old cars. “I recently restored an old and run-down Nissan 1400 pickup as a fun project. It was a complete overhaul of the engine and transmission, and suspension work done with performance equipment”, he shares.

Michael Matundu: A humble, but focused artisan whose drive to succeed makes him excel in a demanding work environment. His story teaches us not to waste time comparing ourselves to others. That the best yardstick for our progress as individuals is not other people, but ourselves. That in mastering our work, we never reach the end. He is living his passion.

Diesel mechanics play an important role in keeping the physical and the economic engines of the world running ”



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What does it take to become a **HEAVY EQUIPMENT MECHANICS**?

Heavy Equipment Mechanics diagnose, adjust, repair, or overhaul mobile mechanical, hydraulic, and pneumatic equipment, such as cranes, bulldozers, graders, and conveyors, used in construction, logging, and surface mining. Using operating manuals, blueprints, and technical drawings, they test mechanical products and equipment after repair or assembly, to ensure proper performance and compliance with manufacturer specifications. They perform other routine maintenance work on equipment and vehicles; examine parts for damage or excessive wear, using micrometers and gauges; and schedule maintenance for industrial machines and equipment.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in mathematics and physics provide a strong foundation for a heavy equipment mechanic's career. You'll have to work well without direct supervision, whether you're working solo or within a team. This work requires physical dexterity and endurance; frequently standing or bending for many hours. Good mechanics are problem solvers. They are diligent, attentive and safety conscious.

Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions and course offerings usually cover the basics of diagnostic techniques, electronics, and other related subjects. Because vehicle and equipment technology is increasingly sophisticated and computerised, some employers prefer to hire mechanics who have completed a formal post-secondary training programme. Many employers train apprentices on-the-job on various aspects of the work including diagnosing and identifying malfunctions; the use of computerised tools and equipment; and the disassembly and reassembly of heavy equipment and components. Apprentices advance to more complex work as they show competence.

Working Conditions

Most heavy vehicle and mobile equipment service technicians work full time, and many work evenings or weekends. Overtime is common. Although many work indoors in repair shops, some travel to worksites to make repairs because it is often too expensive to transport heavy or mobile equipment to a shop. Generally, more experienced service mechanics specialise in field service.

They drive trucks that are specially equipped with replacement parts and tools, and they spend considerable time outdoors and often drive long distances. Heavy vehicle and mobile equipment service technicians frequently lift heavy parts and tools, handle greasy and dirty equipment, and stand or lie in awkward positions. Assistants under more experienced designers before advancing to independent designer, chief designer or creative director. Aspiring designers starting out in their careers spend a considerable amount of time marketing themselves and their products to attract public attention. Established designers continue marketing themselves through advertisements in the print and online media.

Job Prospects

Fashion designers work for design firms, boutiques, manufacturing companies, wholesalers, department stores, chain retailers, retail shops and boutiques. Some are also self-employed. In smaller companies the fashion designer will likely wear many different hats, acting as designer, patternmaker, and even colorist. Solo designers, if just starting out, will wear all hats until he or she establishes a name in the industry. Some self-employed fashion designers may earn many times the salary of the highest paid salaried designers.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Fashion Designer. If you are creative, personable, detail-oriented and knowledgeable of fashion trends, you are a good candidate.

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I just love to create and be in such a zone of focus. It is such a personal process, because you are adding a piece of yourself to your work.

Lila Swanepoel

Video Editor

FROM HOCHVELD TO HOLLYWOOD – BLAZING TRAILS FOR WOMEN FILMMAKERS

Video Editors assemble recorded video footage into a suitable finished product ready for broadcast and screening. Putting together footage, dialogue, sound effects, graphics and special effects, they use digital editing software in building video sequences that are seamless and flow logically, in conveying a message to an audience. Meet video editor Lila Swanepoel, who owns her own production company. This is her story.

FARM GIRL

Born in Windhoek, Lila Swanepoel fell in love with cinematography at a very young age. Spending most of her childhood with her grandparents on their farm, Klawerjas, in the Hochfeld area, near Okahandja, watching movies was her favourite pastime and she knew that making movies was what she wanted to do in life. “My name is actually Cornelia, but according to my mother, I had difficulty pronouncing my name when I started to talk. I called myself Lila and somehow the name just stuck amongst family and friends. And little Lila has always just had a thing for television and movies”, she shares.

Initially thinking that it was just a phase that would wear off as she grows older, Lila’s family started to recognise the weightiness of the young girl’s dreams, when she started questioning them about how movies were made.

“Not only was I interested in the stories, what started to interest me more was how everything was put together. Their basic explanations of daunting work by actors filmed on camera did little to dissuade me. On the contrary, it just spurred me on to learn more and every spare moment I had was spent in front of the screen, watching my favourite programmes and movies. I guess you could say that there was little time to be naughty”, she adds.

EARLY AMBITION

Although Lila’s mother, Marika, harboured hopes that sending her to South Africa’s Northern Cape Province to complete her secondary education at Upington’s Duineveld High School would make her relinquish this dream, and opt for a more viable and worthwhile career option instead, Lila, upon her return to Namibia, remained steadfast.

“I guess my mom somehow wished that a change of scenery would open up new horizons. However, when she asked me what I wanted to study upon my return, I was very clear that I still wanted to

enter the film industry. She asked me whether I was sure because she didn't had money to waste, but I remained adamant", Lila explains.

Mother Marika was still not convinced though and thought that her stubborn daughter perhaps just needed more time to reflect and think. "I didn't budge and remained steadfast. In fact, I ended up spending most of that gap year on the sofa watching TV, while working in a video rental shop. My persistence paid off and my mother eventually gave in for me to enroll at the Pretoria Technikon's Cinema and Television School for a three-year course", she adds.

ARDUOUS TRAINING

Lila felt right at home at her alma mater - today known as the Tshwane University of Technology - where she studied under multi-award winning South African filmmaker and director Katinka Heyns, known for the feminist perspectives in her Afrikaans films, such as 'Fiela se Kind' and 'Die Storie van Klara Viljee'.

"Although I was the only Namibian in my class, I was surrounded by like-minded peers who shared my enthusiasm for cinema helped me to settle in; whereas the intensive training opened my eyes to the endless possibilities the film production industry had to offer", Lila shares. "Not that it was a breeze. Cinematography training is demanding and often of a very technical nature. It's not only about laying the groundwork for young filmmakers. It's a blend of science and art in nurturing and growing the apprentice's skill and creativity", she adds.

Spending most of her time in the art department, Lila early on took a deliberate decision to absorb and learn as much as she could about the film industry. "Film school is all about ensuring that you expose yourself to the full spectrum - from scriptwriting to camera directing; from lighting to sound; from motion graphics to video editing techniques. You need to acquire skills in all these areas. And then it's a continuous process of honing and nurturing your skill set and staying abreast with new technologies", Lila highlights.

EXCITING WORK

After an eventful third year of practical apprenticeship, Lila graduated and entered the world of work. She soon landed opportunities in Johannesburg's lucrative business television production sector, while she also had a short stint

in England. Today, with nearly two decades of experience behind her back, she is considered by production houses as one of the best Namibia has to offer; having worked on the 2005 blockbuster, 'Lord of War', starring Nicolas Cage and of which parts were shot in Cape Town; and more recently, 'Mad Max- Fury Road', featuring Tom Hardy, which was shot here in Namibia in 2015.

"Having worked on commercials for the Sun International Group, Panasonic, Coca Cola, BMW, Samsung and MTC helped me to fit in seamlessly with these international productions. Video production is a collaborative process and editing is just the point at which all the preceding work comes together as a unified whole, integrating all the input - footage, sound, graphics and music - to create the ultimate vision. My job is this final, but important step in a long, complicated process. I just take it in my stride", she shares.

Lila has also won Best Production Design and Best Music Video Director awards from the Namibian Theatre and Film Awards, in 2014 and 2017 respectively. "Recognition is always reassuring. But, you cannot rest on your laurels. As a content creator, your workflow has to be very organised, and I try to move through the video editing process with efficiency and creativity. I feel content and creativity is king. It's what sets me apart from my competitors", Lila notes.

MULTI-SKILLED PROFESSIONAL

Having her own production company allows Lila the creative freedom to excel. "I mean you can see on my face how happy it makes me. I really love video editing. The feeling that you get when you have created something and you can share it with people, fulfills me. To be able to create and share how I perceive the world makes me very, very happy", she notes.

Video editing can be physically and emotionally taxing. Editors spend most of their time in dark rooms in order to best view the images that have been captured for a project. Lila often work into the late morning hours as the pressure to meet deadlines is ever-present.

"I am a one-man show, because I offer the full package. It's exhausting and demanding work that can easily suppress your creativity. So, in keeping the creative juices flowing, I often travel between projects. The change of scenery broadens my horizons and gives me time to catch up on new

technological developments in our industry, in other countries. Being your own boss has its perks, I guess”, Lila shares. Asked about what drives her to work such long hours, Lila’s response is quite thoughtful. “I think it’s a matter of getting into a complete zone of focus; a complete zone of creativity. It has a lot to do with your mind and your passion about a specific project. I just love to create and be in such a zone of focus that I don’t even want to get up to do something else. It is such a personal and intense process, because you are adding a piece of yourself to your work. That is my passion. I love it”, she shares.

CAREER CHAMPION

A good video editor not only possesses a mixture of practical and creative skills; but a good sense of visual awareness and a high level of attention to detail. The technically savvy Lila ticks all the boxes in working under pressure and meeting tight deadlines in a cut-throat production industry still dominated by men.

“I feel that in Namibia we need to encourage more female filmmakers to step up. Disappointingly, film-making is still a very male-dominated profession, although I am seeing more young females joining the fray. I am living proof that women can make it in this industry and I hope my story will inspire more young Namibian women to join in”, says Lila.



Lila has also embraced the epic rise of digital media and marketing through which many corporates today share their brands on different digital platforms. This development has not only changed the face of video editing, but speaks volumes about future employment prospects for this occupation in a world where video is leading the way.

“A key challenge video editors face is the omnipresence of social media, which requires you to convey a very strong message in a very short period of time. The

multitude of media platforms people are exposed to have made them so spoilt for choice and I think as a video editor, it is your goal to find the right ‘hook’ for your client and still convey the message in a very original way, while staying true to your client’s brand”, Lila highlights. “It’s been quite a shift. Smaller production companies like mine are consolidating the industry. You have to find a way to adapt and you have to find your niche. I think I have succeeded in finding my niche in the market. And if I can do it, others can too”, shares Lila.

Away from the demands of work, Lila unwinds by spending time with her close-knit family, especially when she has to babysit her sister’s children. “I love Hanneke’s kids. Seeing them grow up is so special and I’m very fortunate to have them in my life. My family is my support system. My successes are theirs; without them, I wouldn’t have achieved anything”, Lila concludes.

Lila Swanepoel: A creative, multi-skilled trailblazer. Despite her impressive CV, the single-minded focus of this humble and soft-spoken young woman teaches us that creativity is less about talent, and more about attitude. That true passion is not only about unleashing creativity, but about taking pride in what we do, in equal measure. That the best creativity is often the result of passion and good work habits. She is living her passion.

The feeling that you get when you have created something and you can share it with people, fulfills me. To create and share how I perceive the world makes me very, very happy



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What does it take to become a **VIDEO EDITOR**?

Video Editors are generally responsible for editing and assembling recorded raw material into a suitable, finished product ready for broadcasting. The material may include camera footage, dialogue, sound effects, graphics and special effects. Putting raw video footage together using digital editing software, they cut video sequences effectively to ensure the scenes are seamless and flow logically. Inserting music and sound effects. Displaying creative skill in delivering recorded content, they are technically proficient individuals with sensibilities that allow them to properly convey a message.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in arts, drawing and computer science are considered useful. Video editors possess a mixture of practical and creative skills; a good sense of timing and visual awareness; a high level of attention to detail; and the ability to work under pressure and meet tight deadlines. They need to be technically savvy, since they largely use computerised equipment and advanced video editing software in their work. Besides this technical acumen, the ideal digital video editor also has enough experience in film and video production to anticipate what directors and producers want out of their work. The success or ultimate failure of any video production lies in the hands of the video editor as the final production must be a coherent project that incorporates the storyline and do justice to the artistic director's vision.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. Formal training courses often cover the history and theory of film and video and a practical project, which

usually consists of a short narrative or experimental film. Completion of a practical project demonstrates knowledge and technical proficiency of the major areas of film and video production. However, some video editors typically learn the trade on the job and through apprenticeships in media and production houses, learning about all aspects of video production, including writing, editing, cinematography and directing. Industry experience, whether paid or unpaid, is crucial to honing skills and building a reputation

Working Conditions

Video editors spend large amounts of time in front of several monitors in a closed office environment. Video editors sit for extended periods of time, often in dark rooms, in order to best view the images that have been captured for a project. Editors need good vision, hearing and emotional sensibilities. They can work long and unusual schedules, based on the availability of jobs and scheduling of projects. Shift work may be required if editing studios are booked at night.

Job Prospects

Video editors work in many different industries, including film, broadcasting and advertising. The television industry is increasingly project-based, and as a result there has been a rise in the amount of freelance staff employed at all levels. Office hours apply mostly, but often, video editors work into the late morning hours as the pressure to meet deadlines is omnipresent. Many purchase their own software and computers and freelance, as salaried positions are scarce. Compensation varies, but those with established clientele tend to earn more.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Video Editor. If you are creative, detail-oriented, deadline-driven and knowledgeable of IT and software applications, you are a good candidate.

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I actually enjoyed the courses. It may sound strange, but the advanced circuitry models and intricate formulae were fun, actually. Because I enjoyed it, it made it easier to cope.

Arsenio Mouton

Instrumentation Technician

ENSURING SAFETY & SECURING TARGETS IN PRODUCTION INTENSIVE MINING ENVIRONMENT

Instrumentation and Control Technicians perform a very important role in the production-intensive industrial, commercial and mining processing operations environment. Managing plant measuring and control equipment, they install and service a variety of plant systems including safety and security, energy delivery (hydraulic, pneumatic and electrical), communication, and process control systems. Meet Arsenio Mouton, a C&I Technician, employed by diamond mining giant, Namdeb. This is his story.

YOUNG HANDYMAN

Born and raised in Windhoek, Arsenio Mouton, already during his days at Pionierspark Primary School demonstrated an eagerness to work with his hands. “I’ve always been fascinated by how things worked, especially electronics. It started with my remote control toy cars and later appliances such as video machines and TV sets; taking them apart to see what was going on inside; what made them tick”, Arsenio reminisces.

“Reassembling these items were often not as easy, as taking them apart. And when you do, they don’t work anymore, which often landed me in hot water. But looking back now, I guess it guided my parents into realising that I was more technically, then academically-inclined”, he adds.

Appreciating their child’s technical keenness, his parents enrolled him at the Windhoek Technical High School, where Arsenio completed his secondary school education in 2009. “I am indebted to them for their foresight. However, enrolling at a technical school comes with some stigma, as people tend to assume that technical schools are for those that are not academically gifted. And often, friends would tease you. But, I made the most of it and I excelled in Mathematics and Science”, Arsenio shares.

TERTIARY STUDIES

Arsenio’s Grade 12 results gained him entry to former Polytechnic of Namibia for a diploma course in Engineering Technology. Once he acquired his diploma, he enrolled for a Bachelors of Electronic Engineering degree at the same institution, now the Namibia University of Science and Technology, which he obtained in 2015.

NUST’s Electronic Engineering course is quite intensive and covers a wide range of areas, including Material Mechanics; Computer-Aided Drawing; Chemistry; Mechanics; Electronics; Applied Computer Programming; Intelligent Robotics; Control Systems; and Measurement Instrumentation. “I was disciplined. One can get distracted easily, but I think what helped in keeping me on track, was that I actually enjoyed the courses. It may sound strange, but the advanced circuitry models, intricate mathematical

formulae and fabrication design were fun, actually. And because I enjoyed it, it made it easier to cope with the demands. It was therefore a no-brainer when I acquired my diploma, to immediately enroll for the degree course”, he says.

