I got my cleaning tools too, and I was there cleaning floors at Pupkewitz’s premises, cleaning the toilets, the windows and doors. I was there scrubbing the walls, and I worked really hard.

— Ben Zaaruka

“Tired to do something because time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, and the second-best time is now,” he further advised the aspiring entrepreneurs.

OPPORTUNITIES

He said as much as big companies are ‘nice’ to work for, going to work for a small company is advisable.

“Smaller companies are actually the best to work in. It is not about which company, but about which boss you are having,” he said.

As for the sixty-year-old, he wants people to follow him.

“A long time ago, I needed an IT manager. In 1995, I became the first building supplies company to sell by using computers. Even big building materials companies never used computers. I bought computers and put them in a small room, and told my employees to go there sometimes to just play with them,” he said.

But the businessman had a problem. He said those computers sold stock that was not there. It oversold stock.

“I went to South Africa to look for a system. The referred me to accompany in Australia,” he said.

Zaaruka went to Australia, and the company was willing to give him the system at a cost of close to a million dollars. He said Benz became the first building supplies company to have that software.

But he needed that software to be maintained.

“I asked the company to give me someone who could maintain that software, and they gave me a young English lady,” he said.

In 1998, she joined his company. According to him, he needed her for a while, and as such realised she needed a man.

She told me she is single, so I introduced her to my very good friend, and they have been married for years now.

“She and Derick (her husband) are about to retire, and I know they love nature, so I asked them to look for a lodge. They found one, and they will retire there soon near Kuanana,” he said.

“This is the special moment, and this lady is ready to transfer a lot of knowledge. I need someone,” he said.

He further cautioned students not to just grab opportunities, like someone would come and ask how much you want, and the students would say “I am coming from a university, so I need at least N$20 000! Are you looking for work, or are you looking for money?” he asked rhetorically.

“May be the lucky one. Follow me,” he said.
Cashing in on seasonal sales

This is one of the most popular harvests that many seasonal farmers see as a business opportunity. While some people sell their produce in their villages, others, including Janet Muwana, prefer coming to Windhoek, where the market is bigger and they can realise better profits. Muwana, an unemployed single mother, comes from the Mukisa village in the Zambezi region.

She told The Namibian in an interview last week that she has been selling oofukwa wholesale in Windhoek for four years now. “I get the nuts from Zambia at a good price, and I bring them in bulk to sell to these vendors,” she said, adding that she goes back every two weeks to get more supplies.

While the good rains across the country came as a relief to many, Muwana says the rains were not good for business. She said her sales have gone down this year because many people had good harvests due to the good rains and more vendors have sprouted, making the competition very tough.

“In the past four years, every two weeks, I would make about N$12 000 before I would go back to restock,” she explained.

But now, she struggles to make just N$500 in a week. “There are more people now selling the same produce,” she added.

As a bulk supplier, she has a challenge of vendors struggling to sell their stock, and they sometimes take the nuts on credit. She thus always waits longer than earlier before travelling for more supplies.

“But at least the money I am making helps me take care of my family because I am unemployed,” she noted.

The Namibian also spoke to 30-year-old Johanna Ndara, who has been selling tomatoes and onions for eight years in Katutura.

She said her sales have gone down because of the glut and are struggling to sell. “It makes a difference, but this year we have a glut and are struggling to sell,” she said.

The Namibian also came across neighbours from Kalimbeza village in the Zambezi region Mwali Kamwi, Paulina Chikomo and Memory Muyenga, who said they are all unemployed. They have a challenge of dealing with thieves and street kids.

“They (street kids) come here and steal our sugar cane,” added Muyenga.

She said the street kids do not only come at night, but also pounce during the day, and snatch the sugar cane and run away. “Even when we run after them, we cannot catch them,” she said.

But one thing all these vendors have in common is the desire to earn money so that they would otherwise not have to uplift themselves from their situation with this seasonal opportunity.

