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MAGAZINE

INTERVIEW
SEGMENT

KOPANO
MOSHOANA

&

NOKULUNGA
MBANJWA

FLAMBOYANCE
CLIQUE

WOMEN ON THE
MOVE

*Cooking tips
for beginners*

FOOD'O CLOCK

Dr. Tebogo Phetla Mashifana

WOMEN LEADING IN STEM



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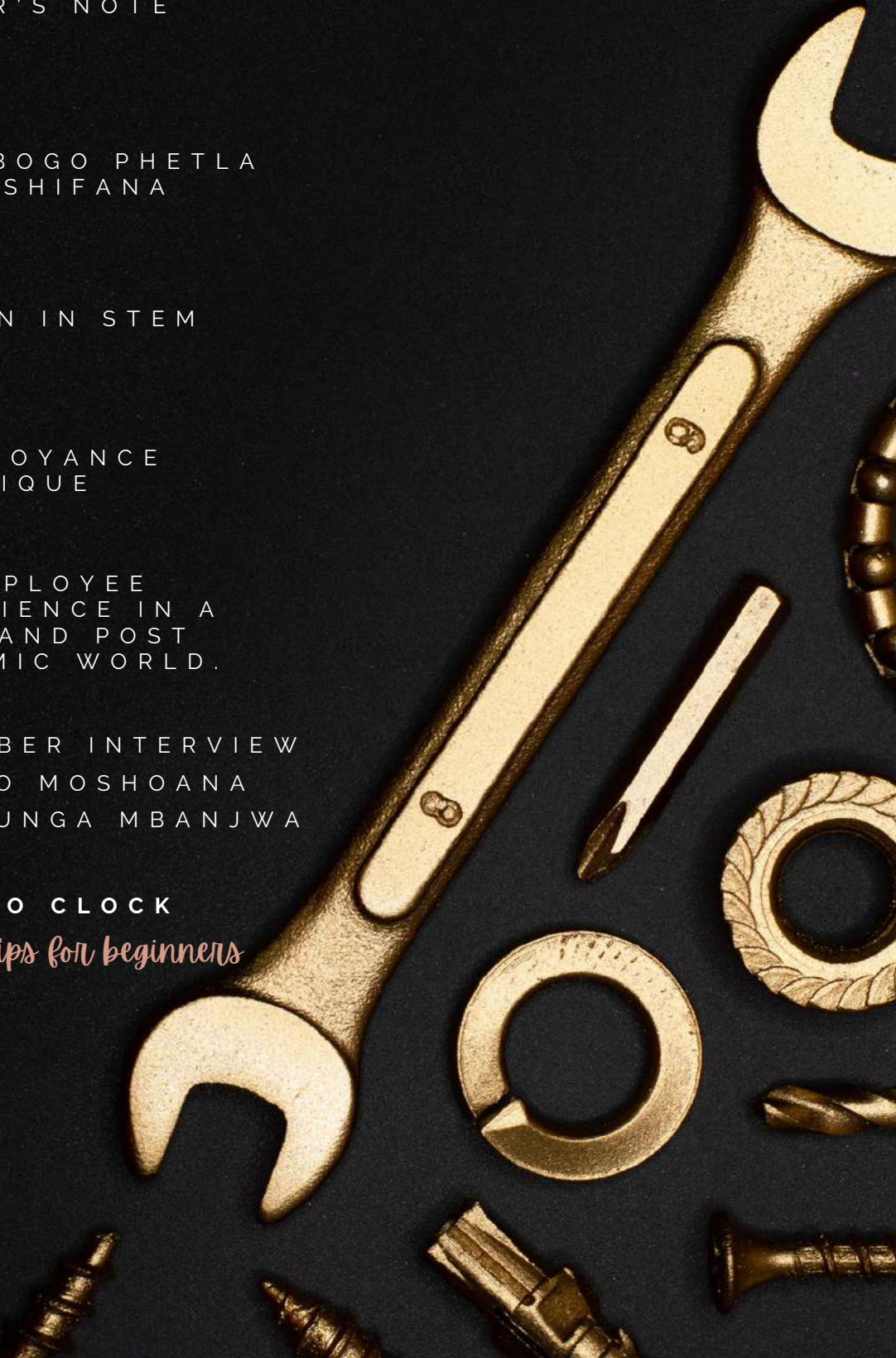
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EDITOR'S NOTE

With the work session slowly ebbing away and ushering in a silly season, South African business is going to come to a slow halt in the last parts of this year. However, the holidays looming over us, should not mean that the world won't benefit from having a good conversation about women taking up space in careers that can be both demanding and engaging.