“Electronic engineering is a rapidly advancing profession and is the driving force behind the development of the world’s information technology. From a theoretical perspective, the courses were well-structured and balanced. You also acquire other soft skills to prepare you for the labour market, such as numeracy and data analysis skills and advanced computer skills”, adds Arsenio.

WORLD OF WORK

Arsenio soon landed his first job as a Solar Installation Technician at local firm, Hopsol Africa, where he was responsible for the design and planning of solar electricity systems and the monitoring of installations. “Entering the labour market seemed daunting at first, but my Hopsol Africa supervisors made the transition easy; taking me under their wings and giving me the scope to not only apply my academic knowledge, but to gain invaluable on-the-job experience, as well. I guess for many of us that very first job would always be special; not always because of the very first paycheck, but because of the fact that it is where our employment journeys started”, Arsenio notes.

“At Hopsol, we provided turnkey solutions for photovoltaic power plants, while the company also acted as a wholesaler of all relevant parts for photovoltaic solar power solutions. Exciting work that laid the foundation for my career growth”, he adds.

Arsenio’s stint at Hopsol Africa was eventful, but short-lived. An application to Namdeb resulted in him being appointed as a Control and Instrumentation Technician at the diamond mining giant. “Working at Hopsol Africa allowed me to gain valuable experience in the photovoltaic power sector. The company’s strong emphasis on values like reliability, flexibility and professional competence certainly helped me in developing a hands-on mentality. However, when Namdeb came calling, I simply couldn’t refuse. And the job is right up my alley”, he notes.

IMPORTANT COG

Mines exist to produce valuable commodities, while making profits for investors and key shareholders. Production is expensive and the need to ensure optimum production levels is of utmost importance. If a mine can’t produce, it can’t make a profit.

Control and Instrumentation technicians play an important role in mining operations in optimising production. Whether diagnosing and repairing faults, maintaining and adjusting system components, or removing and replacing defective parts, they keep plants going and ensure targets are met.

“The four foundational measurements that instrumentation and control technicians deal with are pressure, flow, level and temperature. We install, calibrate and maintain components and instruments according to manufacturer specifications. We have to ensure that every level proxy sensor is working properly. We’re basically the eyes and the ears of the plant. So anything automated and which has a low voltage and low current, such as sensors and meters; that is where we come in”, Arsenio explains.

“The sensors and meters relay essential information about production. For example, is a water valve opening and closing; what is the level of the slurry bins; what is the weight of the bin. If the operators don’t have this information, a slurry bin can overflow and result in spillage and loss of production. This information is therefore of utmost importance in ensuring that you are running at optimal levels. Without it, you can easily go astray and production targets are then compromised”, he adds.

EXCITING WORK

Arsenio is a good problem solver. Diligent, attentive and safety conscious; and armed with his trusted multimeter, this Senior Instrumentation Technician and his team add significant value to the mine’s bottom line in a production environment that is becoming increasingly automated.

“For my team and I, our primary goal is recovery efficiency. And yes, we do achieve those targets. Our main objective everyday is to ensure that all diamond recovery machines are operating efficiently, and as per manufacturer specifications”, he stresses.

While interviewing Arsenio, a call came through from the control room that a water pressure regulator on the plant was malfunctioning. Fit and dexterous, and without any support and supervision, he springs into action, rushing to the site to test the regulator with his multimeter; and then on to the mine’s inventory store to collect a replacement part. “This job is not for everyone. You need to be patient and work well without direct supervision; whether you’re working solo, or within a team. Your problem solving and troubleshooting skills need to be second to none. You need to think on your feet and often you need to take tough decisions that might result in slowing down production”, he highlights.

SAFETY CONSCIOUS

It is not only Arsenio’s skill and ability to fix sometimes very complex instrumentation challenges that make him an asset to Namdeb, but the high premium he assigns to safety, as well. This trait ties in well with the mine’s philosophy of securing the safety of its most important resource - its workforce.

“Here at Namdeb, before we do any job, we first apply the SLAM principle: Stop, Look, Assess and Manage any risk we might find. It’s not all about the diamond

carat production targets. Here, we take pride in our safety record and we do not compromise on the safety of our most important resource, our workers. There are safety hazards all over at a plant, particularly when working with substances under pressure or at high temperatures”, he highlights.

Namdeb employs conveyor technology, which reduces the incidence of worker injuries significantly and Arsenio and his team of C&I technicians play an important role in keeping the conveyors safe and functioning.

“If you think about it, the very instruments and control meters and guages we install make the work environment a safer place. If I can limit the number of workers close to a belt, it creates a safer environment for everyone, because if someone accidentally falls onto a conveyor, it just creates unnecessary challenges. So our work is very much about creating a more hands-off environment and it also make the operator’s work a lot more easier”, explains Arsenio .

LIFELONG LEARNER

Excelling in the mining environment with its sustained focus on increased levels of automation in boosting production and profitability, Arsenio is now reading for a Master’s degree in Industrial Automation.

“Actually, the goal is registration with the Engineering Council. Not that it’s easy, because after physically taxing shifts, you need to dig deep to find the energy and motivation. But, I need to persevere, because registration will just open more doors”, he shares.

“It’s important that I stay abreast of new technologies. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has dawned upon us and as far as the control and instrumentation field is concerned, already there are talks of new technologies and mechatronics through which sensors and guages would be able to connect to the Internet cloud. This would mean that I no more would have to go to test a gauge on site. Instead, the gauge would relay a signal and tell us that it’s broken and needs to be replaced. We need to keep track with these changes”, Arsenio highlights.

Arsenio embraces the fast changes being brought about by enhanced production automation processes. “In a few years time, this trade is going to be much more about computer software applications, then anything else. This bodes well for my own plans as I have developed a strong interest in programming, as well. I’m just aligning myself for these changes that are sure to come”, he stresses.

CAREER AMBASSADOR

A good Control and Instrumentation Technician possesses critical traits such as self-discipline, problem-solving skills, attention to detail, great communication skills, a passion for technology, and patience in spades. The technically savvy Arsenio ticks all the boxes in working under pressure and meeting tight deadlines in

a cutthroat production environment. “It is a lucrative trade and qualified technicians earn solid incomes. Employment opportunities are available in numerous industries and with growth in the manufacturing and mining sectors, jobs are abound. But, you should not enter this field for this reason only. In my book, for you to excel, you need to have a passion for electronics and nerves of steel to work in a pressure-cooker environment”, he notes.

“I can recommend this career path to young Namibians who feel they have what it takes. More and more women are also joining the fray, which is very encouraging. Bottom line is, this is one of this trade areas that keeps you on your toes. Things are changing fast and if you are not prepared to embrace lifelong learning, you’ll risk your skill set to lose its relevance. It is about learning, and re-learning and learning again”, Arsenio adds.

When not at work, Arsenio spends time with his wife, Sheena. “She relocated to Oranjemund. A marketer by profession, there’s not much scope for her line of work here, but we are working on something that would allow her to live her passion too. We are a team now, and teams work together. Who knows, we might just welcome more members to Team Mouton, soon”. As they got married quite recently, the couple’s only ‘children’ are their adopted dogs, whom they often take for walks on the Oranjemund beach. “Relaxation is important, especially when you work at a mine. In fact, our employer encourages us to break away often to reinvigorate and recharge the batteries and we grab the opportunity to visit family and friends here in Namibia, or in South Africa”, Arsenio concludes.

Arsenio Mouton: Arsenio Mouton - diligent, industrious and conscientious. Driven by his aspiration to excel in the industrial automation field and to add value to the work and output of his employer, the sky is the limit for this energetic and ambitious Control and Instrumentation Technician. His story teaches us that hard work always pays off; that hard work beats talent any day. But more: If you’re talented and work hard, you will be hard to be beat. He is living his passion!

For my team and I, our primary goal is recovery efficiency. And yes, we do achieve those targets ”



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What does it take to become an **INSTRUMENTATION TECHNICIAN**?

Instrumentation Technicians install, maintain and repair the measuring and control devices used in industrial and commercial processing. They work with a wide variety of pneumatic, electronic and microcomputer devices used to measure and control pressure, flow, temperature, level, motion, force, and chemical composition. In general, they consult manufacturer manuals to determine test and maintenance procedures; and use pneumatic, electrical and electronic testing devices to inspect and test instrument and system operation. They diagnose faults and repair, maintain and adjust system components or remove and replace defective parts. They also calibrate and maintain components and instruments according to manufacturer specifications.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in mathematics and physics provide a strong foundation for an Instrumentation Technician's career. You'll have to work well without direct supervision, whether you're working solo or within a team. This work requires physical dexterity and endurance; frequently standing or bending for many hours. Good instrumentation technicians are problem solvers. They are diligent, attentive and safety conscious. The work is most rewarding for those who enjoy problem-solving, developing an area of expertise, and working with little direction or supervision.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions and course offerings usually cover the basics of diagnostic techniques, electronics, and other related subjects. Because automated processes are becoming increasingly sophisticated and computerised, some employers prefer to hire technicians who have

completed a formal post-secondary training programme. Many employers train apprentices on-the-job on various aspects of the work including diagnosing and identifying malfunctions and the use of computerised tools and metering systems. Apprentices advance to more complex work as they show competence.

Working Conditions

Working conditions can change dramatically from one job to another. Technicians working with manufacturing processes may be exposed to confined spaces, high elevations, noisy, dusty, cold or unusually warm conditions. There may also be exposure to radiation devices and laser equipment. There are some safety hazards, particularly when processing chemicals or working with substances under pressure or at high temperatures. The track record for safety in this profession is excellent with a low incident rate. Overtime is common and technicians are sometimes on-call at night and on weekends.

Job Prospects

With most industries becoming increasingly automated, instrumentation technicians are needed virtually anywhere there are control and metering systems. The production-intensive manufacturing and mining industries rely on automated processes, and as such, are major employers of instrumentation technicians. Opportunities can also come from the need to replace workers who retire or leave the occupation. The key to climbing the career ladder, or finding these exciting jobs in the first place, is decent training and education. Experienced instrumentation technicians may advance to supervisory positions, be employed as engineering technicians, or move into sales.

You too can live your passion and qualify as an Instrumentation Technician. If you are mechanically-inclined, detail-oriented, physically fit and strong, and possess strong problem solving skills, you are a good candidate.

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Studying is fun when you actually enjoy the subject matter. I was like a sponge that simply absorbed all the information.

Sirkka Kanalelo

Agricultural Technician

A FIREBRAND VISIONARY FOR WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Agricultural technicians have well-rounded skill sets that include a knowledge of farming operations, the ability to maintain industry equipment and an awareness of various farming procedures. Taking care of important functions such as maintenance and safety, they add value towards improving overall farming productivity. Introducing Sirkka Kanalelo, an Agricultural Technician employed by Avagro, a commercial horticulture entity based at Farm Shalom, on the banks of the Swakop River. This is her story.

GREEN FINGERS

Born in Windhoek, Sirkka Kanalelo grew up at Oshipumbu-Shomugongo outside Oshakati in Oshana. A proud product of Ongwediva's Mweshipandeka Senior Secondary School, Sirkka's interest in gardening started at a very young age. "Most definitely, I got my green fingers from my aunt. She had a passion for gardening and our entire backyard was covered in sweet potato, sugar cane, carrots, spinach and a few fruit trees", she recalls. Working in the home garden instilled in Sirkka an appreciation for tilling and cultivation. "Each day after school and homework, we got busy. Weeding, watering, pruning, fertilising, harvesting – all these skills we were taught from an early age. How to take care of the land and how to groom plants", Sirkka notes.

"Not only was my aunt's garden her pride and joy. We too enjoyed the compliments we would get from neighbours and visitors, and my aunt was always eager to share advice and give guidance. But more importantly, our garden's produce also helped to support us as a family, because we would sell our surplus to neighbours and friends, or on the informal market", she adds.

HOME GARDENER

The value their home garden added to her family's upkeep played a big role in Sirkka's career decision. Upon completing high school, her results secured her entry to the University of Namibia, where she enrolled for a degree course in Environmental Sciences.

"This is something that struck me at a very young age. Because, I kept on wondering about the impact of other families replicating our home garden model. I thought that if we can do this on a larger scale, then we all can boost our home incomes and become more self-sufficient. And this is what I kept on telling myself, I was going to do one day. I knew already then that I was going to end up in the agriculture sector", Sirkka explains. This dream gained further traction when at high school, Sirkka got introduced to the concept of environmental management.

"I was drawn in by the key notion of sustainability; to use and manage our environmental resources in a responsible way that can ensure that future generations enjoy those resources, as well. There cannot be agriculture without the environment. And this requires all of us to be more accountable to the environment", Sirkka shares. "In fact, whereas before I wanted to become a crop farmer, I now wanted to be able to teach others about viable and responsible crop production methods", she adds.

TERTIARY STUDIES

With her family's support, Sirkka excelled in her studies at UNAM. "Environmental Science incorporates the study of the physical, chemical and biological processes that take place on the Earth, as well as the social, political and cultural processes which impact the planet. As an Environmental Science student, you strive to understand the complex relationships between mankind and the environment, drawing on a diverse range of disciplines", she explains.

The enthusiasm of her lecturers and being surrounded by like-minded peers who shared her passion for the environment, made it easier for Sirkka to cope with the demands of her programme. "Studying is fun when you actually enjoy the subject matter. Although it involved a lot of reading and laboratory work, my strong passion for agriculture and the environment made it easier to cope. I was like a sponge that simply absorbed all the information", she says.

"Not only did I gain from a well-structured and balanced course, I was also able to acquire other key skills to prepare me for the world of work, including numeracy and data analysis skills, general computer skills, research skills and laboratory and fieldwork skills. I was also taught to present findings clearly and persuasively", she adds.

WORLD OF WORK

Upon obtaining her Bachelor of Science degree - majoring in Crop Production - Sirkka started job hunting. Her go-getter attitude and drive to succeed made it easy for her lecturers to recommend her to the Avagro company. "I will always be indebted to my lecturers for their recommendation. It paved the way for me to enter the sector and to gain first-hand experience at an entity with such a progressive outlook on agricultural production", Sirkka highlights. "Avagro, through our Head Agronomist, Ranjit Patel, has started a high-tech agriculture for women empowerment programme. I'm so fortunate to be part of this initiative. It's rationale is to train mothers, because if we train mothers, the children will also learn. This is something I relate to strongly, considering the way my own aunt introduced me to this world", she adds.

To date, the programme has trained about twelve women in the area of vegetable and flower production. Sirkka assists in this regard and is considered a major asset in Avagro's visionary long term objective to empower Namibians in general, and agriculture graduates specifically, with practical skill sets towards setting up their own agriculture businesses. "This opportunity is doing me a world of good. I learn from seasoned international experts, while honing my own practical skill set", explains Sirkka.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A key expectation for agriculture technicians in commercial farming settings such as Avagro with its intensive scientific setup, is to evaluate how the environment impacts farming in order to help improve overall operations and productivity. To do this, they conduct experiments, collect and analyse data and

prepare reports based on their findings. Sirkka has taken to this environment like a fish to water. "Division of labour is very important. All our work is broken down into smaller components, where different people get to perform separate tasks. We adhere to strict daily schedules and strict procedures which we follow to the tee. I always walk around the greenhouses with my notepad and pen. Is the temperature at the desired level? Is the top netting intact? Are the side curtains working? It's focused and busy work and you cannot let your guard down", Sirkka notes.

"Greenhouses are warmer than the great outdoors, because all that sunlight coming in through the clear glass or plastic walls turns into heat when it hits a solid surface, such as the ground or the plants inside. Light is really a form of energy, which is why plants can use it to fuel photosynthesis", she explains. "The temperature needs to be at a certain level. If it is around 18 to 19 degrees, then we have to open the top net to allow the plants to get maximum sunlight to support photosynthesis. If the temperature is about 20 to 24 to 29 degrees, that is when you open the side curtains as that give the plants some air circulation", she adds.

