

Alumnus scores a career break in Saudi Arabia

Building a career abroad means learning new norms, cultures and most importantly, being willing to accept cultural differences as an answer for why certain things can't be done.

Thabani Khanyile is a mechanical engineering graduate from the Class of 1990 who found better career prospects in Saudi Arabia and seized the opportunity with both hands. Thabani, who used to picture himself designing cars for Toyota, now works for one of the world's biggest oil companies, Saudi Aramco, which has more than 79 000 employees and 7 refineries.

Khanyile believes that the less graduates tie themselves to their homestead, the better their mental growth and openness to new adventures and international experience will be. Mechanical engineering was a



Thabani Khanyile

great window that opened all these opportunities for him in the 1990s.

Back then, being at a university was the greatest opportunity for a black child from a rural area. "Our lecturers were open-minded and understood that English was not our first language. Fortunately, they understood the challenges of the community of Umlazi. They inspired and displayed patience which helped in building our confidence to study hard," he said.

Khanyile also owns a logistics company currently operating in South Africa, called Sesikhanyile Logistics. It is responsible for transporting goods. His vision is to return to South Africa in a couple of years to expand his business and use the skills he has acquired to enhance the experiences of graduates of his alma mater, Mangosuthu University of Technology.

The spirit of giving back is the essence of a successful life

Doing a National Diploma in Accounting and B.Tech in Cost and Management Accounting at MUT was a well thought-through decision. Smanga Mathonsi made after completing his matric at Tshana High School in his hometown of Mandeni on the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal.

Mathonsi received his two qualifications in 2014 and 2015 respectively, and is currently CEO of Dunga Creations, an accounting and taxation firm that he founded in 2017 and which currently has five diverse operations. Mathonsi says that no industry is immune to change and that inspiration rarely arrives when you are doing the same thing every day. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Cost and Management Accounting at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Determination and hard work have landed Mathonsi accolades from the beginning of his career, which started in 2015 with a six-month stint at Virtual Back Office. In May 2018, he aced his board exams and



Smanga Mathonsi

became qualified as a professional accountant and tax practitioner.

Mathonsi credits some of his success to the ENACTUS organisation at MUT. Being part of it made him realise that the future of the country is in the hands of the youth who take leadership roles and are eager to find solutions through entrepreneurship.

As an active student, he was elected to be part of the ENACTUS national competition representing MUT in Johannesburg. They competed with more than 21 universities and managed to achieve fourth position for the first time since ENACTUS' inception at MUT. This is one of his best memories and he holds it close to his heart.

"My passion is helping students. The experience I have gained over the years is that in life, most times we have to give without expecting anything in return. This creates a culture of givers and God rewards selfless givers with what they never imagined," he said.