In the November issue, The Feature Magazine seeks to discuss the dynamics of being African women working in the male dominated fields such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). This Feature is created to give you, our blessed readers, an inside look into a world many don't know much about but are intrigued about.

In this issue, we want to instill two things into the consciousness of our readers: education for the African woman as a gateway to a better future, and the message that anything we set our minds is attainable. Through the interview with Dr. Tebogo, we also want to send the message that beyond entry, there is bountiful opportunity for young women to dominate their respective fields, and beyond that, make them more accessible for young women leaders of the future.

Let November slow down the pace of South Africa, but not the pace of mind. Always look for ways that you can educate and level up, for it is only through empowering our minds that we can propel to our future.



Dr. Tebogo Phetla Mashifana

WOMEN LEADING IN STEM



Tell us about yourself (upbringing and your life values in general)?



DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

I am a village girl born and bred in Sehlakwane, Limpopo. I am the second born of seven children - now the eldest after our sister passed on in 2012. I was raised in a Christian family, where my father is also a Pastor. It is in this environment where I experienced, firsthand, what it means to be in-service to humanity.

Growing up, I witnessed my mother dedicate herself to cooking for us and other kids around the village, and we would feast together. As my father is a pastor, we used to have night vigils, and at the end of the service, without any failure, we would jump into his car, as he would drop-off every church member, from near and far, right at their houses. Papa did this every night, and after, brought us home to sleep. Witnessing all of this planted a seed that would later blossom in my adult life, informing the kind of person I am becoming.

My parents valued education and made many sacrifices for me and my siblings to have a good education. I will forever be grateful for this. Looking back, I can boldly say I would not change anything about my upbringing. From my early years, my parents made me believe that I could be anything I desire to be and I held on to that, irrespective of the challenges I have faced in my life. This is also a seed I am planting in my kids' lives- our eldest daughter is five years and the conversations we have with her about her future are mind-blowing. At such a young age, she already believes there are no limits to who and what she can be.



DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

Seeing my parents serving humanity in the ways they have, through their spirituality and belief in education, motivated me to become the person I am today. Today, I wear many hats, I am a qualified and professionally registered engineer, I am a researcher, and I am a Senior Lecturer, which speaks of my role as a teacher. I serve in a leadership role as the Head of the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Johannesburg. I am an entrepreneur, I am a mother of two, a wife, and a deaconess at the church where I serve. I am a founding member of Dr. Tebogo Mashifana and Partners Foundation, a non-profit organization, whose sole purpose is to serve humanity.

In all the roles I have been entrusted with, I believe I am a servant born to live each day to fulfill a purpose greater than myself. I am a mentor for young people, men, and women who are on their journey to becoming. I am a giver and through the organization, I conduct fundraising and donation projects to help those who are less privileged.

My goal in life is to wake up each day and change one life at a time, whether it is through my action or words (spoken or written). I live a life aspiring to inspire the young and old generation to strive to be the best they can be wherever they have been planted, and in the process lift others with them.

What inspired your interest in STEM?

