



Q&A with CAPTAIN GQWETHA MKHIZE

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS CAREER?

When I was still in high school I attended the careers expo and discovered this career which seemed different, interesting, and adventurous and one could make a good living out of it. Everyone else wanted to do something which to me was normal and I also thought the job market may be a bit flooded which would have meant difficulty in finding a job after studying.

WHAT TRAINING DID YOU UNDERGO, AND WHERE?

Studied Maritime Studies at Durban University of Technology (DUT) which was Technikon Natal at the time, have undergone a lot of practical training that included Survival Training, Fire Fighting, First Aid, etc. The cadetship training which took 12 months onboard the ship and lead to my first qualification as a junior Navigating Officer. I served a further 36 months as a Navigating Officer leading to qualifying as a Captain.

DESCRIBE AN AVERAGE DAY?

It is hectic as it involves a lot of decision making to various aspects of Maritime industry, attend to various complaints and finding solutions, maintaining order within the shipping community especially boating community and ensuring smooth operations within my area of jurisdiction. I also have to ensure that the office functions normally and that everyone does what they are supposed to be doing within the limits of our law.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST?

I enjoy the challenges it brings on a daily basis, most of the issues I have to deal with are on a case by case basis. It develops my mental ability all the time.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS?

Undoubtedly is Graduating for my Diploma in Maritime Studies in (DUT), passing my examination as Captain and being promoted to Principal Officer at SAMSA.

3 IMPORTANT QUALITIES THAT YOUR POSITION REQUIRES?

Understanding the dynamics of the country and the world as whole, discipline and commitment.

IN 1 SENTENCE, DESCRIBE YOUR JOB?

My job plays a major role in the development of Maritime industry, the safety ships and protection of the marine environment and the wellbeing of the seafarers.

EXPERIENCE VS TRAINING:

Hold a National Diploma in Studied Maritime Studies and Qualified as Captain (Master Mariner), spent 10 years sailing in container ships as a Cadet and Navigating officer up to the rank of Second Mate, in 2010 started working for the South African Maritime Safety Authority, in 2013 I Acted in position of Principal Officer and 2015 was promoted to Principal Officer which is the position I currently hold.

ADVICE FOR GRADE 11 AND 12 LEARNERS CONSIDERING THIS CAREER?

Set your mind straight and aim for your goals, be prepared to sacrifice what you hold dear, be disciplined and enjoy life.

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU HAD TO OVERCOME?

Not being well off growing up mainly due to racial division our country went and still going through. The racial discrimination in the industry, when we started there weren't many African people in this career, which then lead to tension from time to time.

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO I NEED?

Matric with good Maths and Science, National Diploma in

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Maritime Studies.

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

Honestly I think I have achieved more than I anticipated at this young age, however I think that my best is yet to come. I see myself as one of the top Executives in the Administrations in the near future, for I still have hunger for more success.

DOES THE INDUSTRY (AND YOUR TYPE OF POSITION) THAT YOU ARE IN, FACE GENDER BIAS?

There have been a lot of changes regarding gender equality therefore it is improving. Perhaps it is more of the numbers issue than bias lately. ■

MARINE NAVIGATOR

