



08

Job Shatona

Millwright

Working with his hands is in his DNA

There is an unfortunate perception that the technical and vocational education stream is a narrow route and that graduates will find it difficult to land worthwhile employment opportunities. This is just that - perception and not fact.

Meet 32-year old Job Shatona. A qualified millwright whose unique and sought-after skill set makes him a highly employable individual. This is his story.

Strange Occupation

Job was born and raised at Okalongo in Omusati, where he matriculated at Okalongo Secondary in 2002. Growing up, Job realised that he liked working with his hands. It did

therefore not come as a surprise to his family and friends, when Job opted to enroll for a course in Marine Engineering at the Namibia Marine and Fisheries Institute (NAMFI), at Walvis Bay.

It was during his time at NAMFI when he read about millwrighting and where he made the decision to instead enroll at the Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology, NIMT, at Arandis. "What really attracted me to the trade was its uniqueness. Certainly, where I come from no one knew what a Millwright was. And since I haven't heard of people doing this kind of work, I decided to give it a go. I am qualified now and I continue to like what I am doing", Job explains.



Early Days

Today, Job is employed at the Namibia Ports Authority (Namport) at Walvis Bay. “I studied on a Namdeb scholarship and upon completion in 2008, I went to Oranjemund to seek employment. However, the company was retrenching staff and couldn’t employ me”, he notes.

Job didn’t despair though and he returned to the capital to seek employment. He soon landed an opportunity at Otis Elevators, a company that develops, manufactures and maintains elevators, escalators, and related equipment. “I was never worried, because I knew that qualified millwrights are highly employable. And sure enough, I soon landed a job at Namport in Luderitz and transferred to the Walvis Bay harbour soon thereafter. I’ve been a

Namport employee since”, he adds.

Cutthroat Environment

As a millwright, Job is trained to erect, install, dismantle, repair, and reassemble machinery. This includes such tasks as installing machinery on foundations or base plates and aligning electric motors or other power sources such as turbines with equipment, which millwrights typically connect with some type of coupling. Millwrights are also known as industrial mechanics or machinists. They perform an important function in any industrial plant or setting, because broken down machines can result in serious production losses.

“I am responsible for electrical and mechanical maintenance on the container handling equipment, which entails routine maintenance, servicing of the cranes and inspections. My main duty is to maintain and optimise the availability of the equipment”,

Job explains. “I am an important member of the team. We cannot deliver with broken machinery. If I don’t meet expectations, production suffers. It’s as simple as that”, he highlights.

Technical Work

Amongst others, millwrights must have a good understanding of fluid mechanics, hydraulics and pneumatics, and all of the components involved in these processes, such as valves, cylinders, pumps and compressors.

According to Job, millwrights also need to have a strong mathematical aptitude as they work with a wide array of precision tools, based on quantifiable information. “Although my training at the Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology really prepared me well to enter the job market, I’ve really learnt a lot and have gained significant work-based experience, since those early

training days. Millwrighting is a very dynamic field. Although the basics will always remain the same, things change fast with new technologies. I make it a point to stay abreast of new developments, because if I don’t, my skill set loses relevance”, Job stresses.

Infectious Passion

Job is a diligent and committed individual who excels in his work. His passion for what he does is clearly demonstrated by his intimate knowledge of the various aspects of his work, and his appreciation for procedures and safety. “Putting together a machine can take a few days or several weeks. As such, one needs to have a good understanding of how the machine works so to repair it when it breaks down. You need to be able to read diagrammes, schematic drawings and service manuals to determine work procedures; operate rigging

equipment; fit bearings; align gears and shafts; attach motors; and connect couplings and belts to precise tolerances”, Job explains.

“You may also do some tack welding to temporarily hold components in place until it can be completely welded by a specialist welder. Modern standards of practice require working within precise limits or standards of accuracy and at heights without fear. We place a high premium on job safety, but minor injuries such as cuts, bruises, and strains do occur, now and then”, he adds.

Role Model

As a highly skilled artisan, Job is also passionate about vocational education and training, and its potential for empowerment and self-actualisation.

“It is true that most people still think of technical and vocational careers as dirty, low-status, low-paying options. I’ve seen so many young people missing out on golden opportunities in this field, just because someone told them that it is not an option worth pursuing. As such, I am always eager and willing to share my experience with technically-inclined school learners in telling them that technical careers and vocational can indeed be fulfilling and rewarding options, worth pursuing”, he explains. “In fact, I tell them that qualified and experienced millwrights are always in demand, especially in the mining

and manufacturing sectors and as instructors of technical programmes. And the salary is good”, he adds.

Friends and Family

Away from work Job enjoys spending time with his friends. Despite not having a family yet, Job has taken in his nephew, whose grandmother passed away recently. He appreciates that he has to be a good example for the young man, who is currently in Grade 9. “It is quite a responsibility, but I take it as a way of grooming myself to be a mature and responsible man. I know that he looks up to me as a rolemodel and if he chooses to go into a technical field one day, I will be there to support him”, Job explains.

Job didn’t share much about his future plans. For now, he is enjoying his work at Namport, Walvis Bay, where he has established himself as a key team member and a firm favourite amongst colleagues. “I am happy for now. I am just a down-to-earth, easy going guy who likes people and who laughs a lot. I am just trying to be the best I can be, doing what I love”, he concludes.

Job Shatona. A confident, driven and committed artisan, but also a humble, modest and caring man. His story teaches us that the price of success is hard work and dedication to the job at hand. That we always

need to have faith in ourselves and our unique abilities and talents. That success isn’t always about greatness. It’s about consistency. That it is consistent hard work that leads to success.

He is a trailblazer for technical and vocational training. He is living his passion!

I make it a point to stay abreast of new developments, because if I don’t, my skill set loses relevance.

”