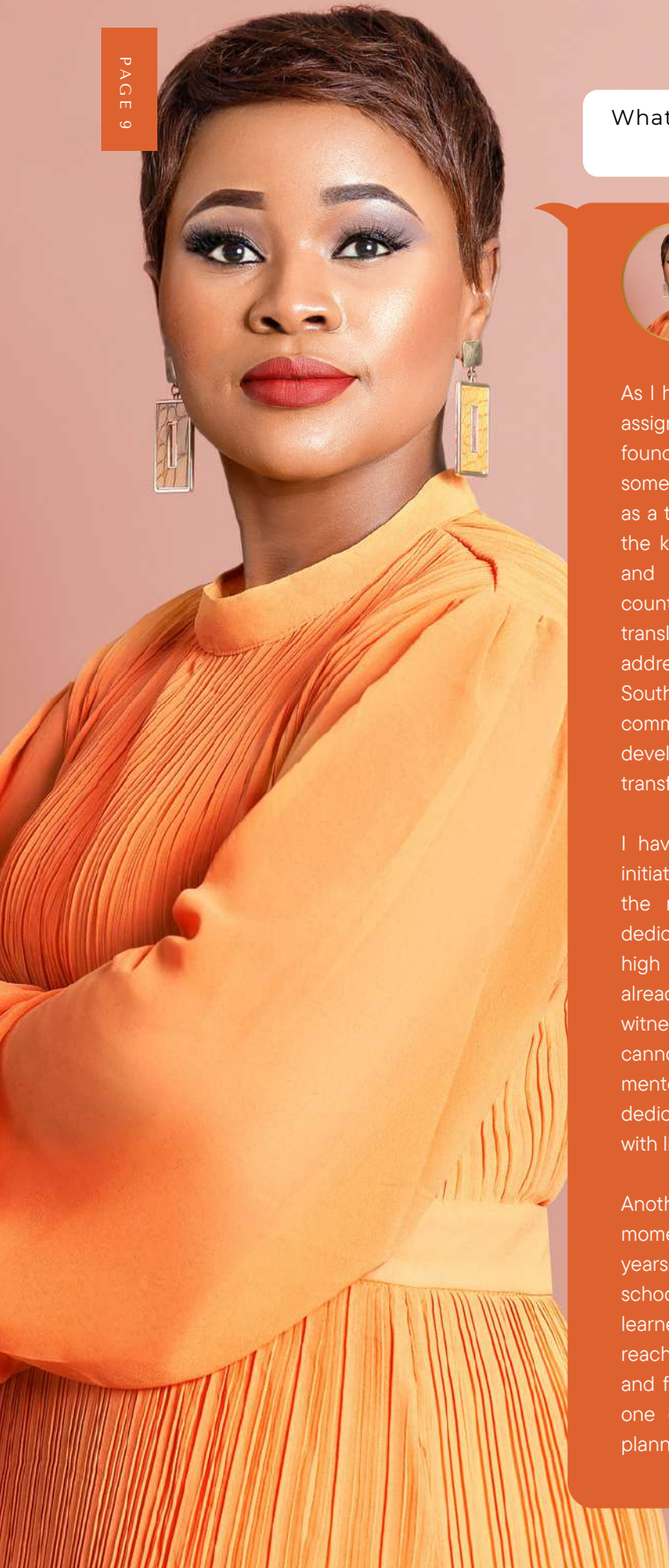


DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

Growing up, I never had career guidance to learn about different careers. When I decided to study Chemical Engineering, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. However, there is a picture that was clear in my mind, I saw myself working in a laboratory and wearing a white lab coat. So, when I went to varsity, the closest program to that picture was “Chemical” engineering.

During my second year, I began to discover how great the career I chose was, which was cemented through my experience in the gold mining industry. Working as Metallurgist made me fall in love with my chosen path.

The opportunity in the mining industry created an environment where I discovered my passion for research and the love to investigate and provide solutions to problems. As I am maturing in my career, the love for developing solutions to solve challenges that may be affecting our societies and the environment, and the opportunities to transfer skills and knowledge and somehow influence lives positively is what is keeping me in STEM fields.



What contributions have you made, or would you like to make, to your current area of focus?



DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

As I have indicated that I wear many hats, so my greatest assignment is to never leave any environment the way I found it. If I am given an opportunity to interact with someone, I use it for this greater purpose. Through my role as a teacher, I strive to impart knowledge to my students—the knowledge they will use to be better human beings and contribute positively to the development of our country. Through my research, my greatest desire is to translate the research I am doing into solutions that will address the challenges of the high unemployment rate in South Africa. I would like to see my research commercialized someday, and through the solutions developed, contribute to creating employment and transferring skills to the young people of this country.