HARD LABOUR

Despite being a woman, Sirkka doesn't shy away from the sometimes-hard physical labour in often-inclement weather that comes with her job. On the contrary, when you are as passionate about tilling and cultivation as she is, it makes sense why she often just have to dig her green fingers into Farm Shalom's fertile desert sands. "Agriculture and physical labour go hand in hand. Personally, I have no qualms with putting in the effort and I know that there are many other young women out there that would embrace such an opportunity. We're all different, I guess. For me, there is nothing more fulfilling than putting a seed into the soil, seeing it sprout, nurturing it and to see it grow into a healthy and productive plant in the greenhouse. When that seedling starts to yield, it's even more special", she shares. "That's why the nursery, where we keep our seedlings is my most favourite place. It is the heart of our agricultural operation. If you ensure that all your young seedlings are well taken care of, then you are most likely to flourish", Sirkka adds.

AGRICULTURE ENTREPRENEUR

Experiencing how the agriculture sector continues to gain prominence and how the need for skilled and qualified agriculture technicians continues to grow, Sirkka channels all her time and energy towards supporting her employer's business objectives. "My degree course merely laid the foundation and I have since benefitted immensely from the further onsite practical training I have received. Over the course of three months, they've taken me through so many practical aspects, including nursery preparation, irrigation, intracaltration and harvesting and packaging. I'm very close the full package now", she notes.

Sirkka appreciates that the skills and experience she is picking up along the way stand her in good stead to realise her dream to one day establish and manage her own crop production facility. "I'm confident that I'll

be able to do so. The beginning is always a struggle, because investing in agriculture and infrastructure can be quite expensive. You start small, but still have to spend quite a lot in terms of your initial investment and layout", she notes. "However, this is my dream and I'm going to make it happen. I'll start small and with my expertise and hard work, I will make the first greenhouse a success. Then it should be easier to find investors and gear more women to join in building more greenhouses. I'll then take the model to other regions until I've got greenhouses all across the country. It's going to be a women empowerment through smart agriculture success story", she shares.

LIFELONG LEARNER

Away from the greenhouses and plantations, Sirkka keeps her circle small and prefer to surround herself with like-minded peers, who are equally as passionate about the agricultural sector. Time is a luxury, anyway; and when not engaging in a good book, Sirkka works on her thesis. "I have ventured into post-graduate studies, which keeps me very busy. The integrated environmental sciences field continues to evolve and it is important for me to keep track with new developments and technologies. There is still so much more I can learn and need to learn", she explains.

Asked about the focus of her thesis, Sirkka explains that it is important for her to play a part in promoting localized crop production. "We need to move away from the dominant perception that Namibia is too arid and water-scarce to succeed in this regard. Greenhouse can help increase plant growth and fruit production and even allow you to grow plants that wouldn't normally survive in your climate. We need to embrace these technologies and women can play a special role in harnessing this potential. If women in Zambia, Kenya and Uganda can do it, we can too. Namibian women can run farms as farm managers. We can also do well in this sector", she concludes.

Sirkka Kanalelo: Far-sighted and driven; focused and passionate. Despite her youth, this visionary woman is destined for greater things in leveraging our country's agriculture sector and in tapping the potential it holds for community empowerment and food security. Her story teaches us not to waste time chasing success and others; but to appreciate that every flower blooms at a different pace. That as long as you excel at your own passion and perfecting it, you will achieve success - and then - success will come chasing after you. She is living her dream. She is living her passion.

There is nothing more fulfilling than putting a seed into the soil, seeing it sprout. When that seedling starts to yield, it's even more special ”



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What does it take to become an AGRICULTURAL TECHNICIAN?

Agricultural technicians typically work on commercial farms and entities. Other than supporting the day-to-day farming operations and taking care of important functions such as maintenance and safety, they add further value towards improving overall farming productivity. They evaluate how the environment impacts farming in order to help improve overall farming operations. To do this, they conduct experiments, collect and analyse data and prepare reports based on their findings.

Skills & Knowledge

Agricultural technicians' duties can vary across the job market, depending on whether they work in crop production or animal husbandry. Generally, technicians need to know how to maintain research, field and chemical application equipment. They often need to be able to operate vehicles or other motorized equipment and should have knowledge of procedures used in farming and land preparation. An agricultural technician has a well-rounded skill set that includes a knowledge of farming operations, the ability to maintain industry equipment and an awareness of various farming procedures. They also need to have excellent communication skills, be able to diligently record data for reports and be willing to carry out physical tasks, sometimes in inclement weather.

Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. Many technicians need on top of a regular driver's license, further licenses and training to operate specialised and often heavy farming machinery, such as tractors and harvesters. Prospecting employers prefer employees who demonstrate own initiative. Amassing practical and industry experience is of utmost importance in building resumes.

Working Conditions

Despite the weather conditions, the work often involve some physical labor in addition to writing reports that accurately record information conducted from research readings and operations. Technicians may set up the feeding of plants and crops on a range, as well as maintain their inventory levels through purchasing chemicals, seeds and supplies required for use their work. It is often necessary for them to be able to sterilize and clean equipment used in labs for the tests that they conduct.

Job Prospects

As a priority growth sector, the agriculture sector continues to gain prominence and the need for skilled and qualified technicians continues to grow. Greenscheme projects countrywide employ qualified technicians, who can articulate into further and relevant qualifications. Postsecondary coursework for this field can include topics in animal genetics and nutrition, laboratory methods and machinery used in agriculture, whereafter lecturing and offering training in this field become viable career prospects for qualification holders. You too can live your passion and qualify as an Agricultural Technician. If you are detail-oriented, physically fit and strong and possess strong problem solving skills, you are a good candidate.

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In fact, the only thing I regret, is not taking this step into the upholstery world, much earlier. I should've started ten years ago.

Shirley Uris

Upholsterer

FROM ADMINISTRATOR TO ENTREPRENEUR - REDISCOVERING HER TRUE CALLING

Upholsterers construct or repair upholstered furniture. Replacing worn coverings, padding, and webbings, they finish furniture pieces by attaching ornament trims, buttons and grommets. Meet Shirley Uris, sole owner of newcomer upholstery firm, Décor Diva, and whose creative skill as an upholsterer has seen her making waves in this exciting and lucrative sector. This is her story.

COMPETITIVE CHILD

Upholstery work is dexterous nimble-finger work, requiring both physical strength and creativity - skills Windhoek-born Shirley Uris has had in equal measure, since childhood.

Growing up a typical tomboy with a strong competitive streak, Shirley was the type of child that always wanted to win at all costs. "According to my mom, I didn't like dresses and was happiest when playing with the boys. I guess I was your typical tomboy. Yes, and I hated losing. In fact, I still do. I remember how I would be angry for days if someone else outperformed me in school. I always wanted to be first", she reminisces.

Little tomboy Shirley also demonstrated a strong creative side. "I don't know where it came from, and I didn't even know then what an interior decorator was, but I've always just had this thing for how people would decorate their interior spaces", she shares. "I would always make comments about how nice a space looked and add my two cents in terms of what I would've done differently in terms of arranging furniture pieces and setting an ambience", Shirley adds.

YOUNG AMBITION

Confronted with what to make of her life, Shirley, upon completing Grade 12 at Khomasdal's Dawid Bezuidenhoudt High School, Shirley wanted to become an airhostess. "I guess it was just another way my creative side was coming to the fore. I fell in love with the way airhostesses looked, how well groomed they were, how they carried themselves, how they dressed, the make-up. I love a woman that looks well after herself. And travelling and getting to see the world, of course", she explains.

Circumstances did not allow, however, and Shirley ended up in the civil service, landing employment as the personal assistant to the Director of Civil Aviation. "Ending up in the administration field was not the dream, but I was able to excel because I'm a meticulous go-getter, who loves order and organisation. Although not an airhostess, working as a personal assistant also gave me the space to maintain a well-groomed professional

look. And although not in aircraft, my work was still about aircraft”, Shirley chuckles.

Soon, Shirley found greener pastures at electricity utility, NamPower, which coincided with her enrolling part-time in an Information Administration diploma course at the then Polytechnic of Namibia. “The NamPower years were good years. Working for a leading employer, I was able to study part-time, whilst gaining valuable experience in and exposure to the corporate world and growing immensely as a person”, she notes.

TRUE CALLING

After nine years of dedicated service to the power utility, Shirley realised that something was still amiss in her life and that she could no longer ignore her creative calling. “It wasn’t a case of not enjoying my work. Instead, it was more a matter of not feeling gratified. After a lot of introspection and self-examination, I decided that I had to do something about it”, she shares.

Surfing the Internet for information that could guide her into career options through which she could express her creativity, Shirley came across a Johannesburg-based institution, which offered short courses in interior design and decorating. “I enrolled for their three-month short course and delving deeper into the intricacies of interior design, merely affirmed that I was doing the right thing. The change was heaven-sent: from tedious files and appointment books to exciting colours and fabrics – I enjoyed the training immensely”, Shirley explains.

Armoured with her new skill set, Shirley was ready to enter the interior decorating market. This proved easier said than done, however. Not one to give up, she realised that to make it as an entrepreneur in this cutthroat environment, she had to enter the upholstery sector. “I saw the demand within the field of upholstery. Mind you, upholstery is also part of interior design. Yes, the demand for upholstery exceeded all the other sectors I studied for. And that’s how I ended up in this field”, she highlights.

A MAN’S WORLD

Today, Shirley’s thriving business, Décor Diva, continues to make steady strides in establishing itself in the competitive upholstery market. “Competition is tough, as more and more upholstery players enter the game. However, we believe that it is our creativity and commitment to quality workmanship that will continue to set us apart, from the rest. We keep busy. And even when orders are low, we remain productive and work on new unique pieces for some of our discerning clients”, she notes.

It wasn’t smooth sailing all the way, however. Shirley had to deal with low business volumes initially, and male employees who found it difficult to adjust to a female boss. “I started out with an all-male team. However, somehow they could not deal with having a lady boss. They were disobedient and unreliable. It stressed me out to a point where I had cut them loose and went solo, all on my own”, she recalls.

Shirley also struggled in convincing her husband, Charles, an established electrical installations contractor, that becoming an upholstery contractor was what she wanted to pursue. “My husband didn’t like the idea of me doing this job. It really took me a while to convince him that I wasn’t necessarily doing it for the money, or because I was struggling financially; but because I am passionate about this work. He eventually recognised that this was indeed my true passion, and started supporting me. He continues to support me in so many ways”, she shares.

ALL FEMALE TEAM

Today, the couple’s partnership continues to grow. This mother of three daughters uses her administration expertise to support her husband’s businesses and ventures, whereas he has made available premises in the Northern Industrial Area, from which Décor Diva operates.

Now employing her retired mother to manage the workshop, Décor Diva is a true family business. “After letting go of my all-male workforce, I felt somewhat destitute and lost, contemplating to just close shop and going back into the administration world. But, my retired mother came to the rescue. She is very reliable and takes care of some of the dreary day-to-day tasks, such as cleaning the workshop and managing orders and supplies. She too, has grown into the upholstery world. For her, it’s like a new lease on life. She is now my right hand”, says Shirley.

“We’ve always been close, but the mother-daughter relationship continues to strengthen. Often I forget she is a pensioner, especially when she starts complaining about some pains and aches after a day’s work. But, the next day, she is back at it again. Full of energy and drive, she has my back”, she adds.

Shirley’s cousin, Zaheeda Engelbrecht is an apprentice upholsterer, and is the other member of the Décor Diva team. “There are no men here; only the three of us. Zaheeda is a good apprentice. She too has my go-getter mentality and she is not afraid to put in the hard hours. Together, we make a solid team and we prove to others that less indeed can be more”, Shirley notes.

DRIVEN ENTREPRENEUR

Managing an upholstery business is arduous and demanding work. Time management is of the essence in navigating between workshop manufacturing, machine maintenance, attending to clients, site visits and administration tasks. Shirley takes it all in her stride, because she loves what she is doing.

“It may sound cliché, but it is really about finding that thing you love and making it your purpose. Think of it, to be in a space where you have the freedom and confidence to grow and nurture your innate and special talent, expressing yourself creatively through your work; while at the same time earning an income from it. I am my own boss. I am an employer, and not an employee. In fact, the only thing I regret, is not taking this step into the upholstery world, much earlier. I should’ve started ten years ago”, Shirley shares.

Quick to point out that being your own boss comes with risks and responsibilities, Shirley shares that entrepreneurship is seldom easy and that challenges are aplenty. “You need to keep your eyes on the prize, even when things get slow. It’s about persistence, selling and growing your brand, and doing the right things the right way. In my case, I’ll say that I’m succeeding as an entrepreneur, because I have the full package: a willingness to get my hands dirty, a desire to grow, an ability to innovate and adapt, an appreciation of the importance of marketing, and most importantly; making work of your dream”, she adds.

HANDS-ON MARKETER

Marketing her venture and introducing her products and services to new clientele, stand central in Shirley’s ongoing success. Before and after pictures of furniture pieces help in this regard. I am able to show prospective clients how we were able to transform a worn-out and lackluster piece into something that attractive and unique. Of course, we cannot compromise on quality, because ultimately, quality determines whether someone will be a repeat client, or not”, she says.

“Going forward, I need to intensify my marketing efforts, especially in the digital space where social media is proving to be a very effective platform in attracting new customers. Word-of mouth is also doing the trick, especially in terms of the work we do for event planners. They order very specific items and we have done many special pieces for various event planners, from scratch. We consult, after which I design and manufacture what

they need. It is a small but lucrative niche market that I intend to explore further”, Shirley notes.

“At the end of the day, if people do not know about your service, how can they support you? It’s about being visible. It’s about selling yourself and your brand. It’s about quality, quality and again, quality”, she adds.

CAREER CHAMPION

Shirley embraces the fact her journey is seen by many as an example of how technical and vocational skills can empower individuals and transform lives.

“I fail to understand how we often add further fuel to this negative perception fire around technical and vocational career options. The thinking that these career options are only for those that do not excel academically is gibberish. I am a good example that it is not true, because I’ve always excelled academically. It is just that working with my hands is what I enjoy most”, she explains.

“I go out of my way in fighting this widespread mindset and it is important that we all do so. I’m a parent and my firstborn is studying towards a veterinary science qualification. She excels academically, but loves working with her hands, as well. The fact that she loves animals makes this an ideal career choice for her, and as parents, she has my full support. How can I not support her? My mother supported me; she still does”, Shirley says.

“I think as parents we need to accept that our children are unique and that their talents differ. Yes, a strong foundation and discipline are important in teaching them the value of education. But, it’s more about challenging them to get out of their comfort zones. It’s about identifying these unique gifts and nurturing and supporting our children to grow these talents, as well. After all, it’s about their dreams; not our dreams for them”, Shirley adds.

Shirley Uris – Bustling and inventive, her story teaches us the value of true commitment and creativity in starting a business: that a startup without creativity is comatose; that an entrepreneurial venture without hard work is paralysed. It is about doubling down on what you’re best at, and love most. The reward is in the work, because you keep getting better and what you are best at. She is a trailblazer for technical and vocational graduates wishing to start their own businesses. She is living her passion!



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What does it take to become a **UPHOLSTERER**?

An upholsterer is someone who makes, replaces, and repairs coverings on furniture and in vehicles. Most work for household and institutional furniture manufacturers, upholstery shops, and automotive interior repair shops. Inspecting furniture to find needed repairs in the frame, upholstery, and springs, they remove and replace old and worn padding, filling, and springs, whereafter they measure, cut, and sew fabric, and attach it to the furniture frame with tacks, staples and glue. They draw cutting lines on fabric following patterns, templates, sketches, or blueprints. Upholsterers need to stay current with trends in furniture design and styles. They select fabrics that meet their customer's lifestyle and preferences.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in mathematics, arts and woodwork provide a strong foundation for a Upholsterer's career. You'll have to work well without direct supervision. Upholsterers are good problem solvers, diligent, attentive and safety conscious. This work requires physical dexterity and endurance; frequently standing or bending for many hours, and picking up and delivering furniture.



