

#MaritimeYouthVoice



Chilling with: Lindani Hlongwane

Occupation: National Customer Experience Project

Lead: Transnet Port Terminals (TPT)

Responsibility and other roles:

Assisting the organisation realise customer centricity in a every changing customer interface where the evolving environment of the Maritime Sector is becoming more and more competitive, evaluating the magic moments for the organisations customers and enhancing wow moments through customer facing initiatives in terminals and alleviating the pain points through inhabiting behavioural traits that accommodate agreements that have been agreed to with Customers, creating one port experience for all our customers and growing the Transnet Port Terminals Loyal Customer listing.

What is your view and hope for SA maritime industry in general?

My personal belief is that South Africa is in a state where the youth is being side-lined in participating in the Maritime Industry and like every other sector it has its advantages along with its disadvantages.

Based on the fact that the 4th industrial revolution that sits in the hands of the youth daily via technological advances they have the creation and maintenance of online communities forming a business ecosystem, meaning business could be taken away from the existing day to day running of the companies that employ youth to push paper, in a culture of passing on excel spreadsheets.

The exposure given to youth in today's Maritime Sector is not only limited, but warped because it is gender specific and racially inclined. If you don't form part of the old boys club you

will continue to create obsolete reports that are of no use to anyone, but because of instilled policies, companies have to confirm to giving experience, which has no allocation of exposing the candidates to the business experience. This creates a labour force that ticks BBEEE regulations, but holds the industry back.

The HR Plan of Maritime has no inclusion of youth, it works very much on in-house disposable youth placed as paper pushers all over organisations. For those who want to supply the sector with knowledge, find it hard to obtain even the 'accelerator programs' designed to empower

the current youth which is why SA is lacking skills transfer. More youthful activity needs to take place in the sector and one of the ways is allowing youth to hold those strategic positions introducing the Internet of things and increasing speed of service while opening market access, thereby building a more effective market for small business participation.

Do you think there is room for innovation in the industry, if so in what space and what could be its significance?

The industry does have room for innovation, all we need is an understanding of this two fold paradigm, technological advancement and Job loss. We have to admit that technology has to take place for us to be global competitors, but the economy can't handle anymore unemployment. The way the future is designed, think from cities to small towns to suburban corridors, innovation spaces are transforming the landscape.

I will be the first to admit that my research of the available spaces and what significance that can be made in the industry is limited. As South Africa, holistically we need more Research and Development centre, incubators, accelerators, innovation centres, virtual office spaces or co-working offices, start up spaces and much more. I think SMME's should account for 60% of employments. This is evident through Stats SA when 85% of new companies fail within the first year, recognising that the first two years of any business needs the company to build rapport. The follow on 2 years needs proper business systems in place for survival. I am yet to find data that illustrates the reasoning behind the high rate of failure behind start-ups, this is across all industries.

What would be your message to SA youth in general?

If I could go back to my more youthful days, I would work an 8 to 4 while studying part time and upon receipt of qualification would be to continue working while pushing a start-up. This would be a strategic exchange of my 24 hours, from study to business while remaining cash fluid. The 8 – 4 is for the business know how, work experience and space where trial and error can place at someone else's expense.

I think SA should stop celebrating nothingness. Every weekend we out and about in our fancy cars and cloths, 'exercising our biceps' with cold beers and whiskey glasses, burning brain cells with toxic substances and engaging in sex before marriage, this is a long windy road to nowhere.

As men, we need to rebuild the culture of being SA man as it has been lost behind women empowerment, BEE scores and the death of our women at our men's hands. As for the young women, the power sits in your standards, the higher your standards the harder a man will work to reach them, and if he is not willing to reach them, he was never the one.