I have lived most of my life serving through different initiatives. Some of my greatest contribution to humanity is the mentorship program I have developed, where I dedicate my time mentoring young men and women, from high school learners to students and those who are already in the workplace. Through this initiative, I have witnessed lives being transformed and impacted in a way I cannot explain. Witnessing some of the testimonies in my mentees' lives has been a ministry in my own life. I will dedicate myself to this program for as long as I am blessed with life.

Another top-of-mind initiative I have in the works at the moment, is a school shoes collection drive I started two years ago. I started the drive to raise funds and collect school shoes for the underprivileged primary school learners in my village. The feedback I received when I reached out to many people on social media; from friends and family, changed my life forever. This project is by far one of the greatest projects I have conducted. I am planning to do more each year,



How does it feel to work in such a male dominated field?



DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

I have had to fight throughout my career. It has not been an easy journey, but as they say, what does not kill you, makes you stronger.

Working in a male-dominated field is challenging, a challenge I believe women will fight for years to come. As a woman, just like other women, I still find myself having to prove to my counterparts why I have a seat at the table. Like most women, I am expected to put in thrice the effort, and be thrice as excellent to be recognized – especially because I am a black woman.

In one of her speeches, Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said “Gender inequality is the responsibility of men to address because perpetrators of discrimination against women, are men”. In my journey, I have found men who would cast me down, I have also found men who lifted me and took a stand to be my sponsor and my voice. I am grateful for these men who have vowed that women will not be discriminated against on their watch.

As women who have gone ahead and have other women coming after us, we should always know that wherever and whenever we show, it has ceased to be about us. We are doing it for the multitude of women coming after us. It is important for us to be diligent, and excellent, embody ethical principles, and serve with humility. In all the battles we come across, I have learned that one of the greatest weapons to silence those who are against you, is to excel in your craft and let your work be your defense. That is how it feels like to be a woman in a male-dominated field, my work has to fight for me daily.

What scientific advancement took your breath away when you first heard about it?



DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

It has to be the research I am doing under waste valorization. After my experience in the gold mining industry and being exposed to the massive wastes generated by the industry, being extremely bothered by that challenge, I proposed it to my supervisors as a topic for my doctoral research. The ability to take wastes that is readily available in our environment and potentially polluting the environment and convert that waste into value-added products that can be used for different applications such as in the building and construction industry, treating wastewater, and using the waste to recover valuable materials from it, is an experience I would never trade for anything.

Who was the female in STEM that inspired you to become the engineer that you are today?



DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

There are many women I look up to, across field and industry, who are modeling the wholesome person I am becoming. I am surrounded by women who have raised their hands to say, we are available to hold your hand in your journey of becoming, and I will forever be grateful for these women. I am the person I am today because I am standing on the giant shoulders of women who have vowed that where they have slipped, I will not slip. These are women I call upon for wisdom when the going gets tougher. They play different and significant roles in my life, sisterhood, mentors, sponsors, and my support structure.

What would you like each of your students to be left with after a session in your classroom?



DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

In the module I teach, I strive to link theory to practice so that my students can see beyond the classroom. I teach my students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers and be aware of how their actions can positively or negatively impact humanity and the environment. I am privileged to be teaching a module related to environmental engineering, which is aligned with my research, making it easy for me to marry the teaching & learning, and research. I want my students to be responsible citizens who are eager to use the skills and knowledge they have acquired in my classrooms to solve challenges in their societies. Above everything, I always want my students to know that I care for them, that I want the best for them, and just like my five-year-old girl, for them to know that the ability to become anything lies within them.

What was the definitive moment that made you realize that STEM is the career path that you needed to go towards?



DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

When I worked in the mining industry, I conducted one of the best trainings as a chemical engineer. The environment I was in allowed me to think outside the box, and I developed a great passion for solving problems. I was so excited when there were challenges in the plant because I wanted to experience how that problem would be solved. It was during this time that I also developed a great passion for research. At the age of twenty-one, I already knew that I wanted to be a researcher, to investigate and develop solutions for problems. I also knew the environment I wanted to work in for me to pursue that passion, and that passion led me to academia to pursue Postgraduate studies, subsequently being employed as a Tutor, Assistant Lecturer, a Lecturer, and then promoted to a Senior Lecturer and then the Head of Department.