SEASONAL SELLERS ... Single mothers Mwali Kamwi, Paulina Chikomo and Memory Muyenga come all the way from Kalimbeza in the Zambezi region to sell sugar cane in Windhoek.

Photos: Ndama Nakashole

For sale, oofukwa for sale in a street in Windhoek on Friday morning.

Supplier ... Janet Muwana sits on top of her bags of oofukwa near a busy road that turned into a marketplace near Stop & Shop in Katutura’s Okuryangavwa area in Windhoek.

Multi-tasking ... Johanna Ndara poses with her twin babies in front of her bags of oofukwa, which are in oversupply at her selling spot in Katutura’s Okuryangavwa area in Windhoek.

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DEADLINE | Date: 03 MAY 2017
The magic of an extra bank account

Having an extra savings bank account can also make you think twice before withdrawing from it since access is limited, without notification, for a certain period, said Bank Windhoek’s communications practitioner Andre le Roux.

“For example, if you are saving up for a holiday or a vehicle, you may think twice before reducing the amount in your investment account so that you can reach your financial goal easier and quicker,” he noted.

Two of his bank’s most popular investment products are call deposits and notice deposits.

“The term call deposit refers to a specific type of interest-bearing investment account, which allows a person to withdraw their money from the account with a 24-hour written notice to the bank,” he explained.

In banking terminology, the term notice deposit refers to a flexible investment product, or a savings account held with a financial institution which permits withdrawals without penalties only after advance notification is given.

The benefits and uses of these two investment accounts also vary.

Notice deposits become available within a predetermined notice period.

“At Bank Windhoek, this period ranges between 7, 14, 21, 32, 60 or 88 days. Funds on notice deposits are available after the specified notice period that was agreed with the bank. A minimum opening balance of N$500 is required. The notice period includes Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. A customer is not restricted to a maximum investment amount or number of accounts. Multiple deposits are allowed on this account,” he added.

Further, he said interest is calculated on the daily balance and capitalised, or transferred monthly.

“Depending on your lifestyle and financial needs, there are different types of savings goals to meet your specific financial requirements. For instance, a short-term savings plan can be used for things like family holidays, or to build a cushion for unexpected expenses. A medium-term plan can be used for large-ticket items like a deposit for a house or a wedding. A long-term plan can be used for retirement, or a child’s tertiary education,” said Gaomas-Guchu.

“The other benefit to savings is that it instils a culture of financial discipline as you avoid living from payday to payday, but rather have peace of mind by thinking ahead and budgeting accordingly. Furthermore, people can earn interest while saving at the same time.”

“Besides having that transactional account with your bank, it is also advisable to have that extra account where you can save up for unforeseen incidents, whether it be an emergency, or even for putting some extra cash away for your children’s school fees, new furniture, a deposit on a new car or that much-anticipated holiday to your favourite destination,” she noted.

She said whether it is Standard Bank’s pure save or plusplan accounts for quick and easy access to your savings, or a 7, 14, 21 or 32 days notice one, a call account or a fixed term deposit, your options are open and your bank, it is also advisable to have that extra account where you can save for unforeseen incidents, whether it be an emergency, or even for putting some extra cash away for your children’s school fees, new furniture, a deposit on a new car or that much-anticipated holiday to your favourite destination,” she noted.

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“The other benefit to savings is that it instills a culture of financial discipline as you avoid living from payday to payday, but rather have peace of mind by thinking ahead and budgeting accordingly. Furthermore, formal savings products with a bank helps you avoid the risk of theft and failure to pay, and provides easy access to your money when you need it. In this way, you have secure savings where you do not run the jeopardy of fraud, theft, fire and relatives’ demands,” she stated.

She said saving for that rainy day does not have to be a daunting task as “it takes on average 21 days to create a habit.”

“A predetermined amount can be deducted automatically from your transactional account, and deposited into a savings account through a debit or stop order,” she added.
Although hitting the ground running on a Monday morning after a much-needed break of a week, Ikela is the epitome of patience when he takes The Namibian through a journey which was characterised by extremely humble beginnings, but with a relentless desire not to be defined by those formative years in Walvis Bay’s Kuisebmond township “I come from a very, very humble background.”

