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Essential advice for young people in the workplace

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Essential advice for young people in the workplace includes embracing a growth mindset, investing in continuous learning, building a strong professional network, navigating workplace dynamics and seeking mentorship and guidance.



With Youth Day coming up on 16 June, Yuneal Padayachy, chief support officer at The BEE Chamber, who is involved in many Y.E.S. Initiative activities for the chamber, believes it is essential to offer advice to the youth navigating the South African workplace.

“Entering the workplace as a young individual in South Africa can be both exciting and challenging. As South Africa’s future leaders, the youth play a vital role in shaping the nation’s economic growth and development. To thrive in this dynamic environment, South African youth must be equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and strategies.” He says the youth must be empowered in the workplace with the focus on professional development, networking, workplace dynamics and personal well-being and has this advice for them:

Embracing a growth mindset

“Cultivating a growth mindset is essential for success in the workplace. Embrace challenges as opportunities for growth and learning. Develop a thirst for knowledge, seek feedback and constantly strive to improve. By maintaining a growth mindset, South African youth can adapt to changing circumstances, embrace innovation and seize new opportunities in their careers. That is why I live by the quote, ‘Failure is success in progress’ by Albert Einstein . It has helped treat challenges as opportunities.”

Investing in continuous learning

Padayachy says in today’s rapidly evolving job market, it is crucial to invest in continuous learning. Acquiring new skills and staying updated with industry trends enhances employability and career prospects.

“I urge all youth to take advantage of online courses, workshops and professional development programmes. By investing in continuous learning, South African youth can stay competitive and position themselves as valuable assets in the workplace.”

Building a strong professional network

Networking is a powerful tool for career advancement and is often underestimated, Padayachy says. “It is essential to actively seek opportunities to connect with professionals in your field of interest. Attend industry events, join professional associations and participate in networking platforms. Engage in meaningful conversations, demonstrate genuine

interest and be open to collaboration. A strong professional network provides access to mentorship, job opportunities and valuable insights. Additionally, support fellow young professionals by sharing knowledge and experiences, fostering a collaborative environment that uplifts the entire community.”

Navigate workplace dynamics

Padayachy understanding workplace dynamics is essential for success. “Adapt to the corporate culture while staying true to your values. Learn to collaborate effectively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. Communicate respectfully, listen actively and contribute constructively to team projects. Cultivate strong interpersonal skills, such as conflict resolution, empathy and cultural sensitivity. Recognise and respect the hierarchy and authority structures in the workplace while also finding your voice and expressing your ideas. Strive for a healthy work-life balance to maintain productivity and well-being.”

Seek mentorship and guidance

Mentorship plays a pivotal role in career growth, he says, and therefore it is important to identify experienced professionals who can guide and inspire you. “Seek mentors within your organisation or industry who can provide valuable insights, advice and support. Establish open lines of communication with your mentors and take the initiative in seeking their guidance. They can offer career advice, help navigate challenges and provide opportunities for professional development. Actively engage in mentorship programmes that align with your career aspirations.”

Padayachy says as the future of South Africa’s workforce, young professionals play a crucial role in shaping the nation’s prosperity.

“Remember, success is a journey that requires perseverance, resilience and adaptability. By applying these strategies, young professionals can seize opportunities, overcome challenges and contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of South Africa’s economy.”