

JB Marks Education Trust to hold career networking session

While having a degree is now a necessity for those wanting to join South Africa's formal workforce - as it is in most parts of the world - a qualification alone is sometimes not enough to secure suitable employment. Other skills - such as how to "sell yourself"; how best to present yourself during an interview, and how to network - can be vital too.



To this end, last year the JB Marks Education Trust Fund, with the Mineworkers Investment Company (MIC), launched a career networking session for its graduates, held on the day the JB Marks Education Trust Fund Awards were handed out. This year, the date for the session is Friday, 29 August 2014 and the venue is the Elijah Barayi Memorial Training Centre in Midrand.

The networking event is supported by corporate partners Sanlam, FirstRand, Ubank, Masana Petroleum Solutions, and African Rainbow Minerals. It offers an excellent opportunity for this year's graduates to experience the realities of meeting potential employers and, often, is the first time they will meet industry players face-to-face.

Masana took part in the session last year. Hlengiwe Spencer, Masana's HR manager, said: "The networking session for graduates and Masana was very valuable. As an organisation we got a chance to meet potential employees or interns, and to understand their goals and vision. This engagement helped us re-look our own learnership, internship and graduate programme and see how we can make it better and accessible to graduates. As for the graduates, they had to engage with us as potential employers and had to deal with difficult, challenging conversations; in this way they are getting exposure to interaction in the real world of work."

How to highlight strengths

During the session graduates will interact with company representatives and learn how to highlight their strengths, vocalise their ambitions - and learn what questions need to be asked of potential employers to ensure the right professional fit. In addition, graduates will enjoy brief motivational talks to stimulate new ideas and illuminate what their preferred career path might be, thus potentially changing and shaping their attitudes and perceptions about their future.

Jako Mokgosi, principal officer of the JB Marks Education Trust Fund, said: "The session is an important reality check for our graduates. It helps with self-confidence for future interviews and they really benefit from the feedback from their interviewers."

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