What would you like females to know about getting into a demanding career such as STEM?



DR. TEBOGO PHETLA MASHIFANA

It is not going to be easy; you will have to fight to have your seat at the table. Many women have given up along the way because they were made to believe that they had to choose between their careers in STEM and being caregivers and starting families, but we are the generation that should stop that cycle. You do not have to choose. You can have it all, but maybe not all at the same time. Know what is important for you and your family and prioritize that.

The number of women in STEM globally is extremely low and the higher we go on the ladder, the fewer the women. Giving up because of the systems that were not designed to handle women and because of the systems people have designed to intentionally kick you out, should never be an option. Remember that the moment you have your foot in, it has ceased to be just about you. It has become to be about the multitude that is coming after you. You will have to be the reason why other women would not consider giving up and leaving the STEM fields. Always know that no matter how bad it may get, your excellent work will represent you and be your defense. Invest your time, energy, and effort to ensure you develop yourself and perfect your craft. They may question you because of your gender and sometimes because of your race, however, your work should always speak for itself.

WOMEN IN STEM

WHY IS STEM VITAL?

STEM refers to the grouping of the disciplines; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, a nomenclature referring to the burgeoning field of innovation and discovery that has defined a new world order. It is known as the best method to springboard South Africa to the forefront of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

That said, while a budding environment, it is not as easy to thrive in it, particularly in the case of Black African women.

THE STEM CHALLENGE FOR AFRICAN WOMEN

From a historical standpoint, African women have been at a disadvantage when it comes to getting the resources needed to pursue STEM in academia.

Academia can be racially divided and patriarchal on this continent, with many South African females in academia experiencing exclusion from educational institutions, and where they are included, they feel marginalized. A report by SANews states that the number of women who graduate with a degree in STEM rests at 13%. These results, when paralleled with findings from a study of 2018 in a journal article titled *Academics of colour: Experiences of Emerging Black Women Academics in Curriculum Studies at a University in South Africa*, provide insight that foregrounds the low graduate percentage point; Many of the research participants in the study felt excluded, like they did not have a voice and thus could not thrive.

The study revealed that among the issues faced by Black Women academics are the microaggressions designed to alienate African women and lessen their contribution to scholarship. On top of these are other important concerns around representation that informed the low graduate percentage point of Black women in STEM in South Africa.

Black women representation in STEM education presents a chicken and egg dynamic. There is a lack of representation because there is a low percentage of enrolments and graduations and there is low percentage of enrollments and graduations in part due to a lack of representation. This is partially due to a lack of exposure to programs that show STEM as a lucrative career path for Black African Women.

THE STEM OPPORTUNITY FOR AFRICAN WOMEN

In South Africa today there are salient figures that foster STEM as a career path. These figures include Nuclear Physicist Senamile Masango and Post-doctoral Researcher Edith Phalane, who serve as exceptional examples of young women who have taken the plunge to pursue STEM education. However, this is not enough as we need more representation in this field. I think, there should be a change in the very structure of the STEM world regarding race and gender. STEM is no longer an 'old-white-boy's-club'. It should thus be opened and made to be more inclusive and accessible.

There is great opportunity for young black women in STEM, but for black women to know this it is important for them to be in awareness of them. Mentorship programs such as Black Women in Science (<http://www.bwisafrica.com/>) do the work to give young women a look into STEM as a profitable and enjoyable career. These organization are important, and their messaging can thrive with our support.

OLWETHU MOKONENYANE



FLAMBOYANCE CLIQUE

WOMEN ON THE MOVE





What sounds better to the ears than spaces created for women to not only share the triumphs that come with being women, but also the tricks they used to climb the rungs of the ever-expanding ladder? Probably nothing.

Created by Nompumelelo Modlane and Londiwe Masilela as a means of bringing women together under the moniker The Breakfast Club initially, The Flamboyance Clique hosts a gathering for strong and influential women, known as the Delightful Budtime Matinée. This gathering is not just designed to help women feel safe, but also to share know-how's for achievement and soaring to new heights.