Training

Generally, employers do not have any formal educational requirements for upholsterers. Some upholsterers take classes to learn how to measure, cut and sew fabric and upholster furniture, but there are few formal programmes to teach someone how to become an upholsterer. Some teach themselves by taking furniture apart to learn how it is made and what appears to be needed to replace the fabric, padding, and broken springs. Other upholsterers are trained through apprenticeships, where they are hired by an experienced upholsterer and get training to develop their skills. However, formal apprenticeships are difficult to find. Apprentices advance to more complex work as they show competence. Upholsterers keep updating their knowledge of upholstery techniques by monitoring the upholstery industry to identify trends.



Working Conditions

This trade requires persistence, accuracy and grit to deliver highly accurate work. Upholsterers spend a lot of time standing, bending, and crouching, which can be tiring. They are sometimes expected to work long hours, including during the night and over public holidays. Work is not always workshop-based, as upholsterers often need to visit current and prospective clients or suppliers to discuss upholstery fabrics, colors, and styles, and provide cost estimates. Self-employed upholsterers may do management and administrative tasks, such as managing the finances and inventory, and taking orders.

Job Prospects

Most upholsterers work for household and institutional furniture manufacturers, upholstery shops, and automotive interior repair shops. Some self-employed upholsterers work out of their homes, whereas some may specialise in working on replacing upholstery for the interiors of boats, cars and recreational vehicles. Most upholsterers work full time, and some work nights and weekends to accommodate customer schedules..

You too can live your passion and qualify as an Upholsterer. If you are detail-oriented, physically fit and creative, and possess good communication skills, you are a good candidate.

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I'm the type who learns better, while doing. And this is what being an artisan in the employ of Namdeb gives you. You get an opportunity to learn every day

Emlyn Olivier

Fitter & Turner

SURPASSING MINING PLANT AND PRODUCTION EXPECTATIONS

A Fitter and Turner is responsible for fabricating, assembling, maintaining and repairing precision instruments and equipment. Working conditions can often be noisy, dirty, crowded, and dangerous, meaning a lot of attention to and awareness of safety is needed. Meet Emlyn Olivier, a qualified Fitter and Turner, employed by diamond mining company, Namdeb, at Oranjemund in the //Kharas region. This is his story.

SUPPORTIVE YOUNGSTER

Born and raised at Rehoboth in the Hardap region, Emlyn Olivier is a product of the town's Ruimte Primary and M & K Gertze High schools. Soft-spoken and helpful, but often playful and mischievous like most boys his age; Emlyn never demonstrated a specific talent, and his school grades were never really anything to get excited about.

"School wasn't really my thing. As long as I passed, I was happy, so just scraping through became the norm. Growing up in a sports-crazy community, I was more into playing rugby. When I performed well on the rugby field, I was content. Nothing else really mattered. Carefree days", Emlyn reminisces.

When not on the rugby field, Emlyn looked forward to weekends on the farm. "I enjoyed helping my father on the farm. In fact, if ever there was a dream, then I guess it was taking over the farm from him one day", he shares. "In fact, this is how I often responded, when schoolmates shared what they wanted to become one day. I never really gave the topic any thought at school. Considering that my friends knew that my mother was a medical doctor, they were often a bit dumbstruck. I was clueless, really", he adds.

TOUGH DECISION

Not harbouring any specific career ambitions, Emlyn, upon completing Grade 12 was confronted with the harsh reality of deciding what he was going to make of life. Losing his father compounded matters, but luckily, his mother recognised her son's technical aptitude and with the help of his uncle, devised a way for Emlyn to apply to the Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology, NIMT.

"My aunt's husband is an experienced boilermaker. He showed my mother an application advertisement in the newspaper and together, they connived and submitted an application to NIMT, on my behalf. One day, I just received a call that I was accepted and needed to report at Arandis. And I did so, without delay. Not that I had any other options, either", Emlyn chuckles.

"Although one of my high school teachers was a qualified Fitter and Turner himself, I must admit that

I didn't really know much about what this trade area actually entailed. Yes, I knew somewhat more about welding, plumbing, carpentry and bricklaying, as these are trade areas for which Rehoboth artisans are renowned. So, I ended up enrolling nonetheless, because my uncle assured me that once qualified, I could look forward to a good salary. According to him, Fitter and Turners were always in demand, he adds.

EXCITING TRAINING

Training at NIMT's Arandis campus was an eye-opener for Emlyn. "Although in a new environment, I somehow felt right at home. The training was intensive and demanding. Not only do you cover the basics, but the course also prepares you for the on-the-job aspects of the work, including precision measuring, machine settings, fault diagnosis and the use of computerised tools, as you advance to more complex work and assignments. I also enjoyed the practical attachments to companies, because it opened your eyes to how your trade was actually adding value", Emlyn highlights.

"Being trained by seasoned artisans also helps a lot in changing your outlook. You appreciate the importance of focus, discipline, efficiency and quality. You are modelled and moulded into an artisan that takes pride in plying his trade. You are made ready to enter the world of work with confidence and self-discipline. You become a problem-solver", he adds.

Not that it was smooth sailing, throughout. Whilst at NIMT, Emlyn's girlfriend, Chantel - now Mrs. Olivier - fell pregnant with their son, Jayden. "It wasn't easy and proved somewhat disruptive. But, the realisation that I soon was to become a father and that I then would have a responsibility towards my child, made me to get my focus back and to push through. And so I completed my training and qualified as a Fitter and Turner. Another proud NIMT product", shares Emlyn.

WORLD OF WORK

Soon after obtaining his qualification, the young father landed a job at Namdeb at Oranjemund. Joining the diamond-mining giant at first seemed daunting. However, Emlyn, under the mentorship of long-serving and seasoned artisans, has since developed into a skilled Fitter and Turner.

"They are some of the best colleagues around. They take you under their wings and teach you the finer tricks of the trade. I've had some tough taskmasters, including my first supervisor and on-the-job mentor, Gustav Kapolo, or 'Kappies', as he is affectionately known. Kappies and others come from the pre-independence days when Namdeb was still Consolidated Diamond Mines. They helped to build this plant; they know it like the back of their hands", Emlyn notes.

Emlyn's diligent approach and eagerness to learn continue to stand him in good stead. Today, colleagues, young and old, value him as a skilled and competent artisan. "My transition from trainee graduate to artisan was not seamless, at all. It was often a pressure-cooker environment, especially when the plan halted to a standstill. It's then when you witness and learn from the Namdeb culture of teamwork and togetherness. Everyone chips in to get things back on track, boilermakers, control and instrumentation technicians, electricians, everyone", he explains.

"I'm the type who learns better, while doing. And this is what being an artisan in the employ of Namdeb gives you. You get an opportunity to learn every day. Not only about your own work, but because you cannot do your own work without the support of other line artisans, you end up learning about theirs, as well. Here, no trade is more important than the other. We are interlinked and interdependent, and together, we make Namdeb productive", Emlyn adds.

SKILLED ARTISAN

Fitter and Turner work is hands-on and often a bit greasy. Emlyn doesn't mind getting his hands dirty and his strong physique allows him to lead by example and deal with backbreaking tasks with ease. Skilled on the lathe machine, it is his ability to perform often-complex work without direct supervision in a noisy and hazardous work environment that makes him an asset to the mine.



"The job description for mechanical fitters and turners comes with a wide range of responsibilities. On the mechanical side, you do repairs on pumps and conveyors, whereas you also perform scheduled plant maintenance assignments. At the end of the day, we play an important role in ensuring that equipment and machinery function at optimal levels in Namdeb's very production intensive diamond mining operations. Downtime means loss in production", he highlights.

Emlyn's faith in his own ability is paying off. His peers appreciate him as a dedicated colleague that assigns a high premium to teamwork and quality outputs. "I've come a long way in establishing myself. And make no mistake, I've made some mistakes along the way in finding my feet. So, it is heartwarming that I'm now accepted as a valued team member. It means a lot when you know people not only value you because you are always in good spirits, but because they actually appreciate your individual skill and competence. They know you as a hard worker and a team player. It is very reassuring when you know you have the support of your team members and peers", he adds.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Although Emlyn for now does not plan to venture into further studies, it becomes clear that he has developed an insatiable thirst for learning everything new about his occupation.

"Technology is changing. And the world of fitting and turning is changing as well. New technologies are being introduced to our mining environment and for my skill set to remain relevant, it is important that I stay abreast of these changes. Health and safety considerations are equally important and as team leaders, we need to stay abreast of new developments in this area, as well", he highlights.

"In fact, every day comes with its own challenges and opportunities to learn. You grow in so many aspects – your skill level, how you function in a team, how you deal with pressure situations, how you solve complex problems. You appreciate the importance of hard work and teamwork. You learn every day", explains Emlyn.

Asked about whether he would recommend his line of work to his son, Emlyn emphasises the importance of parents supporting their children to pursue their own dreams. "This is exactly the role my mother played. My brother performed well academically. In fact, he was even a better rugby player. But, she recognised early on that I was differently talented. She recognised my technical inclination and pushed me into the right direction", he emphasises.

"My growth in this line of work has swayed her. Although a medical doctor and academician, she is now very proud of my growth and success as an artisan. She has witnessed me coming into my own and now she is an ardent supporter of technical career paths", Emlyn adds.

BALANCING ACT

Away from the production plant's noisy activity, Emlyn spends time with his wife, Chantel and son Jayden. "My wife has been part of my journey and she continues to support me wholeheartedly. There were times during my final trade assessments that I wanted to throw in the towel, but she stood by me. As far as Jayden is

concerned, he is my everything. Fatherhood changes your outlook; he is the main reason I get up in the mornings and do what I do. I have a responsibility to ensure that he grows up in a healthy and conducive family environment", shares Emlyn.

"This line of work is physically taxing, and often emotionally draining. It's a hardy, noisy environment and you need to stay on top of your game. Just when you think it's smooth sailing, something happens and you are called on to do your part in getting production back on track. It's therefore important that you strike a balance", he adds.

Rugby also offers an avenue to unwind, whether in front of the television, supporting New Zealand's All Blacks; or on the field of play as a member of Oranjemund Rugby Club. "We play in the Southern League. I'm actually more of a supporter nowadays, because my wife issued a stern warning that she would no longer nurse any serious injuries. I'm not sure whether one day she would be comfortable with our son taking up the oval ball", Emlyn chuckles.

Asked about what the future holds for young Namibians wishing to venture into this exciting world, Emlyn agrees that the future looks bright for prospective fitters and turners. "Increased automation is at the order of the day and fitters and turners, similarly to control and instrumentation technicians, are needed virtually anywhere there are automated production processes. I'll recommend this type of work to anyone who is detail-oriented and not scared of hard work. Many young girls are also joining the fray. But, it starts with proper industry-recognised training", he concludes.

Emlyn Olivier: Diligent, industrious and humble. His story teaches us the importance of a strong work ethic. That we should not work for recognition, but to do work worthy of recognition. That we can all reach the top of the mountain, only when we realize that those at the top didn't fall there, but got there through their willingness to outwork and outlearn everyone. He is living his dream. He is living his passion.

It means a lot when you know people not only value you because you are always in good spirits, but because they actually appreciate your individual skill and competence ”



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What does it take to become a **FITTER & TURNER**?

A Fitter and Turner is responsible for studying blueprints, plans, and drawings to be able to assemble, manufacture, and fit parts of machines. Using machining tools to press, cut, grind, plane, bore and drill metal, they cut, thread and bend hydraulic and pneumatic parts, pipes and lines. They are also responsible for maintaining and repairing different types of machinery. Checking fabricated and assembled metal parts for accuracy, clearance and fit - using precision measuring instruments - they often diagnose faults, perform operational maintenance on machines and overhaul mechanical parts and fluid power equipment.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in mathematics and physics provide a strong foundation for a Fitter and Turner's career. You'll have to work well without direct supervision, whether you're working solo or within a team. This work requires physical dexterity and endurance; frequently standing or bending for many hours. Fitters and Turners are good problem solvers, diligent, attentive and safety conscious. The work is most rewarding for those who enjoy problem-solving and who can work with little supervision.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions and course offerings usually cover the basics of Hydraulics, Pneumatics and Fluid Power, and other related subjects. Because automated processes are becoming increasingly sophisticated and computerised, some employers prefer to hire Fitters and Turners who have completed a formal post-secondary training programme. Many employers train apprentices on-the-job on various aspects of the work including precision measuring, appropriate material identification, machine settings, fault diagnosis and the use of computerised tools. Apprentices advance to more complex work as they show competence.

Working Conditions

Work is hands-on, hardy and often a bit greasy. Above all this trade requires determination and grit to deliver highly accurate work in varied and often extreme working environments. Fitters and Turners spend a lot of time standing, bending, and crouching, which can be tiring. They are sometimes expected to work long hours, including during the night and over public holidays. The working conditions can often be noisy, dirty, crowded, and dangerous, meaning a lot of attention to and awareness of safety is needed.



Job Prospects

With most industries becoming increasingly automated, fitters and turners are needed virtually anywhere there are automated production systems. The production-intensive manufacturing and mining industries rely on automated processes, and as such are major employers. Opportunities can also come from the need to replace workers who retire or leave the occupation. The key to climbing the career ladder, or finding these exciting jobs in the first place, is decent and industry recognised training. Experienced fitters and turners may advance to supervisory positions, or be employed as engineering technicians.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Fitter and Turner. If you are detail-oriented, physically fit and strong and possess strong problem solving skills, you are a good candidate.

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I'm using my disability to fuel my determination to live independently and to show society that I can indeed participate fully and actively in life.

Annemarie Johnson

Diamond Cutter

A JOURNEY OF INSPIRATION AND FLIPPING THE SCRIPT ON DISABILITY AS JUST A LABEL

A Diamond Cutter is a skilled artisan who cuts and polishes a rough diamond into a faceted and sparkly shape; enhancing the value of the stone. Meet Annemarie Johnson, a diamond cutter, employed by local diamond cutting and polishing company, Schachter & Namdar Namibia. Despite being a wheelchair user, Annemarie's technical proficiency makes her a big asset to her employer. This is her story.

CHALLENGING CHILDHOOD

Born at Keetmanshoop in the //Kharas region, Annemarie Johnson injured her spine in a swimming pool in the capital, at age eight.

“Before my accident, I was just a normal child and school at Moses van der Byl Primary in Katutura was fun. You learn to read and write during those early school years and as such, the accident proved very disruptive, as my spinal cord injury kept me confined to a hospital bed for a long time. Left paralyzed, I had to eventually transfer to the Augzikas Primary School, which was in a way, better suited for my needs as a paraplegic”, she recalls.

“So, it goes without saying that growing up was really challenging. It was very, very difficult for my family as well and they struggled to adapt. Not only had I to navigate this new reality of ending up in a wheelchair at the age of eight. Adapting to an environment and surroundings not in tune with the needs of a paralyzed child, proved cumbersome. I lost most of my childhood friends. I had to change schools. It was really challenging”, Annemarie shares.

CAREER DREAMS

Annemarie completed primary school and enrolled at the Cosmos High School, in Khomasdal. It was here where she started harbouring dreams of working in the media sector. “I've always been very talkative, but I'm also a good listener, I thought that becoming a radio host could be a good way through which to reach out to people and show the world my talent. At least, through radio, they would only listen to my voice and will not see my wheelchair”, she shares.

This was not to be, however, as the challenges brought about by the societal stigma led her to abandon school early. “Often, I would experience that people, in considering my situation, would arrive at baseless conclusions, assuming that since I was a wheelchair user, I was also disabled by mind. Decisions were taken on my behalf that I needed to go to a special school. So, I never got to finish Grade 12 and I was taken out of school in Grade 8. That's where my dreams to enter the media sector were shattered”, reminisces Annemarie.

"I really felt destitute at the time. The sense of hopelessness and futility was overwhelming. I was not in a good place, at all. I felt that this was the end; that there was nothing I could do to change my circumstances. Because, who would want to employ a wheelchair-using young girl who was also not well-educated. I felt cursed", she adds.

