

Keynote Speech at the Careers24 Future of HR Awards on the 23rd July 2015 on behalf of the Honourable Deputy Minister, Inkosi Phatekile Holomisa, by Mthunzi Mdwaba, Chairman of Productivity SA

Thank you Programme Director, good evening ladies and gentlemen. I come incognito-I have an arrangement with Inkosi/Chief Holomisa,the Deputy Minister. I use him to attract crowds, then I deliver the speeches :).

Let me start by apologizing for the DM.Those of you who know him, will know that he badly wanted to be here as he takes engagements of this nature very seriously and once he has made a commitment, he goes out of his way to keep it. He has unfortunately had a bereavement in his extended family, of a very close friend and this explains why you got me as a substitute. Hopefully, I shall not disappoint in my duties.

His invitation from Ralf Fletcher, inter alia, makes mention of the fact that it would be a great honour should he agree to attend, both as a VIP Guest and as an inspiration.

The former is easier to comply with, and by being here, I have at least delivered some way towards this,but being an inspiration is a completely different matter.

I have also tried to apply my mind to what the DM would have liked to say or what message he would have wanted to convey, then I thought of so many things that would be apposite for an occasion of this nature, but had to find a way to sift through all of them and work on what can be delivered in the allocated time.

Given that I am speaking here in my capacity as the Chairman of Productivity SA, and have the responsibility to inspire at the same time, I realized that there is a lot I cannot afford to disappoint on. Incidentally, I am thrilled that the magazines that are in your packs, the South African Business Integrator has a cover story on Productivity SA - Increasing Productivity to grow SA's economy with our CEO on the front page. Consequently, you will be pleased to learn that my speech has been reduced by at least 10 minutes. I encourage all of you to read same as I believe that this is one of the most understated organizations within the government space. We are open for partnerships and as you shall hear later, we need each other.

I have had so many lives, so many interesting and enriching sub-lives that make up the life I have lived to date.

I have worked in the Music Industry, first as a lawyer, setting up one of the first entertainment practices in the country, certainly the first one by a black practitioner, winning amongst others, cases for the likes of Lebo Mathosa of Boom Shaka and at some stage ran the music industry, and had to reshape it - from the collection of audio-visual royalties from television stations, structuring agreements with the broadcasting environment, restructuring what is today known as the MTN SAMAs, and many other related matters, running a Music company(and released Kabelo's first solo album-Pantsula for Life and negotiated for the first Craig David album to reach our shores beating many major record companies in the process, such as Sony, EMI and others.

I have also worked in the Hotel Industry at the highest level as the legal adviser for all the hotels, and other properties in the Group I worked for, then worked in the ICT sector and ended up building the largest training solutions provider for networking engineers, incorporating other technologies later, in the Sub-Saharan Continent, with clients in 27

countries(I was then nominated and won Businessman of the Year at an Event run by Topco Media in 2009 and also won the BBQ Awards in the same year).

I then together with my partners decided to sell this into the Human Capital space. Simultaneously to my business interests, I have always devoted 20/30% of my time to business politics in the form of business/employer organizations as a way of serving and giving back, deriving huge satisfaction.

It would be inaccurate though to say it was my idea, as I was approached to get involved in the Black Information Technology Forum by someone who arranged an appointment and asked me to get involved. When I asked why he was asking me, he told me they were looking for a revolutionary to effect change. This was in 2002 and the rest makes for an amazingly blessed life that I have led, with a lot of speed bumps and collision courses.

I ended up chairing the BITF nationally and presiding over the InformationTechnology Association twice, participated and raised all the funds for the drafting of the ICT Charter which is to be gazetted as a Code, went on to be Vice President of Business Unity SA for professionals at first, then moved on to being President of the Unisectoral section before being asked to represent South Africa on the International Labour Organisation in Switzerland, which as you would be aware is a United Nations multilateral agency. Simultaneously, I led the delegation that motivated for South Africa's inclusion into what was the BRIC family to become BRICS on the back of IBSA in Rio de Janeiro and had the privilege of being there for the launch in Brasilia.

I proceeded to represent SADC business on the ILO and have done this for 8 years now and have gone on to be the spokesman for all employers throughout the world for Finance and Vice President for Africa as one of 5 Vice Presidents of the International Organisation of Employers, which is the largest network of private sector organizations in the world, representing business/employer organizations in over 160 countries. I then represent the ILO on its Turin training centre in Torino, represent South Africa on the Business 20 of the G20 countries, which I have done since inception in France, Russia, Australia and now Turkey having been asked to serve on the Task teams for Employment or Job Creation.

Finally, I also chair as you heard the CSR and Business Human Rights Policy Working Group for Employers throughout the world at the IOE. As we speak there is a Treaty that all of you need to know about and get involved in at the UN through the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights as it will affect most of your businesses for failure to comply with the growing body of work referred to as Business Human Rights. It is important to know that it was an initiative of the Ecuadorian Government and sponsored by the South African Government.

It is also important to note that it is based on what was generally referred to as the John Ruggie Guidelines for Human Rights.

So, why have I gone through my CV in more detail than the introduction I got, some of you might be wondering or why not just direct you to Google? Perhaps because it sounds better when I say it myself or because I did not have a speech prepared and it helps me fill the allocated time for my speech?

No!

