

N E W S T A F F M E M B E R



*Information
Technology*

COMMENCE NKOMO



Commence Nkomo

MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBER

"We are excited to introduce the latest addition to our Information Technology team, the Chief Data and Analytics Architect at NWU."

CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND WHERE YOU'RE FROM?

"I was born in Lower Gweru, Zimbabwe. I am the firstborn (as my name confirms) in a family of four children (three boys and one girl). I am married to one wife, Ntsikie, and we are currently blessed with four children (three daughters - [Mamello, Iminathi & Zanda] and one son [Inhle]."



Gweru, Zimbabwe



Midlands State University

WHAT DID YOU STUDY IN SCHOOL, AND WHERE DID YOU ATTEND?

"I hold a degree in Computer Science from Midlands State University. I completed the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators qualification and a Master of Business Leadership with UNISA SBL. Currently, I am working on my Doctorate in Business Leadership with UNISA. I enjoyed my high school days at Fletcher High School, where I became a school prefect, house prefect, and deputy head boy."

WHAT PREVIOUS ROLES HAVE YOU HELD, AND WHAT WERE YOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES?

"I joined Anglo-American Corporation as an IT Graduate Learner. I was then appointed as a Database Administrator and later as a Systems Analyst/Developer. I subsequently worked as a Senior Software Developer/Engineer in several software houses, developing and supporting systems. I developed an interest in the Business Intelligence area, which I coupled with industrial automation solutions from 2008 onward. I concurrently served in other capacities within the digital space as a Cyber-security Champion, IoT Lead, Solutions Architect, and MES Consultant, and became part of the Ethics Committee. Digital ethics was a dimension that we introduced into the organization's agenda. My last role was to lead the consulting, pre-sales, execution, and support of digital and data solutions for various clients."

Anglo American Corporation



WHAT DREW YOU TO APPLY FOR THIS POSITION AT OUR COMPANY?



North-West University PC

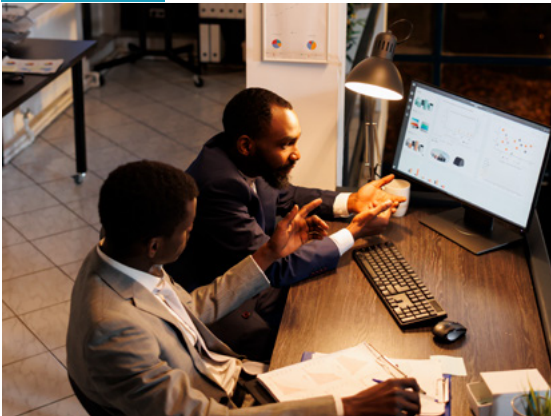
"The fact that NWU has embarked on a digital transformation journey presented an opportunity to try out a challenge to contribute to disruptive innovation in higher education (i.e. create new learning opportunities, enhance existing ones and improve student experience). I love teaching in general: knowledge sharing with colleagues, mentoring juniors, teaching technical, business, and Christian principles. So, this environment is a dream place for me.

Located in Potchefstroom, known as the City of Expertise, I look forward to rubbing shoulders with the best in both academia and sports. As the proverb goes, 'as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another,' I will also learn and develop among some of the best brains in the continent. This institution is one of the best kept secrets in South Africa. Talk of safety and security - in 2021, NWU was ranked the safest university in South Africa in a survey conducted by StuDoc (an education and technology platform)."



Potchefstroom Mooirivier Mall

WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT IN YOUR NEW ROLE?



“Many students from the community are like me – not born rich, but have an opportunity to a better life. The role is an opportunity to contribute to bridging the existing digital divide. At the core of all digital initiatives is data that is accessible, complete, accurate, relevant and timely. If NWU can achieve these data quality dimensions, I would have played my part in community engagement.”

CAN YOU SHARE A BIT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR A PROJECT YOU'RE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF?

