

# Neville Matjie



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**“Without balance you cannot have a career.”**

**N**EVILLE MATJIE is the Chief Executive Officer of Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal (TIKZN), where he has worked for the last 16 years.

TIKZN is a South African trade and inward investment promotion agency and is an entity of the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs. The agency was established to promote the Province of KwaZulu-Natal as an investment destination and to facilitate trade by assisting local companies' access to international markets.

Matjie joined TIKZN after working at the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry. There, he said, he enjoyed interacting with international clients who wanted to either export goods out of South Africa as well as participate in inward buying missions. "Linking our local companies to foreign companies really fascinated me and became something I was really passionate about," he commented.

This interest in linking local business with foreign clients inspired him to look for work in a similar field and since joining TIKZN he has served in several different roles and capacities.

His first job responsibility at TIKZN was in attracting investment to KwaZulu-Natal. Following this position, he set up a business retention and expansion unit within the organisation. This unit was created to assist investors in the province who were having problems during the period of the credit crunch.

Two years later this role was followed by heading up the export promotion department. There Matjie facilitated several trade missions with a focus on Africa. He then became responsible for operations and strategy at TIKZN.

In early 2018, Matjie was requested by the TIKZN Board to take up the position of acting chief executive officer.

He says that his biggest inspiration is the role that his organisation plays in transforming towns and in

job creation. One of the highlights of his career has been in seeing the difference a Taiwanese investor has made to the town of Mooi River, where a few years ago a lot of companies had disinvested.

Matjie commented that he has learnt that the most important thing in this line of work is honesty, especially when dealing with the location of projects. However, he says that for companies looking to invest in KwaZulu-Natal, this is the market for them as there are many opportunities.

Matjie commented that one thing that is important to acknowledge is the dedication and commitment of the South African government to transformation. He added, "There is clear vision for the country and an understanding that South Africa is an economic basket not only for the continent but for the global world."

In commenting on his leadership style, Matjie says that he believes in there being a mixture between a manager and being a leader. "When you are a manager, you are dealing with issues of compliance and ensuring that everything is done to the book. However, you need to be a balanced leader and remember that you are dealing with people and not robots. When you are dealing with people you need to bring in the human side in order to help them to understand what they have to do and to achieve results."

When asked to explain what he attributed his success to, Matjie responded, "One can't have a successful career without dedication and hard work". However, he added that finding time to play hard was important. "Without balance you cannot have a career and would burn out quickly."

Another aspect to his success was through the support of his family who are very important in motivating him. "I have a beautiful wife and three beautiful kids who are important pillars in my life and a lot of time and effort goes in to ensuring that they are not neglected."

He concluded with the words of Martin Luther King Jr. "Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."