On Friday, 17 August 1979, his single mom welcomed her first son after having had three older daughters already at the time. Two brothers followed after him.

From the onset, it was clear that young Sam was destined for great things. “I just had this revelation that if I want to become something in life, I had to take my education seriously.”

Ikela attended grades 1 to 3 at Immanuel Primary School at Walvis Bay, after which he went to Dumneg Primary School – both in Kuisebmond at Walvis Bay.

After a year at the Kuisebmond Secondary School for Grade 8, he managed to convince his mom to send him to a school at Swakopmund: the Swakopmund English High School – one of the flagship schools at the time.

Ikela was placed in the hostel at the then Deutsche Oberschule Swakopmund, which was situated in the centre of this holiday town. This meant that he had to walk his less than 5km every single day to his school, which was situated in the Vineta suburb, followed by another 5km walk back.

He maintains that his life changed for the better whilst attending school at Swakopmund. “It always makes me very emotional. From the day I started until I left, I had to walk every day. Finances were not there, and people at Walvis Bay asked me why I didn’t just go back and attend a school there [which would have been the easy way out]. But I wanted to make a change in my life, and that is what kept me going. Other children came and left.”

Growing up in the poor neighbourhood of Kuisebmond exposes a young child to the evils of alcohol and drug abuse, he says. It was only when he left that environment that he started focusing on what it was that he wanted. “I learned a lot of values from that environment [at Swakopmund]. Discipline was a major virtue I developed.”

Following the completion of Grade 12 in 1997, Ikela enrolled for a diploma in commerce at the then Polytechnic of Namibia (now NUST)).

He admits that money remained a rare commodity and times were tough, especially during the first year of his studies.

At the end of the academic year, FNB came to their campus, offering students holiday jobs. Ikela grabbed the opportunity, and realised “this is absolutely something that I like”.

Upon completion of the holiday work stint over the December holidays, he approached FNB chief executive officer Sarel van Zyl to share his dilemma: He had loved his time at the bank, wanted to further his studies, but his bank balance at the time was not really bursting at the seams.

Van Zyl, who evidently saw the potential in the youngster, offered him not only a job at the bank, but an interest-free study loan to complete his studies.

Three months after his probation as a savings enquiry clerk, Ikela landed a permanent appointment.

Although “it was challenging coming from work and then having to go to school”, he managed to balance the best of those worlds and finish his studies.

In the meantime, he has been able to successfully throw a degree in banking from the University of South Africa (Unisa) into the mix too.

After a few years in the capital, he found himself back in the harbour town, where he worked as a commercial teller.

It was not too long until the powers that be realised Ikela was destined for greater things, and he was promoted to a manager’s clerks in the credit department. Subsequently, he landed in the accelerated training programme in terms of which the progress of individuals with the potential to become managers is fast-tracked, he says.

This saw him travel the country to be exposed to different branches of the bank, and ultimately becoming the business manager at the Windhoek branch.

“I helped to grow the book of that bank, and was roped into the SME division as the SME manager.”

He filled those formidable shoes until December 2015 before rising to the position of the head of the SME division.

Ikela says he loves what he is doing, and wants to continue to grow and learn. “We are helping a lot of people better their lives. Education is key.”

He intends to enrol for a post-graduate qualification next, culminating in a Master’s come 2019, he says.

The relentless reader says he is “not single at all”, but unmarried, runs 10 km every Saturday, is a self-proclaimed gym junky, and fantasises about doing full marathons soon.

His advice for youngsters who may feel overwhelmed by their circumstances is that one needs to be tenacious in pursuit of one’s dreams.

I learned a lot of values from that environment [at Swakopmund]. Discipline was a major virtue I developed.

– Sam Ikela

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 1 MAY 2017

(For levies paid to the NTA from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017)

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