CHANCE ENCOUNTER

A unexpected encounter turned Annemarie's fortunes around. One day, a stranger noticed her on the sidewalk and asked what she was doing in life. She shared her journey, the man promised that he had something in store for her. "It was really out of the ordinary. This stranger came across as sincere, and he promised to pick me up the next Monday morning. Not expecting him to turn up, I nonetheless got ready and when he came as promised, I was there, waiting", Annemarie says.

"I noticed something was going on when he kept on driving and started picking up other disabled people. After the pickups, he started explaining to us about this company looking specifically for talented people living with disabilities to train and employ. Not knowing what to expect, we all went along with his explanation. I guess, all of us saw it as an opportunity to escape our circumstances and find a purpose in life", she adds.

The stranger was a representative of diamond cutting and polishing firm, Schachter & Namdar Namibia, as a local affiliate of the world renowned Schachter & Namdar International, an industry pioneer in diamond branding. When it kicked off its local operations, the company took a deliberate decision to identify people living with disabilities to train as diamond cutters and polishers. "That's how I landed my first job. Just by chance. I never typed a CV, or went for an interview", Annemarie notes.

APPRENTICESHIP

Schachter & Namdar Namibia took in Annemarie and others as apprentice diamond cutters. Diamond cutting is a challenging process and takes years of apprenticeship under a skilled diamond cutter, before one in training is allowed to cut rough diamonds. "I took to my apprenticeship like the proverbial fish to water. And yes, it was so exciting to see a rough diamond for the first time. Under the supervision of experienced cutters, I learned the finer tricks of diamond grading and the operation of cutting and faceting equipment", Annemarie recalls.

"I didn't find the apprenticeship too challenging. In fact, learning about diamonds and the cutting and polishing industry was very interesting. I've always been technically inclined and I'm a fast learner. It helped that all of us were so eager to make a success of the opportunity afforded to us. Coupled with the support and patience of our mentors, it also helped that our mindsets were right. We all wanted to succeed", she adds. The apprenticeship covered aspects such as terminology, diamond grading, the 4 Cs of carat, color, cut and clarity, and operation of cutting and faceting equipment. "It was very interesting

learning about cutting techniques and how to regulate the speed of revolutions of drilling mechanisms. But, more importantly, it made you look forward to upskill yourself to a level where you could also become part of the national effort to add value to our country's natural resources. That's exactly what we do now. We are adding value to our diamonds", she adds.

CARING EMPLOYER

One third of Schachter & Namdar Namibia's factory employees in Windhoek, are disabled, deaf or mute. In catering for the special needs of its workforce, the company has made significant investments in modified polishing benches, handicapped restrooms and a modified mini-bus that accommodates wheelchairs. The firm's commitment to the creation of viable employment opportunities for people living with disabilities in Namibia, allows Annemarie and her colleagues to thrive.

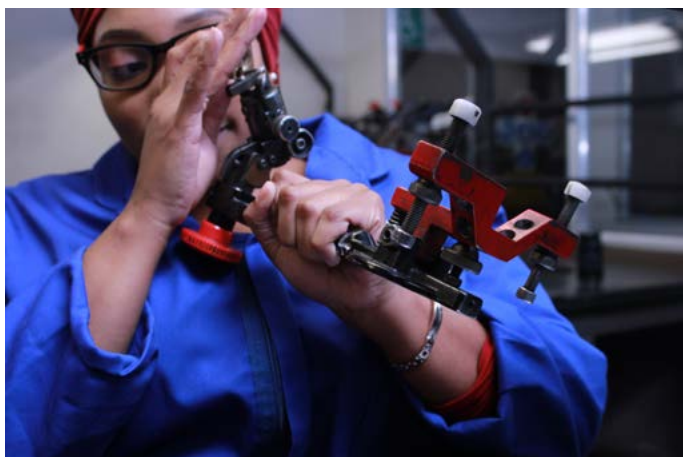
"I'm really proud to be a Schachter & Namdar Namibia employee. Here, it is about teamwork and togetherness. It's really a caring and conducive work environment. Here, no one sees your disability. Not at all. Here it is all about your skills and commitment in a corporate culture of caring and respect", Annemarie highlights.

"I've been lucky to have been afforded this opportunity. However, I often think of other people with disabilities out there, just longing for an opportunity to also be empowered with a skill set through which they can demonstrate to others that they too are of value to the society. This company is leading the way. It is the biggest employer of disabled people in Namibia. It made substantial investments making its factory environment more conducive. More companies need to follow suit. Mere lip service to inclusive work is not enough", she emphasises.

PROFICIENT ARTISAN

Diamond cutting is physically demanding and requires high levels of attentiveness and focus. Annemarie takes it all in her stride and she doesn't mind putting in the hours. Her ability to perform often-complex work without direct supervision makes her an asset to her employer. "Diamond cutting requires intense focus and concentration. If the diamond shoots, you need to identify the direction it went into. You cannot overpolish. You cannot let your guard down, at all", she stresses.

"A key part of our training focused on us developing not only the technical skills, but other softer skills, such as the ability to work under pressure, problem-solving skills and communication skills, as well. These skills are important because diamond cutting and polishing is cutthroat work. A mistake by a cutter follows through to other aspects of our production process. International purchasers of diamonds only want the best quality, and all of us in the production chain need to be on song", Annemarie highlights. Annemarie's calm demeanor and ability to follow complex technical instructions in her work not only adds value to the polishing of diamonds



to reach their full potential; but to Schachter & Namdar's bottom line, as well. "Our Director, Mr. Marc Friedman always encourages us to do our best. This company has given all of us an opportunity to turn our lives around. We know that if we continue to do our best for the company, it will continue to do its best for us. We've been taught the values of teamwork, togetherness and positivity. It is the Schachter & Namdar culture. Here it is not about disability – on the contrary – it is all about ability. I've lost the use of my legs, but there's absolutely nothing wrong with my mind and my hands. Today, I am a skilled diamond cutter", she adds.

WORK COMMUNITY

The Schachter and Namdar programme also reunited Annemarie with her closest friend, who she got to know at age eight, whilst in hospital. Today, the two Annemaries are joined at the hip - at and away from work. "Annemarie Engelbrecht is my best friend. We were hospitalised together and we lost touch after I was discharged. We reunited in 2011 when the stranger who picked us up explained that another wheelchair-bound lady from Rehoboth was going to join us the next day. To my surprise, and as fate had it, it was my namesake. The two Annemaries are besties now. We're joined at the hip", she jokes.

"Together, we have developed a bit of a reputation here at work. And a good reputation, I must say, because our colleagues and supervisors say they always appreciate our positive spirit, and that work is not the same when we're not here. I guess they like our friendliness and light-heartedness. We know when to make jokes, but when it is time to get down to the business of work, we know how to deliver", Annemarie notes. The two Annemaries are also inseparable, away from the office. Next on their bucket lists are driving their own cars and skydiving. "Skydiving sounds so exhilarating. I've heard that a Swakopmund-based skydiving company helps paraplegics to do so, and it is definitely on my radar to go there and tick this adventure off. I need to convince Annemarie still, but I know she'll come around, eventually.", she adds.

ROLE MODEL

Annemarie appreciates the value of her journey in giving hope to other physically disabled people and in overturning the negative societal perceptions and attitudes that often create further barriers for people living with disabilities. "The worst part of living with a physical disability is often not the disability, or the lack of opportunities to help us turn our disabilities into abilities. The worst part is people living with disabilities feeling disconnected from the world by their limitations. They feel cursed and they need help and support", Annemarie shares.

"It starts with society helping people living with disabilities to see what they can do, instead of what they can not. Visually impaired people are the best massage therapists, because of their enhanced sense of touch. Hearing impaired people are excellent diamond polishers, because sounds cannot distract them and their focus levels are very high. People born with restricted growth are excellent jewelry makers because their small fingers make easy work of intricate designs" she explains.

"Disability doesn't need to be a barrier. I've been given an opportunity and I'm using my disability to fuel my determination to live independently and to show society that I can indeed participate fully and actively in life. Others share the same dream. They too can do so, if only supported and given an opportunity", she concludes.

Annemarie Johnson: Proficient, adept and able. Her story teaches us that just because someone lacks the use of her legs, does not mean she lacks direction; but more importantly: that physical disability does not have to equate to disability in spirit; that attitude is a little thing that can make a big difference. She has opted for a career her disability doesn't prevent her from doing. She has chosen not to place the 'dis' in her ability. She is living her passion.

It's really a caring and conducive work environment. No one sees your disability, here. Not at all, here it is all about your skills and commitment in a corporate culture of caring and respect



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What does it take to become a **DIAMOND CUTTER**?

A Diamond Cutter is a trained and skilled artisan who takes a rough diamond and 'cuts' it into a faceted shape and polishes it into a beautifully, sparkly diamond. Their work seriously enhances the value of the stone. They consider the rough diamond's potential as a cut gem, check for any flaws, and decide which faceted shape would enhance the stone. They then accurately saw and cut the diamond into a specific shape, girdle and polishes it in line with the 4 Cs, namely colour, cut, clarity and carat size. Due to the fact that diamonds are extremely valuable, cutting and polishing need to be very precise. They must be able to get as large and as beautiful of a gem as possible without losing a large amount of material. A small mistake can actually ruin an expensive stone and faceting mishaps can cost thousands of dollars.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in science and mathematics provide a strong foundation for a Diamond Cutter's career. You will need a calm demeanour, the ability to follow often complex technical instructions, determination, and good eyesight. A day in the life of a diamond cutter requires dedication, attention to detail, artistic vision and a complex set of instructions in order to polish a diamond to reach its full potential.



Training

Diamond cutting is one of the most difficult processes in jewellery making and takes years of apprenticeship under a skilled diamond cutter before one in training is allowed to cut and polish a rough diamond. Most apprentices receive on-the-job training while being supervised by an experienced diamond cutter. Training normally covers aspects such as diamond grading, the 4 Cs (carat, color, cut and clarity), operation of cutting and faceting

equipment, appraisals and diamond industry terminology. Other aspects include techniques such as bruising, blocking and brilliantteering, and how to regulate the speed of revolutions of drilling mechanisms and the replacement and sharpening of blades, drills, and plates.



Working Conditions

This work requires high levels of concentration and can be very physically taxing, considering that diamond cutters spend most of their time sitting at well-lit workbenches in areas where security arrangements are extremely restrictive and limiting. Diamond cutters are sometimes exposed to contaminants, such as cleaning solutions and often need to wear protective attire, such as gloves, masks and earpieces.

Job Prospects

More and more local diamond companies are being established as part of national value-addition efforts. Becoming a diamond cutter not only enables you to cut diamonds, but also to pursue a number of related career opportunities, including wholesale and retail sales, rough-diamond brokering, consulting, diamond-cutting production, self-employment as a diamond cutter, consultant or broker, as well as diamond and jewelry business ownership.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Diamond Cutter. If you are good with your hands, detail orientated, extremely accurate and precise, and possess good eyesight, you are a good candidate.

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You need to have patience in delivering quality work; for a spraypainter, patience doesn't mean slow; it means doing it right and getting it right.

Frans Paulus

Spraypainter

FROM UNSKILLED LABOURER TO MASTER ARTISAN - MAKING THE BEST OF OPPORTUNITY

Spraypainters play an important role in the autobody repairs industry. Applying the right colour paint and finish to vehicles, they make sure that the newly painted areas match the rest of the repaired vehicle. Meet Frans Paulus, a seasoned spraypainter, employed for the past 22 years by leading autobody repairer, Oppermans/Thiels Body Works, located in Windhoek's Southern Industrial Area. This is his story.

VILLAGE BOY

Born at Omungete near Ruacana in Omusati, Frans Paulus grew up a typical village boy tending to the family's livestock and tilling the mahangu fields. Severe droughts undermined the family's farming operations and they relocated to Oniipa in Oshikoto, where Frans enrolled at the Oniipa Combined School.

"Village life is hard work and from a very young age, you are taught the importance of hard work and to earn your keep. But, droughts are never easy. Although still a youngster, I could see how it impacted on my parents. It broke their hearts seeing our livestock deteriorating to the point where there was no hope. Investing time and energy into ploughing and planting our fields, we couldn't harvest much, as the rains stayed away", Frans reminisces.

"We had no option, but to pack up our belongings and move to Oniipa. A new environment, a new school and new friends; it all happened so fast. But, as a family we had to do what we had to do, because we didn't have much of a choice. But we stuck together. The hardship made us stronger", Frans adds.

CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Frans harboured dreams of becoming a teacher. "I had a huge admiration for my teachers: the way they were always smartly dressed and the respect they commanded in the community. Dedicating your life to educating others and empowering them with knowledge and skills was also something that appealed to me. That was the dream: to one day qualify as a teacher and to also dedicate my life to service", he explains.

"Perhaps my career dreams also had to do with the fact that those days, we didn't really know much about other career options. Mine worker, police officer, nurse and teacher: these were the options we were familiar with and open to us. Back then, I didn't even know what a spraypainter was; let alone any of the variety of technical trade occupations the youth of today can choose from", he adds. It wasn't to be, however. Upon completing Grade 7, Frans had no choice but to leave school and to make his way to the capital city to find employment. "As a young boy, moving to the big city to find a job was

daunting. But, I had no choice, really. I simply had to find a way to make some money and help in the upkeep of my family”, Frans shares.

INFORMAL APPRENTICESHIP

Unskilled and untrained, Frans ended up assisting an informal autobody repairer. “This gentleman, Mr. Moses, had ventured into fixing damaged vehicles and ran a small business from his home. He took me under his wing; teaching me how to knock out smaller dents from body panels; how to mix and apply body filler, and how to scrape off excess paint and filler material. Mr. Moses was my mentor and I was his apprentice”, he recalls.

“I think it helped that Mr. Moses was a very patient man. I made many mistakes, but he would always encourage me to keep on trying. Looking back, I guess I can say that his patient demeanour rubbed off on me, because in this line of work, you need to have patience in delivering quality work. For a spraypainter, patience doesn’t mean slow; it means doing it right and getting it right”, Frans emphasises.

Frans’s skill improved with time and under Mr. Moses’ watchful eye, he enjoyed exposure to others aspects of the work. “I got hooked. Seeing how the body panels we fixed and prepared ended up being re-sprayed and refitted to make the damaged vehicle look brand new, I made a promise to myself that I was going to carve out a future for me in this industry”, he adds.

NEW JOB

Frans soon struck it lucky, when he was recommended to the Oppermans/Thiels Autobody Repairs, and where he duly started as a labourer in the autobody preparation bay, earning a reputation as someone always willing to put in the hard hours.

“I started here in 1997, under the supervision of Mr. Opperman, the owner. A stern and demanding man, he was the one who taught me the finer tricks of the trade in preparing vehicles for spraypainting and repairs. Working here was worlds apart from my time at Mr. Moses. The workshops here were much more sophisticated. Tasks were clearly divided. Everyone had a specific job to do and you had to stick to those tasks”, Frans notes.

Panelbeating is hardy work - preparing vehicles for the final step of spraypainting requires a good mix of practical and creative skill and a high level of attention to detail. “I was really able to hone my skills. As I said already, it is about doing it right and getting it right the first time. You do not want to prepare a vehicle that gets turned away when it reaches the spray booth. You want the spraypainter to agree that the vehicle was properly and well prepared”, he emphasises.

CHANCE OPPORTUNITY

“If there was one part of my work I didn’t like, it was the scraping part. It’s physically draining, let alone the dust residue that ends up all over. Often, you would miss the bus home, because it took you too long to clean up. I was watching the spraypainters from afar and said to myself that I needed to find a way to get into that line of work. I mean, one has to move up in the world”, Frans chuckles.

Frans grabbed the opportunity when it presented itself, to exchange his hammer and skates for the spray gun and nozzles. “One day, the spraypainter was not there and the owner’s son had to step in. He would spraypaint a little, and then would go off to attend to new client quotations. It went on like this a few times and when he had to attend to a quotation again, I took up the spraygun”, explains Frans.

“He wasn’t angry when he got back and found me spraypainting. Instead, he started training me, there and then. After demonstrating a few times, he left me to continue and when he came back later, he was happy with my work. He then showed me how to apply the clear coat. And from thereon, I was a spraypainter”, he adds.