OLWETHU MOKONENYANE



The Delightful Budtime Matinée is a bi-monthly event that seeks to bring women together and host a wide variety of speakers that appeal to a space created for true exchange of information. This is an event that is not only fun, but attendees will feel like they got more than they bargained for, with cocktails, and beautiful memories to boot.

DISCOVER MORE



EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IN A PRE AND POST PANDEMIC WORLD.

The evolution of employee wellness programs can be tracked as far back as the 1st Industrial Revolution with the Ford Motor company. The Ford Motor Company first initiated an employee wellness agenda by implementing a 40-hour work week. This was established in adoption of Robert Owen's philosophy of the importance of employee well-being, in his advocacy of the 8-hour work-day, as an effort to improve productivity and wellness of the employees in the manufacturing world. Fast forward to the early 1980's in South Africa, when mining companies first introduced the concept of employee wellbeing in response to the injuries and illnesses that miners were exposed to underground, giving birth to the Employee Assistant Program.

A lot has changed since the early days of employee wellness. The EAP program has evolved significantly, now covering a spectrum of needs for the employee of today. Today, in part due to the pandemic, a lot of corporates have been forced to think carefully and deeply about employee wellness, encouraging an approach that goes beyond the one-day calendar event of checking employee blood pressure, cholesterol and BMI, and well into prioritising mental wellness for employees in the work environment.

Additionally, with the increase of remote and hybrid work models, more focus has rightfully been placed on finding a healthy work-life balance. Employers have realised the correlation between employee wellness and work performance. i.e. if employees are healthy, happy and motivated, they are far more likely to be productive members of a high functioning team. This has also emphasized the value of cultivating a positive experience in order to retain talent and build a workplace culture where employees can thrive.

What has become clearer is that the "work from the office" phenomenon is getting harder to maintain long-term because the office is a crutch for old habits. The office is a known environment for baby boomers to lead by the comfort of traditional leadership models employed in the 9-5 work culture. This culture, while providing a more hands-on approach to management, does not prioritise employee wellness and wellbeing.

So, in today's hybrid working environment, how do we find the right balance of management approaches for an exceptional employee experience geared towards high performance?

The answer is simple; you build a strong culture.

First and foremost, it's impossible to convert a company to hybrid or remote-in without creating a strong culture. Contrary to popular understanding, culture goes beyond organising social events, virtual keynotes or desk yoga. Culture is how you work together in harmony. For a strong company culture, it is important for employers, their human resources and all employees to co-create a strategy. A co-created strategy is better than an external, imposed strategy. You want the dreamers, the knowers, the historians and the futurists of your business all in one place to build the strategy and company cultures that works for you.

Secondarily, in the creation of a best suited company culture, it is important for leadership to embrace and inspire transparency and accountability. This helps with honest feedback on the missing pieces, what works and what does not, and the strengths and weakness when forming a strong company culture that will be resilient to the changing ways of working.

The future world of work will inevitably be different to anything we have seen before, and perhaps this pivot enforced by the Covid-19 pandemic was necessary for the recalibration of the 9-5. As we have seen employee wellness programs evolve since the 1st Industrial revolution, it's imperative that leaders redesign the employee experience and place ahead of the agenda what wellness in the new work looks like.

The opportunity to honour the human spirit in the context of work is more prevalent than ever before. We now have the chance to show up better than we ever have, by providing conscious led programs that enhance the people experience, whilst advancing employer interests. This, additionally, gives the employees the opportunity to advance their careers, personal growth and development in the workplace.



**NOVEMBER
INTERVIEW
SEGMENT**

**NOKULUNGA
MBANJWA**

**KOPANO
MOSHOANA**

OLWETHU MOKONENYANE



NOKULUNGA MBANJWA

Food has the ability to bring people together, to create memories, but good food elevates this experience, and it's even better when it does not break your bank balance.

When Nokulunga Mbanjwa answered her calling to feed the community she had one mission; to make the food taste good. This would be how she honors a spark created by the most influential woman in her life, her grandmother.