When I look at the common thread, it has always had to do with people, working with people, working for people and growing a huge passion when I realized that all of us in our little way can and must contribute to change, a better world, creation of jobs and concomitant growth of dignity which comes with poverty being shown the door and one being able to provide for loved ones, growth of jobs and concomitant growth of economies. Human capital development has always been my game and it gives me huge 'nachas' when I see people develop and sometimes surprise themselves with their achievements. I am always hugely moved when I see what people can do when they are happy and productive. As a keen cyclist, the Tour de France demonstrates and illustrates this so well-what teams can do when leadership and support go together seamlessly!

So, first, I needed to take you into my world and the only way I can do that is by sharing what I have done and what I do. The world outside South Africa interestingly knows and recognizes what I do far more than South Africans and this is also a discussion for a different day.

Now that I have hopefully taken you with me, I can then talk about the big stuff.

This room from my assumption, having looked at the information I was able to glean is filled with what is supposed to be the heartbeat of South African Business and the private sector, HR specialists and leaders and hopefully some CEOs who have come to support. Is it not fascinating that the majority of business leaders and CEOs always talk about the people being the most important asset of the company without ever pausing to think what that really, really means?

I used to work with someone who would say this and an hour later give a dressing down of a manager, screaming and swearing at the colleague, in front of everyone, instilling fear in all that dare doubt his power, authority and supremacy. What did HR do? Nothing, in this instance obviously too scared as well to cross the voice of authority.

This of course is not to generalize as I also know of environments where this would never happen.

Is it also not amazing how some CEOs only see their staff (more like seen by their staff) when they go on road shows once a year to branches and regions in&out of country, addressing staff from the top of a stage, like superstars.

And yet, we say these are the most important assets.

Are we aware how many environments play lip-service to the importance of HR, even the importance of the Ministry of Labour itself which is supposed to be the heartbeat of Government, but in reality the focus will be on Finance and IT only, and one has to fight harder for HR budgets!

So, I shared my story because we do very important work that is unfortunately thankless and not as easily recognizable and appreciated as other areas of business.

The kind of work I do in the ILO focuses on Policies that are meant to change the world, Conventions that get ratified and translated into National Laws all over the world and are meant to change workplaces and/or create workplaces for the creation of jobs and the growth of economies.

Who sees that? Who makes time to go onto the ILO website to see what is happening at the mother of workplace development and protection of workers or the mid-wife for decent work?

I would say very few of us. Then, I think perhaps we are all focused with making things happen at our places of work and would not be bothered with this international stuff. So, when I see the top management profile by race as per the Employment Equity Report launched this morning showing that for 2010, 2012 & 2014 Africans were at 12.7%, 12,3% and now sit at 13.6%, Coloureds 4.6%, 4.6% and 4.7 %, Indians 6.8%,7.3% and 8.4%, White 73.1%,72.6% and 70% with Foreign Nationals 2.9%,3.1% and 3.4% then the Workforce profile by gender for the same period being 81% v 19%,80.2% v 19.8% and 79.2% v 20,8%, I get very worried. The latter information by the way was also similar to that by a Women Leadership Census that was done and launched by the Business Woman Association two weeks ago(I omitted to mention that I am the only affirmative action male on their Board-the rose amongst the thorns,the first in fact!) Of course this is partly the fault of the department of labour with its inspectorate. As a country we always fail when it gets to execution and inspection/policing.

The pace of transformation is abysmal and the responsibility for this is in this room(or perhaps it is the ones who are here who have been responsible for change but because you constitute such a small number it is not demonstrable and does not show). How do we expedite? How do we get more people on board? How do we get the multiplier effect? I do recognize that an event like this also assists from a peer pressure and competitive spirit point of view.

How do we get more productive when we do not embrace diversity? How do we spread a productivity revolution so that we do not only have an obsession with wages as a measure of incentivisation?

Rhetoric is not the way to do this, action is.

Why are we going backwards in terms of business efficiency as per the recently released Institute of Market Development (IMD) Global Competitiveness Report?
Why are we progressively going backwards and sit on 53rd out of 61 countries, with Government Efficiency at 40(previously 35) and Business Efficiency at 52(previously 51). Employment sits at 57(lack thereof of course& previously 57) and Productivity and Efficiency is at 60(previously 58)
Of course, it is also not helpful that Education sits at 51 and the Labour Market sits at 58(previously 55)!

C'mon guys, we can do better. We require more HR activism! The department of Labour must of course match this with zestful activism as well as the custodian for all working people.

This is how HR gets the deserved respect from business colleagues. This is also how departments of Labour get respect from other government departments.
This is a day to celebrate you who have performed in your workplaces, this is recognition for all your hard work, but do not let this be your destination, but perhaps an arrival lounge knowing that you are connecting to another destination. Let it be what incentivises you, a kick in the tochas for you to be lifted to greater heights and make things happen for those

who cannot do same for themselves, who look to you to change things, change your environment and slowly watch the neighbourhood, your town, province, country and the world change.

Our definition for productivity at Productivity SA is "A mindset that embraces the value of what I do today better than I did yesterday, and even better tomorrow."

Let us work together to shape a better world, one that is not threatened by difference, one that embraces that diversity and productivity lead to doing things better, efficiently and effectively. We need to grow our businesses to grow our economies and to have sustainability that creates jobs.

Congratulations and well done to all of you!!

Congratulations as well to Topco Media for this inaugural event, as well as all the sponsors who have embraced it.

Good Evening!