

MOORE STEPHENS

PASSPORT

TO OWN YOUR FUTURE



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Meet Thando Sompeta, who, despite humble origins and many personal obstacles, pushed himself through school to matriculate in Mthatha, Eastern Cape; ultimately to graduate from his accounting traineeship at Moore Stephens and on into what would become an actualization of his dreams.

1. What was your field of study and which direction did this take you in?

Rhodes University admitted me to study towards my Bachelor of Commerce degree in 2000. Owing to a deep sense of inadequacy, poorly developed study skills and a lack of academic guidance, my initial year at Rhodes saw me come close to exclusion, which forced me to adapt to the demands of the environment. From then on, I did relatively well. I achieved my undergraduate degree in 2003. I stayed on, however, to earn my tax credit, which was necessary to achieve my honours degree.

2. How did your relationship with Moore Stephens start?

Like other graduates, I started applying for traineeships towards the end of honours, going to a number of interviews. Of all the interviews, I most enjoyed the one with a director at Moore Stephens, Dale Kohlberg. Following a brief introduction, Dale scanned my application and opened with, "Oh, you play soccer".

That set me at ease and I started asking questions about Moore Stephens. In less than 10 minutes, my interview was over and a few days later I received a call, inviting me to start my traineeship at Moore Stephens in February 2005.

3. Describe your experience at Moore Stephens

I registered for my Honours in Bachelor of Accounting Science at UNISA around the same time that I started with my training at Moore Stephens. Taking a while to adjust, I worried about lagging behind my peers, but my moment to excel would come and I knew I must continue to work hard.

The Moore Stephens partners set me to work on various clients, mostly owner-run entrepreneurship businesses, retail, recruitment agencies, professional services, travel agents, property holding companies, the hospitality industry and architectural design.

Moore Stephens introduced me to the National School of Accounting (NSOA), equipping me with beneficial technical knowledge for exams. My adjustment from being a full-time student, to studying part-time whilst working proved to be disastrous and as a result, I failed first year. Second and third years fared better.

I received useful mentoring from Moore Stephens partners, Dale Kohlberg and Andrew Pitt, whilst my peers at the Big 4 reported having little contact with partners. I also benefitted from the study program run by SAICA; and through Moore Stephens, we were given lectures and motivational talks from UCT, UJ and NMMU.

I involved myself in the social side of Moore Stephens and participated in the dining club, go-carting, and the Moore Stephens soccer team, winning the Accountants League and the Corporate League in our first year! We really enjoyed the Moore Stephens partner support at each of our soccer matches! 2008 was a great year for me. In February I received my CTA, having written and passed both board exams while I was working as an Audit Supervisor at Moore Stephens. In February 2009, I qualified as a Chartered Accountant (SA).

4. My career post articles at Moore Stephens and where I am now

After saying goodbye to Moore Stephens in January 2009, I started at Old Mutual as a financial accountant with Old Mutual Alternative Risk Transfer (OMART). I was responsible for all finance related functions, including consulting with their existing and potential clients.

Having had aspirations of studying or working overseas since I was a student, and having harboured a deep curiosity about foreign people and cultures, I started searching for opportunities to join the Old Mutual plc team in London. An awesome opportunity was presented to me. I had never travelled outside of SA, and I was going to live my dream.

I proudly joined the Group Internal Audit talent rotation programme, aimed at helping people from the industry who wish to broaden their knowledge and experience.

Thanks to the awesome grounding and mentorship that Moore Stephens partners offer trainees, I developed my skills and self-belief that I could achieve great things and realise my dreams.

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