

AKHONA MAHLATI



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AKHONA MAHLATI is the CEO of BusinessFit, director and principal strategist for Ewe Sana Marketing and Communications, and he chairs the management committee of a school.

He holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Marketing and Business Management from the University of Natal as well as a Strategic Marketing Certificate awarded by the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business.

Akhona's working life started with a number of small part-time jobs, but his professional career commenced when he obtained a position at British American Tobacco as a marketing management trainee in Stellenbosch in the early 2000s.

Mahlati then moved a few years later and worked for Capitec Bank as their brand manager. During his tenure, the bank moved from a micro-lending 'hangover', to being perceived as a challenging competitive retail bank. Post this position, Mahlati moved to Johannesburg where he worked at the Standard Bank Group and held a number of positions in the Diners Club International franchise.

During the last year of his time at Diners Club, Mahlati started a business with a partner, which prompted him to drop everything in Johannesburg and move down to Durban to give the business much-needed focus. "Needless to say, three years later the business was no longer in operation. It's after this failed business that I started lecturing part-time and started my marketing and communications business," said Mahlati.

Akhona's strengths and key sources of success are believing in himself and his abilities, being resilient to the challenges of life and being self-disciplined. He says, "My children and my need to live and enjoy my dreams in this present life drive me to give of my best. I'm inspired by many events and episodes, which teach me life's great lessons."

"I believe that it's in overcoming our challenges that we're able to know how strong we really

are and this strength enables us to reach greater heights in our lives. It's by defeating the demons on a particular level that you're able to get to the next level."

"I'm a driving visionary. When I lead, I offer the team long-term vision as I have a natural ability to inspire and communicate my vision to others. I'm insightful and perceptive, and I genuinely care about the development of others. I want to influence people positively not only in South Africa, but in other countries on our beautiful continent and globally. I want to see young people starting and growing sustainable businesses which dramatically reduce our unemployment and crime rates. Moreover, I want to see young African people pushing the boundaries of development and innovation."

Mahlati added that his 'drive' is natural and not contrived. "Business and life in general are about adding value to other people. We must always try to keep things simple and not over complicate them. You can only do good business with good people. We need to try our best to remove ourselves from negative associations and unbecoming practices. The path to success is never straight and narrow. It's more of a journey of self-discovery, which eventually plants you in the path of your purpose. Once you've found your purpose, try your best to live it, enjoy it and monetise it."

He reflected that he has worked with and has relationships with some of the best minds in the country. However, these are ordinary people who make things happen without seeking attention. "I've also been fortunate enough to share rooms and speaking stages with well esteemed leaders," said Mahlati.

During his spare time Mahlati loves listening to music, chilling with good quality friends and enjoying meat around a braai. He sees himself as an amateur wine and champagne collector. "I also enjoy a few glasses of single malt whisky coupled with a cigar on lazy weekends. I'm not much of a TV person, but I from time to time, enjoy watching programmes related to properties, religion and travel."