Frans’ transition to becoming a spraypainter nearly ended as abruptly, as it has started. When the owner returned the next week and found him busy in the spray booth, Frans was nearly dismissed. However, his supervisor intervened. “In fact, the owner showed me the door and didn’t want to listen to my explanation. Only when my supervisor stepped in and explained what had happened, did he agree to give me a chance. Soon, he too, was convinced that I had what it takes to do this job”, he shares.

FURTHER TRAINING

Recognising Frans’ innate talent, Oppermans/Thiels Body Works decided to invest in his potential. “At first, through in-house apprenticeship and under the watchful eyes of more experienced spraypainters, I got to hone my skills. I learn best by doing. Like these sponges we use to wash off the body panels; I absorbed all I was taught. There was no way I was going to make mistakes and ruin this golden opportunity”, Frans notes. Ongoing training is important in this line of work.

New vehicle models and lines enter the market every year, each with their own and unique paint mix code. “We have the technology to mix paints in-house. It is therefore important that we get training on these new colours, codes and mixing. With the introduction of eco-friendly paint mixes a few years ago, we also received training offered by female trainers from South Africa, who shared with us the finer details of paint tinting and mixing paint to the right shade and texture.”, he explains.

PERFECTIONIST ARTISAN

Mixing paint to perfectly matching colours is child's play for Frans. His well-trained eyes and high level of attention to detail not only stand him in good stead; but more importantly, add value to his employer's reputation as a service provider that assigns a high premium to quality work and client satisfaction.

"I think what makes me a good spraypainter, is the fact that I started at the bottom rung of the panel preparation process, which made me to develop a keen eye for any imperfections. Before, I apply any paint, I need to do a thorough inspection and identify any shortcomings. If I identify dents and cavities or when I detect substandard preparation work, I have no choice but to send it back. I cannot waste time and resources on spraying a panel that doesn't meet our strict quality requirements", he stresses.



Spraypainting is a specialist skill; and Frans is a master - well versed in the art of selecting and adjusting the appropriate spraygun nozzles and applying different paint mixes and types, in order to get the proper paint flow and coating thickness.

"There is much more to spraypainting that meets the eye. It's not merely about picking up a spraygun and getting on with it. The vehicle's panels needs to be cleaned and prepared well. You need to adjust your spraygun and select the right nozzle. You must consider the airflow. Then it's about your hand movement and establishing lines. Merging different coats and layers. How far should your nozzle be from the panel to ensure even spread. You need to know what you're doing", Frans highlights.

FAMILY MAN

Having been in their employ for over 21 years, Oppermans/Thiels Body Works considers Frans as one of its most valuable employees. "This company is my family. They took a chance on me and have supported me throughout - from my early days in the preparation bay to where I am now as one of the penultimate gatekeepers in our autobody repair work. I continue to grow and I wake up in the mornings looking forward to come here and do my best for my employer", says Frans.

Away from the noisy workshop and fume spray booths, this father of 23 children uncoils and unwinds by spending time with family and friends. "My family is very important to me. Raising so many children is not easy, but I try my best in doing my best for all of them, and instilling in them an appreciation for hard work. If you work hard and believe in yourself, you can achieve anything", he says.

"I had not education and no one told me to take up the spraygun. I did so myself, because I wanted to grow in my career path. Through hard work, I've mastered this skill. Through hard work, anything is possible", he concludes.

Frans Paulus: Loyal, skillful and competent. His story teaches us that when a window of opportunity appears, we should not pull down the shade. That often, something valuable can be derived out of adversity. Through taking up the spraygun, he was able to create opportunity in his difficulty; a decision that has changed his life for the better and a decision that continues to serve him well. He continues to work the dream. He is living his passion.

What makes me a good spraypainter, is the fact that I started at the bottom rung of the panel preparation process, which made me to develop a keen eye for any imperfections ”



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What does it take to become a **SPRAYPAINTER**?

Spraypainters apply the right colour and finish to cars and other vehicles to cover repairs or remove scratches and minor damage, making sure that the newly painted areas match the rest of the car. They remove grease, dirt, paint, and rust in preparation for paint application, using abrasives, solvents, brushes and sandblasters. They adjust spraygun nozzles and paint mixes in order to get the proper paint flow and coating thickness. They communicate with clients, employers and other employees to plan and execute painting jobs on a variety of vehicles. Some spraypainters may need vehicle collision repair capabilities as well.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in arts, mathematics and science are considered useful. Spraypainters need to be physically fit and strong, whilst possessing a good mixture of practical and creative skills; a good sense of timing and visual awareness; a high level of attention to detail; and the ability to work under pressure and meet tight deadlines. Safety consciousness is of utmost importance as spraypainters follow strict safety procedures for using hazardous materials. Spraypainters need to have normal colour vision, and not have breathing problems.

Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. Many vehicle repair and spraypainting companies take in prospective spraypainters to learn the trade on the job as labourers on car collision repair projects, selecting those able to follow instructions and who demonstrate talent and initiative for full apprenticeship. Amassing industry experience is of utmost importance in building resumes, as employers prefer well-experienced workers.



Working Conditions

Spraypainters usually work regular business hours in paint shops and workshops or on clients' sites, including road and rail bridges, in conditions that may be noisy and fumeey. However, they can also work long and unusual schedules, based on the availability of jobs and the scheduling of projects. Shift work may be required when working as part of teams on major projects. Workshops attach significant importance to safety and it is important for spraypainters to adhere to such requirements.



Job Prospects

Spraypainters typically work for specialist paint shops and car collision repair companies, industrial companies and joinery and furniture manufacturing companies making items such as cabinets and doors. Many spraypainters are self-employed and those with established clientele tend to earn more than their salaried counterparts

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Spraypainter. If you are creative and detail-oriented and have normal colour vision and a medical record clear of breathing problems, you are a good candidate.

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CONCRETE SHUTTERER



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Seeing how artisans come together and building a home, or office from scratch, and knowing that you played a part in the process, warms the heart.

Petrus Munjengo

Concrete Shutterer

FROM WHEELBARROW PUSHER TO TRUSTED CRAFTSMAN - MAKING WAVES IN CONSTRUCTION WORLD

Concrete Shutterers specialise in building structures from concrete materials and in ensuring that concrete is poured correctly. They prepare the site by setting up the forms in which concrete is poured to create walls, structures, pillars, and walkways. Meet Petrus Munjengo, an experienced concrete shutterer, employed by construction company, CSV Construction, at its Walvis Bay-based operations. This is his story.

BOYHOOD CARPENTRY

Born at the Okawonde village in the Oshikoto region, Petrus Munjengo attended the Esheshete Combined School, where he developed an early fascination with woodwork.

“I was just another village boy. You go to school in the mornings, and in the afternoons, you help with chores before setting off to play with friends. And although as a family, we were not well-off and didn’t have much, those were carefree days, nonetheless”, Petrus recalls. “I was happiest when I could land a few nails and planks to do some woodwork. At first, I would carve out toys; and later, armed with a borrowed hammer, I ventured into making my very first furniture pieces”, he adds.

Although they were very basic and rudimentary beds and chairs, Petrus’ hand-made home furniture pieces served their purpose and his self-taught skill as a carpenter continued to grow. “Working with wood will always be my first love. Wood is such a wonderful material, so easy to manipulate. I still cannot walk past a scrap piece of wood without picking it up and seeing its potential to be turned into something useful. It’s difficult to explain. It’s just something that comes naturally”, Petrus shares.

EARLY ADULthood

Circumstances were difficult; and after completing Grade 10, Petrus left the village to stay with his uncle in the capital and find a job through which to supplement the family’s income. “I didn’t want to leave school so early, but I did not have much of a choice”, he notes.

At the time, the capital city experienced a construction boom and Petrus, at his very first attempt at job-hunting, landed an opportunity as a construction hand. “You have to start somewhere, I guess. They told me that I didn’t have any experience and that they could only take me in to push wheelbarrows. I had to wake up very early to get to the site and a friend helped me out with safety boots. Those years were tough, but a man’s got to do what a man’s got to do”, Petrus reminisces.

Petrus was young and fit and excelled as a construction hand. “I enjoyed working in the industry. Seeing how artisans come together and building a home, or office from scratch, and knowing that you played a part in the process, warms the heart. Yes, it’s hard and low-paying work, but at the same time, so rewarding” he explains.

INFORMAL APPRENTICESHIP

The low wages were discouraging, however, and Petrus realised that for his circumstances to improve, he had to master a higher level construction trade.

Traversing the capital’s construction scene, moving from one construction site to the next, he ended up at CSV Construction, where his dedication, energy and ability to execute instructions to the tee, soon made a strong impression on the company’s owners. It is also here where his innate woodwork talent was identified, which lead to his employers agreeing to teach him the finer tricks of the carpentry trade, through an apprenticeship.

“My supervisor, Mr. Dan Groenewald saw my potential and I was given the opportunity to work as a carpenter. I think what also played a big part in them giving me this opportunity, were my dedication, energy and ability to execute instructions to the tee. I made a strong impression on the company’s owners and they also saw that I was a strong leader, who commanded the respect of my team members”, Petrus recalls.

“I grabbed the opportunity with both hands. Although I’ve always been a fast learner when it comes to working

with my hands, I still did everything I could to learn as much as I can. At was more or less at that point in time when I started seeing a future for myself in the construction industry”, he adds

FORMAL TRAINING

Petrus’ growth and the strong onsite-leadership he displayed convinced the company’s owners to enroll him in a specialised construction course in South Africa’s Eastern Cape Province.

“Only when they called me into the office and shared the good news did I realise that I would need a passport, and on top of it, a study visum. Man, did I rush to get my passport and visum applications submitted? Luckily, everything just fell into place and I was ready to cross the Orange River”, Petrus shares.

Arriving at the Boland College in the Western Cape where he was enrolled for a Junior Construction Foreman course proved daunting. Petrus was the only Namibian enrolled and did not have any friends. “All my peers were South African students. So, I just had to adjust and make new friends”, he shares.

Passing the first level with flying colours, Petrus re-enrolled for the second level, which he also completed with ease. “My strong interest in the subject matter, and the fact that I already had proper practical work experience, which many of my classmates didn’t have, played a big role. Although challenging, the training courses were well structured and aligned to best industry practice”, recalls Petrus.

TEAM LEADER

Working alongside other construction workers, shutterers erect and set forms for concrete structures, building and clamping wooden moulds, using appropriate hand tools. For strength and structural integrity, rebar or wire meshes are introduced for reinforcement.

“In as much as shuttering requires technical skill, at the end of the day, it is all about preparation. Have you done your site inspection? Have you determined and ordered the materials you will require? Have the materials been delivered? Is the steel rebar up to standard a d ready? When are the concrete trucks arriving? Are my fabrications ready? Have inspections been done? Often people think we just make wooden boxes in which we pour concrete. It’s not as simple as that”, he explains.

Now in full-time employ, Petrus has graduated to more complex work assignments, overseeing his own teams of construction workers and rendering key support to CFC Construction’s projects at the coast. “My team and I already wrapped up three pump stations projects at Swakopmund and another dam project at Walvis Bay.



Not only am I keep on gaining experience working on bigger projects; as a team leader, I'm also being exposed to other areas of the work such as managing people on-site. I am growing. I have two teams now - one for shuttering and one for concrete.

HARDY WORK

Like most construction trades, concrete shuttering is strenuous work, involving frequent kneeling and stooping, and the lifting of heavy materials.

"You need physical strength and stamina. It's not an environment for pen pushers. Adhering to safety requirements is very important, as well, as we often work at high elevation or in deep trenches. You need to be on top of your game, throughout", Petrus stresses.

"However, it's not only about physical dexterity and attentiveness to safety. You also need to know your way around the tools and equipment we use in our line of work, as well. You need to have good problem-solving skills. You need to be industrious and observant", he adds.

Concrete shutterers often work nights and weekends to accommodate construction schedules. "That is why keeping fit is so important. In as much as no one plans for delays, they do occur, nonetheless. However, completion dates are seldom adjusted; and often you have no choice but to put in the extra hours and extended shifts", Petrus shares. "That's why looking after my body is so important. I keep fit. Exercise and jogging have become part of the daily regimen", he adds.

JOB ASPIRATIONS

Petrus continues to impress. He doesn't mind the heavy lifting and irregular hours. His positive demeanor and dedication to quality workmanship and safety continue to stand him in good stead.

"I've learned a lot of things in this company. My future lies in construction and I am really privileged to be in a position now where I can just continue to learn about this exciting sector. I really want to repay my employer for the trust they keep on bestowing in me, and for the investments they continue to make in my growth", he notes.

The future looks bright for this passionate and zealous artisan. "My future plans are to just keep on growing, and ascending the career ladder. My next target is a promotion to full foreman level and I know that if I keep on doing what I'm doing, I'm going to land that promotion soon. I'm taking it step by step. Pushing wheelbarrows was just the first step in my journey", Petrus highlights.

"Here it is about open communication. My supervisors are clear about their plans to upskill me to a level where they can with confidence delegate me to take full charge of future sites with my teams", he adds.

BALANCED LIFESTYLE

Away from the outdoor extremities that come with his job, Petrus enjoys spending time with friends and listening to music. "That's the name of the construction game. This line of work often takes you away from your family and loved ones. My fiancée stays up north and we video call each other at least once a week. I also keep in touch with my parents and uncle whom I look up to when I need advise", shares Petrus.

Joinery is another hobby. When the opportunity presents itself, Petrus offers his services to homeowners and other clients, as a joiner.

"I do both construction carpentry and joinery. I'm a very good joiner and I've made and installed kitchen and bedroom cupboards for many people, in my spare time. Not only does it supplement the income; it also keeps me grounded, because I'm reminded of my early days in the village, where it all started for me", he concludes.

Petrus Munjengo: Dexterous, skillful and competent. His story teaches us that often the best way to success is to quit talking and to start doing. Starting out as a construction hand, and now with a bright future in the construction industry, his journey imparts on us that there is simply no substitute for hard work; that it is about consistency and persistence in all we do, every day. He is working his dream. He is living his passion.

My future lies in construction and I am really privileged to be in a position now where I can just continue to learn about this exciting sector. ”



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What does it take to become a **CONCRETE SHUTTERER**?

A concrete shutterer's job description includes fabricating and setting up the forms in which concrete is poured to create walkways, walls, pillars and other structures. Work alongside construction workers by erecting and setting forms for concrete structures, they build wooden moulds and clamp them using appropriate hand tools in fabricating concrete beams, columns and panels. They also introduce rebar or wire mesh to reinforce the material, use trowels and other tools to spread and smooth concrete, and mold expansion joints and edges. They interpret blueprints and read survey stakes with a view to establish appropriate grades, prepare worksites for concrete footings and assemble concrete forms on specified locations.



Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in mathematics and woodwork provide a strong foundation for a Concrete Shutterer's career. You will need to be skilled in areas such as reading and interpreting blueprints; and work well without direct supervision. Concrete shutterers are good problem solvers, diligent, attentive and safety conscious. This work is tough

and hardy and requires physical dexterity and endurance; you can only perform it well if you are physically strong. Experience and skills in using tools and equipment specific to the trade such as hand and power saws, hammers, edging tools, jointers, and straightedges are also required.

Training

Training is offered at registered institutions, covering areas such as bricklaying, concrete pouring and finishing and carpentry. Generally, for most concrete shutterers, training comes on the job as apprentices. They learn by observing and helping experienced professionals. As they gain more experience, workers not only perform their tasks more quickly, but can do more complex jobs, such as inserting spreaders and tie rods between opposite faces of forms; anchoring and bracing forms to fixed objects; and setting and aligning forms to desired pitches and depth.

Working Conditions

This work is physically strenuous. It involves frequent kneeling and bending, and the lifting of heavy materials. Concrete shutterers thus require physical strength as well as stamina. As with any construction job, they can suffer injuries caused by falls from scaffolding, cuts from tools, bumps from construction equipment or burns from chemical substances. They can minimize hazards by wearing protective clothing such as kneepads and practicing standard safety procedures.