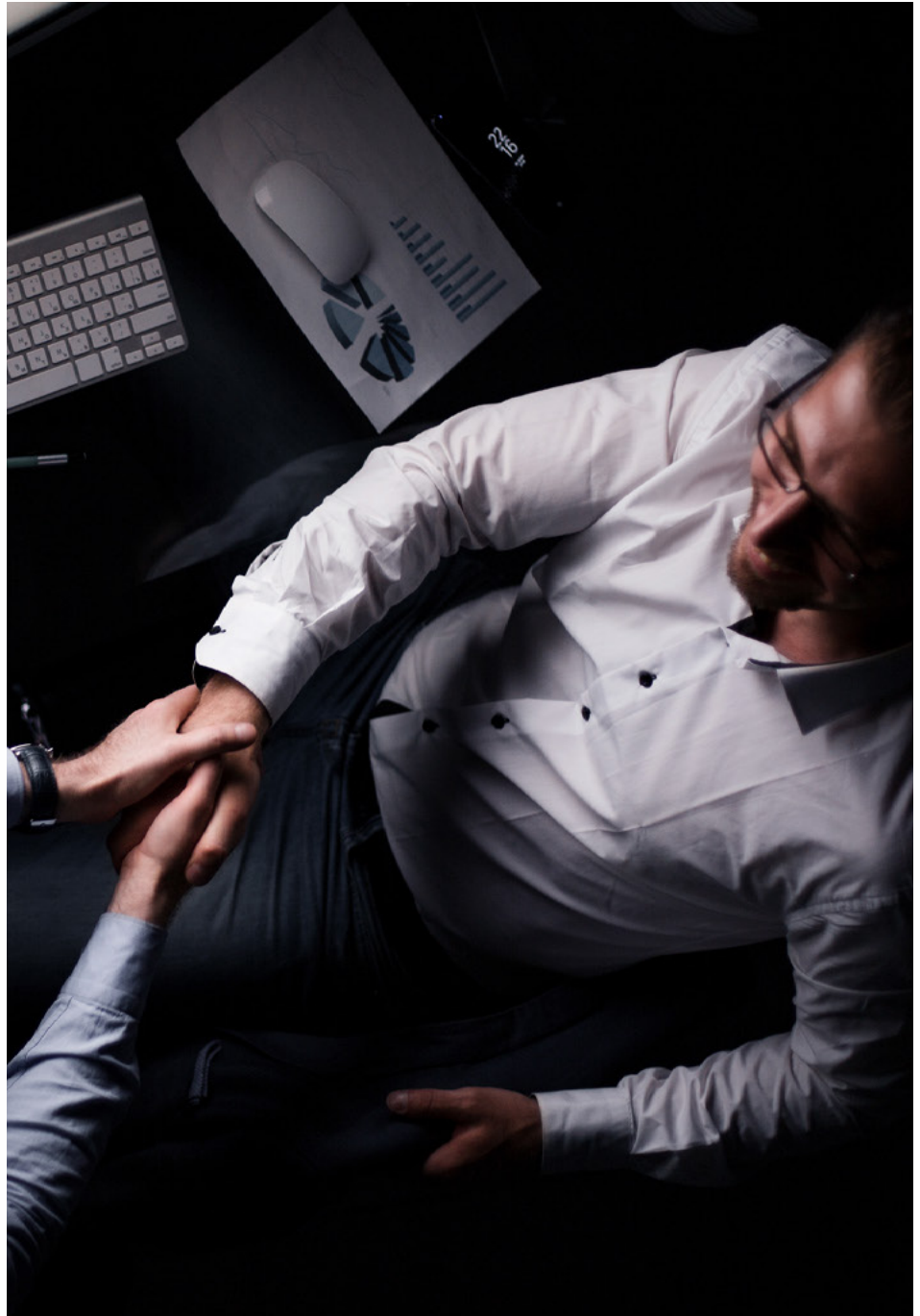
"I did a data migration project for a big bank in Johannesburg some 15 years back, built a data warehouse for a very big mine in the Northern Cape 8 years ago, and other projects that I can cite - but the one close to my heart is the solution we provided for a gold mine in West Africa. The final part of the solution included the automation of a monstrous Excel daily production report. It had over 130 columns that had long, complicated formulae. A myriad of internal and external systems fed into this report. Dedicated human resources strenuously worked daily to produce this report. We found the formulae to be incorrect and inconsistent in some instances. We delivered an automated report that is still being sent out every morning and used in their meetings for deci-



sion making. They created an email account in my name to send out the reports. I asked that they use a generic product or company name, but they decided to stick with my name. The new manager that is the custodian of the reports called me to say, 'I have now been appointed to run the Nkomo office that informs the business.' I am humbled that somewhere in West Africa, some department is affectionately referred to by my name ... for now... until they adopt best practice."

WHAT SKILLS OR STRENGTHS DO YOU BRING TO THE TEAM?

"I have been responsible for designing and managing the data architecture of organisations' systems, as well as ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the data. I have crafted and implemented strategies to improve data quality, enhance data security and reduce data redundancy. I am also adept at building capability for descriptive analytics (what happened), diagnostic analytics (why it happened), predictive analytics (what will likely happen) and prescriptive analytics (what to do going forward). I don't just believe that one should fit the culture of the team, but that one should go beyond and help improve the culture. I also hope to share from my experiences in the employee engagement domain. Since monetary rewards have a limit, one should be generous with non-monetary rewards as there's an unlimited supply of these. I therefore hope to help create a positive and fun environment for everyone."



HOW DO YOU LIKE TO SPEND YOUR FREE TIME OR WHAT HOBBIES DO YOU ENJOY?



"My hobbies are varied for different reasons: to build knowledge, I read; for creativity, I write down my thoughts and designs. I love writing books in my free time. For physical exercise, I walk (with my wife and/or children) or jog (by myself). Farming doubles as a hobby to keep me in shape and to earn some extra income or savings."

WHAT'S ONE INTERESTING FACT ABOUT YOU THAT PEOPLE MIGHT NOT KNOW?



"Before my career in IT, I qualified as a commercial pilot with Ethiopian Airlines and later with Air Zimbabwe, and then completed my first year in medicine. At the time, my dream was to become a flying doctor. Well, the dream has not gone away."

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS OR ASPIRATIONS FOR YOUR FUTURE WITH THE COMPANY?

"I believe if NWU can get to regard data beyond the 'data is the new oil' analogy to the 'data is the new yellowcake uranium' analogy, I will have achieved one of my main goals for joining NWU. I see data as yellowcake. **Yellowcake is raw uranium before it is enriched.** Before it is processed, yellowcake is not very dangerous. Once enriched to make uranium, it has immense power to impact economies, societies and institutions both positively and negatively on a global scale. Hence yellowcake uranium is subjected to strict regulations and security for safe and responsible usage. Data requires similar attention as yellowcake. Data has the potential to grow in value and volume exponentially. Viewing it as yellowcake serves to raise awareness to the

negative results of mishandling data – especially in this AI-driven era. Uranium leaks, just like data leaks, can cause untold reputational damage - a whole institution can be brought to its knees. To establish a robust data governance platform will help unlock and responsibly realise the explosive and exponential value within data.



Achieving this will set us on a solid swift road to the much sought after competitive advantage. This will enable us to reach the ultimate goal: i.e. for NWU to be an agile institution that adapts quickly to change."