"MY FONDEST FOOD MEMORIES COME FROM BEING RAISED BY MY GRANDMOM," SHE SAYS.

"BACK IN THE DAY WE USED TO SIT AROUND THE COAL STOVE, AND SHE WOULD FIX FOOD FOR US AS HER GRANDKIDS."

With these memories in the back of her mind and the realization that her hands belonged in the kitchen, she knew that she needed to start a business that would nourish the body and mind. Nokulunga's brand of food brings out emotions in the hearts of people that she carefully tends to, through the experience her food creates.

"I WANT THE PERSON THAT TASTES MY FOOD TO FEEL COMFORT," NOKULUNGA SAYS.

The more she cooks, the brighter the fires her passion to provide food to the world sparks. To Nokulunga, food speaks a language that can be carried across background, and across differences.

While Nokulunga is excited about the food industry and encourages everyone with a passion to enter, she says that it "isn't glamorous". She advises people who want to enter to do the proper training so that what they put on the plate tastes good and meets an exceptional standard, and importantly, is safe for consumption.

When Nokulunga speaks of her future aspirations, she speaks of a future establishment and manifests that it will happen.

You can view Nokulunga's facebook for more of her mouthwatering food, or follow her company Lakheso.

OLWETHU MOKONENYANE



KOPANO MOSHOANA

The world of marketing can feel like a challenge for the best of professionals, but if there was one word that Kopano Moshona had to use to describe her chosen field, she would use the word “purpose”. When Kopano saw the impact that marketing had on the world, she knew that this sector, despite its challenges, was where her destiny rested.





"HONESTLY SPEAKING, I THINK I WILL KEEP GOING BACK TO THE FACT THAT I'M A PEOPLE'S PERSON, AND INTERACTION WITH DIFFERENT HUMAN BEINGS; GETTING TO KNOW THEIR STORIES, HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN INTRIGUING ELEMENT IN MY LIFE," SHE SAYS.

What originally started out as the idea to pursue public relations, soon evolved into a plan to pursue a career in marketing - a male dominated field, with a particular lack of African women taking up space and leading in the field. Kopano saw that as an opportunity for herself and decided that it was time to start KPRM Marketing Solutions, a business that summed up her experience and aim to be a disruptor.

"AS YOUNG AS SEVENTH GRADE TO BE QUITE HONEST, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED SOMETHING OF MY OWN... I HAD THIS STRONG NUDGE THAT I WANTED TO CREATE SOMETHING OF MY OWN." SHE SAYS.

In her eyes, KPRM Marketing Solutions strives to leave the mark in the world of marketing. For Kopano, one of the key changes she would like to make is encouraging a move towards changing perceptions and creating community discourse, instead of simple consumer manipulation.

Kopano Moshwana is dedicated to creating a positive impact in the world.

"HONESTLY, I SEE MYSELF AS A PROMINENT LEADER IN MY SPACE IN MARKETING, AND ALSO A VERY BIG PHILANTHROPIST." SHE SAYS.

As a young woman herself, Kopano encourages young African women to believe in themselves and show up confident. "You belong in these conversations, talking and thinking about your legacies" she adds.



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FOOD 'O CLOCK

Cooking tips for beginners

1

When following a recipe, please read it carefully and understand the ingredients required.

2

Gather all the ingredients in preparation before you switch on the stove. This will in turn save you time bouncing around the kitchen.

3

Should you be using an oven, its important to preheat it for about 30 minutes to an hour. A preheated oven provides for the food to be thoroughly cooked and helps you avoid unevenly cooking your food.

To achieve tenderness and well marinated meat with rich flavours, it's advisable to cook on low heat, especially when it comes to stew meat.

4

To avoid a messy kitchen, clean as you go along.

5

Taste is important, an even more important for the cook to do so while cooking. This will allow for more seasoning in case its needed. This will also avoid having people add their own seasoning after you've dished for them.

6

For the meat to retain its juices, let it rest after cooking it. Meat tend to retain its flavours if you don't hurry it and only cut it after it has rested for a little while.

7

Happy cooking!