Job Prospects

Most concrete shutterers work for construction companies. Most work full time, and some work nights and weekends to accommodate construction schedules. Some concrete shutterers opt to work as self-employed service providers and subcontractors to bigger construction, civil engineering and mining companies.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Concrete Shutterer. If you are physically fit and strong and possess excellent peripheral and depth perception abilities, you are a good candidate.

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Time critical airfreight is a specialised area of logistics that not many forwarders, brokers or carriers in Namibia can handle. I'm one of only a handful of specialists.

Johannes Mukundja

Freight Handler

A TRIED AND TESTED SPECIALIST HANDLER OF TIME-CRITICAL CARGO

Freight handlers supervise the loading and unloading of all cargo consignments, and as such, play an important role in the cutthroat, but exciting transportation and logistics sector. Meet Johannes Mukundja, a seasoned freight handler, employed by Woker Freight Services in the capital as an Air Freight Aviation Supervisor. This is his story.

CHILDHOOD DREAM

Born at the Onaputa village near Ondangwa in Oshana, Johannes attended Onaputa Combined School up to Grade 9, whereafter he enrolled at the Orono Senior Secondary School, matriculating in 1993. A keen learner, Johannes excelled at school.

Growing up, the radio was Johannes' closest companion and he cherished dreams of joining the NBC as a radio announcer. "I dreamed of working for the NBC's Oshiwambo Service. I really liked the voices behind all the advertisements and I imagined how I was going to read the news bulletins. Actually, I made a deliberate attempt to perfect my vernacular vocabulary and reading, because radio was all I wanted to do", he shares.

Unfortunately, Johannes' applications to the national broadcaster were all turned down. "I applied many times and went for voice auditions but were turned down every time", he notes. With his radio dreams going down in flames, Johannes realised that he had to pursue other options to earn an income and fend for himself. And so, he set off for Walvis Bay, in Erongo.

FIRST JOB

Lady Luck was on Johannes' side, and not long after arriving in the harbour town, he was taken in by Namibia Ship Chandlers, as a trainee import/exports consultant. "I didn't have any qualifications at the time and had to learn everything from scratch. Basically, I was an apprentice – learning the job on the job. And the tutelage of experienced freight handlers really helped a lot in getting me to find my feet. I will be forever grateful to my early supervisors for their efforts in teaching me and mentoring me in this line of work", he says.

Honing his skills at other employers such as Artus Duty Free Shop and logistics powerhouses, F.P. Du Toit Transport and Kuehne & Nagel; Johannes got to learn more about the intricacies and complexities of the sector. "Although the settings differed somewhat, working at these big players in our country's logistics sector certainly helped in shaping my skill set, especially in terms of aspects such as warehousing, consignment management and advanced business processes. I was able to build up contacts, locally and internationally", Johannes notes.

“Today I am highly employable and my skill set is not easy to find. This is because I’ve worked my way up from the bottom rung of the ladder and I know everything there is to know about this work. Coupled with my stints at reputable transportation and logistics service providers, I think that it was this unique skills and experience package I possessed that opened the doors to Woker Freight Services”, he adds.

CUSTOMER CENTRIC

Around 2016, Johannes was taken in by his current employer, Woker Freight Services, who learned in local industry circles about this motivated freight handler, so driven by a desire to succeed and to always render quality client service. “It was a dream move to Woker Freight Services. I was delighted to join a strong and vibrant team and a reputable logistics company”, Johannes shares.

“The logistics sector is a complex world. There are many variables that can complicate your performance. Factors such as time zones, customs requirements, tight schedules and flight delays can muddle things up. I must say that at times, the nitty-gritty and complexities nearly caught up with me, but I pushed through in learning all I could, and as fast as I could”, notes Johannes.

Freight handling requires individuals to possess good communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills. Johannes’ calm and friendly demeanour makes him to excel in the customer-centric transportation and logistics environment.

“Communicating with customers, old and new; whether its face-to-face, or via the phone, or e-mail, is one of the aspects of the work I still enjoy the most. The fact that no two days are the same; and with new clients come new freight, and new challenges. Stimulating work, indeed. You learn new things everyday and get to know new people, everyday”, Johannes notes.

EXCITING WORK

Johannes appreciates that a personalised and well-executed logistics service leads to stronger client relations and loyalty. “I don’t need to tell you this, but when you deliver in a proficient manner, you work not only brings in immediate monetary gain, but ensures long-term success for the business. That’s why ownership is so important. If a client gives me full responsibility for a shipment, I take full ownership,; from point of origin to the final destination”, he notes.

”At the end of the day, it’s really about building trust. In this line of work, competition is tough. You know when

a client comes back with more work, it is because they trust you with their cargo. They come back because you were able to deliver to expectations. That’s sustainable business, in my book”, Johannes adds.

Namibia’s transportation and logistics sector is an important cog in keeping the wheels of the economy running. Growing fast; opportunities are aplenty for competent and skilled freight handlers.

“Local produce need to be delivered to international markets; whereas products not available locally need to be imported from outside our borders. Take the agriculture sector for example; they need their produce delivered to overseas destinations. We help them clear their cargo. Considering the nature and destination, we advise which mode of transport is most appropriate. We then take charge of the cargo and move it, whether it’s via air, road, or sea”, he explains.

LIFELONG LEARNER

In today’s e-commerce society, virtually every shipment is time-critical. Johannes values the importance of keeping his skill set relevant and current in an environment where the customer expects to be kept abreast of a shipment’s journey and delivery.

“Although not a young boy anymore, I find that I still have the energy and drive to learn. Time critical airfreight is a specialised area of logistics that not many forwarders, brokers or carriers in Namibia can handle. Some products have a limited life and as such are vital time critical shipments. We also need to ensure that high value and dangerous goods cargo, which can include highly sensitive medical products, are all treated with great care by our team. I’m one of only a handful of specialists, but we all need to stay on top of our game. And continuous learning is the only and sure way to do so”, explains Johannes.

“I have completed a good number of certificate and diploma courses over the years in areas such as the transportation of dangerous goods and cargo and freight forwarding. Others areas of training include leadership development and International Commerce Terms, or ‘Incoterms’, which are basically a set of rules which define the responsibilities of sellers and buyers for the delivery of goods under international sales contracts”, he adds.

CAREER CHAMPION

Johannes appreciates the potential the transportation and logistics sector holds for driven and aptly talented individuals wishing to build a career in this line of work. “Not many young people are aware of the good

opportunities available to them. I make it a point, whenever I can, to share information and to get them to at least read up more about what this sector has to offer”, he shares. Logistics, especially as far as the airline and shipping industries are concerned, have tight schedules and exacting regulations, so the ability to constantly work under the pressure of a deadline is very important.

“I started out with the basics such as clearing and document preparation and nowadays, I tend to specialise in aircraft parts. What happens if an aircraft is grounded? The airline come to us to bring in the parts from overseas. When fixed, they fly out their passengers and bring in more tourists, again. A simple example of why this sector, and indeed the work we do, are so important to our economic growth”, he explains.

“This is indeed exciting work. You might be based here in Windhoek, but you are picking up and delivering cargo all over the world. In one day, you might deal with service partners in the United Kingdom, China and the United States of America. You need to keep track of the different time zones. Often, depending on the nature and priority of the cargo, you might end up with very little sleep as you track progress from one country to another”, Johannes highlights.



CHALLENGES

The goods and cargo transportation value chain is a complex process, often requiring meticulous planning and coordination to ensure delivery. As a seasoned logistics expert, Johannes is very familiar with the challenges that arise from time to time. And although his work is not always smooth sailing, he deals with the pressures generated by delayed deliveries and frustrated clients.

“You do your part. You book the shipment. The airline accepts it and confirm that the cargo will be delivered tomorrow. Then, on the departure date, you receive an email that your cargo didn’t leave, because a document

was not correct, or the size of the shipment was too big, or the aircraft was full. These are the kinds of challenges we face”, he notes.

“These challenges are an adrenaline-rush. It is what makes the job worthwhile. I tend to see opportunity in them. Sometimes, you need to think outside of the box, and come up with innovative solutions. Often, there’s not much you can do to fasttrack a delayed shipment and then the best you can do is to communicate openly and transparently with your customer”, Johannes highlights.

Away from the office, Johannes enjoys spending time with family and friends. However, he never loses sight of the cellphone, because a customer might just require his assistance, and he has to be available.

“I often look back on my life and I appreciate the direction it went into. Although I was disappointed for not being able to pursue my boyhood dreams of becoming a radio host, I have no regrets for ending up in the logistics sector. My work at Woker Freight Services gives me purpose. It gives my life meaning. I am happy here”, he shares. “And nothing beats a happy customer calling you to say thanks for handling their cargo and for ensuring that it reached its destination on time. It’s a thrill, always!” he concludes.

Johannes Mukundja: Sensible, confident and customer-oriented. His drive to succeed in a cutthroat service environment continues to propel him to greater heights. His story teaches us that he, who serves best, often profits the most; that customer service is not so much about what we do, but more about how we do it. He continues to work his dream. He is living his passion.

The challenges are an adrenaline-rush and makes the job worthwhile. I tend to see opportunity in them. You need to find innovative solutions



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What does it take to become a **FREIGHT HANDLER**?

The primary responsibility of a freight handler is to supervise the loading and unloading of all cargo consignments, ensuring properly packaging and correct loading. They play a pivotal role in the economy as they help transport products or raw materials from one point to the next. Freight handlers are found in the transportation industries, such as airlines, shipping, and railroad companies. They may work specifically as baggage or cargo handlers, or truck loaders and unloaders. Their specific duties differ, according to work setting or industry. They may also work in warehouses or storage areas. The job carries responsibility as the cargo controller forms the link between the customer and the safe, quick and efficient delivery of consignments.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in languages, computer science and mathematics provide a strong foundation for a Freight Handler's career. You will need a calm demeanour, physical strength and determination, and good communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills. Freight Handlers working in the airline industry must speak, read and write English fluently, and communicate effectively. The airline and shipping industries have tight schedules and exacting regulations so the ability to constantly work under the pressure of a deadline is needed. Experience operating a forklift or other industry related machinery is an asset.

Training

Jobs in this field are considered entry-level and the necessary skills can be learned quickly. Most new employees enter as apprentices and receive on-the-job training while being supervised by an experienced cargo handler or manager. Regulations vary, but licensing may be required for handlers who drive forklifts or operate other heavy equipment. As they gain more experience, workers not only perform their tasks more quickly, but can do more complex jobs.

Working Conditions

This work is physically strenuous. It involves frequent kneeling and bending, and the lifting of heavy materials. Freight Handlers work with tools, such as dollies, forklifts, hand trucks, jacks, pallet trucks or wrapping machinery. In managing warehouse floor loads, they also may work with computers, such as data entry software or industry management software, but generally, they work outdoors in all types of weather. The work also requires high levels of concentration in verifying and recording the count and condition of cargo received.



Job Prospects

Most freight handlers work in the transportation industries, such as airlines, shipping, and railroad companies. Overnight courier delivery companies are also considered major employers of freight handlers. Most work full time, and some work nights and weekends to accommodate passenger and cargo delivery schedules. They may also work in big consumer goods warehouses or storage areas.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Freight Handler. If you are physically fit, deadline driven and possess good communication and customer care abilities, you are a good candidate.

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ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN



“

It was just so comforting to know you're doing something you love. It was so uplifting, and it motivated me to work harder, and smarter.

Carlo Snyders

Accounting Technician

SPECIALISED ACCOUNTING THAT MAKES OTHER SMALL BUSINESSES SUCCEED

Involved in the day-to-day practical work of accountancy and playing a key operational role in producing reliable financial information, accounting technicians deal with financial transactions and are responsible for updating financial and balancing accounts. Meet Carlo Snyders, a driven, accredited and self-employed accounting technician. This is his story.

CLEVER KID

Born in Windhoek, Carlo Snyders, when still a toddler, relocated to South Africa, where his father took charge of various construction projects.

Settling at rural Queenstown in that country's Eastern Cape Province, Carlo excelled at school and Mathematics was his favourite subject. "Growing up in a small town was fun. I guess you could say I was your typical bright spark at school - a clever and determined boy; always top of his class. I kept all my certificates from those early years. Maths was my best subject", he reminisces.

"There was always just this thing about calculations. I simply couldn't walk away from a sum. I simply had to get it right. And when it was a bit too advanced for my level, I would pester my siblings to explain to me how to do it", Carlo notes.

"Mathematics was so much fun. And I believe that this early passion I developed for calculations stood me in good stead when I proceeded to high school and got introduced to the exciting world of accounting", he adds.

NEW DIRECTION

It was a teacher's passion for the subject that made Carlo realise that he wanted to make a career out of accounting "I fell in love with the subject when it was introduced to me in Grade 8. It also helped that I had a teacher, Mr. Lochner, who was very enthusiastic about Accounting. His keenness and the way he taught the subject made you understand the importance thereof. It made a huge impact on me", Carlo explains.

Carlo soon became equally infatuated and any spare moment he had was used to delve deeper into the intricacies of financial transacting and bookkeeping. Balancing the books was more fun than watching television.

"I got to a stage where I didn't watch TV in the evenings. I managed to get hold of old higher level text books with the examination papers included at the back and I would sit and work out these questions in the evenings. Often, my dad would ask why I was still awake so late. I simply couldn't sleep. I had to find my answers. So, that's where it came from", he notes.

TERTIARY STUDIES

Upon completing high school, Carlo enrolled at the Vaal Triangle Technikon, where he obtained a National Diploma in Internal Auditing in 2003.

“I soon realised that this was not school anymore. It was much more intensive and the expectations were much higher. You can’t risk missing classes and there’s no one babysitting you. It’s so easy to get distracted in that space. When it comes to getting to grips with the demands and expectations, you are very much left to your own devices”, he shares.

“Although very demanding, I truly enjoyed my studies. It certainly helps when you enjoy the subject matter. But still, you need to be focused and you need to put in the hard hours. The competition amongst peers was also much more intense. Whereas I was the top accounting student at school, all of a sudden, others - equally passionate and talented, surrounded me. I had to work my socks off”, he recalls.

WORLD OF WORK

Carlo soon landed an internship as a trainee accountant at the Charteria & Barnes Chartered Accountants firm in Queenstown. “The transition into the world of work was quite seamless. Somehow, I knew what to expect and I had to adjust my mindset to one under which I accepted that my qualification only served as a means to enter the labour market; but that the real learning started at the workplace; and that I still had a lot to learn from others”, Carlo explains.

Carlo’s thoroughness and keen eye for detail soon got him noticed and he got selected into an elite group of promising candidates to do audits for the Auditor General in South Africa. “I grabbed the opportunity with both hands. I mean, who in my line of work would not want a reference about work done for the country’s Auditor General in his CV?”, he highlights.

“The feedback from my seniors was very encouraging. To know that seasoned and experienced accountants already valued my work reassured me that I took the right career decision. But, more importantly, I think it was just so comforting to know you’re doing something you love. It was so uplifting, and it motivated me to work harder, and smarter”, he adds.

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

Leaving Queenstown and its picturesque rural surroundings, Carlo moved on to Johannesburg in Gauteng, where he had stints at international auditing firm KPMG from 2009, and Chinese telecommunications

giant, Huawei Technologies from 2012. “The time was ripe for me to move on and broaden my horizons, and it just made sense that I tested my skill in Africa’s economic capital. I was really fortunate to have worked at two such leading companies. The different operational contexts generated good exposure and I was able to sharpen my skills, especially in terms of South African legislation and tax and financial regulatory frameworks”, he emphasises.

This invaluable experience and exposure counted in his favour when Carlo applied for professional membership at the Accounting Technicians Association of South Africa. “I am a full and accredited member. The association, in considering my application, took into account my experience and qualifications under its Recognition of Prior Learning arrangements, and they didn’t take long in issuing me with full platinum membership”, Carlo explains.

“This is a valuable membership to have. It helps in allaying fears prospective clients might have about your ability, skill and standard. It puts their minds at ease that they are dealing with a professional who is recognised by peers in the industry. There are just too many chance takers out there, nowadays”, he adds.

COMING HOME

In 2014, Carlo decided to return to Namibia. “Although I went to school south of the Orange River, Namibia stayed in my blood and somehow I always knew that I would one day return to my country of birth. And since my siblings left South Africa and came back home already, it was actually a very easy decision to take”, he shares.

Not long after arriving back in his hometown of Rehoboth, Carlo started to do accounting work at a Windhoek-based company, Rent-a-Drum, where he soon made some sweeping changes in the accounts department. “You know what they say about new brooms! Yes, I would think that I managed to add a lot of value to the company in streamlining processes and reporting, and strengthening the existing checks and balances. The owners appreciated my work and diligence”, notes Carlo.

Carlo’s return to Namibia more or less coincided with the introduction of the online tax submission system introduced by the Ministry of Finance. Having amassed experience in this aspect whilst in South Africa where a similar system was introduced earlier, he saw a gap in the market that convinced him to go solo and offer his services and expertise to others.

OWN CONSULTANCY

Feedback from clients, who appreciated the diligent approach to his work, motivated Carlo to set up his own consultancy, Carlo Snyders Consulting. Working from his home in Rehoboth's Block C suburb, he offers accounting and bookkeeping services.

"It was a true leap of faith. I mean, how else would you describe giving up the security of a fulltime job and then venture into the unknown, knowing that you are yet to secure your first client? But, something in my gut just told me to trust my instincts and forge ahead. I've not looked back since.", he shares.

Carlo's ability to work under pressure, strong interpersonal and communication skills, an eye for detail, excellent commercial sense and good IT skills continue to stand him in good stead in growing his clientele. The future seems bright for this methodical, driven and passionate young man, eager to share his knowledge and skills with those businesses he serves and supports.

"Yes, I'm still working from my home office, but don't be fooled by appearances. I've managed to land some sizable contracts with local construction companies and entrepreneurs. It has been worth my while and the word of mouth is out there about this diligent and thorough accounting technician that brings order to your books", Carlo highlights.

CAREER CHAMPION

Accounting Technicians enjoy excellent career prospects. They can work in a wide variety of finance roles for many types of organisations. Carlo's journey demonstrates that those who pass Grade 12 with Accounting and Mathematics can easily access this career path.

"Knowing what others have done in nurturing me on my own career path, I make it a point to return the favour and share with young people the career potential of venturing into the accounting field. I tell them that not everyone needs to become a chartered accountant or a partner in a big accounting firm; that the market is growing fast and when you operate at my level, you can target the hundreds of small and medium enterprises out there", he notes.

"So, I tell them that if they're good with numbers, love working with people and enjoy helping them to succeed, to give this line of work a full go. The bottom line is that you work for yourself. And the most rewarding aspect is when you can see a small business is growing because of your work, and the advice you've offered them along the way. That's the most fulfilling part" Carlo stresses.

Carlo has big plans to grow his consultancy firm and appreciates that he potentially can be of service to the growing number of small and medium enterprises who often cannot afford and access the services of bigger accounting firms. "Often these businesses fail, not because of them not being viable businesses, but because owners undervalue and neglect their bookkeeping. Often, all such businesses need to stay afloat is someone to take full charge of managing its accounts. And this is where I come in", says Carlo.

Away from his computer and meticulously kept files, Carlo enjoys the company of family and friends, who appreciate him as a caring person, strong in his convictions and views. "I also became a father quite recently. My daughter, Caelyn is now a mere nine months old. She is everything to me. It's no more just about Carlo and his dreams; it's about making a success of my venture to ensure that I secure her future", he concludes.

Carlo Snyders: diligent, methodical and thorough. His story teaches us the importance and value of taking ownership of our work. That there are no shortcuts to quality and that every action is an opportunity to improve. That good quality is never an accident, but always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution. He is working his dream. He is living his passion.

Often, all such businesses need to stay afloat is someone to take full charge of managing its accounts. And this is where I come in ”



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What does it take to become a **ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN**?

Accounting technicians carry out a range of routine and practical accounting tasks, working towards the collation, checking and analysis of financial information, which is then utilised by accountants. They are involved in the day-to-day practical work of accountancy and play a key operational role in producing reliable financial information. Accounting technicians deal with financial transactions and are responsible for updating financial records with payments received and expenses and balancing those accounts. Other key responsibilities include updating computer records with financial data; and source information from clients.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in Mathematics, Accounting and Business Management are considered useful, whereas exposure to computer software applications also stands you in good stead. The ability to work under pressure, strong interpersonal and communication skills, an eye for detail, excellent commercial sense, good IT skills, particularly in the use of spreadsheets, self-motivation, and the ability to work both independently and as part of a team are important skills.

Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. Other than accounting practice, training also focuses on document management for journals, ledgers, logs and worksheets, and all recordkeeping. Training also focuses on computer and software skills as accounting technicians need to be adept at using online applications and manual accounting systems, both in terms of how they work and troubleshooting. Many technicians train through on the job apprenticeship, or via part-time study or distance learning.



Working Conditions

Accounting technicians primarily work in an office environment, and although they may typically work standard business hours, they may need to work evenings and weekends, especially when facing budgeting, reporting or tax deadlines.

Job Prospects

Accounting Technicians enjoy excellent career prospects. They can work in a wide variety of finance roles for many types of organisations, including manufacturing companies, local and central government, the health service, banks and insurance companies and private accountancy firms. Self-employment is also a possibility for qualified technicians. In addition, many who qualify as Accounting Technicians go on to continue their studies, using the qualification as a stepping stone to eventually becoming professional accountants.

You too can live your passion and qualify as an Accounting Technician. If you are detail-oriented, can work both independently and as part of a team, and possess strong mathematical and computer software skills, you are a good candidate.

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AIRCRAFT TECHNICIAN



“

My colleagues appreciate me as someone who assigns a high premium to quality workmanship. They know I don't take shortcuts. I do everything by the book.

Gabriela Kamaahene

Aircraft Technician

MAKING IT BIG IN MALE-DOMINATED AVIATION MAINTENANCE WORLD

Aircraft technicians repair and perform scheduled maintenance on aircraft. They diagnose and repair mechanical or electrical problems and replace defective parts. Another important aspect is testing aircraft parts with gauges and other diagnostic equipment against manufacturer performance standards, while keeping records of maintenance and repair work. Meet West Air Aviation's Gabriela Kamaahene, an ambitious and energetic Aircraft Technician. This is her story.

CHILDHOOD DREAM

Born and raised in Windhoek, Gabriela attended Emma Hoogenhout Primary School, where friends and teachers got to know her as a typical tomboy, always eager to join the boys for a football match. “My mom says I was extremely hyper active. So, they signed me up for ballerina lessons, hoping it would make me more feminine and girly”, Gabriela chuckles.

Growing up in a family environment where granddad was a keen automechanic, her aunt a flight attendant and her uncle an aircraft engineer, Gabriela cherished dreams of qualifying as a pilot. “Becoming a pilot was the dream, yes. And so I worked very hard in Mathematics and Physical Science while at the Windhoek High School. I wasn't a top performer, but my grades were not too shabby, either”, she shares.

“I made it a point to read everything I could find about aircraft and flying. And often I would daydream and imagine myself all dressed up in my pilot uniform, taking charge of a big Airbus aircraft, speaking to my passengers over the intercom, doing all the pilot things”, adds Gabriela.

NEW DIRECTION

After completing Grade 12, Gabriela applied and was shortlisted for a pilot training bursary at the Namibia Civil Aviation Authority. However, the compulsory psychometric and aptitude tests that formed part of the application process revealed that she was more mechanically inclined, and as such, better suited for a career in the aircraft technician field.

“These tests uncover aspects of your personality that you don't know about. Somehow, I didn't feel disappointed for not being accepted for pilot training; somehow I seemed to agree with the outcomes and recommendations thereof; I wanted to give it a try”, Gabriela notes. Her parents and family too agreed to the recommendation that Gabriella enrolls at the Port Alfred 43 Air School in South Africa, a reputable flying training organisation, catering for the private, general commercial, airline and military sectors.

“The training is intensive, but fun. You gain the required industry specific aviation maintenance knowledge and skills. It’s a good combination of theoretical and practical training. You need self-discipline in spades for the 12-month theoretical part. You cover all the basics, which serves as a good foundation from where you then get into all the intricacies around structure, mechanics and fluids. You can’t afford to let your guard down. You need to stay on top of your game”, she stresses.

FIRST JOB

Upon successfully completing the 11-month theory course, 2 800 hours of on-the-job training and a trade test, Gabriela acquired her certification and soon thereafter, landed employment at West Air Aviation, in the capital. “I’ve been very fortunate to have landed this opportunity at such a leading and trend-setting aviation company. The local aviation sector is quite small, and I could not have asked for a better opportunity to get my career off the ground”, she stresses. Aircraft technicians need to possess a good sense of visual awareness, a high level of attention to detail, and the ability to work under pressure. Gabriela, although still relatively inexperienced, is already proving her mettle in a cutthroat environment.

“My colleagues appreciate me as someone who assigns a high premium to quality work and workmanship. They know me as someone that doesn’t take shortcuts. I do everything by the book. When I’m done, I double-check. And after I’ve double-checked; I ask my seniors to come and pressure test, as well”, Gabriela says.

“The feedback from my seniors has been very encouraging. I know that I still have a lot to learn about this line of work, but it is very reassuring, nonetheless, to know that regardless of my lack of work experience; seasoned technicians already value my work, dedication and thoroughness, and what I bring to the table”, she adds.

RESPONSIBLE WORK

Thoroughness is indeed the name of the game in this dynamic trade area, where best practice and safety standards continuously evolve. “The safety of our aircraft, and by extension the safety of crew and passengers, is essentially what this work is all about. There is no room for error, and perfection in all we do, is a must; because lives are at stake”, highlights Gabriela. “My supervisors inculcate this important and overriding aspect of our work, all the time. It’s our workshop mantra: We do not compromise on safety. Never. Every



time you work on an aircraft, all the lives that will be stepping on that aircraft are in your hands. As aircraft technicians and mechanics, we are the first step of safety, and after that, the pilot”, she highlights. Safety comes with integrity and dependability, on the part of aircraft technicians.

Equally adapt in completing tasks on her own, or working in a team on more complex assignments, the go-getting and no-nonsense Gabriela ticks all the boxes. “Our hangar is a pressure cooker, really. Our flights schedules are busy and demanding, and our aircraft need to be safe and ready. You must therefore work with utmost focus and concentration. An incorrect installation results in pressure on our workflow and unnecessary delays”, Gabriela emphasises.

“Things change, as well. Aircraft manufacturers often update us on new developments and technologies, especially as far as safety is concerned, and we need to adapt accordingly”, she adds.

ONGOING TRAINING

From basic certification, aircraft technicians enrol for further training to obtain certification to work on specific aircraft manufacturer brands. Gabriela is gradually working her way up the ladder, having obtained three such licenses already.

“It takes about six months to train and get your first aircraft license. You then can perform work on that type of aircraft only. So, depending on how you manage yourself and your time, you can obtain a new license every six months. Once again, it is all about self-discipline and commitment”, Gabriela notes.

“Furthermore, you should take into account that things evolve quite fast in this line of work. Manufacturers effect upgrades on their aircraft and you often need to complete refresher training at set intervals to keep your licensing. If you don’t, they expire”, she adds. Gabriela embraces the importance of keeping her skill set relevant and appropriate. “I’m so fortunate and lucky in that my parents are so supportive. My mother is pushing me all the way. We’ve set our goal on a further three licenses this year, whereafter we go for the bigger 55-seater Embraer jet. And once that one is under the belt, I’ll move on to bigger and more advanced aircraft”, she shares.

“Aircraft technicians are lifelong learners. That’s just the nature of our work. Luckily, just as I don’t mind getting my hands dirty in the workshop, I also don’t mind getting my nose into the books to study”, says Gabriela.

CAREER AMBASSADOR

Gabriela does not allow negative societal perceptions around the work she does in a male-dominated environment, to bring her down. On the contrary, she embraces it as a challenge. In fact, it motivates her to always give her utmost to the job at hand. “I can do anything my male colleagues can do. I can remove a propeller and I can install an engine. The only difference is size, really. I’m only 1.5 meters tall, but I fit into places they don’t. You underestimate me at your own peril”, she warns.

“I’m proud to play a part in breaking down the negative societal perceptions around women taking up jobs in male-dominated environments. Mechanically inclined young girls passionate about the aviation sector and who do not shy away from manual labour should consider these options. If your Mathematics and Science are on point, you too can make it and enter this exciting and rewarding career path”, Gabriela highlights.

“On a more serious note, I think we need more women to join the fray. My manager observed the other day that I brought a female touch to our work; a touch of perfection, a touch of persistence, a touch of class. Yes, definitely, this trade needs more women in making our aircraft even more safer”, she adds. With more international airlines adding Namibia to their routes and with plans to expand the international airport, the local aviation industry is set for growth, and more employment opportunities for aircraft technicians are sure to arise.

“Give it a go. I don’t hold a university diploma or degree, but I find myself on a viable and rewarding career path with excellent growth prospects. University is not for everyone, and often we overlook rewarding technical options, simple because we think of them as dirty work only men can do”, she concludes.

Gabriela Kamaahene: Courageous, assertive and spirited; a true champion for women in a cutthroat male dominated environment. Her story inspires us to recognise the powerful potential of the girl-child and to have the courage to direct their potential towards good ends. She is living her dream. She is living her passion.

**University is not for everyone,
and often we overlook rewarding
technical options, simple because
we think of them as dirty work only
men can do.** ”



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What does it take to become a **AIRCRAFT TECHNICIAN**?

Aircraft are highly complex machines that require reliable parts and specialized service to fly safely. To keep an airplane in peak operating condition, aircraft mechanics examine aircraft frames and parts for defects; diagnose mechanical or electrical problems; and measure parts for wear, using precision instruments. Reading maintenance manuals to identify methods of repair, they repair wings, brakes, electrical systems, and other defective aircraft components and parts, using hand tools. Another important aspect is to test aircraft parts with gauges and other diagnostic equipment against manufacturer performance standards, while keeping records of maintenance and repair work.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in Mathematics and Science are considered useful, whereas exposure to computer software applications also stands you in good stead. Aircraft technicians need to be physically fit and strong; whilst possessing a good sense of visual awareness, a high level of attention to detail, and the ability to work under pressure. Observational proficiency and safety consciousness are of utmost importance in ensuring that an aircraft is kept in optimal operating condition.



Training

Training is offered at registered training institutions. Most aircraft technicians have some sort of official and industry-approved specialized certification, authorising them to work on any part of the aircraft, except electronic flight instruments, which is the job of avionics technicians. Amassing industry experience is of utmost importance in building resumes, as employers prefer well-experienced workers. For further training, many technicians opt for bachelor's degree programs in disciplines related to aviation technology and management.

Working Conditions

Aircraft technicians work in hangars, in repair stations, or on airfields. They must often meet strict deadlines to maintain flight schedules, yet still maintain safety standards. This is quite stressful at times. Most technicians work near major airports. They often work outside, on the airfield, while repair and corporate mechanics work in climate-controlled shops. Civilian aircraft mechanics employed by the armed forces may also work on military installations. The work can be noisy from loud aircraft engines. Workers must often bend, stoop, and reach from ladders and scaffolds. Most aircraft technicians work full time with some overtime. Weekend work is common.

Job Prospects

Employment of aircraft technicians is concentrated in a small number of industries. The majority of technicians work for national airlines and private aviation companies. With more international airlines adding Namibia to their routes and with plans to expand the international airport, the local aviation industry is set for growth, and more employment opportunities for qualified aircraft technicians are sure to arise.

You too can live your passion and qualify as an Aircraft Technician. If you are physically fit and strong, have a good general knowledge of aircraft, and possess advanced mechanical, problem-solving, creative thinking and computer software skills, you are a good candidate.

This insert is brought to you by the Namibia Training Authority under its 'Live Your Passion' advocacy campaign. To learn more about other technical and vocational career options, visit our website: **www.nta.com.na**

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